

Action Plan Open Science

Introduction

In 2022, UM introduced a policy [framework](#) and invited faculties to incorporate it, taking into account their own research culture. The framework has six themes:

- Open Access;
- FAIR data;
- FAIR software;
- Public engagement;
- Open Educational Resources;
- Preregistration.

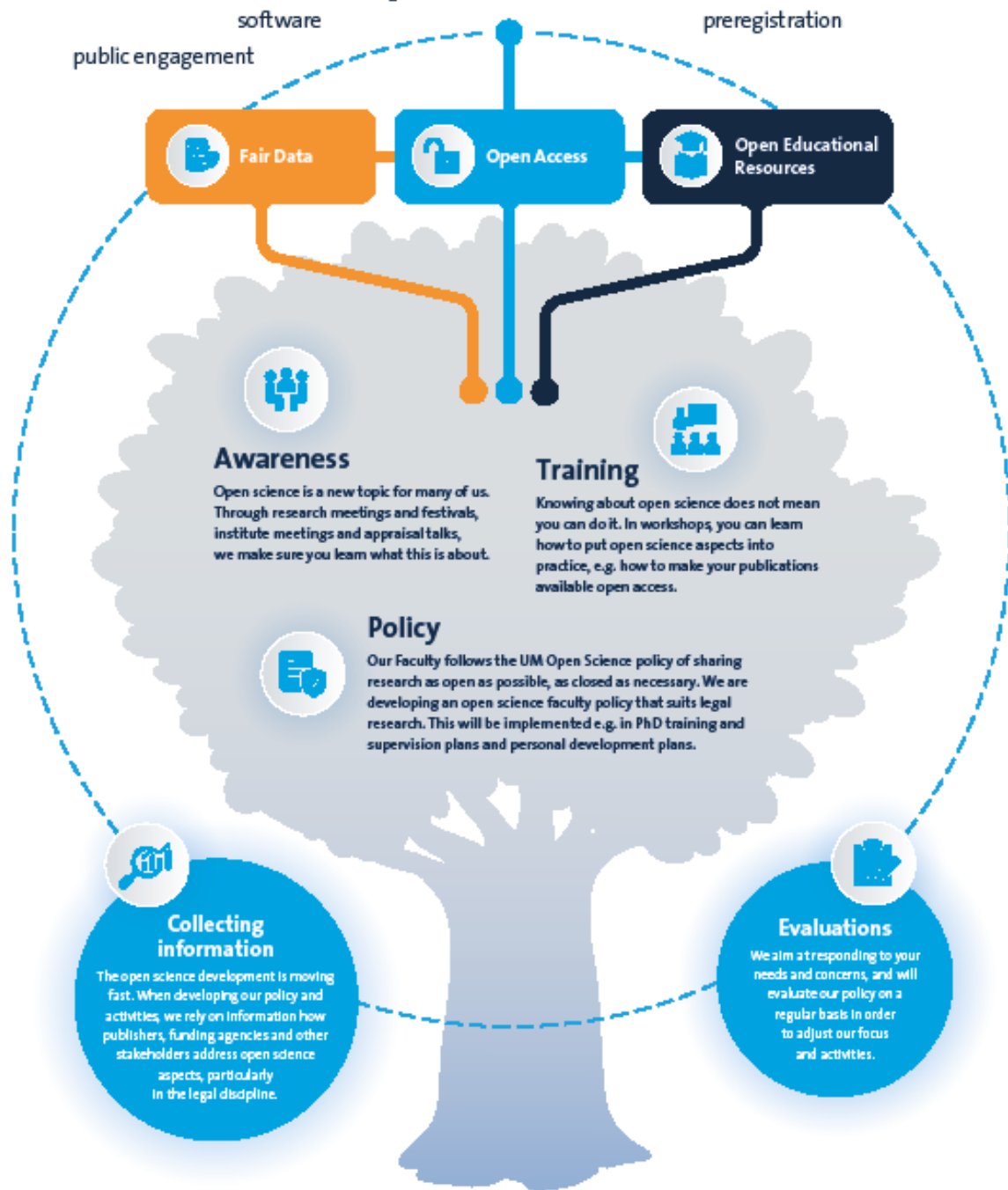
In the Faculty, a staff survey, Faculty-wide research meetings, and discussions in various bodies such as the Scientific Committee and with institute directors have contributed to a further increase in awareness,¹ to help shape views and provide the building blocks for this Action Plan.

