

CALL CONDITIONS

2021/22 Research Councils' Open Access Block Grants (OABG)

In 2021/22, the grants will be paid via the EPSRC Research grants pay run process in four quarterly instalments. The first instalment will be paid in June 2021. The value of the award is based on the staff effort on active grants and the current Article Processing Charge (APCs) rates.

This award is in addition to the amounts provided since 1 April 2013 (unless this is a new award) and covers the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. The grant is paid at 100% and is not subject to Full Economic Costing.

NOTE: It is a requirement of the award that the start date must be the 1 April 2021.

For the purpose of the terms and conditions below, Research Councils include only the following bodies within UK Research and Innovation:

1. Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
2. Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)
3. Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
4. Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)
5. Medical Research Council (MRC)
6. Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
7. Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)

The Research Councils' Open Access Block Grant (OABG) is to support the implementation of the Research Councils' Policy on Open Access., This policy covers all peer-reviewed research and review articles normally published in academic journals or conference proceedings, and which acknowledge Research Council funding. The policy does not cover monographs, books, critical editions, volumes and catalogues, or forms of non-peer-reviewed material. Further information on the policy is available at: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/good-research-resource-hub/open-research/>

For consistency, we are restating to all organisations in receipt of the Research Councils' OABG, the terms under which the funds may be used:

- UKRI reserves the right to amend and vary these Terms and Conditions at any time.
- Research Organisations may use the OABG in the manner they consider will best deliver the RCUK Policy on Open Access in a transparent way that allocates funds fairly across the disciplines and across researchers at different stages in their careers. However, the primary purpose of the OABG is to support payment of APCs. This can include contributions to transformative agreements that meet certain conditions; for further information please see: <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/UKRI-030221-Transformative-agreements-and-block-grant-revision.pdf>.
- To be eligible to use the Research Councils' OABG funds, research articles must acknowledge Research Council funding and comply with the Research Councils' Policy on Open Access.
- The OABG funds can also be used, within reason, to support other costs involved in implementing the Research Councils' Policy on Open Access, such as the costs of additional administrative support.
- As the primary purpose of the OABG is to support payment of APCs, research organisations that disproportionately use these funds to cover non-publication costs may be asked to provide further justification. The Research Councils' OABG should not be used to fund activities that the research organisation would be expected to carry out as part of business as usual.

- Staff costs should not be more than 25% of total expenditure for 2021/22.

The Research Councils' OABG payments are subject to financial conditions below:

- The total award value of the OABG will be divided into four equal amounts and paid in four quarterly payments (Q1-Q4). As the Research Councils' OABG is administered by EPSRC, payment dates will be the same as EPSRC research grants.
- Final Expenditure Statement (FES) - Payment for Q4 will be held automatically and is contingent to the submission of the FES via Je-S, by the 30 June 2022.
- Full Compliance Report - The full compliance report must be submitted to openaccess@funding.ukri.org by 31 August 2022.
- If Research Organisations do not supply details of expenditure when requested to do so, it will be presumed that no funds have either been spent or committed and this could result in award amounts being adjusted.
- UK Research and Innovation reserves the right to amend and/or suspend future payments if funds have not been spent or committed.
- Any under-spend from the 2021/22 OABG as reported in the FES will be fully recovered and reconciled.
- Research Organisations' overspending of the Research Councils' OABG will not be met by UK Research and Innovation.
- UKRI reserves the right to amend the payment profile, vary the value of the OABG during its lifetime, or to take into account any other Government decisions affecting the funding available to UKRI at its discretion. Research Organisations will be advised, in advance, of any such change, which may affect the overall value of the OABG.
- UKRI reserves the right to terminate the OABG at any time, subject to reasonable notice and to make any payment that UKRI agrees may be necessary to cover outstanding and unavoidable commitments. If a Grant is terminated or reduced in value, no liability for payment, redundancy or any other compensatory payment for the dismissal of staff funded by the Grant will be accepted.
- If any provision of these Terms and Conditions is found by a court or other legitimate body to be illegal, invalid or unreasonable, it will not affect the remaining Terms and Conditions which will continue in force.

The reporting and audit requirements for the OABG are as follows:

- Research Organisations will be required to report on how funds have been spent at the end of the year, including both publication and non-publication costs. A full compliance spread sheet and guidance can be found here: <https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/before-you-apply/your-responsibilities-if-you-get-funding/making-research-open/#contents-list>
- Expenditure from the OABG must be auditable and kept separate from Open Access expenditure paid from other sources of funding.
- Research Organisations are responsible for ensuring UKRI has up-to-date information by providing the following information:

- A main contact for general queries – please email the open access mailbox openaccess@funding.ukri.org to notify us of any changes.
- PI or Department changes should be submitted via the Je-S Grant Maintenance function.

By accepting the OABG in Je-S you are agreeing you accept the OABG and the terms and conditions as stated above. Please note, OABGs will only be paid if the Research Organisation has confirmed acceptance of the OABG and completed the Start Certificate by 1 June 2021.

If you have any queries regarding the Research Councils' OABG, please contact openaccess@funding.ukri.org.