

# Open Access Pathfinder Case Study: University of Lincoln



## Optimising Resources to Develop A Strategic Approach to OA

This Jisc-funded project will develop shared tools and best practice policies and procedures to enable HEIs with limited external funding to effectively and creatively respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by recent Open Access policies. Outputs include a customisable Open Access cost modelling tool to help HEIs better plan different scenarios of research growth, best practice policies and workflows for University libraries and research services, case studies profiling lessons learned by four HEIs, and a quick reference decision tree for researchers and support staff.

## Background

Previously known as the University of Humberside, the University of Lincoln opened a campus in central Lincoln in 1996 and changed its name in 2001. Throughout the 2000s the University relocated most schools and services to Lincoln and by 2012 had closed its Hull campus. Since its opening more than £150 million has been invested in Lincoln's Brayford Pool campus, including the award-winning redevelopment of the Great Central Warehouse into the University Library, opened in 2004.



*Image of GCW Library at University of Lincoln by Paul Stainthorp - CC BY-SA*

The University has 19 Schools which are organised under three Colleges (Arts, Science and Social Science). In total there are just over 10,000 full- and part-time undergraduates and approximately 2,000 postgraduate students. Lincoln submitted returns in 17 units of assessment in REF2014 with particularly strong results in Allied Health, Agriculture and History. The University is ranked 51 in the Complete University Guide table for 2016, and 54 in the Guardian University League Tables 2016. Lincoln's institutional repository is based on EPrints (3.3.12) and at the time of writing holds 11,207 entries.

## Overview and objectives

Barry Hall (University of Sunderland, Repository Manager) and David Young (Northumbria University, Research Funding and Policy Manager) travelled to the University of Lincoln on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April and held a semi-structured focus group with six members of staff, mainly based in the Library but with some representation from other services, to discuss their responses to recent open access requirements.

In attendance on behalf of the University of Lincoln were:

Paul Stainthorp (Electronic Resources Librarian)  
Lyndsey Kemsley (College Research Officer, Social Sciences)  
Marishona Ortega (Senior Academic Subject Librarian)  
Jill Partridge (Cataloguer)  
Bev Jones (Research Repository Information Officer)  
Andrew Beeken (Research Information Systems Developer)

The case study is structured around five broad headings which describe the central issues related to Open Access: costs, OA structure and workflows, institutional policy and strategy, advocacy and training, and systems.

## Costs

The Research Office costs Open Access charges into grant applications if the funder allows it. All externally-funded research projects are routed through the Awards Management System (based on Worktribe) and each College Research Officer will include Gold OA costs if possible. Lyndsey Kemsley noted that all academic staff are aware of the standard bid costing and approval process and that College Research Officers are fully embedded in the three Colleges. Payment of OA charges, in common with other award management tasks, is not handled centrally, but rather by College finance administration. This means that the Library has no oversight of or control on grant expenditure on OA. Bev Jones commented that "from what we know, everything that needs to be paid is being paid."

Lincoln is in receipt of a modest RCUK block grant (£14,913 for 2015/16). Paul Stainthorp noted that in year 1 of the RCUK block grant allocation, nothing was spent. This was seen as primarily due to lack of awareness, though it has been suggested by others in the sector that there is little value in running large promotion efforts around such limited pots of funding. The entire grant for both years 1 and 2 was spent in a few weeks in March 2015 after a mass email to all RCUK-funded staff which offered first-come, first-served access to the fund. Paul's observation was that, if your institution is towards the top end of the RCUK block grant curve then you can afford to - and it makes sense to - put more robust processes in place to support this activity.

Paul also highlighted the key issue in relation to costs: linking up payments recorded in Agresso (the financial management software package used at Lincoln) with APCs: "It is difficult to coordinate this across the University. Project finance information should ideally sit in one place but it is scattered across multiple systems." Given the systems available, there is currently no reliable way of doing this. Lyndsey further noted that different Schools handle non-funded OA costs in different ways. However, there has been

good progress made on creating unique staff IDs, and this can be relatively easily replaced by ORCID IDs as and when these become available.

APCs up to the value of £1,000 are paid on a credit card, but above this they must be invoiced which creates a heavy administrative burden. Bev is clear that central management of such invoices would ease this burden considerably, but there is not enough traffic or resource to create a central team or role to do this. Andrew Beeken, who is responsible for development of systems in relation to open access and the library, suggested that it was not good practice to re-key financial information into EPrints.

