



Proof of Concept for a Scottish University Press

Final Report

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01. Summary of the SCURL brief

In short the brief set was to scope out appetite and potential models for an Open Access (OA) Press to be jointly operated and managed by the Scottish Universities who are members of SCURL.

Key areas to be explored included the appetite for an OA Press amongst a range of key stakeholders including but not limited to researchers, senior institution managers, librarians, professional services staff and existing presses.

A qualitative evidence base was to be assembled by means of a hybrid methodology including stakeholder interviews, survey and focus group.

Market research was to be conducted to establish the state of play within OA publishing, shining a light on existing financial and functional models and their strengths and weaknesses.

The final report (owned by SCURL) represents a synthesis of the qualitative evidence gathered, the market research and all findings submitted by the consultants.

02. Executive summary

This project was a qualitative endeavour and should not be regarded as a systematic examination of the landscape. Having said that extensive efforts were made to consult as widely as possible both with regard to the institutions included and the roles and disciplines of those interviewed. There was a particular effort made to discuss the project with stakeholders known to have a range of opinion with regard to open access and its implementation thus far. The perspective of a traditional publishing Press was also taken into consideration by means of interview as were the opinions of those individuals who had been involved in establishing university presses in Scotland in the past.

There is no doubt that the evidence gathering that formed a significant part of this project was welcomed by the community and it was regarded as an appropriate endeavour for libraries to explore. It emerged however that there is still an opportunity for SCURL in particular to further raise its profile amongst the academic community by engaging more broadly and in more detail with regard to its strategic aims and specific projects. It was the experience of the consultants that researchers welcomed the opportunity to engage in conversation about the issues covered and the experience appeared to be very positive for all involved.

Open access was firmly and enthusiastically supported by researchers from all disciplines. Considerable support was expressed for the top level aims of open access and the benefits that could be delivered to society and the academy. Some concerns were expressed that commercial publishers did not necessarily appear to fully embrace these aims and objectives or at the least there appeared not to be a shared understanding of the ultimate goals.

Overall there was a great deal of support for the idea of a collaborative open access Press and a clear acknowledgment that academic publishing is not currently functioning in the way the academy would like. Researchers at many levels and across multiple disciplines felt that commercial publishers were not well acquainted with the pressures experienced by academics or the requirements placed on them by institutions and funders. Very significantly researchers felt that academic aspirations with regard to reach and impact in broader society were not supported in any material way by commercial publishers. Having said that the picture is more nuanced in that researchers in some disciplines, most notably Arts and Humanities did express some support for learned societies and would like to see a future for scholarly societies in a more innovative open access landscape.

There are a variety of potential models available to a new Press and these will dictate costs, the level of risk taken on, the length of the planning process and how soon any Press could move into production. It would be advisable with regard to any of the models to initiate a planning project in advance of any Press launch. There are however certain elements that overlay any Press model selected including a rigorous quality framework, high production values, continuous engagement with researchers and key influencers at institutions and funders and thorough long-term business planning covering the Press from inception through to the initial growth phase and moving through to a sustainable framework for the future. Other key elements include, high quality motivated staff and leadership and the creation of open and transparent governance and editorial structures. Finally broad representation from the consortia within the Press structures was seen as vital in supporting a Press operating on such a large scale.

03. Stakeholder requirements analysis

A range of different stakeholders and their requirements were identified as relevant for consideration during this evaluation process:

SCURL institution Executive Boards/Senior Managers

Requirements:

- An academic Press to increase OA publishing options and disrupt traditional model;
- Structure to enhance the reputation of the consortium and individual institutions;
- Shared governance structures to give all institutions a true voice in the management and operation of the Press;
- Agreed legal status to give sustainability and longevity;
- Agreed distinctive consortial brand that all institutions will support and promote;
- Agreed publication scope (subject areas; publication type);
- Agreed sustainable funding model based on decisions around cost recovery/income generation.

Press operational staff

Requirements:

- Clear supportive governance structure, giving clear remit and guidance on roles and responsibilities; this may be a multiple tier model;
- Embedded, academic-led advocacy structure in place from the outset to engage potential authors and cement the brand;
- Effective resourcing, depending on model; also staffing arrangements;
- Clear documented workflows, covering the stages of publication for various formats, and who is responsible for what (especially if working with external service providers);
- Front end website to surface the publications, with the ability to edit and update the webtext easily and quickly;
- Back end structures to support journal processes (OJS or similar);
- Financial infrastructure (invoicing, paying etc.) to deal with transactions including (but not limited to)
 - claiming grant funding;
 - handling the invoicing for APCs/BPCs as needed;
 - paying invoices from external contractors;
 - purchasing rights/licences;
- Marketing support, including with events e.g. book launches or publicity events;
- Legal support, with contract drafting etc.;
- Access to tools to help in the use of metrics and analytics from a range of sources
- Ability to assign required standard numbers (ISSN; ISBN; DOI);
- Ability to generate effective metadata and MARC records to aid in discoverability, ideally at point of release of publication.

SCURL institution members (staff, students, academics)

Requirements:

- Awareness of the Press through embedding this in Scottish HE environment and beyond, creating an understanding of what it is, how it fits with the strategy of their institution etc.;
- Evidence that the Press will be/is a viable academic publishing option, including:
 - transparent review process that ensures academic rigour;
 - high-quality output;
 - effective dissemination and marketing;
 - access to metric/altmetric data.

Funding bodies

Requirements:

- Ability to evidence compliance with funding requirements, including:
 - instant OA publication;
 - publication to required timescales;
 - publication in the required format and to the required technical specifications;
 - meeting required standards of peer review;
 - meeting licencing requirements;
- Ability to surface funder/project details within the publication as required;
- Disseminating content effectively.

Journal editors/editorial structure

Requirements:

- Clear, detailed contract agreements outlining, liabilities, the services provided by the Press (e.g. publication services, financial services, promotional services etc.) and the costs, including how the costs will change over time (and if appropriate relating to volume);
- Effective guidance on how to set up a new journal; how to structure editorial team, editorial board etc. to meet general indexer requirements; how to clearly articulate scope and submission requirements;
- Access to effective and intuitive journal management system to help with article review/publishing process;
- Support with their contracts with authors to ensure liability is clear;
- Financial support in terms of invoicing and APCs if relevant;
- Compliant outputs in terms of timescale to free availability and formats offered;
- Effective dissemination through listing with appropriate indexes/aggregators;
- Access to usage data; metrics; analytics etc.

Academic authors (articles)

Requirements:

- Direct contact with Press staff for support;
- Clear contracts outlining liability and licencing etc.;
- Clear guidance on how to submit and on journal style;
- Access to effective and intuitive submission/review infrastructure;
- Clear costs and intuitive financial processes - direct invoicing of funder where appropriate;
- Compliant outputs in terms of timescale to free availability and formats offered;
- Effective dissemination through listing with appropriate indexes/aggregators;
- Access to usage data; metrics; analytics for their article;
- Standard number assignment (ISSN; DOI);

- Preservation and longevity of content.

Academic authors (monographs)

Requirements:

- Direct contact with Press staff for support;
- Clear contracts outlining liability and licencing, the services provided by the Press (e.g. publication services, financial services, promotional services etc.) and the costs;
- Intuitive financial processes - direct invoicing of funder where appropriate;
- High-quality output in a range of formats, including chapter downloads;
- High-quality print option if this is appropriate for the volume;
- Compliant outputs in terms of timescale to free availability and formats offered;
- Effective dissemination through listing with appropriate indexes/aggregators;
- Promotion and review- academic dissemination;
- Access to usage data; metrics; analytics;
- Preservation and longevity of content;
- Standard number assignment (ISBN; DOI).

Academic authors (textbooks)

Requirements:

- Direct contact with Press staff for support;
- Clear contracts outlining liability and licencing, the services provided by the Press (e.g. publication services, financial services, promotional services etc.) and the costs
- Intuitive financial processes;
- High-quality OA output in a range of formats, including chapter downloads;
- Ability to embed different interactive elements to aid in knowledge retention and assessment;
- Easy to keep content current; authors need to be able to update e.g. individual chapters in a reasonable timescale/for a reasonable cost; effective version archive;
- Access to usage data; metrics; analytics;
- Standard number assignment (ISBN; DOI).

Content consumers (articles)

Academic

- Journal clearly of good providence through information provided e.g. on Editorial team/board and due to information provided on journal selection/review processes;
- Articles findable through normal search patterns e.g. by being in the key subject indexes and at the very least being made findable through google scholar and preferably JSTOR;
- Ability to download to be able to work offline;
- Access via institutional library portal like other subscription resources so feels authoritative;
- “How to cite” information given clearly;
- Licence showing use/reuse conditions articulated clearly.

