

Global Perspectives on Open Research Culture: A UK–New Zealand case study

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Abstract

This critical reflection explores the role academic libraries play in enhancing the research culture of their institutions, specifically in relation to Open Research, through two contrasting case studies of the work undertaken by the University of Waikato Library, Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Lancaster University Library, UK. A prevalent theme within the paper is the contrasting level of maturity and engagement with Open Research at national, governmental, and institutional levels and the impact this has on the approaches of both institutions. The paper demonstrates how libraries proactively work in partnership with their communities to act as a catalyst for initiatives that facilitate culture change.

Keywords: open research; research culture; library sciences; open access publishing

Introduction

Academic libraries play a significant role in shaping the environment of their institutions. Rather than just being service providers, libraries proactively work in partnership with their communities to act as a catalyst for initiatives across the university in areas that may not traditionally be seen as library business. One area where libraries can play a proactive role in influencing the direction of their institutions is Research Culture.

Research Culture encompasses the behaviours, values, expectations, attitudes, and norms of research communities. It influences researchers' career paths and determines how research is conducted and communicated (**The Royal Society, 2021**). This paper will present a critical reflection on the approaches taken by the University of Waikato Library, Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Lancaster University Library, UK, to enhance the research cultures of their institutions. We will explore the impact of local contexts and how the priorities of both institutions and their approaches to influencing research culture are affected by the level of maturity and engagement with Open Research at national, governmental, and institutional levels.

Lancaster University Library, UK: Developing an Approach to Facilitate a Culture of Open Research

Research Culture is becoming an increasingly important subject within the UK Higher Education Sector. A key theme within these discussions concerns Open Research, which refers to a range of practices relating to the conduct of research and communication of its outputs (**UKRI, 2023**). It champions the idea that research (and data) should be shared as freely as possible and as early as possible in the research process across all disciplines, both within and beyond academia (**Ayris et al., 2018**). Lancaster University Library has an ambition to foster a Research Culture in which staff and students are encouraged and supported to explore and engage with Open Research practices in their work and study to maximise the possibility of public and academic impact. This section of the paper will reflect on how Lancaster University Library developed its approach to advance a culture of Open Research and how this approach was influenced by the local context the University operates within.

Context

Lancaster University is a research-intensive university based in the Northwest of England with over 16,000 students and 3,500 staff. In recent years, there has been an increasing strategic focus within the university on Research Culture. This has been partly driven by a series of developments within the UK Higher Education Sector. In July 2021, the UK Government

published its 'Research and Development (R&D) People and Culture Strategy', which outlines the Government's ambition to build the UK's future research and innovation workforce which will work within a positive and inclusive culture. This was followed by the UK Government issuing 'enhancing research culture' funding to UK Higher Education Institutions in September 2022 to develop and initiate activities in response to the People and Culture Strategy.

Lancaster University's focus on Research Culture has also been driven by the UK Higher Education Funding body's publication of their initial decision on the high-level design of the next Research Excellence Framework (REF). The REF is the UK's national assessment of research in Higher Education institutions. The results of the REF help to decide the government's allocation of funding to Higher Education Institutions and feed into several major university league tables, which can have a significant effect on student and staff recruitment. The UK Higher Education Funding bodies have announced that 25 per cent of the weighting of the next REF assessment in 2029 will consist of the category 'People, Culture and Environment'. Whilst these external factors have brought an increasing focus on Research Culture within the institution, the university has also recognised that the current context and funding opportunities represent a good chance to reimagine research practices and enhance the research environment within the university, such as in relation to Open Research.

Developing an open research culture

Lancaster University has invested significant resources in Open Research, including the establishment of a dedicated team in the library who work with colleagues across all disciplines of the university. The university has also published an institutional Principles of Open Research, which was developed in partnership with researchers from across the institution. These principles promote Open Research, which includes the transparency of processes and sharing of outputs, such as publications, data, code, and methodologies, and recognise the benefits to the worldwide research community of research transparency and openness.

Our library has an ambition to ensure our Research Culture aligns with these Principles of Open Research. To achieve this, we utilised the Enhancing Research Culture Funding received by the university to commission a report in 2022 into its Research Culture, with a particular focus on how it is affected by trends in academic publishing. Following on from the report, the library further utilised the Enhancing Research Culture Funding to create a project post in June 2023 to build upon the report's findings.

