

OPEN RESEARCH STEERING COMMITTEE

Minutes for Thursday 2 November 2023, 14:00–15:30
MS Teams

Present: Alastair Flett (Chair), Marta Costa, Ronan Daly, Emma Gilby, Sara Hennessy, Mandy Hill, Sacha Jones, Amy Orben, Liz Simmonds, Siddharth Soni, Ben Steventon, Debbie Hansen (Secretary).

In attendance: Sam Moore, Joanna Page, Alexia Sutton.

Apologies: Stephen Eglen, Jess Gardner, Peter Hedges, John Perry, Steve Russell.

Alastair Flett started the meeting. He was stepping in as Chair for this meeting as Steve Russell was unable to attend. After giving the other apologies, Alastair Flett welcomed two new members of ORSC: Professor Ronan Daly, the new representative for the School of Technology and Dr Sacha Jones, the Interim Head of Open Research Services.

1 Declaration of interests

Alastair Flett invited the group to make any declarations of interest. Mandy Hill (CUP&A) mentioned that the original paper pack for this meeting that she received contained the list of publisher payment amounts for read and publish agreements with the University. As soon as she realised, she flagged this up and was sent a pack with this list removed. Alastair Flett thanked her for her integrity.

2 Minutes of previous meeting (25 May 2023)

— ORSC-110

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3 Matters arising

— ORSC-111

Sara Hennessy joined the meeting.

Alastair Flett asked the group whether they had any matters to raise that were not planned for discussion elsewhere in the meeting; none were raised.

The outstanding actions were briefly mentioned as follows:

1. **Self-Archiving Policy (item 4 of 25 May 2023 meeting):** Sam Moore has asked Niamh Malin, the OSC Data Analyst, to look at the data from the Rights Retention Pilot. It is not clear whether anything meaningful can be gleaned from the data and Niamh will look at the data in the context of the full Self-Archiving Policy. There should be an update for the next meeting.

Marta Costa joined the meeting.

2. **Responsible Metrics (item 7 of 25 May 2023 meeting):** Sacha Jones noted that this topic is being discussed from various angles. She mentioned that in the Horizon Scan paper, for discussion later in this meeting, this topic is proposed as a high priority area to look at. The next steps will be to look at forming a working group to develop actions

and timescales. It is becoming increasingly clear that support materials are required in this area and Sacha Jones noted a [webinar](#) that mentioned the use of metrics data and AI to head hunt individuals for recruitment. Sara Hennessy described her efforts at looking for DORA tools that would help for giving guidance to promotions committees but what she found was not useful; she enquired whether anyone knew of any good guidance and noted that this will be important for REF. It was agreed that clear, easy to use guidance is needed. Sacha Jones will provide an update at the next meeting.

3. **Future of Scholarly Communications (item 8 of 25 May 2023 meeting):** Sam Moore mentioned that Lynne Meehan, the Research Services Manager in the Office of Scholarly Communication, is leading a communications review and this work will form part of the progress in this space. Alastair Flett suggested that the Future of Scholarly Communications be an agenda item for next meeting.

4 Open access updates

— ORSC-112

a) UKRI open access policy update

Alexia Sutton provided a summary of the recently announced UKRI open access policy updates and the implications of these.

Regarding long form publications arising from UKRI funded research, the policy, which commences 1 January 2024, requires that either the final Version of Record or the Accepted version be openly available with a Creative Commons licence within a maximum of 12 months from publication. Alexia Sutton described the process when a payment for gold open access is required: this will be a two-stage process whereby the institution applies to UKRI for the funding but will be required to make the payment to the publisher and apply for reimbursement from UKRI. UKRI will have a £3.5 million dedicated fund for eligible publications, to be shared across UK institutions. The intention is to use the University of Cambridge institutional open access fund to make the eligible payments prior to reimbursement from UKRI. Alexia Sutton noted that there are still questions about how the policy and UKRI fund will work; there is a webinar next week from which we are hoping to find out more.

