



Establishing an Effective Peer-Review Process for OER Course Materials

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Why Peer Review of OER?

- To provide an assurance of quality that will encourage faculty adoption
- That this assurance should include not only validity of the information, but also of accessibility, inclusiveness of perspectives, navigability, and interactive learning

An Erroneous Comparison?

- Faculty question the quality of commercial textbooks less rigorously, if at all, even though commercial publishers' review processes are not transparent.
- In the end, all learning materials should be rigorously reviewed, regardless of type of publisher.

The Models

Review at the Repository Level

- Host of an OER repository manages the peer review process.
- Typically run by a non-profit org or higher education consortium
- Examples: [Open Textbook Library](#), [MERLOT](#), Ontario's [Open Library](#)

Review at the Program Level

- Institutional OER publisher manages peer review for the titles they publish.

Review at the Author Level

- Peer review is the author's responsibility.
- Usually either encouraged or required by the publishing program but could be individually motivated – adding value to one's work.
- May manage it themselves or engage someone else to coordinate.

MSU Libraries' Pilot

The University Press Model

- [UP peer review best practices](#)—respected by faculty and freely available on the web
- Designed to be adapted depending on the situation—great for any OER program

How it Works

- The OER Librarian manages peer review.
- Authors suggest reviewers and the OER Librarian also researches potential reviewers.
- There is an attempt to engage one from each list.
- Two reviewers for each project at \$200 stipend per review
- Semi-blind—reviewers know who the authors are, but reviewers' identities are not shared.
- [The rubric](#) is adapted from two others ([OER Review](#) & [Equity-minded Chapter Review Final Checklist](#)) and covers content, user experience, pedagogy, and DEIA-related questions.
- Ratings and comments are anonymized and combined in [this document](#).
- Peer-review conference between OER Librarian and author(s)
- Authors prepare a written response.
- OER Advisory Committee “reviews the reviews” to make a recommendation: publish, publish with changes, publish with additional changes, do not publish.
- “Peer Review Statement” in the book includes date and notice that author(s) may have made improvements based on teaching practice.

Interesting Variations

- **Peabody Institute (Johns Hopkins U.):** Prompt to reviewers are customized to each book--here's [an example](#).
- **State U. of New York (SUNY):** Dual review—peer review for the authors plus “open review” to be gathered publicly on the web—here are their [guidelines for reviewers](#).
- **Virginia Tech:** Paid student reviewer, who have taken the course with the previous (non-OER) textbook (\$15/hour). Here's their [student-review rubric](#).
- **U. of Southern Queensland:** Authors themselves tasked with managing peer review--creating a review guide, posting a call for reviewers, and manage workflow and communications. Here's their [detailed guidelines](#).

Other Folks' Rubrics

- [Rubrics for Evaluating Open Education Resource \(OER\) Objects \(Achieve.org](#) – K-12 focused non-profit organization)
- [Open Textbook Criteria](#) (Affordable Learning Georgia)
- [Open Textbooks Review Criteria](#) (OTN's Open Textbook Library)
- [Checklist for Evaluating Open Educational Resources](#) (Austin Community College)
- [Criteria for Peer Review](#) (eCampus Ontario)
- [ROTEL Peer Review Rubric](#) (Remixing Open Textbooks through an Equity Lens project)

Additional Resources

How-to Documentation

- [Feedback & Review Overview](#) (Rebus Community)
- [Conduct Peer Review Using Rubric](#) (Council of Australian University Librarians)
- [Peer Review](#) (BC Campus)

Literature

- Atenas, Javiera, and Leo Havemann. "[Questions of quality in repositories of open educational resources: a literature review](#)." *Research in Learning Technology* 22 (2014): 20889.
- Perifanou, Maria, and Anastasios A. Economides. "[Measuring quality, popularity, demand and usage of repositories of open educational resources \(ROER\): a study on thirteen popular ROER](#)." *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning* 38.4 (2023): 315-330.
- Yuan, Min, and Mimi Recker. "[Not all rubrics are equal: A review of rubrics for evaluating the quality of open educational resources](#)." *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 16, no. 5 (2015): 16-38.



Open Education Talks 2025

