

UCL UKRI/Wellcome open access - Frequently Asked Questions

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Purpose of these FAQs

These FAQs provide supplementary information for UCL researchers about the UKRI and Wellcome open access policies.

Please also refer to the guidance on UCL's open access webpages:

- [Complying with the new Wellcome and UKRI open access policies](#)
- [What do I need to do?](#)

A. Scope of the UKRI/Wellcome policies

A1. Which organisations are part of UKRI in the UKRI open access policy?

The UKRI open access policy applies to publications that acknowledge funding from AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, NERC, STFC or Innovate UK. It also applies to outputs resulting directly from Research England (formerly HEFCE) funding awarded for particular purposes, through a competitive scheme that requires grant holders to acknowledge Research England. Most Research England funding is not awarded for particular purposes, but is used by universities at their discretion.

The UK Space Agency (UKSA) is not part of UKRI and the UKRI policy does not apply directly to UKSA-funded outputs. However, UKSA expects grant holders to follow the UKRI policy, and provides funds for open access through research grants.

A2. Does the UKRI policy apply to publications from grants awarded before the policy start date, and to closed grants?

Yes, the policy applies to publications arising from pre-existing and closed awards.

A3. My paper is not described as a research or review paper. Does it need to meet the UKRI/Wellcome requirements, and am I entitled to open access funding?

The UKRI open access policy applies to peer-reviewed research articles, including reviews and conference papers, that are accepted for final publication in either a journal, conference proceeding with an International Standards Serial Number (ISSN), or publishing platform. These articles discuss the findings of a research project.

- Protocols and methods articles are out of scope of the policy. UKRI-funded protocols and methods are not eligible for open access funding.
- Commentaries are not normally eligible for open access funding, unless they qualify as review articles.

The Wellcome open access policy applies to peer-reviewed research articles. Research/study protocols, systematic reviews, scoping reviews and meta-analyses are not included in the Wellcome policy, but these article types, submitted to a Gold fully open access journal (indexed in [DOAJ](#)), are eligible for funding.

If you have a query about a particular article type, contact [UCL's Open Access Team](#).

A4. It's not clear whether my publication is a journal or a book chapter. Which parts of the UKRI/Wellcome policies apply?

The UKRI policy defines book chapters as outputs that are published together with similar outputs from other authors in a single publication, forming a permanently identifiable set of contributions on a common theme, bearing an International Standard Book Number (ISBN). This includes chapters in academic books arising from conferences. The UKRI open access policy on long-form outputs applies to book chapters.

For conference papers that could be considered journal articles or books, UKRI allows authors and institutions to decide whether the policy for articles and conference proceedings, or for long-form publications, is more appropriate.

Outputs describing a protocol or method are not in scope of the UKRI policy.

The Wellcome policy treats all publications indexed in [MEDLINE](#) as journals, even if they are marketed as book series.

A5. My publication was not funded by UKRI/Wellcome, but UKRI/Wellcome funding contributed to it indirectly. Do the UKRI/Wellcome policies apply?

The UKRI policy applies to publications acknowledging direct funding from UKRI. It does not apply where UKRI funding has contributed indirectly to a research publication, for example equipment or facilities funded by UKRI.

The Wellcome policy applies to original, peer-reviewed research articles that are supported in whole, or in part, by Wellcome; and to original scholarly monographs and book chapters authored or co-authored by Wellcome grantholders as part of their grant-funded research.

A6. My paper was originally submitted before 1 April 2022, but the journal requires me to resubmit it after that date. Does the new UKRI policy apply?

UKRI has advised that submission date means the date that the paper was first submitted to a publication. If you are unsure whether the policy applies to a particular paper, contact [UCL's Open Access Team](#).

B. Articles and conference proceedings – routes to compliance

B1. What tools are available to help me check whether a journal complies with the UKRI/Wellcome open access policies?

