

# Open Access Survey 2025

Report of Findings



JCU Library

# **Open Access Survey 2025**

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James Cook University Library

James Cook University

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## Open Access Survey 2025: Report of findings

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JCU Library would like to sincerely thank the university research community for their valuable support and participation in this survey.

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## Summary

This report presents the findings of an open access survey conducted at James Cook University between 3 November and 7 December 2025. The online survey received 171 responses from researchers across all five colleges, three campuses, and several research centres.

The survey consisted of 14 questions exploring researchers' experiences with open access publishing, their understanding of the different pathways to open access, and their awareness and use of communication channels for keeping informed about developments in open access publishing.

The findings indicate that, although open access publication rates at JCU have increased significantly over the past decade, a key barrier remains researchers' limited familiarity with the range of options available for making their research freely accessible to the public.

## Introduction

Over the past three years, James Cook University Library has implemented a range of educational initiatives aimed at improving researchers' understanding and use of the various pathways to making scholarly work open access. These initiatives have included open access [publishing workshops](#), resources and presentations on [Read and Publish Agreement](#), and an annual [Green Open Access competition](#).

The Library conducted this survey of the JCU academic and research community primarily to assess researchers' understanding of open access publishing. The survey also sought to measure awareness and use of the open access pathways available at JCU for making research openly accessible. In addition, it aimed to identify any gaps in the services and support currently provided to researchers.

This report presents the survey findings and highlights the key outcomes. The results will assist the Library in strengthening its support for researchers and enhancing access to the range of services and resources related to open access publishing.

## Findings

### Demographics

There were 171 responses to the survey with respondents being representative of each college and campus. The highest number of respondents were Higher Degree Research students at 37 percent, with Early Career Researchers forming the lowest at 11 percent. Mid-Career and Senior Researchers were equally represented at 26 percent.

Category of Researcher	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Senior Researchers	45	26.3
Mid-Career Researchers	44	25.7
Early Career Researchers	19	11.1
Higher Degree Research Students	63	36.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100*</b>

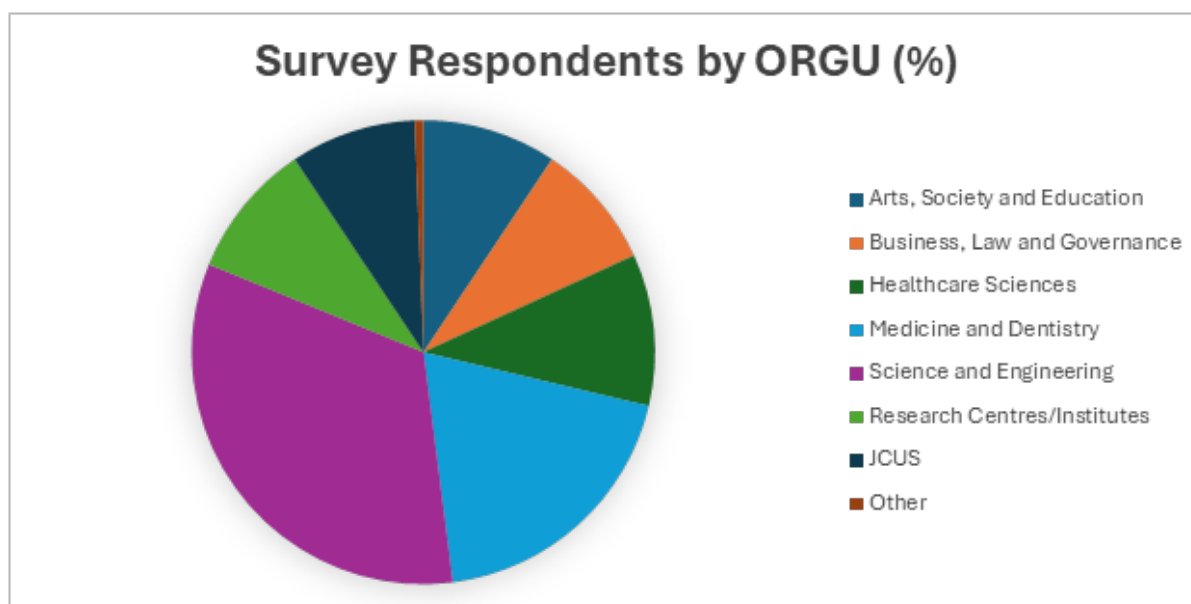
\*Percentages may not total exactly 100% due to rounding to the nearest decimal place

The highest proportion of respondents were researchers from the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) at 33 percent; followed by College of Medicine and Dentistry (CMD) at 19 percent. JCU research

centres and institutes, the College of Arts, Society and Education (CASE) and the College of Business, Law and Governance (CBLG) were equally represented with 9 percent of respondents each.

