

COL's Policy on Open Educational Resources

Overview

This document specifies a broad policy to promote and inform the development and use of OER in COL.

Preamble

COL helps governments and institutions to expand the scope, scale and quality of learning. It promotes policies and systems to make innovation sustainable and works with international partners to build models, create materials, enhance organisational capacity and nurture networks that facilitate learning in support of development goals. In specific, COL encourages the development and sharing of open learning/distance education knowledge, resources and technologies.

COL recognises and promotes OER as central to its agenda of learning for development. COL has adopted the widest definition of Open Education Resources (OER) as 'materials offered freely and openly to use and adapt for teaching, learning, development and research'. While OER are mainly shareable in digital formats (both online and via offline formats such as DVD or CD-ROM), COL sees OER not just synonymous with online resources, online learning or e-learning, and within the development context COL is working, OER can also be in printable formats.

Policy

The Commonwealth of Learning:

- recognises and promotes OER in support of quality teaching and learning, as one tool for using technology to increase equity in access to education;
- facilitates collaboration among institutions, governments and organisations in the use of OER;
- promotes relevant capacity strengthening processes for stakeholders; and
- shapes and promotes new models for OER generation, publication, access and re-use.

It will therefore:

- encourage and support governments and institutions to establish supportive policy frameworks to introduce practices relating to OER;

- advocate the merits of collaboratively creating, sharing and using OER, as one form of intellectual capital in education, to improve quality and enhance long-term cost-effectiveness; and
- release its own materials under the most feasible open licenses including the Creative Commons CC-BY-SA license.

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