



DIRECTORATE OF LEARNING RESOURCES

POLICY ON OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OERs)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Iconic Open University operates within a national and global context where the creation, sharing, and adaptation of knowledge are increasingly recognized as public goods. The National Universities Commission (NUC) of Nigeria has established a National Policy on Open Educational Resources in Higher Education, mandating that institutions develop their own OER policies aligned with national objectives. Furthermore, Nigeria participates actively in the NUC's Nigerian University System Open Educational Resources (NUSOER) initiative, which ranks universities by the strength of their openly available educational resources.

Open Educational Resources (OERs) are learning, teaching, and research materials in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are released under an open license, permitting no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation, and redistribution by others. Unlike proprietary materials, OERs grant users the legal permissions to retain, revise, remix, reuse, and redistribute content often referred to as the “5Rs” of openness.

Iconic Open University recognizes that OERs present a strategic opportunity to:

- Enhance the quality and currency of course materials by incorporating globally available resources;
- Reduce costs for learners by replacing proprietary textbooks with openly licensed alternatives;
- Increase the visibility and impact of Iconic faculty scholarship;
- Contribute to the Nigerian and global knowledge commons, consistent with our pioneering role in ODL.

This policy establishes the framework for the adoption, adaptation, creation, licensing, and sharing of OERs at Iconic Open University. It complements the Policy on Course Material Development for ODL Mode, which governs the creation of self-instructional materials, by providing specific guidance on the integration of openly licensed content and the publication of Iconic-produced materials as OERs.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

The specific objectives of this policy are to:

1. Establish a clear institutional framework for the adoption, adaptation, and creation of OERs in teaching, learning, and research.
2. Define the open licensing regime applicable to OERs produced by Iconic Open University staff and students.

3. Provide guidelines for the quality assurance of OERs used in or produced for Iconic programmes.
4. Institute mechanisms for recognizing and rewarding faculty contributions to OER development.
5. Establish an institutional OER repository for the curation, preservation, and dissemination of Iconic-produced OERs.
6. Ensure compliance with the NUC National OER Policy and alignment with UNESCO's 2019 Recommendation on OER.

3.0 DEFINITIONS AND KEY CONCEPTS

3.1 Open Educational Resources (OERs): Teaching, learning, and research materials in any medium, digital or otherwise that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation, and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions.

3.2 Open License: A license that respects the intellectual property rights of the copyright owner while granting the public permissions to access, re-use, re-purpose, adapt, and redistribute educational materials. The most widely used open licenses are the Creative Commons (CC) licenses.

3.3 The 5Rs of Openness: The permissions that characterize a true OER:

- **Retain:** Make, own, and control a copy of the resource.
- **Reuse:** Use the original, revised, or remixed copy publicly.
- **Revise:** Edit, adapt, and modify a copy.
- **Remix:** Combine a copy with other material to create something new.
- **Redistribute:** Share copies with others.

3.4 Creative Commons Licenses: Standardized, free-to-use open copyright licenses that allow creators to retain copyright while granting others permission to share, use, and build upon their work. The six main licenses, from most to least open, are: CC BY, CC BY-SA, CC BY-ND, CC BY-NC, CC BY-NC-SA, and CC BY-NC-ND. CC0 (Public Domain Dedication) is also recognized.

3.5 OER Repository: A digital archive for the storage, discovery, and retrieval of OERs produced by or for the University.

3.6 Adaptation: The process of modifying an existing OER to suit a particular context, curriculum, or learner population. This may include translation, re-sequencing, updating content, or aligning with local examples.

4.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All academic staff (full-time and adjunct), instructional designers, and librarians involved in the creation, adaptation, or use of teaching and learning materials.
- All courses and programmes offered by Iconic Open University through the ODL mode.
- All educational resources produced under the auspices of the University, whether by staff, students, or contracted third parties.
- OERs adopted or adapted from external sources for use in Iconic courses.

This policy does **not** apply to:

- Research publications, which are governed by the University's Research and Intellectual Property policies.
- Administrative or operational documents not intended for teaching and learning.
- Materials explicitly designated as proprietary or confidential by the University.

