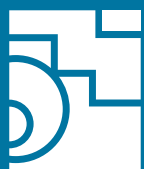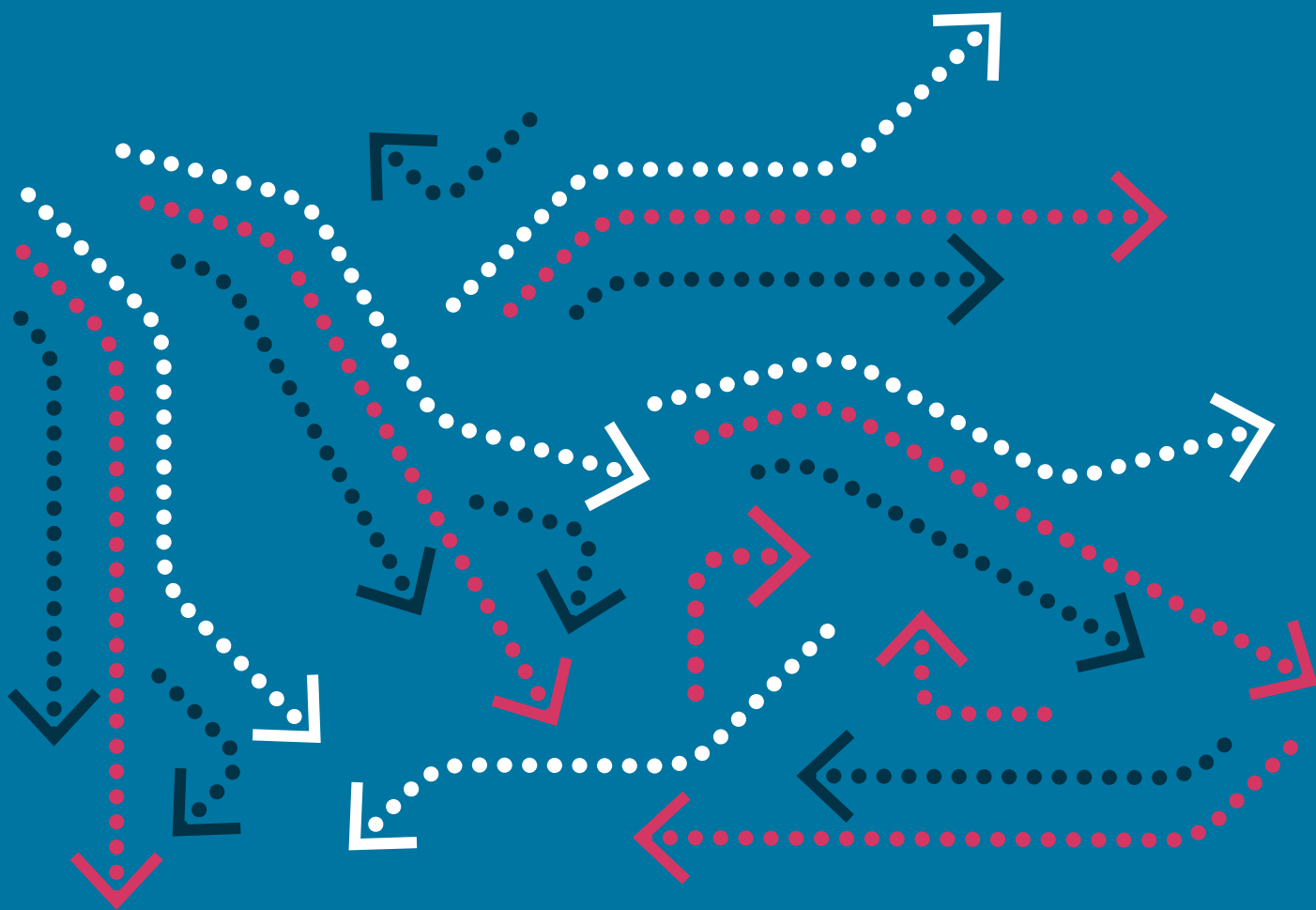# UNIVERSITIES UK
OPEN ACCESS
COORDINATION GROUP

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GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR GOLD OPEN ACCESS

Universities UK

Preface

Over the past four years, the Open Access Co-ordination Group (OACG) convened by Universities UK, has provided a forum for dialogue and engagement involving all stakeholders – universities and other research institutions, research funders, and publishers – to promote the development and implementation of policy and practice of open access (OA) across the UK. In his report in 2016 to Jo Johnson, then Minister of State for Universities and Science, Professor Adam Tickell, Chair of the OACG and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex, recommended that a series of working groups representing all stakeholders should be established to stimulate further progress; and the Minister accepted those recommendations.

