# The OER Equity Blueprint:
# The Role of OER in Advancing Equity

July 13, 2021

## Blueprint Objective

The overarching goal of the DOERS3 OER Equity Blueprint is to define, unpack, and explain the multiple dimensions of equity and foreground the role of OER in closing equity gaps.

## Blueprint Outline

The Blueprint is composed of three sections:

1. **Overview, Theoretical Framework, and Research Foundation**
   a. Overview: What is the OER Equity Blueprint?
   b. Theoretical Framework: Vision, Values and Definitions
   c. Research Foundation

2. **The Equity Through OER Rubric**
   A detailed guide and self-assessment tool to integrate equity and equity-mindedness into OER and mobilize OER to close equity gaps.

3. **Case Studies***
   a. Affordable Learning Georgia and Accessibility (Jeff Gallant)
   b. BC Campus and Accessibility (Josie Gray)
   c. The Ohio State University's Racial Justice Grant Program to increase diverse voices in course materials (Ashley Miller and Jasmine Roberts)

*We envision an initial set of case studies with additional ones to be added over time to the Blueprint.*

# OER Equity Blueprint Overview

## What is the OER Equity Blueprint?

The OER Equity Blueprint (Blueprint) is designed to define, unpack, and explain the multiple dimensions of equity and foreground the role of OER in closing equity gaps.

The OER Equity Blueprint begins with the Theoretical Framework section, including a statement of the Blueprint's vision, values, and definitions. The Theoretical Framework draws on the work of those scholars and academic leaders who have elevated equity and social justice as essential to the mission of public education. The following Research Foundation section provides an overview of research into why and how OER programs have worked to improve access and affordability, deepen student learning, and close equity gaps for historically underrepresented and minoritized students. This research is emerging. There are other research and impact studies underway that will bolster the evidence and case for the critical role OER play in addressing equity and student success.

The Blueprint then moves into the practice realm with a rubric organized by roles and functions within and across higher education institutions. The *Equity Through OER Rubric* is a self-assessment tool designed to guide students, faculty and other academic practitioners and leaders to understand and act on the equity dimensions of OER. The rubric is the heart of the Blueprint, the tangible application of the design that enables higher educators to comprehend the big picture and work deliberately through concrete action to achieve it. Moreover, through the unpacking of roles and responsibilities for those focused on building engagement with OER across the multiple dimensions of higher education institutions, the rubric foregrounds the extent to which equity and quality are inextricably bound.

The final section of the Blueprint is a Case Studies section that shares exemplars and stories of OER work seeking to advance equity, including but not limited to specific initiatives, projects, research, and analysis. Additional case studies will be welcome once the Blueprint is published.

The Blueprint is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY). It is designed to be adopted, adapted and customized by those who seek to utilize and improve it. DOERS3 intends for others to contribute their case studies, research, data and practice so that the Blueprint remains a living document, seeking continuous improvement and progress, like the movements for equity and social justice themselves.

## Theoretical Framework: Vision, Values, and Definitions

### Why a blueprint for the role of OER in advancing equity?

As a collaborative, DOERS3 works to position its members and other higher educators to realize the promise of high-quality, accessible, and sustainable OER implementation to achieve equity and student success at scale. In recognition that equity requires intentionality of purpose and action, the DOERS3 Equity Work Group was convened to develop a blueprint identifying the equity dimensions of higher education engagement with OER, and to foreground the role of OER in closing equity gaps.

Attending to equity has always been implicit in OER. Globally, equity has been a stated goal of OER expansion across all educational sectors—P-20—exemplified in UNESCO's commitment to Open Education and the 2007 Capetown Open Education Declaration. Higher educators focused on building engagement with OER across all types of institutions name equity as a primary motivation.

The OER Equity Blueprint goes beyond naming and explicitly binds equity outcomes to OER. In addition to elevating the multiple dimensions of equity, the Blueprint seeks to identify institutional players' roles and responsibilities, and propose levels of engagement, action, and assessment designed to aid OER in fulfilling their promise. Building engagement with OER in higher education is about leveling the playing field for students by making college more affordable and inclusive, leading to improved student success. Course materials that are openly licensed allow higher educators to improve OER with attention to quality, cultural relevance, and responsiveness. In addition, a focus on equitable and equity-centered educational

environments requires attention to a level playing field for OER agents, including faculty, staff, and administrative leadership.

In a global environment of rising income inequality--much of which is race-based-- increasing the students' social mobility serves as a driver of OER adoption and expansion. With this equity motivation at the heart of OER, other dimensions of equity must also be attended to, including ability, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, geography, and digital and technological capital. Because inequities are historically rooted in income inequality and structural racism, closing equity gaps requires acknowledgement of—and confrontation with—those two barriers.

The DOERS3 Equity Work Group has been motivated by the work of many higher education leaders, both individuals and organizations. For example, the work group believes that "students' cognitive, cultural and interdisciplinary diversity" (Ladson-Billings, 1994), should be included in any understanding of equity. The work group also views OER as a critical means to commit to and take action on inclusive excellence, as articulated by the Association of American Colleges and Universities:

> *The vision and practice of inclusive excellence…calls for higher education to address diversity, inclusion, and equity as critical to the well-being of democratic culture. …The action of making excellence inclusive requires that we uncover inequities in student success, identify effective educational practice, and build such practices organically for sustained institutional change.* (AAC&U, n.d.)

Equally critical is the insistence that the adoption and expansion of OER requires *equity-mindedness* to engender analysis of policy and practice to address "the distribution of power, access to resources and knowledge, and the reproduction of social stratification" (Bensimon, 2009).

