

## Repository Policy Framework

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### Overview

Planning and maintaining a repository involves asking and answering questions on an ongoing basis. A policy framework gives a structure to defining and recording decisions resulting from this process and ensures consistency in applying them. Defining policy is therefore a basic building block in setting up a repository. This briefing paper identifies the benefits of a comprehensive policy framework and explores the different types of policy that a repository should develop.

### Introduction

A comprehensive policy framework is a vital tool through which to establish the operational boundaries within which a repository will function. It supports day to day management of the repository whilst simultaneously taking the longer-term vision of future operational activities into account. Supportive and integrated policies are also indicative of an organisation's level of commitment and are essential if a repository is to be successfully embedded into the wider organisational framework.

### Benefits of a policy framework

A clear and visibly supported repository policy framework does more than simply provide abstract high-level support. It also:

- **Facilitates stakeholder understanding:** Responsibilities and lines of communication are clarified; processes are clearly defined; and equity, standardisation and consistency are promoted. These all contribute towards increased and easier use of the repository.
- **Helps with the planning and decision-making processes:** Risks are better understood and managed, IPR are easier to comply with, and

the implications of dealing with different types of resources are exposed. These outcomes contribute towards ongoing and day-to-day management of the repository.

- **Ensures support for the repository:** The decision-making process is formalised and sign-off by senior management is facilitated. These engage senior management in supporting and contributing to the repository from a longer-term perspective.

To ensure the policy framework is comprehensive, repository managers should seek to integrate a number of policies into the wider organisational framework. These can be classified into two main streams: strategic, and operational.

### Strategic Policies

Policies for the repository do not exist in isolation. They need to be created in harmony with the wider strategic policies of the institution. An important first step is to find out about existing policies. It is likely that an institution will have **high-profile vision statements** and defined agendas in areas such as research, teaching, theses and intellectual property. Do not underestimate the usefulness of existing policies. They can help align and embed the repository in the institution. In contrast, if such policies do not exist then the repository can act as a catalyst for their creation.

One of the most powerful policies is a **mandate** that makes it compulsory for every relevant member of staff to ensure that their research outputs are deposited in the repository. Many funding councils are considering making deposit a condition of continued research funding and, internationally, consortia of institutions are in the process of ratifying their mandates. It could be argued that mandates are the single most effective way to ensure success.

## Operational Policies

Strategic policies are concerned with the bigger picture and their consideration will begin to inform the day-to-day operation of the repository. The details of day-to-day operations are defined by operational policies. Operational policies are essential tools for a wide variety of people involved in the practical aspects of running a repository.

Operational policy areas include:

- **Submission policies:** Who can deposit? What type of materials can they deposit and in what format? What level of moderation is required for checking deposits, if any?
- **Collection policies:** will the repository focus on a specific discipline, or will it reflect the entire academic output? What types of materials are sought? What metadata must be collected? What versions are acceptable? Should peer or quality reviews be implemented?
- **Preservation policies:** for how long will the repository aim to preserve deposits? Can this be guaranteed? What formats should be used for preservation purposes?
- **Usage policies:** what can end-users and services do with repository metadata and content? How should publishers restrictions or embargoes be managed? At what level should usage be permitted, e.g. on an item-by-item level? Is there a takedown policy to respond to copyright or other infringements?

The *OpenDOAR* policies tool<sup>1</sup> from SHERPA is a valuable first step in developing common and machine readable policies to address these areas.

## Policies and Licencing

Some, but not all, policies will need formalising as **legal agreements**. Specifically this involves definition of a deposit license and a use license which users will need to agree to. Licenses are a useful tool through which to manage the risks associated with maintaining a repository.

## Conclusion

Policies that are both human- and machine-readable facilitate effective use of the repository on both a local and global scale. They help embed the repository in the wider organisation and contribute to managing the repository on a number of different levels. They are also living documents that must be revisited and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure they remain up to date and conform with changing organisational requirements. Further assistance on developing repository policies is available from the RSP.

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## References & further information :

### <sup>1</sup> *OpenDOAR Policies Tool*

<http://www.opendoar.org/tools/en/policies.php>

The *OpenDOAR* policies tool is a simple way for repository administrators to formulate and/or present their repository's policies. It provides a series of check boxes and pick lists for all key policy options.

### Repositories Support Project

<http://www.rsp.ac.uk/>

The Repositories Support Project (RSP) aims to co-ordinate and deliver good practice and practical advice to HEIs to enable the implementation, management and development of digital institutional repositories.