UK Research and Innovation

UKRI Open Access Policy – Frequently Asked Questions

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Purpose of this FAQ

This FAQ provides supplementary information about the UKRI Open Access Policy. Please also refer to the core requirements and guidance on UKRI's website at:

- UKRI Open Access Policy
- Publishing your findings

Information about the implementation of the policy can be found at shaping our open access policy.

This FAQ will be updated regularly with new questions and current information.

If you cannot find an answer to your question from these resources or your research organisation, please contact openresearch@ukri.org.

A. Scope of the policy

A1. What research publications are in-scope of the policy?

Publications in-scope of the policy are defined in the UKRI Open Access Policy.

A2. Does the policy apply to UKRI staff?

Yes, when the research publication acknowledges funding from UKRI and its councils, this includes in-scope outputs from staff at UKRI institutes, units and facilities.

A3. Does the policy apply to UKRI-funded studentships?

The policy applies to in-scope research articles arising from UKRI Training Grants as these need to acknowledge our funding. Monographs, book chapters and edited collections arising from training grants are exempt, as detailed in the UKRI Open Access Policy. Training grants include grants for studentships and funding specifically for the training and development of researchers.

A4. Does the policy apply to publications from grants awarded before the policy start date and closed grants?

The policy applies to a publication arising from pre-existing and closed awards if it is an in-scope research article submitted for publication on or after 1 April 2022, or an in-scope monograph, book chapter or edited collection published on or after 1 January 2024.

A5. If a publication is co-authored with collaborators who are not funded by UKRI, or the research being reported was only part-funded by UKRI, does it need to comply with the policy?

Yes. In-scope publications that need to acknowledge UKRI funding are required to comply with the policy. UKRI award holders should be clear on funder requirements they are subject to when agreeing collaborations.

A6. Does the policy apply to researchers not funded by UKRI but who use UKRI-funded infrastructure and equipment?

While UKRI encourages findings from all research it supports to be made open access, the policy is not mandated where UKRI funding has indirectly contributed to a research publication, for example, equipment or facilities funded by UKRI.

However, research performing organisations in receipt of the UKRI open access block grant can use their discretion regarding use of block grant funding for publication types that ordinarily are in scope of the policy, where indirect UKRI funding has formed a significant part of the research.

A7. Are data articles or articles that are focused on describing a protocol or method in scope of the UKRI Open Access Policy?

No. The scope of the policy applies to: "Peer-reviewed research articles, including reviews and conference papers, that are accepted for final publication in either a journal, conference proceeding with an International Standards Serial Number (ISSN), or publishing platform." The "peer-reviewed research articles" that the policy applies to discuss the findings of a research project.

A8. Do researchers based in non-UK research organisations need to comply with the policy?

In-scope publications that need to acknowledge UKRI funding are expected to comply with the policy. This includes publications arising from UKRI Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) funding.

However, UKRI recognises that there are different open access contexts internationally, and it may be that an author based at a non-UK research organisation does not have access to a repository or immediate open access options. Therefore, UKRI may permit a policy exception for an author based at a non-UK research organisation. To request an exception the grant holder should contact openaccess@funding.ukri.org.

UKRI funds international partnerships directly, for example through the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). In most cases these research grants are made via a UK-based research organisation and it is anticipated that all publications in-scope of the UKRI Open Access Policy will have a UK based author and compliance is required. Most UK-based research organisations receive a UKRI block grant to support open access costs.

UKRI also contributes to bilateral and multilateral international partnerships, for example through the Newton Fund or the Fund for International Collaboration. Here UK researchers are supported through a UKRI research grant, with overseas researchers supported by their local funding organisation. In these circumstances the Open Access policy of each funding organisation applies.

Where UKRI research grant funding is directly allocated to a non-UK based research organisation it is permissible for open access costs to be part of the research grant.

A9. Are publications in foreign languages in scope of the policy?

Yes, if they are an in-scope type of publication that needs to acknowledge funding from UKRI or its councils.

A10. How does UKRI's policy relate to future research assessment exercises?