Student

- Articles findable through normal search patterns e.g. by being in the key subject indexes- and at the very least being made findable through google scholar and preferably JSTOR;
- Ability to download to be able to work offline;
- “How to cite” information given clearly;
- Licence showing use/reuse conditions articulated clearly.

Public/practitioner/policy maker

- Freely available and accessible online without barrier;
- Authoritative source as shown by info on journal home page;
- Findable via Google.

Content consumers (monographs)

Academic

- Monograph findable through normal search patterns e.g. by being in the key subject indexes and at the very least being made findable through google scholar and preferably JSTOR;
- Reviewed in appropriate academic journals to give credibility;
- Ability to download whole volume and/or chapters to be able to work offline;
- Ability to purchase in print if appropriate;
- Access via library catalogue like other ebooks so feels authoritative;
- “How to cite” information given clearly;
- Licence showing use/reuse conditions articulated clearly.

Student

- Ability to download whole volume and/or chapters to be able to work offline;
- Ability to access in print e.g through library if appropriate;
- Access via library catalogue like other ebooks so feels authoritative;
- “How to cite” information given clearly;
- Licence showing use/reuse conditions articulated clearly.

Public/practitioner/policy maker

- Freely available and accessible online without barrier;
- Authoritative source as shown by information on Press/monograph home page;
- Findable via Google;
- Ability to download whole volume and/or chapters to be able to work offline;
- Ability to purchase in print if appropriate.

Content consumers (textbooks)

Student

- Ability to download chapters to be able to work offline;
- Clear version control so confidence they are working from current content;

- Access via library catalogue like other ebooks so feels authoritative; also via VLE;
- “How to cite” information given clearly;
- Licence showing use/reuse conditions articulated clearly.

Libraries (as consumers and advocacy partners)

- Ability to effectively ingest metadata to “add” the free digital versions to the collection ideally through MARC records;
- Advocacy - are all librarians in liaison roles confident about OA Press advocacy? Develop centralised advocacy pack for the Press for SCURL members;
- Marketing - publicity materials for distribution via the SCURL library network.

Aggregators

- Availabilities of APIs to facilitate collection of metadata and/or files;
- Availability of appropriate metadata at the point of publishing to aid dissemination.

04. Evidence gathering from within the community

The evidence gathering that formed the basis of this project was carried out between 8th April and 17th June 2019. All the evidence was collected on a qualitative basis and no attempt was expected or made to capture data on a systematic basis given the size of the potential constituency involved.

In total 179 people contributed directly to the evidence. In addition to this 6 Library staff provided background, context and feedback.

The evidence was collected by means of combining a series of interviews from amongst potential stakeholders, a survey distributed via library contacts within the SCURL consortium and via a focus group hosted by the University of Glasgow Library.

Interview methodology

In total 36 questions were agreed with the SCURL Steering Group with these being designed to establish the extent of the appetite if there was any for an OA Press. Particular areas explored included governance, cost models, sustainability, the quality framework, the scope of any Press, format of publications, prestige, marketing, brand, advocacy, functional models to run a Press and the key drivers for OA. The existing publishing landscape was also discussed.

There were 24 interviews involving 27 people, out of 31 potential interviewees approached. In total 21 academics were interviewed, 5 of whom hold or had very recently held “senior management roles” meaning they fulfilled duties at Director of Research or Teaching and above. 10 Professors, 7 Readers/Senior Lecturers, 4 Lecturers/Research Fellows were included. 3 academics had direct experience of running a Press or of researching/teaching publishing as a discipline.

Regarding the subject split there were 8 Arts and Humanities researchers, 2 from Health/Medicine, 9 from Social Sciences, 1 from Science, 1 from Law, 1 from Architecture. Some researchers worked in an interdisciplinary way across major discipline divides.

Of those interviewees not actively involved in REF eligible research there was 1 Library Director, 1 Head of Professional Services, 3 Publishing staff and 1 representative from a major Funder.

With regard to the institutions involved within SCURL, 10 were covered plus 1 UK-based University Press allied to an institution and 1 Funder with experience of SCURL.

The distribution methodology adopted was to act on recommendations from within SCURL in order to spread the net as widely as possible; efforts were made to interview contacts known to be both for and against or more sceptical of open access or its implementation. Hour long interviews were scheduled and carried out by telephone or Skype with interviewees being sent the same conversation template in advance. This was used to structure the discussions and the data outputs and was developed and agreed with the project Steering Group.

A full record the interview schedule (anonymised) and the questions discussed can be found in Appendix 3 and Appendix 6 respectively.

Survey methodology

A brief survey was designed in conjunction with the project Steering Group. This was hosted by the University of Dundee and distributed by means of the SCURL network. The survey was open from 1 May until 20th May 2019.

Respondents were asked to indicate their career stage, subject discipline, whether they were involved in research and/or teaching and their institution.

This was seen as an opportunity to ask key questions around the understanding of OA, whether researchers had published OA outputs and the appetite for an OA Press. The survey also sought to establish what formats and types of publication were seen as appropriate to an OA Press and what services researchers would like to receive as part of the publishing process.

Significantly researchers were also asked what level of APCs they would be willing to tolerate in practice. The survey also enabled respondents to submit free text responses over and above the survey questions.

A full record of the survey results can be found in Appendix 4 along with the questions asked and responses given (anonymised).

Focus Group methodology

On the 23 May 2019 a focus group to discuss “An Open Access Scottish Universities Press?” was arranged and hosted by the University of Glasgow Library.

There were 18 attendees with 8 Scottish universities represented. The majority of attendees were Professional Services staff with some researchers also present.

The topics explored during the afternoon covered awareness of other OA presses, the extent of potential support for a collaborative Press in Scotland, the key drivers for OA, cost models for any Press, sustainability, the format of outputs, the subject span, brand, prestige, marketing and what success might look like in the future.

The discussion was centered around 2 top level questions discussed by the whole group and supplemented by 6 breakout sessions whereby participants were divided into 3 groups to discuss key questions based on the detailed interview template circulated during the interview phase of the project.

A full record of the discussion can be found in Appendix 5 along with the questions discussed.

05. Desk research support

Overview of operational models in use

There are currently a wide range of operational models seen across the new University and Academic Press landscape. Many of these presses are OA presses, or have a strong OA offer, though not all are. The range of approaches is indicative of the evolving nature of the sector and a new Press would be in a position to benefit from the learning of already established ventures.

Presses can balance initial focus/internal investment with outsourcing elements to external providers to find the right initial balance for them, based on the available in-house skills and funding.

At one extreme is the full partnership model. This sees a new Press contract with a production partner to provide the technical infrastructure and handle all the publishing processes. The partner/supplier would normally expect an annual fee to cover the costs of the relationship, and then individual projects would be costed on a “work done” basis.

There is then a sliding scale of self-sufficiency that sees Presses handle a greater proportion of the operation in-house, ending at the other end of the spectrum where all processes are dealt with directly. This could be by in-house, contracted staff or by working directly with freelance staff on a project by project basis. This fully self-sufficient model also requires internal capacity to provide and support the required infrastructure, as well as handle all elements of the commissioned projects.

In all models, the Governance and Editorial elements (policy about scope, resourcing, models for growth, putting in place commissioning processes and the activity of commissioning itself) are done in-house by the Press. This is where the Press can show its value in terms of ensuring rigour, bringing institutional reputation, and tapping into the local academic community to establish appropriate editorial structures. These are not areas that require technical publishing expertise and so can be separated from the actual production processes.

At the moment, of the new University and Academic presses, a partner model is the most common. Several presses (Westminster, White Rose, Stockholm, Cardiff etc.) work with Ubiquity Press under their Partnership offer. This sees Ubiquity provide the Press website/portal, which gives access to the published content as well as information about the Press, as well as backend journal management systems to support peer review and journal publication. This technical infrastructure is fully supported, and included in the partnership costs. In addition, Ubiquity use their own relationships with copy editors, indexers and typesetters to manage these elements for books and journals as required. The most basic description is that the University Press commissions a publication and works with the author to bring it to the point it is ready for publication. At this point, Ubiquity takes the content and publishes it through the partner Press platform to the agreed level of services applied and final presentation of content.

