

## 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.



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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.

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## Authors and Inspiration

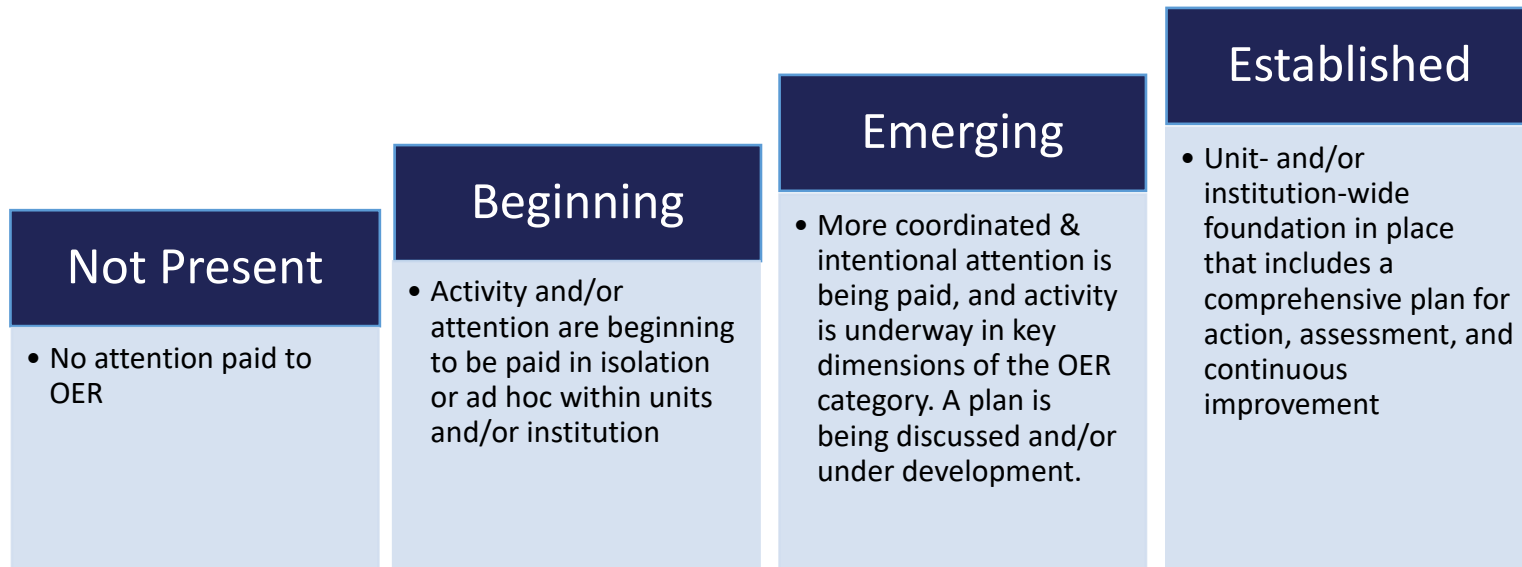
This rubric was developed by Robert Awkward (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education), Reta Chaffee (University System of New Hampshire), Ann Fiddler (City University of New York), Rebecca Karoff (University of Texas System) and Clarenda Phillips (Texas A & M University-Corpus Christi), with support 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 Gelsing (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