As part of their Future Research Assessment Programme (FRAP), the four UK higher education funding bodies (Research England, Scottish Funding Council, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and Department for the Economy, NI) will develop the open access policy for any future national research assessment exercise. Decisions about a future research assessment open access policy will be made by the four UK higher education funding bodies based on consultation with the sector and evaluation of open access in REF 2021.

At the launch of the UKRI Open Access Review, the UK higher education funding bodies agreed that any open access policy within a future research assessment exercise would seek commonality with the UKRI open access policy position. It is the intention that the UK higher education funding bodies will consider a UKRI open access compliant publication to meet any future national research assessment open access policy without additional action from the author and/or institution. Both UKRI and the UK higher education funding bodies note that the scope of an open access policy for the future national research assessment exercise is much broader than the UKRI Open Access Policy. This will be considered when developing the future national research assessment position.

B. Research articles - routes to compliance

B1. What are the compliant open access routes for research articles?

Compliant open access routes are defined in the UKRI Open Access Policy. Additional guidance for authors is available at making your research publications open access.

B2. Are there restrictions on which journals authors can publish in so they comply with the policy?

Authors can publish in the journal or platform they consider most appropriate for their research, provided UKRI's open access requirements are met. This can include fully open access journals or publishing platforms, or 'hybrid' subscription journals that offer an open access option, and which offer a compliant route.

However, UKRI open access funds can only be used for publication costs in hybrid journals when these are included in transitional open access arrangements that are approved by Jisc as meeting the research sector's requirements – either a transitional agreement the author's institution is signed up to and/or a journal having transformative journal status. Further information about Jisc's requirements for transitional arrangements can be found on their website at our role in open access.

If an author intends to publish in a hybrid journal that does not meet these requirements, they will need to consult their research organisation about alternative sources of funding to meet the publication costs.

You can check to see whether journals offer a publishing option that enables compliance with the policy via the Journal Checker Tool (JCT). We will continue to improve the JCT in response to feedback.

Downloadable lists of eligible transformative journals and of transitional agreements are also available via the Jisc website:

- Jisc approved transformative journal list
- Jisc transitional agreement look up tool

B3. What should an author do if a journal does not offer a route compliant with the UKRI Open Access Policy or rejects a submission because of this?

Publishers may not always offer compliant routes to the UKRI Open Access Policy. Whether publishing via Route 1 or 2, authors must check the publisher will provide a compliant publishing option prior to submission. If this is not the case, or a publisher rejects a submission, or changes terms of publication, the author should seek advice from their research organisation. Options could include asking the publisher to accommodate compliance with the author's funding requirements, making the article open access via an alternative route, or identifying an alternative journal, for example.

UKRI has funded Jisc to work with publishers and research organisations to help increase the adoption of open access agreements that comply with the policy and to increase open access options that are eligible for UKRI open access funding. See shaping our open access policy for further information.

B4. How do authors find out if a journal/publishing platform offers a publication route that is compliant with UKRI's policy?

Before submitting, authors should check with the publisher to see if a journal or publishing platform offers a compliant route to the policy.

You can check to see whether journals offer a compliant publishing option via the Journal Checker Tool (JCT). We will continue to improve the JCT in response to feedback.

The lists of eligible transformative journals and transitional agreements are also available via the Jisc website:

- Jisc approved transformative journal list
- Jisc transitional agreement look up tool

B5. How do authors find a suitable institutional or subject repository to use to follow the self-archiving route in the policy?

Authors should check with their research organisation for advice on what repository to use.

Suitable repositories can be found via the Directory of Open Access Repositories (OpenDOAR).

B6. What support is available to help publishers and learned societies to offer a compliant publication route for UKRI-funded authors?

UKRI has funded Jisc to support publishers to offer open access routes that enable compliance with UKRI's policy. Further information is provided for publishers on Jisc's website at our role in open access.

C. Research articles – licensing

C1. What are the licensing requirements for research articles? Is there additional guidance available?

Licensing requirements are defined in the UKRI Open Access Policy. Additional guidance for authors is available at making your research publications open access.

The process and guidance for applying for a no-derivatives (CC BY-ND) licence exception is available at apply for a no-derivatives licence exception.

