# Alberta

**Southern Alberta Institute of Technology**

OER activities at Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) were launched in 2016 with the support of the Campus Alberta OER Initiative (ABOER, n.d.). ABOER’s research regarding benefits to students, faculty, and the institution, as well as development grants, prompted SAIT to produce some the first OER materials in the areas of physics, mathematics, and communications.

September 2016 also saw the formation of the SAIT Academic Council Subcommittee on OER Development. After nine months of work, the subcommittee presented its initial report, The Status of OER at SAIT (SAIT, 2017b), that found SAIT faculty had an interest in OER but lacked support for training and implementation. The report also recommended the creation of an OER policy and procedure, education for SAIT faculty and staff about the benefits and applications of OER, and identification of OER

experts at SAIT. The subcommittee successfully built on this work in the next academic year to produce an institutional communication plan and advocacy materials. A [SAIT-specific OER clearinghouse](http://libguides.sait.ca/OER) was also introduced online at the beginning of 2017.

**OER Policy and Procedure Development, 2017**

The launch of SAIT’s Educational Plan in the fall of 2017 had a large impact on activities on campus, as it specifically listed OER as an area of focus: “We will implement a faculty development and competency model that […] supports faculty in adopting, adapting, and creating open education resources that increase access to relevant, flexible learning content” (SAIT, 2017a, p.17). This mandate increased interest in the use of OER and further highlighted the need for additional training and support around OER activities.

In September 2017, a group made up of the eLearning librarian, curriculum specialist, the copyright officer, and faculty formed to develop an institution-wide OER policy and procedure. An environmental scan of Canadian post-secondary institutions found that only two published policies existed at that time. The understanding that SAIT was at the forefront of this area spurred on work over the fall and winter semesters, cumulating in AC.2.21.1 Open Educational Resources (SAIT, 2018), a policy that was officially adopted by the Board of Governors in the summer of 2018. This policy clarifies training and support measures as well as the processes related to the selection, creation, and use of OER at SAIT.

Alongside this policy development, work continued on the earlier mandate to educate SAIT faculty and staff on OER concepts, with the Reg Erhardt Library presenting information sessions, workshops, and webinars throughout the fall and winter semesters. Topics included The Value of OER, OER: OPEN to the Possibilities, Practical Steps to Finding and Evaluating OER, Approaches to Developing Open Education and Pedagogy, and The Status of OER at SAIT.

**Integrating OER into the Institution, 2018**

The 2018-19 academic year sees a transition in OER at SAIT from “What is it?” to “How do we do this effectively?” Since August 2018, there have been 13 ancillary OER projects (material identified for supplemental use in classes) and five adoption OER projects (replacing primary textbook/materials with OER). In one project, the use of an adapted OER in 88 sections of Communication classes is impacting over 2300 students in just one semester!

The students are noticing the impact of OER in their classrooms. The SAIT Student Association (SAITSA) brought the concept of OER to the students in fall 2018, developing a 5-event education series (SAITSA, n.d.). Over 2,000 students attended the events showing a high level of interest in open, accessible, and affordable learning materials.

The work on an institutional OER program is also expanding. Goals for institutional OER activities will be set by May 2019, while an online training program to increase faculty access to information will launch in summer 2019. These will set the foundation for successful OER development at SAIT for many years.