

# How-to guide: Using OER

What needs to be considered if you want to use existing OER? Below you will find a guide to this. In addition, the possibility of entering into an open exchange with others about the materials created is presented.

Information is required as a guide for the use of existing OER

- how and by what means high-quality OER can be identified.
- how these can be edited and the correct source citation added.

## Find OER

OER can be found on the various platforms for OER materials. There is no centralised repository for Open Educational Resources (OER) where all materials are available. Although there are isolated efforts to develop such platforms, this would not do justice to the diversity and decentralised nature of the OER community. Nevertheless, most OER documents are digital resources that can be found on the internet. If they are equipped with appropriate metadata, you can search for them specifically. You can find more information on [How-to guide: Search and find OER](#), where you can find some hints on how to search as well as references to common platforms.

## Edit OER

When editing existing OER, the change and the way in which it was made must be labelled. A distinction is made here between minor changes and adaptations to a new work. Depending on the license, the editing of existing materials is permitted or not. If the editing of existing material is permitted, the work may be modified under the corresponding license conditions.

Modifying an existing OER is a simple way of adapting content to personal requirements. This saves the time it would take to create new OER. However, before modifying OER, it is important to check whether the Creative Commons license has been released for editing. If it contains a „no modifications“ clause, the work may not be modified. It is advisable to look for formats that are conducive to adaptations, e.g. .docx and .rtf.

## Use OER and add source citation

When using OER, a distinction is made between the unmodified use of the material and the use of modified material. What needs to be considered here is described below with examples and notes.

### Source citation for unmodified use

In order for others to know how to indicate authorship and use the OER, clear information must be

added. This information may be added at the beginning or end of a written document, in the description of an image or video, or in another visible location. These disclosures may be made in any reasonable manner. Indication of a CC license according to the TASLL rule:

1. **Titel:** The title of the work must be indicated.
2. **Author:** The name of the author must be given as it was given by the author, even if it is a user name, a group name, a company name or a club name.
3. **Source:** The source of a work is identified with a link to the place where it was found.
4. **License:** The license under which the work was published must be stated. The license version must be mentioned with all its components.
5. **Link:** The link to the license must be provided. For print products, the link is written out.

More information about the TASLL rule and examples find on

- [Part 1 - OER in practice | How to attribute open material: TASLL rule](#)
- [Best Practices for Creative Commons attributions - how to attribute works you reuse under a Creative Commons license](#)

### Example picture: Der coole Affe (in English: cool ape)



„der coole Affe“ von Philipp Staubitz,  
Diese Werk ist lizenziert unter einer CC BY 4.0

„der coole Affe“ by Philipp Staubitz via <https://moodle2.semsos.fr.schule-bw.de/moodle/course/view.php?id=239&section=4> is licensed under a [Creative Commons - BY 4.0 International \(CC BY 4.0\)](#).

### Source citation for minor change

In the case of minor changes without their own level of creation, it is sufficient to indicate the nature of the change.

More information on [Creating a Remix on OER Commons](#). In the case of minor changes without any level of creation, it is sufficient to indicate the type of change. All Creative Commons licenses except CC BY-ND and CC BY-NC-ND allow you to edit and modify the material. If you have used material and made changes, such as translating a text, using an excerpt from an image or adjusting the colors in a graphic, it is important to indicate these changes. This means that you must continue to apply the TUSLL rule to your information on the source used, but add the „M - modification“ component (TUSLL+M rule).

As a rule, it is sufficient to keep this information as concise as possible and to state in keywords what has been changed and by whom. This ensures that you communicate the changes transparently and respectfully to the authors. This is an important practice in order to meet the requirements of the Creative Commons licenses and to respect the rights of the authors.



### Modified material:

„Affe mit Banane“ von Saskia Weiß based on „der coole Affe“ by Philipp Staubitz via <https://moodle2.semsos.fr.schule-bw.de/moodle/course/view.php?id=239&section=4> is licensed under a [Creative Commons - BY 4.0 International \(CC BY 4.0\)](#).

### Source citation for adaptations to a new work

If changes, adaptations or mergers involve a new work, the person or persons making the changes must also be named. In the case of multi-stage adaptations, all changes as well as the changes made by the previous editor must be named. From a legal point of view, it is important in what form you wish to use the materials. There is **no legally relevant modification** if several works are merely presented together in a loose context - a so-called work combination - and placed next to each other, for example in an anthology, a worksheet with text and images or a presentation in which various CC-licensed images or graphics are integrated. In addition, the CC licenses expressly clarify that changes

to the file format are not considered legally relevant changes. This also applies to format conversions, e.g. when a digital work under a CC license is converted to analogue form or vice versa, as well as to pure format adaptations, e.g. for printing. In this case, the materials must be marked individually in accordance with the TUSLL rule. The differences in the licenses are irrelevant in this case. However, if a uniform **new impression is created by combining or modifying the materials and the materials merge together** in such a way that average viewers can no longer recognize them as clearly separate works, it is no longer a simple combination of works from a legal point of view. In this case, you must pay particular attention to the various CC licenses under which the individual materials were published. Not all CC licenses can be used together in this case, and materials published under licenses with the ND (No Derivatives) component may not be used at all in this context, as they may not be modified or combined with other materials. Such changes include content revisions, such as the rearrangement, redesign, rewriting or other modification of content. Translations also count as changes, as do extensions or rearrangements. The use of music that has been extended under a CC license with the ND component, for example to set a video to music, also constitutes an impermissible change, as do remixes or mash-ups.

