

Open Research Scotland

Research Excellence Framework Open Access Meeting 30th April 2020

Attendees: (Optional to add your name - alphabetically by surname): 32 in total

Joanna Adams, University of Aberdeen

Clare Allan, University of Stirling

George Bray, Robert Gordon University

Michael Duncan, University of Dundee

Mick Eadie, University of Glasgow

Betsy Fuller, University of Stirling

Stuart Lawson, Edinburgh Napier University

Morag Llewellyn, University of the Highlands and Islands

Valerie McCutcheon, University of Glasgow

Lesia Ng, Heriot-Watt University

Michelle O'Hara, University of Glasgow

Hana Pokorski, Abertay University

Debbie Prior, University of the West of Scotland

Jackie Proven, University of St Andrews

Jamie Redgate, Queen Margaret University

Graham Steel, GKS Consulting

Elinor Toland, Glasgow Caledonian University

Nik Tahirah Nik Hussin, University of Edinburgh

The meeting was to discuss questions that members of the Open Research Scotland group had in relation to Research Excellence Framework Open Access.

Note the survey results are informal and intended to inform the discussion on the day. We had low numbers as we had 32 attendees and in some cases voted by institution that there were a much lower number of respondents than 32. Nevertheless some trends were clear.

Relative Weight of Exceptions – Survey Results – Elinor Toland, Glasgow Caledonian University

A survey had been circulated asking which exceptions were considered high risk. The presentation is available here: <https://edshare.gcu.ac.uk/5797/>

There was some discussion as to who makes final decisions regarding exceptions. In most organisations administrators in central services such as libraries and research offices mark up initial exceptions usually based on correspondence with the author however final checks and decisions on the robustness tend to be made by REF teams or Units of Assessments.

In some cases central administration checks the contract dates for relevant exceptions. These exceptions were generally thought to be low risk.

Exception 253b and c relating to publisher embargo and open access permission were rated medium and high risk by most as these can be subjective.

Exception 254b The repository experienced a short-term or transient technical failure that prevented compliance with the criteria (this should not apply to systemic issues). it was unclear if process issues could be covered by this exception or if it was restricted to software and hardware issues. An isolated error by repository staff for example.

Not surprisingly other exception was considered the highest risk.

'Exceptions are a grey area, very much open to interpretation, which is making things very complicated' was a general comment from the survey.

The group had no complete agreement on any of the exceptions indicating policy is open to interpretation.

Online Poll – Valerie McCutcheon

Ideally one person per organisation will complete the poll.

You can use this shared document or the chat box to add additional comments.

Discussion of Poll Answers

Perhaps some misguided comfort that we have such varied approaches thus demonstrating it is difficult to determine what is appropriate.

1. A publisher does not reply to your request for open access policy information and it is unclear if they will allow AAM deposit in the repository.

Do you: (Single Choice)

Answer 1: a) Close the record off as non-compliant after a set period?

Answer 2: b) Post the AAM and deal with it if the publisher issues a take down notice?

Answer 3: c) Mark it with the exception 'It would be unlawful to deposit, or request the deposit of, the output'?

Answer 4: d) Something else? (Use chat box to comment)

A wide spread of answers with no firm trend for one or another.

issues around use of the word 'actively' re exception - it is passive in that the publisher did not declare actively we could not deposit but also did not actively say we could.

Someone said they would use an access exception (but again the interpretation - this is about deposit)

Would probably use 'actively disallows OA' exception and save record of email to publisher as evidence that we tried to find out

May use an 'other' exception.

2. What do you do if you cannot evidence the acceptance date? (Single Choice)

Answer 1: a) Proxy an acceptance date e.g. one week before you heard of the acceptance and use the publication date exception?

Answer 2: b) Proxy the acceptance date as the date of first online publication and use the publication date exception?

Answer 3: c) Proxy the acceptance date and do not use an exception?

Answer 4: d) Leave it blank?

Answer 5: e) Something else? (use chat to comment)

A wide spread of answers with no firm trend for one or another.

Also discussion on UKCorr - could there be clear advice steer from Research England?

put 'd' but would use pub date exception if appropriate

a mix of b and d - leave the acceptance date blank, then apply to publication date exception

Pure users can't leave the date blank so have to Proxy (some noted they do leave it blank and this is a known issue in OA tracking)

3. What do you do if there is an administrative error e.g. the author submitted a manuscript but repository staff forgot to upload it, or repository staff did not release it on time? (Single Choice)

A wide spread of answers with no firm trend for one or another.

Answer 1: a) Use 'repository experienced a short-term or transient technical failure that prevented compliance with the criteria'? (We wondered if anyone had explored whether this was systemic)

Answer 2: b) Mark the item non-compliant?

Answer 3: c) Use 'other' exception?

Answer 4: d) Something else? (use chat to comment)

Research England has suggested 'a' in correspondence but no clarity

One organisation noted they were very cautious so mark as non-compliant

have not had to use an exception for such a scenario yet so cannot say what we would use

Exception Other Admin error

4. What do you do if the publisher allows green route but the manuscript is not readily available in a suitable AAM format and would take considerable time to manipulate? (Single Choice)

Answer 1: a) Use the 'other' exception?

Answer 2: b) Spend a lot of time manipulating the manuscript?

Answer 3: c) Save the 'wrong' version and share it?

