
Tip sheet: Sourcing and creating digital content

This tip sheet provides an overview of how to source digital learning resources, organised from **most preferred** (electronic subscriptions) to **least preferred** (commercial content), based on current resources and support, costs to the University and students, and accessibility.

Provision of learning resources, whilst an important component of the learning and teaching experience, always needs to be integrated with teacher interactions, appropriate leveraging of materials, and using content to create learning moments. These components will always require teaching expertise and topic/curriculum contextualisation.

1. Use University-managed electronic resources

Via Library subscriptions, Flinders University has access to an extensive collection of over 400 [databases and platforms](#) offering a range of electronic resources that includes ebooks, journals and streamed media. The Library also purchases resources to support Flinders University teaching and research programs, and invests in models that best support the needs of students. The Library has resources from major publishers and platforms, including Pearson, Ovid, Wiley, Springer and Elsevier.

Other resources such as the [Online Collections Catalogue \(Flinders University Art Museum\)](#) are also available. Refer to the [object-based learning toolkit](#) for advice on integrating these resources in your topic/across disciplines, or contact your [local learning designer](#).

The [readings system](#) at Flinders University links directly into the Library's collections, making creation of/access to readings easier, and providing great options to support your teaching needs. Readings can include a range of materials such as articles, websites, streaming videos, book chapters and ebooks.

Textbooks may be used as required or recommended books for your topic. See [Using prescribed texts](#) for considerations and guidelines around facilitating student access to textbooks. The Library may be able to source a textbook as an ebook – refer to [Readings information](#) > 'Textbooks' tab.

2. Source open educational resources (OERs)

An OER describes a resource (print or electronic) that is designed for use in learning and teaching and is openly licensed. OERs are free of cost and available in the public domain or under licence terms that allow the resource to be retained, reused, revised, remixed and redistributed ([5 Rs definition](#)).

If you use OERs in your teaching, be mindful of the licence terms and conditions attached to them. For how to search for OERs in textbook, image, multimedia, simulation and other formats, visit the [Creative Commons OER page](#).

The Library can support topic coordinators to source OER digital content. Please submit a [Service One request](#) (Education Services > Online content for topics).

3. Build your own resources

Building learning content is an option and Flinders has a range of tools that can be used to create resources (eg PowerPoint, Camtasia, FLO tools, recording studio, Kaltura video). The resource might be a 'package' that requires a variety of electronic formats. Refer to the [tool selection matrix](#) for options.

This content should be sustainable – easily updated/revised and available to future cohorts ([5 Rs definition](#)). Considerations for the 'build your own' approach include:

- what electronic format/s the content will take (eg video, PDF, website, FLO tool)
- who will build the content (teacher/student/both)
- who needs to access the content and where it will be located (eg within FLO).

The Online Learning and Teaching team can support topic coordinators to create digital content. Contact your [local eLearning support team](#) for advice.

4. Access printed publications, mass media and other copyrighted material

The University has an [Educational statutory licence](#) which allows for limited copying and communication of both print and electronic copyright material to your students. This material can include portions of books, journal articles, TV or radio broadcasts, material from websites, newspapers, and more.

To make use of the licence to copy these materials, you just need to submit all titles through your Readings list. Library staff will do all the checking to make sure your readings fit in with the educational licence limits.

You can learn more about copyright in the 15-minute [Copyright for academic staff](#) FLO module, or contact the Copyright Librarian via [Service One](#) (Education Services > Copyright for my teaching material) re copying specific material.

5. Purchase commercial content

Before you consider sourcing commercial content, contact the Library via a [Service One request](#) (Education Services > Online content for topics) or your [local eLearning support team](#) for advice, and see also the preferred options above. The Library offers topic coordinators a service that sources digital content the University either already owns (option 1 above) or that can be sourced through OERs (option 2 above). Further purchasing of commercial content, beyond what is currently already available, is not sustainable or supported by the University. The rationale behind this approach is outlined below.

- Currently, there is a lack of sound evidence that use of commercial products substantially improves outcomes for students.
- Commercial packages tend to be less flexible and harder to embed as part of the topic/curriculum.
- Commercial organisations (eg publishers) offer learning resources to the University at a cost. The two main purchasing options are 'university pays' and 'student pays'.
 - Purchase options can be cost prohibitive for college and University budgets. In some cases, the 'university pays' option excludes 'value add' content (ie text only, no interactive media).
 - 'Student pays' options can be prohibitive for students. Examinations and essential assessments are included in the student fees (as per [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#) and the [Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2012](#)). Additionally Flinders' [policy](#) requires sources to be provided in the Library for students who do not wish to purchase materials, so it is important to consider whether the inclusion of 'student pays' content is an appropriate and inclusive approach.
- There are also costs (staff and financial) to the University to configure resources to integrate with FLO.

For an overview the implications of using commercial content and other third-party tools, view [Things to consider if you want to use non-FLO tools in your teaching](#).