Libraries and the REF

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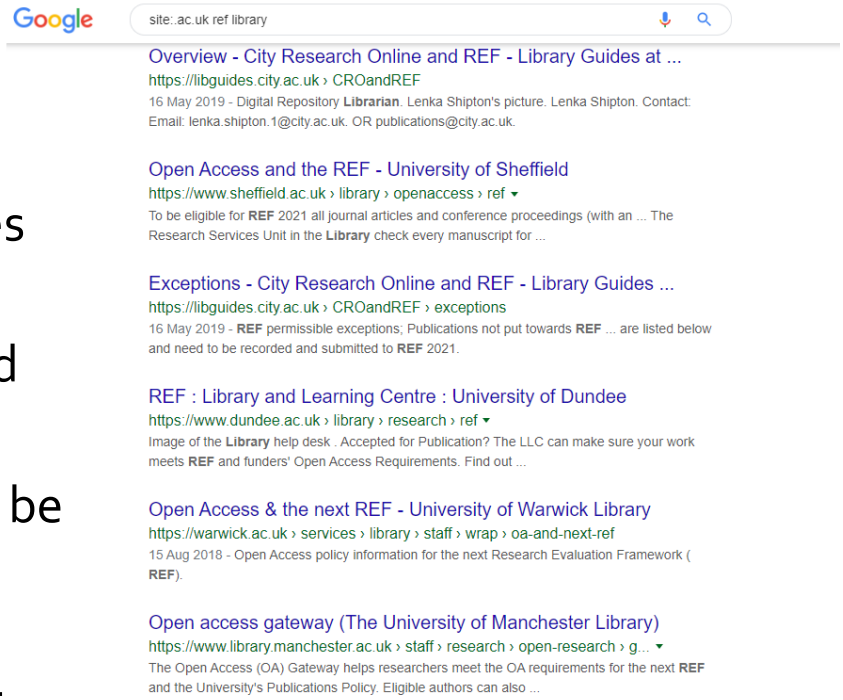
Introduction

- REF as an opportunity to highlight contributions to research and university missions
- SCONUL report (2017): dividing lines between libraries and other areas of the university are blurred; difficult for libraries to demonstrate their contribution?
- Competition from other departments and external suppliers
- Involvement to date in RAE/REF tends to be around providing copies of submitted articles
- Since 2014, talk centered around the REF Open Access Policy: "*You must deposit your work in the university repository within 3 months of acceptance for publication*"



Search on Google for site:.ac.uk REF library

Quality of Outputs

- Expert review of originality, significance and rigour
- Submissions to units of assessment ae given a quality profile: % of publications in 1-star to 4-star categories
- Citation data taken as one indicator of academic significance by some panels, but not primary tool of assessment
- Panels will not use Journal Impact Factors or other bibliometric analyses

Library contributions:

- In-depth bibliometric advice
- Help in selecting papers

Impact of Research

- Assessment of reach and significance of research impact on the economy, society, culture, public policy, health, the environment and quality of life
- Impact assessed through the submission of a number of case studies including impact summaries, underlying research, references to research (inc. beyond academic papers)
- Impact at various geographic scales and size of audience
- Impact evidence and indictors of impact can be submitted as part of case studies

Library contributions:

