**Open Research Working Group**

**Survey of Open Research Practices**

**About the Open Research Working Group**

A working group has been set at the request of the General Board to develop a position statement on open research on behalf of the University. The working group, which reports to Research Policy Committee and includes representatives from each School, central services and the postdoctoral community, is chaired by Professor Richard Penty (Master of Sidney Sussex College / Department of Engineering).

This work will begin with a survey to capture evidence and to consult over existing practices and perceptions of open research in different academic disciplines. The findings will help the group better understand issues and opportunities associated with open research, and to help steer future initiatives like policy, infrastructure and service development and information.

The group starts from the premise that research practices and perceptions of open research differ widely across the collegiate university and any future position statement on open research will need to reflect that diversity.

Open research is a broad spectrum of activities and **the working group is not seeking to make any value judgements or to determine academic practice**. Its remit is to help develop a deeper understanding of current practice – what is already happening in research – and to consider what an institutional position on open research could look like at a university like Cambridge, and how the University can best support its researchers in this regard.

Using the evidence gathered, the group will help steer the development of support for open research activities, including support to help meet funder expectations.

**About Open Research**

The working group starts from the premise that there are many different definitions of open research. A brief summary might describe open research as a philosophy and movement that embodies the goal of opening access to research outcomes to increase collaboration and access to knowledge. Open research can also help underpin the reproducibility of research and research integrity.

Open research is reflected in the principles adopted today by many research funders that research and the findings of research should be more freely available to the public.

**Open research does not assume everything can or should be made openly accessible**; indeed advance planning and management of research data (including primary sources) is an intrinsic part of the protocols of open research intended to ensure proper management of rights, including the interests of authors and subjects.

There are many elements to open research and not all are relevant or equally attractive to all disciplines. For instance, open access to large-scale digitised research resources, like historic archives, are valuable to the arts, humanities and social sciences; and open access to the most up to date biomedical findings are highly relevant to medical research and clinical practice.

Equally, free public access to research findings is not always possible or appropriate for a range of ethical (e.g. pertaining to sensitive personal data), legal (e.g. pertaining to third-party rights, like copyright) or other reasons (e.g. patents and other commercial interests).

It is worth noting that European discussions in this area use the term 'open science' which incorporates all scholarship. The working group is using the more inclusive term, open research, that has greater potential to reflect the breadth of academic activity at the University inclusive of all subjects. The working group is committed to drawing out examples of Open Research practices in different disciplines and to understanding different concerns and aspirations about open research.

A useful typology on ‘openness in research’[[1]](#footnote-1) identifies three pillars of open research: open content, open infrastructure and open development. In this survey, our main focus is on open content. Open development, which includes concepts of open peer review and open educational practices, is largely **out of scope of this consultation**.

**About the Survey**

The survey is intended to gather information and evidence about current open research practices in the University and to learn more about perceptions of open research by individuals and groups. The working group is sensitive to the wide disciplinary, and sub-disciplinary, experience and views of open research, including different views about open access. This is one of the reasons why the survey is being disseminated via each School representative on the working group so discipline-specific views can be captured. The survey is open to all; individual and group responses are welcome. The working group is also keen to hear from researchers at different career stages. Given there is a relationship between open access and the next REF, representatives on the group will also reach out for comment to REF Unit of Assessment leads [UoA] in their School.

The survey is being distributed through Qualtrics and responses will be collated using Qualtrics. The data will be held for a year to allow for any further analysis as necessary after which it will be deleted from the site. The results of this study will be written up for sharing with the Cambridge community with **any individual identifying information removed**. Results will only be shared at an individual question level to avoid participants being identifiable.

**Continuing with this survey indicates acceptance of these terms**. Participants can withdraw from the survey at any time by emailing info@osc.cam.ac.uk with their request.

The findings of the survey will be shared as an output of the working group. Further consultation will take place on the future wording of an institutional statement about open research arising from this survey.

The link to the open research survey is available here:

* **To fill in the survey as an individual go to:**

<https://cambridge.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_74E3gt5tm6AnEOx>

* **To fill in the survey on behalf of your research group or UoA go to**:

<https://cambridge.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6fj4dKE6kRuydhz>

The survey will close on **21 May 2018**.

A parallel consultation is taking place through Degree Committees on behalf of the Board of Graduate Studies about the principles and protocol that should govern options for access to doctoral e-theses. This falls outside of the remit of the Open Research Working Group, but the evidence gathered will be shared with the group to help inform the group’s overall understanding of open research issues.

Professor Richard Penty

Chair of the Open Research Working Group

1. Corrall, S., & Pinfield, S. (2014). Coherence of "Open" Initiatives in Higher Education and Research: Framing a Policy Agenda. In iConference 2014 Proceedings (p. 293 - 313). doi:10.9776/14085 <http://hdl.handle.net/2142/47316> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)