



# 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 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 of these materials do not give up ownership of their work; rather, they choose to facilitate collaboration by sharing it. This allows colleagues to use, adapt, and enhance work and share it back. Rather than working in isolation, individuals can spend their time collectively building and improving resources. In the classroom, open practices facilitate engagement and empowers students to create meaningful and impactful work that can be shared beyond their instructors.

BCIT's Learning and Teaching Framework states that "Open education resources (OER) and open education practices are preferred during curriculum design and resource selection."

Led by the efforts of [BCcampus](#), there has been significant progress made toward adopting open educational practices and OER in BC post-secondary institutions.

British Columbia's Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training identified "expanding the use of open education resources including open textbooks" as a key priority in their 2019/20 [mandate letter](#) to BCIT.

## 2. Purpose

This document outlines BCIT's position on Open Educational Resources (OER) and provides guidelines for practice in learning and teaching. BCIT recognises that the use, creation and publication of OER are consistent with the Institute's reputation, values, and mission. 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.

This document provides guidance to faculty and staff in achieving the following outcomes through open education practises:

- 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

The following resources are available for faculty wishing to incorporate open practices into their work:

- **Financial Support:** There are funding opportunities at BCIT 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.
- **BCIT's Library and the Learning and Teaching Centre (LTC):** The Library and the LTC can help faculty identify high quality OER, incorporate open educational practices and resources in their curriculum, and develop 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.
- **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.

Please see [open.bcit.ca](http://open.bcit.ca) for more information

### 4. OER Quality Assurance

As subject matter experts, faculty are responsible for selecting quality OER that directly support course learning outcomes. When practising open pedagogy, faculty should keep in mind that students may be uncomfortable working in the open for a variety of reasons and should be provided with alternative approaches that protect their privacy rights. Faculty are encouraged to engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning to evaluate the effectiveness of OER use 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) and collective agreements.

BCIT believes that the sharing of knowledge and ideas is an essential foundation of quality education and openly licenses its own materials whenever possible. The institute encourages content creators to



license their learning materials openly with a [Creative Commons attribution license](#) or other open licenses.

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

- The creation of the material is, in part or in whole, supported by a BCIT Open Education Grant or other financial support which stipulates that the materials must be released with an open license.
- 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 and prefers to adopt an open license.
- The material is developed as a result of a specific collaboration, in which case issues of copyright and licensing should be agreed upon at the start of the project.

## 6. Procedures and Responsibilities

Faculty who incorporate OER materials into their courses assume the 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 openly licensed or that exist in the [Public Domain](#). 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).

Faculty who create original open content are encouraged to place a [Creative Commons](#) or other open license on such content before or 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 and beyond. 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.

## 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 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 encouraged to publish OER using a [Creative Commons attribution license](#) and to choose the licence that is the least restrictive as appropriate.

When creating and publishing OER that incorporates OER from other creators, the copyright owner(s), author(s), date, and Creative Commons licence applied must be visibly attributed.

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](#) or other open license.

## 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 visit [open.bcit.ca](http://open.bcit.ca)

