

Australasian Open Access Strategy Group (AOASG)

Response to 2020 ERA review

October 2020

About the AOASG

The Australasian Open Access Strategy Group (AOASG)¹ advocates for open access to academic research outputs and promotes innovation in all areas of scholarly communication. The AOASG is supported by twenty universities in Australia and eight in New Zealand. Creative Commons Australia and Tohatoha Aotearoa Commons are affiliate members.

General comment

The AOASG welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation. The ERA dataset is already very rich. This review of the data collected and published offers an opportunity to enrich this dataset even further, which would also allow comparison of key indicators across Australian universities and internationally, as well as ensuring that the methodology for the data collected takes advantage of evolving technology.

Responses to specific questions

Q3.39 What other data do you think the ARC should publish following an ERA round? Please describe.

In the 2015 ERA round the ARC began to assess the proportion of research outputs that were openly available. In 2015 the results were published for individual universities; in 2018 the average results were published. These data are very valuable both for individual rounds and, if they are reported against a standard set of criteria, would be especially valuable for comparison against subsequent rounds. It would also, as noted in the Terms of Reference, provide “opportunities for coordination of research data reporting and analysis across government, thereby improving whole-of-government reporting capability and reducing the reporting burden on universities”

We recommend that the ARC develop a standard set of criteria for the reporting of open access outputs. An example could be:

- For each research output is a full text copy freely available Yes/no
- If yes, where is the research output available? In a repository (institutional or otherwise)/ at a journal or publisher website/ both
- Does the research output have a Creative Commons or other open license Yes/No
- If yes, what is the license?
- Are the data associated with the research output available? Yes/No/with restrictions

These data could be provided by institutions. Alternatively, since there are ongoing projects that are aiming to automate the collection of data relating to open access e.g. the Curtin Open Knowledge Initiative², the data for OA could potentially be extracted in this way. An automated single approach would have the advantage of removing the burden of reporting for this aspect of the data from institutions and would allow standardisation of the data. Furthermore, with a standard set of data, institutions could then be compared with international benchmarks.

Finally, we would recommend that the ARC institute ongoing review and assessment of compliance with the ARC OA Policy by funded authors as regular practice (i.e., not just at the time of ERA review).

We would be happy to develop any of these suggestions further.

¹ Australasian Open Access Strategy Group <https://aoasg.org.au/>

² Curtin Open Knowledge Initiative (COKI) <http://openknowledge.community/>

Q5.10 ORCID iDs should be mandatory for ERA. Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.

a. What are the advantages and/or disadvantages? Please explain your answer.

Strongly agree. There is no doubt that the use of permanent identifiers is core to ensuring that research can be fully FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable). Furthermore, in alignment with the Terms of Reference, they can make use of “publicly available data sources and new developments in technology and products to capture research evaluation data”. For researchers, the use of ORCID has specific benefits in that it reduces duplication of reporting.

Q5.12 DOIs should be mandatory for ERA. Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree. Please explain your answer.

a. What are the advantages or disadvantages? Please explain your answer.

Strongly agree. DOIs - or equivalent permanent identifiers are also core to ensuring that research can be fully FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable). For research outputs they ensure that a link to a record is permanently available, which is especially important for non-traditional research outputs. It would also be useful to collect other relevant Persistent identifiers associated with the research, e.g. Research Activity Identifier (RAID),³ International Geo Sample Number (ISGN).⁴

Additional comments

Consideration of metrics more widely

There are several ongoing global initiatives on research assessment that are aiming to take a holistic approach to assessment. These initiatives have long-term goals of ensuring that what is captured in research assessment reflects the full breadth of academic work – beyond journal publication – and that the metrics captured support research integrity and quality. Specific initiatives include the DORA declaration,⁵ the Leiden manifesto⁶ and the Hong Kong principles.⁷ We would encourage the ARC to consider these initiatives in this review of ERA.

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³ Research Activity Identifier <https://www.raid.org.au/>

⁴ International Geo Sample Number <http://www.geosamples.org/>

⁵ Declaration on Research Assessment <https://sfedora.org/>

⁶ Leiden Manifesto for Research Metrics <http://www.leidenmanifesto.org/>

⁷ The Hong Kong Principles <https://www.wcrif.org/guidance/hong-kong-principles>