We began by conducting an environmental scan, which included engaging with stakeholders both internal and external to the university and conducting a self-assessment of the institution's readiness for Open Research, based on the 37 criteria set out in the League of European Research Universities (LERU) Open Science Roadmap self-assessment framework (Ayris et al., 2018). The tool presents a set of questions which institutions can use to monitor their progress in implementing Open Research principles, practices, and policies at a local level based on the European Commission's eight pillars of Open Science (Ibid). This provided a valuable framework from which to measure our progress towards developing a culture of Open Research and identify areas to prioritise. We were also proactive in ensuring our work aligned with wider Research Culture initiatives within the university. This included contributing to the delivery of a series of Research Culture workshops, which provided colleagues the opportunity to share their feedback on various aspects of the university's research environment. Through adopting this methodology, we were able to identify priority themes to address to help us meet our ambition to foster a culture of Open Research.

One of these priority themes is supporting Open Access Monograph publishing by our academics. An Open Access Monograph is a long-form publication that communicates an original contribution to academic scholarship on one topic or theme and is designed for a primarily academic audience. It is available online free of charge and accessible without registration or other access barriers (UKRI, 2023). Publishing monographs Open Access provides several benefits to authors including increased readership and citation (Neylon et al., 2021). Research is also more accessible to a more diverse audience, such as policymakers, industries, institutions, and individuals who might lack the resources to purchase it otherwise (Neylon et al., 2021). The principles and practices of Open Access Monographs are aligned with Lancaster University's Principles of Open Research, and we are keen to foster a Research Culture in which Lancaster researchers are able to embrace Open Monograph Publishing.

The focus on this theme was partly driven by the need to comply with funder mandates. UKRI (UK Research and Innovation), a major research funder, has imposed a new policy which requires all monograph outputs resulting from UKRI-funded projects to be published Open Access after the 1 January 2024. However, we have also identified several barriers which are preventing a culture of Open Research concerning Open Access Monograph publishing. For instance, financial hurdles are preventing some authors from publishing their monographs Open Access. One of the most common routes to publish an Open Access Monograph is the book processing charge, where publishers charge researchers a fee, typically between ten thousand and twelve thousand pounds. Whilst there are

alternative publishing routes where publishers don't charge researchers to publish, such as Diamond Open Access, these are not as well known amongst the researcher community and sometimes lack the infrastructure publishers operating with the book processing charge model possess.

To address this issue, we have launched a pilot institutional Open Access fund for the 2023/2024 academic year which enables unfunded researchers to publish monograph outputs Open Access whether they are the corresponding author or not. Researchers can claim up to ten thousand pounds to cover the cost of Open Access fees if Lancaster University affiliation is shown in the output. The scheme addresses a disparity in opportunities that previously existed between funded and unfunded researchers and contributes to a more equitable research environment.

We have also collaborated with Liverpool University Press, the University of Salford, and the University of Liverpool to develop a scheme called 'Trailblazers', which allows selected unfunded early-career researchers from each institution to publish an Open Access Monograph who otherwise may not have had the opportunity. Participants in the scheme will also take part in a series of author boot camps which will equip them with knowledge and skills to support the publication of their work throughout their careers. Our library has also been proactive in supporting the development of Diamond Open Access publishing by working as a partner on the multi-million-pound Open Book Futures Research Project, which aims to develop the infrastructures and workflows of this model to allow more academics to publish through this route. Our involvement in these projects demonstrates the role that libraries can play in shaping the research environment of their institutions through acting as co-creators in partnership with academics and publishers.

There are also many misconceptions and concerns which can prevent monograph authors from embracing Open Access. A common myth is that Open Access Monograph outputs lack prestige and academic quality due to the mistaken belief that they are not subject to the same peer review and assessment process as non-Open Access titles. To address this we have prioritised advocating for Open Access Monograph publishing and challenging these misconceptions. Previously the library has taken a grassroots approach to encouraging researchers to engage with Open Research practises through delivering events and workshops focused on high-level discussions on Open Research related topics. However, in recent years—perhaps due to the concept of Open Research becoming more established within the UK Higher Education context—we have found that researchers often only engage in these areas at the point they need to within their research project lifecycles. We have therefore developed a

bespoke online Open Access Monographs resource to allow Lancaster researchers to learn about the principles and practices of Open Access Monographs at their point of need and showcase author success stories.

