



## Why and How to Implement ORCID in a University

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ORCID has been widely endorsed by major UK funders, sector bodies, and professional associations representing research management, library, and IT staff in higher education. Building this consensus was an important first step on the way to improve the integration of systems and processes that underpin the research life-cycle through the embedding of ORCID identifiers. Through Jisc and ARMA, eight universities are piloting ORCID. The aim of this pilot is to test how ORCID identifiers could work in local systems and workflows and to facilitate the sharing of lessons learned in this process. The pilot universities' experiences with using ORCID identifiers will also help Jisc to decide if it should facilitate ORCID membership for UK universities and research organisations on a national scale.

Now, in the relative calm after universities have completed their Research Excellence Framework (REF) submissions, seems to be a crucial time for them to further develop the systems they use to manage and report on their research activity. This includes exploring how ORCID could make their researchers' lives easier by saving them time through automatically moving research information between systems.

A number of the pilot universities have pointed out that using ORCID identifiers in their institutions aligns well with their strategic plans to improve the accuracy as well as the comprehensiveness of data gathering about publications and other research outputs. This is vital not only to make it less time consuming for researchers to report on the findings and impact of their work to funders but also to improve institutional processes such as the collection of evidence to support internal applications for promotion. One way to get an overview of the research produced by an institution, is to use CRIS systems to aggregate data from multiple external sources such as

PubMed, CrossRef, or bibliographic databases. ORCID should help to automatically resolve the author name ambiguity issues that will arise in this context.

The envisaged enhancements to systems and processes also play an important role in institutions' response to current developments in the UK research policy environment which have brought scholarly dissemination to the centre of attention.

All of the UK universities piloting ORCID are, at the same time, putting in place workflows to enable them to comply with recent UK funders' OA policies that variously focus on Gold OA paid via article processing charges and deposit into institutional repositories. While the reporting and audit arrangements for these policies remain somewhat unclear, the general requirement for better information about university research is not in doubt.

These policies have increased institutions' desire to use ORCID identifiers to improve the quality of their research information and the interoperability of their systems. Some of the pilot universities have emphasised the way in which the move to Open Access for research publications and ORCID are mutually supportive.

To some extent, funders' Open Access mandates place even more demands on research managers, librarians, and researchers as they will be expected to capture information that demonstrates compliance with these policies. UK Research Councils are also responding to the opportunities which ORCID offers for improving data exchange with universities and are developing plans for integrating ORCID identifiers into their grant application system. This means that interesting information flows will start to become possible which should make it easier to monitor and report on compliance with OA policy.

At the same time, OA is about much more than just compliance with funders' requirements.

ORCID should also support universities in fulfilling other aspects of the OA agenda. In this context, they are interested in automatically sharing information between local systems, such as institutional repositories and external systems through ORCID, to make their research more visible and discoverable. Greater exposure of a researcher's work paves the way for more potential impact and citations that can be converted into building a career in research and contributes to raising an institution's research profile.

At this point, UK funders' policies on sharing of research facilities and equipment should also be mentioned. These call for universities to improve the efficiency with which scientific instruments and research labs are used, and better research information management will be critical to achieve this. The University of Southampton is taking the first steps to embed ORCID in the local and national equipment data infrastructure, enabling better management of scarce resources. In time, this should also enable the use of ORCID identifiers to evidence the contribution of a researcher from a grant proposal, to her presence in a lab, and use of an instrument, to the eventual data and publication.

There are compelling reasons for universities to adopt ORCID, but these are relevant in different ways in different universities. Partly, this depends on the policy environment in which the university sits, for example with reference to OA or research reporting, as described above. In the UK, this is complicated and dynamic, and ORCID presents a somewhat refreshing point of stability in that landscape. Nevertheless, ORCID solves different problems, and will be implemented in the context of different imperatives and constraints, for different universities worldwide.

Compared to some countries (Brazil with its Lattes system; Norway with CRISTin, and the US with the emerging STAR-Metrics programme) there are no single overarching initiatives into which UK universities need to fit. Perhaps as a result, the group of UK universities piloting ORCID is quite diverse.<sup>1</sup>

This variety is reflected in their implementation plans. A key point of divergence and discussion is whether, and when, researchers should be required by their employing universities to register for an ORCID. The University of Aston plans to make this a requirement for new members of staff, and the University of York draft publications policy requires that an ORCID be included when researchers record their publications on systems such as repositories. The University of Oxford, on the other hand, along with several other universities, is advocating, rather than requiring researchers to obtain their ORCID and link it to the local single sign-on infrastructure using the minimum data possible. An incentive for researchers to link their ORCID account to the local system will be an affiliation to Oxford validated by the university in their ORCID record.

Another implementation issue is whether the university should set up ORCID records to be claimed by researchers, or whether researchers should take the lead. In the US, Texas A&M took the former route, which resulted in large numbers of ORCID records being claimed, but also large numbers being unclaimed. As noted above, the University of Oxford will not be creating ORCID records. Imperial College London initially considered creating records for all their staff and students, but has since reconsidered this approach. Most of the other universities in the Jisc pilots are relying on authors to create their ORCID and link it in some way to local systems, rather than the university creating the record.

Several of the pilot projects are exploiting intervention points early in the researcher's career. Kent is explicitly targeting early career researchers, whereas Northumbria is going further and setting up a facility for students to register for an ORCID via the student portal. In these cases, it seems that the drivers from OA policies are matched in strength by other concerns, such as the university's role in engendering good scholarly practice early-on, and easing the institutional burden of various requirements to report on their activities and outcomes.

1 In time, the Higher Education Data and Information Improvement Programme (HEDIIP) might be an

important driver toward consistency and rationalisation, but at the moment its focus is on student data rather than research administration.

### Conclusion

While national agencies in some countries, such as Denmark and Portugal, have pushed ORCID strongly, the approach in the UK has been more decentralised so far. The resulting variety of imple-

mentation paths offers a rich source of experience. The end result should be the same, though, that is widespread adoption—at last—of a common and trusted researcher identifier.

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