

Developing A Personal Publication Strategy

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

A publication strategy is useful for every academic. A well-considered publication strategy will help maximise academic impact, support career development and aid the production of an optimal portfolio of research outputs for the next REF.¹

A publication strategy can also help resolve some common conflicts in the direction of academic enquiries, such as how to square personal research interests, with local research strategies and with funding drivers. It will also enable more focused conversations with local research leads and ensure individually-tailored support can be provided.

1.2 Process

Publication strategies can take many forms. A template is provided with this guidance (9.5, below) to assist with the initial development of one, but other types/formats are equally as valid. In general they should cover multiple planned publications, over a period of roughly 5-6 years into the future.

Once a publication strategy has been drafted, input should be sought from a local research lead - such as a research group/centre lead or a Unit of Assessment Co-ordinator - as it is important that an individual's plans are, as far as possible, congruent with broader institutional themes and strategies.

Publication strategies should be reviewed regularly. This will often occur naturally as part of both annual academic appraisals² and the Mini-REF exercise (which will occur every 18 months - census dates December 2016, June 2018 etc.).

Finally, although journal articles make-up about c.75% of all academic outputs, this guidance will attempt to cover all common forms of outputs, including monographs, book chapters and creative portfolios.

2.0 Why Publish

2.1 Context

Producing regular publications is an essential component of an academic career. The core of any University's charitable mission is the creation of new knowledge and understanding for public benefit. Academia is part of a broad public conversation and individuals have a responsibility to effectively communicate the results of their enquiries as a way of advancing their subject areas, and enhancing society and the economy.

The reputation and prestige of the individual academic and their institution relies on publications. Peer-reviewed publication is how expertise in higher education is demonstrated and research quality assured. Publication potential and track record are usually the most important criteria for academic

¹ The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is how research quality is measured in UK higher education. Universities make submissions of their research portfolio to this national exercise, which runs every 5-6 years. £1.6 billion of research funding is distributed to universities each year, based on their performance in the previous REF. For more information see: <https://staff.shu.ac.uk/enterprise/research/researchassessment.asp>

² See: <https://portal.shu.ac.uk/departments/HRD/development/appraisal/academic/Pages/home.aspx> and in particular: <https://portal.shu.ac.uk/departments/HRD/development/appraisal/academic/Documents/Supplementary%20Prompts%20for%20Appraisers%20of%20Research-Active%20Staff.pdf>

recruitment and promotion. Grant applications are more successful when underpinned by a strong publication record, while publication is generally a condition of grant awards. Each output submitted to REF 2014 is also forecast to bring into the University c.£26,000 in QR funding, used to fund academic salaries and enhancements to the research environment.

2.2 Personal Objectives

Within this broader context, there can be many varying reasons why an individual might wish to publish. Publication empowers individuals in many ways. It raises profiles amongst peers, exposes arguments to critique which sharpen ideas, and puts findings into the public realm where potential users and beneficiaries will notice them.

A sufficient quantity of high-quality outputs will help individuals progress their careers. Academic recruitment is based on potential - the expectation of future REF-able publications³ and grant awards - but a track record of having already done so is usually seen as the best predictor of this. Promotion processes at Sheffield Hallam actively reward research performance. A requirement for grade 9 roles such as Reader and Principal Research Fellow is that an individual 'maintains a sustained record of peer reviewed research activity in the public realm of significant quality and impact'.⁴

2.3 Purpose of the Publication

Each publication should have a purpose. On a personal level it may be about intellectual curiosity, ensuring return in the REF, increasing h-index,⁵ or improving job prospects - as all research should be personally satisfying and career sensible. Beyond this, to start making a difference, it might be an ambition to see the work recognised by a related practice community, adopted as policy recommendations, commercialised, or used to underpin an impact case study.⁶

It is therefore important to think about what specifically the publication is trying to achieve, which audiences it is trying to reach and which publication approach would best serve those. Would a select publication in a quality research journal be the best way to maximise reach, would a dedicated monograph be a more effective vehicle, or would multiple publications in more widely-distributed practice-facing journals be the most apt means of dissemination?

3.0 What and When to Publish

3.1 Research Integrity

Authors should publish the results of their research in a manner which conforms with current best practice and in compliance with any relevant funders' and sponsors' terms and conditions. Under-reporting of research should be avoided and in particular studies with negative results should be submitted and published, where possible, to negate publication bias. Duplicate and fragmented (salami-sliced) publications should also be avoided - essentially, each new dataset and/or method of analysis should form the basis of one discrete publication. Exceptions to this would be particularly

³ 3* or 4*, or in some instances 2*, outputs – see section 6 below.

⁴ For information on academic progression at Sheffield Hallam, see:

<https://portal.shu.ac.uk/departments/HRD/pay/acprog/Pages/home.aspx>

⁵ h-index or Hirsch number is a widely-used metric, mainly in STEM disciplines, that considers both the author's number of publications and the number of citations per publication.

⁶ Impact case studies form part of REF submissions and serve to demonstrate the effect of research on wider society.

complex STEM projects where multiple papers are needed to make the results understandable, while inter-disciplinary projects generally require a paper for each of the embedded disciplines.⁷

3.2 Timescales

The REF cycle up-to 2014 mandated that most authors submit four publications at the end of each six year period.⁸ 18 months is also not an untypical timescale for undertaking a discrete research project. This includes: planning, design, funding bids, ethics applications, literature review, data collection, analysis, drafting, conference papers, writing a final version, peer review and publication. Where research teams exist, multiple projects often run in parallel, with different individuals contributing to different parts, and publications will in those circumstances be produced more frequently.

Obviously mindful of the latest REF requirements, authors should have a broad plan for their research 5-6 years into the future. This should take into account the total number of publications intended for the cycle and the time needed to conduct the related research. The time to get accepted for publication, including turnaround time of journals and time to address peer reviewer comments, should not be underestimated. According to data from PubMed, the time from submission to acceptance across academic journals averages about 100 days, but this is highly variable depending on subject area.⁹ This is particularly important if disseminating the results is urgent (e.g. in a notably fast-moving subject area) or during the last year of a REF cycle.

