Northumbria Research Link

Embedding ORCID in researcher workflows and institutional systems

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I would like to share some tips about how we are ensuring ORCID adoption in researcher workflows and institutional systems at Northumbria University. Our scholarly publications team, with one librarian (me) and two full-time equivalent library assistants, provide support for anyone considered research active at Northumbria, largely our 5,000 postgraduate students and 1,385 faculty (what we would refer to as "academic staff" in the UK). We are very focused on growing our research activity, both in terms of the quantity of research we produce and the quality of that research. With use of the ORCID iD, we can better ensure we are capturing this growth. Here are a few strategies we have found to be not only successful, but sustainable.

1. Sell the benefits of ORCID to the individual, not the institution.

We let our researchers know that, as a unique identifier, an ORCID can ensure they receive proper attribution — and thus credit! — for their research publications and other outputs. We tell them to sign up for an ORCID as they are the owners of their scholarly record and their ORCID will stay with them for the length of their career, wherever they may study or work. They understand that it is much more convenient for them to sign up now than to do it later and have to retrospectively populate their ORCID record.

2. Include the ORCID message in other training.

We integrate ORCID into our existing library and research skills training programs that cover open access, research metrics, managing your online identity and promoting your research, among other topics. In this way, we will likely expose individuals to ORCID at least once and hopefully multiple times as they attend more training.

3. Be visible.

We also started to promote ORCID at other university events, such as our annual research conference for faculty and postgraduate research students. We set up a booth in the circulation area with a couple of laptops and talked to people about ORCID, registering them on the spot if they were interested. At that particular event, we had over 100 new registrations! We also put up ORCID posters in our research workspace at the library and sent flyers out to faculty.

We spoke to our research committees about ORCID to listen to any concerns they might have and eventually get their endorsement. We could then speak to their faculty with the research committee's backing, or better yet, have them cascade information to their colleagues.

4. Embed ORCID in internal systems.

We included a field for the ORCID iD in our student record system (SITS). We have just developed a new research portal in SITS to bring all aspects of paperwork relating to a PhD onto an online system from project approval to submission for examination. One aim was that students would not be able to pass and receive project approvals in first year without having an ORCID in the system (if they did not object to registering for any reason).

We then continued to roll this out to students who were farther along, e.g., a final year student cannot progress to examination without an ORCID or at least having a conversation with their supervisor about why they are choosing not to include in ORCID.

We are preparing for the likelihood that our national impact assessment, the Research Excellence Framework, will start requiring ORCIDs from our faculty. Therefore, we are including ORCID as a field within Pure [4], the current research information system we are implementing at Northumbria. It holds our information about publications, grants, postgraduate supervision, and even human resources data for our faculty.

We also added ORCID as a secondary identifier in our EPrints institutional repository. This was long before there was an EPrints plugin that authenticated the ID or could pull in publications from the ORCID profile. It was just a very simple way of us being able to store an ID in a university system.

5. Have a clear point of contact at the library for queries about ORCID.

With such a small team in this size of university, we have to work very closely with other support services, whether that is our Research and Innovation Services, the Graduate School, Planning or other teams in the library, such as Skills Development or Collection Management. We try to get as many people as possible talking about ORCID, but we find it does help to have a single point of contact, particularly if you are asking people in other areas of the university to embed ORCID in their training. They need to know that they have one person to come back to who knows exactly what is going on in all areas of the university and that they will be able to get their questions answered.