UKRI is also working with Jisc to develop a guide for researchers on licensing and copyright, which will be published in due course.

C2. Can a different statement to the wording provided by UKRI be used when submitting a manuscript to a publisher?

We provide wording (see UKRI Open Access Policy) to authors seeking to comply with our policy via Route 2 for inclusion in their articles to give the publisher notice of UKRI's licensing requirement.

Other funders, or your research organisation, may provide equivalent wording to that supplied in UKRI's policy which intends to achieve the same result of immediate open access via deposit of the author's accepted manuscript with the appropriate license. Provided the wording achieves compliance with the policy, authors may use wording provided by another funder (e.g. Wellcome) or their research organisation.

C3. Is a Creative Commons CC0 licence permitted?

UKRI recommends using a CC BY licence for research publications and this is the core requirement for research articles. However, authors are permitted to use a CC0 licence.

D. Research articles – other questions

D1. Does UKRI have requirements and/or guidance on how to write a data access statement?

The policy requires the inclusion of a data access statement. We do not specify particular requirements for the content or format of the statement. UKRI's requirement and guidance is detailed in the UKRI Open Access Policy.

UKRI's good research resource hub links to some external guidance on writing data access statements, including examples and advice for different disciplines including arts,

humanities and social sciences, biomedicine and engineering, for example. UKRI will publish additional examples and guidance on good practice in due course.

Research organisations and publishers may also provide advice to authors on writing data access statements.

D2. Will UKRI-funded researchers be able to publish in a journal, platform or repository that does not meet the UKRI Open Access Policy technical requirements for research articles?

While UKRI recognises, based on our consultation, that the technical requirements set out in our policy are already widely adopted, we will be taking a phased implementation for metadata and technical requirements, as outlined at shaping our open access policy. This is because in some cases, for example machine readable licences, further specific practice needs to be developed.

Repositories, as a minimum, must be registered in the Directory of Open Access Repositories (DOAR).

E. Monographs, book chapters and edited collections – routes to compliance

E1. What are the compliant open access routes for long-form publications? Can I apply for an exception?

Compliance routes and exceptions are defined in the UKRI Open Access Policy. Additional guidance for authors is also provided at making your research publications open access.

UKRI will be publishing further guidance on its open access requirements, exceptions and funding for long-form publications later in 2022; for more information see shaping our open access policy.

E2. How are policy exemptions for monographs, book chapters and edited collections applied?

UKRI's open access requirements for monographs, book chapters and edited collections will apply to outputs published from 1 January 2024. We will develop our approach for managing exceptions to the open access requirements for longform outputs by working collaboratively with stakeholders and provide an update later in 2022. This will include advice on the policy exception relating to third party materials where permissions cannot be obtained and where there is no suitable option available to enable open access publication.

E3. I am editing a collection in scope of the policy and a contributor does not wish to publish open access. What should I do?

In-scope publications that need to acknowledge UKRI funding are required to comply with the policy. UKRI award holders should be clear on funder requirements they are subject to when agreeing collaborations. You should make it clear from the start that the final

publication will be open access, so prospective contributors can take this into account in deciding whether to participate or not.

F. Monographs, book chapters and edited collections – licensing

F1. What are the licensing requirements for long-form publications? Is additional guidance available?

Licensing requirements and are defined in the UKRI Open Access Policy. Additional guidance for authors is also provided at making your research publications open access.

UKRI is also working with Jisc to develop a guide for researchers on licensing and copyright, which will be published in due course.

Relevant FAQs will be added to this section in due course.

G. Monographs, book chapters and edited collections – other questions

Relevant FAQs will be added to this section in due course.

H. Open access funding

H1. Where can I find information on UKRI open access funding, including eligible costs and reporting requirements?

Funding information, including eligible costs and reporting requirements for the UKRI open access block grant for research articles, is available at shaping our open access policy. Terms and conditions are provided to research organisations with their open access block grant offer letters.

Authors should contact their research organisation to find out about available open access funding.

H2. The description of eligible costs for the open access block grant for research articles states that when publishing via a hybrid journal that journal must meet the Jisc requirements for transformative journals or transitional agreements to be eligible for UKRI open access funding. Why is this?