Regarding the block grant that the University receives for journal articles, Alexia Sutton confirmed that this will cease 31 Mar 2025. We don't yet know what happens after that. She also confirmed that UKRI will stop financial support for payment of individual article processing charges in all hybrid and transformative journals from 31 December 2024. This gives us a bit of lead time and we do have the Self-Archiving Policy to ensure compliance with their open access policy for UKRI funded researchers. However, Alexia Sutton mentioned the problem of a declining number of accepted manuscripts being uploaded to Elements, a similar trend being experienced by other UK Universities, and this is being investigated. She stressed that for REF, additionally, it is much easier if we are receiving manuscripts under the Self-Archiving Policy. In summary, the UKRI changes to funding are a risk and we need to plan financially for how we will proceed.

Regarding the decline in deposits, Amy Orben stressed the importance of keeping awareness of the deposit requirements alive, for example by having posters in departments and around the University. Currently there are researchers that are missing knowledge around open access requirements, and having resources in view would help to raise awareness. It was agreed that anything we can do to help should be investigated.

Ronan Daly commented that the UKRI book fund seemed a small amount and others agreed. Alexia Sutton commented that this should be monitored, working with UKRI as necessary. She added that we do have the Self-Archiving Policy which could be considered for extension to other output types. Mandy Hill confirmed that the industry expectation was that it is not enough money and they have fed this back to UKRI. She also stressed that if institutional Self-Archiving Policy routes, with a 12 month or less embargo were to be followed for long form

publications, publishers would take a harder line against this (than with the journal policy) because the economics will not work.

Alastair Flett affirmed that we need to await further guidance regarding long form publications and, regarding the changes to block grant funding, there will be work to do over the next 12 months to consider the way ahead.

b) Annual review of the University's Open Access Publications Policy Framework

Alexia Sutton introduced the paper which has tracked changes of the proposed amendments to the existing Open Access Publications Policy Framework. She noted that the document is intended to be reviewed annually, which is why it is being looked at now. At the start of the paper, the six key changes being proposed are summarised and Alexia Sutton went through each of these. The following points were agreed in the meeting: 1 (deposit old versions of the policy in Apollo and provide a link in the introduction), 3 (add the University's institutional open access fund and Self-Archiving Policy to Responsibilities of the University in Section vii.), 5 (also update this Section vii. to make more explicit that payments for gold open access in hybrid journals is unlikely) and 6 (a new clause added to the Responsibilities of Researchers section for researchers to acknowledge their research funding and link it in Elements where it is possible to do so).

There were two main points of discussion. Amy Orben queried why, in the 'Position statement', there isn't explicit encouragement to deposit all outputs, not just those related to funding or REF, especially as at a particular time a researcher may not know whether an output would be needed for REF in the future? Alexia Sutton explained that in the past prioritisation happened because of volume of outputs. There was agreement that it was important to have wording which would future proof the policy and that the core ethos should be to make outputs available where possible whether there is research funding or not. Mandy Hill commented that a simplification of wording makes sense but noted that including all books in this would not be possible.

Alexia Sutton asked whether there were any comments related to the suggestion to remove the existing statement '*and the University recognises that the publication in gold OA journals might be the most sustainable way to support OA mid to long term*'. Mandy Hill pointed out that for journals publishing, gold open access provides a sustainable future. She suggested that this statement be left in for this version, with perhaps looking at something a bit more robust on the next revision. If it were taken out now it would concern her. Others commented on the non-committal nature of the statement and questioned what message was originally intended. A few suggestions were then made, such as keeping the statement but making it more meaningful. Sam Moore offered that perhaps it meant that the landscape was shifting to the Version of Record being made openly available. Sara Hennessy stressed that the statement should be clarified so that an academic could read it and know what it means. It was decided that Alexia Sutton would implement the agreed changes to the document, provide some drafts of options where agreement hadn't been reached, and circulate the updated file to the group for comment.

Action: Alexia Sutton to re-circulate the document to the committee, with options where agreement hadn't been reached in the meeting.

c) Preprints deposit service

Sara Hennessy and Siddharth Soni left the meeting.

Alexia Sutton introduced the Preprints Deposit Service paper, which had been prepared by herself and the Open Research Systems Manager, Agustina Martínez García. The paper provides a background to preprint deposits at the University, outlines the service currently being developed and describes the next steps for implementing it. There were some supportive

comments made by the group. Before leaving the meeting Sara Hennessy noted that the Education field doesn't have a dedicated preprint server. Amy Orben commented on the usefulness of being able to track how a university output has developed in time especially if linking between versions is able to be automated. Emma Gilby mentioned that, as there is not a preprint culture in the arts and humanities, it will be important to clearly define what is being offered.

