Postgraduate researcher (PGR) Library checklist

This checklist highlights Library advice, information and resources designed to help you succeed as a postgraduate researcher at The Open University. It is important to note that some services listed may still be affected by Covid-19 restrictions. Please check the links below for further information and updates regarding service availability.

Welcome

☐ Attend a Library online training session as part of your University induction
The library’s training sessions will introduce you to the OU library, show you how to use online resources effectively, and help with finding resources. Training sessions run periodically and cover topics such as “Reference management tools – an introduction”, “Smarter searching with library databases” and “Using Library Search for your assignment”.
https://www.open.ac.uk/library/training-and-events

☐ Attend training workshops offered by the Library Research Support Team
Topics for training sessions include research data management, open access publishing, ORCIDs, and data sharing.
http://www.open.ac.uk/library-research-support/research-support-team/training

☐ Visit the Library website to explore library resources
The Library website is your gateway to the extensive library content provided by The Open University. Use the Library Search box to start searching for resources such as ebooks, databases, journals, or journal articles. Alternatively, use the Library Resources tab to browse for resources. Most of our content is available online. http://www.open.ac.uk/library/

☐ Learn about our 24/7 Chat to a Librarian Service
Use our webchat service if you need assistance with library resources or services. Links to Chat to a Librarian can be found on every page of the Library website.

☐ Discover key services for postgraduate researchers
The Services for You page on the Library website contains links to all the key services that postgraduate researchers need. http://www.open.ac.uk/library/services/researchers

Visiting the Library building

☐ Planning your visit to the Library and COVID safety measures
After a period of closure due to COVID-19, Library Services announced the reopening of the Library building for Open University staff and Postgraduate Researchers, for access to study spaces and print materials, on weekdays from Monday 6th September 2021. Access to the building will be by OU security pass (swipe card) only.

Library staff will be located on the ground floor to welcome customers and assist with library-related enquiries between 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday. Print books on the first-floor shelves and print journals on the second-floor shelves will be available for access. If you want to access something specific, please check Library Search (found on the home page of the Library website) first as some of our collections are in restricted areas. Currently there is not access to AV materials.

You can find the Library reopening news story on the Library intranet site https://openuniv.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet-library/Pages/Library-building-reopening.aspx and updates to services can be found on the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) notice of service availability page. https://www.open.ac.uk/library/node/98698
Further steps

☐ How to join the Open University Library
Find out how to join the Library and borrow, renew, and return items at Walton Hall.
https://www.open.ac.uk/library/borrowing-at-the-walton-hall-library

☐ Suggest new titles
Can’t find a book in our Library collection? Open University postgraduate research students may suggest new titles for the library stock. https://www.open.ac.uk/library/library-resources/suggest-new-titles

☐ Set up Google Scholar to link to full text resources provided by Library Services
Instructions for setting up Google Scholar are available on the Library website.
http://www.open.ac.uk/library/help-and-support/access-eresources-using-google-scholar

☐ Check out LEAN Library and Browzine tools
The LEAN Library access browser extension will alert you whenever you are on a website that The Open University has a subscription for, helping you to find the content you want with a single click!
https://www.open.ac.uk/library/services/library-access-browser-extension

Browzine offers Library users a different way to browse content by subject across a range of journal publications, allowing you to build a personal bookshelf of favourite journals, and also to save articles to other services such as EndNote and Dropbox. https://www.open.ac.uk/library/library-resources/browzine-for-ios-and-android

☐ Find out about the SCONUL Access scheme
The SCONUL Access scheme allows you to access other libraries near you.

☐ Find out about our Document Delivery and Inter-library Loan services
You can use the Document Delivery and Inter-library loan services to get items that the Library doesn’t have in stock.

☐ Use our print research methods and academic writing books
Covering a wide variety of topics, they are on the second floor of the Library building (near The Park) and are available on a reference basis (i.e., they cannot be taken out of the library) in order to maximise the number of people who can use them. Alternatively, the SAGE Research Methods online database is a great resource for beginner and advanced researchers alike. Find it via the Library Resources Databases webpage.
https://www.open.ac.uk/library/library-resources/databases?filter=A-Z%3AS&collection=126#resources

☐ Learn about tools that will help you manage your references

☐ Write a data management plan
Data management plans help formulate how you’ll store and manage your research data throughout your project. Research data is the evidence on which researchers build their analytic or other work, collected, observed, or created for the purposes of analysis to produce and validate original research results. Examples are images, video, and audio; survey results and interview transcripts; experimental observations; text corpuses; notebooks and lab books; models and software. http://www.open.ac.uk/library-research-support/research-data-management/data-management-plans

☐ Read about the potential benefits of sharing your research data
There is lots of information and guidance on data sharing on the Library Research Support website.
http://www.open.ac.uk/library-research-support/research-data-management/why-share-your-research-data
Find out about OU requirements regarding your thesis
We recommend you think about securing permission for any third party copyrighted material early on. http://www.open.ac.uk/library-research-support/open-access-publishing/theses
Take a look at the Research Skills site (OU login required) to help you make a start. https://learn2.open.ac.uk/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=1408031
Follow this activity to learn about different forms of plagiarism and how to avoid them during the production of your thesis (OU login required). https://learn1.open.ac.uk/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=21465

Find out about Open Access publishing
Open Access aims to make the research process more transparent and published outputs from research accessible to all. Making research outputs Open Access can increase their readership and impact. http://www.open.ac.uk/library-research-support/open-access-publishing
Research funders increasingly require research data and published outputs to be made Open Access – if your research degree is funded please check our list of funder requirements. http://www.open.ac.uk/library-research-support/open-access-publishing/open-access-policies

Familiarise yourself with ORO (Open Research Online)
ORO http://oro.open.ac.uk/ is The Open University’s open access repository of research publications. It contains records of research outputs published by OU staff and postgraduate research students and theses of former research students. Many of the ORO records also have the full-text of the publications attached. All postgraduate research students are required to deposit the full-text of their thesis in ORO and a DataCite digital object identifier (DOI) will be created which provides a permanent, citable web link.

Find out about ORDO (Open Research Data Online)
ORDO https://ordo.open.ac.uk/ is The Open University’s research data repository, where Open University researchers can upload their data for long-term preservation and, where appropriate, sharing e.g., at the end of a project or supporting a publication. Data stored in ORDO will be kept for a minimum of ten years after project completion. Published data will be given a DataCite digital object identifier (DOI), providing a permanent, citable web link.

Investigate tools that help you find Open Access versions of research publications
Take a look at Open Access Button https://openaccessbutton.org/ and Unpaywall https://unpaywall.org/ There is also CORE https://core.ac.uk/ and EndNote Click, formerly known as Kopernio https://kopernio.com/

Set up ORCID
ORCID is a unique digital identifier that helps ensure you get credit for your published work. http://www.open.ac.uk/library-research-support/researcher-visibility/orcid

Keep in touch
Email library-research-support@open.ac.uk
Website http://www.open.ac.uk/library-research-support/
Blog http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/the_orb/
Twitter @OU_Library