



# BCIT's Open Education Best Practices and Guidelines

## 1. Introduction

[Open Education](#) encompasses resources, tools and practices that are free of legal, financial and technical barriers and can be fully used, shared and adapted in the digital environment. Open educational practices can facilitate things such as meaningful and impactful assignments that can be shared beyond the student and instructor.

[Open educational resources](#) (OER) are high-quality teaching, learning, and research materials that are free for people everywhere to use and repurpose. Users can legally retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute (5R activities) open resources. The creators do not give up ownership of their work; rather, they choose to share their work to facilitate collaboration. This allows colleagues to use, adapt, and enhance work and share it back. With this approach, people are not working in isolation, creating the same thing over and over, but can spend their time collectively building and improving resources.

Led by the efforts of [BCcampus](#), there has been progress made toward adopting open educational practices and OER in BC post-secondary institutions. This is highly encouraged by the BC Ministry of Advance Education, which stated in the [2016/17 budget letters to post-secondary institutions](#): “Institutions are expected to continue to support the use of open education resources, including government’s Open Textbook initiative, to increase affordability for students and their families.”

## 2. Purpose

This document outlines BCIT’s position on Open Educational Resources (OER) and provides guidelines for practice in learning and teaching. The Institute encourages staff, faculty and students to use, create, and publish OER to enhance the quality of the student experience, improve teaching practices, and increase affordability. BCIT also recognises that use, creation and publication of OER are consistent with the Institute’s reputation, values, and mission. These best practices and guidelines provide guidance to faculty and staff in achieving the following outcomes through the utilization of Open Educational Resources (OER) at BCIT:

- improve student success through increased access and affordability
- improve teaching efficiency and effectiveness through the ability to focus, analyze, augment, and evolve course materials directly aligned to course learning outcomes
- promote teaching excellence and innovation in teaching and learning

Faculty will be supported in their use of OER to achieve the stated outcomes.



### 3. Support

BCIT Library and BCIT Learning and Teaching Centre (LTC): The Library and the LTC can help faculty identify high quality OER, help faculty incorporate open educational practices and resources in their curriculum, and help faculty develop OER.

Financial support: There are funding opportunities that support faculty in the development of OER and the adoption of open educational practices. Please see [open.bcit.ca](http://open.bcit.ca) for current information on funding.

Professional development and technical support: BCcampus ([opentext@bccampus.ca](mailto:opentext@bccampus.ca)) supports post-secondary institutions in BC to increase open educational practices. To that end, BCcampus provides support and training to assist faculty to adopt, adapt and create OER.

BCIT Open Education Working Group: BCIT's Open Education Working Group, open to all interested participants who would like to work on open initiatives, meets approximately 4 times per year. The primary goal of the group is to promote open education practices and OER development and use at BCIT.

[open@bcit.ca](mailto:open@bcit.ca): is under construction and will be a central online hub for information about open at BCIT with links to BCIT's open repository.

### 4. OER Quality Assurance

As subject matter experts, faculty are responsible for selecting OER of equal or greater quality than commercially distributed publisher content currently available for adoption. All OER materials selected for inclusion in any course must align directly to the course outcomes as reflected on the official course outline. Faculty are encouraged to collect data where possible on use and effectiveness of OER and open educational practices.

### 5. Ownership and Sharing

With respect to intellectual property and academic freedom, BCIT recognizes the ownership models that currently exist in the Institute and makes a strong commitment that it will make use of OER materials in accordance with existing BCIT Policies (i.e. Policy 5701 and 6601).

BCIT believes that the sharing of knowledge and ideas following its Learning and Teaching Framework is an essential foundation of quality education and encourages content creators to adopt a Creative Commons attribution license (CC BY-SA) licensing schemes. Please see Section 8 for more information.

Creators of educational material reserve the right to decide the conditions under which the material will be shared except in the following cases:



- The material is specifically paid for or commissioned by the Institute or the Institute provides an unusual contribution either financial or material. In this case, the Institute will determine the conditions under which the material will be shared.
- The material is developed as a result of a specific collaboration, in which case the guidelines governing that collaboration will prevail. Materials produced which do not indicate any specific conditions for sharing will automatically be considered to have been shared under a Creative Commons Attribution license.

