

QUICK GUIDE TO REF2021 OPEN ACCESS POLICY

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1. WHY HAS THIS OPEN ACCESS POLICY BEEN INTRODUCED?

The REF process drives the allocation of around £1.7 billion of public money for research each year. The funding bodies that operate the REF believe that the outputs of this research funding should be disseminated as widely and freely as possible. Open Access (OA) research brings substantial benefits to researchers, students, institutions, governments, public bodies, professionals and practitioners, citizen scientists and many others. OA makes research more efficient and impactful.

2. OUTPUTS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE REF OA POLICY

The outputs covered by the policy are **peer-reviewed published journal papers** and **conference proceedings with an ISSN No** accepted for publication after 1st April 2016.

3. ELIGIBILITY OF OUTPUTS FOR REF2021

To be eligible for REF2021 a peer-reviewed journal paper or conference proceedings accepted for publication after 1st April 2016:

- must be deposited in an OA repository. This can be an institutional repository like the UIR or a discipline or subject specific repository.
- the output deposited should be the **accepted** version (following peer review).

4. WHAT IS MEANT BY DATE OF ACCEPTANCE?

The date of acceptance is the point at which the author is notified that:

- the output has been reviewed by the journal or conference (normally via peer review)
- all academically necessary changes have been made in response to that review
- the article is ready to be taken through the final steps toward publication (normally copy-editing and typesetting).

5. WHAT IS MEANT BY ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT?

The author's accepted manuscript is the version of the paper which has been updated to include all changes resulting from peer review as well as any changes of an academic nature requested by the journal editor or conference organiser. At this stage, the journal editor or conference organiser normally notifies the author that their paper has been 'firmly' accepted (as opposed to any earlier point of 'provisional' acceptance e.g. conditional on major or minor revisions being made) and the paper is ready for copy-editing or typesetting.

The author's final, accepted manuscript is the one that has been agreed with the editor at that point. The accepted manuscript is **not** the same as the copy-edited, typeset or published paper – these versions are known as '*proofs*' or '*versions of record*' and publishers do not normally allow authors to make these open access.



6. TIMING OF OA DEPOSITS

To allow Universities time to set up systems to monitor REF OA compliance there will be an initial 'light touch' application of the policy from 1st April 2015 with full compliance expected from 1st April 2017:

- Papers accepted for publication **after 1st April 2016** will only be eligible for submission to REF2021 if authors have deposited their final peer-reviewed manuscript in the UIR **within three months of publication**.
- Papers accepted for publication **after 1st April 2017** must be deposited **within three months of date of acceptance of publication**.

7. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

To be REF compliant you must deposit your accepted/published papers in the UIR within the specified time periods (see 4. above). Please do not leave it too late to deposit – if you do and there are any problems then you risk missing the deposit deadline which could jeopardise your REF submission. We recommend that as soon as you have your accepted peer-reviewed manuscript you deposit it in the UIR (adhering to any embargo periods set by your publisher).

8. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY OUTPUTS ARE COMPLIANT WITH THE REF OA POLICY?

Two new tools have been developed to help authors check if their outputs are compliant:

- REF Sherpa Tool
- REF Compliance Checker

The **REF Sherpa Tool** is now available at <https://ref.sherpa.ac.uk> and allows authors to check if their journal complies with the open access requirements for the REF. Whilst the journal coverage in this tool is comprehensive please bear in mind that more journals will be added as more publishers finalise their policies in relation OA for REF.

The **REF Compliance Checker** is in the form of a plug-in for the UIR and its purpose is to smooth the process by which the University can establish whether an article or conference proceeding is REF eligible. When a depositor enters the metadata for their output it will be checked by the Editor against a logical set of rules that faithfully represent the

requirements of the REF OA Policy. The developers of the plug-in have worked closely with HEFCE to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

9. WHAT IF MY PUBLISHER SETS AN EMBARGO?

The REF OA Policy recognises publishers' embargos and, in such a case, you can make a "Closed" deposit in the UIR with the full-text embargoed as necessary to respect publisher policies (ie: the paper is deposited in the UIR and an embargo date entered to automatically release the paper at the end of the embargo period)

Embargo periods should typically not exceed 12 months for REF Main Panels A and B and 24 months for REF Main Panels C and D.

Embargo periods start at the date of publication NOT acceptance.

10. HOW DOES ULSTER UNIVERSITY SUPPORT OPEN ACCESS?

Ulster University fully endorses the principles of open access and expects all staff to make their research open access where possible. In summary, staff should record details of all their research outputs in the UIR and, for all new **journal articles** and **conference papers**, copies of the appropriate version (accepted/published) should be deposited in the UIR in accordance with the timescales outlined in 6. above.

The University is in the process of updating the UIR with new tools to help monitor OA compliance and we will write out to all researchers once these are installed.

Updated: 14 June 2016