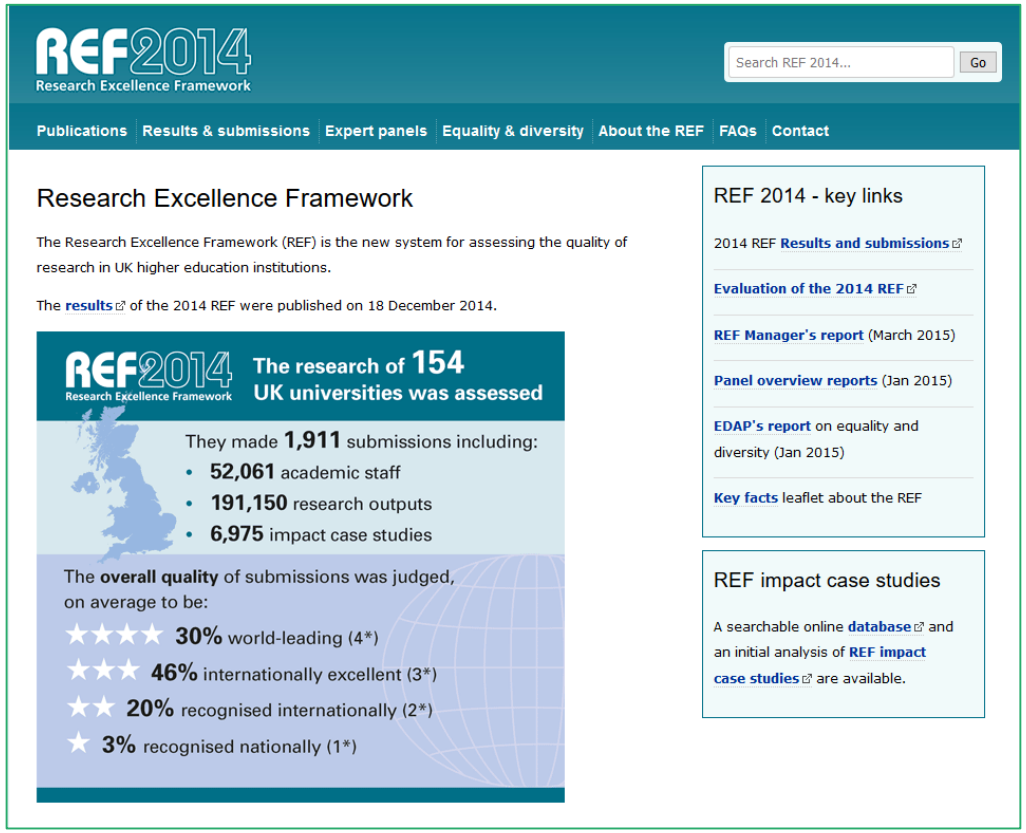
- Helping to measure impact
- Helping to generate impact

Research Environment

- Panels will assess the research environment for each submitted unit
- Approaches to enabling impact, contribution to vitality and sustainability of the discipline
- Institution-level environment statement and unit-level environment statement
    1. the context and mission of the institution
    2. the institution's strategy for research and enabling impact for the current assessment period and for the next 5 year period (inc. open research)
    3. staff (inc. how staff and students receive support and training, equality and diversity initiatives)
    4. income, infrastructure and facilities that support research (inc. structures that support the reproducibility of research and facilitation of impact)

Libraries in REF 2014

- Libraries at the heart of the institution?
- In REF 2014, libraries were rarely mentioned directly/indirectly: 'every student has library access', 'world class libraries are nearby'
- Missed opportunities for recognition



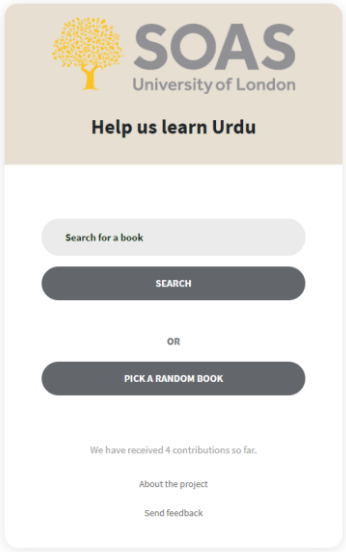
Website: ref.ac.uk/2014

What can libraries do practically to support the REF?

What do libraries do to support research, which can be highlighted in environment statements?

