

University of Westminster Open Access Policy

Version Record

Version Number	3
Prepared by	Nina Watts (Repository & Open Access Manager)
Date written	January 2026
Reviewed by	Research Committee, Research & Knowledge Exchange Steering Committee, Academic Council
Approved by	Academic Council
Date effective	15 April 2026
Review date	15 April 2026

Version Number	Date	Author	Approved by	Details of changes
3	April 2026	Nina Watts		Removal of mention of Virtual Research Environment (VRE) repository; Open licensing section added; Persistent identifiers section (PIDs) added; updated for REF2029; Generative AI information added, updated to ensure it will work alongside a future University rights retention strategy or policy for journal articles.
2	June 2023	Nina Watts	Academic Council	Allow deposit of Version of Record of outputs where published under a Creative Commons licence; strong encouragement of ORCID; Rights Retention Strategy Support; statement on SDGs; EDI & open research recognition; practice research inclusion; Read & Publish agreements
1	March 2018	Nina Watts	Research Committee	

Accessibility

We are committed to ensuring our websites and content are digitally accessible according to the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations (2018). This policy is published on our website and can be requested in a range of formats, e.g., Word, PDF, plain text, and alternative formats such as large print or Braille. If you would like to request this document in a different format you can contact us for support by email at digitalaccessibility@westminster.ac.uk.

If you are unable to contact us by email, you can contact us for support by telephoning 0207 911 5000 and asking for the Clerk to the Court of Governors or the Governance Support Officer.

This document has been designed to maximise usability. Should you encounter an accessibility barrier, please report it to digitalaccessibility@westminster.ac.uk.

To implement this policy, users are asked to access other digital information or systems. The University has published accessibility statements, which you can access from each system. If you need an alternative to please contact the Research Data Management Officer for support by email at research-data@westminster.ac.uk

Contents

Introduction / General Principle

Scope

Institutional responsibilities

Researcher responsibilities

Acknowledgements and Affiliation

Open Licensing

Persistent Identifiers (PIDs)

University Take Down Policy

Policy implementation and review

Appendix A: Glossary

Appendix B: relevant internal policies, codes of practice, and frameworks

1. Introduction / General Principle

The University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy recognises that our research will only make a difference if it is visible, accessible, and openly available wherever possible¹. As such it supports the principle of making the results of publicly funded and peer-reviewed research available via open access to enable its widest possible dissemination and reuse and to ensure compliance with Research England, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and other funders' requirements. Open access requirements are increasingly embedded in scholarly communication and to support this principle, the University operates an institutional repository (the 'Repository'), WestminsterResearch² to enable self-archiving, which is the University's preferred route to ensure its research remains open and available without reliance on unsustainable commercial models. Other models are supported where funding permits.

Open access is part of the wider open research³ (or, open science) landscape, which extends the principle of open access to research publications and research data to all aspects, methods, and products of the research lifecycle. There is an expectation that open research, which improves the transparency, integrity, robustness, reproducibility, and reach of research, is embedded across the research and knowledge exchange lifecycle. Open research looks different for each discipline and making research data as open as possible enables the Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable (FAIR) Principles⁴ while recognising that there may be legal, ethical, or commercial reasons not to do so. As such, this policy should be read in conjunction with University's Intellectual Policy⁵ and the University's Research Data Management Policy⁶ and guidance⁷.

Benefits of open access include:

- Rapid and open dissemination of the University's research across the globe, leading to greater visibility and sharing this knowledge as a public good.
- The maintenance of a complete and accurate record of research will support the University's management reporting and preparation for external research assessment exercises.
- Increased discoverability via Google, Google Scholar, other search engines and discovery mechanisms.
- Contributing to a culture of openness and transparency as part of the University's research environment.
- Enabling and connecting with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which enshrine the need for open access to ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms.

This policy aims to:

- Provide a framework to enable researchers to share widely, openly and legally the outcomes of their research to a global audience.
- Highlight that academic researchers are directly responsible for providing and maintaining details of their research outputs.
- Clarify the responsibilities of the institution.
- Raise awareness of funder requirements relating to open access of funded research.