Timescales should not dictate choice of topics, but the time, scope and resource elements/constraints always need to be carefully considered before beginning a project, to ensure publication goals can be met.

4.0 With Whom to Publish

4.1 Authorship

Authorship guidelines are clear. To be an author on a paper, an individual needs to have made a substantial contribution to ALL of the following:

- Conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data
- Drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content
- Final approval of the version to be published (accepting public responsibility for what it says)¹⁰

Authorship is based on intellectual contribution - i.e. would the paper have been possible without the contribution of that person? Other contributions, such as acquisition of funding, general supervision of a group, technical support, or editing for English, should be recognised through

⁷ For more information see: 'Principles of Good Research Practice for Publication', pp.3-4:
www4.shu.ac.uk/assets/pdf/Principles-of-Good-Research-Practice-for-Publication-Autho.pdf;
www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice

⁸ Arrangements for REF 2021 are still being made, but the current proposal is for an average of two outputs per FTE of academic staff to be submitted, with a maximum of six per individual.

⁹ K. Powell, 'The Waiting Game', *Nature*, dxxx (2016), p.150:
www.nature.com/polopoly_fs/1.19320!/menu/main/topColumns/topLeftColumn/pdf/530148a.pdf

¹⁰ International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, 'Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Writing and Editing for Biomedical Publication' (2008), p.2:
www.icmje.org/recommendations/archives/2008_urm.pdf

acknowledgements instead.¹¹ Claiming authorship when authorship criteria has not been met, known as honorary or guest authorship, is a matter of research misconduct.

4.2 Strategic Partnerships

Co-authorship is usual in most disciplines, except in the humanities and some parts of the social sciences where sole authorship is the norm. Co-authorship enables the pooling of expertise and resource. It also gives junior researchers the opportunity to learn from more senior colleagues, while reciprocally bringing extra capacity and fresh ideas to a project.

Co-authorship brings many opportunities. However the intention is that the productivity should become a multiple of what one individual would be able to achieve in the same time. Therefore collaborators should be chosen (and limited) with this in mind.

Because of current REF requirements, it is often preferable to collaborate with colleagues at other institutions. As well as the cross-institutional makeup enriching the partnership/team, this allows both/all authors to submit the same output to the REF; whereas when co-authors are at the same institution, typically only one individual is allowed to claim it.

If working with internal co-authors therefore, other considerations come into play. For regular writing partners who make equal contributions, particularly in the social sciences, this might involve rotating the lead authorship over several publications, to ensure all collaborators are able to make a strong REF return. However such arrangements must be within the bounds of the 'co-authorship and order of authorship' integrity guidelines, which particularly state that such decisions should not be influenced by status.¹² In particular doctoral and early-career researchers should usually be the principal author of all outputs substantially based on their work.

It is always good practice to discuss authorship during the planning stage of research and to have an explicit written agreement on it in place, even if this just outlines principles.

In the proposals for REF 2021, the intention is that each subject area (Unit of Assessment) will make a submission of two outputs per FTE of academic staff. This moves away from the four outputs per individual tradition and necessitates more collective responsibility. In this new context, engaging with local Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators, to discuss plans and strategically-advantageous potential collaborators, has taken on a new importance.

5.0 Where to Publish - Making Informed Judgements

5.1 Choosing a Journal

Identifying the right journal to submit to is often a challenge and there is no easy answer. A useful starting point can be to make a shortlist of journals that may be suitable:

- Consider the journals you know and read and that inform your research
- Ask colleagues and collaborators for recommendations

¹¹ For more information see: 'Principles of Good Research Practice for Publication', pp.1-2: www4.shu.ac.uk/assets/pdf/Principles-of-Good-Research-Practice-for-Publication-Autho.pdf

¹² For more information see: 'Principles of Good Research Practice for Publication', pp.2-3: www4.shu.ac.uk/assets/pdf/Principles-of-Good-Research-Practice-for-Publication-Autho.pdf

- You may be able to find a list of journals in your discipline, for example, in the Health disciplines there is the National Library of Medicine (NLM) catalogue of journals referenced in the NCBI databases¹³
- There could be academic or professional body guidance to refer to. For example, the Chartered Association of Business Schools' Academic Journal Guide 2015¹⁴
- Use Library Search or the library databases, available via the Library Gateway, to find articles similar to the one you would like to publish. The journals which have published the articles may be suitable for your shortlist
- If you are considering publishing in an Open Access journal (a journal which does not charge readers or their institutions for access; the author's funder or institution pays/provides instead), have a look at the subject listing in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) for Open Access journals in your discipline¹⁵

Once you have a shortlist of possible journals, you should consider each of these journals in more detail to make sure the journal is a good fit for your research, that publishing in it will help you to fulfil your publication goals and that it is a reputable journal that you can trust. Be prepared to identify several possible journals, in case you are unsuccessful with your first choice.

Below is a list of nine factors that you should consider when choosing a journal:

i. Funder and other requirements

You will need to check that the journal meets the conditions relating to publication attached by any funders of the research. It is important that you are familiar with the terms and conditions of your research grant or contract. For example, all articles arising from research funded by one of the seven research councils and published in academic journals or conference proceedings, must be made Open Access.¹⁶

ii. The journal scope and content

Have a look at the scope of the journal. This can usually be found on the journal's website. Consider if your research topic fits with the stated topic coverage and look at the previous 3-4 issues to see what type of article is published in it and if similar material to yours has being included before.

You should also check if the methodology you have used in your research is appropriate for the journal. Some journals only publish original research, while others publish reviews, discussion, case studies or a mixture of types of article. Some just or predominantly publish either qualitative or quantitative research. There may also be a stipulation on the length of the article. You should choose a journal that publishes the type and length of article suitable for your work and write your article to fit the requirements of the journal.

