

Making Open Access Book publishing ‘Normal’

OLH Open Access Award 2024 awardee’s report: Lancaster University Library

Last year Lancaster University Library was awarded the Open Library of Humanities Open Access award to support our research culture activity relating to Open Access Books. We were extremely grateful to have received this award, which allowed us to build upon our work in this area.

Why did we apply for the OLH Open Access Award?

Lancaster University is a research-intensive university based in the North West of England. The university library has a strategic vision which lays out our ambition to be a library that is connected, to go beyond providing just a service and a building and to work in partnership with all Lancaster University communities. As part of this vision, we have been proactive in partnering with our research community to facilitate a research culture in which Open Access Book publishing is part of normal, everyday practice. By this we aim to foster an environment where our research colleagues feel they can engage with Open Access for long-form outputs as the default, rather than as a box ticking exercise to comply with funder mandates.

Prior to applying for the Open Library of Humanities Open Access Award, we had spent the previous 18 months focusing on developing our infrastructure and workflows to make it possible and make it easy for authors to publish open access monographs.

During this time, we developed and engaged with several initiatives to give our academic community more opportunities to publish Open Access Books. This includes collaborating with external partners to develop the [Trailblazers Early Career publishing](#) initiative and our involvement as a partner in the [Open Book Futures Project](#), which aims to develop the workflows and infrastructures to support Open Access book publishing. Our other focus during this time was to make it as easy as possible for authors to engage in Open Access publishing for Longform outputs. To achieve this, we integrated Open Access Books into our researcher development training and developed an online ‘[Guide to Open Access books](#)’ to allow authors to make informed decisions about publishing their longform outputs Open Access.

With this background, our focus for the next 12 months was to consider how we could work closely with our researcher community to make Open Access book publishing part of normal, everyday practice. We therefore applied for the award to support our activity in this area.

How did we use the award?

We used the majority of the award's funding to deliver a series of book launch events for Lancaster University authors who had recently published Open Access Books and Monographs. The aims of these events was to:

- Make Open Access Book publishing prestigious and something researcher aspire towards by celebrating the work of our authors who have published this way and highlighting the production and academic quality of the publications.
- Challenge misconceptions towards Open Access Book publishing within our Researcher community, such as demonstrating that print copies of books can be sold for Open Access books.
- Promote and highlight Diamond open access book publishing models, which do not charge authors to publish Open Access with them.

The primary audience for these events was Lancaster University researchers, and we specifically targeted colleagues within disciplines adjacent to the book being discussed at each event. However the book launches were also open to members of the public and external researchers beyond the University to attend.

The funding received from the OLH enabled us to cover the travel expenses of external speakers and pay for refreshments to allow us to attract a larger audience to our events. We also utilised a small amount of the funding to produce marketing materials such as flyers and pamphlets with information relating to Open Access Monograph publishing and Diamond Open Access models to be distributed at the book launches.

Our events included the launch of the book '[*Abortion Trail Activism: The Global Infrastructures for Abortion Access*](#)' by Dr Deirdre Duffy, Senior Lecturer in Sociology. It featured a panel conversation and Q&A on the book's key themes, which touched on how Open Access was achieved for the book and how this might allow a wider audience to reach this work. We also hosted an event to celebrate the publication of '[*The Renewal of Post-War Manchester: Planning Architecture and the State*](#)' by Professor Richard Brook. The event featured a lecture from Richard and guest speaker Professor Katrina Navickas, which also touched upon how the book was made open access and what this means for potential audiences.

During the book launches we made a point to display the print copies of the books at each of our events to highlight how high-quality physical copies are often still produced and sold for titles published open access online. This was a useful way to challenge a common misconception amongst our research colleagues regarding Open Access publishing. We also deliberately highlighted the academic quality of the works by emphasising the peer review and editorial process each title underwent. All our events were well attended,

allowing us to increase the visibility of our Library initiatives to support Open Access books and develop our network amongst our academic colleagues. Since delivering these book launches we have seen an increase in the number of enquiries we are receiving from colleagues who would like to make their longform outputs open access.

In addition to hosting these events, we recorded case studies with authors who published Open Access Books and Monographs to share their experiences. These interviews are available on our [Lancaster University Library YouTube channel](#).