Other presses operate independently, but partner with other institutions/providers on key areas. This can allow them to develop in the areas where they feel they bring most value and to focus resources efficiently as the Press grows. Examples of this include Goldsmiths who manages a great deal of their processes directly but who outsource marketing and distribution to MIT Press. University of Huddersfield Press have recently started working with Janeway (from Birkbeck/Open

Library of Humanities) as their journal platform. Another example is UCL, who have arguably the largest operation of the new University Presses. They have a large and diverse team, covering the range of publishing areas, but outsource the infrastructure and support for their journal publishing to ScienceOpen. These relationships can allow presses to maximise the potential of working with partners with existing networks while retaining control of projects and processes. UCL is also developing its own Partner Press offer, with a great deal of emphasis on the experience and support they can offer to presses during the set-up process, as well as the technical and operational support offered once the partner Press reaches viability. Developing this type of offer is dependant on having the internal structure and processes in place, and for these to be scalable to take on the processes for others.

Presses that do everything completely independently with all elements handled in-house are not common, as this model does not usually make sense in the current environment. If nothing else, presses will use external providers for printing services, pay portal services, or wholesale and distribution. Presses that operate this minimum delegation model include Open Book Publishers, who retain a high degree of independence, and use established services such as PayPal to cover functional elements required.

Scope, range and formats

Some presses have specific targeted areas of scope usually based around disciplines in which their institution is particularly strong, but potentially also on publications with particular geographic focus. Others do not specialise, at least at first. It is important a Press chooses a model that will help establish identity without being too confining or limiting initially. Some subject areas lend themselves to particular publication types and this may influence initial decisions about scope and range of outputs.

The range of publications offered by a Press may depend on the area of subject focus, may be limited by editorial policy, might be due to technical or resource limitation or may be due to lack of submissions for publications of particular types. Academic journals and scholarly monographs are the most common types of publication represented in the new University Press landscape. Many presses (e.g White Rose, Huddersfield, Westminster) offer both monographs and subject journals. Some publishers, such as Open Library of the Humanities, offer interdisciplinary megajournals, alongside more traditional themed ones. Some (e.g. UCL) have started to explore textbook publishing. Jisc have also done a significant amount of work in this area, and their recent project resulted in the [Institution as e-textbook publisher toolkit](#). Other areas of interest are conference proceedings, grey literature and use e.g. book series to help build brand recognition and create a market strength.

For new University presses, particularly with an OA focus, the primary product is digital. It can be difficult for academics used to writing for print outputs to make the mental shift to writing in a more flexible medium-particularly in the area of monographs. Presses can look to commission projects that take advantage of this digital capability by adding multimedia content (audio, video, 3D modelling etc.) and by linking closely to the underlying datasets that support the research.

In terms of the different file types, books usually come in xml and PDF format for online view and download as a minimum. Some presses offer books in other formats (MOBI, Epub), but not always as part of their OA offer. White Rose, for example, offers all e-formats free of charge but some - such as Open Book Publishers - offer free xml and PDF versions but charge for access to other ebook formats as part of their sustainability model.

Journal articles are usually offered as xml and/or PDF, and this can depend on the publisher infrastructure and also the service model the journal has chosen in terms of the amount of formatting work it will pay for.

Monographs are almost always offered in print alongside the digital versions, with Print on Demand the much preferred model. As the quality of this type of product is now indistinguishable from that from formal print runs, it brings savings and efficiencies not to tie up funds in print copies that may or may not sell but that have to be stored and then distributed in response to customer orders. Print on Demand involves little upfront investment per project and means that the order/fulfillment process can be integrated. Printed copies can be distributed at cost, generate income to support sustainability or generate true profit depending on the ethos of the particular Press.

Environmental scan and market research: Open Access University Presses/publishers

Cardiff University Press: http://cardiffuniversitypress.org/ Publishes journals, books, working papers, conference proceedings (first content expected 2019)
Edinburgh University Library Open Journals http://journals.ed.ac.uk/ Publishes journals (academic and student)
Goldsmiths Press (Green OA, so paywalled initially till embargo passes): http://www.gold.ac.uk/goldsmiths-press/ Publishes books, apps and online resources
LSE Press : https://press.lse.ac.uk/ Publishes books and journals in the Social Sciences
SRUC (Scotland's Rural College) Rural Policy Centre (RPC): http://www.sruc.ac.uk/info/120161/our_publications Publishes research reports and policy briefings
UCL Press: https://www.uclpress.co.uk/ Publishes journals (subject and megajournals), textbooks and monographs
University of Central Lancashire/UCLan Open Journals http://pops.uclan.ac.uk/ Publishes journals
University of Huddersfield Press: http://unipress.hud.ac.uk/ Publishes journals, monographs and sound recordings
University of Warwick Press: https://publishing.warwick.ac.uk Publishes journals and monographs
University of Westminster Press: http://www.uwestminsterpress.co.uk/ Publishes academic books, policy briefs and journals
White Rose University Press: http://universitypress.whiterose.ac.uk/ Publishes journals and monographs
Winchester University Press: https://www.winchesteruniversitypress.org/ Publishes academic books and journals in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Strengths and weaknesses in the current market

In 2017, Jisc published their report [Changing publishing ecologies: A landscape study of new university presses and academic-led publishing](#). This surveyed the new players in the publishing landscape and their offers. While things have moved on, progress has not been as rapid as perhaps was expected. The current OA University Press market has a growing number of small players, who have evolving OA approaches that aim to compete with the commercial and OA offerings of traditional publishers. These new presses can be agile and flexible, and give academics personal and tailored support they appreciate. However, lack of scale means that it will take numerous such presses to achieve a significant impact on the conventional market. A single OA Press operating at significant scale, or an effective constellation of smaller presses would address this. It is notable that there is currently only one collaboratively managed University Press in the UK, White Rose University Press. No national collaborative Press currently exists, and it would seem that this is unlikely at UK level.

It seems a very effective tactic to launch the Press with live content. UCL took this approach and it demonstrated publicly that they were a viable option from their launch. This depends on a great deal of advocacy to the initial target academic market, something UCL built into their model from the very start. This worked very well, though does potentially increase the lead time to launch. A different tactic was taken by White Rose University Press, who used the launch of the Press as part of the advocacy. While this does create great initial interest, unless academic advocacy is a key part of the strategy, it can take longer to build momentum.

Collaborative working can bring great benefits. White Rose benefits from input from a larger pool of academics to work with in the Editorial process than would be available through a single institution. There is also a broader pool of expertise to support the governance of the Press, and a greater number of potential academic authors in the immediate environment. However, the collaborative model does bring particular considerations. These include ensuring all institutions buy into the scope and publishing model implemented; ensuring all feel equally represented throughout the structure and have an equal voice; and ensuring the Press aligns to the strategic goals of the parent institution. A careful approach and sensitive leadership are important in maximising the real benefits of the collaborative approach.

06. Findings, analysis, conclusions

Key questions

Appetite for a collaborative Scottish Universities OA Press?

The evidence base was enthusiastically in favour of this attempt to gather evidence and welcomed further exploration of the issues. This was with the exception of one commercial publisher. Overall it was recommended that any Press should not just be limited to Scotland in context. Some reservations were expressed about the need for university presses in general, were raised at one institution.

With regard to the funder perspective there is a comprehensive commitment to OA in the sector, although not universal mandating. It is consistent with existing REF policy and also developing policy as part of Plan S, to explore new models of publishing and to establish exactly what is needed to further evolve the research base going forwards. This includes developing an understanding of what is needed to further impact and broaden audiences as well as what is not currently being provided in the publishing landscape.

The majority of interviewees were in favour of an OA Press and increased OA publishing bandwidth, although views differed with regard to how the Press entity should be “owned” and managed and there was some evidence that more information would be needed with regard to details and business planning, before unreserved support could be considered.

The complexity of the set up operation was a recurrent theme alongside the need to build trust, reputation and to signal quality from the outset together with developing a high quality offer with regard to commissioning, content, support for authors and marketing.

There is growing awareness of the need for more OA channels and capacity due to funder requirements, general direction of travel with regard to government policy and the desire by many academics to extend and diversify the reach of their publications outwith academia in order to increase impact and contribute in a more timely and accessible way to the knowledge base within society as a whole. Concerns were expressed that existing channels are failing to reach a wider audience.

Key OA drivers were seen as reach and impact plus free access to high quality content and a more progressive approach to rights ownership. The need to challenge the traditional commercial publishing paradigm was prominent as was a general feeling that commercial publishers do not understand OA and are increasingly shifting the burden of tasks associated with publishing an item, back on to academics. There were some instances of academic interviewees lamenting what they saw as dropping standards with commercial publishing plus the decline of a more personalised service approach.

A new OA Press was also seen as an opportunity to build publishing capacity and opportunity for academics involved in scholarship, learning and teaching, as opposed to those retained on research and traditional academic contracts.