Have a look at the number of journal issues published and their regularity. Regular publication builds readership and implies the journal is actively receiving submissions. Also check if the journal

¹³ NLM Catalogue: Journals Referenced in the NCBI Databases: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nlmcatalog/journals

¹⁴ Chartered Association of Business Schools' Academic Journal Guide 2015: <https://charteredabs.org/academic-journal-guide-2015/>

¹⁵ Directory of Open Access Journals' Subject Listing: <https://doaj.org/subjects>

¹⁶ For more information about funders' Open Access requirements see 'Funders: How to Meet their Requirements': <http://research.shu.ac.uk/library/oa/funders.html>

is being published as promised. Missing issues or no recent issues may imply that the journal is struggling to attract content or may not continue to be published.

iii. Reaching your intended audience

Consider whether the journal will assist you in reaching your intended audience effectively.

- *Is the journal general or a specialist*
Consider if your research has implications, interest and relevance to the wider audience of a general or interdisciplinary journal, or if it will mainly advance research in your specialist area and therefore be of most interest to specialists. A discipline-specific journal, while having a smaller readership, may target your audience more accurately. A general journal, such as Nature, may offer broader dissemination, but if it is prestigious, competition will be higher and therefore the acceptance rate will be lower.
- *The journal's target audience*
Choose a journal which is likely to reach the appropriate audience for your work: academics, researchers, professionals, practitioners or the general public. The journal website may indicate the target audience. For example, the Nursing Times is aimed at professionals.
- *The geographic reach of the journal*
The journal website will usually indicate if it is intended for a regional, national or international readership and the target region, country or area, if applicable. You may be able to find additional clues to this by considering the composition of the editorial board and the affiliations (institution and country) of authors publishing in the journal. The geographic reach may be important if your research addresses issues which are of more interest in a particular locale, for example, research related to policies in the National Health Service. Alternatively, you may be trying to reach an international audience.

iv. The discoverability of the journal

Your article will be easier for your audience to find and therefore likely to have more impact if the journal it is published in is indexed in the major interdisciplinary databases and/or key databases in your discipline. A list of which databases index the journal may be given on the journal website. However, this is not always the case, and you may need to find this information by looking at the databases in your subject area to see if the journal is indexed. Most databases provide a list of journals they index. For example these are available for Scopus,¹⁷ Web of Science¹⁸ and NCBI Databases.¹⁹

v. Open Access

Making research outputs available Open Access²⁰ has many benefits, including: raising the visibility, use and impact of your research and enabling a wider audience to have access to your research. You

¹⁷ Scopus source list: www.elsevier.com/data/assets/excel_doc/0015/91122/title_list.xlsx

¹⁸ Web of Science journal coverage by database:

Arts and Humanities Citation Index: <http://ip-science.thomsonreuters.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jloptions.cgi?PC=H>

Science Citation Index Expanded: <http://ip-science.thomsonreuters.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jloptions.cgi?PC=D>

Social Sciences Citation Index: <http://ip-science.thomsonreuters.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jloptions.cgi?PC=SS>

¹⁹ NLM Catalogue: Journals Referenced in the NCBI Databases (including PubMed and Medline):

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nlmcatalog/journals

²⁰ For more information on Open Access see: <http://research.shu.ac.uk/library/oa/index.html>

may also need to publish Open Access to meet funder requirements and HEFCE requirements for the REF.

- *Check that Open Access is possible*
Check that the journal supports Open Access. It may do this through one of two possible routes, either the 'green' or the 'gold' route.

- *Understand the route to Open Access that is offered*
The 'green' route to Open Access (self-archiving) consists of depositing the final peer-reviewed copy (post-print) of an article in an institutional or subject repository in parallel with conventional publication in a subscription journal. Often the research is only publicly available after an embargo period. The main advantage of the 'green' route over the 'gold' route is that it is free to self-archive, no additional charges are payable to the publisher.

The 'gold' route to Open Access consists of publishing in a journal that provides immediate Open Access on the publisher's website, often after paying an Article Processing Charge (APC) to cover publication costs. There are some advantages to the 'gold' route:

- enabling immediate availability with no embargos
- access to the publisher's pdf with the final layout and pagination
- optimal discoverability via the publisher's website

- *Check your funder requirements*
Check whether the journals you are considering will comply with your funder's Open Access policy by using SHERPA/FACT.²¹ Your funder may require Open Access and may prefer a particular route, for example the 'gold' route. Further details of your funder's requirements may be found from SHERPA/JULIET.²²

- *Make sure any costs can be covered*
If you choose a journal offering the 'gold' Open Access route, the publisher will usually charge an Article Processing Charge (APC). There are several options available to you:²³
 - you may need to plan this cost into a research funding bid
 - the University has arrangements with some publishers that may reduce or eliminate the costs of 'gold' Open Access
 - there is a University Open Access fund

If you are considering publishing in a journal which will require an APC to be paid and you would like to request that this is paid from the SHU Open Access Fund, you should fill out the form 'I request support for Gold Open Access'²⁴ **before** you submit your research to your chosen journal. The form should be sent to your Unit of Assessment Co-ordinator, who will assess it against the University's APC funding criteria, which includes whether the expected REF quality of the output is 3* or 4*.²⁵

- *Check that you will be able to comply with the REF requirements*

²¹ SHERPA/FACT: www.sherpa.ac.uk/fact/

²² SHERPA/JULIET: www.sherpa.ac.uk/juliet/

²³ For more information see 'APCs: How to Get Funding for 'Gold' Open Access':
<http://research.shu.ac.uk/library/oa/costs.html>

²⁴ The form 'I Request Support for Gold Open Access' can be accessed at:
<http://research.shu.ac.uk/library/oa/Proforma-GoldOpenAccess.docx>

