

2026/27 UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Open Access Block Grant (OABG)

About the OABG

The OABG is provided by UKRI as a contribution towards the cost of meeting the aims of our open access policy.

This grant covers the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027

- The grant will be paid via the UKRI research grants pay run process in four quarterly instalments, with the first instalment normally paid in June.

It is a requirement of the award that the start date be 1 April 2026.

For the purpose of the terms and conditions below, reference to UKRI includes the following Councils:

- Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
- Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)
- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)
- Innovate UK (IUK)
- Medical Research Council (MRC)
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
- Research England (RE)
- Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)

Further information on the UKRI Open Access Policy is available at: <https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/publishing-your-research-findings/making-your-research-publications-open-access/> .

The Open Access Policy and associated Guidance document is available at: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-open-access-policy/> .

In these OABG Terms and Conditions of Grant, the words “We,” “Our” or “Us” refer to UKRI “You” or “Your” refer to the Research Organisation in receipt of the OABG.

These OABG Terms and Conditions should be read in conjunction with the UKRI Open Access Policy and associated Guidance: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-open-access-policy/> .

In the event of any conflict the terms of these Conditions should prevail.

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

Use of Grant Information

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) handles all personal data in accordance with current UK data protection legislation and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) where appropriate.

To meet UKRI's obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, contents of funded research proposals will also be made available on the Councils' websites and other publicly available sources. As a condition of funding, UKRI may use the data to publish information on awards made. We may also share information with third parties to support, for example, open access publication and reporting outcomes via ResearchFish or relevant systems. This includes data submitted through TFS Student Details.

UKRI is also subject to the UK Freedom of Information Act (2000) and the Environmental Information Regulations (2004) and may be required to release grant information on request, subject to appropriate exemptions.

Further information is provided by the UKRI Use of grant proposal information addendum (www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/before-you-apply/your-responsibilities-if-you-get-funding/meeting-ukri-terms-and-conditions-for-funding/) and via the UKRI Privacy Notice (www.ukri.org/about-us/privacy-notice/)

OABGC1 Variation to Terms and Conditions

1.1 UKRI reserves the right to amend and vary these Terms and Conditions at any time.

OABGC2 Use of Grant

2.1 Flexibility

The UKRI Open Access Block Grant (OABG) supports Organisations to implement the UKRI Open Access Policy. The OABG may be used flexibly to meet eligible publication costs for research articles and eligible implementation costs that support the policy for both research articles and longform outputs. All expenditure must be reasonable, demonstrably support the aims of the policy, and be auditable. (i.e., it must be supported by a clear audit trail enabling UKRI to verify the nature, purpose, amount, and timing of the expenditure, and its compliance with funding conditions).

2.2 Eligible article publication costs

Publication costs relate directly to the process of making research outputs openly available. The OABG can be used to cover:

Charges that support fully OA publication models but are not tied to individual articles, including but not limited to:

- Contributions to OA platforms, diamond OA models, and community-funded or cooperative publishing initiatives
- Infrastructure and service costs that enable journal or platform operations e.g. submission and peer-review management systems, preservation and archiving services, and technical maintenance

- Subscribe-to-Open (S2O) participation fees, provided the model includes immediate deposit of the author's accepted manuscript (or version of record, where permitted) in an institutional or subject repository
- Publish elements of transitional OA agreements approved by Jisc as meeting the research sector's requirements. Note that in 2028/29 UKRI will no longer allow UKRI funds to be used for hybrid OA even when in a transitional OA agreement (precise date TBC). UKRI will continue to allow its funds to be used in transitional OA agreements approved by Jisc as meeting the research sector's requirements where costs relate to non-hybrid publish elements.
- Repository-based OA. Costs associated with processing or depositing individual outputs may be treated as publication costs, while the ongoing maintenance, development, or staffing of repository infrastructure should be treated as implementation costs under Section 2.3.
- Article processing charges (APCs) in fully OA journals and platforms. The OABG may be used to pay APCs where the charge represents the cost of making the article OA, regardless of how the APC is structured (e.g. flat fee or calculated per page). The OABG must not be used to pay additional non-OA publication charges (see Section 2.4).
- Journal submission fees, where the version of record is subsequently published OA in the same journal in compliance with the UKRI OA policy.

2.3 Eligible implementation costs

Implementation costs relate to broader organisational systems, staff effort, and infrastructure costs incurred by Your organisation in implementing the UKRI OA Policy. From 2026/27 we have clarified this includes the UKRI OA Policy for both research articles and longform outputs (monographs, edited collections, book chapters). Note the OABG cannot be used to cover OA publication costs for longform outputs (see Section 2.4).

