Mauritius National Open Educational Resources Policy

Quality Learning Materials for All

Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Republic of Mauritius

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Open Educational Resources (OERs) promise to significantly contribute to the improvement and effectiveness of education at all levels in Mauritius, especially as OERs allow the reuse, revision, and remixing of existing teaching and learning materials. The Government of Mauritius is committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology aims to achieve SDG 4.

A national policy for increasing access to and use of OERs will strengthen the commitment of the Government of Mauritius to promote lifelong learning in Mauritius by making available quality-assured learning materials to everyone across a wide range of skills and competencies.

Mauritius recognises the significant role that OERs play in expanding equal opportunities to access quality education. It reduces barriers to education, transforms teaching and learning, facilitates outreach to disadvantaged communities and enhances educational opportunities to foster development and a more productive society.

This policy aims to provide direction in using OER to support quality teaching and learning in the Mauritian education and training system.

1.0   Background

Open Educational Resources (OER) is one of the major movements in education and training. It brings stakeholders to work for a common cause, ensuring the availability of quality learning materials. It is believed that OERs can fuel the processes for achieving SDG 4: *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030*.

The Qingdao Declaration commits to developing sector-wide strategies and capacity-building programmes to fully realise the potential of OERs to expand access to lifelong learning opportunities and achieve quality education. The Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (MOETEST) hosted the Africa regional consultation on OERs organised by the Commonwealth of Learning in March 2017. Mauritius also participated in the Second OER World Congress Ljubljana, Slovenia, from 18 to 20 September 2017.

The Ljubljana OER Action Plan 2017 was one of the primary outcome documents from the Second World OER Congress, which led to the adoption of the Recommendations on OER by the UNESCO General Conference in November 2019 in its 40th session. The UNESCO OER Recommendation urges Member States to take appropriate steps and effect mainstream OER in their education system, among other things, developing supporting policy, capacity building and equitable access to quality OER to meet SDG 4 on Quality Education. Taking cognisance of these developments, the MOETEST initiated the development of the National OER Policy with the government's approval.

2.0   The rationale of an OER policy

The OER Policy provides the framework for publicly funded institutions in the Republic of Mauritius to coherently align their systems and regulations with implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 and other SDGs. To ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, the policy will allow relevant content to be available for anyone to access anytime and anywhere.

The policy shall apply to all public teaching and learning materials developed by Ministries of the Government of Mauritius and their subordinate offices. Private higher educational institutions shall be encouraged to adopt the national OER Policy and create and share OER materials. Educational institutions and autonomous bodies developing teaching and learning materials using public funds will be guided by this policy and shall undertake appropriate steps to adopt OERs. Releasing work with an open licence will follow the Copyright (Amended) Act, 2017.

3.0 Goals of the OER policy

The goals of this policy are to:

3.1 strengthen the commitment to OERs;

3.2 transform the learning and teaching experiences;

3.3 encourage and embed a culture of OER adoption and integration, including revision, remixing, repurposing and reuse;

3.4 establish a framework where educational materials produced with public funds shall be made available using appropriate licensing;

3.5 encourage educational materials produced by private funds to be shared using appropriate licenses; and

3.6 guide the development and review of OERs.

4.0 Implementation strategy of the OER policy

4.1 A High-Level Committee shall be constituted at the level of the Higher Education Commission to monitor the implementation of the OER Policy.

4.2 The Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology will have the responsibility to:

(i) promote OERs in educational institutions in the country;

(ii) ensure equitable and inclusive access to educational resources; and

(iii) ensure the quality of educational resources produced and used at various levels of education in collaboration with the relevant regulatory bodies and national/international organisations.

4.3 The MOETEST shall be engaged, in collaboration with education and training institutions, to build capacity and foster positive attitudes among educational practitioners and learners regarding the development and use of OERs, to enhance inclusiveness, quality and equity in education.

4.4 Implementation at stakeholders' level
Public and private institutions will be encouraged to participate in the OER movement, and the following explains the functions of each stakeholder involved in this process.