²⁵ For a list of SHU Unit of Assessment Co-ordinators see the 'REF 2021' page:
<https://staff.shu.ac.uk/enterprise/research/REF2021.asp>

The HEFCE Open Access policy requires that in order to be eligible for the next REF, journal articles and conference proceedings with an ISSN must be made available via the University's institutional repository (SHURA) within three months of the date of acceptance. Use the SHERPA RoMEO²⁶ service to check if your shortlisted journals will enable you to comply with this policy. Look for the journal's policy on self-archiving in an institutional repository. When publishing through the 'green' route, there may be an embargo period before the full text of your output can be made freely available. You can check a journal's embargo period using SHERPA RoMEO. The length of an acceptable embargo period differs between REF panels:

- panel A (health, life sciences) 12 months
- panel B (physical sciences, technology, engineering and maths) 12 months
- panel C (social sciences) 24 months
- panel D (arts and humanities) 24 months

If you are unsure about whether your chosen journal will enable you to meet the HEFCE requirements, please contact the Library Research Support Team or your Unit of Assessment Co-ordinator.

vi. The review process

- *Is the journal peer reviewed*

You should check that this quality control process is undertaken by any journal in which you are considering publishing. Details of the review and editorial processes at a journal can usually be found on the journal's website, often in a section covering information for authors.

- *The type of peer review process*

Check that you are happy with the type of peer review that the journal uses. Common types of peer review include single blind (reviewers names are not revealed), double blind (author and reviewers names are not revealed) and open (the process is transparent). There are a small number of journals which use post-publication peer review,²⁷ but this is not a common practice.

- *The rejection rate*

Some journals provide information about their rejection rate on their webpages, but if this is not available, consider the prestige and appeal of the journal. Higher prestige journals usually have higher rejection rates. However, don't be afraid to aim high - you can always submit to another journal if your article is rejected and the feedback you receive from each review should help you continue to improve it. Very low rejection rates may indicate the journal accepts weak material or does not receive many submissions. If publication of your work is time-critical, bear in mind that if your submission is rejected and you need to re-submit to a second choice journal, this will inevitably delay the publication of your article.

- *The length of time taken from submission to acceptance and publication*

Depending on your field and topic, it may be important to have your work published as soon as possible for it to have maximum impact. The peer review process results in an inherent delay in the publication of journal articles. For example, it takes time to seek the opinions of

²⁶ SHERPA/RoMEO: www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/index.php

²⁷ E. Amsen, 'What is Post-Publication Peer Review?', *F1000 Research*, (2014):

<http://blog.f1000research.com/2014/07/08/what-is-post-publication-peer-review/>

reviewers. There may also be a delay in publication after acceptance, which can be due to over-acceptance or the timing of the publication of print issues.

If publication of your work is time-critical, have a look on the journal's website for information about how long these processes are likely to take. If you cannot find this information, you could ask the editor or, if articles from the journal include the submission, acceptance and publication dates, this may give you an indication of the likely timeframe. You may also be able to ascertain if the journal offers online publication in advance of print publication. Give some consideration to whether publishing in a journal offering 'gold' Open Access may be appropriate.²⁸ This will provide Open Access on publication via the publisher's website. The alternative 'green' route may involve an embargo period before your research can be Open Access.

Bear in mind that very short timeframes to acceptance and publication may indicate poor or non-existent peer-reviewing or editorial processes. However, there are some reputable journals that, because of the nature of the field, offer rapid publication.²⁹

vii. Prestige

Choose a journal with a standing commensurate with your research, taking into account the reputation of the journal and the quality of the review process.

You may already know if a journal is prestigious but, if not, consider the following:

- ask colleagues for their opinion
- check to see if the authors publishing in the journal are leaders in their field
- look on the journal website for the name(s) of the editor or editorial board. Research the editors to find out how well-known or respected they are and whether they actively publish
- consider the reputation of the publisher. Professional body publications are often considered prestigious

viii. Impact factor and other bibliometrics

Bibliometrics aim to provide a quantitative analysis of publications, primarily through citation analysis. Journal-level bibliometrics can be used to help you to decide which journals have the highest impact in terms of citations and therefore maybe where you wish to publish. These measures can help you to compare journals, but often only in the same discipline or field.³⁰ In practical terms you may start by looking at the journals in the top 10% or top quartile in your field. It is however the quality of the output alone that is assessed in REF and while these factors may help inform journal choice, they are not a marker of quality.

There are three journal level bibliometrics which it may be helpful for you to investigate:

- *Journal Impact Factor (JIF)*
This is perhaps the most familiar metric and is based on the average number of citations made to articles in the journal. An Impact Factor of 4 for a journal in a particular year means

²⁸ Find out more about 'gold' Open Access at: <http://research.shu.ac.uk/library/oa/basics.html>

²⁹ For example, rapid publication is offered by the Lancet through its Swift+ service: www.thelancet.com/lancet/information-for-authors/fast-track

³⁰ For more information about finding and interpreting bibliometric measures, see the Library's 'Communicating your Research' pages: <http://research.shu.ac.uk/library/communicating.html>

that, on average, the articles published one or two years prior to that year were cited 4 times. Impact factors can be found for science and social sciences journals using the database Journal Citation Reports.³¹

The impact factor for a journal can have little meaning when looked at by itself. However you can find the rank and quartile of a journal in its subject area based on its impact factor.³² Impact factors can also be found for individual journals through the database Web of Science by clicking on the title of the journal when you find a record for an article published in that journal.³³ This will also display the rank and quartile of the journal.

- *Scimago Journal Rank (SJR)*

This metric is similar to the Impact Factor, but allows for the importance or prestige of the journals which the citations to the journal of interest come from. It is calculated on different data from that used to create impact factors and may therefore be a useful double check. SJR scores are available for a different range of journals and may be present for journals which do not have an Impact Factor.

