

# OPENING UP: THE ROLE OF HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARIANS IN THE OER MOVEMENT

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## OER: AN OVERVIEW

### What are OER?

“Open Educational Resources (OER) are any type of educational materials that are in the public domain or introduced with an **open license**. The nature of these open materials means that anyone can legally and freely copy, use, adapt and re-share them.”<sup>1</sup>

**Can be:** Textbooks, supplemental readings, assignments, tests, presentations, assessments, multimedia, and more.

### Benefits of OER:

- Reduced textbook and materials costs to students
- Open sharing between educators and learners
- More exposure for authors and creators
- Reduced copyright violations
- Customization of course materials

### Why Promote OER?

- 65% of students report not buying a textbook because it was too expensive<sup>2</sup>
- 1 out of 2 students say the cost of textbooks impacts how many and which classes they take<sup>2</sup>
- 45% of students will not register for a course because of the price of the textbook<sup>3</sup>

### OER LICENSING

OER use Creative Commons (CC) licensing to determine how material can be used and shared. There are six main CC licenses made up of the following conditions:



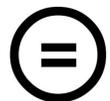
**Attribution:** Free to use, share, and adapt for any purpose (even commercially) but you must give credit and indicate any changes.



**ShareAlike:** Free to use, share, and adapt for any purpose (even commercially) as long as you distribute your work under the same terms and you give credit and indicate any changes.



**NonCommercial:** Free to use, share, and adapt for any purpose other than commercially. You must give credit and indicate any changes.



**NoDerivatives:** Free to use, share, and adapt for any purpose (even commercially). If you make any changes, you may not distribute the modified material.

## ROLE OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARIAN

### ADVOCATE

- Form an OER committee made up of librarians, faculty, students, and other stakeholders.
- Investigate ways that other campuses are advocating for OER. A popular method is to secure funding via grants or other means that you can pass along to faculty as an incentive for converting their classes to OERs.
  - See: University of Massachusetts Amherst OER Initiative<sup>4</sup>
- Partner with your local Public Interest Group (PIRG) to identify ways your campus can get involved in reducing textbook costs.

### EDUCATE

- Gather statistics from existing OER initiatives such as the Florida Textbook Survey.
- Collect original data by offering a student and/or faculty survey on your campus. This will help to gauge interest and also provide quantitative leverage when advocating for OER to your stakeholders.
- Create a libguide or web page devoted to OER for your campus. Use it to share what OER are as well as available OER for specific subjects. Need inspiration? Check out these examples:
  - UMASS Amherst Libraries: <http://www.library.umass.edu/services/teaching-and-learning/oer/>
  - OpenOregon: <http://openoregon.org/>
  - North Shore Community College: <http://libguides.northshore.edu/open>

### CONNECT

- Create a brief list of sources for faculty to investigate when looking for appropriate OER.
  - This is again where a libguide or webpage can be helpful
- Offer to review sources faculty find to make sure they are truly free and open.
- Hold an instruction session or workshop for faculty that showcases the many OER repositories available.

## OER IN THE HEALTH SCIENCES

### WHY DO WE NEED OER FOR THE HEALTH SCIENCES?

- Health professions are the second most popular Bachelor's degree programs in the country.<sup>5</sup>
- Nursing, Biology, Mathematics, Psychology, and Physics textbooks are among the top ten most expensive.<sup>6</sup>
- STCC Nursing students spend over \$2,500 on books and materials.<sup>7</sup>

### AVAILABLE HEALTH SCIENCES OER:

#### OPEN STAX

<https://openstax.org>

Peer-reviewed, open source textbooks in a variety of subjects including biology, microbiology, anatomy & physiology, chemistry, and physics.

#### JOHNS HOPKINS BLOOMBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH OPEN COURSEWARE INITIATIVE

<http://ocw.jhsph.edu/>

A collection of open public health courses and course materials.

#### BIOMED CENTRAL

<http://www.biomedcentral.com/>

Articles from 272 peer-reviewed open access journals focusing on biomedicine.

#### PUBLIC LIBRARY OF SCIENCE (PLOS)

<https://www.plos.org/>

160,000+ peer-reviewed, open source articles.

#### MERLOT II

<https://www.merlot.org>

An online repository of free and open source teaching and learning materials.

### REFERENCES

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