5 Open Access Books Working Group report

— ORSC-113

Sam Moore briefly introduced the recommendations arising from the Open Access Books Working Group. The resulting discussion touched on the high cost of book processing charges which can exceed £12,000, gold versus green, rights retention in relation to books and book chapters, the sometimes-blurred transition between book types and the avoidance of the monograph debate inheriting open access problems associated with journals. It was recommended that for phase two a group be convened wider in membership than the original group (which had been composed of library and research support staff from the University). Mandy Hill mentioned that CUP&A do a lot of studies into the issues raised and noted that publishers are struggling with these issues as much as librarians and researchers. She suggested that it would be better for all group types to work it out together as then they would be much more likely to come up with a sustainable solution which would work for everybody. She noted that rights retention won't work for books. Sacha Jones added that there is a huge research culture piece around this topic too. Ronan Daly supported the inclusion of academics on the working group. Alastair Flett thanked the group for this discussion and in summary confirmed that for phase two different stakeholders would need to be involved.

6 Open research at CRASSH

— ORSC-114

Joanna Page started by noting that she had been asked by ORSC to present a short paper for this meeting on activities related to open research taking place at the University's Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH). Sacha Jones mentioned that resourcing seemed to be the biggest challenge. Joanna informed the group that they do have access to funds and would like to build on the events taking place in Cambridge and convene something more national or international in stature. The resourcing problem relates to staff capacity, and she would like to see a working team emerging with the capacity to take initiatives forward to the next, bigger stage. Sacha Jones suggested that perhaps staff from CRASSH, Research Culture and OSC need to renew discussions to find the way forward. Emma Gilby added that perhaps if there is money available, they could advertise for someone to lead on this. Mandy Hill suggested that CUP&A could get involved and potentially make some resources available. Alastair Flett suggested off-line conversations around this.

Action: Staff from CRASSH, Research Culture, OSC and CUP&A continue conversations off-line regarding resourcing further work in this space.

7 Horizon scan

— ORSC-115

Sacha Jones briefly introduced the horizon scan that was undertaken by the Open Research Operation Group. She confirmed the actions being asked of the Committee, namely whether:

- i. they agree with the item placements in the high/medium/low prioritisation lists;
- ii. they have identified additional emerging issues, not already listed.

As the time left in the meeting was short, it was decided to place a copy of the paper in the ORSC MS Teams channel and all to provide their feedback in the thread.

Action: Debbie Hansen to place the horizon scan paper in the ORSC MS Teams channel; all to give their responses in the thread.

This was a starred item not for discussion during the meeting.

11 Items to be referred to the Research Policy Committee (RPC)

The following papers will be forwarded to the RPC:

1. The approved minutes from the last meeting.
2. A copy of these minutes once approved.

12 Any Other Business

Amy Orben updated the group about progress with membership for the UK Reproducibility Network. She is the local network lead for the Cambridge hub and is working with others to apply for University approval for University of Cambridge to formally join this body. Many other institutions have formal membership including the Universities of Oxford, Edinburgh and University College London. Amy Orben will report back during the next meeting.

Alastair Flett read the group a statement from Steve Russell, which announced his resignation, with considerable sadness, from ORSC. In the statement, Steve Russell mentioned how incredibly proud he was of the progress the group has made in championing the open research agenda. He thanked the group for their hard work and support. Alastair Flett registered the thanks to Steve Russell for all he has done for the committee over the years and the best wishes to him from the committee. Alastair Flett mentioned that over the next few weeks there would be discussions around appointing a new Chair.

Next Meeting: ~~Thursday, 15 February 2024, 14:00–15:30, MS Teams.~~¹ Thursday, 23 May, 14:00–15:30, MS Teams.

Open Research Steering Committee Secretary:

Dr Debbie Hansen - dh554@cam.ac.uk

Office of Scholarly Communication, University Library, Cambridge, CB3 9DR.

¹ 11 Apr 2024: The February meeting was cancelled.