OPEN ACCESS IN THE POST 2014 RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK – BRIEFING NOTE

The UK funding councils (DELNI, HEFCE, HECW and SFC) published their policy for open access in the post-2014 Research Excellence Framework. This paper sets out a summary of the policy and its requirement. The full policy is available on http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2014/201407/.

Policy

For the next research assessment exercise, the funding councils require the following:

- For all journal articles and conference proceedings with an ISSN number accepted for publication after 1 April 2016, the final peer reviewed manuscript or accepted author manuscript must be deposited in an institutional or subject repository (e.g. arXiv) on acceptance for publication.

- The output must be deposited as the final manuscript within three months of acceptance, and may be replaced or augmented with an updated manuscript or the final published version at a later date.

- The policy does not apply to: conference proceedings published with an ISBN number or as part of a book series with an ISSN number; monographs, book chapters, other long-form publications, creative or practice-based research outputs, data or working papers. The policy also does not apply to output types that are delivered confidentially for security or commercial reasons.

- Publications deposited in repositories with embargo periods are acceptable, provided the metadata is discoverable by the public. Access requirements must be met within one month of deposit for outputs without embargo periods, and within 12 months of first publication date (including on-line publication) for Panels A and B (STEM) and 24 months for Panels C and D (HASS). Outputs still under embargo will be admissible to the next REF provided their date of first publication is within the REF publication period.

- Outputs must be discoverable by readers and by automated tools such as search engines. Outputs must be presented in a form that allows anyone with internet access to search electronically within the text, read it and download it without charge. Outputs do not need to allow automated tools for text mining, however, credit will be given to institutions that can demonstrate in their research environment statement, that outputs are presented in a way that allows re-use of the work, including via text mining.

Exceptions

The funding councils will allow the following exceptions:

Deposit exceptions

This applies to outputs that are unable to meet the deposit requirements and that are therefore considered outwith the scope of the policy.

- Author is unable to secure the use of a repository at the point of acceptance
- Author experienced a delay in securing the final peer-reviewed text (for example, where a paper has multiple authors
- Author was not employed by a UK institution at the time of submission for publication
- Deposit is unlawful
- Deposit would present a security risk
Access exceptions

These deal with outputs where deposit can be made, but where access requirements cannot be met. Metadata for these outputs has to be discoverable, and the full output should be accessible as soon as possible.

- Output depends on the reproduction of third party content for which open access rights could not be granted (either within the specified timescale, or at all)
- Publication in which output appears requires an embargo period that exceeds the stated maxima and was the most appropriate publication for the output
- Publication in which output appears disallows open access deposit in a repository and was the most appropriate publication for the output

Technical exceptions

These are exceptions where an output was not deposited, or publicly accessible within the required timeframe for technical reasons. Deposit and open access requirements should be met retroactively, as soon as possible, and no later than the REF submission point.

- At acceptance, author was at HEI which failed to comply with open access criteria
- Repository experienced short term or transient technical failure that prevented compliance (systemic issues are not acceptable)
- External service provider failure – for example, a subject repository does not enable open access within the required period or ceases to operate

Other exceptions

Any other scenario not covered above where open access requirements cannot be met at the point of submission to REF. Institutions will have to submit a short statement explaining why open access could not reasonably be met. Further guidance will be issued in due course.

Compliance monitoring/Audit

Compliance will be monitored at institutional rather than output level. Current thinking is that REF auditors will ask for evidence that we have in place robust procedures that enable authors to comply. Detailed verification and audit processes will be announced in due course.

MB
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