OPEN RESEARCH ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

OPEN RESEARCH AT YORK

The University of York encourages and supports staff and students across all disciplines to explore and engage with open research practices in their work and study ([Open Research statement](#)).

This report summarises the activities of the University's open research groups over the 2024-2025 academic year. It also describes progress made in our commitment to open research across key operational areas and lists recommended actions for 2025-2026.

OPEN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

University Open Research Strategy Group

The Strategy Group has continued to lead on providing guidance and direction for open research activities at the University, reporting to University Research Committee.

Areas of focus have included the impact of changes to open access publishing agreements, and the development of Research Data Management support and infrastructure.

Open Research team

The Open Research team has continued to provide one-to-one support and training for research staff, postgraduate researchers and professional services staff across the University.

The team has developed new resources, videos and workshops on open access, generative AI and different aspects of Research Data Management including guidance specifically for research-enabling staff and PGR supervisors.

Graduate Engagement Leads for Open Research

Working within the Open Research team, the Engagement Leads have continued to deliver advocacy activities including discussion events, communication initiatives and a fifth iteration of the Open Research Awards.

They have also contributed to workshops and conferences where achievements have been shared with wider audiences.

OPEN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES (continued)

Supporting the wider open research ecosystem

The Library has continued to pledge financial support towards a range of open research initiatives, tools and infrastructure services.

Recent commitments include funding open access publishing initiatives at LSE Press and ARC Humanities Press through our membership of the Open Book Collective.

Commitment to Sustainable Scholarly Publishing

The University endorsed the landmark N8 Statement on Sustainable Scholarly Publishing and hosted a launch event with speakers from across the sector.

The statement urges fundamental reform in the way scholarly research is published, citing concerns over the financial sustainability, equity, and transparency of the current system.

Funder policies and REF

Teams across the University have continued to support researchers in meeting the requirements and expectations of funders, in addition to the new REF 2029 Open Access Policy.

York also contributed feedback on the UKRI Research Data Policy proposal and participated in the REF People, Culture and Environment pilot exercise, in which open research was a key component.

OPEN RESEARCH MATURITY MODEL

This section draws on a maturity model first developed in the 2020-2021 annual report.

The model considers four key operational levers, and assesses our current position and trajectory in terms of five levels of growth:

4	Leading
3	Adopting
2	Developing
1	Initiating
0	Unaware

GOVERNANCE

The need for the University to have a clear strategy around open research and an identified leadership with responsibility and capacity to deliver that strategy.

Open Research governance is now well established at York, with work undertaken by the Open Research Strategy Group (ORSG) reporting to University Research Committee (URC).

Open Research is included in the [University Research Strategy 2023-2030](#), and the [Research Publications and Open Access Policy](#) and [RDM Policy](#) were both updated in 2023 and are being implemented.

A set of recommendations on RDM support and infrastructure were endorsed by URC, with work still to be explored around accountability and overall ownership and responsibility in this area.

One aspect of policy and strategy that remains relatively underdeveloped is the recognition and reward of open research practices in research assessment, including in recruitment and promotion. York became a Community of Practice member in the [UKRN OR4 project](#) last year, which is developing best practice guidance and a maturity framework to assist institutions interested in reviewing their research assessment practices.

Our assessment is that the University remains at **maturity level 3: Adopting** for open research governance.

3 Adopting

To move to the next maturity level — **Leading** — will require:

- Appropriate use of data and evidence about adoption of open research practices in institutional prioritisation and decision making, including in research assessment.
- A clear articulation of responsibilities and expectations in developing a culture of open research within the University and in ensuring that appropriate support is in place to realise good practice. This should be done in collaboration with the broader research culture work being undertaken within the University.
- The institution to be seen as a leader within the sector in the promotion and reward of open research activities.
- A senior University-level role with overall responsibility for oversight and governance of RDM.

COMMUNITY, SUPPORT & ENGAGEMENT

The need for the University to engage with researchers both internal and external to York, fostering a culture of open research and providing sufficient support, feedback and incentives to make open research successful.

Work has been undertaken by the Graduate Engagement Leads to engage with our research community, building on the results of the 2024 Open Research at York Survey and through the development of online resources, communications and events.

Funding has been secured to allow the Engagement Leads to continue working towards their objectives during the 2025-2026 academic year, focusing on providing more specialist training and advocacy in their respective faculties. They are also considering how initiatives such as the Open Research Awards and Open Research at York Advocates network, both established in 2021, could be revised to rebuild interest and realise benefits for those involved.

Engagement continues to be fostered by discipline-specific open research working groups in some departments. This includes the Open Science Interest Group in the Department of Psychology and EROS (Education Researchers for Open Science) working group in the Department of Education. Both groups have run meetings and events, raising awareness of the benefits of open research practices both within and beyond their departments.

Our assessment is that the University remains at **maturity level 3: Adopting** for open Community, support and engagement.

