This open access advocacy toolkit has been developed as part of the JISC Pathfinder project Pathways to Open Access. It provides good practice recommendations and practical advice for UK HEIs to help them communicate with researchers about funder requirements and institutional policies on open access (OA).
A useful guide to stakeholder analysis and engagement is available from the Dougherty Centre at Cranfield School of Management.

Before you start “communicating”, consider who you need to reach, why, when, and what they need to know. Only begin crafting your messages and choosing channels to use when you understand your stakeholders’ needs well.

Types of open access

The policy for the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) recognises two types of open access (OA), Gold and Green. The key differences for authors between the two routes are as follows:

Gold (publication in OA journal)
- Gold means immediate open access, with articles made freely available at the point of publication.
- Gold may be required by funders, especially where the publisher does not allow self-archiving.
- Gold OA articles are often published under a licence which minimises barriers to re-use and dissemination, provided the author’s work is duly credited.
- Gold OA usually requires payment of an article processing charge (APC).
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Green (self-archiving in OA repository)
- Green means delayed open access, in accordance with publisher embargo periods (normally 6-24 months).
- From 1 April 2016, Green OA will be required to ensure articles are available in a future REF.
- Green OA offers more flexibility in licence options, and may allow an author to limit re-use of his or her work, particularly for commercial purposes.
- Green OA is available at no additional cost to the author.

Check out useful, informative websites about open access from Cambridge, Manchester, St Andrews, Sussex, UCL and others; and follow Jisc’s Open Access Good Practice blog for links to shared resources.
“Take the temperature” of the groups with which you will communicate. This can be done through a survey similar to this Finnish researcher attitudes survey (questionnaire on pp 15-18), or this one from the UK.

The MIAO tool can help you to assess how prepared researchers are for Open Access (OA) compliance, and semi-structured interviews or focus groups can also be used to gauge their understanding of and attitudes towards open access publishing. From this, you can begin to gather, anticipate and profile the kinds of opinions and concerns they have.

Awareness about open access will vary from non-existent or superficial to highly engaged and critical. Studies show favourable attitudes towards open access publishing in principle, but some scholars have concerns, there are disciplinary differences, and policy on monographs, for instance, is still evolving.

Profile audience types

Once you have an appreciation of sentiment among different groups at your institution, it might be useful to profile discussions about open access with a ‘typical’ audience member; for example:

How much do you know about open access?
A little.
Do you know your research funder’s open access policy? Not really.
Would you make papers open access?
If my department pays the fees.
Do you know the difference between gold and green OA? No.
Have you deposited a paper in your university’s repository? No.
If not, why not? Not sure if I have to and I heard it takes a long time.
Where can you go for advice?
There’s someone in the library I think.
Do you blog about your research or use social media? Yes, a lot.
What will it make more likely that you will publish your papers as open access soon?
If my funders tell me I have to. My head of department hasn’t said anything, but I could do with some training. I looked at the website once, but it seemed out of date and was hard to follow. If doing it doesn’t take too much time, I will, but my workload means I don’t have many hours available.

First, for avoidance of doubt, use a positive, succinct definition of open access. Peter Suber’s is good:

“Open-access (OA) literature is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. What makes it possible is the internet and the consent of the copyright-holder.”

Reiterate UK and international policies driving open access publishing and scholarly communication:

It is now RCUK and HEFCE policy that all peer-reviewed research articles and conference proceedings funded in any way by one of the seven UK Research Councils and published after 1 April 2013 must be made open access. Research outputs funded by any Charities Open Access Fund medical funders must be made open access.

In addition, to be eligible for submission in the post-2014 REF, papers accepted for publication after 1 April 2016 must be made open access.

All projects receiving Horizon 2020 funding now have the obligation to make sure any peer reviewed journal article they publish is openly accessible, free of charge. The open access policy is summarized in this brief factsheet.

Appeal to interests

Form messages that speak to stakeholders’ needs wherever possible. List and anticipate concerns. Take into account the interests of your target audiences, which may relate directly to their discipline or types of output. Show them how you’re simplifying the work they need to do to comply with funders’ mandates. Outline some of the advantages for them:

Broad and growing availability of academic research increases efficiency and innovation both inside and outside academia. It supports the generation of ideas and can lead to new research collaborations.

There are proven benefits:

• Open access publishing ensures publicly funded research is freely accessible by all, and delivers social and economic benefits through increased public understanding of research
• It allows fellow researchers to build on recent findings and to advance knowledge, leading to new collaborations as well as opening up new areas of investigation, such as data-mining
• Open access depositing combined with social media use increases article visibility, raising the profile of researchers. It helps demonstrate your institution’s social and economic contributions.

Draft Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that take account of queries and concerns. Here are some useful examples from Durham, Oxford and UCL. Where appropriate, you could also recommend good publisher resources.

Repurpose and share resources

There are now very many resources available to help people understand open access publishing. In the spirit of open access, these are of course openly available and users are encouraged to share them widely. Publishers, in their communications with authors, are also creating helpful sources of guidance. This open science guide from P1000Research is one example.

SPARC Europe, whose stated aim is “to create change and build a better scholarly communication system for the future”, is happy for people to reuse their helpful resources for OA advocacy.