College or Research Centre	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Arts, Society and Education	16	9.4
Business, Law and Governance	15	8.8
Healthcare Sciences	18	10.5
Medicine and Dentistry	33	19.3
Science and Engineering	57	33.3
Research Centres/Institutes	16	9.4
JCUS	15	8.8
Other	1	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100*</b>

\*Percentages may not total exactly 100% due to rounding to the nearest decimal place



### **Open Access Pathways**

Green refers to making research openly available by depositing a version of the manuscript in an institutional repository without incurring any cost to the author. In contrast, gold open access involves paying a fee to the publisher upfront so that the final published article is freely accessible. Almost half of all respondents (46 percent) declared they were comfortable with explaining at least one open access colour to a colleague. The majority of these respondents identified themselves as familiar with both green and gold open access publishing. The remaining respondents (54 percent) were not familiar enough with any open access colours to explain them to a colleague.

Open Access Pathway	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Gold	64	37.4
Green	58	33.9
Diamond	18	10.5
Bronze	7	4.1
None	92	53.8

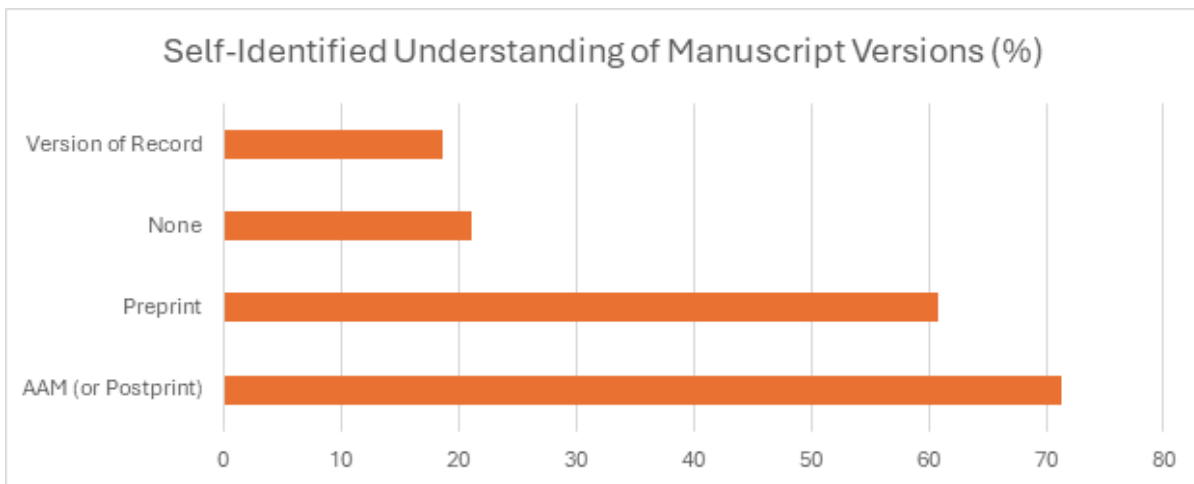
Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could select multiple options; percentages are calculated based on the total number of respondents rather than the total number of responses.

### Self-archiving

Self-archiving as a pathway to open access relies on using specific versions of an article. A total 61 percent of the 171 respondents identified themselves as familiar with the term “Preprint” to explain it to a colleague. Comparatively, 71 percent of respondents claimed familiarity with the term “Author Accepted Manuscript (or Postprint).” On the other hand, 21 percent did not feel suitably familiar with any of the self-archiving terms listed: Preprint, Author Accepted Manuscript, or Version of Record. We have some reservations about the level of confusion between the terms “Preprint”, “Author Accepted Manuscript” and “Version of Record,” which may be impacting responses here.

Self-archiving	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Version of Record	122	18.7
AAM (or Postprint)	36	71.3
Preprint	104	60.8
None	32	21.1

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could select multiple options; percentages are calculated based on the total number of respondents rather than the total number of responses.



### **Latest Article**

There were 120 respondents who identified that their latest article is freely available through open access.

<b>Is latest article open access?</b>	<b>No. of responses</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	120	70.2
No	28	16.4
Other	23	13.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100*</b>

\*Percentages may not total exactly 100% due to rounding to the nearest decimal place.