The SJR for a journal can be found on the Journal Metrics website,³⁴ and through the 'Browse sources' and 'Compare journals' functions in the database Scopus.³⁵

- *Source Normalised Impact per Paper (SNIP)*

The calculation of a journal's SNIP takes into consideration the citation potential of the journal in its subject or field. If you are trying to rank or compare journals from different fields, this metric is the most appropriate. The SNIP for a journal can be found on the Journal Metrics website and through the 'Browse sources' and 'Compare journals' function in Scopus.

ix. The trustworthiness of the journal

You need to be sure that you are submitting your research article to a journal that you can trust. Not all publishers follow the standards required to produce quality publications or follow ethical, best practice in scholarly publication. Have a look at Think Check Submit, where there is a useful checklist of what to look for and a helpful video on finding a trusted journal.³⁶

If you receive an unsolicited email offering to publish your research, be extra vigilant in checking the legitimacy of the journal. Trustworthy, established publishers do not usually approach researchers. One exception to this might be special issues of high-quality journals.

³¹ Journal Citation Reports: <http://lcproxy.shu.ac.uk/login?url=http://jcr.incites.thomsonreuters.com>

³² Finding impact factors and viewing the rank and quartile of a journal is explained by Thomson Reuters' Journal Citation Reports: Impact Factors:

http://youtu.be/ORPsvgf0RY?utm_source=false&utm_medium=false&utm_campaign=false

³³ Web of Science: <http://lcproxy.shu.ac.uk/login?url=http://webofknowledge.com/WOS>

³⁴ Journal Metrics: www.journalmetrics.com/

³⁵ Scopus: <http://lcproxy.shu.ac.uk/login?url=http://www.scopus.com>

³⁶ Think, Check, Submit: <http://thinkchecksubmit.org/>

5.2 Publishing a Monograph³⁷

In some disciplines, publishing a scholarly monograph has more prestige than publishing in peer-reviewed journals or conference proceedings. This is particularly the case in the arts, humanities and social sciences (AHSS).

Choosing a Publisher

If you are planning for a monograph, you will have to identify a publishing house that is most relevant to your research field. Some academic publishers have a diverse portfolio and will publish books in many disciplines, other publishers specialise in specific fields. A fundamental choice is whether you are aiming at a small expert audience or at a wider cross-disciplinary or even non-academic audience. It may be smart to identify a book series with a respected editorial board - this may help you to maximise the impact in your field.

When choosing a publishing house, you could take the following factors into account:

- **Academic weight:** Does the publishing house or book series offer a peer review process? This may or may not be essential for your purposes (e.g. for future career progression or submission to the REF).
- **Prestige:** Are you looking for a prestigious publisher where competition may be greater, or a younger press that may focus on offering a good personal service and where acceptance may be less competitive?
- **Speed:** Will the publisher be able to meet your deadlines, if any, depending on personal requirements or those of your funder or employer?
- **Added value:** Does the publishing house offer services such as: design and layout of your monograph (including designing the cover), indexing, copy-editing and proof-reading, good review coverage, and a wide and effective promotion of your monograph?
- **Pricing policy:** How does the (likely) price the publishing house will sell your monograph for, compare to similar books on the target market? Does this help you to achieve your aims and reach your intended audience?

Publishers' Business Models

Please be aware that some publishers operate an exploitative business model by charging publication fees without providing proper editorial and publishing services; this is sometimes referred to as 'predatory publishing'. These publishers often get directly in touch with you with an unsolicited offer that sounds too good to be true. Often they only do the minimal peer review process, if any at all, and sometimes even guarantee acceptance. These publishers only provide a minimum amount of services, excluding functions such as design, copy-editing, advertising and promoting your monograph. Some publishers may also ask you for a fee, which may not always be clear upfront. Finally, you may be required to sign a copyright agreement in which you sign over all rights to your work.³⁸

³⁷ Monographs are distinguished from textbooks in that they communicate the author's original research and are written for the author's academic peers/recognised experts in the field; whereas textbooks are primarily educational material for taught students. Textbooks are rarely considered research outputs, and therefore not REF-eligible.

³⁸ The Beall's List of Predatory Publishers is subjective, but compiles names of questionable scholarly Open Access publishers and journals, and may be of use: <https://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/>; <https://scholarlyoa.com/individual-journals/>

Open Access Monograph Publishing

Just as for journal articles, it is possible to publish a monograph via Open Access. This may require an author fee. Some publishers will make an electronic Open Access version of your monograph available online whilst also selling hard or paperbacks via print-on-demand. There are many other business models.

Publishing Open Access monographs is a new phenomenon which has so far been received with caution by the AHSS academic community. Initial findings suggest that an Open Access monograph may get more downloads than pay-to-view digital copies, and may open up a wider readership from a broader range of countries. Making a monograph available via Open Access could even increase print sales. However royalties are likely to be reduced and the usually guaranteed 'long tail' of print monograph sales is likely to be eroded. Monographs are exempt from REF 2021 open access requirements, so the decision on this rests with the author and their institution.

