

UKRI Open Access Principles and High Level Policy

Summary

This statement articulates UK Research and Innovation's high level policy and common principles around Open Access. These principles reaffirm the open access policies of the REF and the research councils, and will inform the development of UKRI's policy for Open Access, the UKRI Open Access review and wider UKRI policy development in open research.

UKRI Open Access principles:

1. The outputs of publicly funded research in the UK should be widely and freely accessible as soon as possible.
2. The costs of scholarly communication should be a legitimate and embedded part of research funding as a whole.
3. Stakeholders in the scholarly communications system should work together to provide a sustainable means to disseminate and validate the full range of research outputs.
4. Research outputs should be available with a licence that allows maximum re-use.
5. Open access policy should align and assist with the development of a research system that facilitates 'openness'. This includes opening up access to publications, research data, research methods and metrics.
6. UKRI, together with the UK HE Funding Bodies in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, should work towards a consistent policy framework for Open Access.

Implementation

(i) Scope

7. These principles will apply to journal articles and conference proceedings resulting from UKRI programme project funding and/or outputs submitted for assessment of research excellence via the REF, and Innovate UK funding where appropriate. In the long term, we will seek to encourage open access to as many types of research outputs as possible.

(ii) UKRI requirements for current OA policies

8. Outputs as defined above can fulfil policy requirements through either the publisher making articles freely available (the gold OA route), or by the author depositing in a freely-accessible repository (the green OA route). The routes available are defined as:
 - a. Gold OA allows immediate access to the final version of an output, with a licence to allow maximum re-use. This may be subject to a payment being made to the publisher.
 - b. Green OA is delivered by depositing the final peer-reviewed research output in an electronic archive (repository). The green route allows access to the research output to be granted either immediately, or after an agreed embargo period. Deposited outputs should carry a licence that allows maximum re-use.

9. UKRI expects the deposit of the final accepted manuscript (otherwise known as the 'author manuscript', or 'final author version', or 'post print') for outputs that are meeting policy requirements through the green OA mechanism. UKRI encourages deposit as soon as possible once the final accepted manuscript becomes available. It is permissible for outputs to be 'closed' deposit if under embargo restrictions.
10. A range of repositories are available to the researcher. Some are operated by the researcher's institution and others are shared or subject repositories. We expect deposit of outputs in an appropriate repository dependent on funding and/or assessment requirements.
11. UKRI supports author freedom, as researchers may decide the publication venue. The policies have established maximum embargo periods/lengths, sensitive to disciplinary differences.
 - a. We encourage institutions to make outputs accessible within the shortest timeframe possible.
 - b. Where the most appropriate publication for the output may not comply with UKRI policy, measures are in place to support compliance either through funding available or exceptions to policy requirements.
12. Policy requirements are sensitive to copyright, and the sustainability of the publication system. We encourage the use of licences that permit maximum re-use.

(iii) Reporting and compliance for current policies

13. UKRI supports the following requirements to encourage full implementation of OA:
 - a. Regular reporting of project funding, reporting on the use of block grant funding to pay APCs. This is covered by existing terms and conditions.
 - b. To be eligible for REF 2021, outputs must comply with the REF OA policy. Policy exceptions apply only where compliance is not possible.