3	Adopting

To move to the next maturity level — **Leading** — will require:

- A thriving community of practice in open research, which could be achieved through improved reward and recognition opportunities. This might include honorariums and support with professional development.
- Active participation in national and international open research networks, including those of broader relevance such as research culture.
- Secure funding to ensure the sustainability of the Awards scheme beyond the 2025-2026 academic year, and to enable the Graduate Engagement Lead roles, which have been very impactful, to continue.

INFRASTRUCTURE, PROCESSES & SERVICES

The key technical infrastructure and business processes which support open research at the University, including systems support, quality control, workflows, and adoption of technical standards.

Work in this area has been dominated by York's cancellation of some 'read and publish' journal agreements from January 2025, resulting from reductions to the Library Content Budget.

The University has continued to support publishing in fully open access journals and 'green' open access routes (author self-deposit), while reducing the amount spent on publishing in subscription journals. The impact of these changes will be analysed in early 2026, and a new Scholarly Publishing Working Group, reporting into URC, will develop a joined-up institutional position on scholarly publishing that aligns with the University's vision, aims and principles.

URC was also presented with findings and recommendations from a staff survey and interviews on RDM. ORSG will continue sponsoring work to progress recommendations in the 2025-2026 academic year.

The White Rose research repositories have been upgraded, following a decision to continue using the open source EPrints software. A new repository service for open access learning and teaching resources is also being developed.

Our assessment is that the University remains at **maturity level 3: Adopting** for open research infrastructure, processes and services.

3 Adopting

To move to the next maturity level — **Leading** — will require:

- Open access repository infrastructure that can manage a range of research outputs and facilitates contemporary digital research methods.
- A strategy to maximise open access to the full range of research outputs produced by the University, including longform publications (books, chapters and monographs).
- Coordinated support for researchers and research-supporting staff to enable the effective management and sharing of research data.

8

KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

The need for training and learning within the University to embed an understanding of the benefits of open research, and to undertake open research practices.

Open Research team workshops have continued to be publicised as part of the York Researcher Development Programme, including new training on data management planning, archiving research data and working with sensitive data.

A series of open research discussion events were organised in partnership with departments, including well-attended webinars with researcher contributions. Discussion topics included open and participatory action research for social justice, and Registered Reports and the future of peer review.

The Open Research Toolkit online resource has been launched, providing concise introductory guidance to open research practices and principles. The resource signposts new additions in the Open Research in Practice case studies series, which has expanded to 20 entries detailing researcher perspectives on adopting open approaches in their work.

Guidance on RDM has been added to an internal Research Operations Hub Toolkit, addressing a gap identified in this area for research-enabling staff.

Our assessment is that the University has progressed from **maturity level 2: Developing** to **maturity level 3: Adopting** for open research knowledge and skills.

3   Adopting

To move to the next maturity level — **Leading** — will require:

- Training and guidance on open research to be embedded in standard staff training and induction programmes at department and faculty level, including for professional services staff.
- Increased engagement with national and international groups, such as UKRN, providing support where possible for staff and postgraduate researchers to engage with externally provided training opportunities.
- Active monitoring of engagement with open research learning and training provision.

9

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Monitoring the impact of open research activities on different groups continues to be a priority, but accessing relevant EDI data has proved to be a barrier to achieving this.

Open Research Strategy Group will seek to work with interested teams across the University including the EDI Research Centre, working groups on decolonising the curriculum and the Valuing Voices project, to understand potential EDI considerations and the data that would be required to monitor these.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following recommendations for 2025-2026 were approved at the November 2025 URC meeting:

Recommendation 1: Work with the Research Culture Manager and the Valuing Voices project to review institutional research assessment practices, policies and frameworks, in particular the recognition and reward of open research practices.

Recommendation 2: Explore options to create new forums or channels, encouraging community engagement across the Advocates network, University open research groups and discipline and/or practice-specific special interest groups.

Recommendation 3: Establish a Data Stewardship Network to bring together colleagues from across the University who play a role in the management and use of research data.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen work to encourage deposit of outputs to Pure, providing more guidance around journal publishing and open access options. This is important for meeting both REF and funder open access requirements.
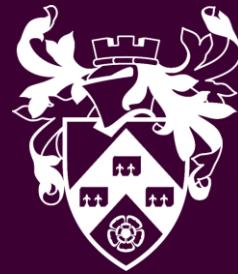
Recommendation 5: Sponsor work to progress the recommendations in the RDM Infrastructure and Support paper, with a focus on identifying a University lead for RDM.

Recommendation 6: Monitor the effect of the Library budget reduction on open access publication and publishing more generally. This will be done in partnership with a new Scholarly Publishing Working Group.

Recommendation 7: Develop further training and support on specific aspects of open research in collaboration with practitioners. This should include better understanding and signposting of training and resources already offered within schools and departments.

Recommendation 8: Work in partnership with Policy, Integrity and Performance to ensure that researchers and support staff are aware of requirements and expectations around open access publishing and open research for REF.

Recommendation 9: ORSG will approach the EDI Research Centre and other relevant groups at the University to improve its understanding of EDI considerations in relation to open research, and the data that would be required to monitor these.

york.ac.uk/open-research