Libraries ensure research resources are discoverable and accessible

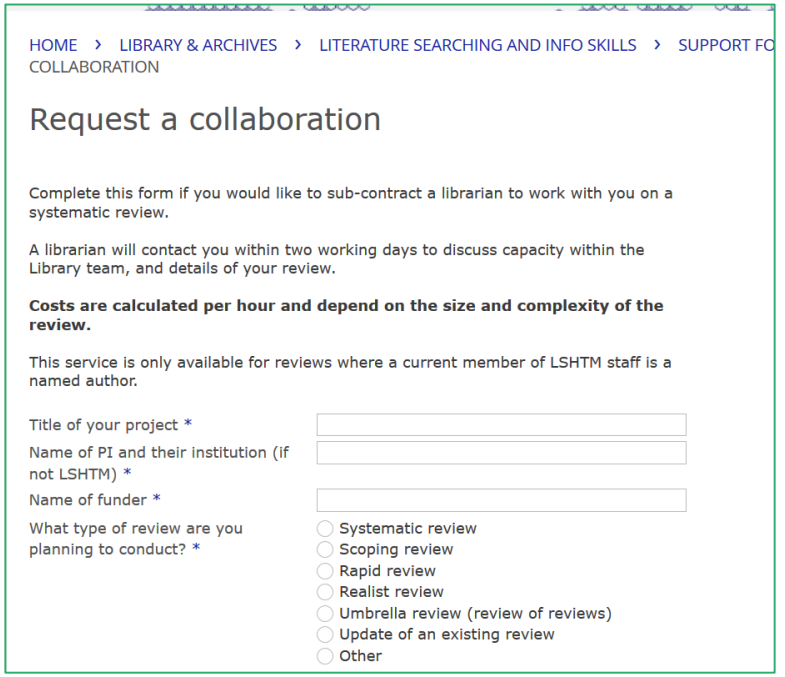
- Traditional role of library as content provider is still important but libraries go well beyond providing copies of submitted papers
- Good libraries help institutions to recruit and retain the best researchers (RLUK 2011): what innovations has your library developed to serve researchers beyond the norm ?
- Innovations in: reading list provision, library management system or discovery layer, access to resources and content delivery?
- Attempts to decolonise collections?
- LSHTM responsive collections project
- SOAS attempts to diversify catalogue



Images: SOAS and https://twitter.com/SimonXIX

Improving research practice: information and organisation skills

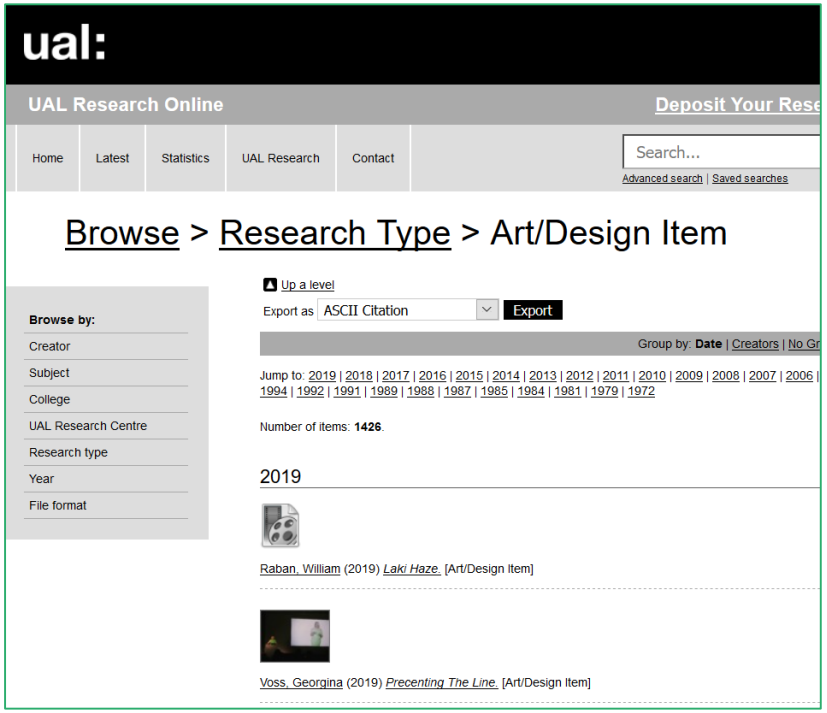
- Literature review and systematic review support across the project lifetime
- Training in databases and software, e.g. referencing software
- Improving quality of funding applications and contributing directly to research outputs
- Research Data Management services also contribute to good quality grant applications
- *"support for early career researchers and career development at all stages…; support mechanisms for, and evidence of the training and supervision of, postgraduate research (PGR) students"*



LSHTM ServiceDesk:
request a collaborative systematic review

Research support services

- Open research roles have developed a lot since REF 2014
- Management of a CRIS is business critical: what has been published, and by which authors?
- Analyses and reports are generated by librarians.
- CRIS-like functionality developed for EPrints and DSpace repositories
- Libraries have worked with open source and proprietary software to ensure accessibility and discoverability of research outputs, including unpublished works
- Generating DOIs for unpublished work
- Accessibility of non-text-based outputs

