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1 Article

## 2 **Supporting Open Access at Kent – new staff roles**

3 **Rosalyn Bass**<sup>1</sup> and **Sarah Slowe**<sup>2</sup>

4 <sup>1</sup> University of Kent; R.Bass-583@kent.ac.uk

5 <sup>2</sup> Sarah Slowe; S.E.Slowe@kent.ac.uk

6 \* Correspondence: osc@kent.ac.uk

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8 **Abstract:** Open Access has been supported at the University of Kent from an early stage with the  
9 establishment of the Kent Academic Repository in 2007. Initially, this work was accommodated  
10 within the existing library staff structure, but the pace of change, funder requirements and a new  
11 university plan meant that support for Open Access needed to become explicit and a research  
12 support team was established using a matrix working system<sup>1</sup>. This article details this new  
13 structure and reflects on the benefits and challenges it brings.

14 **Keywords:** open access, staff, library, research support, scholarly communication

### 15 **1. Introduction, Historical Position and the UK Open Access Policy Framework**

16 Historically, Open Access support at the University of Kent was ad hoc; we look at this position,  
17 then outline the changing Open Access Policy in the UK and the pressure this put our structure under.  
18 We then summarise the changes we made, outlining the details of our current staff roles and establish  
19 whether this can be compared with the situation in other University libraries. We end with  
20 reflections on both the benefits and challenges that the new structure provides.  
21

#### 22 *1.1. The historical position of Open Access support at Kent*

23  
24 While Open Access has been supported at the University of Kent from an early stage with the  
25 establishment of the Kent Academic Repository in 2007, this work had been accommodated within  
26 the existing library staff structure. This was a fairly traditional structure for an academic library,  
27 with: an Academic Liaison Services team (ALS) selecting and recommending resources, monitoring  
28 library budgets and helping staff and students to make the best use of library material; and a  
29 Collections Management team responsible for cataloguing, content description and discovery and  
30 acquisition of print and online resources. Liaison Librarians in ALS supported individual Faculties  
31 and, within that, specific Schools or academic departments. The Collections Management team was  
32 team was not aligned to specific Faculties or Schools.  
33

34 The Kent Academic Repository (KAR) was established by a member of the ALS Science Faculty  
35 team working with EPrints and the dedicated IT Learning and Resource Development team within  
36 the Information Services Department, of which the Library is a part. The fact that this initiative came  
37 from within the ALS Sciences Faculty team was more closely linked to personal interest than planned

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<sup>1</sup> Matrix management is a technique of managing an organisation through a series of dual-reporting relationships instead of a single linear management structure. At Kent, within the library, this is through roles having both a faculty (Sciences, Humanities, Social Sciences) and thematic (Education, Engagement, Research) responsibility.

38 development, but nevertheless, responsibility for KAR remained within the Sciences team. The ALS  
39 Sciences team undertook training, answered queries and produced guidance while the Collections  
40 Management metadata team checked and reviewed entries in KAR. No additional posts were  
41 created and no additional staff resources were allocated.

42  
43 Initially KAR's function was as a register of University outputs because no such central register  
44 existed. The deposit of full text was encouraged but there was no specific advocacy for Open Access.  
45 Until 2012 an ad-hoc approach to Open Access was taken; use of the repository was down to the  
46 preferences of individual researchers or Schools.

47

### 48 *1.2. The changing Open Access policies in the UK*

49 Open Access policy in the UK has been changing at a considerable rate – from the Finch report  
50 [1] published in June 2012 recommending a policy to support open access publishing, which was then  
51 outlined in a government policy paper published in July 2012 [2]. The policy paper highlighted the  
52 government's intention to increase the number of taxpayer funded research papers freely available  
53 to the public. The policy has been encouraged through both HEFCE [3] (assessed through the REF<sup>2</sup>)  
54 and major funders such as RCUK [4] and Wellcome [5].