## Examples

All Creative Commons licenses except CC BY-ND and CC BY-NC-ND allow the material to be edited and modified. If material has been used and modified or edited, e.g. a text has been translated, only a section of an image has been used or the colours of a graphic have been changed, these changes must be indicated. This means that the TUSLL rule (in German TULLU rule) can still be applied to the information on the source used, but it must be expanded to include the component M - modification (TULLU+M rule). In this case, it is usually sufficient to keep this information as brief as possible and to indicate in keywords what has been changed and by whom.

Good practice examples:

- **Example 1:** Editing (translated from English into German) by Maike Mustermensch, editing (image detail) by Hermann Mustermensch, editing (spelling mistakes corrected) by Karim Mustermensch.

The infographic used for the TULLU rule has been reworked by the OER Lab by changing the fonts and adapting the colours to the corporate design of the University of Koblenz. Licensing with CC BY 4.0 allows these changes, but they must be indicated by us when using the graphic.

- **Example 2 Use in a print medium:** Graphic „The TULLU rule for the correct use of openly licensed works“ by Julia Eggerstein based on a concept by Jöran Muuß-Merholz and Sonja Borski under the CC BY 4.0 licence <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>, found on OERinfo: [https://open-educational-resources.de/wp-content/uploads/Infografik\\_TULLU.svg](https://open-educational-resources.de/wp-content/uploads/Infografik_TULLU.svg) Edited (colours and fonts changed) by the OER Lab of the University of Koblenz.
- **Example 3 Use in a digital medium:** Graphic „The TULLU rule for the correct use of openly licensed works“ by Julia Eggerstein based on a concept by Jöran Muuß-Merholz and Sonja Borski under licence CC BY 4.0, found on OERinfo. Editing (colours and fonts changed) by the OER Lab of the University of Koblenz.

**Be careful with logos and trademarks!** Time and again you will come across OER materials that contain logos or (word/image) trademarks of the originators. Please note that such logos or trademarks remain protected, even if the content of the teaching and learning materials is released

for subsequent use and modification in accordance with the Creative Commons licence.

The Creative Commons licences expressly state that trademark rights are not affected by them and that the use of a trademark is not released by them. This means that the trademarks or logos depicted in an OER do not become free trademarks through CC licensing.

Often, but not always, attention is drawn to this by an addition in the licence information such as „logos/trademarks shown are protected by copyright/trademark law“.

Therefore, when re-using OER on which third-party logos or trademarks are depicted, please observe the provisions of the Trademark Act above all.

The Trade Mark Act clearly prohibits the use of other people's trade marks. Therefore, you must not give the impression that any material you have created or modified and its statements have been created by a third-party brand and/or are supported by a third-party brand. This prohibition also includes passing off another person's trade mark as your own or defaming the reputation of a trade mark through such (prohibited) appropriation.

For you as a subsequent user, this primarily means that if you modify openly licensed material on which (third-party) logos and/or trademarks are depicted and publish it in modified form in your name, you must remove the corresponding logos and trademarks and label your modifications in accordance with the TUSLL+M rule.

*The information text [Use of OER](#) of the OER Lab of the University of Koblenz is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0 International. Editing (linguistic formulations) adapted by ValiDE .*

## Notes

For Creative Commons licenses of version 4.0, the naming of the different license variants and version levels of the previous editing steps is omitted for SA licenses. For the sake of simplicity, only the last Share-Alike license must be mentioned. If different works are combined so that a new work is created, a separate license may be granted. However, this license is based on the material that carries the most restrictive conditions. The following link is suitable for checking the compatibility of different licenses: [CC Mixer](#)

## Share OER

Making Open Educational Resources (OER) available requires some further important considerations and steps:

1. **License selection:** Carefully determine the license under which you wish to publish your materials. The [Licence generator](#) from Creative Commons can be very helpful here. Think about the usage rights you want to grant to others and choose the appropriate Creative Commons license. Make sure that the license is well understood and clearly reflects your intentions.
2. **Content adaptation:** Depending on your target audience, you may need to make content adjustments to your materials. If the materials are intended for a wide audience, additional explanations and instructions may be helpful to ensure that the information is easy to understand.
3. **Publication platform:** Consider where you would like to publish your OER. If your university

has an OER repository, this could be a suitable platform for initial publication. However, there are also other platforms and portals where you can share OER. Make sure that the platform you choose provides an easy way to label your materials with the appropriate licenses.

4. **Metadata:** Provide your OER with comprehensive metadata so that they can be easily found. Metadata includes information such as the title, author, description, keywords and license. This information is crucial for other users to discover and properly use your OER.
5. **Versioning:** Remember that OER can be stored in different versions and in different places at the same time. This allows updates and improvements to be made without affecting older versions. Make sure that older versions are still available when you publish an updated version.

Incomplete collection of possible platforms for publishing open license, free materials and OER:

- [SESAM-Mediathek](#)
- [Central Repository for Open Educational Resources in Baden-Württemberg - ZOERR](#)
- [EPALE - Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe](#)
- [eTwinning | European School Education Platform](#)
- [Openly Licensed Images, Audio and More | Openverse](#)
- [Discover Europe's digital cultural heritage | Europeana](#)
- [GitHub](#)
- [Share and Discover Knowledge on SlideShare](#)
- [The Public Domain Review - Online journal dedicated to showcasing the most interesting and unusual out-of-copyright works available on the web](#)
- [free pictures and photos | Unsplash](#)
- [Public Domain Images - PIXNIO](#)
- [Stock photos, open license pictures](#)
- [4.1 million+ Stunning Free Images to Use Anywhere - Pixabay](#)
- <https://www.flickr.com/Flickr>
- [Wikimedia Commons](#)

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— Note: This guide was created in collaboration with the [Project ValiDE](#). The materials were developed by ValiDE and transferred for the ZenDi Wiki by TEgoDi.

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