This guide results from the work of the Service Standards Group (SSG), which was asked to identify service standards for the publication of Gold OA articles, and to develop guidelines for good practice. The SSG has also drawn on the work of two further groups, which have been considering how workflows and processes might be made more efficient, and how policies and processes relating to repositories might be more effectively coordinated. Links to the reports of these groups and to other relevant documents are provided in the annexe, alongside the membership of the SSG.

This guide has been endorsed by the full OACG. It sets out what the OACG believes should be good practice in the publication of Gold OA articles (that is, articles published in fully-OA journals or based on OA terms in hybrid journals that offer OA as an option, and whether or not an article publishing charge (APC) is paid) from the perspectives of all the key stakeholders. The OACG also acknowledges, however, that systems and processes need to be developed further before some of the present inefficiencies and problems experienced on occasion by all stakeholders can be eliminated. It may, therefore, be some time before what is described here as ideal practice can be fully implemented.

Background

There has been rapid progress in the adoption of open access (OA) in the UK since the publication of the Finch Report in 2012; however, at a detailed level, individual stakeholders' policies and practices are still evolving. Evidence gathered by the OACG and its working groups suggests that developments implemented in isolation have brought some mismatches between policies, processes and expectations in areas including communications; language and terminology; invoicing and payments; licensing; and monitoring and reporting. Hence there is considerable scope for improvements.

At the heart of the good practice recommendations set out below is the need for efficient, friction-free flows of relevant and machine-readable information between all stakeholders involved in the publication process. The evidence indicates that there is some way to go before that ideal is achieved in transactions between every member of all the stakeholder groups, and it is critically important that representatives of each group continue to work together to attain that end. The OACG will monitor progress in the adoption of this guide, and it is recommended that the guide itself should be reviewed and revised in light of the evidence available in 3 years' time.

1. **Facilitate the implementation of Gold OA, and compliance with the policies of funders and institutions.**

    Levels of take-up of Gold OA continue to rise in the UK, but not as rapidly as many had anticipated. Despite the efforts made by publishers, funders and universities over recent years, evidence suggests that levels of awareness and understanding of OA vary across the research community. While many authors have embraced Gold OA with enthusiasm, others remain confused over the distinctions between Green and Gold OA, the specific policies of different funders, universities and publishers, and about what they must do to comply with the requirements of those policies.

    Therefore, there is a continuing need for all stakeholders to work together to convey simple and easily-understandable messages about Gold OA, to use as many channels of communication as possible in order to reach different segments of the research community, and to do so on a regular basis. Wherever possible, stakeholders should consult with others, using the OACG and other appropriate forums, before launching any major communications campaigns.

    The variations in terminology used, and lack of consistency across different sources of information, represent a significant barrier to enhancing awareness and understanding. Further efforts are thus needed to ensure that the different stakeholders use consistent terminology to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. The work currently being undertaken at a global level to develop standard terminologies should help towards this, and it is important that steps should be taken by all major stakeholders to adopt those standards once they have been agreed.

    The recommended good practice guidelines for Gold OA are that:

    funders, publishers and universities will:

    - work cooperatively on any initiatives which affect multiple stakeholders, and on efforts to reach all the different sectors of the research community with clear and easily-understandable messages about Gold OA

    - recognise the need to communicate those messages on a regular basis, and seek and exploit opportunities to do so

    - participate actively in efforts to develop standard terminologies, and to promote their adoption across all stakeholder communities, especially in the UK

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2. **Provide accurate, comprehensive easily-findable and readily-understandable information about Gold OA and policy requirements**

It is essential that funders, universities and publishers ensure that clear and concise information about Gold OA, its benefits, how it can be achieved and the need to comply with policy requirements, is prominently displayed on relevant parts of their websites so that it is readily findable and easily navigable. The aim should be to ensure that authors from across the research community are aware of the options available to them before they begin to consider where and how they might publish their work.

As an essential component in their communications strategies, funders should, as a minimum, provide clear and detailed information on their publication policies and requirements on their websites, in their guidance to applicants, and in other relevant literature; and that applicants and grant recipients are regularly reminded about their obligations from the beginning of their research projects. Funders must also take active steps to ensure that any changes in their policies are communicated across all stakeholder groups; that such messages are repeated; and that they enlist the support of universities and publishers in ensuring that researchers are aware of the changes.

Once authors begin to consider where and how they might publish their work, publishers must ensure that similarly clear and detailed information about their Gold OA policies and procedures is prominent, accessible, and clearly labelled, on or via links from the websites of each of their journals. Publishers should provide the information consistently across all their journals, covering:

- the processes relating to publication of Gold OA articles;

- any charges (including discounts), procedures for payment, and waiver policies;

- licences and their terms; and

- where possible, links to major funders' own statements of policy.