We have also identified the need to explore the tensions between existing Open Research policies and the lived experience of researchers as a key theme to prioritise. For instance, our current Research Data Management policy mandates that all research projects should produce a data management plan. In practice, compliance with this policy is low. However, rather than taking a top-down approach and forcing researchers to comply with this policy we are keen to shape our research environment to one in which conducting Open Research practices, such as producing data management plans, are normative. We acknowledge that researcher behaviour is affected by local research community norms and is also subject to external pressures. We have therefore developed a programme of activities to engage with researchers to explore the lived reality of our policies and work in partnership to deliver an Open Research culture. This includes delivering a Research Culture Cafe event, open to all university staff and students, to consider Open Research practices and reflect on how the university can move towards an Open Research culture. Working in partnership with our communities is key to developing and maintaining a culture of Open Research and the outcomes of this programme of activity will inform our future approaches.

University of Waikato Library, Aotearoa, New Zealand: enhancing Research Culture through Open Research

By contrast, the discussions around both Open Research and Research Culture in Aotearoa, New Zealand, are still emerging. The following section explores the approach of the University of Waikato to enhancing its research culture through Open Research within a different context.

Context

The University of Waikato is a small university in regional Aotearoa, New Zealand. It was founded in the 1960s and currently has around 13,000 students and 1,500 staff. The university has a longstanding relationship with the Kīngitanga and Waikato-Tainui, who are the traditional owners and custodians in the Waikato region. *Te Whare Pukapuka* – The Library did not historically have a focus on Open Research or research support in general.

The arrival of a new university librarian in 2021 preceded a range of changes in the research environment, including the establishment of an Open Access Steering Group¹ under the auspices of Universities New Zealand (UNZ) and the publication of a landmark report for the Office of

the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor, 'The Future is Open' (Saunders, 2022). Shortly afterward the UNZ Steering Group established a joint target of seventy per cent open by 2025 as part of their 'Pan-university Open Access Statement', and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), the country's largest funder, released 'Kaupapahere Rangahau Tuwhera MBIE - MBIE Open Research Policy' (MBIE, 2022).

Developing an open research culture through the implementation of an Open Research Position Statement

With these developments in place, and a 2022 library restructure, substantial resourcing was redirected to establish an Open Research Team, and the library was in a position to make meaningful headway on Open Research. Early Open Research initiatives included establishing an Open Access Equity Fund which prioritised funding for Māori, Pacific, and early-career researchers, and embedding a Profiles Check service. The latter encompasses a systematic, individualised review of a researcher's online presence and impact profile, including rates of openness. Undertaking this process with all members of the university senior academic leadership team helped to build awareness of what value the team could provide and what Open Research encapsulated. As part of the team's development, and at the request of the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research, the team undertook a large piece of research on how researchers used and perceived metrics across disciplines. The interviews also touched on other Open Research themes such as Open Access and our Institutional Repository, Research Commons.² Although the focus was on metrics, a key finding of the research was that there was a significant gap between what researchers believed about Open Research practices and their behaviours. The team found that although most researchers had positive views on Open Research and its relationship to impact, they felt they operated in a system that actively discouraged practices conducive to responsible metrics use, impact-centred publishing decisions, and meaningful scholarly engagement by indigenous peoples. This was one of the drivers for turning their attention to Research Culture. Early dialogue with the university's Research Committee opened a discussion around Research Culture, and as understanding developed a vision of the university's desired Research Culture emerged around which an Open Research Position Statement could be formed.

