Liverpool opeNWorks case study

Time period covered: August 2013 to July 2014

Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staffing structure and FTEs for OA</th>
<th>3.5 FTE Library staff who have responsibility for open access administration. This is in addition to other duties, such as providing support for the university’s Research Data Management project and for REF work.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Staff comprises:</td>
<td>1 academic-related manager (Research Support Lead), full time; 4 non-academic related library assistants, most part time to provide 2.5 FTE</td>
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| No. and cost of APCs paid | No. of APCs: 163\(^1\)  
Total cost: £209,404.29\(^2\) |
| No. of deposits, full text and metadata only (note whether public or restricted, and if ETDs are included) | 181 deposits total, including 120 with restricted full text and 61 with publicly-available full text. All but 1 of these deposits is a thesis.\(^3\) |
| Income for OA (Wellcome and RCUK) | Wellcome: £50,000  
RCUK: £368,000 |
| Internal fund for OA | No |

Narrative

_Institutional context (size, mission etc.)_

The University of Liverpool is a Russell Group university with the following demographic make-up:  
1,300 researchers  
36,000 students  
4,700 staff total

It is a comprehensive university, undertaking research and providing degrees across a very broad range of disciplines.

\(^1\) That have been administered centrally by the library. We cannot track any individual APCs that may have been made directly by academic departments.  
\(^2\) This figure comes plastered with warning stickers. The figure does not include a sizeable chunk of VAT that was not paid during our participation in JISC APC (despite many repeated attempts at communication, university finance has not got back to us about how to pay that VAT); it includes a handful of RSC Gold for Gold voucher-paid articles (i.e. effectively “free” APCs); Euro and US Dollar payments made via JISC APC have been converted to sterling via exchange rates at 2014-08-22; the figure does not include the spend on the Elsevier 2013-14 prepayment scheme for RCUK-funded articles, as the payment was made before August 2013, but the no. of APCs includes 34 articles made OA from August 2013 onwards.  
\(^3\) Even with the very, very low rate of deposits we’ve had I find this hard to believe, but it’s what the searches on our Research Archive are giving me. I do not trust the figures at all!

Martin Wolf 2014-08-22
Context for figures
The footnotes provided for the data provide much of the necessary context. The issues of VAT and conversion of different currencies makes it impossible to provide 100% accurate figures for spend on APCs.

From August 2013 until end of March 2014 we used the JISC APC service to pay APCs for RCUK-funded articles, and had used Open Access Key to do the same between April 2013 and July 2013 (APCs for Wellcome-funded articles have always been paid directly by the university). A particularly frustrating element of the JISC APC system was having to maintain separate balances for sterling, euro and U.S. dollar payments, which resulted in lots of transfers between accounts and difficulty in keeping track of actual sterling spend.

It is also worth noting that Liverpool was one of the 30 universities that received “kick-start” funding for Open Access activities from Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.

Institutional policies
There has been no full open access policy at the University of Liverpool. In theory staff are mandated to deposit articles in the Research Archive (EPrints), but promotion of the Research Archive was suspended once a project was initiated to link the system with an in-house system. The project to do this fell massively behind schedule, and the new University Repository (again using EPrints) will be available from 29th September 2014. As such, the mandate has never been enforced.

The only “policy” as such is that since 1st April 2013 we have only funded centrally APCs for articles reporting on RCUK-funded or Wellcome-funded research (in January 2013 to March 2013 we used BIS money to fund APCs for articles regardless of who funded the underlying research). This has been purely on a first come first served basis, and we have not used all our funds.

The university’s Research Policy department is creating a draft open access policy to go before the university’s Research and Knowledge Exchange committee on 1st September 2014, and so we should hopefully have an institution-wide policy in place soon after that.

OA governance (working group, committees and membership)
Put simply, currently there isn’t any. There are no specific open access working groups or committees. This may change once an institutional OA policy is in place.

Issues, challenges and opportunities
Some issues and challenges not already described above include:
- promotion of open access, in particular widespread confusion on fundamental OA concepts;
- hostility towards and suspicion about open access from the local branch of the Universities and Colleges Union;
- the HEFCE policy for the next REF;
- accurately monitoring expenditure on open access.

To combat the first two of these issues, members of staff from the Library and the Research Policy department have undertaken a series of roadshows delivered to individual Schools/Institutes in the university over Summer 2014 to outline OA concepts and provide information to help get an informed response to the consultation over a new university policy for open access. These have been dual edged – on the one hand the roadshows have been very well received, but on the other hand
attendance has been very, disappointingly low, and in many cases the key decision makers in the departments have not been in attendance.

OA concepts themselves can prove frustrating in that they take a lot of explaining, and no matter how clear your advocacy message staff will miss-interpret or hear only what they want to hear, so you’ll get things like academics talking about how they have to go for Gold open access to meet the requirements of the next REF, or asking for payment for Green open access, and so on.

By far the biggest challenge will be how to implement the HEFCE requirement for deposit at point of acceptance. I’ve no answers to this, and am bitterly disappointed that HEFCE have not seen sense and altered their thinking. On the other hand, it also represents the biggest opportunity for open access in that this is the game changer that will force all research staff to start taking open access seriously – it is worth noting we have seen a tripling in the number of APCs requests per month between the months before the HEFCE announcement and the months after.