The Faculty's policy framework is summarised in the Open Science infographic. In the coming years, we will focus on three main themes: **Open Access**, **Open Educational Resources** and **FAIR data**. These are the areas where staff have the greatest need for policy, information and support. We will make adjustments where necessary, based on new developments and evaluations.

¹ See Faculty of Law Self-evaluation Research Assessment 2016 – 2021 for prior activities.



Open Science



1. Open Access

1.1 Objectives

Our aim is to **expand and promote the possibilities of Open Access (OA) publishing**, taking into account the specific nature of legal research. We follow the principle of 'As open as possible, as closed as necessary'. More open access publications contribute to

- increased **visibility**, access to and impact of our output; and
- improved **communication** with peers, students and the non-academic world.

1.2 Focal Points Faculty Policy

Legal scholars often publish in books, with an emphasis on edited volumes. In addition, the Dutch language is relatively important compared to other disciplines. This means that:

- the opportunities to publish OA are relatively limited compared to disciplines where the emphasis is on publishing in (English-language) peer-reviewed journals;
- a good and up-to-date overview of the OA policies of relevant book publishers is missing, and the OA landscape is changing constantly;
- the reputation of publishers and their distribution networks are important criteria in the choices individual researchers make; and
- the researcher may face high costs charged by the publisher (book processing costs).

1.3 Faculty Policy

The Faculty's OA policy is based on the idea that we primarily aim for **Diamond Open Access**. We do this by investing in Maastricht University Press, but also in other diamond OA publishers in which individual staff members are involved. At the same time, the diamond route is not always feasible or desirable, as other arguments play a role in the choice of a publisher or the publication avenue. This is why we also focus on

- UM-wide agreements with publishers for **Gold Open Access** publications;
- making **author's versions** available through a Faculty of Law Open Access Research Series, and
- **Green Open Access** of published research output (including chapters in edited volumes) after 6 months, either through the Taverne arrangement² or through UM-wide agreements with external publishers.

Early career researchers (up to 5 years after the award of a doctorate) may also apply for a Research Fund grant of up to EUR 2,500 per publication for OA publications with commercial publishers who charge for an OA publication and where the costs are not covered by an ACP agreement.

1.4 Action points

The OA policy is shaped along three lines: (1) creating **platforms** that enable diamond, gold and green OA, (2) providing **support** in finding OA publishers and establishing diamond OA journals, and (3) **information and training** on OA.

² <https://library.maastrichtuniversity.nl/research/sharing-output/taverne/>. Maastricht University will move from an "opt-in" to an "opt-out" option. This means that UM researchers' output that fulfils the Taverne amendment conditions will be made available via the UM repository after 6 months of publication, unless the UM researcher has opted out.

Platforms

Together with Maastricht University Press (MUP), we are establishing a wide range of low-threshold opportunities to publish PhD theses, textbooks and academic books under diamond OA conditions. For this purpose, a series will be established that will clearly show the research results of our Faculty, with its own look and feel. In this way, we will be able to respond to the desire to integrate a clear branding of the Faculty of Law. However, there will still be room for a personal design of the cover. We are also working on a link with the Maastricht Law Series; the Open Access version of a Maastricht Law Series book would then be available through MUP.

- **PhD theses:** unlike the current UM PhD theses database, MUP offers a high quality digital book that is also available as a print-on-demand option. The cost is low, about the same as the university fee. The thesis is edited by the PhD candidate, and communication is handled by the Faculty. The path to commercial publication remains open. Co-branding with a (smaller) publisher may also be an option;
- **Textbooks** for educational purposes: Students should also benefit from OA. We want to encourage our staff to publish textbooks for our courses in the MUP series. The costs will be borne by the Faculty. To compensate for the loss of income, the faculty offers an incentive of 1,000 euros from the library's OA fund in the initial phase.
- **Academic books:** can already be published with MUP. In the future, the Faculty Series will also provide a recognisable outlet for this. A link with the Maastricht Law Series is strived for.

In addition to Diamond OA, we also provide a platform for author's versions to be made available with Faculty of Law branding.

