



UKRI open access policy update: 22 December 2021

This document provides an update for stakeholders on the new [UKRI open access policy](#) for research articles that will start from 1 April 2022. The update focuses on two aspects – 1) the eligible costs for the new open access block grant for research articles and 2) the process for applying for a licence exception for research articles i.e. to use the No-Derivatives Creative Commons licence. UKRI will provide further information in due course, the information below is provided to help to give as much information as we can, as soon as we can, and with the intention of helping stakeholders prepare for the policy start date. Related questions can be sent to: openresearch@ukri.org

1) Eligible costs for the new open access block grant for research articles

The open access block grant that will be allocated to support the research articles policy from 1 April 2022 can be used to cover costs that enable research organisations to meet the aims of our open access policy.

Eligible costs include

- Article processing charges (APCs) and charges via other types of funding models (e.g. membership fees) that support publication in fully open access journals and platforms.
- Publish elements of Jisc-approved transitional agreements.
- Open access fees in journals approved by Jisc as meeting the research sectors requirements for transition to OA.
- Costs associated with open access via “route 2” of the policy, for example making the Author’s Accepted Manuscript (or Version of Record, where the publisher permits) available in an institutional or subject repository at the time of final publication.
- Open access costs associated with articles in scope of and compliant with the [RCUK policy](#) i.e. submitted for publication before 1 April 2022.

What the block grant doesn’t cover

- The cost of hybrid open access publishing in subscription journals unless part of Jisc-approved transitional agreements or in journals approved by Jisc as meeting the research sectors requirements for transition to OA.
- Other charges associated with publication, including page and colour charges, and non-open access publication charges and fees.
- Open access fees associated with monographs, book chapters and edited collections. UKRI will be making dedicated funding available once the monographs policy is live in 2024, and before then it is permissible to include these costs in grant applications.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Organisations are expected to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is considered and supported when allocating funds from the open access block grant.

Reporting on the open access block grant

For the new UKRI open access policy from 1 April 2022, UKRI will no longer require organisations to submit the annual open access compliance returns form, which included information on block grant spend. However please note that the requirement to submit this form for the current RCUK open access policy will remain in place until the close of that policy and the end of financial year 2021/22. Under the new policy, to seek assurance that the block grant has been spent in line with eligible costs we will ask organisations to provide details about their spend via the standard grant reporting processes i.e. financial expenditure statements and via funding assurance processes. We are developing the details of the funding assurance process and will liaise with research organisations to inform this.

There will be monitoring and evaluation of the new policy and wherever possible we intend to use existing data sources to minimise burden. Monitoring and evaluation will enable us to assess progress towards open access and compliance with the policy, as well as the effectiveness of the policy. UKRI will share further information on this in early 2022. It is our intention to further develop the detail of this approach with input from stakeholders in the research and publishing sectors.

2) Process for applying for a licence exception for research articles

The UKRI open access policy requires all in scope research articles to be published under a CC BY licence. However, as an exception a Creative Commons No-Derivatives licence (CC BY-ND) may be permitted. This will be managed via a process whereby researchers or research organisation apply for an exception. In developing the process for this we have sought to have a simple process, and to be in line with other funder policies. Our approach is informed by our consultation with stakeholders.

The process will involve submitting an exception request via email. Exceptions should be sought prior to publication. UKRI will require authors and/or their organisation to provide the following information in the email request:

- Author name(s)
- Email address
- UKRI grant number
- Title of publication
- Name of journal or publishing platform
- Why are you applying for this exception?

A research organisation may have internal policies for their staff on publishing their research and licences. UKRI recommends that authors contact their research office equivalent to find out about any local requirements.

The email mechanism for seeking an exception will be established and made available in 2022.

How we will make decisions on the exception?

The decision to grant an exception will be dependent on the reasons articulated to UKRI within the context of research and will be assessed on a case-by case basis.

How we will use this information?

The objective of the exception process is to ensure stakeholders give due consideration to restrictions on opportunities for sharing and reusing publicly funded research. We will also be able to draw evidence from the requests to help demonstrate issues arising from a more open license, to inform future policies.

Please also refer to our web pages: <https://www.ukri.org/our-work/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/open-research/open-access-policies-review/>

This webpage will be updated regularly. Although note that the information in this document has not been added to the web pages yet (i.e. at 22 December 2021). This will be incorporated into this page in early 2022.