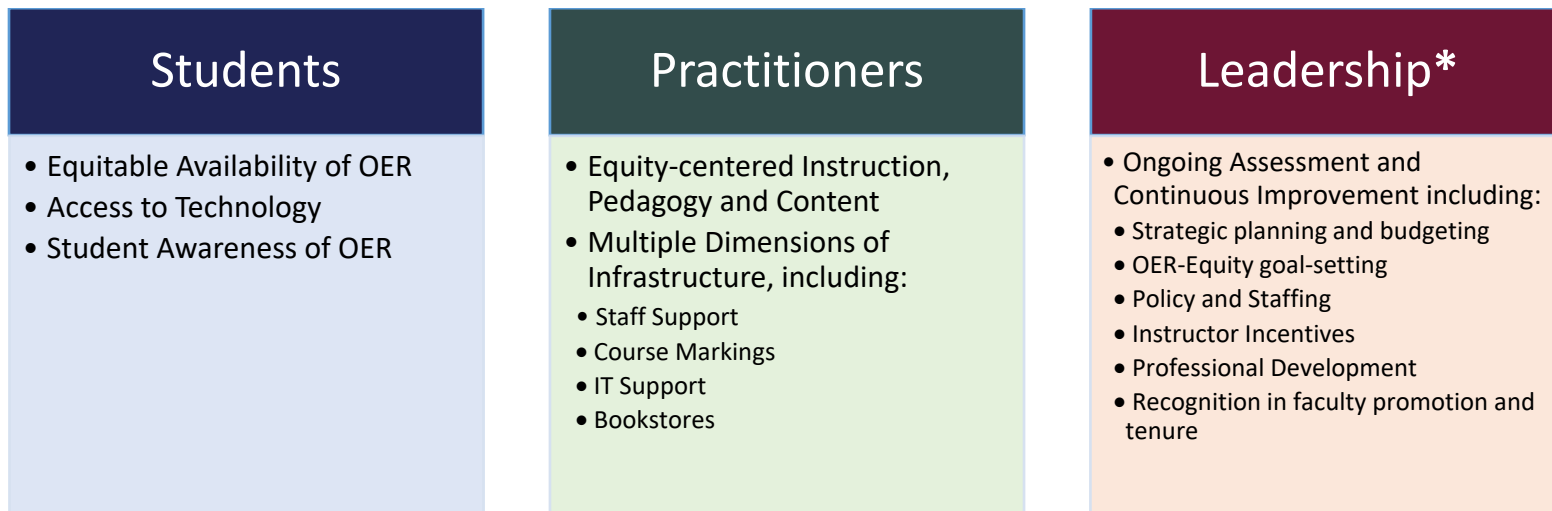
The scale of adoption proposes multiple stages of OER engagement, from not present, to beginning, to emerging, to established.

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.



## 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:



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

<p><b>1.3 Student Awareness of OER</b></p>	<p>Students are not informed about what OER are, where to find them, or how to use them.</p>	<p>Some institutional units and departments are beginning to take responsibility for informing students about OER and how to access them.</p> <p>Course schedules and catalogues, and bookstore increasingly include clear OER course markings.</p>	<p>More institutional units and departments are informing students about OER, including library, academic units, advisement and student support units, and bookstore.</p> <p>Published cost-of-attendance information includes language on no- and low-cost textbooks and course materials.</p> <p>Students are informed about data privacy aspects of automated textbook purchasing programs and other course material options.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Communication plan includes continuous monitoring of assessment, improvement, and dissemination.</p>
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## 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
<b>2.1 Instruction &amp; Pedagogy</b>	<p>No attention paid to inclusive pedagogy.</p> <p>Faculty of diverse voices, perspectives, career stages and identities not represented among instructors that use OER, and/or they do not have adequate support.</p> <p>No incentives, professional development, financial or technical support provided to instructors.</p> <p>Faculty receive no recognition of OER engagement for tenure and promotion.</p>	<p>Attention beginning to be paid to inclusive pedagogy, including:</p> <p>Growing awareness and action to ensure faculty of diverse voices, perspectives, career stages and identities are represented among OER instructors.</p> <p>Culturally and ability-inclusive OER content, including attention to bias in images, multi-media, and text.</p> <p>Diversity, equity and inclusion statements and expression of commitment to inclusive pedagogy made by faculty and some departments.</p> <p>Instructors have access to some <i>ad hoc</i> instructional design resources, professional development, financial or technical support.</p>	<p>Faculty of diverse voices, perspectives, career stages and identities are more equitably represented among instructors using OER across departments, units and colleges.</p> <p>Culturally and ability-inclusive OER content, including attention to bias in images, multi-media, and text, have been widely adopted.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Faculty increasingly receive recognition of OER engagement for tenure and promotion across</p>	<p>Faculty of diverse voices, perspectives, career stages and identities are represented equitably among instructors using OER institution-wide.</p> <p>All instructors have access to ongoing and sustained professional development, including instructional design and technical support, funding and time.</p> <p>All instructors have access to sustained grant program to incentivize and support adoption and creation of OER, and culturally and ability-inclusive OER content.</p> <p>Faculty receive full recognition for OER engagement in tenure and promotion.</p>

		<p>Faculty receive some recognition of OER engagement for tenure and promotion in isolated departments</p>	<p>academic departments and colleges.</p>	
<p><b>2.2.a Content: Quality of OER Content</b></p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Quality standards beginning to be defined, shared and adopted in isolated and limited ways across departments and units.</p>	<p>Quality standards are adopted and implementation plan is under development to include assessment and continuous improvement, and unit- and/or institution-wide dissemination.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Implementation of OER quality content plan across unit(s) and/or institution, including regular assessment and continuous improvement.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p><b>2.2.b Content: OER Across the Curriculum</b></p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Some attention is paid to OER availability and assessment across the curriculum in Gen Ed, Core and gateway courses, and/or majors.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>