Bev was keen to point out that neither she nor the Library is the “quality monitor” with regard to open access publication: bar any obvious predatory journal titles, if the funding is available for OA (either through RCUK block grant or individual grant funding) then it will be released and the APC paid.

<b>Good practice</b>	Use of simple first-come, first-served system helped to ensure entire RCUK block grant was spent relatively quickly.
<b>Future Challenges/ Questions</b>	Linking data on payments with APCs and reporting this back to RCUK.

### Open Access Structure and Workflows

Research responsibilities are formalised and run in different ways across different Colleges. The College of Social Sciences was highlighted as an exemplar by Lyndsey Kemsley: here the Director of Research communicates policy and procedures to the Deputy and Directors of Research in Schools. This clear hierarchy and line of communication was widely acknowledged as helpful in spreading messages about open access policy and procedures. Formally, responsibility for OA at University level resides with the Director of the Library, Ian Snowley, and the Dean of Research, Lisa Mooney. Bev Jones is widely seen as the practical lead on operational OA issues.

OA policy setting is handled primarily by the Research Information Services Group (RISG), jointly chaired by the University Librarian and Dean of Research. This Group includes academic representatives from all Colleges, College Research Officers and administrators, IT Services (Director), Planning (Business Intelligence) and anyone with an interest in research information issues. It reports to the Research and Enterprise Committee, which is chaired by the PVC Research. The RISG is seen as a useful group for consulting on draft policies and procedures. According to Bev, everyone attends RISG because they want to and are engaged with the issues. Paul added that both chairs are fully conversant with OA.

In terms of operational workflows, a decision tree about how to spend Gold OA funds prioritises RCUK, then if there is funding included in grants this is the next option. There is a feeling that academic staff would not engage with an institutional approach to licensing and acknowledgements and so this is left to academics to do according to their own practices. However, Paul noted that it is the institution, rather than individual academics, that is potentially penalised if license or acknowledgements are incorrect.

<b>Good practice</b>	Clear responsibilities and lines of communication in College research hierarchies increase the spread and effectiveness of OA-related communications.
<b>Future Challenges/ Questions</b>	Lack of an institutional approach to licensing and acknowledgements may jeopardise future compliance.

### **Institutional policy and strategy**

An Open Access policy has been in place for some time: there has been a “soft” mandate for repository deposit since 2009 and a full OA policy was introduced from 2014. The University Librarian, Ian Snowley, constructed a series of cost models in 2013 to inform the University on likely costs to the institution, from exclusively Gold to exclusively Green. In common with most HEIs, Lincoln’s policy was drawn up on the recognition that 100% Gold was unaffordable. Therefore, the summarised position is Green OA wherever possible.

Paul noted that senior staff have been supportive of the OA agenda and of the work that the Library and others have done to support it, particularly during the last year when it has become a policy priority across the sector. Bev added that the Dean of Research had recently authored a guide to OA for academic staff. It helps in advocacy and awareness raising to have such positive messages from the highest levels of the institution.

<b>Good practice</b>	Take advantage of senior staff who champion OA agenda and policies to support advocacy work.
<b>Future Challenges/ Questions</b>	If senior staff move on, is the OA policy sufficiently embedded within the organisation to continue momentum?

### **Advocacy, awareness raising and training**

In common with many institutions, views on open access differ across the University. “There are different perceptions in different Colleges,” noted Bev. “It also depends on individuals concerned.” Again, there was a contrast drawn between the approach taken in the College of Social Sciences, with clear lines of communication and responsibilities assigned to Directors of Research, and those of the other Colleges. Lyndsey observed that the Director of Research in Social Sciences is also knowledgeable about OA and makes it a priority issue in College meetings.

Bev contrasted different approaches to OA advocacy: “In the past we’ve made errors in advocacy - going in at too high a level and assuming it will filter down. In reality that doesn’t happen. A better, though more time-consuming approach would be direct one-to-one engagement.” With around 1,000 academic staff in the University, Bev suggested that they could all be contacted by the end of the year if this was deemed to be the highest priority. Instead Bev has presented at research group level, which seems to be a reasonable compromise. The College of Social Science has the most formalised research group structure, which also helps with promotional and advocacy efforts. In other Colleges they tend to be more informal groupings. Marishona Ortega added that induction was not always the best time to raise the issue of OA, which further suggests that interventions at research group level are optimal for Lincoln.

