Open Access Pathfinder Case Study: Teesside University

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

Formerly Teesside Polytechnic, the institution achieved university status in 1992. Huge investment over the last decade has seen Teesside become a centre of excellence for digital media, the creation of Teesside University Darlington, built on the site of Darlington College, and the opening of Centuria South (a dental education and sports therapy complex); Teesside won the prestigious Times Higher Education University of the Year Award in 2009.

The Curve, Teesside University's Landmark Teaching Building by LTees – CC BY-SA 4.0

Departments in the university are arranged into five schools: Arts and Media, Computing, Health and Social Care, Science and Engineering, and Social Sciences, Business & Law. A total of just over 20,000 students are enrolled at Teesside as of autumn 2015, of which approximately 2,100 are engaged on postgraduate programmes. The university is ranked 99th in the Complete University Guide table for 2016, and 91st in the Guardian University League Tables 2016; it submitted returns in eight units of assessment in REF2014 with the majority of the work rated as being world-leading or internationally excellent. TeesRep, the institutional repository at Teesside, runs DSpace (3.4) powered by OpenRepository.

Overview and Objectives

Barry Hall (Institutional Repository Coordinator, University of Sunderland) travelled to Teesside University on Thursday 1st October to hold a semi-structured interview with Leah Maughan (Digital Collections Librarian) where we discussed responses to recent open access requirements.

The interview was structured around five broad headings that describe central issues related to Open Access:

- costs
- OA structure and workflows
- institutional policy and strategy
- advocacy
- training and systems

Costs

Like many UK universities, Teesside received no RCUK block grant; the library has no involvement in the payment of APCs. Although there is pressure from some schools for an institutional fund for Open Access, any payment of APCs is managed at departmental level, with no central point of contact.

Good practice	APC payment is managed at departmental level, which is appropriate where no institutional level fund is available
Future Challenges/ Questions	Potential implementation of an institutional OA fund.

Open Access Structure and Workflows

Leah Maughan heads a small team that deals with the day-to-day running of TeesRep. Total staffing provision equates to 2.5 FTE of which 1.5 FTE is of the level of Senior Library Assistant. Leah's role is, however, divided equally between Interlibrary Loans, Digitisation, and the Repository. Leah, based in the library, is the primary contact with regard to open access and the repository, although it's felt that isolated pockets of OA advocates exist within some departments.

TeesRep offers fully-mediated depositing for researchers, self-archiving is not supported. The mediated process saves time, and ensures complete records. Metadata and full text files are simply emailed to TeesRep staff at the library using a dedicated email address; similarly, updates from authors regarding acceptance and publication are communicated this way, this process has proved successful. Sherpa/RoMEO is consulted for publisher permissions.

Good practice	Fully-mediated depositing has proved more efficient.
Future Challenges/ Questions	Would additional staffing provision be required as OA awareness becomes more widespread?

Institutional Policy and Strategy

An open access policy, which grew out of the already existent TeesRep policy, was put in place in June 2015. The policy states that, in order to conform to the HEFCE Policy as well as the Teesside University Archiving Mandate, authors are required to add metadata and the postprint of outputs on acceptance, and additionally, to update the record on publication. The number of items deposited into Teesrep since the implementation of the open access policy has, 'rocketed'; as Leah explained, 'both since the new policy was announced and since we started doing advocacy on the HEFCE policy in October. Last year our stats show we were averaging

10-20 additions per month, the month the VC announced the new policy we added 144, this is just the stuff we managed to get added'.

A user forum exists for the repository, and wider open access issues, such as the OA policy, can be raised here also. Participants include institute directors and administrators, in addition to representatives from the library and GRS. The forum is scheduled to meet every term, although in practice, meetings are less frequent than this.

Good practice	The institutional OA policy relates directly to that of the repository, resulting in a unified message.
Future Challenges/ Questions	Are there enough opportunities for stakeholders to discuss the issues surrounding OA formally?

Advocacy

Responsibility for open access advocacy rests with Leah, and she has recently been able to create some tangible marketing tools in the form of stationary (pens and bookmarks), a banner, and business cards. She attends a Research Network event, usually annual, but two events have taken place this year, where she can speak with researchers from across the university. Offers of advocacy are also communicated to research directors, although uptake has been slow.

Like many universities there is still wide lack of understanding of, or engagement with, open access across departments, and it was suggested that there remain very few opportunities to discuss with researchers the challenges of open access.

Good practice	Advocacy through networking events have had some success.
Future Challenges/ Questions	Lack of engagement and/ or misunderstanding surrounding OA is an ongoing issue.

Metadata and Systems

TeesRep runs DSpace 3.4 powered by OpenRepository, a platform operated by BioMed Central, now part of Springer. The Rioxx plugin has yet to be implemented at TeesRep, due to compatibility issues with DSpace. The implementation of the Altmetrics plugin has, however, been successful. Leah produces monthly reports from TeesRep that are available from the repository web pages.

Good practice	Altmetrics plugin has been successful, giving a visual appraisal of article-level impact.
Future Challenges/ Questions	Compatibility issues must be resolved before the implementation of additional plugins.

Conclusions

Teesside, like many other universities, is having to work hard to implement open access requirements in a research environment where knowledge of OA is still inconsistent. Relatively isolated areas of research are making APC payments without central guidance, although there is demand for a central fund from certain departments.

Like Sunderland, the research community at Teesside is relatively small, but this doesn't make OA advocacy any easier, and in some ways the areas of research are more isolated, making contact difficult.

Misunderstanding results in a lack of engagement from researchers, and this, along with limited staffing investment, would seem to be the most pressing challenges for the future, as is the case with so many other HEIs.