This restriction on the use of the UKRI open access block grant is to help support the transition to, and affordability of, open access. Hybrid journals include both open access articles where a fee is paid to publish, and articles that are available behind a paywall via a subscription fee. The requirements for transformative journals and transitional agreements help to deliver cost effectiveness, by putting in place mechanisms that progress full and immediate open access, whilst enabling publishers to transparently manage the transition from subscription (paywalled access) to open access. The Jisc requirements have been developed in consultation with the research sector and are governed by the UUK Jisc content negotiation strategy group. Further information is provided on Jisc's website at our role in open access.

H3. How will UKRI's open access funding for monographs, book chapters and edited collections be allocated, and what can it be used for?

UKRI has committed to providing a dedicated fund of £3.5M per year to support the monographs, book chapters and edited collections open access policy from 1 January 2024. The process for allocating the funds and the definition of eligible costs is being developed and UKRI will provided further information later in 2022. The funding will be held by UKRI in a central pot and it is anticipated funding will be available via an application process. It is UKRI's intention that a diversity of monograph business models will be supported, for example book processing charges and membership models that support open access.

H4. Prior to finalising the details of the new funding mechanism for open access monographs, book chapters and edited collections, can open access costs continue to be included in research grants?

Publication costs for monographs, book chapters and edited collections can continue be included in research grant applications. UKRI will provide updated guidance in due course. UKRI's open access requirement only applies to monographs, book chapters and edited collections published on or after 1 January 2024.

H5. Can open access costs for research articles acknowledging Research England or Innovate UK funding be claimed from the UKRI open access block grant?

Yes, if a research article is in-scope of the UKRI Open Access Policy. Further information on when the policy applies to Research England and Innovate UK funding is available at Annex 1 of the UKRI Open Access Policy.

H6. Can UKRI open access funds be used to pay an article processing charge to a hybrid journal that is part of an approved transitional agreement that the author's institution is not signed up to?

Yes, but only if the journal also has Jisc-approved transformative journal status. Further information on the sector's requirements for transformative journals is available on Jisc's website at our role in open access.

H7. Can UKRI open access funds be used to pay an article processing charge to a hybrid journal that is part of an approved transitional agreement with a publishing allocation cap and the cap has been reached?

All Jisc-negotiated transitional agreements that include caps are closely monitored by Jisc so that UKRI funded articles are prioritised if projections indicate that the cap will be exceeded in a given year. This is to minimise the need for extra payments for funded articles outside of the transitional agreement. However, should an article cap be reached, payments can be made from UKRI open access funds held by institutions that are signed up to the agreement.

H8. Can UKRI open access funds be used to pay an article processing charge to a hybrid journal that is part of a transitional agreement if the UKRI-funded author is not the corresponding author and so not eligible to use the transitional agreement?

Jisc and UKRI are currently considering this issue with publishers. Until it is resolved, it is recommended that, where possible to do so, the funded author eligible for UKRI open access funding should assume corresponding author status. Where this is not possible, the UKRI-funded research organisation can use its discretion as to whether to pay an article processing charge using its block grant and/or other sources of funding. Jisc's website provides further information on managing open access publishing in transitional agreements.

H9. Can the block grant be used to contribute towards the cost of Subscribe to Open agreements?

As all Subscribe to Open agreements negotiated by Jisc include a compliant green backstop, and so provide a guaranteed compliant publishing option for UKRI-funded authors, using the block grant towards the cost is permitted. Any costs charged to the block grant must be auditable and proportionate, and in line with the block grant terms and conditions.

H10. My organisation does not receive/has expended its block grant. What should I do?

Authors are still expected to comply with the UKRI Open Access Policy. In the first instance, authors should speak to their research organisations as other sources of funding or open access options may be available. Authors can also comply by publishing in a venue that enables compliance via immediate open access in a repository (Route 2).

Research organisations have discretion about how to financially support open access publication. The open access block grant is provided as a contribution to research publication costs; it is also permissible to support open access through other public funding such as quality-related research funding.

H11. Can the block grant be used for colour and page charges?