Infrastructure that enables repository-based OA at an organisational level – such as repository development, upgrades, preservation services – should be treated as implementation costs, except where costs relate directly to the processing of individual outputs (see Section 2.2).

Implementation costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Staff costs for supporting researchers, managing repositories, maintaining OA systems, providing specialist advice, and undertaking OA administration
- Advocacy, guidance, communication, engagement, and training activities that enable Your organisation to support researchers and implement the policy
- Tools and services that support OA workflows and policy compliance, such as persistent identifier infrastructure services, tools for monitoring and reporting, consultancy or development services for OA process or systems including repository platforms, and OA workflow or decision-support tools
- Memberships and participation in sector organisations that contribute to the effective implementation or advancements of OA, where these support the delivery of the UKRI OA Policy for research articles and longform outputs. This does not include membership or participation fees that form part of, or are directly linked to, publication cost elements for articles (see Section 2.2) or longform outputs (see Section 2.4)

2.4 Ineligible costs

The block grant cannot be used to cover:

- Costs associated with publishing in a hybrid journal that is not part of a transitional OA agreement approved by Jisc as meeting the research sector’s requirements.
- Additional publication fees, including but not limited to charges that are separate from the core publication fee, such as “extra page” fees beyond the standard article allowance, colour charges, or overlength charges.
- Open access publication costs for longform outputs (monographs, edited collections, book chapters). These costs relate directly to the process of making outputs openly available but are not eligible for support under the OABG; separate funding arrangements apply for these output types. This includes, but is not limited to, charges that support fully OA publication models not tied to individual longform outputs (e.g. contributions to OA platforms, diamond OA models, and community-funded or cooperative publishing initiatives) and book processing charges.

2.5 Reasonable and proportionate allocation

UKRI recognises that many eligible costs do not have a direct 1:1 relationship with UKRI-funded outputs. Exact precision is not required, but organisations must be able to demonstrate reasonable allocation of costs to the OABG.

Where costs vary with activity or scale with output volume, these should be allocated to the OABG in a reasonable and proportionate way in relation to the level of UKRI-funded outputs they support or are expected to support.

For fixed costs, exact proportional allocation is not required; however, Organisations must be able to demonstrate that the expenditure reasonably supports delivery of the UKRI Open Access Policy and the UKRI-funded outputs it enables.

2.6 Activities that fall outside of the OABG period

As a general principle, UKRI funds must be used to support activities that take place within the OABG period. An exception is made for publication costs because publishing timelines and charging models mean costs cannot always be aligned to the period in which activity takes place.

From 2026/27, we have clarified that Organisations may charge *any* eligible publication-related costs (see Section 2.2) to their OABG where the fees fall due within the OABG period, even if the associated publishing activity occurs outside the Grant period. Previously this flexibility applied only to transitional OA agreements.

Only the portion of the cost that is contractually due and payable within the OABG period may be charged to that Grant. This flexibility does not override UKRI rules on eligible and ineligible costs.

This includes, for example, some common or more complex scenarios (but is not limited to):

- Multi-year agreements with annual instalments – only the instalment due within the relevant OABG period may be charged
- Agreements requiring upfront payment covering multiple years (e.g. to secure a discount) – these may be charged in full to the OABG where the contract requires payment within the OABG period. However, Organisations must ensure that UKRI funds are not used to support ineligible hybrid OA publishing beyond the point at which such costs cease to be eligible (expected during 2028/29, precise date TBC)
- Prepayment or deposit arrangements – Organisations may charge funds added during the OABG period, provided the payment is due within the period and the amount is reasonable and proportionate based on expected publishing activity of

UKRI-funded outputs. Organisations should take reasonable steps to ensure that prepayments reflect anticipated demand over an appropriate timeframe, and that any unspent balances are declared to UKRI where they are refundable under the terms of the arrangement

Other arrangements should be treated in line with the same principles. This provision applies only to eligible publication costs (see Section 2.2).

By contrast, implementation costs (see Section 2.3) are recognised based on when the service is delivered, not when the invoice is paid, and must relate entirely to activities that take place within the OABG period. UKRI funds must not be used to meet the cost of implementation activities occurring outside the Grant period.