5.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

5.1 Openness: Iconic Open University encourages the widest possible sharing of educational resources produced with institutional support, subject to the rights of third parties and the University's intellectual property framework.

5.2 Quality: OERs adopted, adapted, or created by Iconic staff must meet the same academic and pedagogical standards as proprietary materials. Openness does not imply a relaxation of quality assurance.

5.3 Accessibility: OERs shall be made available in formats that are accessible to learners with disabilities and compatible with the University's learning management system (iCampus). Resources should be released in open, non-proprietary formats wherever feasible.

5.4 Attribution and Respect for Copyright: All use, adaptation, and creation of OERs must respect the intellectual property rights of original authors. Proper attribution is mandatory for all openly licensed content used or adapted.

5.5 Sustainability: The University shall develop and maintain the infrastructure, human capacity, and policy incentives necessary for the long-term sustainability of its OER initiatives.

5.6 Collaboration: Iconic Open University shall seek partnerships with other Nigerian and international institutions, OER networks, and repositories to enhance the quality and reach of its OER activities.

6.0 CREATION AND PUBLICATION OF OERs BY ICONIC STAFF

6.1 Ownership and Licensing of Iconic-Produced Materials: Teaching and learning materials created by Iconic staff within the scope of their employment, and intended for use in Iconic programmes, shall be the intellectual property of the University, consistent with the Policy on Course Material Development. The University shall release such materials as OERs under an appropriate Creative Commons license, unless there are compelling academic, legal, or commercial reasons to retain them as proprietary.

6.2 Recommended License: Iconic Open University adopts **Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0)** as its preferred license for OERs produced by the University. This license allows others to copy, redistribute, remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, provided the original author is credited and any derivative works are licensed under identical terms. This choice aligns with the approach adopted by other leading Nigerian ODL institutions and ensures that derivatives of Iconic materials remain open.

6.3 Alternative Licenses: Subject to approval by the ODL Directorate, staff may select a different Creative Commons license where pedagogical, legal, or strategic considerations warrant. The rationale for the chosen license must be documented.

6.4 Student-Produced OERs: Students who produce educational resources of exceptional quality (e.g., through capstone projects, theses, or collaborative assignments) may, with their consent and appropriate faculty supervision, have their work published as OERs. Students retain moral rights and must be fully credited.

6.5 Recognition and Incentives: Contributions to OER development shall be recognized as a legitimate academic output and shall count towards professional advancement, consistent with the NUC National OER Policy. The University shall establish an annual award or recognition scheme for outstanding OER contributions by staff and students.

7.0 ADOPTION AND ADAPTATION OF EXTERNAL OERs

7.1 Permitted Use: Faculty are encouraged to adopt and adapt high-quality external OERs to supplement or replace proprietary textbooks and course

materials, provided such use is consistent with the course's learning outcomes and the University's quality standards.

7.2 License Compatibility: When adopting or adapting external OERs, staff must verify that the license of the source material permits the intended use. Materials licensed under "NoDerivatives" (ND) licenses cannot be adapted or modified. Materials licensed under "Non-Commercial" (NC) licenses cannot be used in contexts involving commercial activity.

7.3 Attribution Requirements: All external OERs used or adapted must be properly attributed according to the TULLU rule: **T**itle, **U**ser (author/creator), **L**icense (including version number), **L**ink to the license text, and **U**rl to the original source. For adapted materials, an additional statement describing the nature of the modifications must be included.

7.4 Integration into Course Materials: When an external OER is adapted for use in an Iconic course, the adapted material must be reviewed for quality, accuracy, and alignment with the course's learning outcomes prior to deployment on the iCampus.

8.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE

8.1 Pre-Deployment Review: All OERs created or adapted by Iconic staff shall undergo the same quality assurance processes as proprietary course materials, as outlined in the Policy on Course Material Development (Section 4.4). This includes peer review, instructional design review, and editorial review where applicable.