Finally, Sarah Lambert's work to reclaim the social justice dimensions of Open Education deepens and broadens the motivation at the heart of OER engagement and expansion. Without using the word "equity," she provides a definition of Open

Education grounded in redistributive, recognitive, and representational justice that is all about equity:

> *Open Education is the development of free digitally enabled learning materials and experiences primarily by and for the benefit and empowerment of non-privileged learners who may be under-represented in education systems or marginalized in their global context. Success of social justice aligned programs can be measured not by any particular technical feature or format, but instead by the extent to which they enact redistributive justice, recognitive justice and/or representational justice.* (Lambert, 2018)

*With equity-mindedness and social justice as guideposts, this* Blueprint serves to guide Open Education leaders in institutions, systems, and state-wide organizations in implementing and assessing this core equity within their Open Education and affordability programs.

## Values

The DOERS3 Equity Work Group holds the following values as guides in the development of the Blueprint:

- Learner-centered OER promotes equity, inclusion, and accessibility, captured in one member's reminder that "we are teaching students—not content."
- Recognizing inequities and working to redress them requires taking responsibility and action that is personal and professional, as well as individual and institutional.
- Equity and quality should be understood as constituent components of one another—inclusive, capacious, and interdependent. Efforts to make access, participation, and completion equitable without assurance of quality are a hollow promise.
- In higher education, achieving equity results in increased student success in terms of access, participation, persistence, completion, and entry into the workforce.

## Definitions

The DOERS3 Equity Work Group proposes the following definitions of equity, which has been developed by members and builds on their work and that of others, and

equity-mindedness, which has been developed by Estela Mara Bensimon.

## EQUITY

*Life chances and choices are limited by many kinds of inequality, including social, income, racial, ethnic, gender, and ability. Equity is a corrective process that demands fairness for marginalized and minoritized populations by reducing gaps in opportunity and achievement through systematic efforts.*

*In higher education, equity is measurable and must be attended to across multiple touchpoints along the student success continuum, including: **access** to, **participation** in, **persistence** through, and **completion** of **quality** educational programs across student populations, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, income, gender, ability, first-generation and geography, among other characteristics.*

## EQUITY-MINDEDNESS

*"The term 'Equity-Mindedness' refers to the perspective or mode of thinking exhibited by practitioners who call attention to patterns of inequity in student outcomes. These practitioners are willing to take personal and institutional responsibility for the success of their students, and critically reassess their own practices. It also requires that practitioners are race-conscious and aware of the social and historical context of exclusionary practices in American Higher Education."*

> -From Estela Mara Bensimon at the <u>Center for Urban Education</u> at the University of Southern California

The DOERS3 Equity Work Group encourages all who engage with the Blueprint and the *Equity Through OER Rubric* to reflect on and determine definitions that are most appropriate and relevant to their own educational contexts. Likewise, they should reflect on and identify their context-specific student and practitioner populations of opportunity.

## Research Foundation

There is an emerging body of research on the impact of OER on closing equity gaps, deepening student learning, and improving student success outcomes.

The development and use of OER can create more equitable learning experiences for all students. Simply stated, the cost of textbooks and other ancillary course materials should not be a barrier to success in higher education. Adoption of OER provides all students access to necessary textbooks[1] that will enable them to be more successful in class, persist from one semester to the next, and complete their degrees. In addition, OER closes equity gaps because it provides students who cannot afford required course materials access to the resources they need. This is important given the survey results from the Babson Survey Group (2018) which found that, in a survey of 2,700 U. S. faculty, 52 percent of faculty "believe that cost is the primary reason that not all students have access to required course materials" (Seaman, J.E. and Seaman, J., 2019).

Moreover, several studies, as referenced below, affirm that OER use also improves student success outcomes.

- Students were able to use their textbooks on the first day of class rather than waiting to buy the textbooks – if they bought them at all - until they could afford them.
- Students learned and performed better academically when they had immediate access to their educational materials.
- Research has also shown that OER initiatives address and improve the performance of all students, but especially the most under-represented students in the United States.

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at the University of Georgia (UGA) began to encourage the use of OER in the summer of 2013. A study was conducted of faculty who taught large enrollment courses and were currently using an expensive textbook or textbook/technology package. For the more than 21,000

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[1] Whenever the phrase textbooks only are used, it also includes textbooks and other ancillary course materials.

students involved in this study, not only did they enjoy significant savings using work mostly created by OpenStax, but there was also a positive impact on their learning. The study at the University of Georgia also showed a significant and positive impact on under-represented students:

> When considering Federal Pell eligibility, we observed an increase in A through B+ letter grades and a decrease in B though DFW grades. A significant decrease in DFW rates for Pell-eligible students was found (a 4.43 percent change) when OER was adopted as the textbook for the class. This research [also] revealed significant differences in academic performance (average final grade) for both White and non-White students enrolled in OER courses. But the magnitude in which non-White students' grades improved is very compelling (Colvard, Watson, & Park, 2018, p. 272).

These types of findings were echoed in the 2018 Achieving the Dream (ATD) community college study where 48 percent of Pell Grant recipients and 52 percent of under-represented minorities said OER courses had a significant impact on their ability to afford college compared to 41 percent for other students (Ashford, 2018). When students have access to course learning materials, it positively affects their in-class performance leading to student success, persistence, and completion.

The results from the 2018 ATD study were echoed again in the 2020 Achieving the Dream study conducted by their partners SRI Education and rpk GROUP (2020). This study involved eleven community colleges across the country. The average age of the study participants was 20. At least a third or more of the participating students were eligible for or had received a Pell grant. The proportion of students from historically under-represented ethnic minority groups ranged from 25 percent to 88 percent (SRI International, 2020). "In 6 of the 11 colleges, treatment students[2] taking OER courses accumulated significantly more course credits than those who had not taken any OER courses" (SRI International, 2020, p. 20). While the study did not find a significant impact on GPA by students taking OER courses, students maintained their GPAs despite taking more courses. Finally, "the number of credits earned by Pell students taking OER courses relative to their Pell-eligible peers was significantly

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[2] These are defined as students who received a high degree of OER courses by enrolling in three or more.

higher than the number of credits earned by non-Pell-eligible students taking OER courses relative to their non-Pell-eligible peers" (SRI International, 2020, p. 4).

