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Alternative Format

If you need this document in another format, please contact the Library Research Support team library-research-support@open.ac.uk.

Introduction

This policy states that Researchers will retain rights in their Author Accepted Manuscripts of journal articles and conference proceedings.

Researchers will also grant The Open University a non-exclusive, irrevocable, sub-licensable, worldwide, royalty-free licence to their Author Accepted Manuscripts of journal articles and conference proceedings so that these may be made publicly available under a CC BY licence without embargo (see Policy – Section 4). Where rights have been retained by the Researcher, this licence will supersede any downstream licence that a publisher may try to impose.

The Open University will contact publishers to make them aware of this policy. Researchers are encouraged (but not obliged) to include a rights retention statement on their submission manuscript and cover letter to publishers (see Policy – Section 5).

Author Accepted Manuscripts will be made Open Access under a CC BY licence at the same time the Published Version is published (see Policy – Section 7).

It is possible to opt out of this policy (see Policy – Section 8).

Policy drivers

Compliance

Funders (for example, [UKRI](#) and [Wellcome](#)) are increasingly requiring outputs be published Open Access under a CC BY licence without embargo.

For REF 2029, outputs on repositories should be licensed as openly as possible with permissible embargo length halved from the REF 2021 Open Access Policy.

Strategy

[Learn and Live: The Open University's Strategy for 2022-2027](#) and [The Open University's Research Plan 2022-2027](#) state that research should be made as open as possible.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity

The Research Publications Policy will enable Researchers from a wider range of socio-economic backgrounds at The Open University to publish via a funder-compliant Open Access publishing model that does not involve payment of a fee.

Financial sustainability

The predominant model for immediate Open Access at The Open University is currently via the payment of Article Processing Charges (APCs), either directly or via Transitional Agreements. This model is coming under increasing scrutiny for its unsustainably high cost.

Immediacy

Transitional Agreements were initiated to transition away from pay-to-read towards pay-to-publish Open Access scholarly outputs. However, [Jisc's 2024 review of Transitional Agreements](#) found that at the current rate it would take at least 70 years to complete this transition. The new Research Publications Policy represents an alternative model to immediate Open Access, free of publisher charges, without any transitional period.

Efficiency

Researchers at The Open University already publish Author Accepted Manuscripts on ORO after a publisher embargo. The new policy would therefore not significantly impact existing workflows or capacity once it is in place.

Scope

What this policy covers

This policy applies to journal articles and conference proceedings published by Researchers at The Open University where the Published Version and the Author Accepted Manuscript are made available separately. Rights retention is applied to the Author Accepted Manuscript.

What this policy does not cover

This policy does not apply to long-form research outputs (for example, book chapters, edited volumes, monographs).

Policy

1. Policy purpose

- 1.1 This policy supports Researchers to make their Author Accepted Manuscript immediately available Open Access to meet Open University strategy and funder requirements.
- 1.1. The objectives of this policy are:
 - 1.1.1. To set out The Open University's stance on rights retention.
 - 1.1.2. To inform all Open University staff, publishers, and other external stakeholders how we manage rights retention at The Open University.
 - 1.1.3. To provide Open University staff with guidance on how to retain rights over their Intellectual Property.
 - 1.1.4. To diversify the range of Open Access publication models available to Open University staff, to meet funder and other requirements.

2. Policy principles

- 2.1 [Learn and Live: The Open University's Strategy for 2022-2027](#) states that research produced at The Open University should be shared widely and openly to achieve benefits across society. [The Open University's Research](#)

[Plan 2022-2027](#) states that The Open University should lead the way in fostering an open research culture. Rights retention supports these aims.

- 2.2. Researchers are free to choose how they publish their academic work. Rights retention extends this freedom by giving Researchers control over the licensing and distribution of their Author Accepted Manuscript, even if they do not own the copyright for the Published Version.
- 2.3. For specific guidance on how this policy may relate to your personal circumstances, please contact the Library Research Support Team (library-research-support@open.ac.uk) who are specially trained to advise on the implementation of policy.

3. Copyright of academic work

- 3.1 Copyright in academic work belongs to the Researcher. This is in line with the [Research Intellectual Property Policy](#) (section 4) and [Terms and Conditions of Service: Academic Staff Group](#) (section 19b).

4. Grant of a licence

- 4.1 Researchers agree to grant The Open University a non-exclusive, irrevocable, sub-licensable, worldwide, royalty-free licence to make the Author Accepted Manuscripts of journal articles and conference proceedings publicly available under a CC BY licence without embargo. This is to align with funder policies (for example, [UKRI](#) and [Wellcome](#)).
- 4.2 Researchers can request an exception to the CC BY licence (for example, where a funder permits an alternative licence) by contacting library-research-support@open.ac.uk.