- The **Open Access Research Papers** series makes the author's version of book chapters and articles accepted for publication available. This is of particular interest when edited books are published much later than the chapters are written, and when Taverne is not available (foreign publishers not covered by Dutch copyright). The research series is formatted by MUP, can be found via Pure and SSRN, and is supported by a contact person in the Faculty. A fast and accessible procedure applies.

Support

The Faculty offers various ways of support for researchers who want to publish OA or establish an OA journal:

- the **library committee** will play a central role in support. It gathers knowledge on OA opportunities, can provide researchers with advice on various publication options and publishing deals, and advises the Faculty Board on its OA policy, e.g. entering into (read and) publish deals with relevant publishers;
- colleagues who want to establish their own **Diamond Open Access journals** can be financially supported by the Faculty. For this, they can apply for the OA fund to the library committee; the committee advises the Vice-Dean of Research on granting financial support;
- the Faculty does not fund OA publishing of individual publications. The **UM Book Fund** reimburses book processing costs up to a maximum of EUR 5,000.

Information and Training

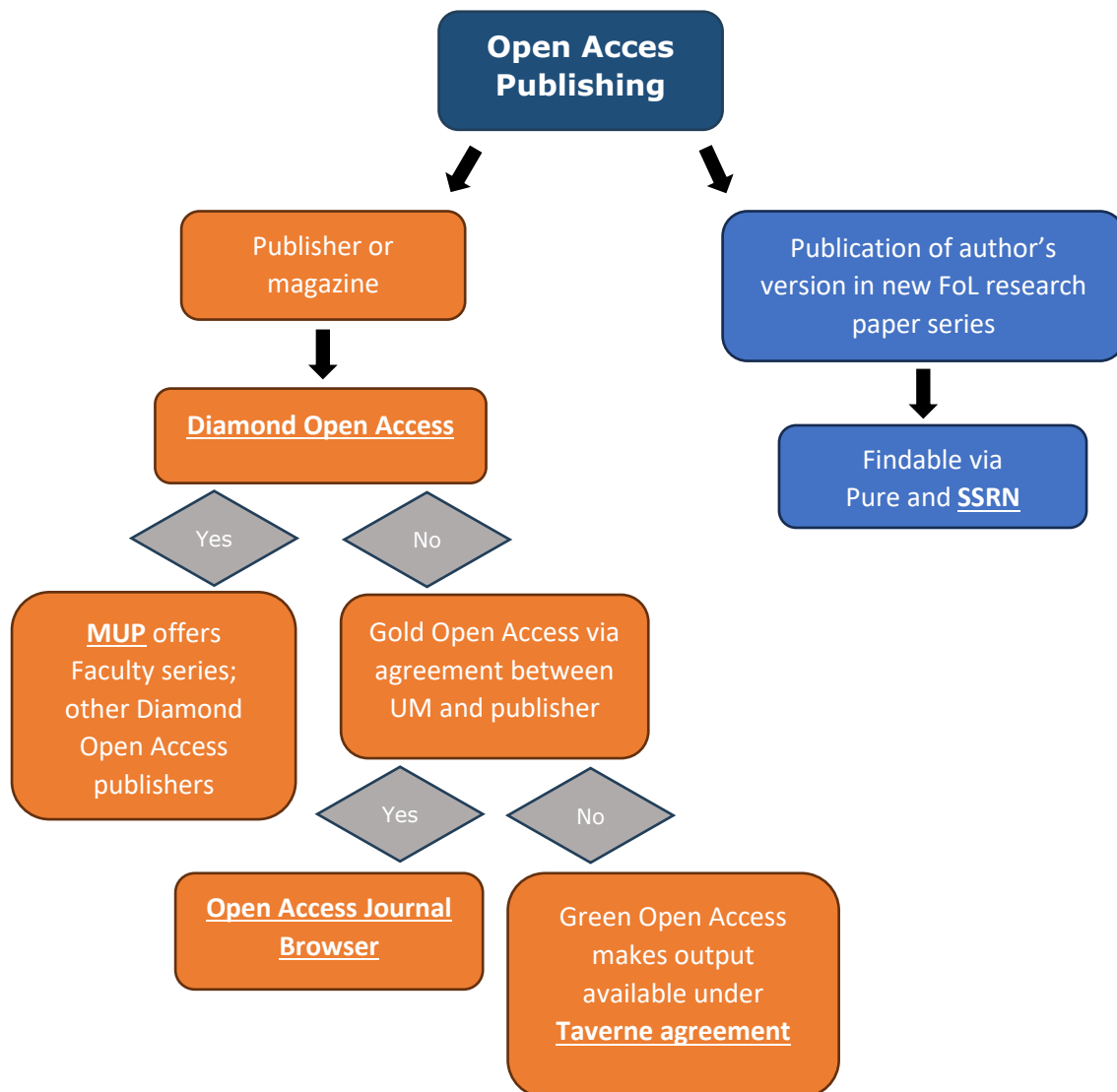
The complexity and rapidly changing reality of Open Access publishing requires increased attention and discussion among staff. Open Science in general and OA in particular is an important part of our **training programme** for **PhD candidates** within the Graduate School. Staff can also participate in this programme. Open Access issues are regularly discussed at **Faculty research meetings**. This allows us to keep staff informed of the

