

PASTEUR4OA Case Study

Institutional policy implementation at University College London (UCL), UK

Author: David Ball (SPARC Europe)

Reviewers: Alma Swan (EOS), Brigita Serafinaviciute (LMT), Andras Holl (MTA)



November 2015

Summary

UCL (University College London¹) sees itself as London's top multidisciplinary research university, with an international reputation for the quality of its research and teaching. It holds itself to be the largest postgraduate institution in the UK: UCL has more than 35,000 students, including over 19,000 postgraduate students, and over 11,000 staff².

The academic activities of UCL have a wide scope covering most established research fields. UCL researchers produce approximately 17,000 publications a year. In 2014 the total number of research outputs by UCL researchers included 12,000 articles, 1,000 theses, 780 proceedings papers, 570 conference papers, 550 chapters, 200 books, and 100 reports.

There has been a sizeable increase in deposits in UCL Discovery, the institutional repository, in response to recent national policies. UCL Discovery contained 10,000 OA items in 2011 and 14,000 OA papers in 2013. OA content increased sharply to 22,500 papers by September 2015. UCL Discovery contains both full-text and metadata-only records. 42% of the records for outputs published thus far in 2015 are live with full text. 76% of these (or 32% of total outputs for 2015) are Open Access.

The Research Councils UK (RCUK, 2013) and Research Excellence Framework (REF, 2014) Open Access policies have been key drivers for depositing in UCL Discovery and engaging with Open Access generally.

Annual download totals have grown from under 200,000 per year in 2008 to over 1.8 million per year in 2014; the average number of downloads per item has more than quadrupled, from 146 in 2008 to 604 in 2014.

¹ www.ucl.ac.uk

² <http://ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/ioe-announce>

Two key principles underpin UCL's publications policy:

1. That, copyright permissions allowing, a copy of all research outputs should be deposited in the UCL institutional repository (UCL Discovery) as Open Access;
2. That individual UCL academic researchers should be directly responsible for providing and maintaining details of their publications in order that UCL can keep an accurate record of its research outputs.

The policy applies to all UCL's research publications in all disciplines and states that it is the responsibility of every UCL researcher to ensure that his or her publications record is up to date. It also lists explicit benefits to researchers.

UCL Library Services coordinates diverse and comprehensive support for UCL's and funders' Open Access policies. Support proportionate to the scope and volume of UCL in terms of research is delivered by the UCL Discovery team, UCL's Open Access Funding Team and UCL Press;

The UCL Press publishes Open Access scholarly monographs, scholarly editions, textbooks, edited collections and journals.

UCL Library Services and the Office of the Vice-Provost (Research) communicate Open Access requirements throughout UCL.

1. Introduction

UCL (University College London³) sees itself as being London's top multidisciplinary research university, with an international reputation for the quality of its research and teaching. Recent developments have seen expansion at UCL, with two formerly independent, specialist and highly respected institutions in London, the School of Pharmacy and the Institute of Education (IoE), merging with UCL. The mergers were seen as extending UCL's influence and providing opportunities to build cross-disciplinary work across the range of higher education⁴.

UCL holds itself to be the largest higher education institution in London and the largest postgraduate institution in the UK. Following the mergers, UCL has more than 35,000 students, including over 19,000 postgraduate students, and over 11,000 staff⁵.

According to an earlier statistical snapshot from October 2014⁶, there were 10,531 staff (including 2,294 academics, 3,264 researchers and 4,973 other staff), 16,491 undergraduate students and 14,060 graduate students, including 4,098 research students.

³ www.ucl.ac.uk

⁴ <http://ucl.ac.uk/news/news-articles/11114/251114-ucl-ioe-confirm-merger>

⁵ <http://ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/ioe-announce>

⁶ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/statistics/>, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/statistics>

UCL offers a broad range of study programmes within ten faculties. *The Complete University Guide*⁷ listed 212 first degrees, 5 Bachelor of Laws (LLB) courses, 3 Master of Laws (LLM) courses and 845 postgraduate taught courses at UCL for 2014/15.

The academic activities of UCL have a wide scope covering most established research fields. The proportions of research and academic staff, and students, in each Faculty are indicated in the following chart (which reflects the situation prior to the merger with IoE).