UKRI/Wellcome are developing a journal checker tool to help authors find out how to comply with their funder's policy. This tool is being tested and improved. UCL currently recommends that authors:

1. Use the Directory of Open Access Journals ([DOAJ](#)) to check whether their journal is a Gold fully open access journal. Funds are available for Wellcome-funded research articles, and UKRI-funded research and review articles, in fully open access journals. [Fill in this form to request funding](#).
2. Check whether their subscription (hybrid OA) journal is covered by a transformative agreement at the corresponding author's institution. See [UCL's transformative agreements](#).
3. Follow the instructions on our [UKRI/Wellcome webpages](#), or [contact UCL's Open Access Team for advice](#), if they are submitting to any other journal.

B2. I want to submit to a subscription (hybrid) journal not in UCL's transformative agreements. Will the publisher let me comply with the UKRI/Wellcome policy?

Some publishers, including [ACM](#) and [AAAS \(Science\)](#), have amended their policies to allow authors to make the accepted manuscript version of their papers Green open access under CC BY in a repository on publication.

Most other publishers will agree to allow this if the corresponding author, supported by UCL's Open Access Team, requests it. To do so:

1. Include the [UKRI/Wellcome submission wording](#) in your submission, covering letter and funding acknowledgements.
2. Before submission, ask the editorial office whether the publishing agreement allows immediate OA to the accepted manuscript under CC BY. [UCL's Open Access Team](#) can provide wording for pre-submission enquiries.

B3. If I submit to a subscription (hybrid) journal that doesn't have a transformative agreement, and pay for Gold OA myself, will my paper comply?

Normally if you are submitting to a subscription (hybrid) journal that is not in [UCL's transformative agreements](#), and the journal does not allow you to make your Author Accepted Manuscript open access in a repository on publication under the CC BY licence, you should comply through Green open access. To do so, see B2. **Most publishers will agree to this.**

However, if you or a non-UK institution wishes to pay for Gold open access, your paper will comply if you choose the CC BY licence.

B4. I am complying through the Green open access route, by depositing my paper in a repository. Does depositing in a preprint server such as arXiv meet the UKRI policy requirements?

Papers deposited in a preprint server such as arXiv will meet the UKRI and REF requirements if:

1. the version deposited is identified, in the file or the accompanying metadata, as the Author Accepted Manuscript, and
2. the date that this version is deposited is on or before publication.

Uploading the submitted version (before peer review) to arXiv will not meet the requirements.

B5. I'm part of a collaboration. My UKRI/Wellcome funding is being acknowledged in a paper on which I'm not the corresponding author. How do I comply?

UKRI's advice is that award holders should be clear on funder requirements, including about open access, when agreeing collaborations.

We recommend that you explain to your collaborators that UKRI requires open access on publication under the CC BY licence (or, for monographs, open access 12 months after publication), and set out the three methods of complying:

Publish in a Gold fully open access journal or platform (see [DOAJ](#)).

1. Publish in a subscription (hybrid) journal, making the paper Gold open access through a transformative agreement at the corresponding author's institution (see [UCL's transformative agreements](#)).
2. Make your Author Accepted Manuscript Green open access under CC BY in a repository on publication.

Most publishers will allow the third option if the corresponding author requests it. The corresponding author must include the [UKRI/Wellcome submission wording](#) when submitting. [UCL's Open Access Team](#) can help advise your collaborators and support you and them in discussions with publishers.

B6. Do Nature portfolio/Nature-branded journals offer a UKRI/Wellcome-compliant option?

Nature, and other Nature-branded subscription (hybrid) journals, are not currently included in a [transformative agreement](#). UCL is not able to pay open access charges for papers in these journals (except for Nature Communications, which is a fully open access journal).

Nature has committed to providing UKRI- and Wellcome-funded authors with a compliant publishing route through Green open access. Authors can make their Author Accepted Manuscript open access in a repository on publication under the CC BY licence.

UKRI/Wellcome-funded papers that are submitted to Nature-branded subscription journals must include the [UKRI/Wellcome submission statement](#). Nature will send you their publishing agreement after acceptance. When they do, explain that your

institution will not be paying for Gold open access, and that you require permission under Nature's open access exception rules to make your Author Accepted manuscript open access in a repository on publication under the CC BY licence, to meet your funder's requirements. Then, upload your accepted manuscript in RPS (and Europe PMC, for Wellcome/MRC/BBSRC-funded papers) on or before publication.