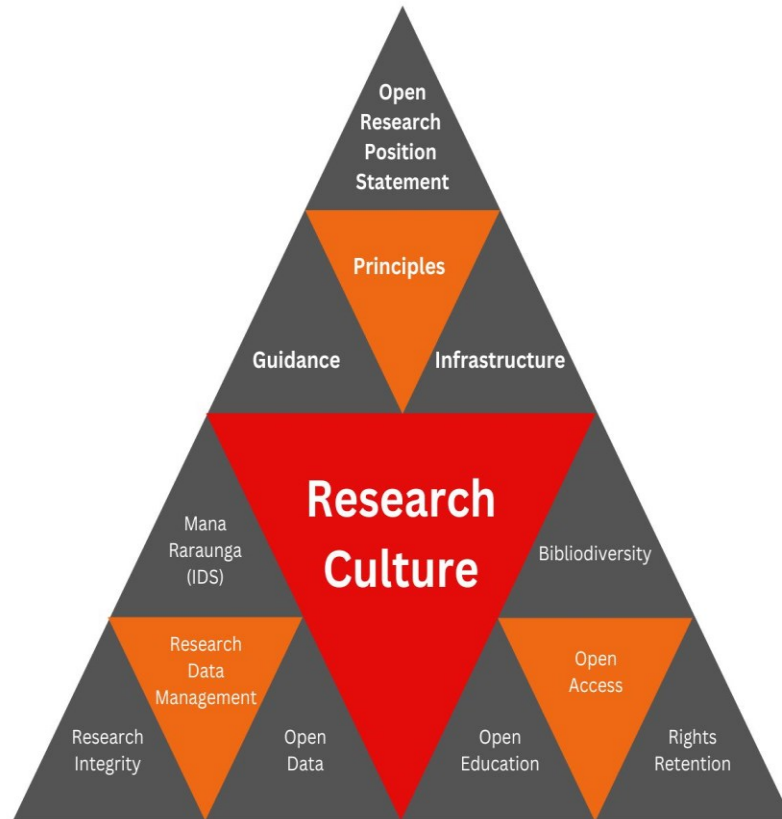
A deliberate choice was made to propose an Open Research Position Statement for several reasons. Firstly, there was a great deal to be learned from institutions overseas that had already implemented an Open Research Position Statement or similar. This led to formative conversations with staff from Lancaster University Library and other university libraries, which provided valuable insight. Secondly, there is

little correlation between an Open Access policy and Open Access rate, as discovered by Catterall and Barbour (2023). While policy can play a role in changing culture (Nosek, 2019), it is clear policy alone would not change behaviour and potentially be viewed in a negative light. A draft Research Data Management Policy had been tabled at Research Committee several times and failed to get the necessary buy-in. Instead of leading with detail, a decision was made to first establish a strong foundation as to what the university wanted to achieve. Principles and guidance as to how to enact the position statement would follow as buy-in grew and needs became clearer. This approach also allows for the team to onboard champions and engage with new stakeholders as need arises through the development of the principles and guidance. Thirdly, with early, targeted stakeholder engagement and effective leader-to-leader communication, the team was able to pull together the statement with relative ease compared to a policy. Simultaneously, the speed with which the statement was developed, coupled with thorough background work, meant that if it became evident the approach was not the right one, a pivot was possible without substantial loss of time or resources.

An environmental scan was the first step, and a range of Open Research Position Statements from around the world were compared and key features identified. At this point there was no other example of an Open Research Position Statement in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and while the scan helped to inform the structure of the statement, it was clear that a different approach was required. Most of the examples identified as part of the environmental scan centred a Western worldview, whereas Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the founding document of Aotearoa), advocates for a partnership between Māori and the (British) Crown, which protects Māori interests. This needed to be reflected in the statement. Similarly, this necessitated robust and honest engagement with the inherent tensions between Open Research and Kaupapa Māori Research, which is the general term for research by, for, and about Māori. The development of the Open Research Position Statement coincided with the release of key documents relating to Indigenous Data Sovereignty, an issue that the sector had been grappling with for some time, particularly Te Kāhui Raraunga, the Māori Data Governance Model (Kukutai et al., 2023). Given the growing recognition that Māori should have control over data pertaining to them under Te Tiriti, the statement needed to be explicit that not everything could, or should, be made open. Rather, the notion that outputs should be as open as possible but as closed as necessary was overarching. In negotiating this balance, the team relied heavily on the principle of responsibility. That is, there is an acknowledgement that a researcher knows their research intimately enough that they can make

decisions accordingly, and that the library is there to help them understand the options available.

