

The University of Tasmania (UTAS) is one of Australia's top 10 research universities and also offers over 100 undergraduate courses across six faculties: Arts; Education; Health; Law; Science, Engineering & Technology; and Business & Economics. As the single university in the State of Tasmania, UTAS balances its strong research with the needs of a comprehensive course offering to meet the needs of the State. Its nearly 34,000 students were born in 147 countries and international students make up 16% of the cohort.

UTAS' vision to provide a high-quality and valuable learning experience is reflected in its innovative teaching approaches, and has been frequently rewarded with grants by the Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT).

1. Institutional Practices and Policies around OER

UTAS actively promotes the use of OER and OEP. This is reflected in its coherent policies, strategies and staff-faced communications. The Teaching & Learning website prominently lists OER as a resource. The site provides internal and external information to staff on the use, development and publication of OER. Examples of supporting policies and strategy papers include the University Learning and Teaching Strategy 2014 – 2016, the Curriculum Principles, and the recognition of OER in the Teaching Performance Expectations.

2. Current (or planned) OER Initiatives

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

- Three MOOCs on Desire2Learn (internal platform)¹
- OERu member
- Learning Object Repository including for OER
- Development of OEP is part of Divisional planning²

1. <http://www.utas.edu.au/wicking2014/wca/mooc>

2. <http://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/content-and-resources/open-educational-resources/open-education-at-utas>

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- Embracing OEP is a UTAS curriculum principle³
- Using OEP counts towards teaching performance expectations⁴
- Professional development micro-course focussed on supporting open curriculum design in higher education (in cooperation with the University of Southern Queensland)⁵
- Individual resources on iTunes, YouTube etc.

3. Interpretation of 'openness'

UTAS does not refer to one specific definition of 'openness', but rather highlights different approaches and interpretations. UTAS' approach recognises that the level of 'openness' depends on a number of criteria, including the goals and objectives for individual resources. However, it proposes that 'open' should include the ability to access, use, re-use, repurpose and redistribute.⁶

4. Motivations and/or barriers to engage with OER

UTAS identifies multiple benefits to engaging with OER: students benefit from a variety of learning resources that enrich and support different learning styles; and teaching staff benefit from sharing resources which enables them to provide a wider range of resources to their students.⁷

Developing OER is seen as serving many purposes including: philanthropic; connecting to content outside traditional course structures; marketing and promotion; and content quality review and enhancement.⁸

3. http://www.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/567744/7825_A3_Curriculum-Principles1.pdf
4. http://www.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/447443/7815A-Revised-Teaching-Performance.pdf
5. <http://openedoz.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Curriculum-design-for-open-education-%E2%80%93-micro-course-pilot.pdf>
6. <http://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/content-and-resources/open-educational-resources/oer-scope-of-resources>
7. <http://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/content-and-resources/open-educational-resources>
8. [https://elibrary.utas.edu.au/lor/file/b302c59b-066b-415a-8a6e-37fe65b5db8f/1/Enabling the Development of the Business of Learning and Teaching 2015 OAVersion.pdf](https://elibrary.utas.edu.au/lor/file/b302c59b-066b-415a-8a6e-37fe65b5db8f/1/Enabling%20the%20Development%20of%20the%20Business%20of%20Learning%20and%20Teaching%202015%20OAVersion.pdf)

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OER, particularly MOOCs, has created markets and opportunities to attract fee-paying students through marketing, advertising and branding. However, it was recognised that UTAS will more strongly benefit from developing MOOCs with a unique selling point. MOOCs should be conceived from areas of teaching and research strength, specialisation or of strategic importance to UTAS.

Rather than describe 'barriers to engaging with OER UTAS uses the notion of 'risk'. The university has assessed risks associated with developing and delivering OER and identified them in the following ways: financial cost; UTAS' reputation regarding content and quality; and technical support. Largely these risks were described as low to medium. High risk was identified where cost for course development and delivery is borne by UTAS.⁹

5. Envisaged outcomes of involvement with OER

The envisaged outcomes of involvement in OEP and OER are very closely aligned with the motivations outlined above. OER are expected to contribute to areas of social and community need; enhance brand reputation; lead to increased enrolment figures; and enhance curriculum offerings.¹⁰ OER can also assist in making education more affordable for our students. However, UTAS also recognised the need to embed pathways between open courses and UTAS award courses including full or partial credits from MOOCs.

6. Insights and Recommendations for other institutions

9. http://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/439013/Technology-Enhanced-Learning-and-Teaching-White-Paper-Academic-Senate-15-November-2013.pdf
10. http://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/439013/Technology-Enhanced-Learning-and-Teaching-White-Paper-Academic-Senate-15-November-2013.pdf
11. http://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/439013/Technology-Enhanced-Learning-and-Teaching-White-Paper-Academic-Senate-15-November-2013.pdf

The OEL Project is a joint research and development project between Swinburne University of Technology and the University of Tasmania. Supported by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching.

