**ARMA REF Exceptions Meeting**

**22/08/18**

This meeting took place to discuss application of REF Open Access Exceptions.

The aims were to:

- Examine different interpretations of the exceptions
- Identify common questions
    - What could we resolve as a group?
    - What key questions would be like to ask Research England?

There were over 60 attendees.

Feedback indicates that one of the key outputs of the meeting was the improved understanding and community support fostered by the opportunity to discuss different perspectives.

Key questions for Research England have been summarised in the accompanying document. We have not documented all of the detail nor sensitive points some of which may be subject to further discussion at future meetings particularly where there was no conclusive outcome on the day.

**Key Actions**

The key questions about REF Exceptions have been passed to Research England who were awaiting our comments. We hope that we can assist Research England in clarifying the guidance and understanding the practicalities. We anticipate further discussion and liaison with Research England.

Updates and feedback from Research England will be shared via ARMA OA and REF SIG mailing lists, UK CoRR, and the Jisc OA Good Practice mail list.

A number of future meetings were suggested and some organisations offered a venue.

- REF Open Access Audit Requirements
- REF Tools/Systems
- Follow up on use of Exceptions in a year's time
- More detailed discussion on particular aspects such as Pre-Prints, information from Publishers e.g. acceptance date, comparing our % exceptions and approaches to showing robust way of applying these exceptions and documenting procedures.
- Engagement and advocacy e.g. supporting supervisors in encouraging engagement with open access agenda

We will organise the audit requirements meeting next and advertise via the email lists mentioned above.

**Informal Notes from the Day**

Please see spreadsheet for summary of key items passed to Research England.

**10.00 Introduction/Demo**

**10.30 Review of Specific Exceptions**

Some concern that the total number of exceptions at an organisation will still be taken into account despite the updated guidance stating it will not.

**Deposit Exceptions – Key Points**

- EVIDENCE
    - What should HEI's be collecting – evidence of guidance, processes, procedures, communication or academic emails/from declarations
    - How/when should HEIs be collecting evidence
- AUDIT
    - What will the audit process be
    - How robust would the nature of the audit be and the evidence required
    - Will author justification/trust be accepted
- GOLD OPEN ACCESS (229)
    - Need for further clarification specifically around licensing
    - Retrospective – would this be acceptable within 3 months and what kind of evidence is needed in regards to 'immediate'
- DELAY (242b)
    - What constitutes a delay? Would an indefinite delay apply?
- MULTIPLE EXCEPTIONS
    - Often multiple exceptions could apply however often systems can't record more than one
    - Some systems apply exceptions to the output itself rather than the author - what may apply to one co-author may not apply to another

Further comments:

~ Should we be working to ensure application of exceptions are consistent across a HEIs submission rather than trying to achieve consistency of approach across different HEIS?

**12.00 Lunch**

**13.00 Review of Specific Exceptions**

**Access Exceptions – Key Points**

- EXCEEDS EMBARGO MAXIMA (243b) –
    - Publisher/Sherpa rules are often unclear
    - Interdisciplinary Journals - Psychology/Social Science appears particularly problematic.
    - 'Most appropriate' - what evidence would satisfy an audit?
- PRIORITY OF EXCEPTIONS
    - When multiple exceptions could apply which are we applying – most appropriate? Easiest to evidence? Nicest??
- ACCESS/DEPOSIT (243c)
    - Term deposit should not be used in an access exception

**Technical Exceptions**

- IT INFRASTRUCTURE (244b)
    - Should the surrounding IT Infrastructure not just the repository be covered – CRIS? Network? Servers? An academics own hardware?
- PREVIOUS HEI (244a)
    - P114 appears contradictory. Do we need to contact the previous HEI or not?
- TECHNICAL FAILURE (244b)
    - What constitutes a transient short term technical failure? And how would this be evidenced?
    - Would scheduled system maintenance/upgrades be included here?

Further comments:

~ ISBN – Previously, it was understood that the presence of ISBN enabled the HEI to allocate an output type as they felt appropriate. However, lecture notes in computer science are confirmed as in scope, where does this leave other ambiguous output types?

~ Acceptance Dates –Missing dates do we need to agreed a standard that we all use for a proxy when dates are missing? No consensus agreed – to be discuss later.

Options include:

1.     Entering the date the publication was first made publicly available

2.     Enter a date 2 weeks before the publication date

3.     Leave blank

**14.30 Coffee**

**15.00 Other exception related questions and issues**

**Other Exceptions**

- SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES
    - Risk of submitting a 'other exception' which is ambiguous more detail over what will/will not be accepted as a valid other exception and the acceptable evidence required in audit otherwise HEIs will choose to minimise risk potentially at the detriment of individuals
- 245a SOFTWARE PROBLEMS – Clarification technical exception will help clarify software included here.

Further comments:

~ Other Exceptions – are seen as risky options for HEIs because the ambiguous nature together with the change in style from previous policy. Should they be seen as risky?!

~ 5% - Stronger clarification is needed on whether this for the submission as a whole or UOA.

Some concern that 'unknowns' or items we thought were compliant but then exception rejected may push the 5% non-compliant up

~ What will be the consequence if an output is incorrectly labelled as compliant or with the wrong exception?

**16.00 Summary and next steps**

See Key Actions at beginning of document

**16.30 Close**