Answer 4: d) Something else? (use the chat box to comment)

Quite a lot of people said they would spend a lot of time manipulating the manuscript to make a suitable copy. Some interpreted the delay exception as infinite whilst others would say this was not appropriate use of the exception as we did not obtain the manuscript.

Maybe scope to use 'delay in securing text' exception for this.

Delay could be interpreted as 'infinite' - maybe high risk but depends on Research England

Have not had experience of this so cannot say for definite what we would do

might use the 'delay' deposit exception as author was unable to acquire a suitable version

probably play it safe and treat as not compliant

we are an SSI, so perhaps have a wee bit more time to do this - but as an SSI, we have a smaller number of outputs that could go in the 5%, so feel this time is justified

5. The REF guidance does not specify a licence for gold open access. What do you do if a gold publication has a CC-BY-NC-ND licence and therefore excludes re-use? (Single Choice)

Answer 1: a) Mark non-compliant if no other exception or green route apply?

Answer 2: b) Mark it as compliant as it is badged 'gold' and otherwise available?

Answer 3: c) Something else? (use chat box)

The highest number of respondents chose answer b and consider articles as compliant if gold regardless of the ND aspect of the licence.

if 'gold' then that's good enough. Any CC-BY- licence is good enough.

REF policy states that we can self-define what we mean by gold.

we define gold in the institutional OA policy as any irrevocable open license, i.e. any Creative Commons license. so would mark it as gold/compliant...it doesn't necessarily reflect what i actually think gold should be defined as

6. If we do not know the deposit date for Pubmed and that is the only repository can we assume compliance? E.g. where

the manuscript was deposited by a publisher so the date is not available to us e.g. JAMA (Single Choice)

Answer 1: a) Assume likely to have been deposited expediently so assume compliant?

Answer 2: b) Assume non-compliant as cannot be sure of compliance date?

Answer 3: c) Something else? (use chat box to comment)

Slight preference for assuming non-compliance but again a split of behaviour.

Often articles not deposited on time, can't assume

We would email the publisher

would like to use answer a, but consensus with others would be ideal as unsure if we can assume

we don't assume compliance if we can't find the deposit date but we only really look at arxiv

often articles aren't deposited until published in an issue, so can't assume deposit would be within 3 months of first publication

7. In what cases should we use Deposit 252d 'would be unlawful to deposit, or request the deposit of, the output'? (assuming you would use 253c actively disallows deposit where that was clear from the publisher policy) (Single Choice)

Answer 1: a) Where the publisher policy is unclear?

Answer 2: b) Something else? (use chat box to comment)

This is rarely used.

Noone said they would use this where the publisher policy is unclear.

Various responses - seems to be few cases when this exception is used.

maybe used in practice research areas

Where we cannot ask the author for the AAM s they are on medical leave

would only use 252d if deposit couldn't be made, normally backend deposit is made so its an access exception or other

Not sure we've used this. Would only use where there was a statement from publisher policy that made it clear that this was the case

Never used this one, still not really sure when this would be suitable

political reasons, security risks; not in relation to publisher policy

We use unlawful or where the publisher does not permit open access deposit - we don't do "closed" deposits on our repository, so cannot use the access exception, as we'd still be non-compliant with the deposit requirements.

8. The publication concerned requires an embargo period that exceeds the stated maxima, and was the most appropriate publication for the output. - what proof, if any, do you request to demonstrate this was the most appropriate publication? (Single Choice)

Answer 1: a) None

Answer 2: b) A written statement that explains this

Answer 3: c) Something else? (use chat box to comment)

Variety of answers. A written statement might just be an email from an author choosing the exception through to quite detailed explanations.

issues around what constitutes the statement and what 'evidence' is required to ensure robustness

Cannot be judged by central administration

9. We often get compliant deposit date from peers. But what about access date -are people routinely checking and sharing that at the same time? (Single Choice)

Answer 1: a) Yes

Answer 2: b) No

Answer 3: c) Sometimes (use chat box to comment)

most did not check for access date those who did found it useful

10. Do you have cases where no DOI exists e.g. publisher does not issue a DOI routinely or publisher practice is to make text freely available via a URL? Feel free to add comments in the text box. (Single Choice)

Answer 1: Yes

Answer 2: No

Answer 3: Don't Know

Next steps

What other REF topics do people want to discuss?

- Unpaywall / Core
- Audit of exceptions - are folk doing this before REF and if yes, how?
- Concern over sending PDFs to reviewers.

The CLA-UKRI licence:

https://ref.ac.uk/media/1215/he_20191003_ref-2021-agreement.pdf

Specifies use by HEIs for storing/sending to the REF submission system, but doesn't cover review purposes. We would like to understand if this does cover the position of administrators sending items for blind review e.g. if some exception has been arranged.

The number of non-OA papers that some organisations want to send to external REF reviewers can be higher than one might assume. Some rely less on journal articles and more on chapters, monographs, exhibitions, and all sorts of outputs which may contain some 3rd party copyright material.

Academics can't send their own papers out to reviewers (as it's a *blind* review process) – so it is often done by administrators. In some cases there are several internal peer reviewers in addition to external reviewers for each output.

Currently relying on risk management and anticipating that a publisher is unlikely to object. Perhaps REF and the CLA can consider the above scenarios for the future.

There are plans to organise some 'fireside' chats and possibly some further topic specific meetings.

These will be advertised via the mailing list.