

Charles Sturt University (CSU) is an Australian multi-campus public university with a footprint covering most of inland New South Wales. Courses are also delivered in Sydney and Melbourne in conjunction with the private education group, Study Group Australia, (known as CSU Study Centres). CSU also has various course delivery partnerships with several TAFE institutions across the country. Online education partnerships include an IT Master's degree for industry certified IT professionals with a private training organisation and the NSW Higher School Certificate Online (NSW HSC Online) in cooperation with the NSW Department of Education and Training.

CSU has three faculties Arts & Education, Business, Justice & Behavioural Sciences and Science, each offering a range of courses. Its student cohort now numbers almost 40,000 students. This is comprised, in roughly equal proportions, of students from: metropolitan NSW; regional NSW; other Australian states and territories; and international students (including attendees at CSU Study Centres).

CSU also has a strong reputation in online education. It aspires to challenge 'traditional approaches to learning and teaching with flexible delivery systems that are continually being refined to improve course delivery'.¹

1. Institutional Practices and Policies around OER

At CSU, the implementation of OER practices is strongly embedded in course development² and distance education strategies.³ To date, strategic OER aims have not been translated into specific guidelines or policies.

2. Current (or planned) OER Initiatives

CSU has a range of OER initiatives across various faculties, schools and services. These include:

- Lead institution for a project funded by the Office for Learning & Teaching, Students, Universities & Open Education⁴
- Joined OERu as a partner institution⁵ and offering open courses⁶
- Hosted Education without Borders, a national event on open education in 2015⁷

1. <http://www.csu.edu.au/handbook/handbook17/university/aboutCSU.html>

2. <http://uimagine.edu.au/the-csu-online-learning-model/>

3. http://www.csu.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1169973/Draft-DE-Strategy.pdf

4. <http://www.olt.gov.au/project-students-universities-and-open-education-2014>

5. <http://oeru.org/oeru-partners/charles-sturt-university/>

6. <http://oeru.org/oeru-partners/charles-sturt-university/australian-indigenous-culture-history-and-contemporary-issues/>

7. <https://www.csu.edu.au/csued/education-without-borders/open-and-online-learning>

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- Establishment of u!magine as a think-tank and an incubator for educational innovation including OEP⁸ and the Learning Resources Unit to strategize adoption and production of OER⁹
- Course development focussed on 'online by design', including the use of OER¹⁰
- OER firmly embedded in CSU's distance education strategy¹¹
- Preliminary redesign of compulsory Graduate Certificate on Learning & Teaching in Higher Education for university staff to encompass use of open education courses
- Short MOOCs, or tasters, in partnership with IT Masters¹² and 'What's Uni Like?'¹³ funded by the national government
- A Badges project scoped the context for the use of CSU badges

3. Interpretation of 'openness'

As a member of OERu, CSU subscribes to the core OER principles of engagement for the OER university initiative.¹⁴ The courses created by the University and hosted by OERu have Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 license. This indicates that CSU subscribes to an interpretation of openness which seeks to retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute resources.¹⁵

4. Motivations and/or barriers to engage with OER

CSU's motivation to engage with OER is rooted in its operation as a university 'for the public good' which sees 'collaboration' as one of its underlying values. CSU recognises the benefits of OER, and specifically its OERu membership, in two ways: through broadening access to higher education as a community service; and generating networking opportunities when working at an international level with like-minded academic institutions. Technology is seen as an enabler for CSU to 'thrive as a distributed yet connected community'.¹⁶

More specifically, OER is regarded as beneficial for

- flexible and open pathways for students worldwide through free course content;
- low cost challenge examinations;
- recognition of prior learning;
- collaborations to garner international marketing profile for CSU's online learning and to provide 24x7 coverage of online support via collaborations with universities across the globe.¹⁷

8. <http://www.csu.edu.au/uimagine/home>

9. <http://www.csu.edu.au/division/student-learning/home/technologies-for-learning-and-teaching/learning-resources-unit>

10. <http://uimagine.edu.au/the-csu-online-learning-model/>

11. http://www.csu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1169973/Draft-DE-Strategy.pdf

12. <https://www.itmasters.edu.au/about-it-masters/free-short-courses/>

13. <http://www.whats-uni-like.edu.au/>

14. <http://guides.ou.edu/oer>

15. <http://guides.ou.edu/oer>

16. https://www.csu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/124106/FinalCSUStrategy20132015.pdf

17. https://www.csu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1169973/Draft-DE-Strategy.pdf

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5. Envisaged outcomes of involvement with OER

Engagement with OER is envisaged to enhance CSU's reputation as a provider of online education, and facilitate CSU in widening its repertoire of online course delivery. OERs are also regarded as useful in providing diverse pathways into formal education. CSU expects that incorporating OERs produced by other institutions will allow it to offer more and diverse courses and react swiftly to curriculum changes.

6. Insights and Recommendations for other institutions

Institutionally, a consultative approach to the development of an institutional strategy in OER is recommended. Familiarity of Senior Executive with concept of OEP is good at CSU but not in enough detail. Senior Executive require an evidence base of relevance of these strategies to market advantage compared with investment of time and money needed. There is currently a low awareness amongst academic staff of open education practices and OERs. The Education without Borders conference raised awareness of the possibilities but further work needs to be undertaken via professional development and funding programs to foster OEP in course development.

At a National level, awareness-raising activities about OEP including business models and creative commons licensing is required. High-level national activity will provide reinforcement and impetus for change with Senior Executives at the institutional level. Recommendations from the Students, Universities and Open Education project invited a number of national bodies to engage with the OpenEdOz Roadmap.¹⁸ The National Roadmap points the way for what a national strategy might look like. It comprises 10 Signposts and 25 Contributing Strategies.

18. <http://openedoz.org/resources/>

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