

RCUK Open Access block grant allocation policy

Approved by Research & Innovation Committee 28th November 2019

Background

The RCUK OA block grant will not be sufficient to cover all requests for APCs (Article Processing Charges) (and related publication charges) if requests by Oxford researchers continue at the current trend.

RCUK has formally advised that:

- No additional funds will be made available above and beyond the awarded allocation.
- RCUK does not expect 100% compliance with its policy, neither does it provide funds enabling 100% compliance with its own policy (See [RCUK OA policy FAQs para 4.1](#))
- RCUK has a preference for immediate, unrestricted OA (Gold) and has an expectation that the majority of the OA block grant funding it provides will be used to support the payment of APCs for Gold. However, RCUK also expects research organisations to stay within the cash limits of the grant, so where demand is high, this may require research organisations to balance out what is published via the Gold and Green Routes.

Policy

This amended policy takes a similar approach to many other universities, to make best use of the remaining funds available and enable authors seeking to publish in fully OA journals later in the block grant year to be able to access APC funding.

This policy (see Box 1 below) sets out how the RCUK block grant will be allocated until further notice. The model is designed to:

- Comply with the RCUK policy as far as possible within the constraints of limited funds
- Enable authors to publish in the journal of their choice
- Enable, as far as possible, publication in fully OA journals
- Promote value for money
- Support the University's OA Publications Policy

RCUK funds will **not** be used to pay for APCs retrospectively, in accordance with RCUK policy.

BOX 1: Whilst RCUK funds are available, the block grant will be used to pay for:

1. Existing commitments for APC payments.
2. APCs of articles published in fully gold OA journals (i.e. journals listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals DOAJ <https://doaj.org>).
3. Non-APC Publication charges as described in the separate policy (see Appendix).
4. APCs of articles in hybrid journals (subscription journal with a paid option to publish OA) where the University of Oxford (via the Bodleian Libraries) participates in an OA deal e.g. Read and Publish transformative agreements (apc@bodleian.ox.ac.uk will advise).

In the light of timing policy clauses 1 – 4 above will be adopted **from 2nd December 2019** (in addition to 'Act on Acceptance' deposit in ORA for REF compliance).

*** Researchers should check before applying with apc@bodleian.ox.ac.uk that sufficient funds are available **before committing to payment** ***

Last updated: 31 March 2020

Progress will be monitored, and the policy may be revised at any point during the year, in consultation with the Oxford OA Project Group and with the approval of Research & Innovation Committee, as a result of the pattern of requests and spend.

Additional Information

RCUK funded authors, including PGRs ('authors') are asked

1. **To deposit a copy of their article in ORA** (Act on Acceptance).
2. **To be mindful of the University's preference for sustainably cost-effective OA dissemination using the 'green route' to OA** via deposit of the accepted manuscript in ORA (as above).
3. **To contact the APC team** to check if funds are available *before* committing to payment of an APC (apc@bodleian.ox.ac.uk).
4. **If funded by MRC or BBSRC and using the 'green' route to OA**, the author should also deposit a copy in Europe PubMed Central (via <http://plus.europepmc.org>) in compliance with publisher's embargo permissions (in addition to 'Act on Acceptance' deposit in ORA for REF compliance).
5. **Abide by the Oxford non-APC Publication charges policy** (see Appendix).

The University, via the Bodleian Libraries will, for RCUK funded authors:

1. **Support the academic freedom** of researchers to publish in their choice of publication, having regard to quality, dissemination channels and impact, and value for money (University of Oxford OA Publications Policy).
2. **Provide an APC administration service** to respond to authors' queries about the availability and requests for payment of APC funds, and completion of publishers' forms.
3. **Administer and allocate the RCUK block grant as described in this policy**, monitor use of the funds, and, if necessary, engage with OA Steering Group and Research & Innovation Committee to revise the policy.
4. **Whilst funds remain available, pay APCs as described above in this policy.**
5. **Pay page and other non-APC charges** as described in the appended University of Oxford non-APC publication charges policy.
6. **Liaise with RCUK about compliance rates** resulting from scarcity of funds and adoption of this policy.
7. **Ensure RCUK funded researchers** across the Collegiate University are provided with the information and training they require, including clear and timely instructions to authors and administrators, and an OA team to advise authors on OA options for their publication.
8. **Where a paper has been written in collaboration with authors from other UK universities** in receipt of RCUK OA Funding, Oxford will pay the whole APC as described above in this policy, where the Oxford author is the corresponding author and the grant is held at Oxford. Other UK universities take a similar approach, but where this is not the case and an Oxford co-author (who is not the corresponding author) is approached to contribute to the cost of an APC, the University will pay a proportion of the cost relative to the number of UK authors supported by Research Council funding. Where a paper has been written in collaboration with authors from other countries, Oxford will pay the whole APC (as described in this policy above) upon request from the Oxford co-author.

Information and advice are available on the Open Access Oxford website at

<http://openaccess.ox.ac.uk/>

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APPENDIX: Use of RCUK OA block grant for non-APC publication fees

To ensure as many APCs as possible can be covered by the block grant, Oxford adopts the following policy guidelines below for RCUK-funded authors.

- 1 It is strongly recommended that authors check whether their charges will be covered **before** committing to payment by contacting the APC team at apc@bodleian.ox.ac.uk.
- 2 Where charges are not covered by the block grant or research fund, authors will need to find an alternative source of funds or, if relevant, ask the journal about other solutions such as opting to have charts/graphics published in colour in the online version only and B&W in the print version.

| | Charge | Rationale |
|--|--|---|
| Charge where non-payment can prevent publication, and/or that have some bearing on OA, and that WILL be paid from the block grant | Page charges (for all RCUK compliant journals whether green or gold route to OA) | Paid if non-payment would prevent publication |
| | PNAS publishing fees (but not PNAS APC) | Paid because non-payment would prevent publication. This model for handling PNAS and other publishing fees where the APC is non-compliant is common practice in other UK universities |
| | Publication charge or publishing fees other than those listed above | Paid if non-payment would prevent publication |
| | Colour charges | Paid if non-payment would significantly affect intelligibility of content |
| Charges where non-payment does not prevent publication, and/or have no bearing on OA, and WILL NOT be paid from block grant | Colour charges (unless exception above) | Relevant only to print format, not online format (irrespective of format eg PDF or HTML). If relevant, ask the journal about solutions such as opting to have charts and graphics published in colour in the online version only and B&W in the print version |
| | Personal membership fees | Irrelevant to OA and non-payment will not prevent publication |
| | Reprints | Irrelevant to OA and non-payment will not prevent publication |
| | Cover images | Irrelevant to OA and non-payment will not prevent publication |
| | Submission charges | Irrelevant to OA plus the article might not be accepted and we have therefore paid for nothing |
| | Supplemental data publication fees (eg <i>Blood</i>) | Irrelevant to OA and non-payment will not prevent publication |
| | Third party copyright charges | "Costs related to image copyright can be included in the application if it is directly linked to the project and the costs are justified." |
| | APCs where the licence or other element is non-compliant with RCUK policy | Non-compliant publication |