



# **Open access in the post-2014 REF: an overview**

# Introduction

**This slide pack covers the main points of the four UK HE funding bodies' policy for open access in relation to the post-2014 Research Excellence Framework.**

The policy states that certain outputs must be available in an open-access form to be eligible for submission to the next REF.

# Definition of outputs within scope

***Outputs meeting both parts of the below definition are within scope of this policy and will need to fulfil open access criteria.***

## **Definition of outputs within scope**

- Output is a journal article or a conference proceeding with an ISSN\*
- Output was accepted for publication after 1 April 2016

\* Conference proceedings that form part of a book series are out of scope.

# Outputs not in scope

**The following outputs are therefore out of scope:**

- **Monographs and other long-form publications**
- **Non-text, creative and practice-based research**
- **Research data**

However, where an institution can demonstrate that it has taken steps towards enabling open access for outputs outside the scope of this definition, credit will be given in the research environment component of the post-2014 REF.

# Open access criteria (1)

***Outputs meeting the definition must satisfy all of the following requirements to be treated as open-access.***

## **Deposit requirements**

- Output must be deposited in an institutional or subject repository within three months of being accepted for publication\*.
- Output must be deposited as the final, peer-reviewed text (as a minimum).

\* A longer timeframe applies during the first year of the policy. [See our letter to HEIs.](#)

# Open access criteria (2)

***Outputs meeting the definition must satisfy all of the following requirements to be treated as open-access.***

## **Discovery requirements**

- Output must be discoverable to anyone with an internet connection, and to search engines.

# Open access criteria (3)

***Outputs meeting the definition must satisfy all of the following requirements to be treated as open-access.***

## **Access requirements**

- Output must allow anyone with internet access to search electronically within the text, read it and download it without charge.
- The access requirements must be fulfilled as soon as any embargo period has elapsed. Embargo periods should not exceed the following maxima:
  - 12 months for REF main panels A and B
  - 24 months for REF main panels C and D

# Text-mining

**Outputs do not need to allow text-mining to fulfil the open access criteria.**

However, where an institution can demonstrate that outputs are presented in a form that allows text-mining, credit will be given in the research environment component of the post-2014 REF.



# Exceptions to the requirements (1)

*Occasionally, it will not be possible for an output to fulfil the criteria. An exception is allowed in the following cases.*

## **Deposit exceptions (these outputs are considered out of scope of the policy):**

- Individual was not employed by a UK HEI at the point of acceptance
- Individual was unable to secure the use of a repository
- Individual experienced a delay securing the final peer-reviewed text (e.g. for multi-authored papers)
- It would be unlawful, or present a security risk, to deposit the output
- The output was published as gold open access.

# Exceptions to the requirements (2)

## **Access exceptions (these outputs must still be deposited):**

- Output depends on third party content for which open access rights could not be granted
- The publication concerned requires an embargo period that exceeds the stated maxima, and was the most appropriate for the output
- The publication concerned actively disallows open-access deposit, and was the most appropriate for the output

# Exceptions to the requirements (3)

## **Technical exceptions (these outputs are considered out of scope of the policy):**

- At acceptance, the individual was at a different UK HEI that failed to comply
- A short-term technical failure within the repository prevented compliance
- An external service provider failure prevented compliance (e.g. a subject repository ceased to operate)

# Exceptions to the requirements (4)

## **Other exceptions**

- There may be very unusual cases where an output could not meet the criteria for a reason not covered above.
- A short written explanation will be required
- Such cases should be extremely rare
- A process for considering these 'other' exceptions will be established in due course

# What does non-compliance mean?

**If an output is submitted to the post-2014 REF that was:**

- **within the definition**
- **not compliant with all of the criteria**
- **and no valid exception was recorded**

**then that output will receive an unclassified score in the REF.**

# Further information

For further information about this policy, please email [openaccess@hefce.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@hefce.ac.uk)