Additionally, the benefits for part-time students were equally compelling. Higher education often overlooks part-time students, and 71 percent are self-financing their education (Bombardieri, 2017). This population contains many under-represented students and tends to be concentrated at community colleges. The UGA study found a 53.12 percent increase in average course grades and a 29.54 percent decrease in DFW rates for part-time students (Colvard, Watson, & Park, 2018).

A common concern among faculty and administrators is the accessibility of digital resources. Disability Services professionals know that online websites and resources often are not as accessible as they should be, even if they pass basic Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. As Camille Thomas wrote in a piece for SPARC News, "We all benefit from good user experience and access that is comprehensive, beyond compliance at the bare minimum."[3] Thus, the use of OER offers an opportunity to promote an expansive definition of equity that addresses issues related to accessibility for all students in higher education. In addition, in order to further facilitate disability access there are three resources that are particularly helpful for faculty to consider when choosing and/or creating OER that improve student access; especially students with disabilities: a) The *BC (British Columbia) Campus Open Education Accessibility Toolkit* (2nd Edition 2018)[4] by Amanda Coolidge, Sue Doner, Tara Robertson, and Josie Gray; b) *The Floe Inclusive Design Learning Handbook*[5] by the members of the Floe Project of the Inclusive Design Research Center at OCAD University; and c) the adoption of Universal Design for Learning principles[6].

Finally, the use of OER enhances faculty pedagogy and produces "significant benefits in instruction and student learning experience," according to the study

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[3] Thomas, Camille. OER and Accessibility: Working Toward Inclusive Learning Open Education SPARC NEWS. MONDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2018. https://sparcopen.org/news/2018/oer-accessibility-working-toward-inclusive-learning/
[4] https://opentextbc.ca/accessibilitytoolkit/
[5] https://handbook.floeproject.org
[6] https://www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/universal-design-for-learning/

from Achieving the Dream (Ashford, 2018). Over 60 percent of students reported their overall learning experience was higher in an OER course than in courses using traditional materials (Ashford, 2018; Colvin, Watson, & Park, 2018; Hilton, 2016; Hilton et al., 2016). It is important to add that the significant benefits are not because OER course materials are easier or of less quality. In a major meta-analysis conducted by Clinton and Kahn (2019), they found there was no meaningful differences in learning between students who utilized traditional textbooks and open textbooks. In addition, students using open textbooks were less likely to withdraw from their courses (Clinton & Kahn, 2019).

## Research Summary

*The use of OER is a significant contributor to increasing affordability for students* by reducing the cost of textbooks and out-of-pocket expenses, reported by students as the second biggest cost challenge they face after tuition (Student Watch, 2017-2018). OER also contributes to improved student learning outcomes, persistence, and completion. Studies suggest that not only is OER effective at improving student learning outcomes, but it also has an especially compensatory advantage in improving the outcomes of under-represented students (Ashford, 2018; Colvard, Watson, & Park, 2018; Hilton, 2016; Hilton, et al., 2016; SRI International, 2020). Thus, OER is a critical element to address equity and improve quality.

*The use of OER will not have any deleterious effect on faculty members' principles of academic freedom*. In fact, the utilization of OER enhances academic freedom by providing additional resources not available to faculty using traditionally published curricular materials. OER published with Creative Commons licenses allow faculty to use course material in ways that would otherwise be impossible if using materials published under traditional copyright.

The Georgia and Achieving the Dream research studies remain seminal to building the body of evidence for the ways in which *OER close equity gaps and deepen student learning and success*. There is emerging research from across North America and beyond that further reinforces the case, while also amplifying the need for additional research, data collection and analysis to explore further the role of OER in addressing systemic inequities across student populations, disaggregated by

race/ethnicity, income, gender, ability, first-generation and geography, among other demographics and characteristics.

DOERS3 is committed to advancing this research agenda across multiple fronts. The Equity Work Group will continue its engagement with the role of OER in addressing the full dimensions of equity in higher education.  Additionally, the DOERS3 Research Work Group is addressing the need for additional research, data collection, and analysis through the establishment of common data standards and the collection of metadata organized around a set of research questions.  As a collective, DOERS3 is united in delving further into the role of OER in enhancing quality and closing equity gaps in student learning outcomes and success.

## Authors

The OER Equity Blueprint was developed by members of the DOERS3 Equity Work Group: Robert Awkward (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education); Reta Chaffee (University System of New Hampshire); Brittany Dudek (Colorado Community Colleges Online); Ann Fiddler (City University of New York); Jeff Gallant (University System of Georgia); Rebecca Karoff (University of Texas System); and Clarenda Phillips (Texas A & M University-Corpus Christi). Critical input and support were also provided by Rebecca Bichel (University of Texas at Arlington), Deepak Shenoy (Deep Consulting), and Tim Anderson (Minnesota State University).

## About

The Driving OER Sustainability for Student Success (DOERS3) Collaborative is a group of 25 public higher education systems and statewide/provincewide organizations that are committed to supporting student success by promoting free, customizable open educational resources (OER). Launched in 2018, DOERS3 helps member organizations implement, scale, and sustain OER by advancing research and policy, sharing tools and learnings, and showing how OER can foster equity and student success. Learn more at doers3.org.

