

Wellcome Open Research

URL: https://mirea.opensciencespain.org/en/iniciativa/bp9_open_research_en_v01/



Topic: Policies supporting open science

Type of initiative: Infrastructure / platform / service

Implementation scale: International

Responsible agents: Researchers, Research managers

Location: United Kingdom

Keywords: open access, research assessment, open peer review

Start and end date: 2016 -

Sustainability: Yes

Summary

Wellcome Open Research is an open platform for the rapid and transparent publication of scientific findings from research funded by Wellcome.

Wellcome is a politically and financially independent global charitable foundation. Its strategy includes funding schemes, advocacy campaigns, and partnerships aimed at addressing today's most pressing health challenges.

Unlike a preprint server, Wellcome Open Research allows authors to benefit from a rapid publication system, transparent open peer review, and editorial guidance to ensure that all data sources are openly available.

In the open peer review process, expert reviewers are selected and invited, and their reports and names are published alongside the article, along with author responses and comments from registered users.

During the review phase, authors may publish revised versions of their article. All versions remain linked and are independently citable. Additionally, articles that pass peer review can be indexed in external databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar.

Promoting organizations

The **Wellcome Open Research** platform is promoted by the **Wellcome Trust**, one of the world's leading philanthropic foundations in the field of health research, based in the United Kingdom. Wellcome launched this initiative in 2016 as part of its commitment to open access, scientific transparency, and the rapid dissemination of research findings funded by the organization.

The platform's technical and editorial management is handled by **F1000**, a publisher specialized in innovative publishing models. F1000 provides the technological infrastructure and the **open, post-publication peer review** system that defines Wellcome Open Research. This collaboration brings together Wellcome's institutional support with F1000's editorial expertise in open science.

Objectives

Wellcome Open Research aims to address a concern shared by many researchers: that the time and effort required to share research findings might place them at a competitive disadvantage, without offering sufficient recognition or benefits. The platform seeks to overcome these challenges by enabling researchers to publish quickly, saving time and thereby increasing the duration during which their articles are available for citation.

In the long term, one of the platform's key objectives is to contribute to a shift in how research and researchers are evaluated—moving away from journal-based metrics and toward the direct assessment of research outputs themselves, whether articles or other types of scholarly work. In other words, the goal is for evaluation to focus more on the intrinsic value of the research than on the venue in which it is published.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders

In the first instance, the researcher benefits directly by being supported in the open access publication of their scientific articles. In the second instance, the broader scientific community benefits from the increased availability of open access research, thereby improving access to knowledge.

Results

Wellcome Open Research has a cross-cutting impact, as Wellcome funds a broad range of disciplines. As a result, the platform includes scientific output from the following areas and contributes to enhancing their visibility and dissemination:

- Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)
- Humanities and social sciences

- Clinical and allied health sciences
- Experimental medicine
- Public health

According to the platform's fourth-year annual report, Wellcome Open Research reached a major milestone by becoming the most frequently used site by Wellcome-funded researchers to share the results of their studies.

The steady increase in the number of published articles has been largely driven by researchers sharing findings related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, Wellcome's Early-Career Advisory Group launched an initiative to promote a data-sharing culture aimed at helping early-career researchers adopt open research practices. The campaign expanded across multiple disciplines and led to the creation of several practical guidance documents.

Challenges

The main limitation of the platform is that it is currently restricted to researchers funded by Wellcome. At the same time—and in alignment with its broader objectives—Wellcome Open Research aims to help drive a shift in the evaluation of science and researchers, promoting an approach based on the direct assessment of research outputs and their intrinsic value, rather than journal-based metrics.

Additionally, the 2021 annual report highlights a key challenge faced by the publishing industry: finding appropriate peer reviewers and ensuring the rapid publication timelines promised by the platform.

Interest and transferability

Since the platform's launch in 2016, the year 2020 marked an extraordinary peak, with 40% more articles published compared to 2019, largely due to the volume of research related to COVID-19.

According to the annual report, publication speed remains one of the platform's unique selling points; however, the overall time from submission to publication in 2020 was 20% slower than the average in 2019, likely due to the surge in COVID-19-related submissions.

All articles published on the platform are associated with a variety of quantitative and qualitative metrics that offer open insight into their reach and impact. For peer-reviewed articles, Altmetric scores, Scopus and PubMed indexing data are available, as well as views and PDF download counts from both Wellcome Open Research and PubMed Central.

The wide range of article types and disciplines supported by Wellcome funding, combined with flexible publishing conditions, helps attract new researchers to this open access model of publishing.

The platform also offers several benefits compared to traditional publishing venues, even those with open access options and rigorous peer review systems. Specifically:

- Rapid publication saves time and accelerates the sharing of new findings, while increasing the time articles are available for citation.
- Authors can publish any type of output, not just standard research articles.
- The inclusion of research data enables others to re-analyze, replicate, and reuse results, thereby improving research reproducibility.
- Authors—not journal editors—decide when and what to publish.
- Authors also select their own reviewers (within defined criteria), allowing them to recommend experts whose feedback may be publicly cited later on.

Moreover, the platform offers distinct advantages for early-career researchers, such as:

- Open access publishing increases visibility and maximizes the social impact of their research.
- No editorial gatekeeping: articles are not rejected based on perceived novelty or impact.
- Faster dissemination of results and datasets, combined with transparent peer review, allows early-career researchers to quickly share their work.
- Doctoral research often results in null or negative findings, which are typically hard to publish. This platform allows early-career researchers to share such outcomes and build a suitable publication record for future positions.
- Open peer review fosters constructive dialogue with experts, helping early-career researchers build connections and potential collaborations that may shape their future careers.

** Wellcome Open Research provides detailed guidance on its peer review process, reviewer criteria, and tips for selecting appropriate reviewers.*

Bibliography

- Wellcome Open Research: <https://wellcomeopenresearch.org/>
- FAQs: <https://wellcomeopenresearch.org/faqs>
- How to publish: <https://wellcomeopenresearch.org/for-authors/article-processing-charges>
- Wellcome: <https://wellcome.org/what-we-do/our-work/open-research>

- Wellcome Open Research: a summary of year 4:
<https://blog.wellcomeopenresearch.org/2021/02/08/wellcome-open-research-a-summary-of-year-4/>

Authorship information:**Created on:** 09/02/2022**Author of record:** Berta Ollé Pérez**Author's institution:** Universitat de Barcelona

Automatically generated document from the published entry.