

Open access for the UK

Dr Stuart Taylor

THE
ROYAL
SOCIETY



The Royal Society's position

"As the UK's national academy of science, we support the widest possible dissemination of research outputs provided this is delivered in a sustainable way."

All our journals offer open access.

8 "hybrids" – optional gold OA @ £1400 APC with CC-BY license and immediate deposit in PMC

1 "native" – exclusively gold OA @ £1200 APC with CC-BY license and immediate deposit in PMC

All journals allow green OA with a 12 month embargo

Why gold OA is best

Gold open access is preferable for three reasons;

1. it provides immediate open access
2. it provides access to the definitive, published, version of record
3. it recognises the legitimate costs of publishing ∴ sustainable

In contrast to green open access which;

1. provides access usually after some embargo period
2. provides access to a variety of versions ∴ confusing for readers
3. does not recognise any costs no sound business model
4. dependent on subscription journals ∴ can never replace them

Green OA is therefore not a viable long term option; it will only ever be transitional.

Finch Report and HM Govt

In 2011, Minister for Universities and Science, David Willetts commissioned a study increasing access to publicly funded research

Dame Janet Finch + representatives from universities, funders, societies, publishers

Reported in July 2012

recommended a clear policy direction in the UK towards support for 'gold' open access publishing for all publicly funded research

HMG adopted the recommendations in full

RCUK / HEFCE published their new policy later that month

So what actually is RCUK policy?

What?

all publications being submitted for publication from 1 April 2013 which result from research that is wholly or partially funded by the Research Councils

How?

must be published in journals which are compliant with Research Council policy on Open Access

must include details of the funding that supported the research, and a statement on how the underlying research materials such as data, samples or models can be accessed.

What is a compliant journal?

Either

A journal which offers gold OA under CC-BY license

Or

A journal which allows green OA with an embargo no longer than six months

The clear preference from Finch, Government and RCUK is for gold

But gold costs money.

Funding for the policy

Block grants from RCUK to universities

Funding will not be full initially as low compliance is assumed.

45% of articles will be funded in the first year (April 2013 – March 2014)

Gradually increasing to 85% funding over five years

So far, so good.

But what about the unfunded articles?

In the first few years, the funding level will be <100%

If compliance is low - no problem

BUT, if compliance is higher than expected, some articles will not be funded for gold OA

In those cases, the author may opt for green OA but a longer embargo is acceptable (12-24 months)

It is this last point that RCUK have been curiously reticent to commit themselves to

A word about licenses

RCUK policy requires CC-BY

- + arguably the only “true” open access
- + maximises re-use and distribution potential
- + retains author attribution
- + permits text and data mining

- creates problems with third party material (big problem in humanities)
- jeopardises non-subscription income streams to learned societies
- gives pharma companies a free ride at the expense of the taxpayer

How clear is it?

Do researchers and university research offices understand what is expected of them?

"RCUK did not consult or communicate effectively with key stakeholders in the publishing and academic communities when implementing its open access policy." Lords Krebs, February 2013

"The lack of clarity in RCUK policy and guidance, and the consequent confusion, especially given the imminent start date of 1 April 2013, are unacceptable." House of Lords S&T Committee, February 2013

All on the same page?



Let's hope so

"If a publisher chooses not to make a gold option available then green open access is admitted with an embargo initially of up to 6 months for STEM subjects and 12 for arts and humanities. But if the money's run out from the gold open access (from the money that the research councils and others are making available) then a longer embargo period is admitted. So a decision tree has been made available which allows one to work out the optimal way through these thickets; and it's a pretty simple one. If the research has been publicly funded and there is a gold open access option available with article processing charges, you're then expected to take it. If it is not, then you go green after an embargo of 6 months. If the funds are available from grants that have been made to various HEIs then immediate gold open access is mandated, whereas if they're not then we accept there should be longer delays, initially of 12 to 24 months."

Prof Doug Kell of BBSRC at a meeting of the FST March 6th 2013

"The arguments for gold are, I think, very clear... gold unambiguously achieves the object of open access to the taxpayer-financed research when it is published. It's the only thing that unambiguously delivers that. And it also, secondly, honestly recognises that there are some costs to publishing...my view is that [green] is a defective model. There have been several decision trees. This is the one that has always been Government policy and one which I am pleased to see convergence, with both the publishers accepting it and the research councils accepting it...this is a very fair summary of where we are."

Rt Hon David Willetts MP at the Royal Society on 25 March

The Lords again



HOUSE OF LORDS

Committee Office

House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Tel: 020 7219 4963
Fax: 020 7219 4931
hlscience@parliament.uk
www.parliament.uk/lords

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Dear Rick,

The implementation of open access

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chairman of the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee. We welcome the publication of RCUK's revised open access policy and guidance. Furthermore, we are pleased to see the comprehensive list of issues that RCUK intends to examine in the 2014 review. You invited comments on the revised policy and guidance. We wish to raise three points and recommend that RCUK clarify them in the final version of its policy.

Although RCUK have included the agreed decision tree in the revised guidance, we would strongly urge you to improve the clarity of language about embargo periods in circumstances where a researcher wishes to publish under the gold model but there are not adequate funds. It would be much more straightforward if RCUK would simplify section 3.6 to, at most, summarise the contents of the agreed decision tree and save comments on its desire to move towards 6-12 month embargo periods for elsewhere. In the current draft, it is inconsistent for RCUK, on one hand, to include the agreed decision tree, but, on the other, to encourage authors to find alternative journals where funds are not available for the gold route. The sentence "in some circumstances, where funding for APCs is unavailable during the transition period, longer embargo periods may be allowable" should be rewritten to read: "where funding for APCs is unavailable during the transition period, longer embargo periods will be allowable". This will align RCUK policy with that of BIS as well as with the oral evidence that you gave to the Committee. All those reading the guidance should have clarity regarding the position you are adopting on 1 April 2013.