The evidence gathered clearly surfaced the notion that universities do not see traditional commercial publishing as sufficiently progressive or responsive to changes in government, funder

and institutional policy, technology or the academy's needs with regard to vision, impact and collaboration in addressing global, national and regional challenges. Bringing publishing back to the academy was seen as one plank in a far more proactive strategy working towards increased research excellence and impact.

There was also a feeling that it is not healthy to rely on one traditional academic publisher associated with a single institution throughout Scotland, and it was noted that previous independent presses had now either been commercially acquired or no longer existed at all.

Several interviewees saw an OA Press as a way of "focussing" the sector in Scotland and as building on a good track record of collaboration although multiple references were made to the complex politics that exist between Scottish institutions and observations made about the need to continue with robust collaborative frameworks, even though there was competition between Scottish institutions.

There was a general sentiment expressed from institutions outwith Edinburgh that any new Press should be located elsewhere. Some of the institutions further away from the central belt were at pains to stress that the Press would need to be inclusive at all levels. This idea of inclusivity was generally echoed in the bulk of the evidence collected with the exception of a small tranche of evidence that considered the need for the highest quality outputs to dominate the development of the Press with this idea being predicated on high quality output being far more likely to emanate from the more established, high profile research intensives.

Concerns were raised on several occasions about a "Scottish" universities Press. Upon further exploration, it emerged that the vocabulary is vital and there was a desire to avoid appearing parochial and insular. The concept of the OA Press was well received but careful thought needs to be devoted to the name and just how the Press can be seen as being led from Scotland but set firmly in an international context.

Doubts were articulated by one respondent that there is no need to set up an OA Press when one already exists. Any new Press would add nothing to the publishing landscape in Scotland. There was however acknowledgment that the current commercial OA Press capacity does not extend to all subject disciplines.

Regarding OA generally, some less frequent concerns were articulated about how OA has been rolled out thus far and the effect this has had on some learned societies although it was acknowledged that OA does have a great deal of potential for benefitting the academy and society at large.

Open Access drivers and understanding

There is clear and overwhelming support for OA based on the evidence collected during this project. Awareness levels are very high and the top level goals and aims of OA chimed consistently well with the value based statements often contributed by active researchers from across the spectrum.

The top level drivers towards OA are various but free access to high quality content and the need to comply with the REF and funders are seen as key. Broadening the audience is also vital and this is seen as one way to build mutually reinforcing legitimacy between authors and readers.

Funders are committed to OA although not always in a position to finance all OA activities. In STM funders do see the relationship between Open Science and OA and perceive a virtuous circle whereby increased impact and societal engagement lead in turn to increased research resources. Furthermore, the Scottish research landscape is characterised by a high density of world class research, very often in collaboration with international partners, and any increase in discoverability and access to research outputs will benefit the research base.

Again recent developments in licensing and rights management were seen as crucial with researchers striving to keep control of their outputs and no longer being sanguine about signing over permissions to publishers. There is a clear ambition within the researcher base to deliver outputs for the benefit of society to a broader audience than those traditionally marketed to by established publishers.

Researchers would also like to see their outputs published faster and on many occasions noted that traditional publishing houses appeared unaware of the scrutiny applied to academics and the need to meet deadlines in order to comply with research policy.

There is a very clear understanding of REF requirements and funder mandates with regard to OA and a desire to comply with these despite additionality to workloads.

This support for OA is accompanied by some concerns about how OA has been implemented by specific publishers. There is also concern about how the implementation, as distinct from the principles, of OA has impacted on smaller learned societies and their own publishing enterprises.

Some researchers, although fully supportive of OA goals, thought that putting the costs of publication onto the providers of knowledge, represented a structural fault in the OA strategy. In particular this worked against Early Career Researchers (ECRs) who often found institutional support to cover costs less forthcoming.

There is widespread disapproval of some publisher implementations of OA and in particular the high fees charged for many APCs alongside subscription charges that have been persistently inflated over time, despite the many efforts made by the community to curtail this trend. Most of this evidence supporting this comes from STM, Social Sciences researchers and senior university managers who commented on the “ruinously expensive” market that currently exists. It is not seen as sustainable in the current financial context of Higher Education either in Scotland or elsewhere in the UK.

Given that the evidence was contributed by both researchers and external stakeholders in some cases involved in commercial publishing, it does appear that there are different views about what comprises OA. There does not seem to be a shared understanding of the key concepts and the ultimate goals, although the understanding as expressed by the HE constituents was consistent. There is therefore a strong imperative to move away from the publishing landscape as it is now and to disrupt what is widely perceived as an unfair and unsustainable market. Bringing publishing back to academia is seen as a key strand of this transformation.

What are the models of publishing?

Given the common challenges in Scotland, the UK and beyond there is scope for consulting JISC about any developmental projects they may have in the pipeline with regard to technology and publishing models. The more you bring “in-house”, the more internal resource this will require, but the more control will be achieved. It makes sense to take advantage of certain specialisms that will exist within SCURL institutions: finance, legal, marketing. This would ensure confidence and autonomy in these vital areas.

There are various options about how the Press functions could operate. Some of these can be combined in different ways as suits, and can be used as stages to work through to achieve a final working structure.

Elements that need to be present in functioning models are:

- Governance (budget allocation, policy, strategy, scope);
- Leadership (representing the Press, bringing identity and leading the operation);
- Editorial and Commissioning (peer review, commissioning process, quality control);
- Legal (contracts, licencing and copyright, legal status and governing agreements);
- Financial (invoicing, APC control, paying production freelancers, grant funding claims, tax, pay portal for e.g. PoD transactions);
- Operational (author support, work flows, advocacy for Press as potential publisher, marketing of publications and Press as brand, event planning, positioning the Press);
- System and technology (Press portal, journal management system, system support and development);
- Production services (design and layout, copyediting, typesetting, indexing, DOI registration, dissemination, formatting, template production, print on demand);

Governance models need to consider:

- How will the collaborative approach be reflected in the governance?
- How can you ensure equitable/equal voices in decision making, budget and agenda setting?
- That setting expectations and how to meet them should be transparent;
- Clear, transparent agreements around legal status: MOU not a sufficient level;
- Ensuring confidence that this is truly a joint venture and will not be monopolised by large institutions, or better resourced partners;
- How an initial strategic plan will be developed, and e.g. a five year plan be agree;
- An “exit strategy” from start e.g. in case future strategic directions change.

In terms of leadership, the interview comments revealed the importance of quality staff in the success of a Press, and the leadership role is particularly key. It seems likely an individual will be required to provide leadership through the role of Press Manager or equivalent. This would likely be a strategic leadership team level role, requiring an appropriate salary comparable to the commercial sector equivalent. Initially, a fixed-term Project Leader role could be created to establish the Press. At the end of the initial set up period, the Press Manager role could then be created to deal with business as usual. This would allow SCURL to outline that role based on the established requirements informed by the real-world operational development of the Press. It also recognises different skills may be required during the set up phase.

Operational models currently in use

Fully “in-house” approach:

All elements done by dedicated Press Staff.

Pros: Full independence and autonomy

Cons: Maximum upfront investment in staffing resources and technical infrastructure
Specialist skills needed, some in areas entailing high salary costs and likely not to be already present in participating institutions
Maximum set up time

This may be a model to work towards as part of a long term plan, but is a risk heavy initial approach.

Using current staff augmented as required:

All or some functional elements done by existing staff from within participating institutions, supported by contracted freelancers where skills do not currently exist.

Pros: Draws on skills that already exist within participating institution infrastructures
May increase buy-in and engagement from consortia colleagues
Cost effective, low risk approach

Cons: Would add to existing workloads
Would require relationship building with numerous freelance service providers
Would require initial buy-in from a large group of people.

Dedicated central Press team within a consortia, outsourcing elements:

A dedicated consortial Press team that outsources technical and production aspects to a range of providers.

Pros: Maximum flexibility in working with tailored relationships

Cons: Dedicated staffing resource required
Takes time to identify the range of suppliers and build relationships on a variety of fronts
Individual contracts with a range of suppliers for different aspects may increase costs, or bring savings depending on the details. There will be an overhead in terms of resource for each relationship.

Partnerships with package providers:

Different providers offer different levels of partnership/hosting solutions, in terms of services, support and publication types. Some partners offer flexibility in terms of their offer. It is possible to form a couple of partnerships to cover all elements required. Providers include: UCL Press, Ubiquity Press, Fulcrum (University of Michigan), Ingenta, ScienceOpen, Birkbeck. The maturity of the partner offer may also impact on their level experience in providing and willingness to tailor/develop their offer based on requirements or feedback.