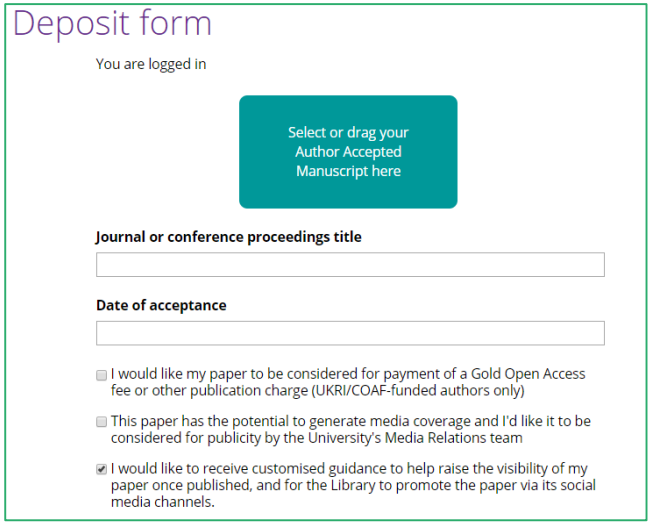


UAL Research Online

Research indicators and generating impact

- Leading on initiatives like San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and the UK Scholarly Communications License (UK-SCL)
- Support for bibliometrics and altmetrics: integration in repositories, Altmetric Explorer database
- Guidance on use of social media and networking sites, working closely with press offices and knowledge exchange officers
- LSHTM: internal communications about high attention research
- University of Manchester: open access+ deposit workflow
- *"How the unit has sought to enable and/or facilitate the achievement of impact arising from their research…"*

Univ. Manchester OA deposit workflow
Images: University of Manchester and https://twitter.com/UoMOpenAccess

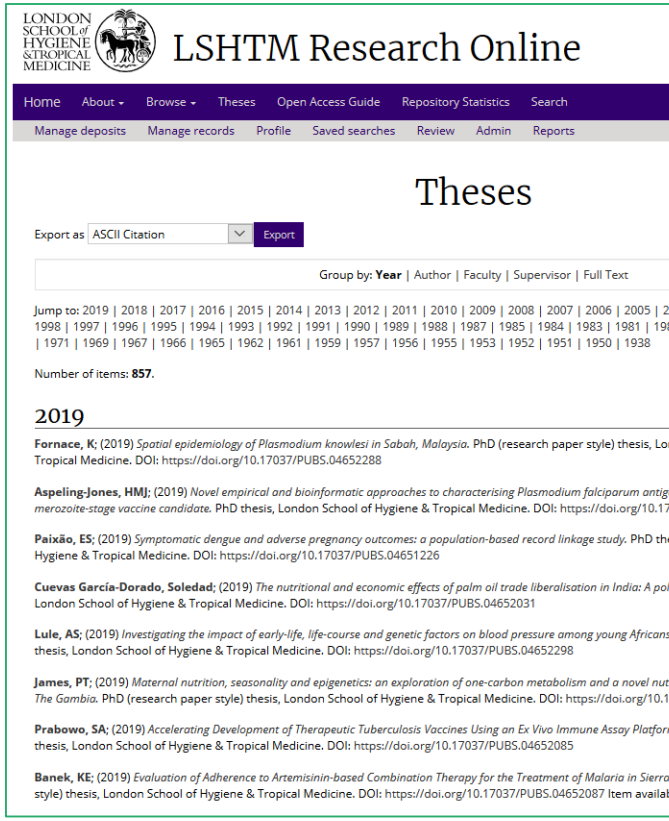


Equality and diversity

- Highlight work of the library in supporting equality and diversity (e.g. in relation to research-related promotion and reward procedures, recruitment, and support for funding applications)
- Creating accessible spaces and access to resources
- Copyright advice
- DORA/Responsible Metrics