5. Retaining Researcher rights

- 5.1 The Open University will contact publishers to make them aware of this policy.
- 5.2 We encourage Researchers to include a rights retention statement on their manuscript and cover letter at the point of first submission. This policy will still apply regardless of the presence of a rights retention statement.
 - 5.2.1. Where a funder has not provided wording, the following statement may be used: “For the purpose of Open Access, the author has applied a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence without embargo to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission”.

6. Acknowledgement of funding

- 6.1 Researchers are expected to be aware of funder requirements and comply with them. This is in line with the [Open University Open Access Publications Policy](#).
- 6.2 Researchers are expected to acknowledge the source of funding for their research. This is in line with the [Open University Open Access Publications Policy](#).

7. Metadata and deposit to ORO

- 7.1 Researchers are expected to deposit their Author Accepted Manuscript in ORO. This is in line with the [Open Research Online \(ORO\) Policies](#).
- 7.2 It is the Researcher's responsibility to ensure that their Author Accepted Manuscript does not contain content that infringes third party copyright. This must be done before upload to ORO, as outlined in the [Open Research Online \(ORO\) Policies](#).
- 7.3 Researchers are encouraged to use a unique persistent personal identifier (for example, [ORCID](#)). This can help readers quickly and accurately establish author identity.

8. Opt out

- 8.1 Researchers are the ultimate copyright holders of their academic work (see Policy – Section 3). Therefore, it is possible for Researchers to opt out of this policy.
- 8.2 The decision to opt out belongs to Researchers. Researchers are required to notify The Open University of their decision to opt out in advance of the date of publication of the Published Version.
- 8.3 Researchers should note that opting out may cause their research output to be non-compliant with funder policies.
- 8.4 To opt out, complete [the opt out form](#).

Related Policies and Legislation

Documentation from The Open University:

- [Learn and Live: The Open University's Strategy for 2022-2027](#)
- [Open Research Online \(ORO\) Policies](#)

- [Open University Open Access Publications Policy](#)
- [ORDO Depositor Agreement](#)
- [Research Code of Practice](#)
- [Research Intellectual Property Policy](#)
- [Research Plan 2022-2027](#)
- [Terms and Conditions of Service: Academic Staff Group](#)

Other relevant documentation and links:

- [The Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988](#) (CDPA 1988)
- [Library Research Support website](#)
- [Opt out form](#)

Definitions

Author Accepted Manuscript

The Author Accepted Manuscript is the author's version of a research article that has been peer reviewed and is accepted for publication, prior to typesetting by the publisher. It may otherwise be known as the author manuscript, final author version, or post print.

CC licence

[Creative Commons \(CC\) licences](#) offer a standardised set of permissions for reuse of a copyrighted work. Most funders require a CC BY licence on Open Access outputs. This means that all types of use and reuse are permitted, as long as the author is attributed.

Conference proceedings

Conference contributions that have an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), following the description of in-scope outputs in the [REF2029 Open Access Policy](#).

Embargo

An embargo is a delay to the public availability of the Author Accepted Manuscript. Embargo periods can vary in length, but are usually between 6 and 24 months from either acceptance or publication. In this policy, no embargo means no delay to the public availability of the Author Accepted Manuscript from the point of publication of the Published Version.

Open Access

Open Access (OA) is a term used to describe any type of publication activity which results in a scholarly output that is free-to-read online, and always will be.

There is a belief that the outcomes of publicly funded research ought to be made freely available to the public who funded it. Therefore, funders increasingly expect outputs to be made Open Access.

ORO

[Open Research Online \(ORO\)](#) is The Open University's publications repository.

Published Version

The Published Version is the final version of a manuscript that has been copy edited and typeset by the publisher.

Researcher

The term "Researcher" in this policy aligns with the definition outlined in the [Research Code of Practice](#).

Support and Information

How to contact us

If you have any queries around the content provided within this document and how to interpret it, please contact the Library Research Support Team library-research-support@open.ac.uk.

The Open University commitment to Equality Diversity and Inclusion

Our commitment to equality and inclusion is embedded in all that we do and reflects our mission to be open to people, places, methods and ideas. We celebrate diversity and the strengths that it brings, whilst challenging under-representation and differences in outcomes within our institution. We promote and manage equality and diversity to meet both our strategic goals and our statutory equality duties. We achieve this in many ways, including the development of inclusive policy.

About this Document

Policies Superseded by this Document

- None

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