UKRI Open Access Policy Books - Meeting Note 2021-09-08

Introduction

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

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.

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

We typically get about 30-40 attendees at our online meetings. Today over 100 people took part in discussions. We ran two breakout sessions focusing on the requirements for long-form publications set out in the UKRI Open Access policy - compliant open access routes and licensing requirements.

Thank you to everyone for their views and participation.

Breakout 1 – Clauses 16-18 – compliant open access routes, exceptions, metadata standards

The policy includes monographs, book chapters and edited collections. The final Version of Record or the Author's Accepted Manuscript must be free to view and download within 12 months of publication. Exceptions to the policy may apply: where the only appropriate publisher is unable to offer a compliant OA option or where the output is the result of a UKRI training grant. Further guidance will be published regarding the first exception.

Metadata standards and persistent identifiers for long-form publications are encouraged but are not currently required by the policy.

What challenges do research organisations and researchers face in making long-form publications OA? Additional guidance is forthcoming; what does UKRI need to clarify in order for research organisations to feel confident in delivering the policy?

Breakout 2 – Clauses 19-21 Licencing and Third Party Material

Long-form outputs must be published under a Creative Commons License. CC BY is preferred, but other CC licenses are permitted (or OGL).

Third party materials may have a more restrictive license, or an exception may be applied when reuse permissions for third-party materials cannot be obtained and there is no suitable

alternative option available to enable open access publication. Further guidance will be published in due course.

What does this mean in practice for researchers and research organisations? When might a long-form output require a more restrictive CC license?

Summary of Key Discussion Points (will be completed by organisers after event)

Research Organisation

There is a more significant learning curve for research organisations to implement open access long-form publications, with many unknowns at this stage. There is a much longer lead time for books, so books included in grant applications now may not be published before the policy comes into effect for books.

Authors do not regularly involve repository staff at an early stage in publisher agreements for long-form outputs and sign the contract without necessarily taking advice from their institution. The same is true for managing the licensing for third party content included in long-form publications. There is also an issue around staff changing institutions whilst writing a book or agreeing a contract with the publisher, which can complicate matters. Publishers are touting gold OA to UKRI award holders and ECRs especially, creating an expectation and demand that the funding is available.

There are fears that the lack of detail and guidance in the UKRI policy will lead to ROs introducing potentially unnecessary additional layers of bureaucracy. There is a great deal of behaviour change needed to successfully deliver the policy, although one positive aspect is that it will likely necessitate a closer working relationship between libraries, research offices and other departments.

There is concern that OA books will result in unintended consequences, such as: authors avoiding books and opting for journal articles to avoid the complexity and cost; ROs encouraging authors to reconsider where to publish; additional challenges and hoops for ECRs to jump through to be published (particularly in the arts); an increase in the cost of BPCs as publishers realise there is UKRI funding to support authors to pay for OA; the inevitable rise of predatory long-form publishers.

There aren't many publishers that will allow entire green OA books to be shared. It was suggested that university press groups could play a key role going forward, but there were questions about whether they lack the kudos for academics. Not every institution will be able to set these up, and it could push authors towards more vanity publishing. Long-form outputs are seen by authors as something they want to sell and which can affect their reputation in a different way from journal articles. Will OA books mean that authors can no longer earn royalties from their books?

The requirement for a Creative Commons license was generally welcomed, particularly the flexibility of selecting the most open CC license applicable. However, there are concerns and challenges for arts & humanities researchers, who will be more likely to require more restrictive licenses and to have third party content. It was noted that Martin Eve has raised concerns about CC licenses being used for OA long-form outputs.

Licensing/permissions for third party material has raised a number of concerns, including who will manage securing and checking licenses within ROs or redacting material (resourcing implications), how third party material will be funded, and whether redaction will dilute the author's argument (could authors annotate their PDFs?). Authors and publishers should monitor third party copyright and exceptions, but it will be left to the RO to support this and report to UKRI. There is a need for standard permissions agreements for third party materials (could UKRI provide this?).

There is a great deal of concern across the sector, particularly for small institutions and for the arts, humanities and social sciences (AHSS), about the UKRI's funding mechanism for OA books and the lack of clarity. Not all ROs have dedicated open access teams or specialists, so using funding for infrastructure could help.

UKRI
It will be challenging for research organisations to ensure compliance as we are dependent on authors informing us at a very early stage; any penalties should be for not putting proper processes in place, rather than for individual cases of non-compliance (particularly as it is the academic who signs the contract with the publisher, and not the RO). There are concerns that individual authors will make outputs OA through an inappropriate route, rather than the best route, or without acknowledgement, and so will technically be non-compliant despite meeting other requirements. Researchfish could be used for reporting, since the information is provided directly by the researchers.

