Making Open Science the "New Normal" in a Large and Diverse Institution: The Road so Far.

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Introduction

Attempts to offer a fundamental change in research culture and practice are all the more difficult when the environments are large and complex as the University of Edinburgh. Open Science (OS) advocates must reach almost 5000 academic staff and more than 15000 postgraduate students, staff and students are spread across 16 Colleges consisting of 16 Schools and more than 30 different Research Centres and Institutes.

In response to these difficulties, the University of Edinburgh has developed an Open Research Roadmap to build on the Open Science and communities at universities: a roadmap for cultural change. The Roadmap both informs our activities and measures our progress towards making Open Research the "New Normal" for Edinburgh researchers.

Undoubtedly, we are making good progress in some areas. However, despite our best efforts, understanding of what OS is and what researchers are meant to do should improve.

Future of Scholarly Publishing

Open Access (OA) Publication is well established at Edinburgh with 89% of 8 publications OA according to the 2023 Research Outputs. In January 2022, Edinburgh became the first university in the UK to adopt an OA outputs retention policy. This policy enables Edinburgh authors cannot be forced by publishers to surrender copyright to their work and gives us the right to publish the authors accepted manuscript in our OA repository online.

Edinburgh Diamond supports staff to publish fully open journals and monographs. The service currently hosts 22 journals and monographs. OpenAccess Edinburgh Diamond steadily increasing, but expansion is currently limited by a lack of staff resources.

Culture Change

Culture change is central to achieving the University’s Open Science ambitions. Without it, practical change will be impossible to achieve. This is why we focus our greatest efforts on awareness raising, education, and training. Good OA is especially necessary when working with early career researchers who are usually adept at new practices before their research is even published.

- The Research Culture Alliance Plan: Research Ethics Policy: Statement on the Responsible Use of Research Metrics (ORI) and, in consultation with OS, to develop a new OA policy to address.

One, particularly useful initiative in helping us to track progress is the University’s Internal Research Culture Index. It provides a useful measure of the impact of OA work and highlights those areas where we need to focus our resources.

- The first survey was conducted in 2020 and the second in 2022. Comparing results across these two years, reveals definite progress, unfortunately the impact of COVID has significantly reduced the number of responses to the second survey. We will use this information to re-examine our priorities and strategy.

Research Integrity

The University has prioritized the development of good practice across many aspects of research ethics and integrity and in December 2022 adopted its new comprehensive E coli Policy. Research integrity, openness, and transparency are recognized as core values of the institution. This policy is explicit in addressing.

The role of OS in supporting research integrity and identifying potential areas of risk in the full range of research that the university undertakes. It will take some time and considerable effort to change that. However, the Library Research Support (LSRG) Teaching is incorporated into the Open Science Group (OSUG) and Research Communication Group (OCC) and will communicate all aspects of OS as research to ensure good practice in research. A key part of this will be embedding OS in the research ethics and integrity training that all research staff and students are required to complete.

Recognition, Reward & Next-Generation Metrics

The University Research Culture Assessment Plan has committed to "Reducing reliance on metrics and embracing the complex CVs". This part of our strategy for ensuring researchers and research support staff receive fair recognition and rewards for their work.

In this Statement on the Responsible Use of Research Metrics the University of Edinburgh has "agreed to promote a broad range of research outputs and to avoid focusing on the metrics of research and the metrics of research that directly affect the research evaluation and assessment undertaken at the University. For example, the university subscribes to Altmetric, which monitors social media activity, as well as other metrics that measure the impact of research publications. As a result, researchers are encouraged to publish their work in open-access journals, and the metrics that are used to evaluate their work are those that are most relevant to their research and their fields of study. By doing this, we aim to encourage a culture of open access and to highlight the importance of research outputs that are not measured by impact factors or other traditional metrics. This is consistent with the University of Edinburgh’s commitment to Open Science (OS), which seeks to make research data and resources more accessible and reusable, and to promote the use of non-traditional metrics such as altmetrics and social media metrics.

This is because identifying equitable ways of assessing researchers’ contributions to research is difficult and needs to be standardized across institutions before it can be widely adopted. More consistent recognition of work not directly connected to research, such as education and community engagement, is also needed, and is particularly important for early career researchers.

References

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