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# A Rubric for *Equity Through OER*

| **What** | • The *Equity Through OER Rubric* is a comprehensive self-assessment tool, designed to guide students, faculty, administrators and other academic practitioners and leaders in not only better understanding, but also acting on the equity dimensions of OER. The rubric is organized by categories, aligned with roles and functions for higher education institutions, units and practitioners. Its overarching goal is to enable users to integrate OER in equitable ways across higher education leading to equitable student access, outcomes and success. |
|---|---|
| **Who** | • College, university and university system educators and students from across all spheres of influence and practice, as well as practitioners and policy-makers from a broad spectrum of adjacent organizations and associations, are invited to use the *Equity Through OER Rubric*. The rubric identifies three broad categories of institutional focus and engagement: Students, Practitioners, and Leadership & Accountability. The three broad categories are broken down further into additional dimensions. While focused on individual institutions, the rubric has broad applicability and relevance to university systems and other educational entities. |
| **Why** | • In recognition that equity does not happen without intentionality of purpose and action, the DOERS3 Equity Work Group was formed to develop a blueprint—the *OER Equity Blueprint*—to identify the equity dimensions of OER in higher education, and to foreground the role of OER in closing equity gaps. The blueprint reclaims, amplifies and elevates the origins of OER in equity and social justice. Over the course of its work, the Equity Work Group realized the extent to which quality and equity are intertwined: *doing OER with an equity lens is doing OER well*. Equity is embedded in quality OER programs, just as quality is embedded in equity-minded OER programs, reinforcing the extent to which quality and equity are constituent components of one another. |
| **How** | • There are multiple ways to engage with the rubric. The rubric developers invite higher educators to use it as a means to both recognize and honor their commitment to equity, as well as evaluate progress and act on those areas identified as requiring additional focus and effort. The rubric can be used to assess the institution as a whole, and/or may also be used by units and offices, including but not limited to colleges, academic departments, student support services, libraries, bookstores, information and instructional technologies, and business affairs. There is a distinct section for leadership and administrators, including those responsible and accountable for making student-facing, academic, policy and budgetary decisions. At the same time, the rubric seeks to make clear that all stakeholders have leadership roles to play in advancing equity through OER. |

# DⓄERS³

The *Equity Through OER* Rubric was created by members of Driving OER Sustainability for Student Success (DOERS3). DOERS3 is a collaborative that works to position its members and other higher educators to realize the promise of high-quality, accessible, and sustainable OER implementation in order to achieve equity and student success at scale.  In addition to the Equity Work Group, DOERS3 also has work groups focused on research and capacity-building.

The rubric is a tangible application of the theoretical framework proposed in the Equity Work Group's *OER Equity Blueprint*. It brings the Blueprint into the practice and action realm by identifying roles and responsibilities of institutional players, and proposing levels of engagement, action, and assessment required to aid OER in fulfilling their promise. It is recommended that users read the Blueprint framework prior to engaging with the rubric.

The rubric will be under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License (CC-BY).  Users are encouraged to take advantage of the CC-BY license to adopt, adapt, and customize to best suit their needs.
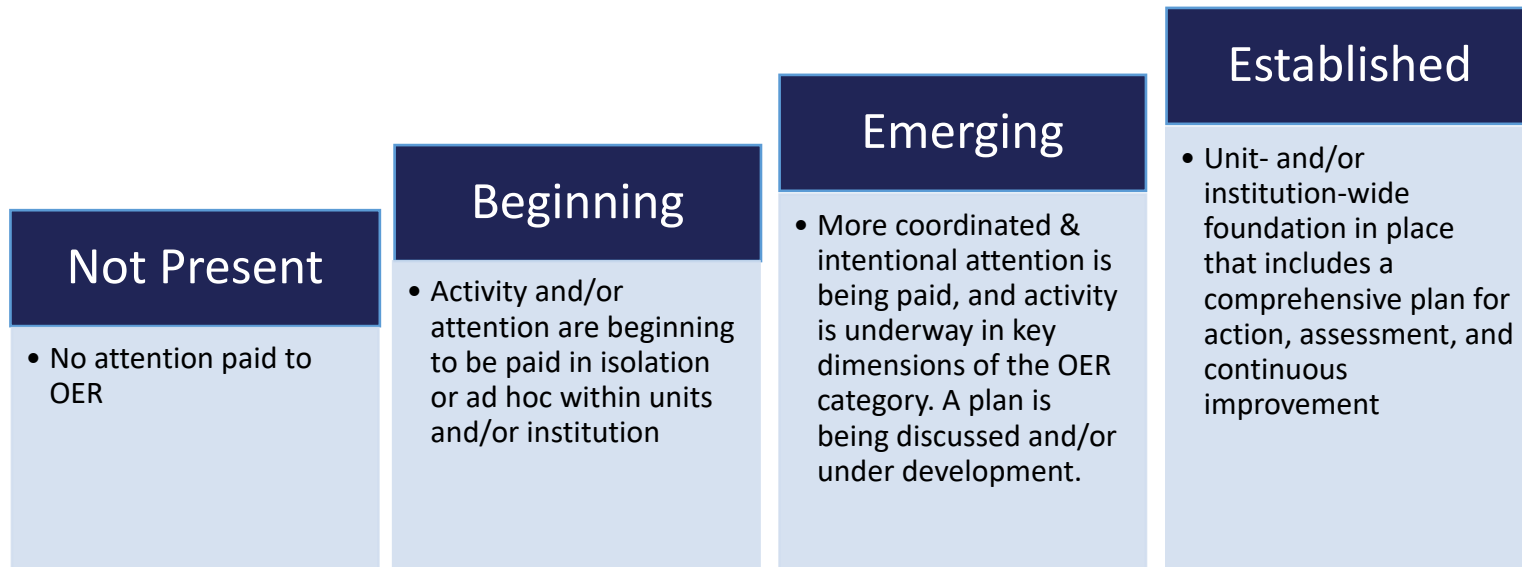
# Authors and Inspiration

This rubric was developed by Robert Awkward (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education), Reta Chaffee (University System of New Hampshire), Ann Fiddler (City University of New York), Rebecca Karoff (University of Texas System) and Clarenda Phillips (Texas A & M University-Corpus Christi), with support from Brittany Dudek (Colorado Community Colleges Online) and Jeff Gallant (University System of Georgia), all members of the DOERS3 Equity Work Group. Deepak Shenoy (Deep Consulting) provided critical input as the project got underway, Tim Anderson (Minnesota State University) towards the end of the project, and Rebecca Bichel (University of Texas at Arlington) has provided sustained support throughout.  Emma Gelsinger (University of Texas System) helped finalize the formatting of the rubric.