The aim should be to ensure that potential authors have all the information necessary to make well-informed judgements about the journals to which they might wish to submit their work. Ideally, such information should be made available in machine-readable form. Both funders and publishers should intensify their efforts to ensure that centralised resources such as Jisc's SHERPA services provide fully-comprehensive and up-to-date information about their policies to help inform authors' choices.

The recommended good practice guidelines for Gold OA are that:

funders, publishers and universities will:

- ensure that clear and concise information about Gold OA is prominently displayed on relevant parts of their websites, so that it is readily findable and easily navigable

- support the development of centralised resources such as Jisc's SHERPA services, and ensure that they provide fully-comprehensive and up-to-date information about their policies

funders will:

- provide clear and detailed information about their publication policies and requirements when researchers apply for grants, and also when grants are awarded

- take active steps, in collaboration with publishers and universities, to ensure that any changes in their policies are actively and regularly communicated to all stakeholder groups

publishers will:

- ensure that clear and detailed information about their Gold OA policies and procedures is prominent, accessible, and clearly labelled, via the websites of each of their journals

- work towards providing that information in machine-readable form

- wherever possible, provide links to the policies of the major funders in the key subject areas covered by each journal

3. Promote efficient workflows by all stakeholders

Some of the workflows associated with Gold OA, particularly for hybrid journals, have been developed on top of longer-established systems and processes. Funders, universities and publishers all struggle with inefficiencies in transmitting information between different systems. To increase efficiency and reduce both costs and scope for error, current systems should be fully adapted to enable transmission of information between stakeholders in machine-readable format; but it will take time before some of the recommendations below can be fully implemented. The OACG should take an active role in encouraging dialogue, and in stimulating and monitoring progress.

It is critically important that full and accurate information is gathered from corresponding authors as early as possible in the publication process, so that it can be transmitted to key stakeholders, including universities and funders. The information should ideally include:

- the Open Researcher and Contributor (ORCID) iDs for all authors;

- their institutional affiliations (using one of the standard identifiers);

- any funders who have supported the work (using the CrossRef Funding Data system) and the funder's unique grant reference number; and

- full details of who has agreed to pay any APC once the article is accepted for publication, and to whom correspondence should be sent.

We recognise that publishers' systems vary as to the point at which they gather such information; but it is important that stakeholders work together to help authors understand the need to check and supply this information at an early stage.

Once an article is accepted for publication, a communication is sent to the corresponding author. Ideally, that author should be prompted to send a copy of it to whoever has been designated to pay the APC and/or to designated contacts in institutional OA services. It should include not only the date of acceptance and the titles of both the article and the journal, but also wherever possible the digital object identifier (DOI) (though that may not be possible in all cases under current systems), and confirmation of the licence under which the article will be published. It is essential that full metadata should be deposited with CrossRef.

Invoices should be sent to the designated contact for payment of the APC, and they should ideally include all the information set out in the paragraph above. They should also include a breakdown of the prices charged, including any discounts arising from membership or prepayment schemes, and any additional amounts in the form of page charges, colour charges or similar. For papers published under offsetting arrangements where no APC is charged, statements should be sent to the designated contact in the institutional OA services.

> The recommended good practice guidelines for Gold OA are that:
>
> ***funders, publishers and universities*** will:
> - work cooperatively as they each seek to develop systems to facilitate the transmission of information between each stakeholder in machine-readable form
>
> ***universities*** will:
> - provide clear information to authors and publishers about designated contacts and procedures for the submission and payment of invoices
>
> - pay invoices promptly
>
> ***publishers*** will:
> - gather from authors the information necessary for smooth operation of all parts of the publication process at an early stage in that process
>
> - deposit relevant metadata with CrossRef once an article has been accepted for publication, and prompt corresponding authors to copy acceptance letters to designated contacts in institutional OA services
>
> - provide on invoices a breakdown of prices charged, including any discounts or additional charges

4. Promote and facilitate access and reuse of Gold OA content

The aim of OA is to increase access to published articles, and to facilitate reuse. It is crucial that everything possible is done to facilitate this. Close attention must be paid to four issues.

First, many funders require that Gold OA articles published with their support should have a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) licence. Many publishers and journals have adopted that licence as standard, but many others provide it as a choice to authors, alongside other Creative Commons or bespoke licences. Where publishers do not wish to compel authors to adopt the CC-BY licence required by their funders, they should where possible make clear to authors who have identified such a funder that choosing any other licence will put them in breach of their funder's requirements.

Second, OA signalling. Where it is not the case already, publishers should work towards systems which ensure that Gold OA articles are clearly listed as such in the metadata, tables of contents, and on the title page of the article. The full text of the article (and preferably the title page) should include a clear statement (again in machine-readable format) of the licence under which it was published.