(i) A joint committee including the Higher Education Commission,

the Quality Assurance Authority and the Mauritius Institute of Education shall monitor and evaluate the implementation of OERs.

(ii) Private higher educational institutions shall be encouraged to develop OER.

(iii) A national OER repository will be set up. Digital OER will be developed and made available in appropriate formats to encourage reuse and promote accessibility in an inclusive manner.

(iv) All educational institutions will develop guidelines and procedures for developing OERs as appropriate, relevant to their organisations, and consistent with this policy.

(v) All educational institutions, whether public or private, in early childhood, primary, secondary and TVET sub-sector will be encouraged to create high-quality, accessible learning resources to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Mauritius and update their institutional OER repository regularly as well as have a team to screen and maintain the resources. The institutional repository will be linked to the national repository.

(vi) Educational resources, including those from the institutional and national repositories that are freely and openly available, will be used to produce teaching and learning materials based on institutional and national curriculum requirements.

(vii) All educational institutions shall be encouraged to use open-source hardware and software whenever possible to create and repurpose OER.

4.5 Capacity Building

4.5.1 Resource persons and educational practitioners shall be encouraged to participate in OER-related training programmes. All personnel involved in quality assurance, accreditation and academic recognition processes shall be trained on issues surrounding OERs, such as open-source software, intellectual property rights, copyright and licensing options available for educational materials. This will be part of the regular capacity building and professional development of such personnel and agencies.

4.5.2 The professional development programmes of educational practitioners shall include a component on OERs, open educational practices and open licensing.

4.5.3 Teacher training curricula, including pre-service and in-service training programmes, shall include courses on open education, copyrights, open licensing, open pedagogy and OER creation and use.

4.5.4 Educational institutions shall promote capacity building among students to create, share, and use quality OERs.

4.6 Curriculum Development

4.6.1 All school-level curricula and textbooks shall integrate culturally relevant OER.

4.6.2 Curation of relevant OER shall be prioritised before developing new curricula or textbooks.

4.6.3 Teachers and curriculum developers shall be encouraged to identify relevant OER to help teaching and learning.

4.6.4 The national OER repository shall cover curriculum-aligned resources with an open license.

4.7 Copyright and Licensing

4.7.1 All teaching and learning materials developed with public funds shall be released with the most appropriate open licence to permit reuse, revision, remixing and redistribution when the copyright is held by a ministry, department or educational institution.

4.7.2 The preferred open licences are Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY), Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike (CC BY-SA), Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial (CC BY-NC) and Creative Commons-Non Commercial- Share Alike (CC BY-NC-SA), but other open licenses in widespread usage may also be adopted, should the need arise.

4.7.3 The OER Policy will not apply to any work if releasing the work under an open licence would:

- be contrary to legislation, court order or specific government policy;
- constitute a breach of contract or lead to the disclosure of a trade secret; and/or
- prevent the patenting of an invention.

4.7.4 Onus for exceptions to open licensing will rest with the institution or the concerned ministry (as the case may be).

4.8 Quality Assurance

4.8.1 The Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, in collaboration with relevant agencies, shall facilitate the development of guidelines for quality assurance as per relevant international best practices.

4.8.2 The quality assurance with regards to OERs shall focus on the appropriateness of the content concerning the level of education; suitability for learning outcomes; entire course versus specific learning objects; accessibility for vulnerable people; use of local language;

cultural appropriateness; and examples to help students learn.

4.8.3 A quality assurance process shall be in place for the national OER repository.

4.8.4 Agencies developing OER shall be responsible for maintaining the quality of resources designed before uploading them to the national or institutional repositories.

4.8.5 All personnel involved in education quality assurance, accreditation and academic recognition processes shall be trained on intellectual property rights, copyright and licensing options available for educational materials.

4.9 Evaluation and Review

The National OER Policy shall be reviewed as and when required to follow international practices.