55

56 The effect of these policies was for the University of Kent to publish its "Open Access Policy" [6]  
57 which was ratified in its original form in 2013. This policy stated that

58

59 "The University requires that all research publications produced by its staff as part of their  
60 employment by the University are registered in KAR (the Kent Academic Repository:  
61 <http://kar.kent.ac.uk/>) and, where allowed by the publisher, that a 'full text' be deposited at the same  
62 time or as soon as permitted"

63

64 This change in policy, with enforced compliance for REF inclusion and research funding  
65 eligibility, alongside an increasingly complex administrative burden, as publisher and funder policies  
66 differed on licensing, embargos, method, place of archiving and availability and technical intricacies  
67 on the version that could be made available placed an unsustainable burden on an already  
68 overstretched team.

69

### 70 *1.3 The problem*

71 This pace of change and new funder requirements led to Open Access becoming increasingly  
72 important to business objectives at Kent. Although the library was already supporting Open Access,  
73 this was not always clear to researchers or senior management. It was necessary to raise awareness  
74 of the ways in which the library and other professional services departments could assist. The  
75 University Plan 2015-2020 <https://www.kent.ac.uk/about/plan/> later set out its key objectives within  
76 three specific areas: research, education and engagement. With the Institutional objectives aligned,  
77 clarifying the library contribution to each strand was key. Running alongside this was a desire to  
78 provide specialist support, so that researchers could concentrate on original research and the  
79 administrative burden for academics would be reduced.

80

81 KAR and the work that a limited engagement with Open Access entailed, had been added into the  
82 ALS Sciences team's and the metadata team's duties. No additional staff resources were available  
83 and other work was not diverted elsewhere. As Open Access grew more critical to business

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<sup>2</sup> The REF is a process of expert review undertaken by the UK higher education funding bodies, which assesses the quality of research outputs, their impact beyond academia, and the environment that supports research at each institution. The previous cycle was REF2014, the next will be REF2021.

84 objectives, the work demands increased, for example deposits into KAR increased from 2037 in 2010  
85 to 5606 in 2015 to the extent that the metadata team were no longer able to keep up with the volume  
86 of entries requiring checking in the “Under Review” section of KAR. With the need to demonstrate  
87 compliance to national bodies, there were requests to organise and participate in major, University-  
88 wide high profile Open Access events and a need to provide web guidance and training sessions to  
89 equip researchers with the knowledge and skills to adapt to the new agenda. In order to incentivise  
90 open access to research outputs for individual researchers, in 2014 it became mandatory for staff  
91 applying for promotion at the University of Kent to ensure that all publications they wished to use  
92 in support of their application were in KAR. This meant that the ALS Science team needed to  
93 participate in the promotions exercise and the metadata team had to manage the spike in deposits  
94 that the annual promotions exercise caused, accommodating this within their usual workload.

95  
96 The University of Kent is a recipient of funds from RCUK to make articles arising from their funded  
97 projects openly accessible, through the payment of Article Processing Charges (APC). This again  
98 increase the need for provision of guidance, support to administer applications to use the funds and  
99 to report back to RCUK each year. The University of Kent also arranged for supplementary funds  
100 to pay for APCs for non-RCUK articles creating a further need to establish and publish criteria for  
101 institutional APC funding. Increasingly publishers had individual platforms to manage APC’s, from  
102 dashboards to bundles, and expertise was need to navigate the variety of systems in use.

103  
104 These additional demands put undue pressure on the ALS Sciences team, and detracted from their  
105 core liaison role, such as selecting and helping students use library resources. It was becoming  
106 increasingly difficult to meet the Open Access research support demands and the traditional liaison  
107 role within the team of four people. There was increasing evidence that the structure was not capable  
108 of supporting Open Access adequately, as, for example, APC funds were underspent each year  
109 indicating that awareness of the funds’ existence and purpose was low. Also, the changes made to  
110 institutional requirements meant that the team was unable to respond to demand from the research  
111 community and in 2015 this resulted in a backlog of KAR entries where the metadata had not been  
112 checked or improved. There was no time for proactive development work, and four months before  
113 HEFCE’s Open Access requirements for the Research Excellence Framework began, guidance had  
114 not been created for University of Kent staff nor a mechanism for checking and reporting upon  
115 compliance. While there was much enthusiasm for open access to research outputs, the structure of  
116 support was plainly unsustainable.