Third, in order to make published articles accessible from a variety of sources, some funders require that articles be deposited in designated repositories; and many publishers have established arrangements for the automatic deposit of the version of record. Where such arrangements do not exist, deposit levels remain lower than wished for by many universities and funders. Further steps are needed to enable all stakeholders to implement efficient and effective procedures to ensure that versions of record are accessible in specified repositories; and that robust metrics of usage and impact can be gathered and collated across all platforms.

Fourth, most but not all publishers, have established arrangements with third-party organisations such as Portico, the British Library, and other national libraries for the long-term preservation of the journals and articles they publish. These arrangements – in many cases in line with relevant national legislation – include agreements as to the terms on which copies can be made accessible to readers. In order that the records of scholarly work should be safeguarded for the (very) long term, it is imperative that universities, libraries and publishers work together to ensure that such arrangements are kept under regular review, and that they cover all scholarly publications.

The recommended good practice guidelines for Gold OA are that:

funders, publishers and universities will:

- work co-operatively in developing and implementing efficient mechanisms to enable the versions of record of Gold OA articles to be made accessible, not only from the publisher's site but via other platforms too

Publishers, libraries and universities will:

- work together to ensure that robust mechanisms are in place for the long-term preservation of all scholarly publications

Publishers will:

- where possible alert authors if they choose a licence that does not meet their funder's requirements.

- ensure that all OA articles are clearly signalled as such in machine-readable form

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5. **Support monitoring of levels of take-up, compliance and expenditure**

Universities and funders have a strong interest in monitoring levels of adoption and compliance, and in checking that each article for which they have paid an APC meets their policy requirements. Publishers too have an interest in monitoring levels of take up in the UK and other parts of the world.

At a micro level, publishers should provide a designated point of contact for dealing promptly with any problems that arise with individual articles, and publish and implement a refund policy for any cases that do not meet their advertised publishing standards.

At a broader level, it is essential that systems are developed to facilitate friction-free flows of data between publishers, universities and funders, so that each can monitor levels of adoption, compliance and expenditure by funder, institution, and so on. Such information should be made freely available across the university and publishing sectors.

The recommended good practice guidelines for Gold OA are that:

funders, publishers and universities will:

- work co-operatively in facilitating friction-free flows of information between them so that each can monitor levels of adoption, compliance and expenditure

publishers will:

- provide a designated point of contact and deal promptly with any problems that arise relating to the publication of individual articles

- develop and implement policies for refunds in cases that do not meet their advertised standards

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Next Steps

Universities UK urge all stakeholders to adopt the principles and good practice guidelines set out in this document, and we hope that many will be able to make formal commitments to do so. As more of them make such a commitment, we anticipate that it should be possible to move from these guidelines to a more formal concordat or code to be agreed across all stakeholder groups.

ANNEXE A

USEFUL AND RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Background to the guidelines

- Open Access Co-ordination Group (OACG), *Terms of reference, membership and papers*

- Professor Adam Tickell, *Open access to research publications: Independent advice,* February 2016

- Jo Johnson MP, Former Minister of State for Universities and Science, *Response to independent advice on open access research: letter from Jo Johnson MP*, 11 February 2016

Reports

- Working Group on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings (the Finch Group), *Accessibility, sustainability, excellence: how to expand access to research publications*, June 2012

- Open Access Co-ordination Group (OACG), *Monitoring the transition to open access*, August 2015

- Universities UK, *Monitoring the transition to open access*, December 2017

- Universities UK, *Open access efficiencies: report and recommendations*, July 2018

- Universities UK, *Open access repositories: report and recommendations*, July 2018

External Reports

- Efficiency and Standards for Article Charges (ESAC), *Outcome report of the 2nd ESAC Offsetting Workshop in Vienna*, 9–10 March 2017

ANNEXE B

Membership of the Universities UK Open Access Service Standards Working Group

- Professor Yvonne Barnett, Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Head of The College of Arts and Science, Nottingham Trent University (Co-Chair)

- Audrey McCulloch, Chief Executive and Company Secretary, The Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (Co-Chair)

- Yvonne Budden, Head of Scholarly Communications, University of Warwick

- Geraldine Clement-Stoneham, Head of Knowledge Management and Scholarly Communication, Medical Research Council (representing Research Councils UK)

- Janet Dean, Royal Society of Chemistry

- Gemma Hersh, Vice President, Open Science, Elsevier (representing the Publishers Association)

- Valerie McCutcheon, Research Information Manager, Glasgow University (representing the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA)

- Torsten Reimer, Head of Research Services, British Library

- Caroline Sutton, Director of Editorial Development, Taylor and Francis

- Stuart Taylor, Publishing Director, Royal Society

- Michael Jubb, Director, Jubb Consulting (Working group secretary)

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