¹ <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/sites/default/public-files/general-documents/Research-and-Knowledge-Exchange-Strategy-2022-29.pdf>

² <https://www.westminsterresearch.westminster.ac.uk/>

³ <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/researcher-support/open-research>

⁴ FAIR Principles <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>

⁵ <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/our-university/corporate-information/policies-and-documents-a-z/intellectual-property-rights>

⁶ <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/researcher-support/research-data/research-data-management-policy>

⁷ <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/researcher-support/research-data>

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to any member of University staff whose job requires them to conduct research (the 'Researcher').
- 2.2. The metadata of all output types must be added to the institutional repository and made openly available. The full-text of all journal articles and published conference papers must be made open where permitted by the publisher. For all other output types, the inclusion of attachments is encouraged, including practice research.
- 2.3. Art & design and practice research outputs have traditionally been underrepresented in repositories and the open access conversation. Changes have been made to the institutional repository to better capture practice research output types. Practice researchers are encouraged to make outputs open where possible.
- 2.4. Doctoral research theses are added to the institutional repository upon completion, unless there are legal, ethical, commercial or other reasons not to do so⁸.
- 2.5. Scholarly material which contributes to the overall profile of the University of Westminster may be submitted for inclusion in WestminsterResearch.
- 2.6. When a researcher leaves research outputs will remain within WestminsterResearch.

3. External Funder Expectations

- 3.1. The REF2029 open access policy and guidance⁹ states that from January 2026, to be eligible for submission to REF2029, all journal articles and conference papers published with an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) must be made available through open access within three months of publication. By depositing the accepted author manuscript (AAM) in the Repository within 3 months of acceptance, both the University and REF OA policies will be complied with,
- 3.2. UKRI¹⁰, the Wellcome Trust¹¹, the European Commission¹² and other funding agencies now demand that certain research publications that acknowledge funding are made openly available using specified licences. Failure to comply with these policies may result in funders withholding final grant payments or excluding non-compliant authors from further funding proposal submissions. Researchers must comply with these requirements.

4. Researcher Responsibilities

- 4.1. Researchers are responsible for regularly maintaining their research outputs record in the institutional repository.
- 4.2. For journal articles and published conference proceedings, a copy of the final accepted manuscript and date of acceptance must be included as soon as possible, and no later than 3 months from acceptance. If published under a Creative Commons licence¹³ the published version should be uploaded and licence recorded.
- 4.3. For all other types of research output, details should be deposited into the institutional

⁸ See Research Degrees Handbook <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/academic-programme>

⁹ <https://2029.ref.ac.uk/guidance/ref-2029-open-access-policy/>

¹⁰ <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-open-access-policy/>

¹¹ <https://wellcome.org/research-funding/guidance/ending-a-grant/open-access-guidance/open-access-policy>

¹² https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/our-digital-future/open-science/open-access_en

¹³ See Copyright for Researchers: Creative Commons <https://libguides.westminster.ac.uk/copyrightresearchers/creativecommons/>

repository as soon as possible and no later than the date of publication or completion. The researcher should consider adding attachments for other research outputs and, where available, include a link to the published version.

- 4.4. New researchers will be required to add metadata and deposit their outputs, where relevant, into the Repository within three months of their start date at the University. Past outputs may include those intended for consideration in the next research assessment exercise, as well as those that a researcher wishes to feature in the outputs section of their online profile. A link between ORCID¹⁴ and the Repository is available to automate this deposit where a researcher has an active, populated ORCID account [See 4.7].
- 4.5. Where appropriate, underlying data should be made available¹⁵.
- 4.6. Researchers need to ensure that appropriate rights clearance has been obtained before uploading.¹⁶
- 4.7. Researchers are strongly encouraged to register with ORCID. An integration with ORCID ensures outputs are shared between the Repository and ORCID accounts and can help reduce manual data entry. ORCIDs should be included on personal webpages, when submitting publications, when applying for grants, and in any research workflow to ensure that the individual is credited for their work and that the correct institutional affiliation is recorded.
- 4.8. The researcher is responsible for ensuring compliance with any additional research funders' publication requirements.
- 4.9. Researchers are expected to opt for gold open access to journal articles where the University subscribes to a Read & Publish (R&P) agreement with a publisher.

4.9.1 University Gold Open Access Fund Guidance

A limited institutional publication fund is available for the payment of gold open access article processing charges (APCs) where conditions are met. Institutional criteria, and application details are available in the University Article Processing Charges (APC) Application Fund guidance¹⁷. Applications are welcome from Early Career Researchers, and potential non-eligibility for the REF will not affect a decision.

4.9.2 Rights Retention

Researchers are encouraged to submit their manuscripts for publication using a Rights Retention Strategy (RRS). The RRS strategy enables authors to exercise the rights they have on their manuscripts to deposit a copy of the Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) in a repository on publication and provide open access to it immediately under a Creative Commons Attribution licence. Guidance¹⁸ on how to do this is provided by Coalition-S. This acts as a safeguard between funder policy and publisher policy for green open access.

