



# Academic Libraries North Conference 2026: Call for Papers

## Reimagining Openness in Academic Libraries

### #ALN26

We invite you to submit a proposal for the 2026 ALN Conference, to be held online via Microsoft Teams on 24th June 2026 and in person on 6th July 2026 at the Dalton Building, Manchester Metropolitan University.

We welcome papers from all colleagues working within any institution, whether they are [ALN member institutions](#) or not. We encourage submissions from those who are looking to present for the first time and we particularly welcome submissions from people belonging to under-represented and marginalised communities and sectors, including but not limited to global majority and UK ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA+, those with disabilities and those who are neurodivergent. You do not need to come from an ALN institution to be able to present at **or** attend the conference.

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## Conference theme

### **What does “open” really mean in academic libraries today?**

Is it a philosophy, a policy, a practice—or a provocation?

In a landscape shaped by open access mandates, open research infrastructures, open educational resources, and open data, academic libraries are often positioned as champions of openness. But are we truly opening up, or simply reshaping the boundaries of control?

We invite submissions that challenge, disrupt, and reimagine the concept of openness in academic libraries, from all levels and all career stages. This is not a call for comfort zones. We want your boldest ideas, your critical reflections, your experiments, your successes, and your failures.

You can submit an abstract exploring any aspect of the topic, including, but not exclusive to, the following subthemes:

- Open Access/Open Research/Open Educational Resources
  - The effectiveness of Transformative Agreements
  - Engagement with academic staff to comply with OA mandates
  - How best to discover suitable OERs
  - Opening of more university/scholar-led publishing models to move away from established publishers
- Accessibility of resources
  - For people with disabilities
  - For library resources for non-campus-based students
  - Staff knowledge of accessibility requirements
  - Ensuring provision of alternative formats
  - Removing barriers to resources
- Other topics relating to openness
  - Open communication between library and users
  - Emotional/wellbeing openness
  - The challenges of openness for digital infrastructure, particularly in the face of AI
  - Physical openness of the library space
  - Openness of collaboration across teams and other institutions

We also welcome submissions that may fall outside of these themes but will still be of relevance and interest to our delegates and reflective of the overall theme of openness.

## Who can submit a proposal?

We welcome papers from all colleagues working within any institution, whether they are [ALN member institutions](#) or not. We encourage submissions from those who are looking to present for the first time.

Submissions are invited from individuals, as well as collaborative contributions from within one institution, across institutions or between an institution and an external partner.

## What types of paper can be submitted?

Proposals are welcome for the following formats:

- **Workshops (in person day)**
  - Workshops are the opportunity to engage and involve your audience in an interactive session which showcases your practice and thoughts on your openness topic. Workshops will be 50 minutes, including time for questions.
- **Short papers**
  - You can use the short paper format to discuss changes or developments in your practice or services, or to present the results of a research project. Short papers will be 20 minutes followed by 5 minutes for questions.
- **Lightning talks**
  - These are rapid presentations that should present your key ideas on a topic in a quick, clear and concise way. Lightning talks will be 10 minutes with time for questions at the end of the session.
- **Panel discussion**
  - Panel discussions will engage with a relevant theme and allow attendees to explore it from several angles and perspectives through the varied expertise of the panel. We encourage submissions with panellists from different institutions and sectors who can provide diverse views on the chosen topic. You should be able to facilitate the room and encourage audience participation and interaction. The panel should be made up of a maximum of 4 speakers plus a facilitator.
- **Wild card**
  - If your idea does not fit with any of the above formats, then submit your innovative wild card suggestion for consideration. Please give an indication of the length of time and any resources you may need.

The expectation is for papers, workshops and lightning talks to be presented live, but pre-recorded presentations will be considered for the online event. Please note that all content will need to comply with [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) at the time of the conference.

## How to submit a proposal

**Proposals should be submitted via [this form](#)** by 13<sup>th</sup> March 2026. They will be reviewed and selected by a panel of members of the conference committee. Decisions on proposals will be sent by no later than the 17th April 2026. Please note, there is a limit of two presenters per submission (except for panel discussions).

You will be asked to answer a short set of questions, which will be combined to form an abstract for the conference programme, if accepted.

## What are the selection criteria?

All proposals will be marked according to the following criteria:

1. Relevance of submission
  - o Does the submission address the themes of the conference?
2. Benefits to delegates
  - o Does the proposal state what attendees will gain from the session and why they should attend? If the proposal is for a workshop or other interactive session, then how does it seek to engage and interact with attendees?
3. Clarity of submission
  - o Is the submission clearly and unambiguously worded? Is the method of presentation appropriate for delivering the content?
4. Currency of submission
  - o Is your submission related to an up-to-date or current discussion or topic?

## Prices

Ticket prices for presenters will be discounted to:

Presenters (ALN members) Online - £30

Presenters (ALN members) In-person - £75

Presenters (Non-ALN members) Online - £40

Presenters (Non-ALN members) In-person - £110

For full information on pricing see Eventbrite (accessible from 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026 when registrations open) or the ALN Conference [website](#). If you are chosen to present, please remember you will need to book your place for the conference date you are presenting on!

## Help and support

We understand that submitting a proposal can be a daunting task! We have created this [resource](#) to support you when developing your proposal. This is aimed in particular at first-time presenters, but everyone is welcome to view it. *It will give you an idea of what ALN is looking for from conference contributors and provide you with top tips for writing conference submissions and presenting at the ALN conference.*

If you have any queries or questions about submitting a proposal, please contact [alnconferenceteam@gmail.com](mailto:alnconferenceteam@gmail.com). The conference committee is keen to support colleagues with their proposals, so you are welcome to get in touch for a friendly and supportive chat about your submission.

**Academic Libraries North 2026 Conference Committee**

**Conference:** [Academic Libraries North Conference 2026](#)

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