OPEN ACCESS POLICY

Supporting Open Access to our Research Outputs at the University of Aberdeen

1. Context

As an organisation which creates and uses knowledge to make a difference, the University of Aberdeen wishes to make its research outputs as freely available as possible, with the minimum of delay. Open Access allows research findings to be freely available to anyone throughout the world, including individuals and institutions currently unable to pay subscription charges. Institutions and their academic staff benefit from open access by raising their research profiles and increasing the number of times that their research is cited. In the UK there have been important governmental, Research Council and other funding agency (notably Wellcome Trust) policies to accelerate the open access publication of UK-based research. Although the UK is leading efforts to increase open access publishing, there are initiatives elsewhere in Europe, the USA and other parts of the world.

2. Methods of Open Access Publication

Currently there are three main ways of making research available Open Access:

i. Publication in a fully Open Access journal, such as one of those published by the Public Library of Science (PLoS) and BioMedCentral. Readers of these journals can access full paper content free of charge. Authors pay an article processing charge (APC) to cover publication costs. The key advantage of this method is speed of publication - the article is accessible as soon as it is published. This model also enables text mining of documents in a repository. The main disadvantage is cost, although APCs for some fully Open Access journals are less than those of ‘hybrid’ journals.

ii. Publication in a ‘hybrid’ journal which allows authors to pay an APC so that a journal article that would normally sit behind a pay wall (i.e. only available to readers by subscription or after payment of a fee) becomes freely available to any reader without payment (so called gold model of Open Access publishing by CC-BY licence). Like model 1, advantages of this model are speed of publication and ability to text mine documents. The disadvantage is cost; APCs can be high for some journals.

iii. Publication in a ‘hybrid’ journal which allows authors to place a copy of their paper in a repository after an embargo period (so called green model of Open Access
publishing). The advantage is no cost. Disadvantages are delays in making the research available, and some of the embargo periods may be longer than those permitted by the funding bodies (see below).

3. **University Policy on Open Access Publishing**

   Ideally, the University of Aberdeen would like to have all of its research made available via open access wherever possible and, where copyright allows, have a copy of each work placed in our *institutional repository* (AURA). It is acknowledged that there are journals which will not allow any open access route. The University of Aberdeen does not wish to restrict publication in such journals, unless this is in conflict with the terms and conditions of grants that have supported the underlying research.

   In the first instance, the University recommends that researchers seek to publish outputs using the Green Open Access model wherever possible.

   Where the underlying research has been funded by UKRI and Wellcome; we will pay (APCs) for original peer-reviewed research articles and non-commissioned review articles published in fully gold open access journals as listed in the *Directory of Open Access Journals* (DOAJ). We will no longer pay APCs in hybrid (subscription) journals. The green route to open access must be taken for these journals unless they are included in one of our *Open Access Publisher Agreements*. This will ensure that the block grant covers our costs while allowing authors the freedom to publish in the journal of their choice.

   Where there is a strong case that gold open access is essential to ensure required research impact an exception can be made to the policy. This must be approved by your School Director of Research. We will also cover APCs in hybrid journals for MRC funded research where the green embargo exceeds 6 months; whilst funds are available.

   The University of Aberdeen will support open access costs related to UKRI/Wellcome grants for journal articles where the corresponding author or Principal Investigator of the related research grant is a member of staff.

4. **UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Open Access Mandate**

   As a condition of receipt of funding, UKRI has an Open Access Publishing Policy that all outputs (currently) peer reviewed journal and conference proceeding outputs arising from UKRI grants received since 2006 must: i. Acknowledge funding from UKRI with appropriate grant codes. ii. Have a statement of access to underlying research materials. iii. Have unrestricted on-line access to the peer-reviewed output, either through Gold (by CC-BY licence usually paid for by an APC) or Green (with no more restrictive than the CC-BY-NC licence) with an embargo of not more than 6 months (or 12 months for a transition period for AHRC or ESRC grants). Preference is for Gold as this offers the fullest access and text mining, but it is recognised that the choice remains with the authors and institutions. If the journal does not agree to these options (Gold or Green with a short embargo) the work needs to be published elsewhere in a policy compliant journal. The UKRI mandate applies to research wholly or partially funded by UKRI. From 1st April 2013 UKRI will be monitoring institutions for compliance with this policy; for all relevant publications submitted for publication from that date. It is accepted that there will be a transition period of a number...
of years, during which the percentage of papers available via the Gold route will steadily increase.

The funding allocated by UKRI is insufficient to allow compliance with their open access policy via the Gold Route. For this reason, we will only pay Article Processing Charges (APCs) for original peer-reviewed research articles and non-commissioned review articles published in fully gold open access journals as listed in DOAJ. We will no longer pay APCs in hybrid (subscription) journals. The green route to open access must be taken for these journals unless they are included in one of our Open Access Publisher Agreements. This will ensure that the block grant covers our costs while allowing authors the freedom to publish in the journal of their choice.

Where there is a strong case that gold open access is essential to ensure required research impact an exception can be made to the policy. This must be approved by your School Director of Research. We will also cover APCs in hybrid journals for MRC funded research where the green embargo exceeds 6 months whilst funds remain available.

The University of Aberdeen will support open access costs related to UKRI grants for journal articles where the corresponding author or Principal Investigator of the related research grant is a member of staff.

5. Wellcome Trust Open Access Mandate.
The Wellcome Trust’s Open Access policy, applicable to all grant holders from October 2006, is that all outputs arising from projects that it has funded must be deposited in the UK PubMed Central (PMC). In order to do so, the author(s) can: i. pay an APC which permits immediate deposition of the published paper (as formatted by the publisher for formal publication) ii. or publish in a journal which allows the final version of the manuscript (i.e. with any changes made after referees’ comments) to be deposited in PMC, followed by author deposit in PMC as soon as possible or in any event within six months of formal publication. This is the least preferred option.

From 1st January 2021 the Wellcome Trust will implement a new open access policy whereby they will no longer pay APC’s for articles published in hybrid journals. The green open access route must allow deposit in PMC with zero embargo and under a CC-BY Creative Commons licence.

6. Open Access Publishing Fund
The University has received funding from the UKRI and the Wellcome Trust, to support the costs of open access publication of research arising from grants made by them from 2006. This money is held within an Open Access Publishing Fund. The Fund can be accessed by holders of grants from UKRI or Wellcome Trust requiring open access publication as a condition of grant, for APC costs of publishing a peer reviewed original research article reporting research resulting from that grant. The funds cannot be used for other costs associated with publication, such as page or colour charges. At the moment, this fund cannot be used to pay APCs for other types of outputs arising from UKRI or Wellcome funded projects, or any outputs arising from projects supported by other funders.

Approved by Senior Management Group August 2020