5. Institutional Responsibilities

- 5.1. The University provides a range of mechanisms to enable open access. This includes WestminsterResearch (the University's public institutional repository); the internal Repository system, which allows records to be created; the University of Westminster Press, a peer-reviewed diamond open access publisher; and a team of experts to provide

¹⁴ See Persistent Identifiers <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/researcher-support/open-access/what-are-persistent-identifiers> for more information about ORCID

¹⁵ <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/researcher-support/research-data>

¹⁶ <https://libguides.westminster.ac.uk/copyrightresearchers>

¹⁷ <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/researcher-support/open-access/making-your-research-open/article-processing-charges-apc-application-fund>

¹⁸ <https://www.coalition-s.org/resources/rights-retention-strategy/>

advocacy, training and promote best practice.

- 5.2. After submission, metadata will be checked and amended as necessary, and a final check on copyright compliance and licence details will be made by Repository administrators.
- 5.3. Repository administrators will apply embargoes where necessary. Outputs without a publisher embargo will be made live shortly after deposit.
- 5.4. Records may be amended by Repository administrators to support external research assessment and other reporting purposes.
- 5.5. The Library & Archives Service team will provide advice and assistance to researchers to comply with the policy, including checking publisher conditions. Information and advice are available on the open access webpages¹⁹.
- 5.6. EDI and open research:
 - 5.6.1. The increase in the number of publishers' Read & Publish deals allows far more researchers to benefit from open access to their research articles, making gold open access an option to many beyond just those in receipt of external research funding to pay APCs.
 - 5.6.2. A full, transparent list of institutional criteria determines how the University Article Processing Charges (APC) Application Fund²⁰ is allocated and applications from Early Career Researchers are welcome. Potential non-eligibility for the REF will not affect a decision. Helping to ensure that there are fair and appropriate decision-making processes around what research is funded and supported.
- 5.7. The University's library subscribes to Read & Publish deals where appropriate deals are available. These provide access to read, as well as publish, research articles through gold open access, in return for a single annual subscription cost.

6. Acknowledgements and Affiliations

- 6.1. When submitting to publishers, a standard institutional affiliation, "University of Westminster" should be used in all articles and papers, in preference to a School or College name. This ensures that full credit is given to the University in bibliometric searches.
- 6.2. The University's Guidelines for Using Generative AI in Academic Research²¹ provides guidance on the citation and acknowledgement of AI tools. This should be read alongside the University's policy and guidance in relation to Generative AI.
- 6.3. The source of funding, including grant code if appropriate, should be acknowledged in all papers.

7. Open Licensing

- 7.1. Open licences allow others to make use of a copyrighted work as long as they follow the conditions of the licence.
- 7.2. **Creative Commons** open licences²² are commonly used in academic publishing. The most permissive is CC BY, which allows others to distribute, remix, tweak, and build upon a work, even commercially, as long as they credit the original creator. Some funders, such as UKRI and Wellcome, stipulate that a CC BY licence must be used (in most cases) if they pay for

¹⁹ <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/researcher-support/open-access>

²⁰ <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/researcher-support/open-access/making-your-research-open/article-processing-charges-apc-application-fund>

²¹ <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/sites/default/public-files/general-documents/AI-Policy-Nov-25.pdf>

²² <https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/cclicenses/>

gold open access. Other licensing may be required by the funder, e.g., Open Government Licences (OGL) for crown copyright works published by the UK government or GNU licences for open source software.

- 7.3. The University encourages the use of rights retention by researchers. The Rights Retention Strategy²³ (RRS) enables authors to exercise the rights they have on their manuscripts to deposit a copy of the Accepted Author Manuscript (AAM) in a repository and make it openly available under a CC licence upon publication.

8. Persistent Identifiers (PIDs)

- 8.1. Persistent identifiers (PIDs) aim to be a unique, long-lasting reference to digital objects of various types and are a core element of open research. They fall into two main categories: PIDs for people, e.g. ORCID, and PIDs for objects, e.g. DOIs.
- 8.2. DOIs will be allocated to doctoral theses, datasets and other digital research outputs published by the University when deposited in WestminsterResearch. They are not created for Accepted Author Manuscripts subsequently to be published as a journal article.

9. Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) and Open Access

This policy acknowledges that making research open access will allow Large Language Models (LLMs) to harvest the University's research. While there will be concerns about this, there will also be benefits in that the University's research will be reflected in training data. This does mean that researchers need to ensure they have the rights to make their work openly available. The University has published policy and guidance in relation to Generative AI.²⁴

10. University Take Down Policy

Material which has been included in contradiction to publisher copyright policies or other third-party intellectual property ownership may be removed immediately on request. If the investigation finds no infringement, the full text will be reinstated. This will not affect the inclusion of associated metadata.

11. Policy Implementation and Review

Implementation Date of Version 2: 7 December 2023

Updated version 3 Implemented: 15 April 2026

For review: April 2029

Nina Watts, Repository and Open Access Manager

²³ <https://www.coalition-s.org/resources/rights-retention-strategy/>

²⁴ Artificial Intelligence Policy <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/our-university/corporate-information/policies-and-documents-a-z>

Appendix A: Glossary

Accepted Author Manuscript (AAM) is the version of an article that has been accepted for publication and includes author-incorporated changes suggested during submission, peer review, and editor-author communications. This is the version before copy-editing, formatting, technical enhancements and pagination.

Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs)

A DOI is a unique and never-changing string assigned to journal articles, books, and other works online. DOIs make it easier to retrieve works. If a journal changes publisher, the DOI will remain the same, and the link will still take a reader to the paper, wherever it is hosted. DOIs make sure that each published article gets a unique, permanent identifier and can be cited easily. This can increase the visibility of the published work.

Green, Gold, and Diamond Open Access

Items can be made available through open access in two main ways:

- **Under green open access**, the item is published in the normal way and then a second copy, usually the accepted author manuscript version, is deposited ('self-archived') in an institutional or subject repository and made available after any embargo period required by the publisher, usually 6-24 months.
- Where a publisher's version of the item is made instantly freely available on the publisher's website, in some cases in return for an Article or Book Processing Charge (APC/BPC) being paid to the publisher, or as part of a subscription to publish paid for by the library, this is known as '**gold open access**'. Where charges are not made to read or publish, this is known as '**diamond open access**'.

ORCID

ORCID provides a persistent digital identifier (an ORCID iD) that a researcher owns and controls, and distinguishes them from every other researcher. ORCID can be connected to a researcher's professional information - affiliations, grants, publications, peer review, and more. This information can then be shared with other systems through ORCID.

Read & Publish Deals

Read & Publish agreements allow libraries to purchase both content and open access publishing with a single subscription. Read & publish subscribing institutions can access all content, and accepted articles are published with no APC fees to pay at the point of use. The library subscribes to Read & Publish deals²⁵ where appropriate deals are available. These are seen as a transformative, or transitional, stage in the move from paid access to fully open research.

Persistent Identifiers (PIDs)

Persistent identifiers provide and maintain unique and stable digital identifiers for research components such as people (ORCID), institutions (Research Organisation Registry, ROR IDs), publications, datasets and other digital objects, e.g. websites, software (Digital Object Identifiers, (DOIs)). PIDs improve the integrity of research by authenticating identities and providing and maintaining stable digital links between creators, collaborators, grants, articles, and research data.

Using PIDs enhances the discoverability and citation of your research, making it FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable. DOIs provide a permanent, stable, citable and trackable link between the output and metadata about it and enable both human and machine-readable actions to enable indexing and greater discoverability. Conditions for access and reuse, such as licences, can also be linked via a DOI. There are several organisational IDs providing unique identifiers.

For the University of Westminster they are:

²⁵ <https://blog.westminster.ac.uk/researchoffice/how-to-make-your-research-articles-open-at-westminster/>

- ROR (Research Organization Registry): <https://ror.org/04ycpbx82>
- GRID grid.12896.34
- ISNI 0000000090468598
- Crossref Funder ID 501100001319
- Wikidata Q1247544

Practice Research

Practice research is defined by the Practice Research Reports²⁶ published by Bully & Şahin in 2021 as: “An umbrella term that describes all manners of research where practice is the significant method of research conveyed in a research output. This includes numerous discipline-specific formulations of practice research, which have distinct and unique balances of practice, research narrative and complementary methods within their projects.”

Repository

‘Repository’ in this document refers to the central University system, in which researchers can create records of research outputs that are then approved by administrators before appearing publicly in the University’s institutional repository, WestminsterResearch.

Rights Retention Strategy (RRS)

The Rights Retention Strategy²⁷ (RRS) enables researchers to exercise the rights they have on their manuscripts to deposit a copy of the Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) in a repository and make it openly available upon publication.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nations sets out its Sustainable Development Goals²⁸ as “[...] *a call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. More important than ever, the goals provide a critical framework for COVID-19 recovery*”.

WestminsterResearch

WestminsterResearch, the University’s institutional repository, is maintained as an open access, permanent and secure online archive that contains the research output of the University’s academic community. It is the external face of the institutional repository.

²⁶ <https://doi.org/10.23636/1347>

²⁷ <https://www.coalition-s.org/resources/rights-retention-strategy/>

²⁸ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

Appendix B: relevant internal policies, codes of practice, and frameworks

[Being Westminster: Our Strategy 2022-2029](#)

[Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2022-2029](#)

[University of Westminster Research Data Management Policy](#)

[Code of Research Good Practice 2025/2026](#)

[Intellectual Property Policy](#)

[ISS Acceptable Use Policy](#)

[Research Degree Handbook](#)

[University of Westminster AI Policy in Relation to the Safe and Ethical Use of Generative AI \(GenAI\)](#)

[University of Westminster position statement on Generative AI \(GenAI\) tools and systems](#)