How many books will fall in-scope as outcomes of UKRI research? Has UKRI considered the amount of additional administrative burden and bureaucracy that OA books will create for ROs? (Could Jisc reduce some of the administrative burden for ROs?) There need to be UKRI-led discussions with publishers to support ROs in understanding how to meet the needs of the policy without creating additional layers of bureaucracy internally. More transparency from UKRI about these discussions and implementation would be welcome.

The OA monograph infrastructure isn't sufficiently developed to be able to just happen. There are concerns that most publishers won't agree to a 12 month embargo; has UKRI confirmed this with publishers (concerns publishers won't make policy changes if they know exceptions can be applied)? Paying BPCs puts money into publishers' pockets and could risk publishers dictating the landscape as they do with journals. Work needs to be done at the top level to ensure support for infrastructure and to avoid the waste of resources that results when each university has to do this on their own. Could UKRI become a book publisher?

There is a definite need for a SHERPA Romeo-type service for long-form publisher policies and licensing. UKRI could provide a list of publishers they consider 'appropriate', although the question arises as to whether this risks restricting academic freedom of expression.

What is UKRI's argument for CC-BY? Some publishers won't offer this, and a monograph is a substantial publication, representing years of work, so where it is published is important. What does 'after liaison and consideration' mean in practice? How do we determine/evidence that a publisher is the 'only appropriate' one? Who will record this exception, and where? A straight-forward system for recording exceptions would be welcome.

There are a lot of concerns about UKRI's OA funding for books, not least of which is the lack of detail provided at this stage. It was agreed that the amount of funding for OA books does not seem sufficient and that ROs will be expected to supplement this with institutional funds. It's unlikely many institutions will be able to do this, meaning some books may end up being non-compliant due to costs. Authors who aren't UKRI-funded should also be able to make their books OA; we need to avoid a two-tier system where the well-funded can publish and the unfunded cannot. Diamond OA?

Clarity on terminology would be welcome (e.g. authors accepted manuscript) where terms that are used for articles do not translate well to long-form outputs; acceptance vs publication is an example of this, as date of acceptance can be very ambiguous for books and the publication date is not always readily available. Clear guidance is required on copyright, perhaps a toolkit or training provided nationally. (Jisc and ARMA could develop this?) Generally, the messaging is confusing and the lack of detail and potential for change in the policy means that ROs will find it difficult to prepare to operationalise the policy. A clearer roadmap for the publication of additional guidance details with more specific dates will be needed to enable ROs to plan effectively and support UKRI-funded authors to comply. The opportunity for researchers and professional services to feed into and shape the guidance would be welcome.

There is a great deal of concern about what the REF OA books policy requirements might be. Monographs can be critical and are often double-weighted, so they can be very high stakes.

All Stakeholders

There is a need for a list similar to the UKCORR lists for publishers' OA policies around embargo and licensing.

Repository suppliers will need to be brought in on discussions regarding metadata standards, applying multiple licenses to a single long-form output, file sizes, pulling in data for long-form outputs, etc.

Publishers will need to engage with discussions around assigning PIDs (will they be assigned by the publisher, and if so, by full output or by chapter?), providing machine-readable text, alternative OA models, etc.

What does this mean for PGRs? Who owns their UKRI-funded output? They're not employees, so what control do ROs have over publications where PGRs are the sole author and therefore are not under employment contract with IP clauses?

Appendix 1 - Questions about specific clauses

There are questions about trade publications; while the policy defines long-form publications, there is a decision to be made by ROs about trade publications. How do we make sure trade books are licensed appropriately since they're in-scope if they are the sole output from a funded project?

How are translations or other versions of in-scope long-form outputs affected by this policy; are they considered in-scope as well?

Funding questions: for edited collections, will UKRI-funded editors need to pay for the entire collection to be OA/CC-BY, and will UKRI-funded contributors be disadvantaged; will OA books funding be available for paying for third party material licensing particularly if without it there will be little value in making the book OA (due to amount of redacted material/key material relating to author's argument) - this is a particular issue for art history and other related disciplines; will funding for OA books be carried over from year to year as books have a long lead time - funding will need to be agreed much earlier in the process but won't be invoiced until the book is published; could grants be used to join a collaborative endeavour/press; who should apply for OA books funding - the researcher or the RO; how long after a grant has ended will books need to be made OA, and will OA books funding still be available once the grant has concluded; can/should OA block grants for articles be used for OA books as well? How will we report on compliance?

What counts as an edited collection (e.g. for REF, special journal issues were considered edited collections)?