8.2 Review Criteria: The review of OERs shall assess:

- Accuracy and currency of content;
- Pedagogical soundness and alignment with learning outcomes;
- Accessibility and inclusivity;
- Quality of media and presentation;
- Clarity and appropriateness of license and attribution information.

8.3 Post-Deployment Review: OERs hosted in the Iconic repository shall be subject to periodic review to ensure continued accuracy and relevance. User feedback mechanisms (ratings, comments) shall be provided in the repository, and persistent concerns shall be addressed through revision or replacement.

9.0 INSTITUTIONAL OER REPOSITORY

9.1 Establishment: Iconic Open University shall establish and maintain an institutional OER Repository, hosted on the University's website and accessible

to the public. This repository shall serve as the central point for the discovery, download, and adaptation of Iconic-produced OERs.

9.2 Content: The repository shall include, at a minimum:

- Full courses and course modules developed for ODL programmes;
- Open textbooks and self-instructional materials;
- Lecture notes, presentations, and recorded lectures (where not containing sensitive material);
- Assessment items and question banks (where appropriate);
- Multimedia resources (videos, audio, simulations, graphics).

9.3 Metadata and Discoverability: All resources deposited in the repository must include complete and standardized metadata (title, author, date, subject area, license, learning outcomes) to facilitate search and retrieval. The repository shall be interoperable with national and international OER repositories where technically feasible.

9.4 Preservation: The University Library shall be responsible for the long-term preservation and maintenance of the OER repository, ensuring that resources remain accessible and usable over time.

10.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities
Vice Chancellor/Academic Board	Approves the policy; provides strategic direction and resources for OER initiatives.
Director, Directorate of Learning Resources	Coordinates OER adoption and creation activities; provides instructional design support; oversees quality assurance.
University Librarian	Manages the OER Repository; provides advisory support on licensing and copyright; ensures preservation and discoverability.
Deans/Heads of Department	Encourage and facilitate OER adoption and creation within their faculties; identify candidates for OER development grants or recognition.
Faculty Members/Facilitators	Integrate OERs into teaching where appropriate; create and share OERs in their disciplines; adhere to licensing and attribution requirements.
ICT Directorate	Maintains the technical infrastructure for the OER repository and iCampus integration; ensures accessibility and open-format compliance.
Quality Assurance Unit	Incorporates OER review criteria into existing QA processes for course materials.

11.0 CAPACITY BUILDING AND AWARENESS

Iconic Open University shall:

- Provide training workshops for academic staff on OER concepts, licensing, attribution, and integration into ODL course design.
- Develop and disseminate guidance materials on OER best practices.
- Include OER awareness in staff induction and orientation for new facilitators.
- Foster a community of practice among faculty interested in OER development and use.

12.0 COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY COMPLIANCE

12.1 Respect for Third-Party Rights: All use of external materials in the creation of OERs must comply with copyright law and the terms of the source license. Staff must not reproduce or adapt copyrighted material without permission or a valid legal exception.

12.2 Plagiarism: The integration of external content into OERs must be accompanied by full and proper attribution. Failure to attribute constitutes plagiarism and will be treated as a breach of academic integrity.

12.3 Institutional Rights: The University reserves the right to determine the licensing of OERs produced with substantial institutional support (e.g., through funded projects or assigned duties). In such cases, the default license (CC BY-SA 4.0) shall apply unless otherwise agreed in writing.

13.0 REVIEW AND REVISION

This policy shall be reviewed every **three (3) years**, or earlier if required by changes in national policy, institutional strategy, or international best practices. The review shall be coordinated by the ODL Directorate in consultation with the University Library, Faculties, and other relevant stakeholders. Progress in OER adoption, creation, and repository growth shall be monitored and reported annually to the Academic Board.

14.0 CONCLUSION

Open Educational Resources represent both an ethical commitment and a strategic opportunity for Iconic Open University. By embracing OERs, we reduce barriers to learning for our Icons, enhance the quality and relevance of our curriculum, and contribute to the democratization of knowledge in Nigeria and beyond. This policy provides the framework for realizing that vision ensuring that openness is pursued with rigor, legality, and a steadfast commitment to academic excellence.