

Research Councils UK' updated position statement on access to research outputs, June 2006

1. In June 2005, the Executive Group of Research Councils UK (RCUK) issued a draft position statement on access to research outputs. Following consultation and discussion, the research councils remain committed to the principles that underpinned that statement and agree on the further activities necessary to develop their position.

These principles state that:

- Ideas and knowledge derived from publicly-funded research must be made available and accessible for public use, interrogation and scrutiny, as widely, rapidly and effectively as practicable.
- Published research outputs must be subject to rigorous quality assurance, through effective peer review mechanisms.
- The models and mechanisms for publication and access to research results must be both efficient and cost-effective in the use of public funds.
- The outputs from current and future research must be preserved and remain accessible for future generations.

2. The position statement covers two aspects of the changing publication landscape.

- Author-pays publishing
- Self-archiving.

Author-pays publishing

3. RCUK Executive Group reaffirms its long-standing position that authors choose where to place their research for publication. It is for authors' institutions to decide whether they are prepared to use funds for any page charges or other publishing fees. Such funds could be part of an institution's indirect costs under the full economic costing regime. RCUK Executive Group makes no judgement as to the most appropriate publishing model.

Self-archiving

4. Research councils agree that their funded researchers should, where required to do so, deposit the outputs from research councils funded research in an acceptable repository as designated by the individual research council. This requirement will be effective from the time indicated in the guidance from the individual research council. This guidance will be published on individual Research Council websites and will, where appropriate, require funded researchers to:

- Personally deposit, or otherwise ensure the deposit of, a copy of any resultant articles published in journals or conference proceedings, in an appropriate repository, as designated by the individual research council.
- Wherever possible, personally deposit, or otherwise ensure the deposit of, the bibliographical metadata relating to such articles, including a link to the publisher's website, at or around the time of publication.

5. Full implementation of these requirements must be undertaken such that current copyright and licensing policies, for example embargo periods or provisions limiting the use of deposited content to non-commercial purposes, are respected by authors. The research councils' position is based on the assumption that publishers will maintain the spirit of their current policies.

6. Where relevant, grant guidelines will be amended to provide guidance to grant holders on the requirement for ensuring the deposit of material, and will apply from the date indicated in individual research council's guidance. These research councils will also encourage, but not formally oblige, award-holders to deposit articles arising from grants awarded as a result of applications before that date.

Further activities

7. RCUK Executive Group has consulted widely on its position statement and it is clear that there is a wide spectrum of views on the likely impact of self-archiving on subscription journals. Accordingly, RCUK Executive Group will:

- Organise a workshop jointly with interested learned societies to discuss the implications for them of self-archiving.
- Consult with the publishing community regarding copyright and licensing issues through existing forums. There is no intention that individual researchers will be expected to break publishers' copyright or licensing agreements or to negotiate with publishers.
- Initiate a project to investigate the impact of author-pays publication and self-archiving on research publishing. Three leading publishers (Macmillan, Blackwell and Elsevier) have indicated that they are prepared to be involved in the project. Discussions have also taken place with the Royal Society, which also believes that such research could be useful. It is intended that this project will start late in 2006 and report in late 2008. RCUK will review its position in mid to late 2008 in light of the findings from this research. A pre-study with the Research Information Network and the Department of Trade and Industry on the availability of data on scholarly publishing has already started (see www.rcuk.ac.uk/access/).