



University of Essex



Open Research Position Statement

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Publication date:	May 2022
Amended:	April 2025
Review date:	April 2028

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Open Research Position Statement

1. Purpose of the statement

- 1.1 The mission of the University is one of excellence in education and research, for the benefit of individuals and communities. Our aim is to produce new knowledge from research that is open and conducted with integrity, carried out by researchers who are ambitious, creative, and collaborative.
- 1.2 The University is committed to undertaking high quality research in an environment of high standards of research integrity, governance, and good practice. We seek to operate an open research environment, enabling access to, and sharing and replication of, our research. The University is committed to disseminating its research and scholarship as widely as possible to contribute to society as well as to academic advancement.
- 1.3 This Statement summarises our commitment and approach to Open Research. We explain what it is and why it is important. Our statement is informed by external frameworks, including the [YERUN Statement on Open Science](#), the UKRN's paper [Open Research as an Imperative for Institutions](#), and the [Concordat on Open Research Data](#) (.pdf), and is underpinned by more detailed University policies on [Open Access](#), [Research Data Management](#), and [Research Integrity](#).
- 1.4 Research should be 'as open as possible, as closed as necessary'. Some research outputs cannot be openly available due to ethical, legal, or commercial restrictions.

2. What is Open Research?

- 2.1 The terms 'Open Research' and 'Open Science' are often used interchangeably to refer to openness and transparency within the whole research lifecycle. [UNESCO](#) defines open science as follows:
"Open science is a set of principles and practices that aim to make scientific research from all fields accessible to everyone for the benefits of scientists and society as a whole. Open science is about making sure not only that scientific knowledge is accessible but also that the production of that knowledge itself is inclusive, equitable and sustainable."
The University accepts this definition, but has adopted the term 'Open Research' as this is more inclusive to all disciplines.
- 2.2 Open Research is a set of principles and practices that aim to make as much of the research process as possible, including final outputs, freely accessible and reusable, maximising the possibility of public benefit. Consideration should be given to the best route to achieve public benefit, and development of commercial propositions may be necessary to enable partners to facilitate the dissemination of outputs, as outlined in the [Intellectual IP Commercialisation Policy](#) (.pdf).
- 2.3 Open Research is relevant to all researchers, although the applications will vary according to discipline and research context.

2.4 The basic principles of open research are:

- to make publications available open access
- to make underlying data relating to publications openly available under the FAIR Data principles
- to share protocols, methodologies, preprints, software, and code
- to share negative results to prevent unnecessary replication of research
- to establish rights for (archival) source material to be digitised and shared where possible
- to apply appropriate licences to open material e.g. Creative Commons
- to use persistent identifiers consistently throughout, e.g. DOI and ORCID, to aid discoverability and re-use
- to exploit online tools to aid collaboration including blogging, social media, and non-traditional bibliometrics (altmetrics)
- to recognise the importance and unique value of different knowledge systems and incorporate the expertise of people outside the immediate or easily reached research environment. This can manifest in different ways, including citizen science, and community engagement work.

2.5 Many of these principles of Open Research are increasingly aligned with the priorities of funders, research organisations and academic publishers, and with the expectations of the public.

3. Benefits of Open Research

3.1 For some researchers, practicing open research is already second nature. Others may feel it adds another stage to the research process, but there are significant benefits for both researchers and the research community. However, not everything can or should be made openly accessible, and any form of open research should not be at the expense of research quality or the researcher's own interests.

3.2 Practicing open research:

- demonstrates that research is robust
- helps other researchers to reproduce results.
- helps other researchers to avoid replicating research
- ensures that researchers retain access to their own work in the long term
- enables faster dissemination and impact, helping to raise researchers' profiles
- extends the reach and impact of research outside academia
- enables different knowledge systems to be incorporated into research

- increases opportunities for collaboration
- increases chances of citations

4. Expectations of our Researchers

- 4.1 The University expects that all researchers will observe the highest standards of research integrity as set out in the [Research Integrity statement](#) and [Code of Good Research Practice \(.pdf\)](#).
- 4.2 Researchers have the freedom to choose the most appropriate means to disseminate research outputs and data (in all its forms); but within that free choice, we encourage all parts of the research process, including the final outputs and accompanying data, to be ‘as open as possible, as closed as necessary’.
- 4.3 The University expects its researchers to be open with other researchers and the public regarding their work and promote the open exchange of ideas and information. This may include:
 - ensuring all outputs are Open Access where possible, i.e. outputs should be discoverable, and free to read, download and search within, by anyone with an internet connection
 - making the underlying data relating to publications reusable and openly available using [FAIR](#) data principles where it is appropriate and possible
 - using collaborative approaches including blogging, releasing teaching materials and preprint deposit, where appropriate
 - ensuring Open Research requirements are considered when costing a research project, and throughout the project lifecycle
 - acting in accordance with the expectations of research funders, and within at least the minimum thresholds set by regulatory bodies. For example: Plan S, the UKRI Open Access Policy, UKRI’s Common Principles on Research Data, the Wellcome Trust Open Access Policy, and Horizon Europe
 - incorporating principles of openness throughout the research process wherever appropriate, including when developing and sustaining best practice in research engagement and impact, as outlined in the [Ethical Public Engagement Tool and Guidance \(.pdf\)](#).
- 4.4 We encourage our research community to explore the possibilities and benefits of using open practices in their research, to discuss their needs with us, and to draw on the available support outlined in section 5.
- 4.5 We encourage our research community to engage with groups such as the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN), drawing upon resources, expertise, good practice, and discussion forums to advance their own open research practices.

5. Support for Open Research

- 5.1 Support is provided by the Library and Cultural Services, and the Research and Enterprise Office. It includes technology platforms such as the University's Research Information System (RIS), Research Repository and Research Data Repository, help with funding for publishing gold Open Access, and training on a variety of open research principles and practices. Training is particularly delivered through our Network for Early Career Essex Researchers (Newcomers) and is also available on request (ressup@essex.ac.uk).
- 5.2 The Author Rights Retention Policy empowers authors to control the dissemination of their research outputs and simplifies both funder and REF compliance. The Policy provides a key mechanism for Essex research to be as open as possible, and as closed as necessary.
- 5.3 Library and Cultural Services are committed to enabling an open research environment at the University of Essex. This includes providing technologies, expertise, and platforms for open publications, promoting a research culture focused on open and inclusive research practices, and working across the sector to ensure Essex is a connected, collaborative part of the open research environment.
- 5.4 Please contact us at oapublish@essex.ac.uk if you want to know more about Open Research at the University and the support available.

Document Control Panel

Field	Description
Title	Open Research Position Statement
Policy Classification	Statement
Security Classification	Open
Security Rationale	None
Policy Manager Role	Open Research Development Librarian
Nominated Contact	oapublish@essex.ac.uk
Responsible UoE Section	Library and Cultural Services
Approval Body	Senate
Signed Off Date	May 2025
Publication Status	Published
Published Date	May 2025
Last Review Date	April 2025
Minimum Review Frequency	Reviewed three yearly, or after major policy changes.
Review Date	April 2028
UoE Identifier	0164

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