

## OPEN ACCESS POLICY EFFECTIVENESS

### What an Open Access policy covers

An Open Access policy covers core issues, such as when and where research articles must be deposited, the length of embargo permitted, whether waivers may be granted.

The main areas that a policy on Open Access should address are:

- Whether or not the policy is mandatory;
- Whether the policy stipulates how Open Access should be provided (through deposit into an Open Access repository or by publication in Open Access journals);
- Where repository-based OA is concerned, in which repository (or repositories) items may be deposited;
- The length of permitted embargoes;
- Whether there are to be sanctions in the case of non-compliance;
- Whether there are to be any particular requirements regarding licensing, including whether authors should retain certain rights over their work.

### What makes an Open Access policy effective: the important elements of a policy

The PASTEUR4OA project looked at the mandatory policies in place at over 120 universities around the world and assessed the effectiveness of each policy (Swan, A. 2015. *Open Access policy effectiveness: A briefing paper for research funders*. Available at:

<http://www.pasteur4oa.eu/resources/132#.Vwzilnp4WT9>). This research and analysis showed that the important elements of a policy, whether of a funder or an institution, are as follows:

- The policy states that research articles must be deposited in a repository (that is, the policy is mandatory);
- The policy states that this action cannot be waived: whatever the conditions of embargo, the article must be deposited at the point specified by the policy;
- If the policy states that an author should retain certain rights over the published work, this action is mandatory and cannot be waived;
- The policy states that deposited items must be, or must be made, Open Access, and if there is an embargo then they must be made Open Access immediately the embargo comes to an end;
- The policy links the deposit of articles with research assessment/performance evaluation procedures within the institution: that is, the policy states that articles that are not deposited in line with policy requirements will not count towards performance reviews or research assessment exercises.

### What makes an Open Access policy effective: the critical elements of a policy

- The policy requires that research articles be deposited in an Open Access repository;
- In addition, the policy must state that this deposit step cannot be waived;
- The policy links deposit with research assessment (performance evaluation).

The first two elements are significantly correlated with resulting high levels of Open Access and, of course, they make the policy a mandatory one.

### A model institutional Open Access policy

### A model institutional Open Access policy: criteria to include

**Purpose:** This policy aims to make the knowledge created in this institution available to all for the benefit of research itself and for society more widely.

**Policy conditions:** The policy requires the following:

- All peer-reviewed publications must be deposited in the institutional repository [*name*] at acceptance for publication.
- The version to be deposited is the author's final document once the changes required by peer review have been made.
- The deposit must be made, regardless of whether a publisher embargo is to be observed or there are other legitimate reasons for not making the material openly available at a future date.
- Articles must be made openly available immediately wherever possible, or once any embargoes have run their course.
- All assessment and evaluation procedures in this institution will use the institutional repository to source publication lists for candidates: publications not deposited at acceptance for publication will not be eligible for consideration.

A policy that includes all these criteria and is implemented properly by funders and institutions will succeed in gathering a large volume of Open Access content. The requirement to deposit, and the insistence that this step cannot be waived for any reason, ensure that authors deposit their work.

#### Examples of successful funders' policies

There is evidence from the PASTEUR4OA project to show that the adoption of strong policies by funders drives the adoption of policies, particularly aligned policies, in institutions (see Picarra, M. 2015. *From policy development to effectiveness and alignment: An analysis of the UK's Higher Education Open Access policy landscape*. Available at:

[http://www.pasteur4oa.eu/sites/pasteur4oa/files/resource/Brief\\_from\\_policy\\_development\\_to\\_effectiveness\\_and\\_alignment%20UK.pdf](http://www.pasteur4oa.eu/sites/pasteur4oa/files/resource/Brief_from_policy_development_to_effectiveness_and_alignment%20UK.pdf). Most importantly the policy for the European Commission's Horizon 2020 research funding programme is also of this type, meaning that institutions making this type of policy are aligning their own policy with that of the European funding programme.

Other examples of successful funders' policies are:

- *Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) Portugal* – insists on deposit as soon as possible on acceptance or publication ([https://www.fct.pt/documentos/PoliticaAcessoAberto\\_Publicacoes.pdf](https://www.fct.pt/documentos/PoliticaAcessoAberto_Publicacoes.pdf)).
- *The Health Research Board (HRB) Ireland* – is the lead funding agency in Ireland for health research. Their most recent Open Access policy, published in 2014 ([http://www.hrb.ie/uploads/media/HRB\\_Policy\\_on\\_Open\\_Access\\_1\\_May\\_2014\\_01.pdf](http://www.hrb.ie/uploads/media/HRB_Policy_on_Open_Access_1_May_2014_01.pdf)), requires researchers to deposit their publications in an Open Access repository and ensure they are discoverable, accessible and re-usable as soon as possible.
- *HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) in the UK* – the policy insists that “to be

eligible for submission to the post-2014 REF [the next research assessment exercise], authors' outputs must have been deposited in an institutional or subject repository" (<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/Year/2014/201407/>). There is evidence from individual institutions that this policy is already having the effect of increasing the number and proportion of OA deposits. At UCL (University College London) for instance the repository contained 10,000 OA outputs in 2011 and 14,000 OA papers in 2013; OA content then sharply increased to 22,500 papers by September 2015.

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