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Open Access for REF

What is the REF policy on Open Access?

To be eligible for submission to the next REF, journal articles and conference proceedings with an ISSN, accepted for publication between **1 April 2016 and 31 March 2018** must be deposited in an open access repository within 3 months of first online publication. Journal articles and conference proceedings with an ISSN, accepted for publication after **1 April 2018** must be deposited in an open access repository within 3 months of acceptance.

- It is best practice to upload your paper as soon as it is accepted for publication. Outputs not uploaded within 3 months of acceptance cannot be submitted to the REF, without an appropriate exception. The policy encourages open access for all outputs, so we encourage every paper to be uploaded.
- The version to upload is the final accepted manuscript (after peer-review, but before the publisher's typesetting).

- The Open Access Team will make your paper open access through PURE, and our institutional repository AURA, according to the publisher's copyright permissions (and usually after an embargo period).
- If an output cannot be made open access, the output may fall under an exception in the REF policy, an output with an appropriate exception can still be submitted to the REF.

Does the REF policy affect which journals I can publish in?

The REF policy does not restrict authors' academic freedom to choose the most appropriate journal for their output.

Most journals are compliant with the REF policy. Where a journal does not allow open access within 12 months (REF panels A and B) or 24 months (REF panels C and D), or doesn't offer open access at all, the author is encouraged to consider publishing in an alternative journal. If the author still wishes to publish in the journal, and considers that it is the most appropriate publication for the work, an exception to the policy applies. The accepted manuscript should still be uploaded to PURE within 3 months of first online publication. Our library team will apply the most appropriate exception to your publication.

How can I check whether my journal complies with REF?

The HEFCE REF policy requires that the accepted manuscript is deposited in the institutional repository. Between 01 April 2016 and 31 March 2018 the accepted manuscript must be deposited within 3 months of first online publication. From 01 April 2018 the accepted manuscript must be deposited within 3 months of Acceptance date. Embargoes of up to 12 months for STEM subjects and 24 months for the arts and humanities are allowed. Please check Sherpa Romeo www.ac.uk/sherpa/romeo for your preferred journal's permissions or email openaccess@abdn.ac.uk for assistance.

How can I comply with REF even if the journal doesn't?

Even if your journal does not allow you to make your publication open access there are a number of exceptions which can be applied to your publication.

What open access exceptions are available?

REF allows several exceptions to be applied to a publication which cannot meet the Open access requirements set out by REF, these are listed below:

Deposit exceptions

1. The individual whose output is being submitted to the REF was unable to secure the use of a repository at the point of acceptance.
2. The individual whose output is being submitted to the REF experienced a delay in securing the final peer-reviewed text (for instance, where a paper has multiple authors).
3. The individual whose output is being submitted to the REF was not employed by a UK HEI at the time of submission for publication.
4. It would be unlawful to deposit, or request the deposit of, the output.
5. Depositing the output would present a security risk.
6. The output was published as 'gold' open access (for example, UKRI(RCUK)-funded projects where an open access article processing charge has been paid)¹

¹ We would strongly encourage these outputs to be deposited in a repository to facilitate preservation, aggregation and text-mining.

Access exceptions

1. The output depends on the reproduction of third party content for which open access rights could not be granted (either within the specified timescales, or at all).
2. The publication concerned requires an embargo period that exceeds the stated maxima, and was the most appropriate publication for the output.
3. The publication concerned actively disallows open-access deposit in a repository, and was the most appropriate publication for the output.

Technical exceptions

1. At the point of acceptance, the individual whose output is being submitted to the REF was at a different UK HEI which failed to comply with the criteria.
2. The repository experienced a short-term or transient technical failure that prevented compliance with the criteria (this should not apply to systemic issues).
3. An external service provider failure prevented compliance (for instance, a subject repository did not enable open access at the end of the embargo period, or a subject repository ceased to operate).

Other Exceptions

1. In very exceptional cases, it may not be possible for an output to meet the open access requirements set out by the REF policy for a reason not covered by the exceptions listed above. For other Exceptions a short written explanation for why the output could not meet the open access requirements will be required.

From 01 April 2018 an additional exception will be available. The exception will read “the output was not deposited within three months of acceptance date, but was deposited within three months of the earliest date of publication”.

I’m a new employee at the University of Aberdeen, do I need to add all my papers to PURE?

New members of staff should upload the final accepted manuscript of all journal articles and conference papers that were accepted for publication after 1 April 2016. If you have previously added your paper's to another institution's repository, please email paperaccepted@abdn.ac.uk with the details.

I’m due to leave the institution or retire shortly, does this policy still apply to me?

Yes. It is important that all papers that fall under the policy are uploaded, so that they are eligible for submission - regardless of where the authors are based at the time of the next REF.

I have just uploaded my paper in arXiv, SSRN, ResearchGate or another repository, does this comply?

The accepted manuscript needs to be uploaded to PURE, even if the paper will also be made available through a subject repository like arXiv, bioRxiv, SSRN or Europe PubMed Central. This is because The University of Aberdeen needs to demonstrate that the accepted manuscript was uploaded within 3 months of Acceptance, and subject repositories do not record the information needed to do so (especially the version that was uploaded). If your paper is published with Gold open access, we still encourage uploading of the accepted manuscript to PURE.

If your funder requires open access in Europe PubMed Central, and your paper is not Gold open access, you will need to upload your manuscript both to Europe PubMed Central and to PURE.

Sites like ResearchGate and Academia.edu are social networking sites with commercial business models. They do not ensure long-term access to deposited publications. Uploading to these sites does not satisfy the requirements of the REF open access policy.

Open Access for Funders

What is the Institutional Block Grant?