Pros: Can be a cost effective way to become operational
Can allow very quick set up of Press with limited internal structure, working with a range of local leadership/management models
Can bring tested technology and process solutions with limited resource required for relationship management

Cons: No control over partner costing models which impact on authors/funders
Committing to partnerships can be limiting, in terms of operational independence and also in preventing experience that would help the Press grow and expand
Can be difficult in terms of identity - why would academics work with you and not the partner direct?
Can make issue resolution more difficult as you are one layer removed from implementation, in lots of cases.

Commissioning

The evidence points towards academics still requiring a rigorous, academic-led commissioning process, with peer review as a central feature.

There is a general feeling that there should be a central Editorial Board/series of Boards to oversee the review process and commission content for the Press. Depending on capacity, a single board or a series of subject area specific boards may be appropriate.

It is important that the Editorial process be scalable with growth.

More boards bring greater scope, and greater capacity for involvement from across a large collaboration, but also increases the management overhead in terms of recruitment and communication.

It was felt that, to further collaboration, boards could consist of academics from across the SCURL institutions and represent the required make up of disciplines for a single/subject focused board as required. Additionally it was noted that a high proportion of research in Scotland is carried out in partnership with international collaborators and casting the net wider for high profile overseas representation was seen as positive.

Boards would consider proposals for publication projects, and commission or reject based on their judgement of the proposal and peer review reports and any author response to these.

Boards bring academic authority to the Press so need to be high profile and well respected across their fields/institutions.

Part of commissioning journals would include ensuring they have their own internal Editorial structure and commissioning process. Evidence shows that academics and also indexing sites require journals to have diverse, preferably international, board representing all areas within the scope of the journal.

Legal framework and governance

The evidence pointed to a considerable degree of collaborative success throughout Scottish higher education based on little more than Memoranda of Understanding, a sense of shared purpose and an agreed mutuality.

There was a general feeling however that a more robust legal infrastructure would be needed to frame an OA Press. A Memorandum of Understanding is an appropriate choice when dealing with principles but any financial arrangement would require a specific mechanism. The Memorandum of Agreement vehicle was suggested along with a Service Level Agreement and in general it was felt that if finances are involved a more formal legal agreement would be prudent.

The desire for the Press to be an independent legal entity or at the very least under the wing of an established and respected “neutral” legal entity with a very firm commitment to the Press, was a recurring theme although no concerns were raised about buying in services from platform providers on the understanding that appropriate contracts were put in place. The trusted and well regarded existing legal entities appeared to be the NLS and APUC.

There was little appetite for attaching any new Press to an existing publishing house as there were concerns about neutrality in such a relationship and with an innovative fledgling Press being associated with the more traditional approach.

In part this concern for legal rigour was motivated by the possibility of challenges to published content in the future and an understanding that there needs to be robust a legal mechanism in place to deal with such disputes. Several researchers observed that such disputes were not unusual within academic publishing.

Furthermore legal independence was suggested as a way for the Press to distance itself from any potential reputational scandals that are not unknown at individual institutions. Finally, legal independence is seen attractive in encouraging wider buy in from the research community.

Governance

With regard to governance it was clear that the two tier model often adopted by OA presses was seen as the preferred way forward. This typically involves a separate management board to oversee operational matters. Inclusivity and representation on the management board could well be a sensitive issue and it is recommended that significant thought is given to the balance and membership with regard to the broader consortium. Membership of relevant boards was seen as a positive way to underline institutional buy-in and it is very important to define this up front.

No significant concerns were raised about recruiting academics for boards were raised provided that the Press value proposition, vision, business and quality standard were clearly stated and communicated across the stakeholder group. There was no evidence to suggest that attracting candidates of the appropriate calibre to the Press would prove to be problematic over and above the usual diary constraints. It is worth considering if these roles should be filled exclusively from

within the Scottish constituency to start with or if approaches should be made on an international basis. There was a desire for inclusivity and institutional input and representation both within the legal framework and on any management board. It was widely acknowledged that editorial board membership should be led by quality and academic drivers.

There may well be just the single editorial board at the outset depending on how the Press wishes to operate its commissioning process but flexibility will be needed going forwards.

New journals either transferring from elsewhere or setting up with the Press will require their own editorial groups. Transfer titles may well arrive with a pre-populated board.

Depending on the range and speed of monographs and other content published, there may also be the need for specialist discipline based editorial groups. Should the creative disciplines be included which often generate non text outputs, it is advisable to ensure strong representation from these researchers within any editorial layer.

It was clear that all researchers regarded the editorial function as crucial and that it would be vital to attract motivated, skilled, influential and proactive researchers to these roles.

Costs, sustainability, success

Costs

It is very difficult to give an accurate indication of costs as these will depend significantly on the scale of Press and growth model, staffing model, level/grading of dedicated/assigned staffing resource etc. It is also very dependent on the model chosen. In some ways, a fully “in-house” model is easiest to cost as you can map directly what resources are required. This will also be likely to be the most expensive model. There will be “hidden” costs such as using existing specialists for e.g. legal advice.

To recruit and retain high quality staff, salaries will need to compete with the commercial publishing market to attract people from this sector.

Regarding costs for the sector overall it was observed that creating one OA Press would be far more cost effective than a multiplicity of solutions.

It would also be beneficial to examine financial flows around the research base. At present it appears that much of the financial resource in the market goes to commercial publishers and it is not clear that society derives commensurate benefit.

In general a fixed term subsidy model for any new Press was favoured by most researchers provided a suitably rigorous business plan was agreed. Planning should be rigorous as it is all too easy to underestimate the costs and complexity of publishing. It was clear that there was little chance that any Press could be self funding in the first few years of operation although there is a possibility of a modest income stream from Print on Demand (POD) monograph sales; this has proved surprisingly lively for some other OA presses. It was regarded as likely that any subsidy would need to continue well into the future but that many Press costs could be offset against the collaborative effort and skills available within the SCURL consortium.

Regarding the initial seed funding of the Press, it was virtually unanimous that institutions should contribute on a collaborative basis. Flexibility would be needed to accommodate disparities between the respective sizes of institutions within the consortium and a fixed contribution would not be possible for all participants. It was also suggested by some researchers that it would be worth cancelling some very expensive journal titles in order to finance the Press endeavour.

Potential models for SCURL with indicative costs

During the evidence gathering there was significant discussion and support for the models below based on the understanding that more consultation would be carried out within the community and that any decisions would be underpinned by very thorough long-term business planning. The possibility of partnering with an existing commercial press was raised as a potential option but this did not attract any support. Additionally, the idea of operating a Press purely from existing SCURL resources was raised but although there was acknowledgement that libraries possessed many of the core skills needed in this area, the prevalent view was that any Press should have ring-fenced resource at its disposal from the outset. The models below were generally regarded as viable. Please note that other variants on these models are included in the options appraisal for completeness.

Partner model

Staff costs:

Press Manager: £60,000+ Salary
Support staff: 2 x £25,000+ Salary

Platform/partner costs (will depend on exact relationship, size of your operation, expected throughput of content, their desire to have you): £15,000+ pa. This is a very notional cost and could be very different after real world negotiation.

Central team outsourcing separate elements model

Staff costs:

Press Manager: £60,000+ Salary
Systems support/developer: £35,000+ Salary
Support staff: 2 x £25,000+ Salary

Some freelance service providers charge relationship fees to maintain e.g. agreed style and formats with copyeditors/typesetters. These could be a single sum for the Press as an entity, if a limited variety was required, or could be publication specific depending on complexity. Costs will depend a great deal on volume so are difficult to quantify currently. Platform costs will also vary significantly depending on how much can piggyback on existing infrastructure and support processes, and whether commercial or open source platforms are used.

Fully "in-house" model

Staff costs:

Press Manager: £45,000+ Salary
Systems support/developer: 2 x £35,000+ Salary
Support staff: 3 x £25,000+ Salary

Specialist staff: copy editor, typesetter, designer, indexer, Marketing support. Salaries unknown but it is recommended that this be explored in the future.

FTE of the specialist staff would depend on the throughput and type of publication. Having all of these on staff would be very expensive and difficult to justify initially. Costs will again depend on volume and platform costs will again vary significantly as outlined above.

Publishing charges

The cost to individual researchers to publish OA was a recurrent theme and many researchers had taken decisions in the past not to submit an OA output based on these concerns. It is fair to say that this varied greatly according to discipline with STM outputs far more likely to attract funding for OA article publishing although not necessarily sufficient funding to cover the multiplicity of extras often charged by publishers.

The survey evidence was also illuminating with regard to publishing costs. All researchers were in favour of their institution or an external funder paying for OA publishing costs. When asked about potential APC charges for a new OA Press researchers were opposed to the higher APC levels listed and favoured the lower tariffs. In practical terms however, most if not all institutions are already funding APC costs far in excess of those suggested in the survey. Regarding costs versus outputs, if your costs are transparent people can see that the output represents value. There is a minimum that can be charged but academics and institutions need to see that is based on real world costs. Researchers are also focussed on high quality outputs in terms of presentation and these production values will also need to be funded.

