

Major funding boost for UK's open research agenda

A consortium of 18 universities including Southampton – members of the [UK Reproducibility Network](#) – has received significant funding to drive uptake of open research practices across the sector, furthering the UK's position at the forefront of rigorous and reproducible research.

The Bristol-led project is worth £8.5M over five years and includes £4.5M from the Research England Development (RED) Fund.

Open research ensures transparency across the research lifecycle, promoting rigour, reproducibility, and public trust in research. The benefits of open research practices for improving the quality and integrity of research have been widely documented, and are recognised by the [UK Government R&D Roadmap](#) as contributing to improving the culture of research.

The project represents a major strategic investment by Research England that is intended to ensure the UK remains at the forefront of the open research agenda and continues to generate globally leading research of the highest quality. It builds on the [recent announcement](#) by the Science Minister regarding UKRI's new open access policy.

This funding will drive uptake of open research practices across the UK, through the delivery of training and evaluation of its impact. Initially the project will be delivered across institutions that are part of the UK Reproducibility Network. The network is expected to grow over the five years of the award, making training and material available more widely across the sector.

The Chair of the UKRN Steering Group, [Professor Marcus Munafò](#) from the University of Bristol's School of Psychological Science, said:

"Open research practices – making as much of the research process available for re-use and scrutiny as possible – have the potential to accelerate the advancement of knowledge and improve the quality of the research we produce. This project will allow us to drive the uptake of open research practices across UK institutions and ensure this is done in a consistent and coordinated way. What is most exciting is that it represents a collaborative approach – multiple institutions working together to ensure the sector as a whole benefits."

[David Sweeney](#), Executive Chair of Research England, said:

"We know that increasing the transparency of the research process supports higher standards of research integrity, and drives up the quality and reach of research. Research England has supported the UK Reproducibility Network since its inception. We are delighted to fund this project, which will enable the network to scale up its activities, and accelerate the uptake of open research practices across the sector."

Professor Mark Spearing, Dr Alison Knight (Head of Research Integrity and Governance, and UKRN institutional lead at Southampton), and Dr Christian Bokhove (UKRN Local Network Lead at Southampton) agree:

"We are delighted for Southampton be involved in this important project as part of efforts to improve open research practices across the HEI sector. Open research is a key pillar of the work we and others do

at the University to support both the quality and integrity of our research, as well as an important factor to help embed and sustain a positive research culture.”

Further information

The [UK Reproducibility Network \(UKRN\)](#) is a national peer-led consortium that aims to ensure the UK retains its place as a centre for world-leading research. We do this by investigating the factors that contribute to robust research, promoting [training activities](#), and disseminating best practice. We also work collaboratively with various [external stakeholders](#) to ensure coordination of efforts across the sector.

UKRN is coordinated by a [Steering Group](#) and supported by an [Advisory Board](#), with representation across the UK through researcher-led [local networks](#) at several institutions, many of which have formally [joined UKRN](#) as institutional members.

The project consortium includes Cardiff University, Keele University, King’s College London, Newcastle University, Oxford Brookes University, Royal Veterinary College, University College London, University of Aberdeen, University of Bristol, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, University of Liverpool, University of Manchester, University of Reading, University of Sheffield, University of Southampton, University of Surrey, and University of Wolverhampton.

The [Research England Development \(RED\) Fund](#) commits up to £27 million in annual funding. It supports projects that aid the development and interaction of the UK’s higher education research and knowledge exchange (KE) activity in line with Government and UKRI priorities.