The primary reasons identified for selecting a particular journal ranged from: the aims and scope of the journal; to the ranking or impact factor; to the journal being free to publish open access. Just under half of all respondents (40 percent) took advantage of the Read and Publish Agreements to publish their article open access. By comparison, 22 percent were not aware of the pathway that had been used to make their last article open access.

<b>Pathway to open access</b>	<b>No. of responses</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
JCU's Read and Publish Agreements	68	39.8
Diamond Open Access	18	10.5
Green Open Access	7	4.1
Gold Open Access	25	14.6
Not Open Access	15	8.8
Other	23	22.2
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100*</b>

\*Percentages may not total exactly 100% due to rounding to the nearest decimal place.

### **Overall Open Access Publishing**

Moving onto a broader overview of open access publishing among JCU researchers, 85 percent of respondents identified themselves as having published open access at some point in the course of their career using at least one of the four pathways identified by the survey. The most common pathway to open access used by JCU researchers was JCU's Read and Publish Agreements, with 57 percent of respondents having used the agreements at some point. Meanwhile, 27 percent identified themselves as having deposited an author accepted manuscript into JCU's institutional repository, ResearchOnline@JCU at some point in their career.

<b>Open Access Options</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Using JCU's Read and Publish Agreements	98	57.3
Choosing a journal that is free to publish in and free to read (Diamond OA)	75	43.9
Depositing an Author Accepted Manuscript into ResearchOnline (Green OA)	46	26.9
Paying an article processing charge to publish open access (Gold OA)	71	41.5
I don't know	13	7.6
I have not published any articles open access	12	7.0

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could select multiple options; percentages are calculated based on the total number of respondents rather than the total number of responses.

The majority of researchers (73 percent) responded that they encountered barriers in trying to publish open access, with the predominant barrier identified as being the high cost of open access publishing. Other obstacles described by respondents cumulatively represented 27 percent who claimed to experience barriers to open access publishing.

<b>Barriers to open access publishing</b>	<b>No. of responses</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Cost of publishing open access	104	60.8
Journal not in Read and Publish Agreements	6	3.5
Lack of quality open access journals	4	2.3
RPA quota being reached	8	4.7
Difficulties in using RPAs	3	1.8
No barriers	46	26.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>100</b>

### **Communications**

The overwhelming majority of respondents at 88 percent stated a preference for receiving updates about open access research through emails from the Library. This was followed by a smaller proportion (33 percent) indicating a preference to finding relevant information on the JCU Library website. There is work to be done promoting the use of Viva Engage and SharePoint as avenues for communication, with 3 percent and 6 percent identifying these as preferred pathways respectively.

<b>Preferred Means of Communication</b>	<b>No. of responses</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Viva Engage	5	2.9
Other	6	3.5
Social media platforms	10	5.9
Sharepoint	11	6.4
JCU newsletters	28	16.4
JCU Library website	56	32.8
Emails from JCU Library	150	87.7

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could select multiple options; percentages are calculated based on the total number of respondents rather than the total number of responses.

### **Digital Platforms**

While 15 percent of respondents indicated that they did not use any of the digital platforms specified, 48 percent preferred to use LinkedIn with another 36 percent favoured The Conversation to learn about new developments in research and scholarship.

<b>Digital Platforms</b>	<b>No. of Responses</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Bluesky	9	5.3
ChatGPT	13	7.6
Facebook	23	13.5
Instagram	11	6.4
LinkedIn	82	48.0
X (Twitter)	7	4.1
The Conversation	61	35.7
ResearchGate	2	1.2
Substack	4	2.3
I don't use digital platforms	26	15.2
Other	28	16.4

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could select multiple options; percentages are calculated based on the total number of respondents rather than the total number of responses.

### **Final Comments**

Respondents were asked to add any final comments on open access publishing. Fifty-nine respondents did so with nearly half of the comments being related to JCU's Read and Publish Agreements. A number of researchers requested increased support for open access publishing in general. A selection of representative comments is presented under three broad headings:

- Appreciation of the Read and Publish Agreements
- Lack of understanding of how the Agreements work
- Request for more support with open access publishing and better understanding the Read and Publish Agreements

### **Conclusion**

The findings will help provide further direction to the open access support the Library provides in the form of services and resources including workshops. The identified gaps in the services and support that we currently provide will provide a focus for future support.