Publishers offering Open Access monograph publishing are, amongst others:

- Commercial University presses, such as Cambridge University Press and Manchester University Press³⁹
- Open Access ('new') University presses - these publish journals and monographs irrespective of institutional affiliation and after scrutiny by an editorial board, such as UCL Press, White Rose University Press and University of Westminster Press⁴⁰
- Open Access monograph publishers, of which Open Book Publishers and Ubiquity Press are probably the best-known examples⁴¹
- Commercial publishers with an Open Access option, such as Palgrave Open, Brill Open, Springer Open and Routledge Books Open Access⁴²

If you are unsure about the credibility of an Open Access publisher you can check:

- Whether their monographs are included in the OAPEN library⁴³
- Whether their monographs are included in the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB)⁴⁴
- Whether they are a member of the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA)⁴⁵

These publishers are meeting strict criteria to show their commitment to quality assurance, e.g. they have a proper peer review process.⁴⁶

³⁹ www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/cambridge-open-access/open-access-books/;
www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk/open-access/

⁴⁰ www.ucl.ac.uk/ucl-press; <http://universitypress.whiterose.ac.uk/>; www.uwestminsterpress.co.uk/

⁴¹ www.openbookpublishers.com/; www.ubiquitypress.com/site/books/

⁴² www.palgrave.com/gp/rights-permissions/open; www.brill.com/brill-open-0;
www.springeropen.com/books; www.routledge.com/info/open_access

⁴³ www.oapen.org/home

⁴⁴ <http://doabooks.org/>

⁴⁵ <http://oaspa.org/>

⁴⁶ For more information see: E. Collins, C. Milloy and G. Stone, 'Guide to Open Access Monograph Publishing for Arts, Humanities and Social Science Researchers' (2015): <http://dx.doi.org/10.5920/oapen-uk/oaguide>

6.0 REF Requirements

6.1 REF 2014 and REF 2021

REF requirements are reviewed and revised between each exercise. Most of the following section is based on the requirements as they were for the last REF in 2014. The Stern Review, published in July 2016, set out the principles for REF 2021.⁴⁷ These proposals will be highlighted here where possible. However much of the detail around the new arrangements is still being formulated, and is not expected to be confirmed until summer 2017. An update to the section will therefore be made as and when appropriate.

6.2 Definition of Research for the REF

For the purposes of the REF 2014, research is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.⁴⁸ It includes research that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of assessable research outputs and confidential reports. For the avoidance of doubt, this excludes the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research. Reviews, textbooks or edited works (including editions of texts and translations) may be included if they embody research (e.g. systematic/Cochrane reviews, which generally relate to randomised controlled trials, plus other acceptable experimental designs and case control studies, in health care).

6.3 Output Quality Standards

The REF 2014 panels provided an assessment of outputs in terms of originality, significance and rigour; with reference to research quality standards known as the 'star quality levels'. A generic description of these quality levels is provided in the table below. Research at all these quality levels is valued by the University and will contribute to research, knowledge transfer and scholarship agendas in different ways. For REF, authors should aim to publish outputs at 3* and above as only internationally excellent (3*) and world-leading research (4*) contribute to Quality-Related (QR) funding; of which the University receives c.£4.5 million p.a. as a result of REF 2014. Authors are likely to produce a range of outputs at different quality levels and it is recognised that for REF 2014, research that underpinned impact case studies had a minimum threshold of 2* quality. Publication strategies must address research quality and authors are encouraged to engage with the University's Mini-REF process and develop their publications based on peer review feedback.

Four star	Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour
Three star	Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence
Two star	Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour
One star	Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour
Unclassified	Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment

⁴⁷ N. Stern, 'Building on Success and Learning from Experience' (2016): www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/541338/ind-16-9-ref-stern-review.pdf

⁴⁸ The full definition can be found at: www.ref.ac.uk/pubs/2011-02/#d.en.69578 (Annex C)

It should be noted that ‘world-leading’, ‘internationally’ and ‘nationally’ in this context refer to quality standards alone. They do not refer to the nature or geographical scope of particular subjects, nor to the locus of research, nor its place of dissemination. For example, research which is focused within one part of the UK might be of ‘world-leading’ standard. Equally, work with an international focus might not be of ‘world-leading, internationally excellent or internationally recognised’ standard.

These quality starred definitions are further expanded in the context of the broad research specialisms including STEM subjects, social sciences, and the arts and humanities. More detailed descriptors that have relevance for each broad area can be found in the appendices (9.2-9.4, below). Authors are further encouraged to refer to the REF Panel overview reports, which detail how the assessment was undertaken, and critically provide observations about the assessment and the state of research within their discipline areas.⁴⁹ These reports provide valuable information about outputs at each of the quality starred levels.

6.4 Outputs

An underpinning principle of the REF is that all types of research and all forms of research output, across all disciplines shall be assessed on a fair and equal basis, including interdisciplinary and collaborative research. In addition to printed academic work, research outputs may include, but are not limited to: new materials, devices, images, artefacts, products and buildings; confidential or technical reports; intellectual property, whether in patents or other forms; performances, exhibits or events; work published in non-print media. Authors may wish to consider a mixed output approach within their publication strategies; this may be particularly pertinent for interdisciplinary research where alternative output types may dominate another research discipline.

REF panels will not regard any particular form of output as of greater or lesser quality than another per se; however, monographs and practice-based outputs of extended scale and scope can be double-weighted - e.g. a monograph plus two articles will count as four outputs. This is common in arts, humanities and social sciences, but will only be considered in exceptional circumstances in STEM areas. When considering whether an output merits double-weighting it may be prudent for the author to consider producing a reserve output within a publication strategy, in the event that the double-weighting is rejected.

To accompany a publication strategy, authors may wish to consider producing short statements on the research questions, methodology or dissemination, where these are not described within the output itself. This applies to practice-based outputs, for example, an exhibition, performance or artefact. Furthermore, it may be helpful to record factual information about the significance of the output where this is not evident within the output (for example, if the output has gained external recognition, led to further developments or has been applied).

Some REF panels will consider the number of times that an output has been cited, as additional information about the academic significance of submitted outputs (see earlier section on citations - 5.1 *viii*, above). Those panels that do so will continue to rely on expert review as the primary means of assessing outputs, in order to reach rounded judgements about the full range of assessment criteria (‘originality, significance and rigour’).

⁴⁹ www.ref.ac.uk/panels/paneloverviewreports/

6.5 Collaborations and Co-authorship

Strategic partnerships and collaborations are addressed in an earlier section, including reference to the University's authorship guidelines and consideration of publications within the context of the Unit of Assessment and the proposed Stern principles for the next REF.

