

OEL Case Study: 12 October 2016

University of Canberra (UC)



The University of Canberra (UC) is a young and innovative higher education institution based mainly in Canberra.¹ UC also has an established network of Australian and international partners that allows students to transition seamlessly between vocational and higher education.² UC enrolls more than 16,000 students³ across its four faculties: Faculty of Arts & Design; Faculty of Business, Government & Law; Faculty of Education, Science, Technology & Maths; and Faculty of Health.⁴

UC positions itself as contributing to the building of prosperous, just, and sustainable communities, that are respectful of their Indigenous past and committed to redressing disadvantage.⁵ Its vision is to be distinguished as an educator for all stages of life, with an emphasis on work-integrated learning that prepares people for adaptive careers in emerging professions.⁶

1. Institutional Practices and Policies around OER

UC has recently engaged in a number of institutionally supported OER initiatives, including UC Open.⁷ This initiative is a project coordinated by UC's Teaching and Learning unit, and is focussed on UC's engagement with OERu, and the development and delivery of OER projects, including MOOCs. To date, this has not been reflected in UC's policies.

1. <http://www.canberra.edu.au/alumni/home/our-story/our-history>

2. <http://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/campus-locations>

3. <http://www.universityrankings.com.au/international-student-numbers.html>

4. <http://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/faculties>

5. <http://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/strategic-plan/documents/breakthrough-uc-strategic-plan-prospectus-2013-17.PDF>

6. <http://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/strategic-plan/purpose>

7. <http://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/tl/projects>

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2. Current (or planned) OER Initiatives

UC has a range of OER initiatives across various faculties and services. These activities include:

- Dedicated UC Open webpage to provide information on and access to UC's open initiatives⁸
- Three MOOCS, including 1 used as a regular course module (see previous footnote)
- OERu membership⁹
- Canvas Network membership¹⁰

3. Interpretation of 'openness'

As a member of OERu, UC subscribes to core OER principles and an interpretation of openness which seeks to retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute resources.¹¹ UC also uses the learning platform Canvas Network to deliver its open online courses. For learners to access UC content through the Canvas platform they need to create a Learner Account, which requires an 'invite code' provided by a UC Instructor. This functionality suggests an 'open to enrol', rather than 'open to re-use' interpretation of openness.¹²

8. <http://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/learning-at-uc/ucopen>

9. <http://oeru.org/oeru-partners/university-of-canberra/>

10. <https://www.canvas.net/>

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

12. <https://info.canvas.net/terms-of-use#payment-and-refund-policy?seen=yy?seen=yy>

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4. Motivations and/or barriers to engage with OER

UC has a strong commitment to Open Access. Prof Nick Klomp, UC's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), describes engaging with OERs as an opportunity to democratise education. He is keen for UC to participate in and learn from current transformations in the higher education sector, for example, industry practices in development and release of MOOCs.¹³

Barriers identified to engage more fully with OER include:

- Investment (e.g. in MOOCs)
- Time availability of educational designers, academics and IT staff
- Uncertainty about long term success¹⁴

5. Envisaged outcomes of involvement with OER

OER are well suited to support the university's focus on student-centred policies and practices. They are used to increase choice and flexibility in students' access to teaching and learning. UC's MOOC engagement has already produced some interesting transfers of knowledge, with findings from MOOC delivery and student engagement informing methods of face-to-face teaching. Learner engagement with MOOCs has also delivered information about potential geographical markets and new student cohorts.

At this point however, UC's expectations remain constrained. While the institution is very supportive of OERs and particularly MOOCs, they are regarded as only one of the ways higher education might develop, and engagement with these resources is seen as experimental and a learning experience (see previous footnote).

6. Insights and Recommendations for other institutions

13. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qus9A_CAaRc

14. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qus9A_CAaRc

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