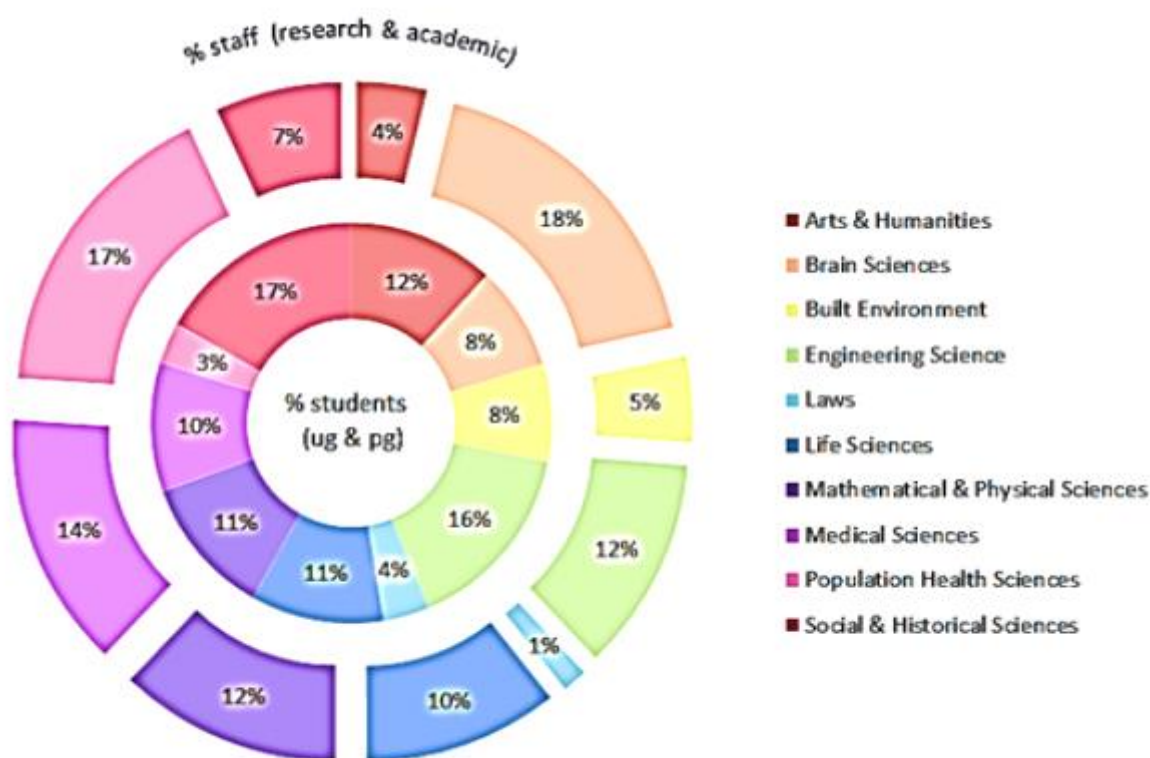


Figure 1: Percentage staff and students (undergraduate and postgraduate) per Faculty at UCL 2014-2015

The Research Strategy of UCL aims to maintain ‘an innovative cross-disciplinary research agenda, designed to deliver immediate, medium, and long-term benefits to humanity’.⁸ In keeping with the Research Strategy, the recent UCL Grand Challenges initiative has encouraged the academic and research community at UCL to engage with world problems, develop new collaborations across UCL disciplines, increase partnerships with external agencies, work with policy makers, and disseminate research and solutions through scholarly outputs⁹.

7 <http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/university-college-london/courses>

8 Price, D (2011). *Delivering a Culture of Wisdom: The 2011 UCL Research Strategy*. London: UCL.

9 Scott, I (2014). *Celebrating the UCL Grand Challenges*. London: UCL.

UCL researchers produce approximately 17,000 publications a year. In 2014 the total number of research outputs by UCL researchers included 12,000 articles, 1,000 theses, 780 proceedings papers, 570 conference papers, 550 chapters, 200 books, and 100 reports.

The above introduction provides compelling evidence of the size and complexity of UCL and the level of its ambition (witnessed by its strategic approach, the recent mergers and the volume of its publications). The following sections illustrate the institution's response at the strategic and practical levels.

Summary:

- UCL regards itself as London's top multidisciplinary university, with more than 35,000 students, including over 19,000 postgraduate students, and over 11,000 staff;
- There is a very strong research strategy and culture, reflecting the presence of a large corpus of research students and staff;
- UCL produces approximately 17,000 publications a year.