Sustainability

There was a clear consensus that any Press revenue should be invested back into the business to expand the portfolio and to help subsidise extra staffing should the operation be required to scale up in response to demand. There was also a clear values based commitment to running the Press as a non for profit entity. There were numerous examples in the evidence of researchers citing existing publishers' focus on profit levels as unhelpful and possibly the real reason why services to authors had diminished over time. For the new Press it should be made clear from the beginning that its benefits would not be financial but would lie elsewhere. That said, there was an understanding that a Press needs to be sustainable. There was a clear consensus that any income generated should be invested back into the business to expand the portfolio and to help subsidise extra staffing. Costs should be set to enable this sustainability without looking to generate a profit surplus.

The overall sustainability and longevity of any Press was also examined with the consensus view being that the Press would need to establish its long term credentials and intentions from the very outset. The business plan would need to be clear and realistic with regards to costs and how the business could be built incrementally. The legal foundation would need to be secure, a thorough risk analysis would be required and business continuity plans should be in place. It should also be clear how academic quality would be ensured, both in terms of reputation for the Press but also for the academics publishing with the Press. Researchers would not be likely to contribute their research outputs unless the Press has a strong reputation and longevity in discoverability of content could be guaranteed.

Regarding content sustainability, concerns were raised about durability of OA content and its accessibility and preservation for the future. A small number of examples emerged within the evidence base relating to “disappeared” content previously contributed to OA publications. Such risks could be mitigated by any new Press partnering with a dark archive or repository service to secure content in the event of a trigger situation.

Success

The evidence is clear that success can come in many forms and that can include intangibles and impact elsewhere. This could include a higher profile for Scottish research outputs and the positive benefits that would accrue to the research base.

Many researchers identified success with reputational gain and prestige. It was regarded as of paramount importance that the Press should establish high quality credentials in the first instance and should seek to maximise these over the years by means of publishing indisputably high quality impactful content. Securing international standing was seen as more important than the numbers of outputs published although there is clearly some relationship between the two.

Strategic success was also a consideration, with significant evidence in support of taking academic publishing back to the academy. If the creation of an OA Press (one of many such emergent OA presses) was part of an overall strategy to this effect and part of a plan to curb what are seen by many as extreme publication excesses in the existing market, there was significant support. There was a clear desire to disrupt the existing market but within the Arts and Humanities there was consideration given to the learned societies and smaller presses who are not necessarily associated by researchers with profiteering; this may vary according to discipline.

It was also felt that overall strategic goals would be served by the availability of high quality output which was free at the point of use and under licences that were open and permissive allowing re-use with appropriate attributions.

Success was also seen in terms of providing an alternative publishing outlet within Scotland and also in demonstrating additionality to what is present already. In other words offer a distinctive, different and clearly defined value proposition and not just another version of what is already available.

Naturally researchers also wanted to see a diverse range of monographs, journals and more innovative formats published successfully to a high standard according to any business plan in order to define success.

The timetable was also seen as important and many researchers saw success in terms of more transparent publishing processes, faster speed of publication and better services for authors. There were many comments noting the diminishing service authors feel they receive from traditional publishing houses and a desire to see any new Press look at publishing more holistically and not purely from a profit perspective.

Regarding success from a funder perspective, the possibility of one solution as opposed to nineteen different ones for OA publishing was attractive. It was thought that the likelihood of success for the Press was increased by the absence of an existing solution to meet the common challenge. It would be more difficult to entice stakeholders away from pre existing proprietary systems, than to engage them with a new service offering additionality to the market.

Success was also conceptualised in terms of financial success with the outputs here seen as a thriving, dynamic, independent and sustainable Press which was able to innovate and build incrementally into the future.

Reputation, prestige, brand and marketing

There is a desire to ensure institutional brands are still very prominent and not entirely obscured within a new Press enterprise but this does not preclude a shared service above campus model. The feeling was prevalent that a suitably resourced and marketed above campus international OA publishing solution would have the potential to develop a very significant reputation that would outstrip that of any equivalent Press owned by a single organization. It is possible to develop a nuanced and flexible brand that can flex to accommodate institutional requirements and drivers.

Any Press should be clearly defined from the start with a definite value proposition. There is an opportunity to stress uniqueness in the OA publishing landscape. There is also a need to be innovative and ambitious from the outset in order to establish Press credentials and there should be a sense of additionality and an alternative approach; this could well result in reputational gain that would outweigh anything an individual institution could accomplish.

Key institutions need to be on board given that, even though this may sound elitist, a subset of Scottish universities have very prominent international reputations. This links to the philosophy that Scotland has played a significant role as a “cradle for education” and still retains the concept of “the ancients” in terms of the older universities.

An inclusive, innovative Press would be mutually reinforcing and would be able to demonstrate cost efficiencies consistent with a shared service approach. This type of collaboration is already a well established concept within Scottish higher education. Publishing as much content as possible in one place with the attendant cost efficiencies would represent a good return on public investment.

There is also a feeling that developing a high quality OA Press would be a potential strategic advantage for Scottish HE. This would be a large high profile sector-wide collaboration of a different order of magnitude to individual institutional OA presses and smaller collaborations within the UK.

The evidence gathered surfaces the opinion that such a large above campus collaboration could well derive considerably more prestige and reputation than any individual OA Press and its national dimension might well establish an opportunity for Scotland to lead in the area of OA publishing, something that chimes well with EU policy. Given the high level of international collaboration that exists within the Scottish research base, any new OA Press needs to offer services and functionality that works for international partners.

Marketing should form a key component of the Press business case and should be invested in appropriately and not just aimed at the Scottish market but consistent with the international reputation and ambitions of Scottish universities. Additionally, marketing is perceived as an emergent weakness of established publishing houses with their reach limited to traditional academic channels and their fondness for assuming that libraries are their main target audience. This impacts on price points often making monographs very expensive and putting them out of the

reach of most individual consumers. Libraries may also take the view that such highly priced books are increasingly outwith their reach also.

The significance of reputation can not be overstated and every care should be taken to sustain this reputation by ensuring that the quality framework is signalled from the outset in marketing efforts and that this is clearly defined as an academic-led enterprise.

Quality signalling and assurance

The evidence shows peer review remains vital. Quality should be the only arbiter for publishing. There must be high quality scrutiny with rigour but the veracity of the rigour is far more important than the tradition.

The quality framework could be flexible in terms of discipline appropriateness; some disciplines favour single blind or double blind reviewing, some fully transparent reviewing. The quality framework should be sufficiently flexible to adapt to the different practices across disciplines. There is an opportunity to set out a bold and thorough quality model from the outset of the new Press; this could be attractive to researchers in itself.

Additionally, editors are regarded as key to the publishing endeavour and must be skilled, motivated and proactive.

Some concerns were raised about varying quality of peer review in existing presses with examples of negative experience recounted. Established peer review can be variable so a demonstration that any Press has a fresh approach addressing potential shortcomings would be welcome. Given some very prominent concerns about existing peer review, the Press would do well to be committed to developing best practice as appropriate to different disciplines.

A strong clear stance on this will be advantageous to foreground quality assurance from the outset and as part of the subsequent advocacy and marketing strategy.

The Press must be careful not to compromise on quality in order to maintain collaborative relations as this runs the risk of creating a distorted incentive structure.

The label of “vanity publishing” should be avoided at all costs from the outset of the project. This was referred to in interviews by a majority of the respondents. There was no inference that a consortial press would be a vanity project but there was a clear steer that any such idea should be quashed from the outset by foregrounding the quality model.

Types and formats of material to be published

With regard to varying formats, there was a great deal of support for monograph publishing alongside an acknowledgement that the Press should be prepared to publish in the most appropriate formats for given disciplines.

There was also support for textbooks including shared teaching resources across several disciplines. A link was drawn from any published teaching resources to institutional VLEs and the potential benefits that might be realised over the consortium. Some pressures that can deter academics from publishing textbooks were also noted, especially as these outputs are not eligible for the REF.

Overall it was not thought likely that STM researchers could be enticed away from high profile established journals given the metric heavy culture of STM but there is capacity for attracting journals within other disciplines and for founding new ones. It was however noted from the funder perspective that high prestige journals often drive behaviours that can be unhelpful and that these titles do not always deliver the highest quality of research.

It was also suggested that any new Press might investigate pre-prints as a potential publishing strand.