Seven medical funders, including the Wellcome Trust, form the Charities Open Access Fund (COAF), these funders provide The University of Aberdeen with central funding to pay authors' Gold fees. UK Research and Innovation, UKRI (formerly known as RCUK) also fund open access charges for a proportion of research papers, through a central block grant.

Is my article eligible to have the APC paid from the block grant?

UKRI (RCUK) and Wellcome/COAF have provided a block grant to make their research open access. Where there is not a compliant green open access route we may have funds available to pay for gold open access. The block grant is available for original peer reviewed research published in a journal, please note that commissioned review articles are not eligible for funding.

The conditions are that the corresponding author or PI must be currently employed at the University of Aberdeen. Expired grants must have ended in the last 5 years as per the Researchfish reporting period. The grant reference number must be acknowledged in the article.

The article must be published under a CC-BY Creative Commons licence.

Email openaccess@abdn.ac.uk for further information.

Should I go Green or Gold open access?

Sherpa Romeo is a useful guide which gives a summary of permissions that are normally given as part of each publisher's copyright transfer agreement. www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo

You can check the self-archiving terms of your preferred journal here, however the terms vary between journals and for a definitive answer you should check the individual journal policy or email openaccess@abdn.ac.uk for advice.

If your research has been funded by an external body please check their open access policy. SherpaFact www.sherpa.ac.uk/fact can help.

If you are funded by UKRI (RCUK) or Wellcome/COAF and there is not a compliant green open access option funds may be available where there is a suitable gold open access option. Please email openaccess@abdn.ac.uk for more information.

Can The University of Aberdeen pay publication fees, including page and colour charges?

The University of Aberdeen's open access funds generally only cover open access payments. This includes Article Processing Charges from subscription journals, where the author chooses Gold open access, and "publication fees" from fully open access journals (eg. BioMed Central and PLOS).

In most cases, The University of Aberdeen cannot pay non-open access publication charges (eg. page and colour fees).

How can I check whether my journal complies with my funder?

SHERPA/FACT www.sherpa.ac.uk/fact is a tool to help researchers check if the journals in which they wish to publish their results comply with their funder's requirements for open access to research.

You can check whether your preferred journal is compliant with your funder here, however the terms vary between journals and for a definitive answer you should check the individual journal policy or email openaccess@abdn.ac.uk for advice.

Which version of my paper can I archive in the institutional repository?

The most common versions of a paper are:

- Pre-print: a draft of an academic article or other publication before it has been submitted for peer-review.
- Post-print: the final manuscript of a peer-reviewed paper accepted for journal publication, including all modifications from the peer review process, but not yet formatted by the publisher.
- Publishers' PDF: the fully formatted and typeset version of the article, in some cases publishers may permit this version to be uploaded.

The term "Accepted Authors Manuscript" or "Accepted Manuscript" is often used when depositing papers for REF. This term directly relates to the Post-print version of a paper and is the version of the paper which has been firmly accepted and agreed with an editor, before copy-editing or typesetting.

Most publishers allow deposit of the accepted manuscript which is the final draft incorporating any amendments resulting from peer review but before the publisher formatting has been applied.

Gold open access papers should allow the published PDF to be archived under the terms of the CC-BY Creative Commons licence.

Open Access – General Questions

What is a Creative Commons licence?

A Creative Commons (CC) license is one of several public copyright licenses that enable the free distribution of an otherwise copyrighted work. A CC license is used when an author wants to give people the right to share, use, and build upon a work that they have created.

The common types of CC licence used in open access publishing are:

- CC-BY "Attribution" - The most open licence that lets others distribute, change and build upon your work, even commercially, as long as they credit you for the original creation. UKRI (RCUK) and COAF require that articles published via a gold open access route use a CC-BY licence.

- CC-BY-NC "Attribution-Non-Commercial" - This licence lets others use and build upon your work non-commercially. Their new works must also acknowledge you and be non-commercial, but they don't have to use a CC-BY-NC licence for their derivative works.
- CC-BY-NC-ND "Attribution-Non-Commercial-Non-Derivative" - This licence lets others use and share your work non-commercially as long as they do not change it in any way. This licence is the most restrictive creative commons licence.

For further information visit <https://creativecommons.org/about/>

- Please note that Wellcome/COAF and UKRI (RCUK) require that the CC-BY licence is used for any publications where they have funded the APC.
- Please note that for green open access UKRI (RCUK) specify that the licence is no more restrictive than the CC-BY-NC licence or equivalent

[If I upload my paper to PURE, will I breach my publisher's copyright conditions?](#)

No. Uploading your paper to PURE does not make it immediately accessible.

Publishers normally impose a delay on making papers open access (this is set out in the terms and conditions you agree to when you publish). After you upload your paper to PURE, the Open Access Team will check the publisher's terms and conditions, and apply the relevant delay (embargo) period. The citation will appear in PURE, but the file itself will only be made open access after the embargo period.

[Where do I find Open Access papers?](#)

Open access papers, that have been uploaded to PURE are found in the Aberdeen University Research Archive (AURA) <http://aura.abdn.ac.uk/>

Open Access Papers from other institutions are available from institutional open access repositories, journal websites, or through services such as BASE <https://www.base-search.net/> or oaDOI <https://oadoi.org/>

[What is the University of Aberdeen's policy on Open Access?](#)

The University of Aberdeen's policy is that the accepted manuscript of all outputs must be uploaded to PURE. Publications will be made open access through our institutional repository AURA, according to the publisher's copyright permissions and usually after an embargo period.

The University of Aberdeen encourages Green open access, but limited Gold funds are available for corresponding authors who are staff or research students and are funded by a UKRI (RCUK) funding body or a Charities Open Access Fund (COAF) funding body. The full policy can be found at <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/support/open-access-212.php#panel226>