

Policy on Open Access

Context

The Government announced on 16 July 2012 that it had accepted the recommendations in the report of the Working Group on Expanding Access to Published Research Findings, chaired by Dame Janet Finch: *Accessibility, sustainability, excellence: how to expand access to research publications*, published on 18 June 2012.¹ The report recommended a balanced programme of action to enable more people to read and use the publications arising from research, and to accelerate the progress towards a fully open access environment.

Scope

The principle behind open access is that publicly funded research should be freely available to the public. The move to open access had been endorsed by HEFCE, the United Kingdom research councils (RCUK) and the European Commission with respect to Horizon 2020 funding and will have an impact on future REF preparations. For the post-2014 REF, HEFCE has stipulated that:

[T]o be eligible for submission to the post-2014 REF, authors' final peer reviewed manuscripts must have been deposited in an institutional or subject repository on acceptance for publication. Deposited material should be discoverable, and free to read and download, for anyone with an internet connection. The requirement applies only to journal articles and conference proceedings with an International Standard Serial Number. It will not apply to monographs, book chapters, other long-form publications, working papers, creative or practice-based research outputs, or data.

Policy for open access in the post-2014 Research Excellence Framework

At present HEFCE does not have a policy on open access for monographs but the recent report from the Monograph and Open Access Project, led by Geoffrey Crossick, Distinguished Professor of Humanities at the School of Advanced Study, University of London, has explored the feasibility of extending open access and HEFCE continues to explore options.²

These developments require an institutional policy. While HEFCE's policy applies to research outputs accepted for publication on or after 1 April 2016, **Edge Hill is requiring adherence to HEFCE's policy with immediate effect: from 1 April 2015 where academic staff are preparing outputs which fall under this policy (journal articles and conference proceedings with an International Standard Serial Number), they should ensure that they are able to comply with the open access requirements.**³

¹ See <http://www.researchinfonet.org/publish/finch/>

² See <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/year/2015/monographs/#d.en.99908>

³ This does not apply to articles already under review or in press at this time, although where possible they should be made available through open access following the guidelines below.

The Policy

Edge Hill is committed to making its research available via open access ensuring that there is access to research work through the internet, unrestricted by payment or subscription. The University believes that there are significant benefits of open access: research outputs are read more, cited more and are more likely to have impact. Although this policy applies to research where the type of output is a journal article or a conference proceeding with an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN), staff members are encouraged to engage with open access for all their research outputs where feasible. The University has also developed [Open Access Guidance \(RO-GOV-08\)](#) to assist staff to meet the open access requirements.

Understanding Open Access: Green and Gold Routes

There are two routes for open access: 'green' and 'gold'.

- Green open access refers to digital archives (otherwise known as repositories) which are online web sites where authors deposit scholarly publications for anyone to read. Usually these publications are the author's final pre-publication version – the peer-reviewed, accepted manuscript. Repositories are a mechanism for managing and storing digital content. They can be subject or institutional in their focus. Putting content into an institutional repository enables staff and institutions to manage and preserve it, and therefore derive maximum value from it. Repositories use open standards to ensure that the content they contain is accessible and can be searched and retrieved for later use.
- Gold open access refers to an author's manuscript being made freely available to the end user via the publisher's website and where the version made available is the final publisher's version. The work is available immediately, with no embargo periods. A payment is made by the author (or the author's institution) to allow the article to be made freely available, irrespective of whether an individual or institution has a subscription to the journal in which the article appears. The payment is known as an APC (article processing charge). The fee amount can vary greatly from publisher to publisher, and even from journal to journal belonging to an individual publisher, but the average charge is currently around £2000.

Responsibilities

The Edge Hill Policy on Open Access requires that all staff should ensure that their research outputs meet 'green' open access requirements by making their research outputs available via publicly accessible repositories: these include subject specific repositories (click [here](#) for examples), funders' archives (e.g. ESRC Research Catalogue) or the Edge Hill Research Archive (EHRA). **Staff members are responsible for ensuring that they follow the [Open Access Guidance \(RO-GOV-08\)](#) for making their research adhere to green open access protocols, while remaining compliant with HEFCE's rules for REF outputs.** In particular, researchers need to ensure that:

- The items are available via open access within three months of being accepted for publication
- Must be deposited as the final peer-reviewed text (as a minimum)
- They respect any embargo period: i.e. the length of time a publisher may require an author to wait until they can make their published paper available through green open access. Embargo periods are usually for a minimum of 6 months to a maximum of 24 months.

HEFCE has also published a list of [FAQs](#) to assist staff in understanding the open access requirements in relation to the next REF exercise.

In order to ensure that researchers are adhering to these criteria, Learning Services will carry out periodic audits of EHRA to ensure that open access requirements are met after embargo periods have lapsed.

The University stresses that research outputs that do not conform to HEFCE's criteria will not be eligible to be included in the post-2014 REF (please see Open Access Guidance (RO-GOV-08) for a detailed summary of HEFCE requirements; or access the full text of HEFCE's [Policy for open access in the post-2014 Research Excellence Framework](#)). The policy therefore requires that all relevant research outputs meet these criteria to increase the pool of potential REF items and encourages staff to make all research output open access if feasible.

The University acknowledges that there may be occasions when authors wish to publish in open access journals that charge APCs. Wherever possible, the costs should be met by external funding sources and researchers need to make provision for this in their external bids (where the funders allow for APCs). Exceptionally, the University will meet the costs of publication but a very strong case needs to be made and approval granted before the costs are incurred.

The [Open Access Guidance \(RO-GOV-08\)](#) explains in detail how researchers can adhere to best practice.

*This policy was approved on **25 March 2015** by the Edge Hill University Academic Board.*

*The policy is effective from **25 March 2015** and is to be reviewed **March 2018**.*