The *Equity Through OER* rubric was inspired by other rubrics and models, including the Peralta Equity Rubric, the Transfer and Dual Enrollment Playbook Assessment Tools developed by the Aspen Institute and the Community College Research Center at Columbia University, the AAC&U VALUE rubrics, and the NERCHE Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Higher Education. The NASH Equity Action Framework, under development simultaneously by one of the authors, also provided cross-fertilization.
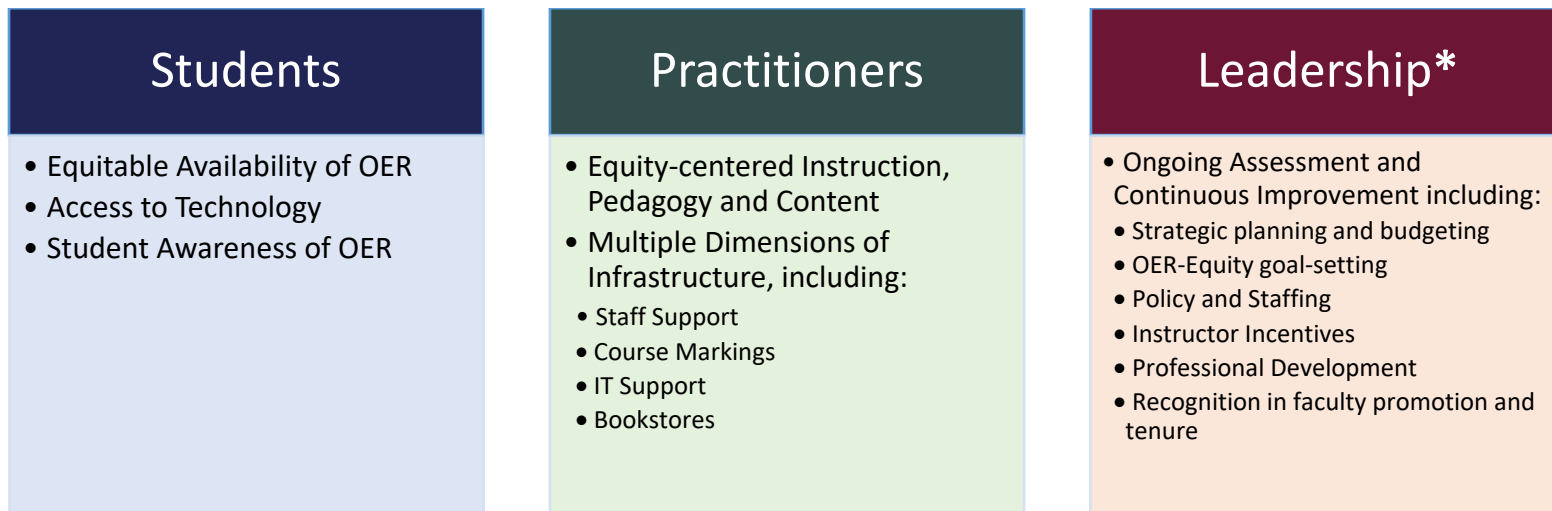
# Scale of Adoption

The scale of adoption proposes multiple stages of OER engagement, from not present, to beginning, to emerging, to established.

The rubric is not intended to shame people or induce guilt, even if users find that they fall into stages of adoption where there is no or only beginning activity and attention. Evaluating where action and attention are absent is a necessary first step to being intentional, equity-minded, taking action, and making progress. Given that OER engagement is still nascent at many U.S. institutions of higher education, where resource constraints are all too real, the established stage will remain aspirational for many for some time. The holistic planning embedded in these stages, with emphasis on continuous improvement, sustainability and scaling, is intended as a blueprint for reaching equity, the corrective process that demands fairness for marginalized and minoritized populations by reducing opportunity and achievement gaps through systematic efforts.

### Not Present

- No attention paid to OER

### Beginning

- Activity and/or attention are beginning to be paid in isolation or ad hoc within units and/or institution

### Emerging

- More coordinated & intentional attention is being paid, and activity is underway in key dimensions of the OER category. A plan is being discussed and/or under development.

