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Loughborough University Open Research Position Statement

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Loughborough University Position Statement on Open Research

What is open research?

Open Research (also known as Open Science) is the practice of research with the bold aim of maximising the ability of others to collaborate and contribute, achieved by making research data, lab notes and other research processes and outputs freely, or 'FAIRly' (findable, accessible, interoperable and reproducible¹) available under terms that enable reuse, redistribution and reproduction of the research and its underlying data and methods (adapted from the Foster Open Science definition). Open Research encompasses many elements, including open access to publications, 'FAIR' data, open methods and open software, and, as a consequence, places inclusivity at the heart of research practice.

Loughborough's commitment to Open Research

At Loughborough we have an excellent, though hitherto uncelebrated, track record of engagement with the 'Open' agenda. Our Institutional Repository was established in 2005 and by 2019 we were in the top five institutions globally in terms of the percentage of our outputs available on Open Access². In the 2019 CWTS Leiden Ranking on the proportion of our outputs available openly in Web of Science, Loughborough ranks 13th in the world³. Our Data Repository was established in 2015 and has been shortlisted for two national awards. The two repositories were brought together to form a single Research Repository in 2019 by which point they had reached 7.8M downloads in combination. Whilst some of Loughborough's activity has so far been driven by the UK's external policy environment (e.g., the REF and UKRI Open Access and Data Management policies), this position statement sets out our Open Research ambitions, guided, for the first time, by our institutional values and research strategy. It seeks to celebrate and build upon our leading status in the area of Open Research, which will, in turn, ensure that our research is positioned to achieve the highest levels of quality, visibility and impact in the future.

This position statement keeps true to our scholarly communication principles, including emphasis on the importance of citation. When conducting your research and choosing where to place outputs, consider readership, rigour and reach - and in that order:

1. **Readership.** Who may benefit from accessing your research plans, methods, data and publications? How might you bring your research to the attention of your target audience?
2. **Rigour.** Are you working to the highest levels of research integrity? Have you documented and shared your processes and data? Does your publication outlet have high editorial standards, offer rigorous peer review and, if appropriate, have an international editorial board?
3. **Reach.** Are your processes and outputs as visible and accessible as possible to allow your target audience to find, use and cite your work? Do your publication outlets have international reach and a liberal open access policy or option?

This position statement also recognises how research practice is in transition from traditions that have been established over a century or more to a future that may be radically different and here within a decade. Whilst the final destination may not yet be clear, we are committed to supporting

¹ FORCE11. FAIR Data Principles. <https://www.force11.org/group/fairgroup/fairprinciples>

² Source: Open Knowledge Project, Curtin University. Based on any output for which a free to read copy is available according to Unpaywall.

³ See: <https://www.leidenranking.com/ranking/2019/list> Proportion of Open Access Publications PP(OA)

our staff and research students along the journey, adapting our institutional processes as we go so that we move forward with confidence and in an orderly fashion.

Overarching principles

Our CALIBRE (Collective Ambition at Loughborough for Building Research Excellence) Framework commits us to enhance quality, impact and visibility, while celebrating research excellence, wherever it is found. This position statement serves as recognition of the powerful and distinctive contribution to pursuit of these aims that can be played by Open Research practices that prize rigour, reproducibility, transparency, accessibility, and speed of publication.

- Openness improves RESEARCH QUALITY by emphasising rigour and reproducibility as embodied in pre-registration, open methods and open data.
- Openness accelerates RESEARCH IMPACT through prompt publication of accessible and more readily understandable outputs, and through engagement with the communities on which our research impacts.
- Openness enhances RESEARCH VISIBILITY by making the whole research lifecycle more transparent and accessible

Open Research Next Steps

Our Open Research culture will be characterised by growth in three broad areas of activity:

- Open, or FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable and reproducible), outputs including publications and data, supported by the launch of an enhanced Research Repository in 2019.
- Open processes including pre-registration of research plans, open methods and open-source software.
- Institutional policies which provide the tools and support for researchers to engage with the Open Research agenda and which incentivise engagement in a way that acknowledges the diversity of our research and its stakeholders.