## 118 2. The changes made

119 Adjustments to the staff structure within the library, and to the way the library and other  
120 professional services departments related to each other and to researchers, were necessary to meet  
121 Open Access needs in a positive and dynamic way. These included:

- 122
- 123 • The creation of a new Research Support Post in ALS
  - 124 • Aligning staff members in ALS to the University’s strategic themes
  - 125 • Use of matrix team working [7]
  - 126 • The creation of two new REF Assisted Deposit posts
  - 127 • The establishment of an Office for Scholarly Communication with two posts

128 The new structure has created a sustainable environment where the support for open access,  
129 and open scholarship more widely, is embedded in the Library Collections team. We are confident  
130 that this has equipped us to be in the best place possible to support Open Access as organisations  
131 such as JISC review the ongoing transition to openly accessible research [8]. Below we set out the  
132 roles now involved in Open Access support at Kent and the benefits and challenges of such an  
133 approach.

### 134 3. New structure in detail

135 The University of Kent Library Collections team sits within the Information Services  
136 department, which is comprised of four sections: Customer Support, Library Collections, IT  
137 Development and Planning and Administration. Library Collections manages the planning,  
138 acquisition and provision of physical and digital learning and research resources. It is, in turn, made  
139 up of three separate teams: Academic Liaison Services, Collections Management and the Office for  
140 Scholarly Communication. See Appendix A.

141 In addition to their primary team roles, many members of library collections now also have a  
142 strategic theme (Research, Education or Engagement) within which they work.

143 Academic Liaison Services (ALS) manage and develop the physical and electronic content of  
144 library collections in line with the learning, teaching and research priorities of the University. ALS  
145 works with the Academic Schools to select, provide and maintain library resources for the University  
146 community, and to enable users to get the best from these resources. Key areas of service delivery  
147 are: information and digital literacy; library services for research; liaison with academic schools;  
148 collection engagement and development; the management of subject based library budgets and user  
149 support for all student and staff group. The provision of library services for research within ALS is  
150 outlined in more detail below.

151 Collections Management are responsible for acquisitions, digital resource management and  
152 metadata management and stock processing. Within the metadata team, one senior library assistant  
153 and two library assistants are part of the research support provided within Library Collections.

154 The Office for Scholarly Communication is a new team within Library Collections, launched in  
155 September 2017. The Office showcases all the research support provided across Kent to deliver a  
156 researcher focussed service that offers support and advice across the research lifecycle. Building on  
157 the existing expertise at Kent, both within and beyond information services, the office provides  
158 support for researchers in maximising the dissemination, in the widest sense, of their work. The office  
159 supports innovative dissemination of research, identify issues and finding solutions for sharing the  
160 research outputs of the University more effectively, to both academic and non-academic audiences  
161 globally.  
162

#### 163 3.1 Academic Liaison Services

164 The 16.5 FTE posts within Academic Liaison Services consist of Liaison Librarians, Senior  
165 Library Assistants and Library Assistants working in three teams. Each team supports one Faculty  
166 (Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences) and is managed by a Faculty Librarian who also leads on  
167 one of the University's strategic themes which are Education, Engagement and Research

##### 168 3.1.1 Faculty Librarian for Sciences and Research Support

169 The Faculty Librarian for Sciences and Research Support line manages the four roles outlined below  
170 and provides strategic leadership for research within Library Collections co-ordinating work on  
171 Open Access across all the teams by means of a research support strategy, team meetings, planning  
172 and setting and prioritising objectives. This role also pulls library and IT support together by  
173 chairing a Research Technologies Development Group in which technological development and  
174 fixes are captured, discussed and scheduled. The Faculty Librarian is responsible for Open Access  
175 guidance, web pages, training, enquiries and reporting. They also ensure that colleagues within  
176 ALS are equipped with basic Open Access knowledge and feel confident when and where to refer  
177 students and staff.

