Open Scholarship

In recognition of International Open Access Week 2019, from the 21-27 October 2019, with the theme *"Open for Whom? Equity in Open Knowledge"*, the Rhodes Library defines and articulates its position on Open Scholarship.

Rhodes University (RU), as a research-intensive university, became a signatory to the Berlin Declaration on 24 October 2013. As a signatory to this Declaration, Rhodes University is committed to adopting Open Access (OA) as a paradigm which enhances the institution's research strategy "to encourage research at the highest level of excellence and to ensure that our research programs are internationally recognized for their excellence" (Research Office, 2016).

The call to South African universities to support Open Access was strengthened by a statement issued by the National Research Foundation (NRF) in January 2015, after it became a signatory to the Berlin Declaration on 20 October 2014. The NRF announced that from 01 March 2015, all publicly funded authors "deposit their final peer-reviewed manuscripts that have been accepted by the journals, to the administering Institution Repository with an embargo period of no more than 12 months." (NRF, 2015). The statement advocated institutions to:

- "Formulate detailed policies on Open Access of publications and data from its funded research;
- Establish Open Access repositories; and
- Support public access to the repositories through web search and retrieval according to international standards and best practice" (NRF, 2015).

Furthermore, a statement was issued from the Research Office on 6th October 2015, wherein the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Research & Development advocated Rhodes University researchers register with ORCiD (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) as the preferred institutional researcher profile platform. This OA scholarly communication practice is aligned with the requirements of the National Research Foundation (NRF) on OA advocacy.

Rhodes University Library supports Open Scholarship through:

- The Office of the [Librarian: Scholarly Communication;](#)
- The [Rhodes Digital Commons](#), the official institutional repository;
- The [Rhodes University - Hosted Journals](#) service, a journal management system intended to improve and expand access to research, designed to support the scholarly journal publication processes;
- The [Rhodes University Research Data Management](#) services to be launched in the 1st quarter of 2020, intended to support researcher with plans for gathering, storing, archiving and, where appropriate, publishing their research data.

WHY OPEN ACCESS?

Open Access addresses the limited access to scholarly outputs, usually caused by high journal subscription rates. It is **the practice of providing online access to scientific information (articles, monographs, research data and other research outputs) that is free of charge to the reader, and licensed** so that they can be further used and exploited by researchers, the industry, and citizens. For Africa in particular, Open Access will build more understanding of the need for equity in opening up knowledge for sustainable development for all.

Milestone definitions of Open Access include those of the [Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI)](#) and the [Berlin Declaration on Open Access](#)

In support of transparency and increased access scholarship globally, the ACRL recommends as standard practice that university community publish in open access venues, deposit in open repositories, and make openly accessible all products across the lifecycle of their scholarly and research activity, including articles, research data, monographs, presentations, digital scholarship, grant documentation, and grey literature. Authors should retain rights to these products of scholarship and make them available for reuse under an appropriate license. (Adapted from the ACRL Policy Statement on Open Access to Scholarship by Academic Librarians)
http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/openaccess

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For more information on national initiatives on Open Access, refer to this presentation by Prof Ahmed Bawa of USAf, presented at the DVCs Forum in September 2019.

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