It was clear that being OA was not seen as the only opportunity to demonstrate additionality in the market and it was repeatedly suggested that innovative formats such as long-form journal articles, short-form monographs or minigraphs (e.g. Palgrave Pivots), graphic novels and comics used for teaching in universities and by academics in the corporate environment, should also be considered. There was also significant support for edited volumes, essay collections, high quality series and what was termed the “book in a MOOC” model.

In particular creative subjects were seen as the least well served by traditional publishing houses. Researchers in these disciplines often struggled to identify publishing capacity even though their outputs are just as important to them and their institutions in terms of the REF, impact and profile. Non text outputs such as music scores, visual content (for example Scottish print-making), illustrations and animations are not well catered for in the market. Any publishing structure that could be sufficiently flexible to support all the arts and its wide range of outputs would garner support.

The need to broaden the audience outwith the academic bubble also underpinned many comments relating to format and subject. Researchers and institutions are striving to demonstrate impact within the context of the REF and to reach new audiences in other sectors and within society in general.

Subject range and scope

Leading on from the unanimous view that quality should be the only arbiter for publishing content, it was clear that any Press should in principle publish across the full discipline spectrum although pragmatic decisions would need to be taken in the early stages.

The evidence was equally demonstrative about the reach of the Press. It should again be driven by quality and be open to the international community. All the researchers and senior managers interviewed saw themselves and their institutions in the international context.

There was little support for a Press whose value proposition was centred on its “Scottishness” although it was hoped that there would be sufficient room in the portfolio to offer a strand which did focus on legitimate research about Scotland and its unique place in the world.

In practical terms, however, full spectrum publishing is unlikely to be achieved from day one and many researchers had constructive suggestions about good places to start. There was a general consensus that the Arts and Humanities would be the most likely source of high quality monographs in the first instance. It was also felt that existing OA journals published at Scottish HEIs, including postgraduate and undergraduate journals, could be encouraged to partner and transfer to the new Press.

It was also plain from the survey evidence that a new Press should not seek to restrict itself to the Arts and Humanities and that content from Social Sciences would be suitable for both monographs and potentially journals.

Certain gaps in the market were also perceived and it was noted that the fine arts and other creative disciplines are not well served by traditional publishing houses. For example poetry and creative writing outputs can be difficult to place despite their high quality. Additionally, Scottish dialect works lack publishing capacity overall. There was also a perceived gap for publishing policy papers in law.

There is also a growing need to publish in interdisciplinary spaces and a channel devoted to interdisciplinarity would be welcome as would capacity for publishing about higher education practices, with neither need currently being met. There is also an opening around the Scottish legal system where capacity is also limited. Additionally, STM researchers remarked on inconsistency around publishing conference proceedings observing that this seemed to be dwindling and further noting that this format was still very important within engineering and some sciences. Funders also commented that it is increasingly difficult to leverage the benefit from some conferences where there is no longer a formal record and when not all interested researchers could attend.

With regard to potential authors for any Press, it was once again clear that this should be predicated on quality. All active researchers should be encouraged to engage with the Press regardless of career stage. In the first instance it would be advantageous in business terms to attract outputs from high profile experienced researchers but the roster should in no way be confined to this group.

There was a great deal of support for including Early Career Researchers (ECRs) with many interviewees commenting that ground-breaking work often emerged at these relatively early stages. From the funder perspective it was seen as important for the future to encourage ECRs and Phd outputs given that these are sometimes omitted in REF exercises for tactical reasons. There is existing funder policy in this area and it is seen as important to acknowledge these outputs. There was also evidence of the appetite for including postgraduate and possibly undergraduate content, principally journals, provided that this strand was framed appropriately.

Additionally it was repeatedly observed that staff on Teaching Only or Teaching and Scholarship contracts often found it challenging to identify publishing outlets even though their outputs could be of a very high quality. The Press might consider how this content could be published.

Timelines

There is no doubt that the evidence supported an exploration of a consortial OA Press. It is vital to consider what can be achieved according to any project milestones and not to get too far ahead of what can be practically delivered whilst engaging support from key stakeholders including relevant funders, institutions and most of all the academy.

Preparation was seen as key to setting up any new Press and a great deal of emphasis laid on the quality of the set up and how this should be amply resourced. Setting up a new OA Press “on a shoestring” was rejected unanimously across the evidence base.

Detailed preparations should include the development of a clearly articulated value proposition, risk analysis, potential roadmap, market research into the sector and setting up a transparent governance structure should precede any launch.

It was acknowledged that commissioning quality content can be time consuming and sufficient time should be set aside for this in any project. Once commissioned, a journal can be quite quick to set up on the technical infrastructure front, but it can take a while to generate sufficient content and take this through peer review in order to actually launch the publication.

For monographs, projects can vary significantly in timescale from commissioning through to production and then to release. This can be dependant on any author's capacity to work on manuscripts, all authors working to schedule for edited volumes, engagement with requirements around permissions etc. All of this can be supported to help streamline the process, but timescales are mostly outside the Press's control until the finished manuscript is delivered. This makes predicting any future required capacity difficult.

Overall setting up an OA Press would benefit from a first project phase which can then be converted into business as usual for the Press. It would seem advisable to work to a model where a number of publications would be ready for release at the official launch of the Press to enable it to offer content immediately. This would require a great deal of advocacy on behalf of the Press from the earliest stage, buy in from the academics involved, and faith in the Press to deliver the output as agreed and to any deadlines.

Potential tensions in the publishing landscape?

The Press project would be a collaboration of independent organizations with their own rules so there has to be a coalition of the willing to move the Press forwards. The project cannot afford to have the Press dominated by a single organization. Inter-institutional rivalry also has the potential to hamper Press development.

Existing presses in Scotland may feel that such an OA Press is unnecessary and it is possible that existing editors from traditional editorial boards who are based in Scotland, may be opposed to an OA Press. Traditional publishers outside of Scotland would be unlikely to welcome competition for manuscripts and content.

Also relations, business models and partnerships would need to be managed carefully with any existing independent university presses and those institutions who currently publish their own OA content such as journals and in some cases specialist student journals.

There is potential for the governance and financial models to cause tensions if they are not seen to be transparent and fair by all institutional stakeholders. The "little guys" need to feel represented and not automatically disadvantaged by any differences in institutional weight. The disparity in dependence on Scottish Funding Council (SFC) monies may also be a factor. The existing SCURL collaboration has developed significant trust capital in the way it conducts collaborative business and this flexibility and understanding of the resource disparities between members could be used to avoid tensions before they develop. The SHEDL brand is also strong with a proven track record of delivering benefits.

There doesn't appear to be a solid shared understanding of what an OA Press is between researchers and existing publishers, so it is possible that some tensions could be dispelled by clarity of purpose.

Some researchers expressed the view that a single respected platform which aimed to disseminate research of the highest quality may well dissipate tensions for some researchers and lead to improvements in the often taxing culture that surrounds active researchers. There may also be tension between institutional strategic need and that of individual researchers.

It was widely thought that there are plenty of tensions within academia already so care is needed not to ascribe or project pre-existing issues on to a new Press. Some tensions in the publishing market are inevitable if a new Press is formed and it was a generally held view that such tensions should not be allowed to undermine the enterprise, especially in a country where collaboration exists on so many levels already. Any project would need to decide which tensions can be tolerated, which need to be mitigated and how such risks can be managed.

Advocacy within the community

The evidence base indicates that those researchers and managers who were fully aware of SCURL and its activities were confident that it was an appropriate vehicle to explore the concept of the Press. Given SCURL's established track record of developing shared services and its cohesion as a collaboration alongside the manageable size of the constituency, it would be well placed to lead any advocacy efforts. Some researchers however were not aware of the exact nature of SCURL's work although the majority did know that the libraries worked together in a positive way for shared benefit. SHEDL is a known quantity also and well regarded. There does seem to be some scope for further promotion of SCURL and any advocacy activities around the Press would provide opportunities to this effect.

It was noted that as with any new initiative there would be a need to manage the stakeholders who were not in the SCURL family and those who do not attend SCURL events. There would be a political dimension to establishing a Press and often powerful voices not tightly involved in any discussions are very influential.

It was generally agreed that any Press would need the support of key influencers within institutions and also within funding bodies. Regarding the latter it is important to note the nuances of policies pertaining to OA with not all funders mandating but all committed to enabling OA within the context of nurturing the research base.

The advocacy effort would do well to focus on a coalition of the willing in the first instance. It is inevitable that some opposition to change will be present across the community and although it would be a positive move to engage these voices, it is possible that any resistance stems from loyalties to existing editorial boards or discipline related attachments to learned societies. Researchers who are firmly embedded in these traditional structures are the most likely to downplay the Press in the first instance based on a combination of genuine concern and negative inferences from traditional publishing houses who are bound to be concerned about loss of market share and reduced access to manuscripts.

