

Impact Round-Up 5th April: Open access mandates, academic freedom, and homo academicus.

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2014/04/05/impact-round-up-5th-april/

4/5/2014

Managing Editor [Sierra Williams](#) presents a round-up of popular stories from around the web on higher education, academic impact, and trends in scholarly communication.

There has been plenty of news coming from HEFCE this week.

The new [policy for open access in the post-2014 Research Excellence Framework](#) was announced (see Monday's post by Alma Swan describing the new [policy as a game-changer](#) for the open access movement, along with Mike Taylor's response welcoming the announcement but noting a [number of the policy's let-downs](#)).

Image credit: William Warby (CC BY)

The new policy requires academics to deposit their work in institutional or subject-specific repositories immediately upon journal acceptance in order to be eligible for the next Research Excellence Framework. Stevan Harnad has an extensive review of the essential components of an effective self-deposit mandate in his piece, [HEFCE/REF Adopts Optimal Complement to RCUK OA Mandate](#):

(1) The mandate must uncouple the date of deposit from the date the deposit is made OA, requiring immediate deposit, with no exemptions or exceptions. How long an OA embargo it allows is a separate matter, but on no account must date of deposit be allowed to be contingent on publisher OA embargoes.

This is exactly what the [New HEFCE policy for open access in the post-2014 Research Excellence Framework](#) has done.

(2) Eligibility for research assessment (and funding) must be made conditional on immediate-deposit (date-stamped by the journal acceptance letter). Again, this is in order to ensure that deposits are not made months or years after publication: no retrospective deposit. The deposit requirement for eligibility for research assessment and funding is not itself an OA requirement, it is merely a procedural requirement: For eligibility, papers must be deposited in the institutional repository immediately upon acceptance for publication. Late deposits are not eligible for consideration. [\[read more\]](#)

HEFCE have also announced their intention to review the [role of metrics in research assessment](#). You can browse our [recommended reading list](#) on the variety of topics to be reviewed.

Martin Eve has a short post on [Why OA mandates don't compromise academic freedom](#) which further delves into the backlash against requirements such as this new HEFCE open access policy:

...in the current case, given that most venues have green OA policies, all that is being asked of academics is to put your work on a repository for the world to read. Most publishers will allow you to do this. You will not have to pay to publish. You can publish where you want to and simply use these policies. Given these features, I really struggle to understand how that is an aspect of contemporary practice that is truly worth resisting. [\[read more\]](#)

A riveting anthropological exploration of how neo-liberal trends are shaping higher education, academic practice and academic freedom, [The Long, Lonely Job of Homo academicus](#) by John Ziker can be found at [The Blue Review](#):

Now, the life and times of Homo academicus are morphing before our very eyes, along with the rapidly changing global economy, reductions of state support for state universities, the rationalization of the higher education “industry” and increasing pressure from online colleges. This is not just a U.S.-based phenomenon; it is a global one. Colleagues from the U.K. to the Russian Federation are increasingly saddled with a reporting burden — justifying their existence in spreadsheets — evermore concerned with journal impact factors, participating in multidisciplinary research and competing for external grant monies. What place does academic freedom hold in such an economically-oriented and competitive higher education world? [\[Read more\]](#)



Image credit: Newton Graffiti (CC BY)

Athene Donald has written a reflection [On Saying No](#) at [Occam's Typewriter](#) on the importance of knowing when to say no (and yes) to speaking and engagement opportunities:

When starting out on one's career as a PhD student, it is easy to feel that anything but the straight and narrow of research is unimportant, a distraction or too difficult. Thus, an opportunity to try out something else, outreach perhaps, a little teaching, giving an oral presentation at a conference or getting involved with committees in your department, may feel a bridge too far...[But] seizing opportunities opens doors and can provide much satisfaction – as well as, naturally, the occasional embarrassment or failure. Saying no because of fear of either of those outcomes is likely to mean you're holding yourself back. However, there are other times when equally I believe saying no is the right thing to do. This is when you realise you're being taken advantage of. I believe this is potentially a perennial problem at any stage. [\[read more\]](#)

And it wouldn't be an Impact Round-Up without an attempt to solve the so-called 'humanities crisis'. [The solution to the humanities crisis must come from within](#) writes Mikhail Epstein at [The Conversation](#):

So the system of priorities in the humanities needs radical revision. Today, it encourages a proliferation of overly detailed and highly specialised descriptions rather than genuine new ideas. In order to survive and prosper in the 21st century, the humanities must shift their focus from descriptive scholarship to creative thinking capable of producing new intellectual movements, spiritual practises and socio-cultural institutions. [\[read more\]](#)

- Copyright © The Author (or The Authors) - Unless otherwise stated, this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Unported 3.0 License.