UKRI Open Access Policy Articles - Meeting Note 2021-08-26

Introduction

This is a meeting note from an informal discussion about UKRI Open Access Policy for articles.

Thank you to our friends at the Association of Research Managers and Administrators head office for allowing us to use their platform and for managing the breakout rooms.

We typically get 30-40 people on our online meetings. Today 237 people took part in discussions.

The policy was only recently announced and UKRI will be providing further guidance and support which we look forward to seeing.

Future community discussions were suggested on books, technical requirements, REF, block grants and compliance, demos and discussions of some tools and platforms (see Appendix 1 for some suggestions), rights retention options e.g., UK-SCL, case studies of using a submission statement and working with a publisher, practicalities of managing third-party copyright issues, communications, PIDs (Persistent Identifiers), and more. We will be looking for some volunteer experts and some helpers from the community for these sessions.

We ran two breakout sessions that considered the following key points raised in pre-meeting discussion and any other questions or ideas that attendees wanted to mention.

Thank you to everyone for their views and participation.

Breakout 1 – Rights

The policy includes a requirement for authors to include a statement in submissions allowing them to post the accepted manuscript on a repository with a CC BY licence regardless of publisher standard policy.

 'For the purpose of open access, the author has applied a CC BY public copyright licence (where permitted by UKRI, 'Open Government Licence' or 'CC BY-ND public copyright licence' may be stated instead) to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising'

How might organisations support the requirement to include the rights statement in submissions?

- Encourage this only for the funders that require it?
- Make a blanket recommendation or mandate at a research organisation level?

- Adopt a generic solution such as UKSCL?
- Something else?

Clause 13 – third party copyright materials – how does this work in practice for 'green' open access? Would authors need to negotiate with rights holders? Would the material be redacted?

Breakout 2 - Processes and Systems

Clause 6 – deposit AAM (Author Accepted Manuscript) in repository at time of final publication. Does this cause concern that act on acceptance opportunity to support authors and capture publications will be diluted? E.g., where previously admin could make sure awards were acknowledged?

Would it be useful to have some community walk through of the technical specification for repositories and of tools such as Portico and CLOCKSS?

Summary of Key Discussion Points

Research Organisation

It is early days, with senior management discussions pending at most organisations to establish their position on rights management before doing more widespread communications and further push to embed in pre- and post-award workflows. Some are considering a blanket institutional mandate/recommendation on a submission statement, and some are looking at only enforcing for certain funders. There are pros and cons to each approach e.g., a blanket approach may be easier to explain and administer but might create push back within organisations when asking authors not affected by funder compliance requirements to use it. Organisations are also worried about being first movers and exposed to legal action. There is an opportunity to link better with IP (Intellectual Property) screening which also needs to be done pre-submission.

It will be useful to share messaging and communications channels and wording that works to help authors be aware of the rights requirements, importance of reading and understanding agreements, and how to get help in their organisation.

There is concern that there may be backlash against the wrong people, when organisations try to communicate these policy changes and advise authors who then fall foul of funder or publisher policy or feel unhappy that they need to seek an alternative publishing venue.

Related to this, there was concern from smaller institutions who get no or very little block grant about the extra administration and complexity of the requirements when it applies to very few individuals.

We will need to rethink our processes to embed activity and support at the submission stage to manage issues around copyright and license negotiations. Many authors do not notify central administration of their publications until acceptance or publication stage. We need it to be as straightforward as possible for authors. For example, some publishers may insist on post submission agreements that contravene the rights statements and some publishers might be aggressive. The author and institution may be caught in a difficult and costly situation. If we do not comply with the funder requirements, then grant income may be lost.

There is a related nervousness about immediate sharing of accepted manuscripts with a CC BY licence when it may be against the terms of the journal which could include an embargo.

Deposit on publication (in clause 6) rather than acceptance seems to be retrograde. It may impact our ability to support authors and will go back on the messaging of most institutions for the last few years and could cause confusion. We have been in the habit of checking accepted manuscripts and adding value e.g., pointing out missing or incorrect award acknowledgements. What does publication mean - first online? Perhaps organisations will retain the act on acceptance message.

How can organisations easily check open access at time of publication?

Will we need DOIs (Digital Object Identifiers) for accepted manuscripts? Requirement for PIDs may cause a confusing array of identifiers.

There is a cost of administering this and it is likely to be stressful to the authors and administrators trying to navigate the jigsaw. Resource will be required even if articles do not get accepted. We already have difficulty in getting the full story case by case as we do not see all the communications between publishers and authors so often do not know if there is a misunderstanding. There are a variety of publisher agreements and terms that make this difficult for authors and those trying to explain the options. We are not legal experts. There may be more self-deposit to EuropePMC. Will organisations need additional administrative resource?

The guidance means that those authors with relevant grants have some responsibility for ensuring compliance requirements are considered early on. This can be challenging with multiple co-authors.

Some organisations do not have research information systems with award modules.

It might be a tight timeframe for systems to be updated if further technical guidance is expected in October.

We need to look at how tools can best be developed and deployed e.g., tools like Jisc Router could assist with automatic deposit.

There were many unknowns around third party rights including practicality and resourcing of checking permissions, appraising what to redact, and redacting.

ORCID (Open Research and Contributor Identifiers) for co-authors - whose responsibility is this?

Arts and Social sciences topics may need more support as they tend to produce other outputs and less articles than other topics.

UKRI

Whilst flexibility can be helpful it can also dilute messages and undermine confidence in central advice. Clear policy and support for delivering it is appreciated. The community is hoping that UKRI will be proactive and lead publisher discussions to help us deliver the policy e.g., as with the REF Elsevier UK embargo list.

What will new grant terms and conditions say about this open access policy? What communication will UKRI do with award holders, and can we see this and help shape it so that it works best to support UKRI and authors?

What is the plan for sanctions?

The community is interested in hearing more as to how UKRI might be supporting software and tools to reduce the administrative burden of the requirements.

It is important that the community gets information about exceptions and other additional details as soon as possible so that communications and processes can be set up in advance of April 2022. If organisations plan to do a drive on communications in early 2022 that means we really need as much information as possible by November to allow time to explore options for local support.

Attendees were particularly keen to know what REF policy might be so that processes and communications can be consistent and set up as efficiently as possible. This will also help with institutional policy decisions as REF is such a large part of the open access landscape any blanket arrangements considerations will take REF into account.

Whose responsibility is it to check that OA journals comply with technical requirements? Will this be on SHERPA?

Can we be reassured that SHERPA will be better resourced? It is not reliable and often we have to also check publisher web pages.

It would be useful to hear about block grant allocations as soon as possible. Clear rules and reporting requirements will be appreciated e.g., can we use the grant for preservation?

Can we resurrect the OA Practitioners Group to help with practical implementation and on-going maintenance of the policy? There are clearly a lot of questions and ideas worthy of discussion. Alternatively, the community can re-create the group and provide feedback to UKRI, but it would be great to discuss with all stakeholders represented.

All Stakeholders

Terminology varies. Can we agree on plain English terms that everyone can understand? For example, the 'version of record freely available on publisher site' is now known as gold or route 1. The 'accepted manuscript available on a repository' known as green or route 2.

Appendix 1 - List of Tools and Software to consider demos of:

- Octopus
- Jisc Publications Router
- Portico
- CLOCKSS
- PID's
- CORE - could this be an option for the preservation system for research organisations?
- OA Switchboard
- OABLE
- Commercial and non-commercial information systems (includes repositories)
- Cronoshub