Co-authored outputs are eligible for REF and such an output listed against an individual member of staff will count as a single output in the assessment, regardless of the number of authors listed. Collaborations with researchers external to the University is preferable, but where co-authors are regular collaborators from within the University and contributions across multiple publications are broadly equal, consideration might be given to rotating the lead authorship. From a REF perspective the order of authors is not important and practice can vary enormously between disciplines; however, authors should be prepared to evidence their individual contributions, if subject to audit.

6.6 Quantity

The requirement for a researcher to be submitted to REF 2014 was to produce four outputs between the two census dates, six years apart. Deductions were permitted for early-career researchers, part-time staff, and those who had extended periods of absence, such as maternity or health-related leave. Institutions then applied their own quality threshold to all those who were 'REF-eligible', i.e. had produced the sufficient number of research outputs. Only staff who had four (or an adjusted total) outputs and which were judged to average at or above the University's quality threshold of 2.5* were selected for return.⁵⁰ Other researchers' publications also supported the submission by underpinning impact case studies and contributing to the research environment.

The new principle for REF 2021 is that all academic staff who have any significant responsibility to undertake research are to be returned. Outputs are to be collated at subject area/Unit of Assessment, rather than individual, level. An average of two outputs per FTE of academic staff will be returned, with a maximum of six per individual permitted.

Current advice is that staff should continue to work on the principle of producing at least four outputs during each six-year period (broadly pro-rata in respect of early career or periods of extended leave). This will allow flexibility within the subject area and for the highest-quality possible return to be made. Mini-REFs will continue to run at 18-months intervals and will give authors the opportunity to have one output produced during that period reviewed.

6.7 Practice-Based Outputs

In the University's REF 2014 return, 74% of outputs were journal articles, 6% were monographs and 8% were book chapters. The remaining 12% included exhibitions, artefacts, performances, compositions and other creative/practice-based work from the arts and humanities (particularly Units of Assessment 29 (English), 34 (Art and Design) and 36 (Communication, Cultural and Media)). These were often presented as portfolios, submitted alongside a 300-word statement documenting the research process - textual analysis and explanation covering the aims, context, method, academic contribution and dissemination. Full guidance on practice-based outputs will be developed, in collaboration with the subject areas where they are prevalent, in due course.

⁵⁰ A 2.5* average would be achieved by producing, for example, two 2* and two 3* outputs.

7.0 Raising the Profile of Research

7.1 Planning

To raise the profile of their research, researchers should plan how to communicate and promote it beyond the output itself, including raising interest in the research before publication.

7.2 ORCID iD

An ORCID iD uniquely and unambiguously identifies researchers and provides a record of their scholarly work.⁵¹ It can be used when applying for funding, when submitting work to a publisher, and when depositing in the SHU Research Archive (SHURA) or elsewhere. ORCID iDs can be setup to automatically update individual lists of works from connected databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, CrossRef, Europe PubMed Central and the Modern Language Association's International Bibliography.

7.3 Researcher Profile

Keeping researcher profiles up-to-date informs others about researchers' areas of expertise, what they are currently working on, and what they have published in the past. Besides profiles on the University's external webpages, there are widely-used international academic networking sites such as ResearchGate and Academia.edu.

7.4 Sharing Publications via Open Access

Academics should plan for how to make their outputs Open Access (see Section v. in 5.1 above for more details on this). This includes depositing work in SHURA. Evidence shows that Open Access articles are cited more often and have higher visibility, therefore are more likely to reach a wider audience. Another advantage is that references can be made in other online communications to Open Access publications for more information, which readers will then be able to get immediate access to. Where articles are published in an Open Access journal which will incur Article Processing Charges (APCs), academics should plan for how this cost will be covered.

7.5 Sharing Research Data

Authors should consider sharing their research data.⁵² Evidence shows that sharing research data increases citation impact. Sharing data also enables researchers to open up new lines of enquiry or develop new insights based on existing data, without the duplication of effort that would be needed to collect the data again, if re-collecting the same data would even be feasible or possible. Increasingly research funders encourage the sharing of data. If research data is to be shared, research data management planning should take place as early as possible in the project.⁵³

7.6 Writing or Blogging

Researchers should consider how to raise awareness of their research before publication. One option is to write or blog about the progress of the research. However, caution should be applied regarding what is revealed about research before publication. Many academic publishers will not

⁵¹ <http://orcid.org>

⁵² <http://research.shu.ac.uk/library/rdm/sharing.html>

⁵³ <http://research.shu.ac.uk/library/rdm/planning.html>

accept pre-published work and may have issues with media coverage before publication. For example, see the Sage Publishing's *Prior Publication* policy and the Nature Journal's *Confidentiality and Pre-Publicity* policy.⁵⁴ Once research is published, academics should continue to use their chosen channel(s) to publicise their work and link to the full publication.

7.7 Building a Network through Social Media

Prior to publication authors can begin to build a network of researchers, stakeholders and interested parties, who publications can then be communicated to when they are available. As well as through traditional methods such as academic conferences, another way to build a network is by using ResearchGate, Academia.edu, Twitter, Facebook, or other appropriate social media platform or network.

8.0 Reviewing Publication Strategies

8.1 Review

A publication strategy for an individual is a valuable resource. However publications coming out of a subject area should be broadly coherent - complementing existing research themes and strategies. For that reason it is important to share publication strategies, both with line-managers and local research leads (research group/centre lead or Unit of Assessment Co-ordinator). They will be able to provide feedback and also potentially suggest opportunities that may enhance the plans, such as new connections or access to resources that might upscale the project.

Finally, plans invariably change, so publication strategies should be revisited and revised at least annually, ideally to coincide with an upcoming appraisal, research planning meeting or a Mini-REF.

December 2016

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⁵⁴<https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/prior-publication;www.nature.com/authors/policies/confidentiality.html>

9.0 Appendices

9.1 REF Generic Quality Star Levels

4*	Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour
3*	Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence.
2*	Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
1*	Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
U	Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment.