### Established

- Unit- and/or institution-wide foundation in place that includes a comprehensive plan for action, assessment, and continuous improvement

# Rubric Categories and Dimensions

The *Equity Through OER* Rubric includes three broad organizational categories, each with several dimensions, and each of which is essential to build and sustain capacity. The categories represent not only areas of focus and engagement, but also stakeholder communities that sometimes intersect in terms of practice and responsibility: Students, Practitioners, and Leadership/Administrators. Within these categories, rubric users are asked to engage and evaluate themselves along a set of key dimensions and the rubric is organized accordingly:

| Students | Practitioners | Leadership* |
|---|---|---|
| • Equitable Availability of OER<br>• Access to Technology<br>• Student Awareness of OER | • Equity-centered Instruction, Pedagogy and Content<br>• Multiple Dimensions of Infrastructure, including:<br> • Staff Support<br> • Course Markings<br> • IT Support<br> • Bookstores | • Ongoing Assessment and Continuous Improvement including:<br> • Strategic planning and budgeting<br> • OER-Equity goal-setting<br> • Policy and Staffing<br> • Instructor Incentives<br> • Professional Development<br> • Recognition in faculty promotion and tenure |

*While leadership should be understood broadly and responsibility is required across all dimensions of the rubric, this section is focused on decision-makers and their responsibility and accountability

# Students

This section focuses on equitable Availability of OER, Access to Technology, and Student Awareness of OER leading to equitable student access, outcomes and success.

| | Not Present | Beginning | Emerging | Established |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.1 Availability of OER** | OER are not adopted in any programs or courses, and hence not available to students. | OER are adopted in a few academic programs and courses. | OER are being adopted more widely and intentionally in academic courses and programs, with attention being paid to availability for specific student populations.<br><br>OER are available online.<br><br>OER available offline through limited printing access. | Comprehensive plan is developed with implementation underway to increase availability of OER to students institution-wide, with focused attention to targeted student populations by ability, income, race/ethnicity, gender, geographic location, and majors.<br><br>OER are accessible to all learners, and available online and offline.<br><br>New OER are designed in adherence to accessibility requirements and standards.<br><br>Monitoring plan in place to ensure no disparities in students accessing OER, including by ability, income, race/ethnicity, gender, geographic location, and majors. |
| **1.2 Access to Technology** (Broadband, Devices, and Services) | Access to technology not considered as part of OER usage and/or planning. | Access to broadband, devices and service considered as part of OER usage and/or planning. | Alternatives for accessing OER are offered for students with technology impediments with attention to broadband, service and device needs. | Comprehensive plan is developed with implementation underway to ensure technological access to OER for students, with attention to differing needs of student populations.<br><br>The plan includes alternatives for accessing OER for students with technology impediments and students can access course materials in a variety of ways. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.3 Student Awareness of OER** | Students are not informed about what OER are, where to find them, or how to use them. | Some institutional units and departments are beginning to take responsibility for informing students about OER and how to access them.<br><br>Course schedules and catalogues, and bookstore increasingly include clear OER course markings. | More institutional units and departments are informing students about OER, including library, academic units, advisement and student support units, and bookstore.<br><br>Published cost-of-attendance information includes language on no- and low-cost textbooks and course materials.<br><br>Students are informed about data privacy aspects of automated textbook purchasing programs and other course material options. | Comprehensive communication plan is developed with implementation underway in which units take responsibility for informing students, including orientation, registration, financial aid, advisement, libraries and academic departments, and bookstore.<br><br>Communication plan includes continuous monitoring of assessment, improvement, and dissemination. |

# PRACTITIONERS

This section focuses on equity-centered Instruction & Pedagogy, Content, and multiple dimensions of Infrastructure, including Staff Support, Course Markings, IT Support, and Bookstores—all designed to build practitioner capacity institution-wide in terms of equity-centered OER engagement and expansion leading to equitable student access, outcomes and success.  *N.B.* The Leadership & Accountability section below also includes attention to support for instructors, professional development, and academic policy like tenure and promotion, focused on those with decision-making authority and responsibility. The focus in this section is on the practice side of instruction and pedagogy.

| | Not Present | Beginning | Emerging | Established |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2.1 Instruction & Pedagogy** | No attention paid to inclusive pedagogy.<br><br>Faculty of diverse voices, perspectives, career stages and identities not represented among instructors that use OER, and/or they do not have adequate support.<br><br>No incentives, professional development, financial or technical support provided to instructors.<br><br>Faculty receive no recognition of OER engagement for tenure and promotion. | Attention beginning to be paid to inclusive pedagogy, including:<br><br>Growing awareness and action to ensure faculty of diverse voices, perspectives, career stages and identities are represented among OER instructors.<br><br>Culturally and ability-inclusive OER content, including attention to bias in images, multi-media, and text.<br><br>Diversity, equity and inclusion statements and expression of commitment to inclusive pedagogy made by faculty and some departments.<br><br>Instructors have access to some *ad hoc* instructional design resources, professional development, financial or technical support. | Faculty of diverse voices, perspectives, career stages and identities are more equitably represented among instructors using OER across departments, units and colleges.<br><br>Culturally and ability-inclusive OER content, including attention to bias in images, multi-media, and text, have been widely adopted.<br><br>Instructors increasingly have access to incentives to engage with OER, including more instructional design and other technical and financial support through designated staff, units, funding and/ or structured professional development.<br><br>Faculty increasingly receive recognition of OER engagement for tenure and promotion across | Faculty of diverse voices, perspectives, career stages and identities are represented equitably among instructors using OER institution-wide.<br><br>All instructors have access to ongoing and sustained professional development, including instructional design and technical support, funding and time.<br><br>All instructors have access to sustained grant program to incentivize and support adoption and creation of OER, and culturally and ability-inclusive OER content.<br><br>Faculty receive full recognition for OER engagement in tenure and promotion. |

