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LEARNING FROM ADVOCACY: A CASE OF OER POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN THE WAWASAN OPEN UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

Wawasan Open University has been the pioneer institution in the region to respond to the global advocacy for the OER movement. The OER-Asia initiative in 2010 under the auspices of the University for advocating and disseminating relevant information about OER as well as developing training materials and conducting research in this area. OER-Asia as well as the University made concrete contribution to the drafting the World OER Declaration jointly by the Commonwealth of Learning and the UNESCO. Responding to the advocacy for OER by the OER-Asia Initiative and other global initiatives the Wawasan Open University in spite of being a new organisation took the bold decision to join the OER movement. In the last one and half years the WOU has managed to make substantial progress in this area. This paper attempts to present the major aspects of OER Policy adoption and implementation.

Introduction

The Council of the Wawasan Open University in its meeting in December 2010 asked the University to consider and develop a proposal for possible adoption of OER and bring out a detailed implementation plan in order to transform the existing course development process with an aim to increase the quality and efficiency of developing course materials. Since then the University engaged itself in deliberating on various pros and cons of OER development. A discussion paper titled '**OER Integration in WOU-Policy Directions, Strategic Outputs and Action Plan**' was drafted and this was discussed in several forums including the OER Steering task group which was constituted for the purpose of formulating further plan of action. After long and extensive deliberations a WOU-OER Policy was drafted for consideration and approval of all governing bodies of the University.

Policy Formulation and Implementation Details

Details regarding the OER policy formulation and implementation of related task are presented in the following paragraphs:

WOU-OER Policy: An OER Policy for WOU with implementation strategies has been adopted by the OER Steering Committee, Senate, Management Board and endorsed by the Board of Governors of the University. The broad OER Policy declaration is given below:

“WOU will promote and implement the creation, reuse, remix, repurpose and redistribution of Open Educational Resources (OER) within an Open Licensing framework”

WOU-Open Licence Policy (OLP): The University has adopted an Open Licence Policy with CC-BY-ND-SA as the licence for all selected course ware. It will also develop guidelines for using and mixing OER with varied open licences to make sure that legally accepted norms and standards are uniformly practiced in the University.

Development of OER integrated Courses: Two courses have already been developed in WOU using OER. These were presented in January 2012 and July 2012. Experience of developing and presenting these pilot courses is expected to give the University the required insight into OER integration leading to feasible and effective models. A detailed report on these two pilot courses is being prepared. This would help modifying appropriately (with OER integration) the course development policy and practice being adopted by Schools now. All four Schools of Studies of the University have prepared ‘School-specific OER Plans’ for implementation during 2012-13.

OER Capacity Building: A detailed Plan for OER capacity building has been endorsed by the Senate and reported to the BoG. The training areas will include:

- Knowledge and understanding about concept of OER and its development in the last decade
- Knowledge and skills required for searching and identification of OER materials including Reusable Learning Objects (RLOs) to suit different programme and course areas
- Knowledge about different open licences and understanding and skills for using and remixing OERs/RLOs with varied open licences
- Skills required for creating/adopting appropriate learning designs in an OER based e-learning environment.

Starting with a town-hall meeting in March 2012, a number of training workshops have been organised for academic and academic support staff in OER creation, search, licensing and designing learning with OER materials.

OER Resource Support: Library and Learning Support Unit has created an OER Repository in the staff portal where OER materials are uploaded for internal use. The LLSU will be identifying new OER materials relevant to WOU

programmes and courses and updating it regularly. OERs identified by the Schools can also be deposited in this repository. Such a Repository of available OER multi-media materials relevant to the programmes/courses of WOU will be an excellent resource for the academics as well as students of the university.

WOU-OER Website: Now the University has developed a WOU-OER website for making available OER created by WOU for public access and use. This webpage will be linked to a repository where OER materials developed by WOU, created by institution (e.g. course materials) and by individual staff members (e.g. journal articles, seminar presentations etc) will be uploaded. The LLSU will be the custodian of these materials. The decision regarding which courses/materials will be made 'open' (with CC-BY-NC-SA licence) will be decided by the OER Steering Committee with approval of the Senate.

Newly approved Models of Course Development: The Senate and BoG recently approved the following two models for Course Development to be adopted by the University in future.

- 'Warp-around model' with only OER.
- 'Stand-alone model' based on copyrighted books or/and OER

Revision of SOPP for Course Development: Course Development Committee will review and revise the SOPP for Course Development based on the requirements of the two approved models as well as the feedback received from staff members who were involved in the development of the two pilot courses.