

EPSRC Policy on Access to Research Outputs

Current and future research fundamentally relies on access to the published findings and ideas that come out of publicly-funded research. EPSRC fully supports the concept of universal access so that everyone can benefit from this knowledge.

Research Councils UK position statement

EPSRC is strongly committed to the principles in the RCUK [position statement](#) on access to research outputs. These include that knowledge derived from publicly-funded research must be made accessible as widely as practicable and must be subject to rigorous quality assurance through peer review, that publication mechanisms must be efficient and cost effective, and that research outputs must be preserved and remain accessible for future generations .

Understanding the issues

The internet has completely changed the way we disseminate information and made Open Access possible (Open Access is defined as free, unrestricted and immediate online access to published scholarly material, primarily peer-reviewed research articles in academic journals). Whilst recognising the benefits of 'Open Access', EPSRC also recognises that a number of complex issues need to be considered. These include: determining how to assess the validity and quality of published findings; deciding how, where and by whom they should be published; agreeing how the costs of publication and long term storage should be met, and who should pay for them. To improve understanding of these issues RCUK, in collaboration with the Research Information Network and the Department of Trade and Industry, commissioned an [analysis](#) (published in April 2009) of the availability and quality of data on scholarly journals publishing.

Two main approaches to Open Access publishing of research findings are currently in widespread use: 'Gold' (pay-to-publish) in which peer reviewed papers are published in Open Access journals which do not charge subscription fees; 'Green' in which research is published in traditional subscription journals and authors self-archive their peer reviewed papers in a digital on-line repository (often following an embargo period); in addition, a number of 'Hybrid' journals now operate which continue to charge subscriptions but offer a pay-to publish option for individual articles.

EPSRC is working with the other research councils to develop a sustainable approach to supporting increased open access to research outputs including journal articles and data.

EPSRC Policy

EPSRC Council has agreed to mandate open access publication, with the proviso that academics should be able to choose the approach best suited to their field of research. This mandate is now being implemented: EPSRC requires authors to comply with this mandate and ensure that all published

research articles arising from EPSRC-sponsored research, **and which are submitted for publication on or after 1st September 2011**, must become available on an Open Access basis through any appropriate route. As now, publication costs may be recovered either as 'directly incurred costs' (if incurred before the end date of the relevant research project) or as indirect costs (and hence factored into the fEC indirect cost rate for the relevant research organisation).

Researchers are reminded that all EPSRC-funded research publications should acknowledge the funding source(s) using the [standard format](#) agreed by funders and publishers in 2008.

Contact

For further details please contact Mr. Ben Ryan, Senior Evaluation Manager (ben.ryan@epsrc.ac.uk).

EPSRC Policy on Access to Research Outputs – FAQs (v0.1)

1. [Why is EPSRC doing this?](#)
2. [Is EPSRC's stance in line with the other research councils?](#)
3. [What is EPSRC's definition of 'Research Outputs'?](#)
4. [What is EPSRC's definition of 'Open Access'?](#)
5. [What do EPSRC mean by 'widely accessible', i.e. how wide and what mechanisms are included?](#)
6. [Do EPSRC recommend particular mechanisms to use?](#)
7. [Whose responsibility is it to publish findings?](#)
8. [Who will pay for publishing findings and more importantly, maintaining these?](#)
9. [Can researchers charge for access to their publications?](#)
10. [What is the 'Research Information Network'?](#)
11. [What are the 'Gold' and 'Green' approaches to Open Access publishing and do EPSRC have a preference for which approach to use?](#)
12. [How will EPSRC ensure that research articles are made publicly available?](#)
13. [What are the consequences of not publishing findings?](#)

1. [Why is EPSRC doing this?](#) [<back to top>](#)

The policy is being introduced in recognition of the need for increased availability and accessibility of publicly funded research findings; the aim of the policy is to ensure that these are made as widely and freely available as practicable.

2. [Is EPSRC's stance in line with the other research councils?](#) [<back to top>](#)

Yes - all the UK research councils mandate open access publication of the research findings which stem from their funding. We believe that open access to published research will improve the capacity of the UK research base to undertake world leading research and will benefit the UK economy and society more broadly. To achieve this, open access needs to be implemented with due allowance for established research cultures and practices.

Open Access to research publications is also mandated more widely by major funding agencies such as the Wellcome Trust, NIH, and NSF.