178 This strategic role is combined with overseeing the management and development of library  
179 collections and the support for students and staff within the Faculty of Sciences.

##### 180 3.1.2. Liaison Librarian (Sciences)

181 This librarian works with the five Schools in the Faculty in a more traditional academic library  
182 liaison role. They do not play a specific part in supporting Open Access.

### 183 3.1.3. Research Support Librarian

184 This post has enabled the Liaison Librarian for Sciences to focus on the Faculty and has provided a  
185 clear point of contact and source of advice for the Liaison Librarians. The post leads on research  
186 data management, bibliometrics and Open Access advocacy. They monitor and evaluate changing  
187 Open Access needs and opportunities.

### 188 3.1.4. Senior Library Assistant (Sciences)

189 The Senior Library Assistant (Sciences) role is split 50/50 between support for the Sciences Faculty  
190 and support for research. They have a detailed knowledge of Open Access, answer enquiries and  
191 take a lead on Kent Academic Repository training.

### 192 3.1.5. Library Assistant (Sciences)

193 The Library Assistant primarily supports the Liaison Librarian (Sciences) in collection development,  
194 stock management, ordering and user support, but they have a working knowledge of the Kent  
195 Academic Repository and assist with full text requests, training and triaging of enquiries.

## 196 3.2. Collections Management

### 197 3.2.1. Metadata team

198 Within the Collections Management section a Curation and Discovery Manager is responsible for  
199 ensuring that metadata schemas comply with industry standards; the interoperability of research  
200 support systems and the prioritisation of non-technical development work, while a Senior Library  
201 Assistant (Digital Curation) runs daily and scheduled quality control work on the repository and  
202 supervises staff to do so; tests metadata following development; produces data for Open Access  
203 reporting and administers the Research Technologies Development Group .

### 204 3.2.2. Content and Purchasing team - Article Processing Charge support

205 The administration of Article Processing Charges and the processing of applications to use  
206 University funds for APCs is undertaken by a Library Assistant and Senior Library Assistant in the  
207 Content Purchasing team.

### 208 3.2.3. REF Assisted Deposit – 2 Library Assistants

209 We developed the REF Assisted Deposit Service in response to the changes to requirements for the  
210 Research Excellence Framework (REF) relating to publications and Open Access, which have  
211 brought increasing levels of complexity to this area of academic activity. The launch of an assisted  
212 service model provided reassurance to researchers, and the University as a whole, that outputs are  
213 eligible for the REF and reduced the administrative burden on researchers that compliance  
214 introduced. We expanded the Metadata team within Collections Management to include two posts  
215 that were specifically focused on delivering assisted deposit into the Kent Academic Repository.

216 The increased capacity created by these appointments has also enabled us to monitor databases and  
217 social networks for new, potentially REF eligible research outputs that hadn't been included in the  
218 repository or submitted through the REF Assisted Deposit service. This has increased our  
219 compliance rates.

### 220 3.3. Office for Scholarly Communication

#### 221 3.3.1. Head of the Office for Scholarly Communication

222 The Head of Scholarly Communication contributes to the delivery of Kent's research strategy by  
223 maximising the impact of our research outputs to build our research profile and our reputation for  
224 research excellence. Working with the Assistant Director, Library Collections and Director of  
225 Research Services in setting the strategic direction of scholarly communication across the  
226 University, the Head of the office leads on the creation of a cohesive research support service at  
227 Kent, in implementing best practice in open access and in piloting innovative processes and  
228 technologies.

#### 229 3.3.2. Scholarly Communications Co-ordinator

230 The initial focus of the role was the design, introduction, development and management of the  
231 mediated deposit service for the university's institutional repository (KAR), which now forms part  
232 of the Curation and Metadata team. Following the successful launch of this service, the role  
233 broadened out to include dedicated support to scholarly communications to ensure the smooth  
234 running of the office of Scholarly Communication's service. The OSC co-ordinator works closely  
235 with the Research Support Team to continue to improve the current provision for Open Access and  
236 Research Data Management and provide information, guidance and support for dissemination  
237 through academic and non-academic outlets, social media, alternative publishing platforms,  
238 specialist output and other related activities.