All OER materials shared from the Institute to the world at large should carry a disclaimer indicating that the material is for educational purposes only and that the Institute absolves itself of any practical misuse of the OER materials or its content. OER materials authored and published by faculty and staff of the Institute do not necessarily reflect the opinion of BCIT. Medically-oriented materials should bear a warning indicating when sensitive materials are to be displayed, and a statement confirming that any images of patients were obtained with the expressed consent of those involved.

## 6. Procedures and Responsibilities

Schools and departments are responsible for making budgetary allocations for the development of OER within their units. By choosing and utilizing various opportunities for support as outlined in section 4 above, they can explore external sources of funding including grants and collaborations to roll out OER as a means of addressing existing curriculum needs.

Faculty are encouraged to employ the following OER Community standards in the adoption and adaptation of OER: Retain, Reuse, Revise, Remix and Redistribute (or 5Rs, as previously mentioned). Faculty who incorporate OER materials into their courses assume all responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the course content as related to copyright and scholarly merit. Faculty who adapt, reuse or distribute adapted materials under a Creative Commons license must use only materials that are published under a Creative Commons license or exist in the Public Domain. Faculty who create original open content are encouraged to place a Creative Commons (CC BY-SA) license on such content at the time it is introduced into the course.

BCIT encourages a teamwork approach to curriculum and materials development to bring together different kinds of expertise available across the Institute. Project groups are strongly advised to discuss Creative Commons licensing at the start of any project to ensure that all group members agree to how their collaborative work will be shared and licensed.

It is the responsibility of faculty and students to ensure that they have the necessary rights to publish an OER and that all resources published comply with all relevant policies and collective agreements (e.g. copyright, intellectual property, accessibility).

The Open Education Working Group is responsible for maintaining and reviewing these guidelines.



## 7. OER Technical Format

BCIT's open repository accepts files in a variety of formats, including in the Portable Document Format (PDF), which is very convenient to display. However, PDF's are very difficult to edit, and may not be accessible to people who do not have specialized editing software. Contributors are therefore encouraged to also supply any OER source-files in an editable form that was used to generate the PDF's, for example Word documents, PowerPoint files, etc. A single submission can contain a number of different files in different formats.

Other file formats that are supported include but are not limited to Postscript, MPEG Audio, WAV, GIF, JPEG, PNG, TIFF, HTML, Plain text, Rich Text Format, XML, CSV and Tab Separated Values.

The following file formats are also recognized but may not have the full functionality –Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Project, and Visio; WordPerfect, Photoshop, BMP, QuickTime Video.

Where OER have been created as part of an externally funded activity, any storage and/or repository locations mandated as a condition of the funding should also be used.

## 8. Licensing OER

Faculty, staff and students at BCIT are advised to publish OER using a Creative Commons attribution license (CC BY-SA). Other [Creative Commons licenses](#) (for example to add a non-commercial use element) may be used if the creators feel this is necessary or appropriate for their particular resource, or to comply with the licence of any third party content used in the resource.

When creating and publishing OER, the copyright owner(s), author(s), date and Creative Commons licence applied must be visibly attributed. Author(s) should be properly acknowledged, giving recognition for work undertaken, along with date and Creative Commons licence applied so that others can clearly understand what permissions for reuse are being granted.

Institute policies on intellectual property must be adhered to. When using OER, students and staff must comply with the terms of the license of use.

All educational resources and knowledge produced through competitive grants facilitated or managed by BCIT Open Education will carry a Creative Commons Attribution License, CC BY-SA.

## 9. Conclusion

Faculty, staff and students at BCIT are encouraged and supported to use, adapt and develop OER and to engage in open educational practices to enhance learning and teaching. It is the hope of the OE Working Group that this document provides some of the necessary background to inspire the BCIT community to become more involved with the OE movement. To find out more, please contact [open@bcit.ca](mailto:open@bcit.ca)

