

Open Education Resources at College of the Rockies

Statement on Open Education Resources

College of the Rockies supports and encourages the use, creation, and adaptation of Open Education Resources (OERs) that enhance the quality of the student experience.

What are Open Educational Resources?

The Creative Commons defines OER as follows: “teaching, learning, and research materials that are either (a) in the public domain or (b) licensed in a manner that provides everyone with free and perpetual permission to engage in the 5R activities.” The 5R activities refer to the right to retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute a copy of the resource.

BC Campus promotes OER resources province-wide and provides an extensive list of tools and resources, including a searchable catalog of over 350 Open Textbooks. Among the current projects at BC Campus are development of ancillary resources and open source interactive homework systems authored in H5P. Another BC Campus project area is resource development for Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) programs in ABE, Business, Health Education, STEM, and Trades.

Value of OER for Students and Faculty

OER resources minimize the cost of learning for students. They allow faculty to customize their classroom resources and use local examples. OER adoption means we can offer Zero Textbook Cost courses and programs, which can improve recruitment and retention of students. OER resources promote equity in education, where every student has access to the textbook, which in turn improves classroom preparedness. OER adaptation and development by college faculty showcase the college’s faculty expertise. OER resources can be downloaded instantly and used effectively with all the benefits of electronic documents: available, searchable, accessible to those who use adaptive devices. OER development also supports innovation and collaboration across the province.

College Support for OER

Many COTR faculty members already use OER resources and some are involved in creating or adapting OER materials. The College is exploring ways to support OER adoption and remove barriers to adoption, such as identifying courses with zero textbook costs for students and promoting Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) programs at COTR as they become available.

OER Resources

BC Campus OpenEd: <https://open.bccampus.ca/>

Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) Programs: <https://bccampus.ca/projects/open-education/zed-cred-z-degrees/>

Open Homework System (OHS) and H5P development: <https://bccampus.ca/projects/open-education/the-open-homework-systems-project/>

Open Education Global: <https://www.oeglobal.org/>

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Q&A

Q: How do I adopt an OER?

A: It's easy. BC Campus has you fill in a form with the details on the textbook adopted, the cost of the textbook it replaced, the course where it is being used, and the expected enrollment. Talk to Scott Gerrity or Brenda Mathenia if you need assistance.

Q: What are the statistics on OERs?

A: The current totals (cumulative since 2012) reported by BC Campus as of April 2021: 685 faculty have adopted OERs in 4,560 unique sections with 199,096 students collectively saving \$24 million. Faculty are only counted once; each section is counted separately.

Q: What if I want to adapt some of the material in the textbook?

A: The terms of the Creative Commons license allow it. See "[Adapt an Open Textbook](#)" at BCCampus.ca.

Q: What about Bookstore revenue from textbook sales?

A: It's been renamed the Campus Store. It's for campus merchandise, and that includes textbooks, but Campus Store revenue is not a consideration in faculty textbook selection decisions.

Q: Don't students make money selling their textbooks?

A: They lose money buying them. The argument for using traditional textbooks is not a financial one.

Q: What if a student doesn't have a computer?

A: All students in academic programs are required to have a computer.

Q: In what formats are OER resources available?

A: Those who prefer to read a print version of an OER textbook for the scribble factor or the ability to flip back and forth through physical pages can order one at a nominal cost.

Q: Are there accessible textbooks in the BC Campus collection.

A: Currently 124 textbooks meet accessibility criteria (BC Campus [accessibility checklist](#)).

Q: I'm concerned about articulation.

A: Mike Winsemann, Director of Transfer and Technology at BCCAT, comments that course equivalency relies on learning outcomes, not textbook selection. BCCAT has no record of a transfer credit request being denied due to an OER textbook. Two courses with substantially the same scope, depth, and learning outcomes will achieve equivalent goals even if they use different textbooks.

Q: Do students value open textbooks?

A: Yes they do. A 2017 survey found that almost 2/3 of respondents rated their open textbooks either above average or excellent. And when textbooks are too expensive, students don't buy them. More than half of all students reported not buying at least one textbook in their program due to cost (Jhangiani, R. S., and S. Jhangiani. "Investigating the Perceptions, Use, and Impact of Open Textbooks: A Survey of Post-Secondary Students in British Columbia". *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, Vol. 18, no. 4, June 2017, <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v18i4.3012>)

Q: Are there ancillary resources for OERs?

A: Many BC Campus projects are under way to develop ancillary resources. Check the availability in your discipline area. Another BC Campus initiative is the Open Homework Systems (OHS) project for the development of interactive resources with the H5P format.