9.2 Originality, Significance and Rigour Quality and Research Quality Standards for STEM

Originality	The extent to which the output introduces a new way of thinking about a subject, or is distinctive or transformative compared with previous work in an academic field
Significance	The extent to which the work has exerted, or is likely to exert, an influence on an academic field or practical applications
Rigour	The extent to which the purpose of the work is clearly articulated, an appropriate methodology for the research area has been adopted, and compelling evidence presented to show that the purpose has been achieved

In assessing work as in terms of originality, significance and rigour, sub-panels will expect to see evidence of some of the following types of characteristics of quality, as appropriate to each of the starred quality levels:

- scientific rigour and excellence, with regard to design, method, execution and analysis
- significant addition to knowledge and to the conceptual framework of the field
- potential and actual significance of the research
- the scale, challenge and logistical difficulty posed by the research
- the logical coherence of argument
- contribution to theory-building
- significance of work to advance knowledge, skills, understanding and scholarship in theory, practice, education, management and/or policy
- applicability and significance to the relevant service users and research users
- potential applicability for policy in, for example health, healthcare, public health, animal health or welfare.

4*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agenda-setting ● Research that is leading or at the forefront of the research area ● Great novelty in developing new thinking, new techniques or novel results ● Major influence on a research theme or field ● Developing new paradigms or fundamental new concepts for research ● Major changes in policy or practice ● Major influence on processes, production and management ● Major influence on user engagement
3*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Makes important contributions to the field at an international standard ● Contributes important knowledge, ideas and techniques which are likely to have a lasting influence, but are not necessarily leading to fundamental new concepts ● Significant changes to policies or practices ● Significant influence on processes, production and management ● Significant influence on user engagement
2*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides useful knowledge and influences the field ● Involves incremental advances, which might include new knowledge which conforms with existing ideas and paradigms, or model calculations using established techniques or approaches ● Influence on policy or practice ● Influence on processes, production and management ● Influence on user engagement
1*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Useful but unlikely to have more than a minor influence in the field ● Minor influence on policy or practice ● Minor influence on processes, production and management ● Minor influence on user engagement

9.3 Originality, Significance and Rigour Quality and Research Quality Standards for Social Sciences

Originality	The innovative character of the research output. Research outputs that demonstrate originality may: engage with new and/or complex problems; develop innovative research methods, methodologies and analytical techniques; provide new empirical material; and/or advance theory or the analysis of doctrine, policy or practice
Significance	The development of the intellectual agenda of the field and may be theoretical, methodological and/or substantive. Due weight will be given to potential as well as actual significance, especially where the output is very recent
Rigour	The intellectual precision, robustness and appropriateness of the concepts, analyses, theories and methodologies deployed within a research output. Account will be taken of such qualities as the integrity, coherence and consistency of arguments and analysis, such as the due consideration of ethical issues

In assessing work as in terms of originality, significance and rigour, sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics:

4*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outstandingly novel in developing concepts, techniques or outcomes ● A primary or essential point of reference in its field or sub-field ● Major influence on the intellectual agenda of a research theme or field ● Application of exceptionally rigorous research design and techniques of investigation and analysis, and the highest standards of intellectual precision ● Instantiating an exceptionally significant, multi-user data set or research resource
3*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An important point of reference in its field or sub-field ● Contributing important knowledge, ideas and techniques which are likely to have a lasting influence ● Application of robust and appropriate research design and techniques of investigation and analysis, with intellectual precision ● Generation of a substantial, coherent and widely admired data set or research resource. ● In assessing work as being two star (quality that is recognised internationally)
2*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing valuable knowledge to the field or sub-field and to the application of such knowledge ● Contributing to incremental and cumulative advances in knowledge in the field and sub-field ● Thorough and professional application of appropriate research design and techniques of investigation and analysis
1*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Useful knowledge, but unlikely to have more than a minor influence in the field ● An identifiable contribution to understanding, but largely framed by existing paradigms or traditions of enquiry ● Competent application of appropriate research design and techniques of investigation and analysis

9.4 Originality, Significance and Rigour Quality and Research Quality Standards for the Arts and Humanities

Originality	A creative/intellectual advance that makes an important and innovative contribution to understanding and knowledge. This may include substantive empirical findings, new arguments, interpretations or insights, imaginative scope, assembling of information in an innovative way, development of new theoretical frameworks and conceptual models, innovative methodologies and/or new forms of expression.
Significance	The enhancement or deserved enhancement of knowledge, thinking, understanding and/or practice.
Rigour	Intellectual coherence, methodological precision and analytical power; accuracy and depth of scholarship; awareness of and appropriate engagement with other relevant work.

In assessing work as in terms of originality, significance and rigour, sub-panels will expect to see evidence of, or potential for, some of the following types of characteristics:

4*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A primary or essential point of reference ● Of profound influence ● Instrumental in developing new thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences ● A major expansion of the range and the depth of research and its application ● Outstandingly novel, innovative and/or creative
3*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An important point of reference ● Of lasting influence ● A catalyst for, or important contribution to, new thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences ● A significant expansion of the range and the depth of research and its application ● Significantly novel or innovative or creative
2*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A recognised point of reference ● Of some influence ● An incremental and cumulative advance on thinking, practices, paradigms, policies or audiences ● A useful contribution to the range or depth of research and its application
1*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Based on existing traditions of thinking, methodology and/or creative practice ● A useful contribution of minor influence

9.5 Personal Publication Strategy

	Proposed title or broad topic	Output type (e.g. journal article, book chapter, monograph, practice-based)	Approximate date (e.g. spring 2018)	Co-author(s)	Target journal(s) / publisher(s) / audience	Context (e.g. link to local research themes, prospective REF contribution etc.)
1						
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Name:	
Date:	

Comment/Feedback:

Reviewed by (line manager/research lead):	
Date:	