

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OER)

Background

The purpose of this document is to inform colleges of the signing of Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1375 adding a new section to chapter 28B.50 RCW, with an effective date of July 23, 2017. The statute requires each college to provide information on the cost of textbooks/course materials and whether the course uses Open Educational Resources (OER).

The Washington Community and Technical College system has completed its 2-year journey to establish the policies and coding to identify OER and Low-Cost codes.

- [2015 Faculty & Staff Qualitative Study on OER support](#)
- [2016-2017 Faculty & Staff Survey on OER Code](#)

Definition

The required instructional materials are provided online at no cost during the course. A printed version and some supplementary course materials may be available for purchase in bookstore.

Note: The OER code (**OER: No Textbook to Purchase**) and description were simplified to offer easy-to-understand, intuitive course attributes on the course search/class schedule for students.

Criteria

To be designated as an OER course, a course should use Open Educational Resources (OER) as the primary, required instructional materials for the course.

Open Educational Resources (OER) are resources released either under an open license or in the public domain permitting their free use, repurposing, and sharing.

- **This includes** ALL required instructional materials such as textbooks, websites, software programs, apps, courseware packages, access codes to homework websites, etc.
- **This does not include**
 - **Tools and supplies**, such as a lab coat, goggles, notebook paper, art materials, thumb drives, or calculators.
 - **Course fees**, such as a lab fee, technology fee, testing fee, or eLearning fee.
 - **Small copying/printing costs**. For example, if instructors expect students to have minor printing/copying expenses (for printing out worksheet drafts, assignments, etc.), this expense should not be factored into the consideration.

Courses that traditionally do not require any course materials are not to be coded as an OER course, such as aerobics, yoga, or sports dance class. These types of courses should be coded as Low Cost.

Courses that use copyrighted materials with all rights reserved as supplementary materials while using OER as the primary, required materials may be coded as an OER course. For example, if a course uses an open textbook as a primary course material and lists a small number of articles from the library database as supplementary reading, the course may be coded as OER.

If a course's required course materials are not determined prior to registration, the class section cannot be evaluated against the OER coding criteria.

Examples of qualified cases for coding as OER courses:

- **Use of adopted open textbooks or materials** regardless of the format. For example, courses that use a printed version of open textbooks or materials with a small printing and handling cost.
- **Use of a faculty-developed textbook or materials with** an open license or public domain designation.
- **Use of a faculty-developed textbook or materials without** an open license or public domain designation, if
 - materials are freely accessible by the students and students are allowed to keep them after the course is completed, **and**
 - faculty plan on releasing the materials with an open license or public domain designation when ready.
- **Use of open textbook or materials as required course materials** while supplemented by other copyrighted materials with all rights reserved.
- Courses technology fees or lab fees that are included in the tuition and fee structure.

Examples of insufficient cases for coding as OER courses:

- **Use of OER as a supplementary course material** while using a commercial textbook as the primary course material.
- **Use of OER with software or online sites that require the purchase** of software or licenses permitting the use of materials. For example, courses that require the purchase of an access code to do homework or to read primary course materials would NOT typically be designated as OER courses.
 - To the extent possible, charging fees on top of those already included in tuition, technology and lab fees, for software or licenses to access online sites for coursework should be discouraged. If these additional costs are significant, it undermines the OER goal to reduce costs to students.
- **Publisher materials included in tuition, technology, or lab fees that are not openly licensed** would not be marked with the OER code.

To learn more about open license and the public domain, visit [Module 1 Introduction in How to Use Open Educational Resources](#).

Updated OER Course Coding

Courses that meet the criteria above are coded with a Student Attribute of “SOER”. Students in these courses will be identified with a Student Group of “SOER”. The student group will be set automatically each night based on the Course Attribute.

Implementation and Timelines

To be compliant, a college must implement the statute requirements **within one quarter of migrating to the PeopleSoft environment**. The information must be available to students during registration by either displaying it in the online course description or by providing a link to the bookstore's website. The statute also requires each college to report which courses provided textbooks' and course materials' costs to students during registration, and what percent of total classes this equaled.



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