No. UKRI requires open access via online publication and therefore colour and page charges are not an eligible cost for the open access block grant. Research publication costs for research articles cannot be included in research grants. If an author/research organisation considers such a charge to be appropriate they will need to use alternative sources of funding.

H12. Can the block grant be used for journal submission fees?

Yes, if the Version of Record is subsequently published open access in the journal, in compliance with the UKRI Open Access Policy and in accordance with UKRI open access eligible costs. Research organisations have discretion as to whether they will support submission fees.

H13. Can the block grant be used for publication platforms that charge for open access prior to peer-review?

Yes, if a publishing platform offers a route compliance with the UKRI Open Access Policy and the peer-reviewed Version of Record is published on the platform following peer-review. Note that preprints are not in-scope of the policy.

H14. How long is UKRI committing the open access block grant for, including its use for publication costs in hybrid journals via transitional agreements and transformative journals?

UKRI intends to provide open access funding via the block grant, under the terms and conditions applicable from 1 April 2022, in FY2023/24 and 2024/2025. We will review the implementation of the policy and associated funding two years from the start date. Therefore, any change to the open access block grant would apply after FY2024/2025, informed by the outcome of the review point.

As with all UKRI funding, the level of support available for the open access block grant beyond FY2024/25 will be subject to future government spending reviews.

H15. Can the block grant be used to pay for Jisc transitional agreements? Is there a limit on how much of the block grant can be used towards such agreements?

The block grant can be used for the publish elements of Jisc-approved transitional agreements. The publish elements charged to the block grant must be based on an organisation's UKRI output or previous UKRI spend with that publisher using the publisher's methodology to calculate the 'publish' element of the agreement.

There are no limits set on the amount of expenditure from the open access block grant for any relevant activities that support the policy. In line with UKRI's usual approach, research organisations will need to ensure the funding is auditable and spent in line with the grant terms and conditions.

I. Monitoring and compliance

I1. How will UKRI monitor the policy?

Monitoring and evaluation will enable us to assess progress towards open access and compliance with the policy, as well as the effectiveness of the policy.

UKRI will be finalising the detail of the monitoring and evaluation framework for the policy during late spring and summer of 2022; this will include seeking input from stakeholders in the research and publishing sectors. Further information will be provided in due course.

UKRI will no longer require research organisations to submit the annual open access compliance returns form. UKRI intends to use existing data sources from monitoring. At this point, we do not think additional specific reporting from research organisations will be required.

Monitoring and evaluation will take into account adoption and practice in relation to all requirements in the policy, in order to inform monitoring of compliance and evaluating implementation. There will be a review point within two years of the policy start date to take the opportunity to consider whether adjustments are necessary.

Separate information on block grant reporting is available at shaping our policy.

I2. What are UKRI's processes for non-compliance?

Compliance to the policy will form part of our monitoring activity.

Our approach to monitoring compliance will be pragmatic and proportionate, recognising there will be a bedding in period for the research articles policy that starts in April 2022. While authors and research organisations are expected to comply with the policy from the start date, it will only be when there is a pattern of repeated or extensive non-compliance, or evidence of organisations inadequately supporting researchers, that there would be a concern which UKRI may take up with a research organisation. This follows our usual practise and is in line with the approach we set out in the UKRI Open Access Review Consultation. Any associated measures will be graduated and with the aim of supporting research organisations to address compliance issues.

Further details on the approach to monitoring are being further defined and information will be published in due course.

Monitoring and compliance in relation to the open access block grant is via normal funding assurance processes; see shaping our policy for details.

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Version Control

Version Control				
Version Number	**Status**	**Revision Date**	**Author(s)**	**Summary of Changes**
1.0	Complete	February 2022	UKRI Open Research Team	New document created
1.1	Complete	March 2022	UKRI Open Research Team	New: A6, A9, B6, D1-2, E3, F1, H7-I2. Updated: A7, B2-4, C1, H1, H3, H5. Retired: block grant staff costs and allocation timings (updated on website). Revised section headings and numbering, and minor edits for clarity and style.
1.2	Complete	March 2022	UKRI Open Research Team	New: H15 Updated: A7, B2, B4