

Independent review of the implementation of RCUK Policy on Open Access

Call for Evidence

1. Background

In April 2013, the revised Research Councils UK (RCUK) policy on Open Access came into effect; it applies to the publication of peer-reviewed research articles that acknowledge funding from the UK's Research Councils that are submitted for publication from 1st April 2013, and which are published in journals or conference proceedings. The full policy and guidance is available on the [RCUK Website](#).

RCUK acknowledges that this is a fast moving and transformative policy area. On introducing the revised policy, RCUK committed to a number of independent reviews during the transition period (five years from the policy being introduced) to monitor the implementation of the policy and provide advice where needed. The first of these reviews, chaired by Professor Sir Bob Burgess, is now underway and the full terms of reference and panel membership can be viewed on the [review's webpages](#). The 2014 review will cover the first sixteen months of the policy's implementation: 1st April 2013 to 31st July 2014.

2. Who should respond?

This is an open call for written evidence and anyone may respond. The review panel would particularly welcome evidence from interested parties who have been affected by the introduction of RCUK's revised policy. This could include:

- Individual academics / researchers publishing journal articles.
- Higher Education Institutions
- Independent Research Organisations
- Research Council Institutes
- Learned Societies and academies, especially where they may be engaged in publishing
- Publishers (including Open Access publishers)
- Research Funders

Within Higher Education Institutions and Independent Research Organisations the panel would encourage a coordinated institutional response from those involved in implementing the policy as well as those involved in the processes and practicalities of the implementation of the policy to respond - which may include, for example, librarians or PVCs Research.

Separately to this call for evidence, RCUK will also be collecting OA compliance data from all eligible UK institutions (e.g. the number of peer-reviewed research papers arising from research council funded research that have been published by researchers within that institution; how many RCUK funded papers have been published under green/gold

etc). Those institutions in receipt of a RCUK Block Grants for Open Access will also be asked for a short financial report outlining how they have used the block grant funding. For further information see the [guidance](#).

3. Review Areas of Focus

The Review Panel acknowledges that this first review is taking place early within the policy's implementation and, as such, there might be limits to the volume and robustness of evidence to draw on. The areas, therefore, that the Panel would like to focus on and would welcome written evidence on are:

1. The effectiveness and impact of the RCUK policy on the transition of RCUK funded outputs (both within HEIs, IROs and research council funded institutes, centres, units and facilities) to open access. In particular, the panel would welcome evidence of the impact on:
 - a. Higher Education Institutions and Independent Research Organisations
 - b. Different disciplines
 - c. Learned societies
 - d. Academic publishers
 - e. Collaborations between researchers both within the UK and internationally
 - f. Internal processes within Higher Education Institutions and Independent Research Organisations and the practicalities of administering the RCUK Block Grant to support Open Access
 - g. The wider Open Access landscape in the UK and internationally
 - h. The cost of Open Access publishing
2. Compliance with the 'green' Open Access embargo periods mandated by the policy.
3. The impact on particular discipline areas of the RCUK requirement for Creative Commons licensing, in particular CC-BY licences for 'gold' OA.
4. How effectively the policy has been communicated, including evidence or views to suggest any further engagement needed.

4. Types of evidence

The Review Panel would like to encourage all written submissions to be evidence-based. The panel acknowledges that, in some circumstances, owing to the early stage of implementation, there might be limits to the volume and robustness of evidence available and would encourage respondents to highlight where this is the case.. In order to get a broad picture of the impact of the policy implementation, the Panel invites respondents to submit a wide variety of types of evidence, including but not limited to:

- Statistics and data on compliance with the policy, including
 - numbers of publications that are compliant / non-compliant with the policy, and the route to open access through which compliance has been achieved;
 - data on APC payments made, if possible by journal, so as to help understand disciplinary differences in APCs;
 - other publication charges paid (e.g. page and colour charges);
 - details of issues arising from the requirement for use of the CC-BY licence in 'gold' publications, for example not being able to publish, not being able to reproduce required third-party materials, or researchers not being able to publish in a researchers first choice of journal or publish using the specified licence;
 - Details of difficulties arising from the green embargo periods mandated by the policy;
 - a breakdown of the publications by licence, for example, the different creative commons licences (CC BY, CC-NC-BY, CC_NC-ND-BY etc) or another equivalent licence.
- Any difficulties in understanding which journals offer publication options compliant with the policy
- Any difficulties in reaching agreement regarding multi-funded and/or multi-authored manuscripts
- Any difficulties in ensuring that RCUK funding for open access is used for its intended purpose
- Any difficulties in the processes and workflows relating to APC payments to publishers
- Any difficulties in obtaining the data required to demonstrate compliance.

Please note: the review does not intend to investigate the merits or otherwise of Open Access publishing.

5. Submitting a response

The Review Panel invites written submissions on these issues by **noon on Friday 12th September 2014** to alexandra.saxon@rcuk.ac.uk

Each submission should:

1. be no more than 3,000 words in length
2. be in Microsoft Word format with as little use of logos as possible. Please do not submit PDFs (if you do not have access to Microsoft Word you may submit in another editable electronic form)
3. have numbered paragraphs
4. include a declaration of interests.

If you need to send a paper copy please send it to:

Alexandra Saxon, Research Councils UK, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1ET.

Please note that:

- The Review Panel will use evidence submitted to it in whatever way it thinks is necessary to further the aims of the review. In order to support the transparency of the review, the evidence will be made publicly available on the internet (where it will be searchable). If there is any information you believe to be sensitive, you should highlight it and explain what harm you believe would result from its disclosure. The Review Panel will take this into account in deciding whether to publish or further disclose the evidence.
- The Review Panel is unable to investigate individual cases.
- The Review Panel will also be holding a series of oral evidence sessions in October and November and may invite those submitting written evidence to provide further detail on their evidence in one of these sessions.