Advocacy activities will also be beneficial to the core SCURL community as not all library staff are as close to the OA endeavour as others. This came through to some extent in the focus group feedback and a clear shared understanding of OA would be very beneficial if libraries are to be one

of the main advocacy conduits. There is some evidence from other university OA presses that a co-ordinated thorough engagement with library colleagues at the outset would have paid dividends later on in Press development.

Concerning advocacy within institutional committee structures the evidence all pointed to this being a sound way to proceed with virtually all researchers being of the opinion that their universities would support discussions around the Press through these channels. There is already considerable conversation around OA at Library Committees and OA advisory groups and it would seem natural to include the Press in any such discourse. Both REF and UKRI policies have also ensured that OA is now a mainstream strategic theme with senior university managers engaged in discussion and delivery.

Regarding attracting researchers to the Press the balance of opinion was that an ethical and transparent quality model accompanied by institutional and funder endorsement plus well-pitched advocacy would go a long way to establishing the Press in the collective mindset.

It seems important for advocacy for a Press like this to be academic led. The most successful examples seem to be UCL, where the academic led advocacy started with the initial discussions around the feasibility of the Press so that by the time the Press was ready to take projects, it had the required visibility and profile to start well and release a significant amount of content at “launch”. The success of Open Book Publishers shows, amongst other things, that academics relate to their peers and consider their opinions as having more weight in this area, than others e.g. library colleagues. A committed, early appointed editorial board could be a real asset.

07. Financial / functional models overview

Options appraisal

Models can overlap and in some cases elements of one model can be used as an add-on to other models.

Partner model

Staff costs:

Press Manager: £60,000+ Salary

Support staff: 2 x £25,000+ Salary

Platform/partner costs This will depend on exact relationship, size of your operation, expected throughput of content, their desire to have you: £15,000+ pa. This is a very notional cost and could be very different after real world negotiation. It is reasonable to expect that any partner would be very interested in working with SCURL at such scale and with such potential with regard to prestige, scope and reach.

Pros: Can be a cost effective way to become operational
Can allow very quick set up of Press with limited internal structure, working with a range of local leadership/management models
Can bring tested technology and process solutions with limited resource required for relationship management

Cons: No control over partner costing models which impact on authors/funders
Committing to partnerships can be limiting, in terms of operational independence and also in preventing experience that would help the Press grow and expand
Can be difficult in terms of identity - why would academics work with you and not the partner direct?
Can make issue resolution more difficult as you are one layer removed from implementation, in lots of cases

Central team outsourcing separate elements model

Staff costs:

Press Manager: £60,000+ Salary

Systems support/developer: £35,000+ Salary

Support staff: 2 x £25,000+ Salary

Some freelance service providers charge relationship fees to maintain e.g. agreed style and formats with copyeditors/typesetters. These could be a single sum for the Press as an entity, if a limited variety was required, or could be publication specific depending on complexity. Costs will depend a great deal on volume so are difficult to quantify currently. Platform costs will also vary significantly depending on how much can piggyback on existing infrastructure and support processes, and whether commercial or open source platforms are used.

A dedicated Scottish University Press team that outsources technical and production aspects to a range of providers.

Pros: Maximum flexibility in working with tailored relationships

Cons: Dedicated staffing resource required

Takes time to identify the range of suppliers and build relationships on a variety of fronts
Individual contracts with a range of suppliers for different aspects may increase costs, or bring savings depending on the details. There will be an overhead in terms of resource for each relationship.

Fully “in-house” model

Staff costs:

Press Manager: £45,000+ Salary

Systems support/developer: 2 x £35,000+ Salary

Support staff: 3 x £25,000+ Salary

Specialist staff: copy editor, typesetter, designer, indexer, marketing support. Salaries unknown but it is recommended that this be explored in the future

FTE of the specialist staff would depend on the throughput and type of publication. Having all of these on staff would be very expensive and difficult to justify initially. Costs will again depend on volume and platform costs will again vary significantly as outlined above.

All elements done by dedicated Scottish Universities Press Staff.

Pros: Full independence and autonomy

Cons: Maximum upfront investment in staffing resources and technical infrastructure

Specialist skills needed, some in areas entailing high salary costs and likely not to be already present in SCURL institutions

Maximum set up time

This may be a model to work towards as part of a long term plan, but is a risk heavy initial approach.

Commercial Press partner model

Staff costs:

Unknown as this would depend on the extent of the relationship management effort; this is unlikely to amount to an entire FTE role given the nature of the partnership and its basis in buying services from an exiting commercial publisher.

Pros: Less set up costs and staffing outlay

Mitigation of any tensions in Scottish publishing landscape depending on the who the chosen partner is

Cons: Would detract from the alternative value proposition and would be unlikely to demonstrate additionality to the market

If the chosen commercial publisher did not have impeccable OA credentials the whole enterprise could be tarnished from the outset

Less control over processes, production values, timings and content

Fewer learning opportunities for existing SCURL staff

Using current staff augmented as required

This can be applied in conjunction with any of the models above to varying degrees or as a stand alone approach:

All or some functional elements done by existing staff from within SCURL institutions, supported by contracted freelancers where skills do not currently exist.

Pros: Draws on skills that already exist within SCURL institution infrastructures
May increase buy-in and engagement from SCURL colleagues
Cost effective, low risk approach

Cons: Would add to existing workloads
Would require relationship building with numerous freelance service providers
Would require initial buy-in from a large group of people

Risk analysis

Please note that the full risk assessment can be found as Appendix 8. This is not an exhaustive set of risks but a summary of the top level risks as seen from the current point in time. It is recommended that more in a depth assessment is carried out when and if the preferred functional models have been narrowed down.

08. Recommendations

Based on the evidence gathered during this project there is very significant support for open access and its top level aims within the SCURL constituency. It was clear that there are tangible frustrations with regard to the current publishing landscape. The support for open access therefore extends in principle to the establishment of an open access Press with the proviso that any planning and consultation is inclusive and thorough and resourcing is ample to underpin such a wide and complex endeavour.

The outputs from the focus group did not chime exactly with the other evidence although the overall feeling was in support with some concerns being expressed about institutional branding and the desire for more details about how any Press would be operated. Concerns about funding were expressed but in many ways that reflects the survey evidence relating to APC levels – people are concerned about high transactional costs but in reality even higher transactional costs are already being funded across the constituency.

With the above in mind, the recommendations are as follows:

- Continue with the Press concept establishing a formal project.
- Business planning should be thorough and include set up, initial growth and long-term phases. Production of a 5-year plan to guide the project covering governance, structure, processes etc. would be helpful. Existing project staffing could be used to lead this phase.
- Further consultation is recommended including focus groups held at a range of institutions and a more systematic survey or other consultative effort eliciting input from more of the institutions within the constituency and from more researchers in the disciplines under represented in the evidence gathering for this project that is Engineering and Medicine / Dentistry / Health.
- Explore significant issues raised in this report in more detail and amongst groups under represented thus far.
- Consult directly with the National Library of Scotland (NLS) and Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges (APUC) with regard to their potential buy-in and willingness to “host” any Press in the legal context.
- Perform a more detailed risk analysis focusing on models of interest to inform a formal options consideration process. For example setting up a legal entity, if that proved to be the decision, would benefit from this analysis.
- Carry out further high level advocacy both informally and formally with senior university managers and key influencers across the constituency in order to seed the ground for the Press. Encourage academics to advocate to their peers.
- SCURL might also consider promoting its brand more within the sector conveying its strategy and giving more details about its existing notable achievements directly to

academics. This could well provide a platform for more conversations about an open access Press.

- Resourcing should be ring-fenced and well planned in support of the business planning.
- The resource framework should also be flexible in order to accommodate smaller institutions at the outset.
- Any enterprise should be inclusive with transparent representation from across the constituency. No one institution should dominate the enterprise.
- The enterprise should be academic led with regard to content and quality and the latter should not be compromised in any circumstances.
- Any Press should be set up with an international context and not limited in terms of content and governance and editorial input to Scotland.
- Governance structures should be transparent and representative and include both academic and professional services stakeholders.

09. Appendix 1 to 8

- 1 SCURL brief (separate PDF)
- 2 Consultant's work package overview (separate PDF)
- 3 Interview schedule and overview (separate PDF)
- 4 Full survey results (separate PDF)
- 5 Focus group summary (separate PDF)
- 6 Documentation used in the project (separate PDF files)
- 7 Slide deck of presentations (separate PDF files)
- 8 Risk Assessment (separate Excel file)

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