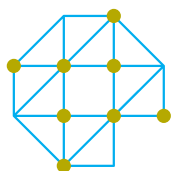


# How to make an open textbook

For authors



**Acceleration plan**

Educational innovation  
with ICT



digital educational resources



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For authors

Acceleration Plan for Educational Innovation with IT –  
Towards digital (open) educational resources zone



**Acceleration plan**  
Educational innovation  
with ICT

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## Phase 1: preparation

In this phase, you'll decide whom you would like to write the book with, (together) how you'll approach the project, and collect your own existing materials to examine what needs to be added to create an interactive open textbook.

This summary on how to create an open textbook is meant to give an overview for the authors, for example teachers. More details and additional (organisational) steps can be found in the support part. In the **support part**, we distinguish between two different types of project organisation:

1. a single author/ small project group;
2. a large (intra-institutional) project group.

### Determine the scope

After you have decided who you're writing the open textbook with and decided on an approach, you'll determine the scope of the open textbook.

1. Determine the topic of the textbook. To decide on the **scope** of the project, it's important to think from the perspective of the **target group** and **purpose** of the open textbook. Is it for students, professionals or another target group? Is it a textbook, a reference book, or something else? And how will the audience access the book?
2. Decide in which **language** you would like to write the open textbook. A book in English has potentially more readers. Content focussing specifically on a Dutch context will be more difficult to reuse, even when it's translated.
3. Depending on the purpose, it may be useful to determine the **potential impact** in advance. For this, make a list of measurable and qualitative performance indicators, such as the number of users, the low threshold for lecturers to reuse it, and the extent to which it supports learners in achieving their learning goals.

### Develop a project plan

1. Depending on the size of the project, determine the division of roles, such as project leader, author(s), proof-reader or editor, etc. In a smaller project group, it's common for one project member to fill several roles. Also establish who'll liaise with the support staff.
2. **Agree** on the approach, consultation moments, the feedback process, lead time, deadlines, motivating the team, valuing everyone's input, keeping each other up-to-date, version management and ownership. Depending on the size/cost of the project, ask the support staff about funding options.

## Determine the structure

When you have your project plan in place, you can start working on the contents of the book. Start with determining the structure.

1. Make a **draft table of contents** for the book and put it in a spreadsheet. Are you working with multiple authors? Divide the chapters among the co-authoring teachers.
2. Collect all your **own content** while using the table of contents as structure. Together with the support staff, make an inventory of the extent to which your own content needs to be adapted. Consider rewriting texts, replacing figures, and/or redesigning.
3. Using the table of contents, determine what **external content** is required. Which external materials are suitable for (adapted) reuse under a [Creative Commons licence](#)? What external materials can't be used simply because they are copyright protected? For the latter, create or find an alternative yourself. Support staff at the library could refer you to sites with copyright-free materials.

## Ensure educational integration

1. Work from **learning objectives**. Divide the learning objectives across the table of content.
2. Think about learning activities suited to the content of the text. Make the book as interactive as possible. If necessary, involve an instructional designer to help you with this. The Wheel of insight tool! shows how various content forms support learning objectives and learning activities.
3. Make the open textbook **modular** to promote sustainable reuse. You also need to consider modularity with reference to the structure: content that makes a lot of references to other parts of the book will be difficult to use as a separate module.
4. Submit your table of contents to the support staff. Go through the intake checklist (Dutch) from the **support part** together.



## Phase 2: Content production

In the content production phase, you'll start the writing process and find additional materials. You also determine how the book may be reused by others.

### Determine the Creative Commons licence

Open textbooks are offered under a Creative Commons licence. A CC-by licence specifies what others may do with the book and under what conditions. The library support staff could give advice on CC-by licences, or which is standard within the institution.

### Start the writing process

1. Think in advance about writing style and structure, quotes and the use of images. Make agreements about this when collaborating.
2. The Dutch website Auteursrechten.nl explains the basic rules for using author's rules. Check this page before you start writing. Have support staff check all existing content for copyright and for any resemblance to existing material. Process the results of this check and work with support staff to resolve copyright issues.
3. Determine whether the book will receive **peer reviews** by (scientific) experts. Tap into your network for this. You can also choose to review each other's chapters.
4. If you work together, keep each other informed of **progress**.

### Supplement the (visual) content

1. Search for **additional content** on platforms for OERs. Ask support staff for advice on the use of citations.
2. Are new figures needed, such as graphs, images, diagrams or video materials, which cannot be found online as open content? With the help of support staff, engage a **designer, producer or illustrator** internally or externally.

### Final check

Before proceeding with publication, support staff makes a final check on all the material. You may need to adjust the open textbook after this check.



## Phase 3: Publication

In the publication phase, you are relieved of a lot of work by support staff, but you'll do several things yourself: provide background information, generate publicity and ensure the open textbook remains relevant after publication.

### Gather background information

The support staff has a checklist to collect all **metadata** and other background information. Metadata are digital labels that can be added to educational resources to make it easier to find. Consider keywords, a description of the book and authors, and a photo for the cover.

### Devise a communication strategy

Find the largest possible **audience** for the book. Consider a collaboration with your institution's communications department. Bring the publication to the attention of the target group, colleagues, and peers. Organise a book launch. Issue a press release and use social media to gain traction and visibility for your book.

### Review the current edition

1. Once a year, determine whether **revisions** are required. An ideal moment is a few months before the start of a course in which the book will be used.
2. Ask students for **feedback** on the use of the book in the course. Use the feedback to improve the book. Do this at least the first year it is used in the course.
3. Ask users for **reviews**. Add a feedback form to the publication or offer a feedback option or improvement form on the publication platform. Set up a process for processing reviews.



*The Acceleration Plan for Educational Innovation with IT is a four-year programme from SURF, the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences and the Association of Universities in the Netherlands, that aims to bring together initiatives, knowledge, and experiences to realise ambitions for higher education at an accelerated pace. This is taking place in eight 'acceleration zones'. In the Towards digital (open) educational resources acceleration zone, eight universities are working to ensure that students and lecturers have the opportunity to compile and use an optimal mix of educational resources.*



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