Research Councils UK Open Access Practitioner Group
Terms of Reference - Draft

1. Background

In March 2015, Professor Sir Bob Burgess delivered his independent review of the implementation of the RCUK Open Access policy after the first year of its introduction. One of the main recommendations of the review was:

“2.5 The establishment of a joint practitioners working group to bring together representatives from the higher education sector, other research funders, learned societies and publishers in order to address this issue in relation to RCUK policy. Rather than duplicate existing groups in this space, the group should be comprised of representatives who are closely involved in the practicalities of implementation of the policy.”

On accepting the recommendations of the Review, RCUK Executive Group agreed that a practitioner group should be established.

2. Purpose of the Practitioner Group

The purpose of the Practitioner Group is to bring together representatives from the sector who are working on the implementation of the RCUK Open Access policy to share best practice, discuss issues and provide sector insight on particular aspects of the policy with the aim of improving its implementation. Where needed, other funders, learned societies and publishers will also be invited to be part of the group.

3. Main responsibilities

The Practitioner Group will:

- Sharing best practice on implementation of the RCUK Open Access Policy across the sector.
- Advising RCUK on how implementation of the policy might be improved.

Specific areas for advice include:

- Further development of processes, mechanisms and data standards for collection of compliance monitoring data;
- Communication of the policy to ensure clarity, including alignment with other funders’ policies, and to articulate the benefits of open access;
- Further development of the policy guidance, FAQs;
- Collecting evidence from the sector on the use and impact of embargos;
- Collecting evidence from the sector on the use and impact of licences.
- Gathering evidence from the sector on the overall benefits of the policy.
4. Membership

The Practitioner Group is an advisory body making recommendations to the RCUK Champion for Open Access, Professor Duncan Wingham and the RCUK Strategic Executive. The group will be chaired by Alexandra Saxon, Associate Director Policy and Analysis, Research Councils UK.

Membership of the Practitioner Group will be drawn from the HEI sector with a good representation of the different types of institution that make up the sector. An invitation for nominations will be issued via the RCUK website and representatives appointed to the group to ensure this balance of representation. Should a member of the group step down, a representative offering a similar sector perspective will be sought.

In contributing to discussions at meetings representatives should not only represent their institution’s view but also the perspective of their part of the sector.

Where discussion would benefit from the input of other funders, learned societies, or publishers, appropriate representatives will be invited to attend.

In order to ensure continuity at meetings, the use of deputies is not allowed.

5. Frequency of meetings

The full Practitioner Group will meet at least quarterly and more frequently if business requires it. Where there are work-streams that need more timely progression, these may meet outside of the normal meeting schedule.

The group is time limited and will be dissolved once its work has been done and the issues addressed. The role of the group and its effectiveness will be reviewed at the point of the next independent review currently scheduled for 2017.

6. Minutes and meeting papers

The RCUK Executive Directorate will provide support to the meetings of the Practitioners Group and will take the minutes of the meetings. The minutes, recording key points of discussions, decisions made and actions will be made available via the RCUK website.

Where practicable, meeting papers will be circulated at least five working days before the meeting.

Terms of Reference agreed by RCUK Champion for Open Access, March 2016.