Bev was candid on the differences between what the policy says and what happens in practice: "In theory there's an expectation - and a policy mandate - for academics to self-deposit. In reality, the repository officers [Bev Jones and Jill Partridge] upload items on behalf of staff, but this is a self-defeating strategy in the longer-term and unsustainable." If there is time, Bev and Jill will trawl Researchgate to make sure the repository is not missing any recently published work, although again this is not viewed as a long-term strategy. On the positive side, Paul noted that since the introduction of the policy in 2014 general levels of awareness of Green OA and the benefits of the repository had increased across the University.

Staffing levels have a wider impact than just the ability to get items on the repository - they can also change perceptions about OA. 2013 was the first year that Lincoln employed a member of staff full-time on the repository. Bev noted that before this there was an assumption that OA was equivalent to Gold OA. The profile of Green OA increased substantially through the efforts of this post and the introduction of the OA policy. The focus in 2013/14 was heavily on the benefits of Green OA: "why not do it anyway?" Since HEFCE's policy it has been more difficult to justify the benefits, according to Bev: it becomes all about compliance.

Paul noted that one service with potential for significant impact in relation to OA advocacy was Marketing: "We could put in place a requirement that all research underpinning press releases is in the repository." This would help to raise awareness of OA within the institution and would also provide an immediate boost to external awareness of Lincoln's research, by linking to the relevant item page in the repository within the press release.

Another good driver for OA engagement at Lincoln has been staff web profiles. These are linked directly to the repository, so that by default the latest items on the repository are automatically fed through into each academic profile. Andrew Beeken is developing this theme further and is creating a Research Dashboard which will take the DOI from the repository and link to Altmetrics.

Paul noted that there is still widespread confusion around versions. Publishers often have different understandings of and workflows for "author accepted manuscript" and without more standardisation here there is significant work involved (mainly falling on Libraries) to explain these differences to academic staff. Bev confirmed that there is still a wide range of material being submitted to the repository: "drafts for review, things with edit marks, proofs." Paul suggested that more could be done to communicate standards for versions, perhaps using the Library's webpages which are being redeveloped over the summer.

<b>Good practice</b>	An advocacy approach which targets research group or department level, rather than Faculty or College, tends to be more effective.
<b>Future Challenges/ Questions</b>	There is still misunderstanding about the correct version to upload to the repository.

## Metadata and systems

The Lincoln Repository runs on EPrints 3.3.12 currently. There has already been an attempt to implement the RIOXX plugin, but it was unsuccessful because of custom

modifications made to the repository data tables in advance of the REF submission in 2013. This has compromised the core of the Eprints installation and it has been difficult to implement a fix. As a result of this there is a repository audit due to take place this year to look at whether EPrints is fit for purpose. If the University does continue to use EPrints, Bev suggested that the development of a FundRef module should be a priority.

The Awards Management System is the only other system in the University which is relevant to OA. There is a plan to pay for Researchfish to get access to the link between funded RCUK projects and outputs. Without a Current Research Information System (CRIS) it is difficult to link these two pieces of information together.

According to Andrew: "It was the Research Information Services Group which started to change attitudes around systems integration." The IT Business Systems team is now carrying out work to scope system integration more broadly. Andrew is separately developing a Wordpress-based "Research Dashboard" system which is intended to be multipurpose, but is primarily designed to be able to link and track disparate sources of data. This is effectively a mini-CRIS, developed in-house. The intention is to run an OA compliance report as a test of the system's effectiveness later in 2015. However, the success of this system depends upon integration with the Awards Management System, which has yet to be achieved: "Ideally we will have a functioning system which will generate reports in advance of the next REF."

<b>Good practice</b>	In-house Research Dashboard system is a simple, platform non-specific tool built to integrate data from existing systems.
<b>Future Challenges/ Questions</b>	EPrints audit and the potential migration of repository data to an alternative system.

## Conclusions

Lincoln has found that early adoption of an OA policy and mandate, as well as buy-in at senior level has helped "on the ground" advocacy efforts around open access. An approach has been taken to target interventions at research group level, and while there are differences in levels of engagement, this is generally seen to be effective. Misunderstanding around versions is still an issue. More time-intensive one-to-one support and website trawling has worked in the short-term to address this, but there's a recognition that this is not a sustainable strategy for repository and OA support. Some of the key challenges are around systems and linking information on awards and outputs. An in-house CRIS-like tool is being developed to address this, and this has benefits in terms of customisability and control, but there are clearly also risks and drawbacks if this does not provide the results the University is looking for.