| | | Faculty receive some recognition of OER engagement for tenure and promotion in isolated departments | academic departments and colleges. | |
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| **2.2.a Content: Quality of OER Content** | No definition or shared understanding of quality in OER content as defined by cultural responsiveness, relevance and inclusiveness, accessibility and inclusive design, instructor authority over resources, and alignment of OER with course learning outcomes and assessment. | Quality standards beginning to be defined, shared and adopted in isolated and limited ways across departments and units. | Quality standards are adopted and implementation plan is under development to include assessment and continuous improvement, and unit- and/or institution-wide dissemination.<br><br>Quality content standards include attention to many of the following components: cultural responsiveness, relevance and inclusiveness, accessibility and inclusive design, instructor authority over resources, and alignment of OER with course learning outcomes and assessment. | Implementation of OER quality content plan across unit(s) and/or institution, including regular assessment and continuous improvement.<br><br>OER quality content plan includes attention to all of the following components: cultural responsiveness, relevance and inclusiveness, accessibility and inclusive design, instructor authority over resources, and alignment of OER with course learning outcomes and assessment. |
| **2.2.b Content: OER Across the Curriculum** | No attention is paid to availability and assessment of OER across the curriculum, in Gen Ed, Core and gateway courses, majors and transfer pathways, to ensure access by diverse student populations in terms of ability, income, race/ethnicity, gender, geographic location, and majors. | Some attention is paid to OER availability and assessment across the curriculum in Gen Ed, Core and gateway courses, and/or majors. | More coordinated attention is being paid and a plan is developed or underway for ensuring availability and assessment of OER across the curriculum, with attention to Gen Ed, Core and gateway courses, majors and transfer pathways, with a focus on diverse student populations in terms of ability, income, race/ethnicity, gender and geographic location. | Implementation of OER Across the Curriculum plan, including assessment and identification of continuous improvement and scaling opportunities to ensure availability of OER in Gen Ed, Core and gateway courses, majors and transfer pathways, with a focus on diverse student populations, in terms of ability, income, race/ethnicity, gender and geographic location. |

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| **2.3. Infrastructure – Staff Support** | No staff expertise around OER. | Limited and inconsistent staff knowledge of OER exists but some staff are developing expertise, and conversation about staffing required for OER capacity-building is occurring in isolated units, including library, instructional design, or Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). | Part-time staff support in place, including OER librarian, instructional designers, or dedicated CTL staff.<br><br>Planning underway for additional staff requirements and professional development needed to build staff capacity. | Full-time staff support in place, including OER librarian(s), instructional designers, and/or dedicated CTL staff.<br><br>Comprehensive OER staffing plan in place that includes dedicated position lines, funding, regular professional development, and continuous evaluation and improvement designed to scale institution-wide. |
| **2.3.a Infrastructure – Course Marking Responsibility** | No course marking of OER taking place. | Initial course marking of OER taking place in isolated units or departments.<br><br>Exploration of options underway, including conversations with stakeholders (students, library, faculty, administrative leadership, registrar, bookstore) regarding federal and/or state requirements, and how the institution can better serve students and work towards compliance through policy, practice, and platforms. | Planning underway to implement course markings across departments and units, including:<br><br>• Identification of roles and responsibilities<br>• Policy guidance<br>• Budgetary requirements, including staffing and platform/technology<br>• Clear instructions<br>• Bookstore, faculty, and student engagement;<br>• Communication to build understanding of course marking designations, i.e., OER, ZTC /Zero Textbook Cost, zero-cost course materials, LTC/Low Textbook Cost or low-cost course materials (with defined amount). | Comprehensive plan developed and implementation underway for institution-wide course marking. Plan includes:<br><br>• Student engagement;<br>• Dissemination and adoption of policy and instructions, roles and responsibilities for library, registrar, faculty, departments, course coordinators;<br>• Required resources for staffing, platform and technology support;<br>• Bookstore engagement;<br>• OER courses and other course designations flagged in data systems, i.e., bookstore listings, course schedules and registration;<br>• Evaluation with metrics and ongoing monitoring. |

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| **2.3.b Infrastructure – IT Support** | No IT support for OER, in terms of staffing or technology. | Growing awareness and conversations that IT support is essential for OER implementation, in terms of budget, staff and platforms. | Part-time IT support is put in place.<br><br>Planning underway for staff, budgetary and platform development requirements, including conversations about platform options, what can be done locally, and what needs to be out-sourced. | Comprehensive OER IT plan being implemented, including dedicated budget for staff and platform, and ongoing evaluation of needs and requirements.<br><br>Full-time IT support in place, with platform operational.<br><br>Institutionalization of plan includes continuous improvement designed to scale and sustain funding, |
| **2.3.c Infrastructure – Bookstore Engagement** | No conversation with bookstore or consideration of bookstore role in advancing equity through OER. | Bookstore starting to be recognized as important partner in advancing equity through OER.<br><br>Conversations beginning to make bookstore aware of OER options and requirements.<br><br>Some consideration underway of roles and responsibilities of institutions and instructors in bookstore relationship, including policies, protocols and deadlines. | Planning underway to:<br><br>• Engage faculty, registrars, other administrative units and bookstore as partners with respective roles and responsibilities.<br>• Identify policies, protocols and deadlines.<br>• Inform students and faculty about where OER are available.<br>• Inform students and faculty about proprietary textbook and course material costs, options and requirements.<br>• Develop o procure bookstore software to track information from faculty and departments. | Comprehensive plan developed with implementation underway that includes the following:<br><br>• Bookstore works with faculty to make OER options available and transparent.<br>• Bookstore communication to enable students to make informed choices about OER and proprietary options.<br>• Cooperation between bookstore and registrar.<br>• Bookstore infrastructure to support and track OER options and make them clearly available to students and faculty<br>• Institution has a process for attaching ISBN to OER.<br>• Institution-wide policies, protocols and deadlines communicated broadly.<br>• Transparency and tracking also for proprietary textbook and course material costs, options and requirements.<br>• Institutionalization of plan includes ongoing evaluation for continuous improvement, scalability, and sustainable funding designed to support and sustain bookstore partnership and accountability. |

# LEADERSHIP & ACCOUNTABILITY

While leadership should be understood broadly and responsibility for equity is required across all dimensions of the rubric, this section focuses on decision-makers who have not only responsibility, but also accountability for ongoing assessment and continuous improvement, including strategic planning and budgeting, OER-Equity goal-setting, policy, staffing, infrastructure, instructor incentives, professional development and faculty tenure and promotion recognition. The overarching goal remains equitable student access, outcomes and success.

