
BIROn - Birkbeck Institutional Research Online

Powered by *ePrints* software, [BIROn](#) is an Open Access digital archive of **Birkbeck staff's published research**.

The College has operated a [mandate](#) to deposit since October 2011.

[See the latest additions via Twitter.](#)

Quick FAQ

What is Open Access?

- “[Open Access](#) (OA) is free, immediate, permanent online access to the full text of research articles for anyone, worldwide.” You can read more about it [here](#). Depositors [give permission](#) to keep their work in a current format and to freely distribute electronic copies - nothing else.

Why should I deposit in BIROn?

- **Enhance** your academic standing and widen your audience. BIROn's data is indexed by search engines and content aggregators like Google and [OAster](#). Your work is available world-wide.
- **Preserve** your research in a backed-up, searchable space. BIROn assigns stable URLs so your work has a permanent home.
- **Enable** access if the library doesn't subscribe to a journal – BIROn works *around* rising subscription costs and restricted budgets which could stymie students' access.
- **Link** to the version of record. BIROn always provides a web link to the definitive published version where available.
- **Fulfil** your obligations to research funders, who increasingly [mandate](#) Open Access to research output.
- **Ensure** eligibility for the next REF. HEFCE now requires *articles* and *conference publications* to be [deposited at the point of acceptance](#).

How long will it take?

- It takes about five minutes to deposit an item. Only *starred* fields are mandatory. *The more you deposit, the quicker it gets.*

How will the college benefit from OA?

- It **Demonstrates** the breadth of research carried out at Birkbeck.
- It **Frees** work from access barriers and subscriptions.
- It **Provides** a secure, central archive for research in perpetuity.
- It **Accelerates** the dissemination of research.
- It **Allows** part-time and distance learners to access publications.
- It **Complies** with the new HEFCE Open Access policy.

How do I use BIROn?

- BIROn is integrated with the College's LDAP authentication system, so authors should be able to sign in with their ITS username and password. Anyone can search and access the live content from the front page. View a complete Deposit FAQ and a Search FAQ.

Who can I contact?

- For technical, copyright or general BIROn queries in the first instance, please contact [Paul Rigg](#) (ext. 6240)
- Alternatively, you can contact your **Subject Librarian**:
- Sciences: [Emma Illingworth](#)
- History, Classics & Archaeology, History of Art & Screen Media, Politics and Sociology: [Aubrey Greenwood and Jackie Madden](#)
- Law & Psychosocial Studies: [Wendy Lynwood](#)
- English & Humanities, European Cultures & Languages, Iberian & Latin American Studies, and Philosophy: [Lindsay Tudor and Charlotte Hobson](#)
- Business, Economics & Informatics: [Aidan Smith](#)
- Applied Linguistics & Communication, Geography, Environment & Development Studies: [Noemi Defosse](#)

How do changes in funders' OA policies affect me?

- For more information on the potential effects of the RCUK funding policy changes, and the ongoing Wellcome Trust policy, please see [Funders & Open Access](#).

How does HEFCE's new OA policy affect me?

- For more information on the new HEFCE policy, please visit [OA & the next REF](#).

What about ResearchGate and similar services?

- We advise caution when considering deposit on ResearchGate, and do not recommend it as a solution for open access to publications.
The most salient issue is that deposit on ResearchGate is not sufficient to comply with HEFCE's Open Access policy for the next REF. However, other factors should also be considered:

Though it harvests metadata from BIROn and other institutional repositories, ResearchGate's terms of service forbid anyone else from harvesting their data in turn, which is hardly in the spirit of OA!

Given its funding, ResearchGate is generally considered to be a commercial service. This means it (and any work hosted there) could disappear if that funding dries up.

Authors often upload versions of publications which are not legally permitted by their publisher. ResearchGate appears to have no central administration checking these (as with BIROn), and the service's terms and conditions lay the legal responsibility (and any potential costs) at authors' feet.

More on academic social networking sites and how they differ from institutional repositories can be found at the University of California's blog.