

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL OPEN RESEARCH POLICY

Summary	
<p>University of Bristol Open Research Policies. Overarching Open Research Policy and set of Sub-Policies and guidance documents on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Access • Data Sharing • Open Code • Pre-Registration. 	
Scope	
<i>University of Bristol staff and PGR students</i>	
Document Control	
Document Type	Policy
Owner Accountable	PVC Research and Enterprise
Owner Responsible	APVC Research Culture
Manager	Associate Director Research & Scholarly Communication, Library Services
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Related Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations	General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Freedom of Information (FOI)
Related policies, procedures, guidance	University of Bristol Export Control Policy Research Governance and Integrity Policy University Ethics Policy and Procedure Information Security Policy University of Bristol Intellectual Property Policy for Students
Related reporting requirements	Informs REF PCE element
URL	https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/staff/documents/open_research_policy.pdf

1. ABOUT THIS POLICY

Where this policy and related sub-policies and guidance documents use the word **should**, this denotes best practice and aspiration to lead by example. Where the term **must** is used, this denotes actions that are compulsory or necessary.

This policy – and its linked sub-policies and guidance – is intended to apply to all staff and students at the University of Bristol engaged in research activity, or activity in support of research. We recognise that in cases where research is funded by a third party, any agreement with that party concerning access rights, deposit and storage takes precedence over this policy.

2. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Open research incorporates many practices, not all of which are applicable to every discipline, but it has at its core: open access to research outputs, including using preprint servers, using the Registered Reports publishing format, open peer review; pre-registration of study protocols and analysis plans; making research data available; making underlying code or software available; using persistent identifiers, such as [Digital Object Identifiers \(DOIs\)](#) for articles and data, and [ORCID](#) for researchers; and using the CRediT taxonomy and citizen science.

Open research enables a more transparent, inclusive and democratic research process. It includes the practice of sharing intermediate research objects (e.g., data and code) as well as final research outputs, and involving a range of communities in the research process (e.g., through citizen science, co-production, public and patient involvement, etc.). As a member state of UNESCO, the UK has adopted the [UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science](#), which includes open dialogue with other knowledge systems and societal actors and engaging in research practices beyond those of traditional academic community.

The University of Bristol recognises the moral and practical value of open research. It is committed to the advancement and wide dissemination of knowledge to the benefit of society by adopting practices that support open, reproducible and responsible research, consistent with our civic responsibility as a public university. We aim to support and embed a transparent research culture, recognising and valuing a broad and diverse range of research outputs. Transparency fosters trust in research, allowing greater scrutiny and ultimately improving quality. It also allows for more granular recognition of individual and diverse contributions to the research process.

The University of Bristol is therefore committed to making as much of our research process, and the intermediate research objects we produce, as open and inclusive as possible (and appropriate).

3. AIM AND SCOPE

We aim to lead the way and go beyond minimum funder requirements; our guiding principle is to strive for a more open, transparent and inclusive research culture, in support of our institutional

mission and research sub-strategy. We will support our research community in this endeavour, through the provision of appropriate infrastructure, training and incentives.

Research should be sufficiently transparent and rigorous that someone with the relevant expertise can clearly follow - as relevant for different types of research - how it was done, why it was done in that way, the evidence that it established, the reasoning and/or judgements that were used, and how all of that led justifiably to the research findings and conclusions.

4. WHEN SHOULD RESEARCH *NOT* BE MADE OPEN

We recognise that it is not always possible to be fully open in all aspects of our research process. For example, there may be ethical reasons not to make data open (e.g., if there is a risk of re-identification of vulnerable individuals). This policy is intended to follow the principle of “as open as possible, as closed as necessary”

We also note that it can be possible to make research objects FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) without making it open, and that some repositories (e.g., the University’s Institutional repository - data.bris) offer various levels of access to accommodate this. Some platforms also allow for an embargo period where the deposit remains closed for a specific time.

Reasons for keeping research closed include Export Controls which may apply to certain STEM research. Other considerations include research relating to ongoing or planned patent applications, issues of national security, or trade secrets. Contact the [Research Compliance Team](#) for more information and guidance if you believe any of these may apply before planning to share your research.

If the work may have commercial potential, consider protecting any intellectual property before publication. Note that this also applies to intermediate research objects such as data and code. For advice on protecting intellectual property researchers can contact the [Commercialisation Team](#).

5. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The University of Bristol is accountable for “maintaining a research environment that develops good research practice and embeds a culture of research integrity” (taken from the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#)).

The University is also a signatory to the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment](#) (DORA), and as such is committed to not using journal-based metrics (e.g., Journal Impact Factor) as a proxy, and assessing research outputs in all their forms on their own merits.

This environment is based on the principle of research openness and transparency, and makes open research *possible, easy, expected, rewarded* and *required* (from the [Center for Open Science theory of change](#)) in the ways outlined below (adapted from the [OpenAIRE model policy](#)).

Our research, technical and professional communities should feel empowered to take the steps outlined in this and related sub-policies – and any other steps according to the evolving norms of their discipline, field, method or setting – to make their research open and transparent.

5.1 MAKING OPEN RESEARCH POSSIBLE

The University of Bristol will provide resources and infrastructure to make open research possible, specifically:

- Developing, communicating, maintaining, evaluating and revising the University’s Open Research policy and sub-policies and guidance, and providing appropriate guidance to researchers, including relevant templates.
- Developing and providing mechanisms and services for the storage, safekeeping, registration, deposition and sharing of data, publications and other records, according to the FAIR [principles](#) and international standards, as well as their long-term preservation.
- Ensuring the compliance of the institution’s repositories and other research infrastructures with certification requirements in relation to FAIR [data principles](#) and related international standards.
- Appointing staff responsible for all open research related matters, including – but not limited to – issues related to compliance with national and applicable international laws, regulations and grant conditions.

5.2 MAKING OPEN RESEARCH EASY

While open research may require changing practices, the University will provide training, support and workflows to reduce administration and bureaucracy to the minimum possible, specifically:

- Supporting and empowering the transition to open research through education, training and awareness-raising actions targeting research, technical and professional communities (including students).
- Providing the necessary infrastructure and funding to support this transition, so that acquisition of open research and related skills forms an integral part of professional training and career development offered to staff and students.
- Ensuring the quality and coherence of a range of University policies related to open research, including intellectual property, data protection, public engagement, research security, IT provision and use, and commercialisation.

5.3 MAKING OPEN RESEARCH EXPECTED

The University aspires to a culture where openness and transparency in research are normal and expected, noting that such expectations are also set elsewhere such as in disciplinary communities. To play its part the University’s specific actions will include:

- Providing procedures and guidance that are ethical, aim to set norms, and are supportive and take account of the principle of openness and transparency in the context of the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#).

5.4 MAKING OPEN RESEARCH REWARDED

The University will recognise and reward open research practices in a variety of ways, including:

- Embedding open research practices in recruitment, promotion, research assessment and evaluation criteria beyond the provision of open access to publications and data.
- Including other practices, such as participation in citizen science projects, experimentation with open peer review or the development and use of open educational resources.

5.5 MAKING OPEN RESEARCH REQUIRED

Where necessary, the University will set out clear requirements with respect to open research, for example in the sub-policies attached to this overarching policy, including:

- Having an open licensing sub-policy mandating a coherent and comprehensive set of licences for releasing content and data.
- Where appropriate, requiring the use of persistent identifiers (e.g., DOIs for research outputs, ORCID for individuals, etc.).
- Encouraging use of the CRediT taxonomy.
- Monitoring policy compliance using a range of methods and data sources, and using this to further improve the research environment, reporting the results appropriately.

Through its own actions and/or wider engagement, strengthen the cost/benefit evidence base relevant to this policy, and adapt its policies to reflect that evidence over time.

6. SUB-POLICIES

Underpinning our Open Research Policy are sub-policies and guidance in established areas of open research practice: these policies will be revised and updated as the landscape evolves, to reflect our commitment to open research practices.

These sub-policies are designed as practical ‘how-to’ guides for anyone engaged in research activity, with links to external policies, initiatives and bodies involved in supporting the transition to Open Research. The sub-policies are:

- Pre-registration (of study protocols / plans)
- Data sharing
- Open code
- Open access publishing (including Scholarly works policy)

7. REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- UKRI Open [Research](#)
- [University of Bristol Export Control Policy](#)
- [Research Governance and Integrity Policy](#)
- [University Ethics Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Information Security Policy](#)
- [University of Bristol Intellectual Property Policy for Students](#)

8. GLOSSARY

https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/staff/documents/open_research_glossary.pdf

