What is an Open Educational Resource OER?
An OER is any type of educational material that is copyright cleared for release onto the internet, typically under a Creative Commons licence. OER can include entire courses and modules, to multimedia files and images. The licence makes it easy for people to release their materials, and also makes it easy for users to understand how they can use what they find.

OER at DMU
In 2009 the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences participated in the pilot phase of JISC/HEA “OER Programme”, and also in 2010 succeeded in gaining funding to release OER on the subject of sickle cell and thalassemia with the aim of introducing an OER policy and process at DMU. VAL to date has released over 200 videos and animations on laboratory skills onto the internet, and the website had 10,000 global visitors last year. Thus one of the areas that DMU should be exploring more deeply is the use of OER as a marketing tool.

Also in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Jacqui Williams is collaborating on an OER project run by the University of Northampton on “Continuing Professional Development”, and Tina Barnes-Powell in Art and Design also is working on an OER project.

How to turn a resource into an OER?
The following flow chart gives you an idea of the steps to go through to develop and release an OER. The evaluation and testing steps are optional, but the steps to clear copyright and ensuring all the necessary permissions are gained are essential. OER must be accessible, discoverable and technically sound, and producing meta-data (key words, a description) to accompany each resource are also important to enable the resource to be searched.
A “live” version of this complete with permissions forms (approved by the library) is available at:

http://www.sicklecellanaemia.org/Assets/FlowChart/FlowDiagram.htm

What licence to use?
Creative Commons 3.0 is one of a number of “open” licences and it comes with a series of clauses. The most open is “BY” which means you can use the resource but must give the original author credit. The most restrictive is “BY – NC – ND” which means you can use the resource by giving the author credit but you must not use it for commercial purposes, and you cannot alter, transform or build upon the work.

For SCOOTER we are aiming for “BY-SA” which means attribute the author but the important part is “SA” or “share-alike” which means derivative works can be made but must be shared back to the community under the same licence.

How to find and share OER?
This will be the subject of a series of workshops held jointly by Viv and Jacqui during the course of this year, the first being Tuesday 14th December. The main repository promoted by JISC is JorumOpen which has now over 10,000 items from 800 authors around the UK, so is building to be a pretty incredible resource. All the OER from VAL and SCOOTER are being placed there, in addition to the project websites.

OER can also be shared via Web 2.0 services – YouTube, Flickr, SlideShare are all useful sources, and often now you can search by Creative Commons licence, so you not just find the resource you want, but one that you can use in the way you want.

Further Information
Please contact Viv if you have any questions on OER or if you wish to attend the December workshop or be placed on the mailing list.

Dr Viv Rolfe
vrolfe@dmu.ac.uk

SCOOTER project Blog contains information about OER in general
http://www.sicklecellanaemia.org

List of JISC OER Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects (around 50 individuals, subject centres and institutions)
http://www.jisc.ac.uk/oer

Creative Commons (CC)
http://creativecommons.org/

JorumOpen, the open repository part of Jorum
http://open.jorum.ac.uk