The survey attained a reasonable response rate at 17 percent with responses from all categories of researchers and across all academic units – colleges, research centres and institutes, and campuses. There was a higher proportion of responses from Higher Degree Research students than other categories, with many indicating that they were in the first year of their research degree and new to open access publishing and therefore unfamiliar with some of the terminology.

The results overall indicate that while researchers not familiar with all the pathways to open access, the majority have published open access at some point of their career, and that the Read and Publish Agreement pathway was the one used most to publish open access. A third of respondents indicated they had taken the green open access route by depositing an author accepted manuscript into the ResearchOnline@JCU institutional repository, at some point in their careers.

### **Recommendations**

In addition to continue running open access publishing workshops for both staff as well as Higher Degree Research students through the Graduate Research School, the Library would:

- Identify ways to promote better understanding of the range of open access pathways among researchers
- Identify college-specific opportunities to promote understanding and benefits of open access
- Work with researchers in promoting a clearer understanding of the Read and Publish Agreements
- Include diamond journal publishing as a strategy for open access publishing
- Identify new and innovative ways to promote open access publishing opportunities to the University community
- Individually contact those researchers who have requested further support

## Appendix

### JCU Library Open Access Survey 2025 – survey questions

#### A. About You

##### Question 1

What stage of your academic career are you in?  
(required)

- Higher Degree Research students (includes PhDs, professional doctorate and MPhil students)
- Early Career Researcher (academics in the first 5 years since being awarded their PhD)
- Mid Career Researcher (academics that are 5-15 years since being awarded their PhD)
- Senior Researcher (academics who have held a PhD for more than 15 years)

##### Question 2

What college are you primarily affiliated with?  
(required)

- Arts Society & Education (CASE)
- Medicine & Dentistry (CMD)
- JCU research centre or institute
- Business Law & Governance (CBLG)
- Science & Engineering (CSE)
- Other affiliation
- Healthcare Sciences (CHS)
- JCU Singapore

#### B. About Open Access Pathways

##### Question 3

Open access pathways are often described using colours. Which of the following colours of open access would you feel confident to explain to a colleague? (Select all that apply)  
(required)

- Gold Open Access
- Green Open Access
- Diamond / Platinum Open Access
- Bronze Open Access
- None of the above

##### Question 4

Self-archiving as a pathway to open access relies on using specific versions of an article. Which of the following publishing terms would you feel confident to explain to a colleague? (Select all that apply)  
(required)

- Preprint
- Author Accepted Manuscript (or Postprint)
- Version of Record
- None of the Above

### **C. About Your Most Recent Article**

#### **Question 5**

What was the name of the journal that your most recent article was published in?

#### **Question 6**

What were the primary reasons you chose to submit to this particular journal?

#### **Question 7**

- Is your most recent article currently open access?
- Yes
- No
- I don't know

#### **Question 8**

- If your article is open access, which pathway did you use to make it freely available?
- The journal was included in JCU's Read and Publish Agreements
- I paid a fee to publish open access
- The journal was free to publish in and free to read
- I deposited an author accepted manuscript into the ResearchOnline Repository
- My most recent article is not open access
- I don't know

### **D. About Your Experiences with Open Access**

#### **Question 9**

Thinking more broadly to all the articles that you have published in the course of your career, which of the following pathways have you used to make your work open access? (Select all that apply)  
(required)

- Using JCU's Read and Publish Agreements
- Paying an article processing charge to publish open access
- Choosing a journal that is free to publish in and free to read
- Depositing an Author Accepted Manuscript into ResearchOnline
- I have not published any articles open access
- I don't know

#### **Question 10**

What barriers have you experienced with making your research publications open access in the past?  
(required)

## **E. About Open Access Research**

### **Question 11**

What is your preferred method for being notified by the JCU Library about open access news, workshops, resources or events?

(required)

- Emails from the JCU Library
- Viva Engage
- Sharepoint
- Articles in JCU newsletters such as Research Roundup
- Information on the JCU Library website
- Social media and other digital platforms
- Other (please specify)

### **Question 12**

Which of the following digital platforms is your preferred option to learn about about new developments in research and scholarship?

(required)

- The Conversation
- LinkedIn
- Facebook
- Instagram
- X (Twitter)
- Bluesky
- Substack
- ChatGPT
- I don't use digital platforms
- Other

### **Question 13**

Do you have any final comments on open access?

### **Question 14**

If you would like us to follow up with a discussion about the open access pathways available to you, please include your email address below.

