

Open Access: a Guide for Busy Researchers

What is open access?

Open access publications are those that are freely-available to everyone on the internet. Open access publications should still be rigorously peer-reviewed.

Why should I make my publications open access?

- Wider dissemination and increased citations
- Free to read
- Fairness and accountability

You want your research to be disseminated and read as widely as possible. Wider availability leads to increased citations and usage. Making your publications open access means no-one is prevented from reading your work due to not being able to afford to purchase or subscribe to the publication. No university can afford to subscribe to all the journals that are of interest to researchers. Access costs are a barrier for researchers in industry, charities, and in developing countries.

There is also the principle that publicly-funded research should be publicly accessible. UKRI and other major funders require that publications arising from research funded by their grants are open access upon publication. Furthermore, HEFCE requires that research articles and conference proceedings must be available open access if they are to be considered for the REF.

How open is open?

At the very minimum, open access publications are free to access and read for non-commercial research. Higher levels of openness are encouraged; for example, allowing publications to be adapted and re-used, provided they are properly attributed.

The phrase 'free as in beer or free as in speech?' is often used to illustrate these differences. 'Gratis' open access publications are free to read; like free beer, there is no cost but you can't re-use it. 'Libre' open access, like free speech, gives readers additional rights; e.g. to re-distribute, adapt and re-use the work.

Creative Commons licences are increasingly used to make clear the rights that a reader has. Under the basic Creative Commons Attribution licence (CC-BY), the author keeps ownership of the copyright but explicitly allows readers to copy, distribute and build upon the work, provided it's properly attributed. Other Creative Commons licences prohibit commercial use and/or derivative works.

Many scholarly open access journals publish under Creative Commons licences.



How? Green and gold

There are two routes to making publications open access, known as the 'green' and 'gold' routes to open access. Currently, these apply to journal articles and conference proceedings, rather than monographs or book chapters.

Gold open access publications are available free of charge to readers immediately upon publication. To fund this, authors usually have to pay an 'article processing charge' (APC). APCs usually range between £800 and £2000, though the mean charge is estimated by the UKRI to be £1727 (+ VAT). The Library has also purchased a number of publisher 'Read & Publish' deals (also known as Transformative Agreements) which enable Bath authors to publish Open Access without having to pay an invoice. Please see our Library webpages for full details: <https://library.bath.ac.uk/open-access/payingforopenaccess>

Green open access, also known as self-archiving, is where authors deposit copies of their articles accepted for publication in an open access repository, such as the University of Bath's research repository. There is no charge for researchers using this option. Depositing the publisher's PDF is usually not permitted, but the author's final, peer-reviewed accepted version usually is. To protect their revenues, some publishers require the imposition of an embargo period - typically 6-12 months - on green open access versions of their publications. Plan S aligned funders no longer permit publishers to impose embargoes.

Open access policies

University of Bath Open Access Mandate

The University of Bath Open Access Full-Text Deposit Mandate requires researchers to "deposit full-text copies of their peer-reviewed journal articles and papers from published conference proceedings in the University of Bath research repository". You can see the full mandate here: <https://library.bath.ac.uk/open-access/whatisopenaccess>

UKRI policy <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-open-access-policy>

UKRI have recently strengthened their open access policy to align with [Plan S](#). Qualifying publications from UKRI-funded work must be either gold open access, published under a Creative Commons CC-BY licence, or green open access whereby the author's accepted version is in an open access repository upon publication with a CC-BY license. The library manages a block grant to pay for gold open access for papers that acknowledge UKRI-funded research. For more detail, read our webguide here: <https://library.bath.ac.uk/open-access/funderrequirements>. Use our [FlowChart](#) to ensure you comply. Use our [Journal Checker form](#) to enquire about journals to see if they comply. Other major researcher funders including Wellcome Trust and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) have similar open access policies to UKRI.

The REF <https://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/guidance-on-submissions-201901/>

The policy for the next REF is due to be updated in late 2022 and will likely align with the new UKRI open access policy. The [existing guidelines](#) require that, in order to be considered for the REF, all journal and conference proceedings (that have an ISSN) accepted for publication after 1st April 2016 must be open access. This can be achieved by publishing with Open Access or by uploading your author's final version (i.e. an author-created copy that incorporates changes made in response to peer-review, but prior to the publisher's copy-edited version) to Pure within three months of the date it has been accepted for publication. The library will apply any embargo that is necessary and which complies with your funder's Open Access policy.

For questions about open access, please contact:

Email the open access team at: openaccess@bath.ac.uk.

Visit the [library's open access pages](#).