latest developments and to gather input for faculty policy. in Faculty research institutes and groups, this information is further discussed within their own peer group.

1.5 Evaluation

A framework of indicators will be developed with the University Library to evaluate the policy. These could include the number of OA publications, findability of and access to output.

1.6. Roadmap “Open Access Publishing”



2. Open Educational Resources

2.1 Objectives

The discussion on making educational resources available is still in its infancy. A thorough exploration is therefore necessary. In the first instance, the aim is to stimulate **discussion**

and raise **awareness** about what materials can be shared. In the meantime, **support** will be given to individual staff members who wish to take steps in this direction.

2.2 Focal Points Faculty Policy

The Faculty endorses Open Science, also with regard to teaching materials. However, a number of comments can be made:

- creating teaching materials is time consuming;
- from a didactic point of view, it does not always make sense to make material available to students in advance;
- licensing conditions for textbooks are important for authors.

2.3 Faculty Policy

We are still in the process of exploring which teaching materials we want to make available, and under what conditions, from the point of view of didactics and open science. At present, the Faculty's policy is as follows

- the Faculty's **support and advice** to individual members of staff in making decisions about the OA availability of teaching materials is mainly the responsibility of the Library Committee;
- the Library Committee advises the Faculty Board on the Faculty OER policy;
- for **textbooks**, we go one step further and focus on an OA series (see section 1.4).

2.4 Action Points

We formulate the following action points:

- launching a Faculty **textbook series**;
- integrating OA teaching materials into the **BKO course**;
- encouraging **discussion** at Faculty meetings

2.5 Evaluation

A framework of indicators will be developed to evaluate the policy. These could include the cost for students to purchase teaching materials, the number of open access textbooks, the findability and accessibility of these books and the author satisfaction.

3. FAIR data

3.1 Objectives

Important steps have already been taken to make data FAIR:

- tailor-made **support** by the Data Steward;
- the introduction of a FAIR data **checklist**;
- a regular **discussion** at research meetings;
- a data management training course for PhD candidates;
- the inclusion of information on data management in the **PhD training and supervision plan**.

The Faculty has decided to continue on this path, investing in **awareness, training** and **tailor-made support**, taking into account the specific nature of legal research.

Again, we apply the adage '**as open as possible, as closed as necessary**'. The data collected is mainly qualitative. Legal restrictions (such as GDPR) or the sensitive nature of the data mean that it cannot always be made publicly available. So for each research, we examine how the data can be made FAIR. In other words, we consider whether the data can be made available via open access, restricted access or only via metadata and documentation. We use the institutional repository [dataverse](#).

3.2 Focal Points Faculty Policy

Although considerable efforts have been made, there is still relatively little experience of making data FAIR. The checklist, the data management plan and the training and supervision plan for PhD candidates will help researchers to get on the right track. The Data Steward and Legal Affairs provide support when necessary in drafting data sharing and processing agreements.

3.3 Faculty Policy

The Faculty's policy rests on the two named pillars:

- **awareness**, including front-end verification;
- tailor-made **support** from the Data Steward and Information Manager.

3.4 Action Points

In the short term, the following actions are planned within these two pillars

- the widespread adoption and integration of the **Research Project Services Platform** into Faculty research, again raising awareness for the need of data management and FAIR data;
- organising **workshops** on the use and importance of ORCID and DOIs, and on metadata registration.

3.5 Evaluation

A framework of indicators will be developed to evaluate the policy. These could include the extent to which data have been recorded in line with FAIR principles.