2. Repository

UCL Discovery¹⁰, formerly UCL EPrints, was established as UCL's institutional repository in May 2004 using the GNU EPrints platform. Not unusually, the implementation preceded UCL's adoption of an Open Access policy by some 5 years.

The repository initially offered a mediated deposit service, but moved to researchers' 'self-archiving' in 2010. Also in 2010, UCL EPrints was coupled with Symplectic Elements, a current research information system (CRIS), which was introduced as a publications management system for UCL. The repository was re-branded and re-launched as UCL Discovery in 2011. It now claims to host metadata for all known UCL publications, with accompanying full text where deposited, and hence is portrayed as providing a central, Open Access showcase for UCL research¹¹.

The RCUK (Research Councils UK) Open Access mandate of April 2013¹² and HEFCE's (Higher Education Funding Council England) Open Access requirements for the next Research Excellence Framework starting in April 2016¹³, are seen as key drivers for researchers to engage with the repository in particular and Open Access in general.

As is shown in the following graph, there was an increase in deposits in UCL Discovery in 2009, coinciding with the adoption the Open Access policy. There has subsequently been a sizeable increase in deposits since the above national policies were introduced. Before the RCUK OA

¹⁰ <http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk>

¹¹ Ayris, P; Moyle, M; McLaren, E; Sharp, C; Speicher, L; (2014). Open Access in UCL: a new paradigm for London's Global University in research support. *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, 45(4). 10.1080/00048623.2014.956462.

¹² <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/openaccess/policy/>

¹³ <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/rsrch/oa/Policy/>),

mandate, UCL Discovery contained 10,000 Open Access items in 2011 rising to 14,000 Open Access papers in 2013. OA content then increased to 22,500 papers by September 2015. These figures reflect successful deposits and exclude deposits that could not be made available because of copyright restrictions.

UCL Discovery contains both full-text and metadata-only records. 42% of the records for outputs published thus far in 2015 are live with full text. 76% of these (or 32% of total outputs for 2015) are Open Access, without any restriction such as a publisher’s embargo.