| | Not Present | Beginning | Emerging | Established |
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| **3.1 Ongoing Assessment: Quantitative and Qualitative** | There is no assessment of OER and its role in advancing equity.<br><br>No support for or identification of designated roles for assessment responsibility, nor how leadership is accountable for acting on results.<br><br>Student success data for OER (i.e., cost, outcomes, utilization, and perceptions) courses is not collected, disaggregated, analyzed, shared with the community, or input into planning and budgeting processes. | Assessment of OER and its role in advancing equity is beginning, with some attention paid to the following:<br><br>• Who is responsible and accountable for assessment.<br>• Cost savings to students using OER.<br>• Perception of OER through student and/or faculty satisfaction surveys.<br>• Diversity of faculty and staff engaging with OER | More coordinated assessment of OER and its role in advancing equity is taking place, both quantitative and qualitative, including much of the following:<br><br>• Cost savings to students.<br>• ROI formula developed to track $$ savings to units and/or institution.<br>• Utilization data, including # of OER courses/sections, increase in faculty adoption.<br>• Student performance and success data collected for OER courses and academic programs, focused on: student enrollments in OER courses/sections; changes in DFW rates; and overall GPAs; subsequent course performance.<br>• Qualitative assessment of OER usage through student and faculty surveying.<br>• For both student and faculty engagement, data are disaggregated by populations, including race/ethnicity, gender, income ability, and geographic location.<br>• In addition to support for designated assessment roles and | Comprehensive quantitative and qualitative assessment plan is in place across units and/or institution-wide that includes:<br><br>• Leadership accountability for acting on results.<br>• Sustained support for assessment roles and practice.<br>• Cost savings to students.<br>• Institution-wide ROI formula in place to track cost savings to units and/or institution.<br>• Utilization of data, including # of OER courses/sections, increase in faculty adoption; participation in and impact of professional development.<br>• Student performance and success data collected for OER courses and some programs, focused on: student enrollments in OER courses/sections; changes in DFW rates; and overall GPAs; subsequent course performance; impact on retention and graduation rates.<br>• Qualitative assessment of OER usage through student and faculty surveying.<br>• For both student and faculty engagement, data are disaggregated by populations, including race/ethnicity, gender, income, ability, geographic location. |

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| | | | responsibilities, leadership assumes accountability for acting on assessment results. | • Data are disaggregated by academic programs, including Gen Ed, gateways courses and majors.<br>• Data are analyzed for improvement opportunities and shared with the institutional community and system.<br>• Data are utilized in strategic planning and budgetary decisions.<br>• Assessment plan is institutionalized and made public in ways that promote sustainability and continuous reinforcement through data, action, improvement and scaling. |
| **3.2 Continuous Improvement: Leadership Commitments**<br><br>(strategic planning and budgeting, policy, staffing, infrastructure, funding, professional development, recognition and rewards, and sustainability of OER as contributor to advancing equity) | No efforts have been made to address Equity and OER through a leadership commitment to continuous improvement in terms of policy, staffing, infrastructure, funding, professional development, recognition and rewards, and sustainability. | Leadership has stated a public commitment to OER and Equity, and is beginning to address *ad hoc* attention to several key areas, for example:<br><br>• Limited funding for staffing, infrastructure, faculty incentives, and professional development<br>• Student-facing or academic policy, including faculty recognition and rewards<br>• Some conversations with institutional stakeholders, including library, student groups, individual departments | Strategic planning and budgeting is underway to ensure equity-driven continuous improvement in the form of:<br><br>• Establishment of equity goals for OER engagement by student and faculty and staff<br>• OER Staffing and infrastructure<br>• Professional development for faculty and staff<br>• Policy changes to institutionalize OER engagement, including those impacting students, faculty and student governance, faculty tenure and promotion, etc.<br>• Leadership-led engagement of institutional stakeholders, including faculty senates, deans, student groups, libraries, student affairs, business affairs, administrators, etc.<br>• Leadership evaluation includes attention to progress on OER-Equity goals.<br>• Solid plan for continuous improvement initiated, but is not deep, pervasive, or consistent | Leadership takes responsibility for progress on OER-Equity goals, including student and faculty engagement across disaggregated populations; ROI and budgetary goals; review and updating of policy and practice; and improvements to strategic planning and funding commitments.<br><br>Leadership is regularly evaluated on progress on OER-Equity goals.<br><br>Continuous improvement is publicly demonstrated through leadership commitment that is deep, pervasive, consistent, sustainable and scalable.<br><br>At the same time, recognizing OER culture as a contributor to advancing equity is so institutionalized that it will not be impacted by leadership changes. |

**Rubric Models**

| Title | Link |
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| NERCHE Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Higher Education | https://www.wpi.edu/sites/default/files/Project_Inclusion_NERCHE_Rubric-Self-Assessment-2016.pdf |
| Peralta Online Equity Rubric | https://web.peralta.edu/de/files/2019/05/Peralta-Online-Equity-Rubric-2.0-May-2019.pdf |
| Northern New York Library Network | https://nnyln.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Grant-Proposal-Scoring-Rubric.pdf |
| AACU VALUE Critical Thinking Rubric | https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/PartsofaVALUERubric.pdf |
| SUNY Sustainability Overview | https://oer.suny.edu/oer-sustainability/ |
| Aspen Institute College Excellence Program Transfer Playbook and Tools for Colleges | https://highered.aspeninstitute.org/transfer-playbook-and-tools-for-colleges/ |
| NASH Equity Action Framework | http://nashonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NASH-Equity-Action-Framework-Summary-1.pdf |