Across these three areas, we have identified five priorities for the period 2020-2025. These priorities will be taken forward by reconstituting the Research Committee's Open Access Advisory Working Group, to form an Open Research Implementation Group. The newly constituted group will create an action plan and report on progress to Research Committee. As Chair of Research Committee, the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research) will be responsible for the delivery of this action plan.

Area 1: Open or FAIR outputs

Priority 1: Open access to research outputs

We do not seek to prohibit the use of any particular outlets, nor do we wish to sustain the current practice of paying supplementary fees to secure gold open access in journals to which we already pay an institutional subscription. We will, however, ask researchers to assess journal open access policies, alongside bibliometric indicators, to inform decisions on where to publish. We will make this information readily available. In so doing, we will build on existing high levels of engagement with the Institutional Repository by committing to deposit of the full-text of all primary research outputs (including on closed access where this is unavoidable) from 2020.

While recognising the legitimate reservations that some researchers have about current open access publication options, we will improve understanding of these options and raise awareness of the role

of pre-print servers, open peer review and how copyright licences affect their rights to their own published works. We will also seek to enable academics to retain the copyright in their outputs giving them the freedom to make them quickly and freely available to as wide an audience as possible.

This focus on broader issues will accommodate, but not be limited to, compliance with external drivers such as REF2027 requirements on open access to monographs and Plan S for publications emanating from publicly funded research.

We will also play our part as an institution in supporting national and international initiatives to deliver greater open access to academic outputs.

Priority 2: Open data

The success of our data repository reveals how a significant number of Loughborough researchers are already committed to and benefitting from the sharing of research data. Some researchers also share their data in other subject or funder repositories. We note that many funders and journal publishers already require researchers to share their data and such expectations may increase. We aim to make ethical data sharing an established part of scholarly communication for all Loughborough researchers, beginning with greater access to training for all, both face-to-face and online, from PhD students to our most senior academics. We will promote engagement in data sharing by introducing an Open Research strand to the University Fellowships scheme with the intention that every School has at least one FAIR data champion and access to examples of best practice in an appropriate disciplinary context.

Area 2: Open processes

Priority 3: Open methods

Currently, relatively few researchers have actively recognised the importance of pre-registration of research plans, open methods and open-source software to support robust and reproducible research. Those who have engaged have seen how this is a critical element of a culture of research integrity and quality. Some researchers have begun pre-registration of research. We will increase instances of researchers sharing methods, materials and analysis code, with the aim of making this an established part of the research process. This will be achieved via greater access to training for all, both face-to-face and online, from PhD students to our most senior academics. This will include guidance on subject-specific platforms and services. We will promote engagement in open methods by introducing an Open Research strand to the University Fellowships scheme with the intention of developing open methods champions and enabling access to examples of best practice in an appropriate disciplinary context. Library services will provide support for the sharing of methods, materials and code via the Research Repository building on the facilities already in place for publications and data. We will also play our part as an institution in supporting national and international initiatives on reproducibility.

Area 3: Institutional Policies

Priority 4: Culture change including communication and staff development

Supporting staff and research students to engage with new open policies and practices is essential if the University is to make the transformation described here successfully. Loughborough will be at the forefront of creating a successful programme of engagement and training for open research to ensure all researchers are best able to take advantage of the opportunities it presents. Without compensating actions, engagement with Open Research in the manner proposed will raise workloads and so recommendations on what to stop doing form an equally important part of this change in culture.

Priority 5: Rewarding openness

Openness will be acknowledged as an important means of achieving our strategic aims for research quality, visibility and impact and, alongside traditional indicators of these vitally important aims, will be equally valued in recruitment, probation, PDR, reward and promotion. Engagement with Open Research will be monitored and celebrated from the level of individual researchers all the way to the institution as a whole. At Loughborough, our Responsible Metrics Statement has served us well over the period when we have introduced much greater use of bibliometric indicators. We will revise the Statement to ensure Open Research outputs are also considered in fair and responsible ways. In particular, it is recognised that different disciplines have different opportunities to engage with open research practices, and no-one should be penalised for this. We believe that openness is a means to an end and not the end in itself. Our ultimate aim is to enhance research quality, visibility and impact and our performance assessments will reflect this.

Open Research Policy Working Group

October 2019