



Curtin University



# Faculty of Humanities

2020 Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarships

## Strategic Project Profile

**PROJECT TITLE:** Libraries and Open Access

**FIELD OF RESEARCH CODE:** 2001

**PROJECT SYNOPSIS:** Open Access (OA) is quickly becoming a 'gold-standard' for research quality internationally. A growing number of major research funders now require the outputs of the research that they support to be made OA. University libraries are playing a vital role in supporting this transition to open access. But in spite of early investment in library-based OA repositories, Australia continues to lag behind the United States and Western Europe in relation to the proportion of publications that its researchers make openly available.

This project explores the intersection between cultural and implementation challenges facing libraries in Australia as they work to support a transition towards OA for research publications and data. Identifying practices and challenges specific to the Australian context, as well as opportunities to learn from international best practice in this space, will be a particular focus. Questions that the project will seek to answer include:

- \* What do Australian librarians think researchers are doing in relation to OA?
- \* What are Australian researchers actually doing?
- \* How do the choices that Australian researchers make about where to deposit the OA version of their work compare to the choices made by researchers elsewhere in the world?
- \* What do librarians think the barriers to open access are?

- \* What do researchers think the barriers to open access are?
- \* How do each of these groups frame their discussion of those barriers?
- \* Where do non-institutional repositories and commercially supported services fit in? For example, are researchers using subject repositories (e.g. such as SSRN, H-Commons, or the Australian Policy Observatory) instead of institutional repositories? Are Universities choosing to pay for data deposit services like FigShare? Why?

The project will draw on the large data sets and established data capabilities developed as part of the COKI project. This data provides new opportunities to explore patterns of repository choice and deposition at large scale, and to compare Australian patterns with those found elsewhere in the world. Quantitative approaches will be combined with qualitative perspectives, including surveys, interviews and ethnographic approaches.

#### **FEASIBILITY AND RESOURCING – DESCRIPTION OF THE SUPPORT THIS PROJECT WILL RECEIVE:**

The project will draw on the large data sets and established data capabilities developed as part of the Curtin Open Knowledge Initiative. COKI data and the digital infrastructure and dashboards developed by the COKI team over the last two years provide opportunities to explore patterns of use across Australian repositories at unprecedented scale. This data also makes international comparison possible. The multidisciplinary COKI team are in a unique position to support PhD projects that combine quantitative and qualitative perspectives, and to support a student in engagement with Australian and international library communities.

#### **WHAT MINIMAL ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS EXPECTED BY THE CANDIDATE BE COMPETITIVE:**

- \* A relevant Honours or Masters qualification
- \* An interest in open access
- \* Experience in policy and practice related to open access and international repositories

#### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT/ PROGRAM FOR THE ENROLLING SCHOOL OR INSTITUTION:**

The COKI project, which this PhD scholarship would be attached to, has been identified as a key strategic research priority for the school: representing a substantial investment by the Research Office at Curtin.

The proposed PhD project will make a substantial new contribution to knowledge in its own right; and will also help to deepen the University's larger program of work on Open Knowledge Institutions by leveraging large-scale data sets, data collection, interpretation and visualisation infrastructure, and the unique, multi-disciplinary capabilities of the COKI research team.

**Students are advised to contact the Project Lead listed below prior to submission of their scholarship application to discuss their suitability to be involved in this strategic project.**

#### **PROJECT LEAD CONTACT**

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