

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH  
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



**PA 23-151**—sHB 6771

*Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee*

**AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE  
CONNECTICUT OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE COORDINATING  
COUNCIL**

**SUMMARY:** By law, the Connecticut Open Educational Resource (OER) Coordinating Council must establish an OER program to lower the cost of textbooks and course materials for high-impact courses at state higher education institutions. This act makes various changes to the council and modifies the definition and use of OER.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2023

**OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

Prior law defined “OER” as a college-level resource available on a website for students, faculty, and the public to use on an unlimited basis at a lower cost than the market value of the printed textbook or other educational resource. It included full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and other similar teaching, learning, and research resources residing in the public domain or released under a creative commons attribution license that permits the free use and repurposing of the resources.

The act redefines OER as a teaching, learning, or research resource that is (1) offered freely to users in at least one form and (2) either (a) in the public domain or (b) released under a creative commons attribution license or other open copyright license.

**COUNCIL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING**

Under prior law, the OER council was part of the executive branch and the Office of Higher Education (OHE) executive director appointed council members, including the statewide OER coordinator. OHE administrative staff served as the council’s administrative staff.

The act moves the council from the executive branch to the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) and gives the CSCU president the same duties that the OHE executive director had under prior law (i.e., appointing the state-wide coordinator and council members). The act also makes the CSCU administrative staff serve as the council’s administrative staff and authorizes the coordinator to hire a part-time employee to assist and support the council.

**COUNCIL DUTIES**

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The act requires the council to develop a model OER policy for higher education institutions to adopt. The policy must establish (1) definitions for OER terms, (2) methods to collect data on OER use and availability, and (3) ways to present online course catalogs to students to clearly identify courses using OER.

### LICENSING OPTIONS

By law, the council can accept, review, and approve grant applications for the conversion or adoption of these resources. Under prior law, grant recipients could only license their OERs through a creative commons attribution license. The act expands this limitation to allow licensing through either a creative commons attribution license or other open copyright license (i.e., a copyright license that is not a creative commons attribution license, but allows for the free use, reuse, modification, and distribution of a work product if the original author is credited).

### REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Prior law required the council to annually report to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee on the use of OERs, including the number and percentage of high-impact courses for which OERs have been developed. Beginning February 1, 2024, the act makes this a biennial, rather than annual, reporting requirement and changes the report's contents to instead include the number of courses using OER (i.e., a course in which all required materials are OER). By law, unchanged by the act, the report must also include information about (1) the degree to which higher education institutions promote the use of and access to OER, (2) grants the council awards, and (3) any legislative recommendations.

### BACKGROUND

#### *Related Act*

PA 23-204, § 95, contains identical provisions.