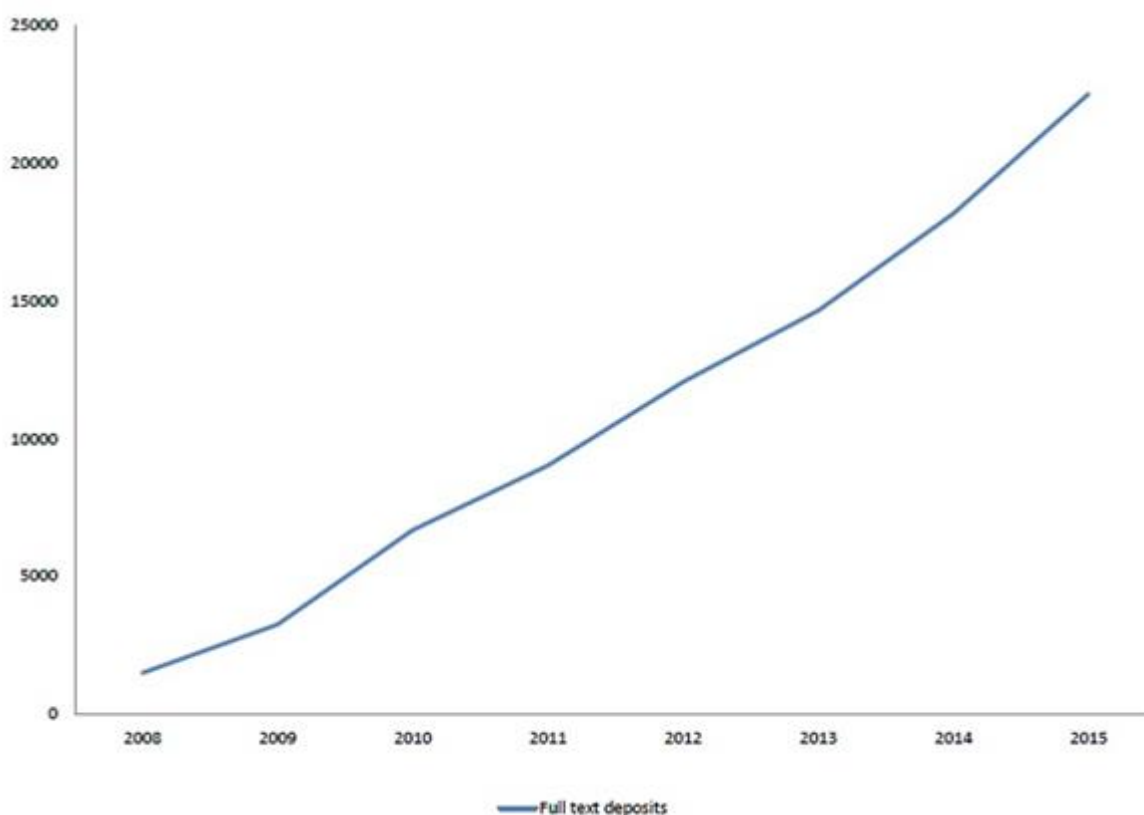


Figure 2: Full text deposits in UCL’s repository 2008-2015

The volume of downloads from UCL Discovery has also increased markedly, indicating high visibility for UCL research. Annual download totals have grown from under 200,000 per year in 2008 to over 1.8 million per year in 2014. This seems to be due to the visibility of the content, not simply the volume: the average number of downloads per item has more than quadrupled, from 146 in 2008 to 604 in 2014.

In July 2015, UCL Discovery exceeded 8 million lifetime downloads.

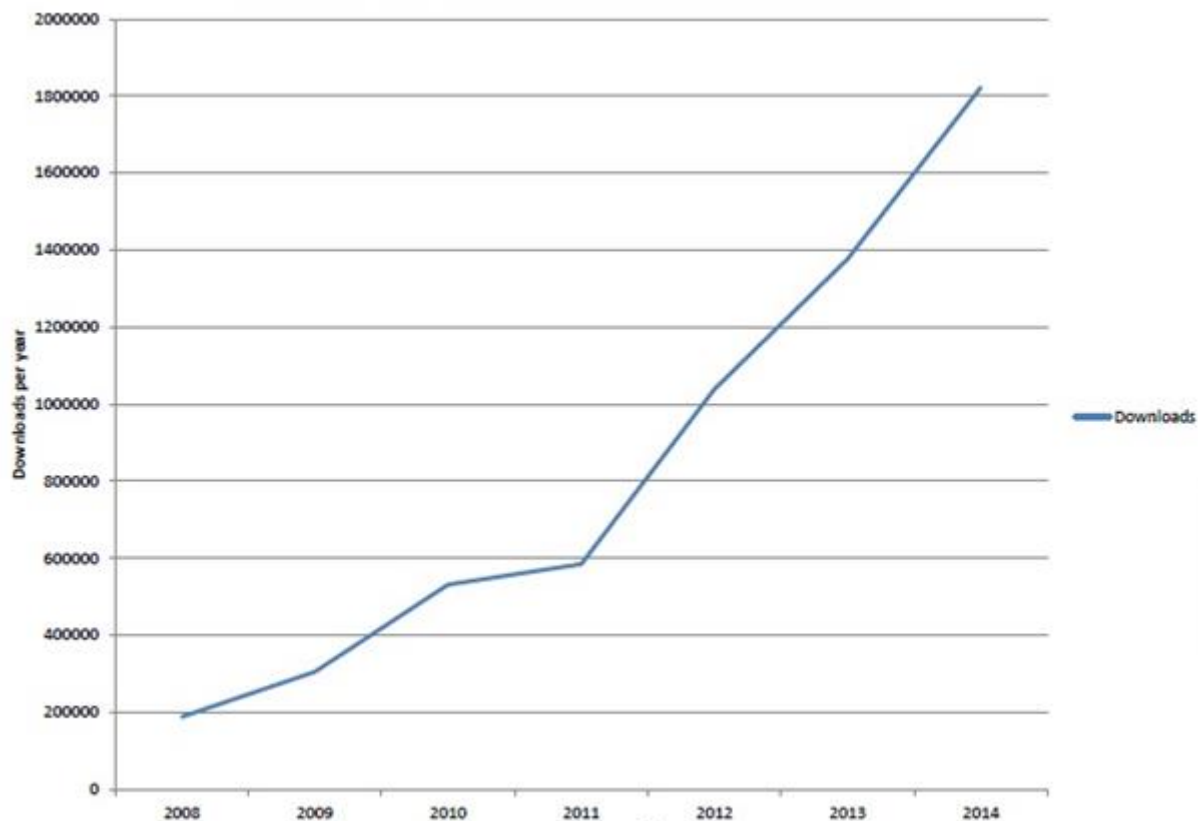


Figure 3: Downloads of items from UCL’s repository 2008-2014

Summary:

- As of September 2015 the repository, UCL Discovery, contains more than 22,500 full-text items, a rise of 125% from the 10,000 items it contained in 2011;
- The RCUK (2013) and REF (2014) Open Access policies have been key drivers for depositing in UCL Discovery and engaging with Open Access generally;
- UCL Discovery contains both full-text and metadata-only records. 42% of the records for outputs published thus far in 2015 are live with full text. 76% of these (or 32% of total outputs for 2015) are Open Access;
- Annual download totals have grown from under 200,000 per year in 2008 to over 1.8 million per year in 2014; the average number of downloads per item has more than quadrupled, from 146 in 2008 to 604 in 2014;
- The move to self-archiving by researchers and the emphasis on compliance with internal and external OA policies are major factors in achieving high levels of inputs in an efficient fashion.

3. Policy

In May 2009 UCL’s Academic Board, the senior academic committee in the university, agreed two principles to underpin UCL’s publication activity and to support its scholarly mission:

1. That, copyright permissions allowing, a copy of all research outputs should be deposited in the UCL institutional repository (UCL Discovery) as Open Access;
2. That individual UCL academic researchers should be directly responsible for providing and maintaining details of their publications in order that UCL can keep an accurate record of its research outputs.

Following these principles, the institution-wide Open Access mandate of 2009 was steered through by the Academic Board and is enshrined in UCL's Publications Policy¹⁴.

The rationale for the policy includes: compliance with UCL's Knowledge Transfer and other agendas by making UCL's research outputs visible to new communities; rapid and open dissemination of UCL research to Society across the globe.

A list of benefits to UCL researchers is provided. These include: a comprehensive personal record of outputs, which is easy to maintain and keep up-to-date; reports on publications, for instance to support appraisal or grant submission; author-level bibliometric measures, such as citation counts and the h-index.

Also included is a list of benefits to 'external communities', including exposure of UCL research outputs to Google, Google Scholar and other search engines, and current awareness services for new UCL research publications. One might however hold that these measures benefit UCL as much as external communities.

The mandate applies to all UCL's research publications in all disciplines. While it makes researchers directly responsible for providing and maintaining details of their publications, it also makes explicit the benefits to them of deposit.

4. Policy support

As befits an institution of the scope and volume of UCL in terms of research, an excellent range of diverse and comprehensive support is provided by UCL Library Services. Library Services are responsible for co-ordinating support for UCL's Open Access mandate and for funders' Open Access policies, including the REF Open Access policy.

The UCL Discovery (institutional repository) team manages Green full-text deposits, and advises authors on how to deposit through UCL's Research Publications Service (Symplectic Elements).

¹⁴ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/library/open-access/publications-policy>

UCL's Open Access Funding Team processes payments for Gold OA from UCL's COAF (Charity Open Access Fund¹⁵), RCUK¹⁶ and institutional funds, and ensures that Gold papers are deposited in UCL Discovery.

The UCL Press, set up in mid-2015, publishes open access scholarly monographs, scholarly editions, textbooks, edited collections and journals, and claims to be the first fully Open Access university press in the UK.

Staff in UCL Library Services collaborate with the Research Evaluation team in the Office of the Vice-Provost (Research) to disseminate the requirements of the REF Open Access policy and UCL's Publications Policy to faculties and departments, using existing channels of communication. UCL has set up an Academic Advisory Group to promote the policies and advise on their implementation.

UCL's Open Access Working Group (with representatives from UCL Library Services, the Office of the Vice-Provost (Research) and UCL Information Systems Division) takes operational responsibility for implementing the policies, and reports to UCL Publications Board.

Summary:

- UCL Library Services coordinates diverse and comprehensive support for UCL's and funders' Open Access policies;
- Support proportionate to the scope and volume of UCL in terms of research is delivered by the UCL Discovery team, UCL's Open Access Funding Team and UCL Press;
- The UCL Press publishes open access scholarly monographs, scholarly editions, textbooks, edited collections and journals;
- The UCL Press claims to be the first fully Open Access university press in the UK;
- UCL Library Services and the Office of the Vice-Provost (Research) communicate Open Access requirements throughout UCL.

¹⁵ <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/About-us/Policy/Spotlight-issues/Open-access/Charity-open-access-fund/>

¹⁶ <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/openaccess/policy/>