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Open access and the next REF

From 1st April 2016 research outputs must be deposited in a repository (at Birmingham, Pure) at the point of acceptance in order to be eligible for submission to the next REF. The record of the publication and document must be discoverable online.

# Key points of the policy

* The policy applies to all Journal articles or conference proceedings with an ISSN (as an illustration, these made up 100% of the MDS REF14 return , and approximately 40% of the CAL return)
* Chapters, monographs, and non-textual outputs are not covered by the requirements
* The document can be embargoed for up to 12 months (Main Panels A and B) and 24 months (Main Panels C and D[[1]](#footnote-1)).
* If we are unable to meet the guidelines, but can prove that we have made every effort, we still able to submit the output for REF and specify an exception. It is expected that the number of exceptions will be monitored and kept to a minimum.
* This policy complements the existing structure of Green and Gold open access routes, allowing either method (although favours the green route).

HEFCE’s guide to their policy can be found at <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/rsrch/oa>

# What researchers need to know

As decisions about submission to REF may be taken significantly after publication, all journal articles and conference proceedings must be deposited in line with the REF rules to avoid later problems.

The nature of the relationship between an author and their publisher means the University is unaware of when articles are accepted. It is therefore the academic’s responsibility to ensure their accepted article is deposited in Pure within the 3 months. **If this is not done it is likely that it will not be possible to submit the article to the REF.**

## Guidance

Guidance notes, roadshows and open drop in sessions have been running in the 12 months running up to April 16.

General guidance can be found at: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/Pure> and <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/openaccess>

* **Download on REF guidelines:** <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/collaboration/pure/documents/public/Open-access-guidelines.pdf>
* **Download on making your work open access in Pure:** <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/collaboration/pure/documents/public/openforref.pdf>
* **Drop-in clinics:** <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/collaboration/pure/using-pure/dropin.aspx>

A range of communications promoting the HEFCE rules for open access will be released in the lead up to, and beyond, the April 2016 start date.

# Internal Processes

## Publisher embargo policies

All journals, whether fully open access or hybrid, have specific policies regarding the author’s ability to deposit a final manuscript and embargo times. Most major publishers are aware of the HEFCE rules for REF and are starting to communicate these policies to author on acceptance.

However, there are still a substantial group of journals/publishers whose policies do not match the minimum requirements for REF. In these cases we are still able to submit the output to REF, but we have to declare that we have been unable to comply with the rules.

The Digital Assets team in Library Services will apply embargo period to all deposited outputs and highlight any that do not reach the HEFCE requirements. It is not expected that an author should change their preferred place of publication solely to ensure compliance with the HEFCE open access rules.

## Monitoring OA deposits

All records created in Pure with an acceptance date are check by the Digital Assets team in Library Services to ensure that they comply with the REF rules. The team will communicate directly with the author to collect any missing information, with any potential issues escalated to the REF lead for the UoA.

## New developments in Pure allow us to monitor open access for REF and record any non-compliance reasons and regular reports will be generated for University and College Research Committees.

## Pure usage has risen vastly since the OA advocacy started in May 2015. The focus is now on ensuring accepted articles are uploaded within the timeframe, with the correct documents attached. Already in 2016 we have over 60 accepted output records created with a document attached, and another 20 that are missing the required document. These numbers point to a significant level of engagement from the research community but work is needed to maintain the current level of activity.

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1. For details of the disciplines covered by the different REF Main Panels see: http://www.ref.ac.uk/panels/unitsofassessment/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)