APPENDIX

RELEVANT LEGISLATIONS

Mauritius has several related legislations and supporting policies in place that are essential to strengthen further the need for the National OER Policy, such as:

a) National ICT Policy 2007–2011, September 2007

b) National Broadband Policy, January 2012

c) e-Government Strategy, 2013–2017

d) National Open Software Policy, June 2014

e) Nine-Year Continuous Basic Education Reform, 2016

f) Open Data Policy, May 2017

g) Copyright (Amended) Act, November 2017

h) Higher Education Act, December 2017

i) Data Protection Act, December 2017

CREATIVE COMMONS LICENCES

Licence Name	Acronym	Icon	Description
Attribution	BY		This licence lets others distribute, remix, tweak and build upon your work, even commercially, as long as they credit you for the original creation. This is the most accommodating of licences offered, in terms of what others can do with your work.
Attribution– ShareAlike	BY-SA		This licence lets others remix, tweak and build upon your work even for commercial reasons, as long as they credit you and license their new creations under the identical terms. This licence is often compared to open-source software licences. All new works based on yours will carry the same licence, so any derivatives will also allow commercial use.
Attribution–No Derivatives	BY-ND		This licence allows for redistribution, commercial and non-commercial, with credit to the author. The work may not be altered, transformed or built on. (Not considered OER.)
Attribution– NonCommercial	BY-NC		This licence lets others remix, tweak and build upon your work non-commercially, and although their new works must also acknowledge you and be non-commercial, they don't have to license their derivative works on the same terms.
Attribution- NonCommercial –Share Alike	BY-NC- SA		This licence lets others remix, tweak and build upon your work non-commercially, as long as they credit you and license their new creations under the identical terms. Others can download and redistribute your work, just as under the BY-NC-ND licence, but they can also translate, make remixes and produce new stories based on your work. All new work based on yours will carry the same licence, so any derivatives will also be non- commercial in nature.
Attribution– NonCommercial NoDerivatives	BY-NC- ND		This licence is the most restrictive of the six main CC licences, allowing redistribution only. This licence is often called the "free advertising" licence because it allows others to download your works and share them with others as long as they mention you and link back to you, but they cannot change them in any way or use them commercially. (Not considered OER.)

Source: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/

KEY TERMS

"*Agencies*" means departments, institutions and regulatory bodies supported by the government.

"*Copyright*" refers to the legal right of the creator of a work. This includes ownership of rights over copying, distributing, altering and displaying creative, literary and other types of work as per the country's copyright laws. Unless otherwise stated in a contract, the author or creator of a work retains this copyright. The author(s) retain the moral rights to assign the rights to any other person or legal entity and share the materials with others under any other conditions they may desire. Copyright allows the creator or the copyright holder to have exclusive rights to engage in all lawful activities, such as selling, licensing, transferring the rights and making presentations on the work in different media and platforms.

"*Creative Commons (CC)*" is a global non-profit organisation that enables the sharing and reuse of creativity and knowledge through the provision of free legal tools. Some CC licences are widely accepted as global standards for sharing Open Educational Resources.

"*Educational Practitioners*" refers to educational professionals, educators, teaching and support staff, lecturers, instructional designers, web and multimedia designers and developers, educational technologists, administrators, managers, policymakers, etc.

"*Intellectual Property (IP)*" refers to the exclusive rights, including economic and moral rights, from creative works developed to support teaching and learning.

"*Licences*" refers to copyright holders' legal mechanisms and tools to grant permission and/or specify conditions for using their copyrighted works.

"*Open Educational Resources (OERs)*" are teaching, learning, and research resources and materials in any medium, digital or otherwise, used to support education, training and research, which reside in the public domain or have been released under an open licence that permits no-cost access, use, sharing, adaptation, reuse, revision, remixing, retention and redistribution by others, with no or limited restrictions.

"*Open Educational Practices (OEPs)*" refer to the teaching techniques and academic practices that draw on open technologies, pedagogical approaches and OER to facilitate collaborating and flexible learning.

"Open Licence" is a licence that allows anyone to access, reuse, revise, remix and redistribute a work without the original copyright holder's permission. The Creative Commons Attribution licensing framework has several different types of open licences.

"Public Domain" refers to works whose copyright has expired or whose authors have relinquished their copyright or other legal restrictions.

"SDG 4" refers to the Sustainable Development Goal to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.