<p><b>2.3. Infrastructure – Staff Support</b></p>	<p>No staff expertise around OER.</p>	<p>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).</p>	<p>Part-time staff support in place, including OER librarian, instructional designers, or dedicated CTL staff.</p> <p>Planning underway for additional staff requirements and professional development needed to build staff capacity.</p>	<p>Full-time staff support in place, including OER librarian(s), instructional designers, and/or dedicated CTL staff.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p><b>2.3.a Infrastructure – Course Marking Responsibility</b></p>	<p>No course marking of OER taking place.</p>	<p>Initial course marking of OER taking place in isolated units or departments.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Planning underway to implement course markings across departments and units, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Policy guidance</li> <li>• Budgetary requirements, including staffing and platform/technology</li> <li>• Clear instructions</li> <li>• Bookstore, faculty, and student engagement;</li> <li>• 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).</li> </ul>	<p>Comprehensive plan developed and implementation underway for institution-wide course marking. Plan includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student engagement;</li> <li>• Dissemination and adoption of policy and instructions, roles and responsibilities for library, registrar, faculty, departments, course coordinators;</li> <li>• Required resources for staffing, platform and technology support;</li> <li>• Bookstore engagement;</li> <li>• OER courses and other course designations flagged in data systems, i.e., bookstore listings, course schedules and registration;</li> <li>• Evaluation with metrics and ongoing monitoring.</li> </ul>

<p><b>2.3.b Infrastructure – IT Support</b></p>	<p>No IT support for OER, in terms of staffing or technology.</p>	<p>Growing awareness and conversations that IT support is essential for OER implementation, in terms of budget, staff and platforms.</p>	<p>Part-time IT support is put in place.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Comprehensive OER IT plan being implemented, including dedicated budget for staff and platform, and ongoing evaluation of needs and requirements.</p> <p>Full-time IT support in place, with platform operational.</p> <p>Institutionalization of plan includes continuous improvement designed to scale and sustain funding,</p>
<p><b>2.3.c Infrastructure – Bookstore Engagement</b></p>	<p>No conversation with bookstore or consideration of bookstore role in advancing equity through OER.</p>	<p>Bookstore starting to be recognized as important partner in advancing equity through OER.</p> <p>Conversations beginning to make bookstore aware of OER options and requirements.</p> <p>Some consideration underway of roles and responsibilities of institutions and instructors in bookstore relationship, including policies, protocols and deadlines.</p>	<p>Planning underway to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage faculty, registrars, other administrative units and bookstore as partners with respective roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• Identify policies, protocols and deadlines.</li> <li>• Inform students and faculty about where OER are available.</li> <li>• Inform students and faculty about proprietary textbook and course material costs, options and requirements.</li> <li>• Develop o procure bookstore software to track information from faculty and departments.</li> </ul>	<p>Comprehensive plan developed with implementation underway that includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bookstore works with faculty to make OER options available and transparent.</li> <li>• Bookstore communication to enable students to make informed choices about OER and proprietary options.</li> <li>• Cooperation between bookstore and registrar.</li> <li>• Bookstore infrastructure to support and track OER options and make them clearly available to students and faculty</li> <li>• Institution has a process for attaching ISBN to OER.</li> <li>• Institution-wide policies, protocols and deadlines communicated broadly.</li> <li>• Transparency and tracking also for proprietary textbook and course material costs, options and requirements.</li> <li>• Institutionalization of plan includes ongoing evaluation for continuous improvement, scalability, and sustainable funding designed to support and sustain bookstore partnership and accountability.</li> </ul>