Figure 1: The Research Culture visualisation
(University of Waikato Library, Aotearoa, New Zealand: 2023)



The resulting visualisation created by the library allowed the team to further articulate the interplay between the Open Research Position Statement, the Research Culture, the various facets of Open Research, and the principles in development. It also incorporated locally relevant cultural symbolism and provided instruction for those who learn better visually the intentions behind the statement. The interlinking triangles reference the *'niho taniwha'*, which translates to 'teeth of the *taniwha*'.³ The positioning of the Open Research Position Statement within the visualisation speaks to its nature as overarching, a kind of capstone, and a point from which all else flows. The first element to flow from the statement is the principles. These are the reference points through which all further developments pass. They articulate and define the values the position statement aims to embody and are currently in development. The principles, in turn, are supported by the guidance provided to researchers through resources and expertise. Similarly, the university provides the infrastructure which facilitates Open Research, for example, in the form of the Institutional Repository. Together they are effectively the 'make it possible' layer of the 'Strategy for Culture Change' pyramid described by Nosek (2019).

Including them as part of the visualisation also expresses a commitment to continuously review and improve these so that they remain relevant. At the heart the visualisation is Research Culture, as this is central to everything.

Conclusion

This article has reflected upon the approaches taken by the University of Waikato Library and Lancaster University Library to enhance the Research Culture of their institutions by presenting two contrasting case studies. In doing so it has highlighted the roles libraries can play in proactively influencing their institutions Research Culture by working in partnership with our communities.

Of particular relevance is the impact the level of maturity and engagement with Open Research at national, governmental, and institutional levels has had on the approaches of the two institutions. We find in the case of Lancaster University Library that the groundwork laid by government and funder policies has very much shaped the progress made. The library has been able to take advantage of the increased focus on Research Culture within the UK Higher Education sector and the funding opportunities resulting from this to develop a strategy to facilitate a culture of Open Research. Whilst the concept of Open Research has been prevalent within the UK sector for several years, the focus on Open Access Monographs within this approach reflects the evolving nature of these discussions.

In New Zealand, on the other hand, conversations around Research Culture and Open Research more specifically have only begun more recently. Funders and government departments have been slow to implement policies that drive behaviour within institutions such as universities. The emergence of these early initiatives at national and governmental level has allowed the University of Waikato Library to take a leadership role in helping the university to articulate its ambitions. Being able to draw on the experience of others with a higher level of maturity is key in being able to act quickly and in agile ways. Simultaneously, the added layer of complexity necessitated by developments in the Māori data governance space means that the library has unique expertise to offer.

In conclusion, one of the main lessons learned in comparing these two scenarios is that university libraries can be effective in acting as catalysts for change by being responsive to changes in the environment and willing to learn from other institutions. Collaboration and the leveraging of specialist expertise already residing within libraries will be crucial in ensuring that they can continue to add value as the conversation around Research Culture develops.

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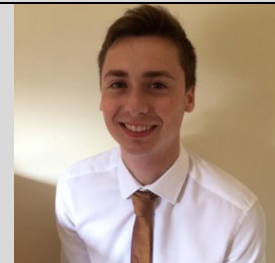
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Michelle Blake is University Librarian at the University of Waikato. She previously worked in the UK, where she was based at the University of York and held a number of roles including Director of Library and Archives. She is a member of Open Access Australasia's Executive Committee and sits on the IATUL Board. Michelle is passionate about the value and impact of libraries and their transformative power for public good and works to challenge traditional notions of what a library is.



Tom Morley is currently undertaking a secondment as the Research Culture and Open Monographs Lead at Lancaster University Library. Within this role he leads and coordinates programmes of activity to develop an Open Research Culture as well as exploring options to facilitate open monograph publishing. In his substantive post he works across the areas of Open Access, Research Intelligence and Research Data Management to coordinate and deliver a range of projects, services and initiatives as an Open Research Officer. Tom is also co-editor of UKSG e-News.



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Endnotes

¹ See: <https://www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/about-universities-new-zealand/expert-and-working-groups/open-access-steering-group>

² See <https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/home>

³ *Taniwha* are 'more-than-human' relations within a Māori worldview or paradigm. They are sometimes described in *pūrākau* or traditional narratives as taking the form of various animals, though are often depicted in Māori artforms as water creatures that resemble large serpents or dragons in other cultures. They occasionally take on a guardianship role, either for certain tribes or particular places of significance.