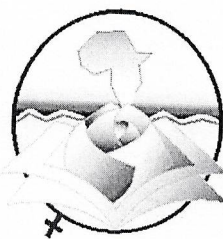


WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY IN AFRICA

Library
Department



549 Arcturus Road,
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Addressing gender disparity and fostering equity in University Education

OPEN SCIENCE POLICY

1. TITLE OF THE POLICY

Open Science Policy

2. INTERPRETATION (DEFINITION OF TERMS)

Citizen Science means active participation of the public in scientific research processes, including data collection, analysis and dissemination, contributing to democratic access to science.

FAIR Principles refer to a set of guiding principles to ensure research outputs are Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable, promoting maximum value and reproducibility.

Metadata refers to structured information that describes, explains, locates, or otherwise makes it easier to retrieve, use, or manage research data and outputs.

Open Access means immediate, free availability of scholarly research outputs online, enabling users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts without financial, legal, or technical barriers.

Open Data refers to research data that are freely available for others to use, reuse and redistribute with proper attribution, enhancing transparency, reproducibility and collaborative innovation.

Open Educational Resources (OERs) mean digitised materials offered freely and openly for educators, students and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning and research.

Open Science refers to a broad, inclusive movement to make scientific research, data, methods, and dissemination accessible, reproducible and reusable by all.

Repositories are digital platforms developed to ensure the secure, long-term preservation and dissemination of research outputs, ideally in open access formats.

Research Outputs encompasses all forms of disseminated scholarly work, including peer-reviewed publications, preprints, data sets, software, methodologies, protocols and multimedia outputs.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- i. Promote a research culture aligned with Open Science values as articulated in the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science (2021).¹
- ii. Enhance the visibility, accessibility and impact of the University's research outputs.
- iii. Promote ethical, transparent and collaborative research practices.
- iv. Equip researchers with the knowledge and skills to practise Open Science responsibly.
- v. Ensure compliance with funder mandates on open access and open data.

3.1 Relevant Statutes, Policies and Guidelines

In pursuing the foregoing objectives, the open science initiatives shall be informed by, inter alia, the following guidelines, statutes and frameworks:

- Cyber and Data Protection Act [Chapter 12:07];
- Freedom of Information Act [Chapter 10:33];
- Research Act [Chapter 10:22];
- University Charter - Statutory Instrument 130 of 2004;
- Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education Act (Chapter 25:27);
- Zimbabwe National Library and Documentation Service (ZNLDS) Act (Chapter 25:10);
- Zimbabwe National Qualifications Framework (2018);
- Zimbabwe National ICT Policy;
- UNESCO Recommendations on Open Science
- The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Guidelines.

WUA's policy procedures and structural arrangements for open science are consistent with its fourteen (14) strategic objectives enunciated in the 2023-2027 Transformational Strategy, namely gender equality promotion, teaching and learning, research, community engagement, innovation and industrialisation, internationalisation, institutional environment, human capital, resources and assets, business development, marketing and brand development, quality assurance, student welfare and development and risk management. Similarly, the Open Science Policy shall be underpinned by the following related policies and procedures:

- Bring Your Own Device Policy;
- Continuing Education Policy;
- Disability Policy;
- Fraud and Risk Policy;
- Gender and Diversity Policy;
- ICT Policy;
- Institutional Repository Policy;
- Collection Development and Management Policy;
- Open Educational Resources Policy;
- Research Data Management Policy;
- Internal Audit Policies and Procedures;
- Internationalisation Policy;
- Library Disaster Response and Discovery Plan;
- Partnership Policy;
- Policy on Intellectual Property;
- Procurement Policy and Procedures; and
- Risk Management Policy and Procedures.

4. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Women's University in Africa (*hereinafter referred to as the University*) members, including academic staff, researchers, visiting scholars, postgraduate and undergraduate students and collaborators. It encompasses all research activities funded internally or externally, including commissioned research, consultancy projects, and collaborative research partnerships. It applies to all research outputs, whether traditional (articles, monographs) or non-traditional (datasets, software, digital artefacts, creative works).

5. POLICY STATEMENT

The University endorses Open Science as a fundamental principle underpinning research excellence. All University researchers should make their research outputs openly available as soon as possible, respecting intellectual property rights, ethical standards, and data protection requirements.

The University shall:

- i. Establish and support infrastructure for open access publishing, data sharing and open repositories.
- ii. Advocate for open and inclusive research ecosystems locally, nationally and internationally.
- iii. Uphold the protection of sensitive data and ensure equitable access to knowledge for all communities.

6. PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE POLICY

The University endorses Open Science as a fundamental principle underpinning research excellence. All University researchers shall make their research outputs openly available as soon as possible, respecting intellectual property rights, ethical standards and data protection requirements. The Open Science practices at WUA shall be guided by the following principles:

- i. Transparency and reproducibility are foundational to Open Science. Research methods, data and results must be fully disclosed, detailed and made openly accessible to enable independent validation, facilitate replication and enhance the credibility of scientific work. Comprehensive documentation and transparent reporting shall be integral to all research activities.
- ii. Accessibility and affordability must be prioritised to ensure that research outputs are made freely available to the public with minimal barriers. Open access to publications, data and other outputs will be encouraged, utilising repositories and open licences to broaden dissemination and reduce financial inequities in knowledge sharing.
- iii. Collaboration and participation shall be actively promoted to build interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral and inclusive research communities. The University recognises the importance of engaging diverse stakeholders, including interdisciplinary teams, citizen

- scientists, indigenous groups and other underrepresented communities, in the co-creation and dissemination of knowledge.
- iv. Equity and inclusiveness must guide Open Science practices. The University is committed to ensuring that all individuals, regardless of background, have equitable access to research outputs and the benefits of scientific advancement. Cultural and linguistic diversity shall be respected, and efforts shall be made to address barriers to participation.
 - v. Accountability and ethics shall underpin all Open Science activities. Researchers are expected to comply with established ethical guidelines, protect the dignity, rights and privacy of research participants and ensure the responsible management of sensitive data. Transparency in ethical considerations will be upheld throughout the research lifecycle.
 - vi. Sustainability and stewardship are essential to the long-term value of research outputs. The University shall promote practices that ensure the preservation, curation and accessibility of research outputs over time, promoting responsible data stewardship following the FAIR principles.
 - vii. Recognition and reward mechanisms shall be put in place to appropriately value Open Science contributions. Activities such as open publishing, data sharing, open peer review, and citizen science engagement shall be recognised in academic evaluations, promotions and funding decisions, thus embedding Open Science as a core component of academic excellence.

7. POLICY PROVISIONS

- i. Researchers must deposit a copy of all peer-reviewed articles into the University's open access repository immediately upon acceptance for publication, ensuring compliance with funders' mandates.
- ii. Research data supporting publications must be made openly available in recognised repositories unless restricted by ethical, legal, or contractual obligations, accompanied by sufficient metadata.
- iii. All research proposals must include a data management plan outlining how data will be managed, shared and preserved.

- iv. Where possible, researchers should use open-source software and tools to promote reproducibility and reduce dependence on proprietary systems.
- v. Researchers are encouraged to engage the public and stakeholders in their research activities through citizen science projects and open communication of findings.
- vi. Training programmes on Open Science principles and practices must be made available to all University members, and participation should be encouraged and recognised.
- vii. Intellectual property developed through research must be managed to maximise public access while protecting legitimate commercial interests where applicable.
- viii. Ethical considerations in data sharing and public engagement must be integrated into all stages of the research lifecycle.
- ix. The University will monitor compliance with Open Science policies through periodic audits and reporting requirements linked to funding and performance evaluations.
- x. Collaboration with national and international Open Science initiatives will be actively pursued to enhance the University's contribution to global knowledge sharing.
- xi. Metadata are fundamental to the successful implementation of Open Science practices. Every research output deposited in a repository must be accompanied by high-quality metadata that adheres to recognised standards and best practices. Metadata should be detailed, accurate and maintained to ensure that research outputs are easily discoverable, accessible, interoperable with other systems, and reusable by others. The use of common metadata schemas and controlled vocabularies is encouraged to facilitate interoperability and enhance the visibility and impact of the University's research outputs.
- xii. The University must incentivise Open Science practices through recognition in performance evaluations, promotions and funding allocations.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Quality Assurance Department	Policy Evaluation and Assessment
University	The University is responsible for providing funding to develop the necessary infrastructure and training support services for effective research data management.
Library Department	Lead the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of the Open Science Policy

Library Committee ICT Department	Oversee the implementation of Open Science at WUA Provide the necessary infrastructure for open science initiatives as well as set up the requisite systems.
Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Centre	Lead the strategic development, coordination, and continuous improvement of research data management practices across the University. This includes establishing institutional standards, monitoring compliance, supporting infrastructure and training initiatives and ensuring that the University's research data management aligns with national and international best practices.
Internal Audit	Evaluate, monitor and review the Open Science Policy

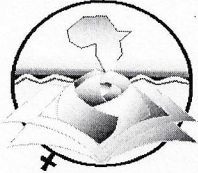
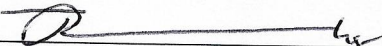
9. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Policy will take effect when approved by the University Council.

10. REVIEW

The authority to amend this Policy shall reside with the Library Committee of the Women's University in Africa, acting on the advice of the Council. The Policy shall be reviewed on a five-year cycle; however, recommendations for improvement may be incorporated as they arise.

11. DOCUMENT VERSION AND CONTROL

Document Name	Open Science Policy	 WUA
Version Reference	1.0	
Document Owner	Library	
Approved by		
Date of Approval		
Review Date	5 years	

¹ UNESCO Recommendations on Open Science: <https://www.unesco.org/en/open-science/about?hub=686>