LA TROBE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

OPEN PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

1. PURPOSE & PRINCIPLES

The Open Practice Framework (OPF) functions as a dynamic and evolving guide and point of reference for La Trobe University library staff. It outlines the principles and guidelines governing the purpose, content, evolution, and advancement of open practice for La Trobe University Library. It aligns with and supports the University's vision, strategic objectives, and priorities by promoting transparency, accessibility, equity, and collaboration across teaching, learning, and research.

In seeking a unified definition and consistent approaches to key "open" strategies and services within the library, a review of currently used terminology and practices across teams has been considered to provide a cohesive, transparent, collaborative and accessible framework that empowers staff to co-create and evolve open practices (see definitions in appendix 10.1 glossary).

2. HOW LA TROBE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY DEFINES OPEN PRACTICE - WHAT OPEN PRACTICE MEANS TO US

Open practice is a holistic approach that prioritizes transparency, accessibility, equity, and collaboration within the higher education sector. It promotes openness across content, pedagogy, research, technology, and collaborative efforts.

Supporting this, open practice includes the creation and use of open educational resources (OER), open/public pedagogies, open access publishing, open research practices, and the sharing of teaching knowledge through open technologies. It also involves fostering inclusive education, supporting open infrastructure, and influencing institutional policies to advance openness throughout the academic ecosystem at La Trobe.

These practices operate on a continuum—being open where possible and closed where necessary—and often emphasize purposeful reuse, critical self-reflection, consideration of the broader context, and openness to sharing works-in-progress for constructive feedback. The term open practice has its origins in open educational practices. For the purposes of this framework, we are interpreting open practice to include open research practices.

3. OUR FIVE PILLARS OF OPEN PRACTICE

3.1 Open educational resources (OER) - creating

OERs are freely available teaching and learning materials such as textbooks, lecture notes, and videos. The library supports OER initiatives through creation (eBureau), training, repository OER collections, and copyright guidance. La Trobe promotes regional relevance by advocating for Australian and New Zealand OERs in reading lists.

3.2 Open educational practice - implementing

Open educational practice refers to educational approaches that use OERs which enables teaching staff to transform legacy models and learning content to align with contemporary pedagogy and practice, transparency, collaboration, accessibility, and learner empowerment—often leveraging digital tools and platforms to foster inclusive and participatory learning environments.

3.3 Sharing of teaching and research knowledge through open technologies - sharing

Sharing of knowledge through open technologies refers to the practice of using digital platforms and tools to freely exchange instructional resources, strategies, and insights in ways that are accessible, collaborative, and often participatory. It is the dissemination and co-creation of practices, materials, and expertise using digital tools that support openness.

3.4 open access publishing - accessibility

Open access publishing ensures research outputs are freely accessible. The Library supports this through transformative publisher agreements (e.g., CAUL Read & Publish agreements), OPAL the institutional repository and researcher training and through support for selected innovative open access book publishing models (e.g. Subscribe to open, Knowledge unlatched).

3.5 Open research practices - transparency

Open research applies openness across the research lifecycle, including methodologies, data, software, instruments, and protocols. The Library facilitates this through training and platforms on data management, reproducibility, and findable, accessible, interoperable, reproducible (fair) principles, and by promoting open-source tools.

4. ENABLERS OF OPEN PRACTICE – WAYS OF WORKING

Enablers include tools, technology, platforms, behaviors, and innovative practices that support open practice. Examples: repositories, open-source software, OER platforms, advocacy, inclusive education, and discoverability enhancements.

4.1 Collaboration & community building

The Library fosters collaboration through communities of practice, partnerships, and sector engagement. Projects are transparent from inception, encouraging shared ownership, co-design and sustainable outcomes.

4.2 Equity & inclusion

Open practice removes barriers to knowledge by promoting culturally relevant and inclusive materials, ensuring accessibility, and amplifying marginalized voices. The Library curates and promotes diverse scholarship to enrich academic experiences.

4.3 Innovative practices

Innovative practices include creating systems for free scholarly access, repurposing content for teaching, and recognizing open teaching and publishing efforts. Examples: writing OER ebooks, integrating open content into learning and teaching, and exploring new OA publishing models.

5. OWNERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

The Library Open Practice Committee oversees the framework's development and dissemination. It ensures ongoing alignment with institutional goals and supports continuous improvement through collaborative input. The Committee suggests open practice projects to LLT for consideration; and contributes to and reviews policies relating to "open".

6. RELEVANT POLICIES

Relevant policies include:
- Library and digital learning resources policy
- Research data management policy
- Research authorship and outputs policy
- Library business plan
- Collection development framework

7. APPENDIX

7.1 Glossary of key open concepts in scholarship and education

A. Open scholarship
An inclusive approach to scholarly activity that promotes transparency, accessibility, and collaboration across all disciplines. It encompasses open access, open data, open education, and open research, aiming to make knowledge creation and dissemination equitable, reproducible, and socially impactful.

B. Open education
A philosophy and practice that uses openly licensed resources, tools, and pedagogies to improve access, equity, and effectiveness in learning. It includes open educational resources (OER), open pedagogies, and learner-centered approaches that empower students as co-creators of knowledge.

C. Open access publishing
A publishing model that provides free, immediate, and unrestricted online access to scholarly research. It supports reuse with appropriate licensing and includes various models such as gold, green, diamond, and hybrid open access, all aiming to increase visibility, impact, and equity in research dissemination.

D. Open educational resources (OER)
Teaching, learning, and research materials that are freely available in the public domain or under open licenses (e.g., creative commons), allowing users to retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute content without legal or financial barriers.

E. Open research practices
Research methodologies and workflows that prioritize transparency, accessibility, and reproducibility throughout the research lifecycle. This includes open data, open methods, pre-registration, open peer review, and sharing of software and protocols, fostering collaboration and integrity in research.

Location of document: Open Practice Committee working group TEAMS folder

Version: 6 February 2026

Endorsed by LLT