B7. Do IEEE publications offer a UKRI/Wellcome-compliant option?

IEEE allows UKRI/Wellcome-funded papers to meet their funder's requirements through the Green open access route.

Papers must include the [UKRI/Wellcome submission statement](#) in the funding acknowledgements section of the manuscript and in any covering letter/note accompanying the submission. As soon as your paper is accepted, send a request for permission to apply the CC BY licence to the Author Accepted Manuscript to copyrights@ieee.org, explaining that the paper needs to comply with the UKRI/Wellcome policy.

B8. Do APS journals offer a UKRI/Wellcome-compliant option?

At present, with the exception of high-energy physics papers in SCOAP3 journals (see below), APS journals do not comply with the UKRI/Wellcome policies. Authors are advised to follow the route for [non-compliant journals](#). The [Open Access Team](#) will support authors wishing to request permission to comply with their funder's policy.

B9. I am publishing a high-energy physics paper in a SCOAP3 journal. Will my paper comply with the UKRI policy?

High-energy physics papers published in [SCOAP3](#) fully open access and subscription journals meet UKRI's open access requirements, because they are published Gold open access under the CC BY licence. In particular, HEP papers published in the following subscription (hybrid) journals comply with the UKRI requirements, even though they are not included in a transformative agreement:

- APS: [Physical Review C, Physical Review D and Physical Review Letters](#)
- Chinese Physical Society: [Chinese Physics C](#)

These arrangements apply to manuscripts posted on arXiv with the primary category hep-ex, hep-th, hep-ph, or hep-lat. Follow your journal's submission instructions to publish via [SCOAP3](#).

C. Funding

C1. Is funding available to cover non-open access publication fees such as page and colour charges?

UKRI and Wellcome do not fund page and colour charges, either through research grants or as part of UCL's UKRI/Wellcome open access block grants. Authors are advised to ask their journal's editorial office, before submission, whether any non-open access publication charges apply, and, if so, request a waiver. This applies to all journals, including those in UCL's transformative agreements, some of which still charge additional publication fees. Where necessary, [UCL's Open Access Team](#) can confirm to the publisher that no funds are available to cover publication fees.

C2. My paper acknowledges MRC unit funding. Is UCL's UKRI open access grant able to cover the costs of publishing in a fully open access journal?

MRC has advised that units are required to ringfence adequate funding for open access publishing within their budgets. UCL's UKRI open access block grant cannot be used to pay fees for papers in fully open access journals unless a UCL-held UKRI/Wellcome/CRUK/BHF research grant is also acknowledged. However, papers in fully open access and subscription (hybrid) journals funded by an MRC unit may be able to use UCL's transformative agreements, if the corresponding author is affiliated with UCL and the paper is otherwise eligible. See [UCL's transformative agreements](#).

D. Monitoring and compliance

D1. What will happen if I don't follow the UKRI/Wellcome policy requirements?

UKRI is developing its approaches to monitoring and to non-compliance. However, UKRI has made it clear that authors are obliged to comply with the policy from its start date, 1 April 2022.

UKRI-funded authors are responsible to UCL, as well as to UKRI, for meeting their grant conditions. UCL is committed to supporting authors with compliance, and expects authors to follow the requirements of the UKRI open access policy.

Wellcome has confirmed that researchers and organisations who do not comply with the Wellcome policy will be subject to appropriate sanctions, which may include Wellcome not accepting new grant applications, and in extreme cases suspending funding to organisations.

If you are concerned about how to comply, contact [UCL's Open Access Team](#), who can provide support for all UCL UKRI/Wellcome authors, including those who wish to submit to non-compliant journals. For information about how to comply if you are submitting to a non-compliant journal, see B2.

D2. If my paper complies with the UKRI/Wellcome open access policy, will it also meet the REF open access requirements?

Yes. A new REF open access policy is in development and is expected to align with UKRI's. In the meantime, meeting UKRI/Wellcome open access requirements will also satisfy the requirements for the next REF.