## 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
<b>3.1 Ongoing Assessment: Quantitative and Qualitative</b>	<p>There is no assessment of OER and its role in advancing equity.</p> <p>No support for or identification of designated roles for assessment responsibility, nor how leadership is accountable for acting on results.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Assessment of OER and its role in advancing equity is beginning, with some attention paid to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is responsible and accountable for assessment.</li> <li>• Cost savings to students using OER.</li> <li>• Perception of OER through student and/or faculty satisfaction surveys.</li> <li>• Diversity of faculty and staff engaging with OER</li> </ul>	<p>More coordinated assessment of OER and its role in advancing equity is taking place, both quantitative and qualitative, including much of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost savings to students.</li> <li>• ROI formula developed to track \$\$ savings to units and/or institution.</li> <li>• Utilization data, including # of OER courses/sections, increase in faculty adoption.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Qualitative assessment of OER usage through student and faculty surveying.</li> <li>• For both student and faculty engagement, data are disaggregated by populations, including race/ethnicity, gender, income ability, and geographic location.</li> <li>• In addition to support for designated assessment roles and</li> </ul>	<p>Comprehensive quantitative and qualitative assessment plan is in place across units and/or institution-wide that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership accountability for acting on results.</li> <li>• Sustained support for assessment roles and practice.</li> <li>• Cost savings to students.</li> <li>• Institution-wide ROI formula in place to track cost savings to units and/or institution.</li> <li>• Utilization of data, including # of OER courses/sections, increase in faculty adoption; participation in and impact of professional development.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Qualitative assessment of OER usage through student and faculty surveying.</li> <li>• For both student and faculty engagement, data are disaggregated by populations, including race/ethnicity, gender, income, ability, geographic location.</li> </ul>

			<p>responsibilities, leadership assumes accountability for acting on assessment results.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data are disaggregated by academic programs, including Gen Ed, gateways courses and majors.</li> <li>• Data are analyzed for improvement opportunities and shared with the institutional community and system.</li> <li>• Data are utilized in strategic planning and budgetary decisions.</li> <li>• Assessment plan is institutionalized and made public in ways that promote sustainability and continuous reinforcement through data, action, improvement and scaling.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.2 Continuous Improvement: Leadership Commitments</b></p> <p>(strategic planning and budgeting, policy, staffing, infrastructure, funding, professional development, recognition and rewards, and sustainability of OER as contributor to advancing equity)</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Leadership has stated a public commitment to OER and Equity, and is beginning to address <i>ad hoc</i> attention to several key areas, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited funding for staffing, infrastructure, faculty incentives, and professional development</li> <li>• Student-facing or academic policy, including faculty recognition and rewards</li> <li>• Some conversations with institutional stakeholders, including library, student groups, individual departments</li> </ul>	<p>Strategic planning and budgeting is underway to ensure equity-driven continuous improvement in the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of equity goals for OER engagement by student and faculty and staff</li> <li>• OER Staffing and infrastructure</li> <li>• Professional development for faculty and staff</li> <li>• Policy changes to institutionalize OER engagement, including those impacting students, faculty and student governance, faculty tenure and promotion, etc.</li> <li>• Leadership-led engagement of institutional stakeholders, including faculty senates, deans, student groups, libraries, student affairs, business affairs, administrators, etc.</li> <li>• Leadership evaluation includes attention to progress on OER-Equity goals.</li> <li>• Solid plan for continuous improvement initiated, but is not deep, pervasive, or consistent</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p> <p>Leadership is regularly evaluated on progress on OER-Equity goals.</p> <p>Continuous improvement is publicly demonstrated through leadership commitment that is deep, pervasive, consistent, sustainable and scalable.</p> <p>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.</p>

**May 2021**

**Rubric Models**

Title	Link
NERCHE Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Higher Education	<a href="https://www.wpi.edu/sites/default/files/Project%20Inclusion%20NERCHE%20Rubric-Self-Assessment-2016.pdf">https://www.wpi.edu/sites/default/files/Project Inclusion NERCHE Rubric-Self-Assessment-2016.pdf</a>
Peralta Online Equity Rubric	<a href="https://web.peralta.edu/de/files/2019/05/Peralta-Online-Equity-Rubric-2.0-May-2019.pdf">https://web.peralta.edu/de/files/2019/05/Peralta-Online-Equity-Rubric-2.0-May-2019.pdf</a>
Northern New York Library Network	<a href="https://nnyln.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Grant-Proposal-Scoring-Rubric.pdf">https://nnyln.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Grant-Proposal-Scoring-Rubric.pdf</a>
AACU VALUE Critical Thinking Rubric	<a href="https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/PartsofaVALUERubric.pdf">https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/VALUE/PartsofaVALUERubric.pdf</a>
SUNY Sustainability Overview	<a href="https://oer.suny.edu/oer-sustainability/">https://oer.suny.edu/oer-sustainability/</a>
Aspen Institute College Excellence Program Transfer Playbook and Tools for Colleges	<a href="https://highered.aspeninstitute.org/transfer-playbook-and-tools-for-colleges/">https://highered.aspeninstitute.org/transfer-playbook-and-tools-for-colleges/</a>
NASH Equity Action Framework	<a href="http://nashonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NASH-Equity-Action-Framework-Summary-1.pdf">http://nashonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NASH-Equity-Action-Framework-Summary-1.pdf</a>