

University of Exeter policy for managing central open access (OA) funds

This policy was agreed at the meeting of REIG on 16 December 2020 and applies from 01 January 2021

1. Background

The University has four central OA funds administered by the Open Research team (Library)

- UKRI open access block grant (UKRI OABG)
- Wellcome Trust open access funds
- British Heart Foundation (very small grant in 2020/21)
- Institutional Open Access Fund (IOAF)

2. Aims and Rationale

The policy aligns our strategy with [Plan S](#) and the [Wellcome Trust open access policy 2021](#) and is underpinned by the rationale that the transition to full and immediate OA to all research outputs is best served by supporting fully OA journals and publishers that are committed to transitioning from a subscription / hybrid business model to fully OA through Transformative Agreements (TAs).

This policy will allow the Open Research team to manage central OA funds to ensure that:

- academic freedom is protected - researchers can continue to publish in most appropriate journals
- researchers wishing to publish in full OA journals later in the year can still access APC funding
- the University receives the best value for money from payments made to publishers
- authors can comply with funder OA mandates
- OA funding is distributed fairly across the University

3. Management of funds

Funds will be prioritised to support:

- OA publishing fees where these are essential to publication e.g. fully OA journals
- Transformative Agreements (TAs)
- APCs in hybrid journals where these are essential for funder compliance

4. Scope of Expenditure

UKRI open access block grant

- APCs in fully OA journals
- publisher TAs, according to UKRI guidance for use of funds towards TAs
- publishing fees e.g. page charges that are essential to publication and cannot be waived
- APCs in hybrid journals where the journal embargo exceeds 6 months (MRC), 12 months (STEM) or 24 months (HASS) – upper maxima allowed by UKRI when APC funds are unavailable e.g. due to our policy for managing finite funds (section 3.6 iii [RCUK policy](#))

Wellcome Trust

- APCs in fully OA journals, compliant with Wellcome OA policy 2021
- APCs in Transformative Journals, compliant with Wellcome OA policy 2021
- publisher TAs (2021-2024) according to Wellcome Trust guidance for use of funds towards TAs
- APCs in hybrid journals – articles submitted before 31 Dec 2020 – [Wellcome policy 'til Jan 2021](#)

Institutional open access fund

- APCs in fully OA journals
- publisher TAs (costs that cannot be paid using UKRI or Wellcome Trust funds)
- other costs as approved by RIEG/19/98 - OA monographs, data publication charges, open research initiatives, OA compliance, support training and campaigns, non-OA publication charges when these are essential to publication and cannot be waived

Frequently Asked Questions

Scope of policy

Does this policy apply to all research output types? Research output types in the scope of funds will not be changed: it will be determined by funders or by the Institutional Open Access Fund. The Institutional fund covers all research output types with peer-review if not invited/commissioned by the publisher. If publishing in a journal: researchers can publish in OA through Transformative Agreements in place and in fully OA journals or to comply with funders' OA requirements. Contact openaccess@exeter.ac.uk upon submission to a fully OA journal to confirm if funds are available.

How does this proposal relate to longer form output types e.g. monographs? OA publishing fees for scholarly monographs and book chapters are within scope of the Institutional Open Access Fund.

Compliance and freedom to publish

Can researchers still publish in hybrid journals? Researchers are free to publish wherever they wish; it is not necessary to pay an APC (Article Processing Charges) in order to publish in a hybrid journal. Researchers can publish without paying an APC then make their work open access in ORE, free of charge. Where payment of a hybrid APC is necessary for funder compliance, we can pay.

Can researchers still comply with funder policies? Our proposed policy enables researchers to continue complying with all funder OA mandates and we will pay an APC when this is necessary for funder compliance.

Can researchers still comply with REF 2021 OA policy? Researchers can publish in hybrid journals and comply with REF 2021 OA policy by uploading the accepted manuscript via Symplectic to ORE within 3 months of acceptance, free of charge. There is no requirement in the REF policy for researchers to pay APCs. The policy facilitates researchers publishing REF submissions in fully OA journals by prioritising funds to pay.

Co-authorship with another institution

How does this policy affect funded research outputs in co-authorship with another institution? OA requirements are determined by the funders. If publishing in a hybrid journal with a non-compliant embargo, we can pay if the leading/corresponding author is based in Exeter. If not, we may consider paying (subject to funds availability) if the other institution does not have funds.

Plan S and Transformative Agreements

What is the aim of Plan S? [Plan S](#) aims to accelerate the transition to free and immediate online access to, and largely unrestricted use and re-use of, scholarly publications. Hybrid journals do not meet the requirements of Plan S.

Why don't hybrid journals meet Plan S' principles? "Hybrid" refers to a publishing model in which subscription-based journals allow authors to make individual articles OA on the publisher website upon payment of an article processing charge (APC). The average cost of a hybrid APC is significantly higher than in fully OA journals. Hybrid journals generate greater income by what is known as "double dipping". Research Libraries UK (RLUK) defines this as where "a publisher seeks an unwarrantable increase in revenues by levying article processing charges (APCs) for publication in a hybrid journal, while not providing a proportionate decrease in subscription costs".

How do Transformative Agreements (TAs) differ from hybrids journals? The Library currently pays journal subscriptions to publishers, in addition to paying APCs. TAs are nationally negotiated by [JISC](#) and aim to convert institutions' subscription expenditure to fund OA publishing, constraining the total cost to institutions. TAs provide a route for publishers to transition to full OA and provide authors with Plan S-compliant publishing routes. They deliver better value for money, simpler workflows for researchers and increased OA publishing compared to paying individual APCs.

Where researchers can find the Transformative Agreements (TAs) in place? All the TAs can be found [here](#). You can also find other publishers' agreements that offer discounts or full APCs. This information is regularly updated.