### 239 4. How does this compare to elsewhere?

240 A systematic review of emerging roles for librarians illustrates that support for Open Access  
241 was not a role under consideration in articles written between 2000 and 2014 [9] and, while there  
242 are plenty of later surveys that indicate a need to address how libraries support researchers [10, 11]  
243 few of these link roles specifically to Open Access. Lara's survey of librarians' opinions of the role  
244 they should play in the management of Open Access found that there was agreement that  
245 education and advocacy of Open Access should be a vital role for librarians [12]. RLUK's survey  
246 into the role and skills of librarians required to support the needs of researchers [13], revealed that  
247 22% of the respondents believed that it was essential for their Subject Librarians to have the "ability  
248 to advise on current trends, best practice and available options in research publication and  
249 dissemination methods and models nationally and internationally, including scholarly  
250 communication and open access publishing" [13] (p. 101). 60% stated that this knowledge would be  
251 essential by 2017 [13] (p.101). Knowledge to support researchers in complying with the various  
252 mandates of funders, including open access requirements, was identified as one of the most  
253 significant skills gaps [13] (p. 43). However, these attitude surveys do not compare specific  
254 approaches or staff structures in libraries in relation to Open Access. DeGroff provides examples  
255 of Open Access good practice across institutions in the UK [14], but this pre-dates the start of  
256 HEFCE's Open Access requirements for the REF. Blatchford et al [15] summarise the different  
257 approaches to addressing research support: some libraries have completely restructured to create  
258 dedicated research support teams while some have a more dispersed model, but again Open Access  
259 roles are not explicitly discussed. It is therefore difficult to evaluate the approach at the University  
260 of Kent against those adopted elsewhere in the UK since 2016. The Open Access survey  
261 commissioned by HEFCE, JISC, the Wellcome Trust and RCUK, due to be published in spring 2018,  
262 addresses staff costs associated with Open Access and so may provide some of this missing  
263 information[16].

### 264 5. Benefits of the new structure

265 5.1. *Specialist Expertise in Open Access*

266 A key benefit of this way of working, with research support spread across a wide range of teams is  
267 that each individual brings a specialist perspective to an issue. The role holders involved in Open  
268 Access support within Library Collections each have a primary area of expertise, which they bring  
269 to their support for Open Access. An example of the benefits of this include in our recently  
270 established data repository, we have both expertise on the sector wide standards for research data  
271 storage from the Research Support Librarian and on the underlying metadata needs from the  
272 Curation & Discovery Manager. The current role holders are from a wide variety of backgrounds,  
273 including administration, publishing, academic libraries, archives and research support. This  
274 variety of perspectives and knowledge means that new development and process in supporting  
275 open access are applicable beyond the immediate requirements of REF and funder compliance.

276 5.2. *Resilience across the support for Open Access*

277 Whilst each role holder brings a specialist knowledge to the support for Open Access, the range of  
278 people involved also ensures that Open Access support is embedded across all the relevant teams in  
279 Library Collections. Whilst there are key leads for research support within the teams, the research  
280 leads also ensure that other members of their primary team are aware of the key information and  
281 where to access to support on issues such as funder compliance or REF deposit. This means that  
282 whilst not having to know the specific requirements of licensing or embargos for a particular  
283 funder, any liaison librarian would be confident in providing basic information or in referring  
284 researchers to the ways of accessing this specialist support. This resilience is also shown in the lack  
285 of backlog for KAR entries – the peaks in demand for support, for example, around promotions  
286 time, are less onerous. This is due to both the higher proactive rate of inclusion of publications and  
287 the wider team of people able to respond to queries at busy times.

288 5.3. *Making Open Access easy for researchers*

289 With such a large and diverse team, it is easy for researchers to access the Open Access support that  
290 they need – it is very rare that no one in the team would be available to answer queries, and  
291 members of the research support team are all confident in answering most of the queries that  
292 researchers have.