Your open access campaign will be more effective if messages are not only rational but also entertaining and emotional. This video imparts great background information about open access publishing, and also reveals a very human rationale for going open access.
Communication Tips

1. **Involve the right people** – identify and map your audiences and stakeholders, their interests, concerns and needs.

2. **Enlist top level support** – when advocating open access, show these changes are sponsored by the Vice-Chancellor, PVCs, deans and senior researchers.

3. **Promote readiness and responsibility** – communicate regularly with clear ‘calls to action’.

4. **Improve compliance and support** – assess and communicate impacts and monitor success.

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**Face-to-face contact, emails, video and other methods**

All surveys of internal communication continue to confirm that face-to-face contact with stakeholders is still the way most people prefer to receive information. **Leaders and line managers** (including heads of research groups, PI’s and supervisors) are vital channels for strategic communication.

When communicating to engage and persuade, do so regularly and consistently using a variety of appropriate channels to ensure you reach all the target audiences you hope to contact. Test your messages on colleagues or associates who are unfamiliar with open access with the aim of clarifying anything they don’t instantly understand.

You must be honest and genuine in how you communicate. This strengthens trust, builds relationships, and improves chances of audiences being receptive and supportive. The information in the messages you send or the things you say face to face should be concrete not abstract.

Your communication plan is both a starting point and a reference point. It needs to be good but not perfect before you start communicating. If you wait until every last detail is ideal, you may lose opportunities to engage and persuade target audiences. In the absence of planned communication, rumours and misinformation fill the silence. Begin as soon as you can and adapt and improve communications as needed.

Here are some tactics and channels used by UCL:

- Meetings with HoDs
- E-mail reminders
- Web guidance
- Workshops and conferences
- Guide and 1-page summary
- REF OA Academic Advisory Group
- DA Forum
- Research Support Forum

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**Why?**

The Edinburgh Path (including Heads of Research Groups, PIs and Supervisors) are vital channels for strategic communication. A video like this, by Newcastle’s PVC Research and Innovation, may help.

**What?**

Email is one of the next most popular channels for receiving and sharing information. The Edinburgh Pathfinder, LOCH, has shared exemplar emails and other resources for others to adapt.

**How?**

In a presentation at the Joining The Dots Open Access Advocacy Pathfinder workshop at Senate House in March 2015, Newcastle University’s Deputy University Librarian, Jill Taylor-Roe, outlined how their advocacy campaigns have adapted to new policy environments and, in phases, built upon previous successes to address the latest needs of different groups.

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**5. PLAN YOUR COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN**

Depending on the stage you’re at in advocating open access publishing and depositing within your institution, there are many communication and advocacy options available. Begin your planning by defining your immediate objectives and putting some effort into matching the stakeholder groups or audiences you have identified with specific types of message and available communication channels. Working with those responsible for delivering related messages can make your advocacy more effective. At UCL, Library Services and the team responsible for UCL’s REF submission coordinate open access advocacy together.

A simple communications planner grid (right) can help you start to plan your open access advocacy campaign. This Internal Communications Review Toolkit, from the University of Manchester, takes you through a number of techniques and suggests available channels you may also find within your university. You haven’t yet sought guidance from internal communication and public relations specialists within your institution’s communications and marketing department, it would be valuable to enlist their help.

**Arranging all the elements you need**

Your campaign plan will match the target audiences and stakeholders you identified with clear, compelling messages that inform them and address their needs. It will designate appropriate communication methods – eg, face-to-face meetings, web resources, postcards, emails, case studies, videos etc – as well as scheduling frequency and timings. These activities should engage individuals and groups, foster supportive coalitions and potential OA advocates.

Where possible, gather allies to support and ‘champion’ open access advocacy, building a coalition of support to improve acceptance and initiate changed attitudes and behaviour. A network of ‘open access champions’, like those at Edinburgh, can help colleagues with OA.

As you plan, note sensitivities: One Pathfinder project, led by the University of Northumbria, reported that in open access communication and advocacy it is best to focus on general benefits of OA, not just REF/RCUK compliance issues which risk creating a ‘REF divide’ and disengaging staff not being considered for REF submission.

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Here are some tactics and channels used by UCL:
Throughout your communication programme, evaluate how well it goes. Gather feedback and communicate changes and improvements made.

Simple methods for monitoring, measuring and evaluating success will help to check approaches are working, gather feedback, refine communications and move the campaign forward. These can include:

- Metrics on new OA deposits and downloads, communicated to encourage competition
- Online quizzes and surveys to check understanding – pop quiz, surveys
- Further studies of individual researchers who are benefiting from making their papers open access.

Monitors, measure and evaluate success

Produced in association with:

Open Access Advocacy Toolkit

YOUR 7-STEP OPEN ACCESS CHECK LIST

1. Gather essential information for accuracy and consistency.
2. Understand your audiences and find the best ways to reach them.
3. Build a profile of open access stakeholders and their attitudes.
4. Create compelling messages that appeal to stakeholders’ interests.
5. Plan and develop your communication and advocacy campaign.
6. Begin communicating and do so regularly, honestly and consistently.
7. Monitor, measure and evaluate the impact of how you communicate.