



Position Statement on Open Research

Introduction

Open Research, also known as Open Science, aims at accessibility, transparency, and collaboration in the Arts, Humanities, and Sciences. Its goal is to enable free access to scholarly information, data, methods, materials, and publications, thereby accelerating progress and fostering global collaboration.

A number of national and international organisations, including UNESCO¹, the EU², and the governments of Ireland³, the Netherlands⁴, and others, actively support Open Research as a benefit to society. They see Open Research as a means to accelerate discoveries and make access more equitable.

In keeping with this, our position statement outlines the University's commitment to Open Research, recognising its pivotal role in advancing scientific knowledge and addressing societal challenges.

Core Values of Open Research

The University's support for Open Research (OR) is grounded in:

1. **Transparency:** Open practices enhance academic integrity, sharing outputs allows for greater scrutiny and validation of results while ensuring that research processes are clear and robust, reducing the risk of bias, error, and irreproducible results.
2. **Collaboration:** OR breaks down institutional and geographical barriers, enabling a more inclusive global scholarly community. It facilitates cross-disciplinary collaboration by supporting researchers to build on one another's work.
3. **Equity and Accessibility:** Researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and the general public can be actively involved in, and benefit from, discoveries in the sciences, arts, and humanities, regardless of their affiliations or financial resources. By making research processes and outputs as open as possible, OR democratises access to knowledge and ensures that the subjects of research can use that knowledge for their benefit.
4. **Efficiency and Innovation:** Open sharing of scholarly outputs accelerates the pace of discovery and reduces duplication of effort. It encourages more efficient use of resources, enabling researchers and practitioners to focus on creating new knowledge rather than re-inventing solutions.
5. **Public Trust and Accountability:** OR holds researchers accountable to the communities they serve, ensuring that the knowledge produced serves the broader public interest. It also enhances public trust in research by making research outputs and processes available to all.

1) UNESCO: Open science - Making science more accessible, inclusive and equitable for the benefit of all, <https://www.unesco.org/en/open-science>, accessed 12/11/2024

2) The EU's open science policy, https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/open-science_en, accessed 12/11/2024

3) National Action Plan for Open Research, <https://norf.ie/national-action-plan/>, accessed 06/12/2024

4) Open Science Netherlands, <https://www.openscience.nl/en>, accessed 06/12/2024

Our Commitment to Open Research

The University of Edinburgh is committed to enabling its staff and students to undertake their research while enacting the principles of Open Research. This means we will:

- **Support Open Access:** We require the Open Access publication of research findings, ensuring that our work is freely available to all.
- **Promote and Enable Sharing of All Forms of Research Output:** We encourage our researchers to share all their research outputs, including; pre-prints, data, methodologies, materials, and code. Making outputs open and appropriately licensed, enables others to reproduce, verify, and build upon our work.
- **Encourage Open Peer Review:** We support transparent peer review processes, where reviews are open and publicly available, fostering an environment of constructive feedback and trust in the research process.
- **Facilitate and Encourage Pre-Registration:** We encourage all researchers at all career stages to adopt pre-registration whenever possible, providing tools and training to support this.
- **Provide Services, Training and Support:** We will continue to provide platforms, resources and training to our researchers, supporting them to adopt best practices and reap the benefits of OR.
- **Recognise and Reward Open Research Practice:** We will recognise the efforts of our researchers in adopting the values/principles of Open Research through our researcher assessment processes, e.g., recruitment, annual review, and promotion.
- **Community Involvement in Research:** We will develop policy and infrastructure to support the inclusive, equitable and sustainable production of open knowledge, such as novel participatory research methods.
- **Align with Global Standards:** We will align our policies with international standards, such as the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) and CARE (Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, Ethics) data principles, to ensure that our research outputs meet global expectations for ethical openness and reuse. The University is already a signatory to, among other things, DORA and CoARA, as well as the Concordat on Open Research Data.

Challenges and Considerations

While we strongly advocate for Open Research, we know that challenges remain, including concerns around intellectual property, data privacy, and the resources required to make outputs openly available. We are committed to addressing these challenges by developing policies and best practices that balance openness with ethical, legal, and practical considerations, and that incentivise open behaviours.

Conclusion

Open Research is a transformative approach that enhances academic progress, innovation, and public engagement. By embracing Open Research, we aim to contribute to a future where knowledge is shared openly and equitably, thereby maximising the benefits to society as a whole.