293 It has been a key aim to make Open Access compliance as administratively simple as possible for  
294 researchers, and the large team has been a key to this – with one contact email for all research  
295 support and a team that is nearly always available within office hours this has been very successful.  
296 Feedback on the REF assisted deposit in particular has been overwhelmingly positive:

297 “In my view, the REF assisted deposit service has been extremely useful for colleagues in  
298 the School. The service is efficiently operated and KAR staff are quick to answer queries.  
299 Because the service is provided centrally, it provides peace of mind that the item has been  
300 uploaded accurately and in accordance with REF requirements.”

301 “It was a very helpful and reassuring service!”

302 “I personally have found the REF assisted deposit service extremely useful in my role. It  
303 certainly speeds up the process when having to deposit multiple papers on KAR, and I  
304 believe the service is used by many researchers in our School.”

307 As these changes have been introduced, we have seen our APC funds move from a substantial  
308 annual underspend to spending our allocation (£95,000 from RCUK; £85,000 from the University).



309 A single point of contact on email has meant that enquiries are now handled efficiently and  
310 effectively and we have seen an increasing interaction with researchers. The team answered 3,400  
311 enquiries in 2016 and over 5,000 in 2017.

312 The additional expertise and capacity afforded by this revised structure has also meant that we are  
313 able to offer proactive support. The REF assisted deposit team check Scopus, Springer, Ebsco,  
314 ProQuest, Wiley, T&F and Sage for Kent researchers outputs, to ensure that they are also appearing  
315 in KAR and are REF compliant. Since June 2017 they have contacted researchers regarding 257  
316 publications. This marks a change in support for open access, where the support is approaching  
317 researchers, rather than responding to approaches from researchers.

318 Focus on Open Access to date has been on articles (following the REF and funder requirements),  
319 but our increased specialism and capacity has enabled us to look at supporting other forms of  
320 outputs to be openly accessible. Examples of this include making funding available for openly  
321 accessible books, support for data sharing with a new data repository and a project to look at  
322 supporting non textual or non digital outputs.

## 323 **6. Challenges of the new structure**

### 324 *6.1. Competing time demands*

325 One of the drawbacks of matrix working with roles aligned to Academic Schools and strategic  
326 themes, is the potential for staff to feel pulled in several different directions. There is a risk that  
327 priorities become unclear and that people grow anxious that they are devoting too much time and  
328 weight to one aspect of their job and not enough to another. This can lead to a perpetual feeling of  
329 guilt and dis-satisfaction. This risk has been minimised through careful planning, and the setting  
330 and reviewing of short and long term objectives, alongside annual appraisals and regular one to  
331 one to meetings with line managers.

### 332 *6.2. Ownership, decisions and reaction time*

333 Because many staff roles play a part in Open Access, “ownership” of particular issues is not always  
334 immediately clear. Problems and development suggestions sometimes need unpicking in order to  
335 define responsibility for taking forward actions. For example, we do not have a designated  
336 Repository Manager for the Kent Academic Repository. This can increase the time it takes to react  
337 to situations. A departmental Research Technologies Development Group helps with this and  
338 allows for escalation of issues. The structure also means that issues are always assessed from  
339 multiple angles. This prevents one viewpoint from becoming dominant.

### 340 *6.3. Communication*

341 The involvement of many people in supporting Open Access means that good communication is  
342 vital. However, the need to discuss items and ideas with multiple people could become to feel like  
343 an impediment and may not suit all personalities. Decisions and actions taken without reference  
344 to other members of the team who support Open Access can lead to misunderstanding and  
345 duplication of effort. Given that the Open Access environment is a complex one anyway, shared  
346 understanding is essential. Regular team meetings, Sharepoint, wikis and online notices have  
347 helped with this.

