Developing the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Open Research Strategy

How a globally recognised framework was translated into locally meaningful policy and practice

Veronica Cano
Open data and REF manager
College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS), University of Edinburgh

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Why a college-level strategy?

Open research awareness and adoption at University of Edinburgh has been skewed towards the sciences. CAHSS covers a wide range of research cultures, methods, and outputs — many not well served by science-led models of openness.

2018

Previous strategy — significantly out of date

~70%

CAHSS articles in gold OA via large legacy publishers

4

New strategic areas for 2026–29

The strategy responds to major policy changes: UKRI requirements, the University's Rights Retention Strategy, research data policy, and emerging work on research culture and research ethics.

Building on the UNESCO Recommendation

> *Open science is about making sure not only that scientific knowledge is accessible but also that the production of that knowledge itself is inclusive, equitable and sustainable.*

Built on values of quality, integrity, equity, fairness, diversity and inclusiveness — and six guiding principles:

- Transparency, scrutiny and critique
- Equality of opportunity
- Responsibility, respect and accountability
- Collaboration, participation and inclusion
- Flexibility
- Sustainability

The flexibility principle is especially important for CAHSS — there is no one-size-fits-all way to practise open research.

Four strategic areas

A Advocacy

Promote diverse approaches to openness. Champion bibliodiversity and non-commercial publishing. Recognise creative outputs, cultural materials, and diverse evidence as research data.

B Training & Education

Build competence and exchange good practice. Discipline-sensitive training including CARE principles and FAIR data. Support researchers at all career stages.

C Culture, Ethics & Integrity

Foster a diverse culture of open research. Address AI's impact on publishing, LLM training with open outputs, and questions of consent and attribution.

D Strategy & Environment

Develop an enabling policy environment. Align with university-wide and funder policies. Support long-form and diverse outputs beyond articles and conference papers.

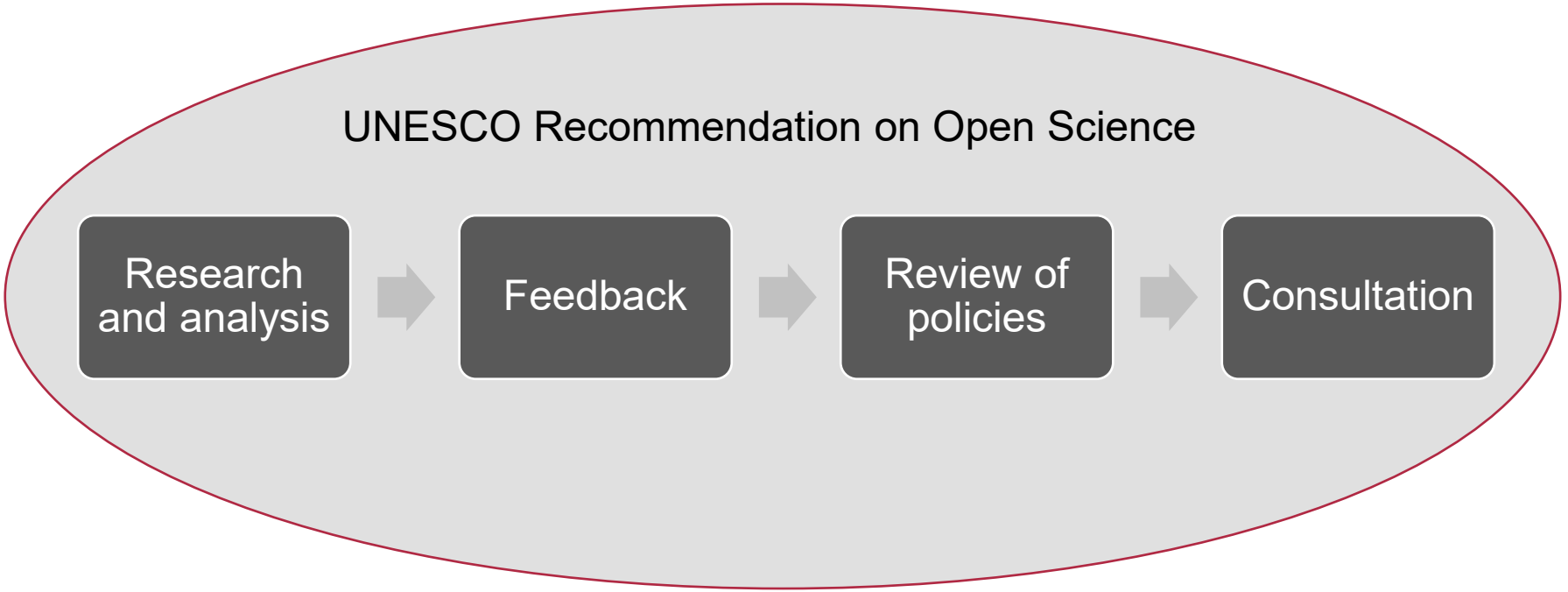
What makes this strategy different?

Rather than applying universal science-led norms, CAHSS explicitly addresses tensions between global open research mandates and disciplinary realities:

Universal open access mandates push towards gold OA via large publishers	⟷	CAHSS advocates for scholar-led, community-owned publishing to support bibliodiversity
FAIR principles and data sharing as the default expectation	⟷	Arts & humanities data includes novels, interviews, audio — with complex confidentiality and cultural access requirements

The strategy supports researchers in making contextually appropriate, ethically grounded decisions — openness is about responsibility, above policy.

Strategic Development Process



A model for translating global frameworks locally

The CAHSS Open Research Strategy 2026–29 demonstrates how the UNESCO Recommendation can be embedded at college level in a discipline-aware, equitable way.

- **Global principles need local translation —** One-size-fits-all open science does not serve arts, humanities and social sciences researchers.
- **Openness is about responsibility, not just policy —** The strategy foregrounds ethical, contextually grounded decision-making.
- **CAHSS can lead and shape the agenda —** Not only respond to it — scholars here are already engaging critically.
- **Next step —** An Action Plan developed with Schools, research groups and centres across the College.