

Executive Summary

- The LERU Roadmap towards Open Access represents a conscious decision by the League of European Research Universities to investigate new models for scholarly communication and the dissemination of research outputs emanating from LERU universities.
- The European Commission has singled out "the dissemination, transfer and use of research results, including through open access to publications and data from publicly funded research", as one of the action points to be pursued in order to achieve a well-functioning European Research Area (ERA).¹ Access to research information must be optimised if the European research community is to operate effectively, producing high-quality research that has a wider social and economic impact.²
- We are seeing a growing interest across the world in the moves made in recent years to stimulate an 'Open Access' environment, where scholarly literature is made freely available on the internet, so that it can be read, downloaded, copied, distributed, printed, searched, text mined, or used for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal or technical barriers, subject to proper attribution of authorship.³
- The idea of Open Access is not new; the first major international statement on Open Access was set out in the Declaration of the Budapest Open Access Initiative in 2002.⁴ However, 'the pathway' to Open Access is not a smooth one. Many parties are involved and there are many competing interests. There are costs and there are advocates, agnostics and critics. There are gains and impacts which need to be carefully assessed.
- This Roadmap traverses some of this landscape and aims to assist LERU members who wish to put in place structures, policies and practices to facilitate Open Access. Whilst the Roadmap is primarily intended for LERU members, other European universities may find it useful.
- The two basic mechanisms through which researchers can make their work freely available are often termed as the 'gold route' and the 'green route.' The adoption of either or both routes could lead to a transformation in the means of disseminating research outputs by LERU and other universities across the globe.
- LERU and/or other universities can consider having Open Access repositories into which, copyright permissions allowing, copies of their members' research outputs could be deposited. Those who already have such repositories are continuing to develop them. Many universities have found the Green route a helpful one to follow as a means of improving the dissemination of research outputs. In Webometrics listings of the impact of institutional repositories, LERU universities are significant contributors. The July 2010 listing shows that five of the top ten European universities listed are members of LERU.⁵ Further guidance, including some costing information, on implementing the Green route is given in section III.
- Several universities have supported the Gold route for Open Access, whereby authors in these institutions either publish in Open Access journals or pay publication charges (funded by the research funder or from an institutional Open Access fund) to make their article available in Open Access on publication. Some research funders, such as the Wellcome Trust in the UK, the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), will fund such publication payments. The Gold route is a bold route, which may also change the pattern of publication. Further information, including some financial information, is given in section IV.
- All of the changes described in this Roadmap require leadership. Universities could usefully nominate a senior person who can lead on Open Access issues for the whole university. These people could, in turn, work together collaboratively to take forward the Open Access agenda in Europe, making links as appropriate to other bodies in Europe who support Open Access developments. At an institutional level, the senior Open Access champion could usefully draw together a pan-university committee, with representatives from disciplines/support services to take the agenda forward.

¹ See Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative Innovation Union. European Commission. COM (2010) 546, 6 October 2010.

² See Overcoming barriers: Access to research information content. Research Information Network, London, 2009. Available at http://www.rin.ac.uk/system/files/attachments/Sarah/Overcoming-barriers-report-Dec09_o.pdf and Friend, F.J. (2007) UK Access to UK Research, in *Serials*, vol. 20 (3), pp. 231-34. Available at <http://eprints.ucl.ac.uk/4842/>.

³ See Getting your feet wet: An introduction to Open Access, <http://www.rin.ac.uk/our-work/using-and-accessing-information-resources/introduction-open-access>.

⁴ See <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/view.cfm>.

⁵ See http://www.webometrics.info/top100_continent.asp?cont=europe.