## 348 **7. Conclusion**

349 It is interesting that thoughts and predictions expressed in RLUK’s 2012 survey *Re-Skilling for*  
350 *research* reflect the changes we have seen [17]:

351 “We will need team work to cover all these new roles” [17] (p.108)  
 352 “All of this is a big change and very important for the whole library – it is not just about  
 353 Subject Librarians – it is really about whole structures, a library wide approach” [17] (p.108)  
 354 “Subject Librarians cannot be expert in themselves in each new capability, but knowing when  
 355 to call in a colleague.....will be key to the new liaison role. Just as researchers are often  
 356 working in teams to leverage compatible expertise, liaison librarians will need to be team  
 357 builders among library experts where this advances client research” [17] (p.109)

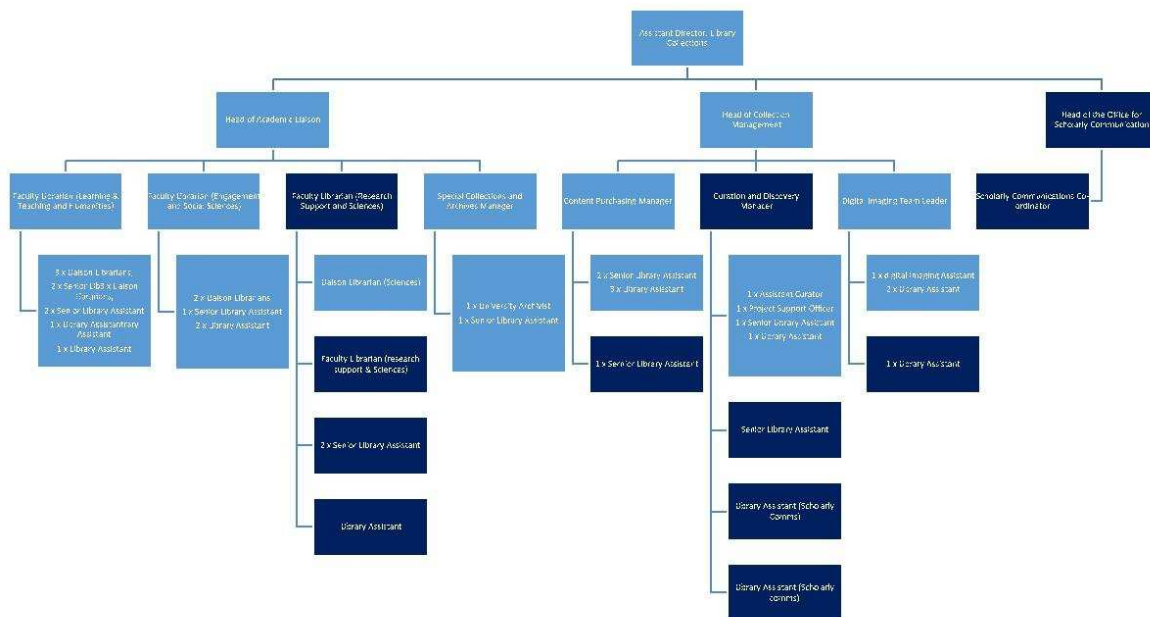
358 Response from our researchers has been positive. The volume of items deposited (1,627 deposits in  
 359 2007 increasing to 4,440 in 2017); the number of enquiries received and dealt with; the take up of  
 360 APC funds; our levels of Open Access compliance and the security of the shared specialist  
 361 knowledge and “trust” approach among our librarians would indicate that our approach is  
 362 successful. We have been able to develop our support model, and respond in a timely and effective  
 363 manner to internal needs. The new model also engages professional services departments across  
 364 the institution, embedding open access as an agenda beyond the library.

365 Additionally, the new structure has given us the ability to respond proactively to changes in the  
 366 open scholarship environment globally, moving beyond a compliance agenda to support for openly  
 367 accessible research outputs more broadly.

368 On the whole, the benefits of our hybrid matrix working model to support Open Access outweigh  
 369 the challenges, but time and care is being dedicated to planning and managing the model to keep it  
 370 this way. However, a more thorough and periodic evaluation with agreed benchmarks would be  
 371 beneficial.

372 **Appendix A**

373 Library Collections – Organisational chart highlighting those involved in open access (dark blue)



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