

# ORCC UKRN Primer on Open Access



Authors: Writing original draft: [Ilkay Holt](#), [Nicki Clarkson](#), [Anna Grigson](#),  
Writing, reviewing and editing: [Valerie McCutcheon](#), [Sofia Fernandes](#), Alex Clarke,  
[Kate Ehrig-Page](#)  
Conceptualization: [Helen Clare](#)

This is an introductory guide for those working and considering working in the area of open access. It was drafted by members of the [Open Research Competencies Coalition](#).

## What is working in Open Access?

Open Access (OA) refers to research that is published as digital, online, free of charge for reading, and free to re-use or share. [See [Open Access: a Primer from UKRN](#)]

Removing 'paywalls' and making research freely available to read helps ideas to spread more rapidly, and supports more equitable access to research. Making publications available to re-use facilitates computational research practices, as well as enabling business to build on ideas. Open access is an essential part of open research (also known as open science), the way research is conducted in an open, transparent and collaborative manner. [See Open Research primer]

Because open access is so important to open research, many governments, research funders and research organisations have policies that require research publications to be made open access. These policies include journal articles and conference proceedings as well as longform outputs such as monographs and book chapters. Other research outputs including preprints, software, theses, artefacts and datasets can also be made openly available. [See RDM primer]

An open licence, often a [Creative Commons](#) licence, is applied to a research output to specify reuse rights and permissions.

## UK context

Keeping up with the major policies and trends in the open access landscape would be very beneficial for the person in the relevant post.

The UK [Research Excellence Framework \(REF\)](#) includes an open access policy, which publications must comply with to be eligible for assessment.

Research funders may have policies that require publications arising from funded research to be published open access. For example, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) [Open Access Policy](#)

applies to peer-reviewed research articles submitted for publication from 1 April 2022, and (for the first time) monographs, book chapters and edited collections published from 1 January 2024.

Some UK funder policies, including UKRI, align with [Plan S](#) supported by [cOAlition S](#), an international consortium of research funding and performing organisations. Plan S is an initiative for open access publishing and requires that publications must be published in compliant open access journals or platforms, and made openly available immediately on publication.

[Jisc](#) is an enabler for open access policy development, engaging with HEIs, sector negotiations with publishers (moving spend from subscription (read) access to cover both read and open access publishing), and other routes and tools for open access in the UK.

Rights retention mechanisms to facilitate open access via self-archiving are becoming widely adopted in the UK by both funders and [research organisations](#), enabling immediate open access via repositories without a publisher-mandated embargo. Rights retention is also a driver for Plan S as a strong part of their [strategy](#). [See [Rights and Retention Strategy: a Primer from UKRN](#)]

### ***How might someone get involved?***

There are no strictly-required qualifications or background knowledge for someone wanting to work in open access.

Many people come from a background of working in libraries or information management. It can also be useful to have knowledge of research practices and the research lifecycle, gained by doing research (in any field) or by working in research administration roles. Technical expertise or a grounding in scholarly publishing and licence management are also useful, but it is also possible to come from a different background and make a success of the role.

Strong transferable skills (communication, time management, prioritisation etc) are probably the most important skill set for a job in this area, combined with an ability to work in a rapidly changing landscape and a level of comfort with uncertain situations.

### **On the job**

Roles which involve Open Access knowledge and skills often sit within the library or research services, and work in the areas of research support, repository services, open research and scholarly publishing . Typical activities for this role include but are not limited to;

- Understanding funder and other policy requirements
- Outreach and engagement with researchers and stakeholders
- Supporting researchers through guidance, delivering training, and answering enquiries
- Disseminating research outputs
- Applying publisher, funder and local policies on depositing in repositories
- Providing knowledge of copyright and rights statements

- Performing licensing services, applying open licences
- Evaluating OA publisher agreements and initiatives
- Managing budget for open access- e.g. organising payment of processing charges and approving articles included in publishing agreements
- Compiling financial reports and compliance checks
- Managing repository services
- Managing metadata for OA articles and other research outputs

## Looking for Open Access roles?

Many roles based in research organisations are advertised on [jobs.ac.uk](https://www.jobs.ac.uk). You might find searching using words like open access, or broader terms like open research, open science or research support yields results. If you are unsure where to start when searching for a job you could look under [Library Services, Data & Information Management](#) as many jobs are advertised in this category but be aware jobs could come under several headings. Jobs are also advertised on the mailing lists listed below and beyond.

Some examples of job descriptions are provided below:

- JISC [Open access support coordinator](#)
- The British Library [Assistant Digital Services Specialist](#)

### **Short experience videos**

[Working in Research Support](#) - Kate O'Neill, Research Services Librarian at the University of Sheffield.

### **Open access communities and resources**

Competencies and skills

- NASIG <https://www.nasig.org/Competencies-Scholarly-Communication>
- FOSTER Learning Paths <https://www.fosteropenscience.eu/>

Courses and learning resources

- OpenAIRE Training <https://www.openaire.eu/tag/training>
- FOSTER Open Access resources including courses <https://www.fosteropenscience.eu/foster-taxonomy/open-access>
- OAPEN Open Books Toolkit <https://www.oabooks-toolkit.org>
- CILIP Training and CPDs <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/TrainingandCPD> (members-only)

Mailing lists - please check eligibility criteria in the descriptions of the lists.

- UKCORR Mail List <https://www.ukcorr.org/membership/email-list/>
- JISC Repositories <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=JISC-REPOSITORIES>

Communities

- JISC Digital Research Community Group <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/get-involved/digital-research-community-group>

- RLUK Networks <https://www.rluk.ac.uk/strategic-activities/>
- SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) Europe <https://sparcopen.org/>
- UKSG <https://www.uksg.org>
- ARMA Special Interest Groups <https://arma.ac.uk/special-interest-groups>
- CILIP Careers <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/JobsandCareers>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).