Where implementation activities or service periods extend beyond the OABG period, Organisations must apportion (prorate) costs so that only the portion relating to activity within the Grant period is charged to that Grant, even where the invoice for the full term becomes payable within the OABG period.

Organisations are responsible for ensuring that any remaining balance relating to activity outside the OABG period is charged to an appropriate subsequent OABG or alternative funding source, in line with UKRI eligibility rules.

2.7 Equality, diversity, and inclusion

You are expected to ensure that equality, diversity, and inclusion considerations are embedded when allocating OABG funds, in alignment with UKRI's policies and principles: www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/good-research-resource-hub/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/

OABGC3 Starting Procedures

3.1 The OABG must be formally accepted by completing and returning the Offer Acceptance with 10 working days of the issue of the Offer Letter.

3.2 The Start Confirmation must be submitted within 42 (calendar) days of the OABG starting. The date entered on the Start Confirmation will be the Official Start Date of the OABG.

3.3 It is a condition of the OABG that the start date must be 1 April 2026.

OABGC4 Extensions

4.1 The UKRI OABG cannot be extended. The Grant will end on 31 March 2027.

OABGC5 Financial Conditions

5.1 The total award value of the OABG will be divided into four equal amounts and paid in three quarterly payments (Q1-Q3), in June, September and December.

5.2 Payment for Q4 will be automatically held and is contingent to the submission of the Final Expenditure Statement (FES) via The Funding Service, by the 30 June 2027.

5.3 Any under-spend from the 2026/27 OABG as reported in the FES will be fully recovered.

5.4 Any over-spend of the UKRI OABG will not be met by UKRI.

5.5 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.

5.6 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.

5.7 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.

OABGC6 Reporting and Audit Requirements

6.1 Expenditure from the OABG must be auditable (i.e., it must be supported by a clear audit trail enabling UKRI to verify the nature, purpose, amount, and timing of the expenditure, and its compliance with funding conditions) and must be kept separate from OA expenditure paid from other funding sources.

6.2 OABGs will be subject to review as part of UKRI's Funding Assurance programme. Further details can be found here: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/funding-assurance-programme/>

6.3 If requested, You must provide information demonstrating compliance with the OABG terms and conditions for monitoring and evaluation purposes. UKRI intends to reintroduce reporting on the OABG in 2026/27 through a co-developed, lightweight, standardised template. This will provide a clearer view of spending across OABG allocations and enable insight into investment needs and strategies to support OA.

OABGC7 Sanctions

7.1 If the Financial Expenditure Statement is not received within 3 months of the end of the Grant Period, UKRI will recover 20% of expenditure incurred on the Grant. All payments will be recovered if the report or statement is not received within 6 months of the end of the Grant. You may appeal against a sanction but must do so within 60 days of the pay run in which the sanction was imposed.

OABGC8 Monitoring

8.1 You are responsible for ensuring UKRI has up-to-date information by providing a main contact for general queries. Please email the open access mailbox at openaccess@funding.ukri.org to notify us of any changes.

8.2 PI or Department changes to the OABG should be submitted via the TFS Grant Maintenance functionality. You must ensure that your OABG is updated in a timely manner should the grant holder change.

OABGC9 Disclosure and Inspection

9.1 We shall be entitled to inspect any financial or other records and procedures associated with the Grant as are reasonably required to verify the regularity and propriety of OABG expenditure, or to appoint any other body or individual for the purpose of such inspection. This includes expenditure by Third Parties. We shall use reasonable endeavours to ensure that any confidential information disclosed shall be treated with the same care and discretion to avoid disclosure as We use with Our own similar information. We may disclose Confidential Information to the minimum extent required by any law or regulation (provided, in the case of a disclosure required under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or Environmental Information Regulations 2004, none of the exceptions within such Act or Regulations applies to the information disclosed), any governmental or other regulatory authority, or a court or other authority of competent jurisdiction.

9.2 If We request it, You must provide a statement of account for the OABG, independently examined by an auditor who is a member of a recognised professional body, certifying that the expenditure has been incurred in accordance with the OABG Terms and Conditions.

9.3 It is a requirement that any instances of Fraud or attempted Fraud relating to funding received by You from Us, should be reported to FundingAssurance@ukri.org.

9.4 We will undertake periodic reviews of Research Organisations within the Funding Assurance Programme to seek assurance that OABGs are managed in accordance with the Terms and Conditions under which they are awarded. We reserve the right to introduce further reporting requirements should it be necessary to demonstrate use of this grant in line with the requirement of the UKRI Policy on Open Access.