3. [What is EPSRC's definition of 'Research Outputs'?](#) [<back to top>](#)

The policy concerns any form of scholarly work arising from EPSRC funding and accepted for publication in an academic journal; work which is unpublished is covered by our policy framework on research data.

4. [What is EPSRC's definition of 'Open Access'?](#) [<back to top>](#)

Open Access is defined as free, unrestricted and immediate online access to published scholarly material, primarily peer-reviewed research articles in academic journals. Note that this does not go so far as to say that such access should always be 'from the date of publication' – currently, many journals make content available on an open access basis only after an embargo period has elapsed, during which the content is accessible on a subscription or pay-per-copy basis. Most embargo periods are either 6 or 12 months. It is important to point out that Open Access does not affect peer-review; articles are peer-reviewed and published in journals in the normal way.

5. What do EPSRC mean by 'widely accessible', i.e. how wide and what mechanisms are included? [<back to top>](#)

By 'widely accessible' we mean that anyone with access to the internet should have online access to read and download the full length published version of an academic article without having to pay an additional fee. The terms of access should be clear – depending on the copyright agreement between author and publisher there may be conditions concerning rights to distribute and/or obligations to cite.

Articles may be made 'open access' through one of two main routes: the author publishes their work in an Open Access journal, or deposits ('self-archives') their peer-reviewed paper in an on-line repository.

- Open Access journals are subscription-free and make their content freely accessible online from the date of publication; publishers cover the cost by charging up-front fees to authors. Publishing in an Open Access Journal is also known as 'Gold' open access.
- Self-archiving is often referred to as 'Green' open access: in this model, papers which have been peer-reviewed and accepted for publication by a subscription journal are also deposited in an institutional or subject-based repository, but generally can only be made openly available following an embargo period (typically 6 to 12 months). During the embargo period content is only available to subscribers or on a pay-per-view basis.
- Many subscription journals now offer a 'Hybrid' approach where authors can pay a fee to make an article open access from the date of publication.
- Some journals which impose an embargo simply stop charging for online access to an article after the embargo period has expired (these are sometimes referred to as 'delayed open access' journals).

6. Do EPSRC recommend particular mechanisms to use? [<back to top>](#)

No – EPSRC leaves authors free to choose the approach to open access publication that best suits their field. Where an embargo period is stipulated efforts should be made to ensure that it is as short as possible.

7. Whose responsibility is it to publish findings? [<back to top>](#)

It is the responsibility of the authors of research articles to arrange for their publication

8. Who will pay for publishing findings and more importantly, maintaining these? [<back to top>](#)

It is a legitimate use of public funds to meet the costs of publishing publicly funded research. As now, EPSRC-funded researchers' publication costs may be recovered either as 'directly incurred costs' (if incurred before the end date of the relevant research project) or as indirect costs (and hence factored into the fEC indirect cost rate for the relevant research organisation).

9. Can researchers charge for access to their publications? [<back to top>](#)

No, researchers should not charge for access to any of their publicly-funded research publications.

10. What is the 'Research Information Network'? [<back to top>](#)

The Research Information Network is a policy unit funded by the UK higher education funding councils, the seven research councils and the three national libraries

11. What are the 'Gold' and 'Green' approaches to Open Access publishing and do EPSRC have a preference for which approach to use? [<back to top>](#)

The 'Gold' and 'Green' approaches to open access publishing can be summarised as follows:

- 'Gold' Open Access (pay-to-publish) – peer reviewed papers are published in Open Access journals which do not charge subscription fees. The costs of publishing are met in by e.g. pay to publish models, fee charged to authors, funders or institutions.
- 'Green' Open Access – research is published in traditional subscription journals and authors self-archive their peer reviewed papers in a digital on-line repository (often following an embargo period).

EPSRC leaves authors free to choose the approach to open access publication that best suits their field. Where an embargo period is stipulated efforts should be made to ensure that it is as short as possible.

12. How will EPSRC ensure that research articles are made publicly available? [<back to top>](#)

EPSRC will monitor compliance with the policy through use of random checks on the accessibility of articles reported as research outputs arising from EPSRC funding.

13. What are the consequences of not publishing findings through an Open Access mechanism? [<back to top>](#)

[<back to top>](#)

Where EPSRC becomes aware that published research is not being made openly accessible EPSRC will work with the researcher and research organisation to try to resolve the problem. Wilful refusal by a researcher to comply with our policy could lead to withdrawal of eligibility for EPSRC support.