Open research initiatives

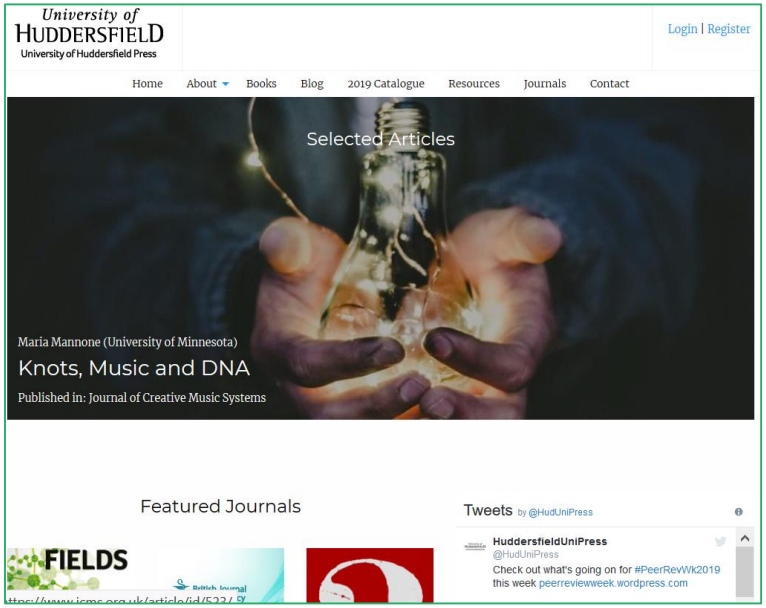
- OA teams increase OA policy compliance, ensuring articles can be submitted to the REF
- Innovative cross-institution working, use of tools like Unpaywall, Lantern, and creation of communities like London Open Access Network (LOAN)
- Technical skills ensure discoverability via Google Scholar, Core.ac.uk, etc.
- Training delivered to students and staff
- Doctoral student initiatives have included copyright training, e-thesis policies and e-thesis digitisation projects
- Encourage dissemination and re-use of research outputs

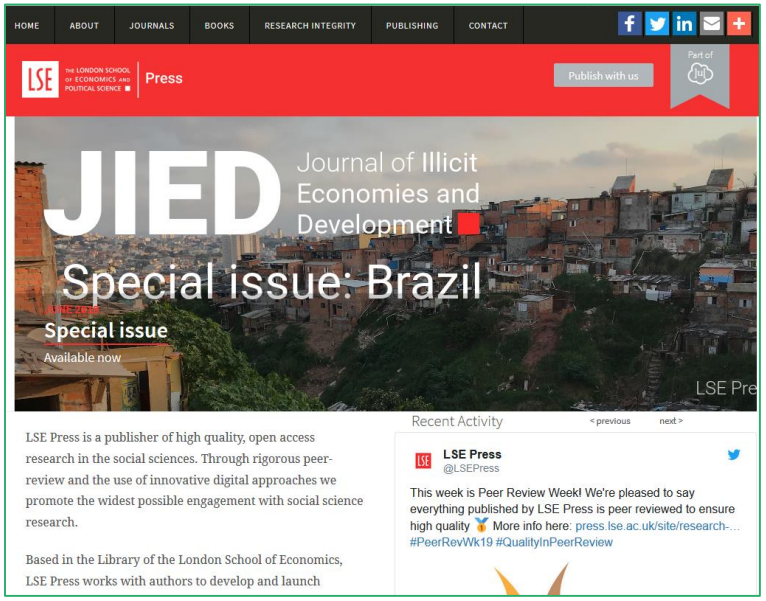


LSHTM Research Online

Open research initiatives

- Open research support across the research lifecycle
- Research data management services: data management plans, securing and transferring data, sharing data, reproducibility
- LSHTM: building in the idea of 'open' from an early stage
- University of Edinburgh: MANTRA RDM training platform
- Open access publishing: from OJS and Janeway installations to Ubiquity Press hosting – libraries as leaders in the institution
- Pre-prints, open peer review, digital humanities projects





Conclusions

- Libraries may not always be good at shouting about their successes
- Libraries contribute directly to REF submission processes, as well as providing excellent research support which can be referenced in REF Environment statements
- Make sure library initiatives are related to university strategy
- Get in touch with REF Officers
- Draft paragraphs about library contributions to the research environment
- Challenges include staff time and skills development, e.g. leadership and assertiveness, but can built on existing strengths, e.g. communication with different audiences
- Libraries are 'business-critical' and contribute to the process of producing 'excellent' research