The Finch Report and Research Funders Mandates

The Finch Report

In June 2012, Accessibility, sustainability, excellence: how to expand access to research publications’ was published. Otherwise known as the Finch Report, this group was established after a roundtable meeting of representatives from research, libraries and publishing communities, chaired by David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities and Science in 2011.

Finch suggests a move to Open Access (OA) and Article Processing Charges (APCs) for journal publishing, the fallout from this proposal has been significant and will have a far reaching effect on the way UK research is disseminated for years to come.

European Commission

In July 2012, the European Commission followed by announcing its support for OA by stating its intention to make all research findings funded by the €80-billion Horizon 2020 research funding programme open access and urged member states to follow suit.

Research Councils UK

In March 2013 RCUK released its policy on OA, “As bodies charged with investing public money in research, the Research Council take very seriously their responsibilities in making the outputs from this research publicly available – not just to other researchers, but also to potential users in business, charitable and public sectors, and to the general tax-paying public.”

HEFCE funding

“Is it our policy that all research arising from HEFCE funding should be as widely and freely accessible as the available channels for dissemination permit.”

HEFCE are out to consultation at the moment, however, is likely that all submissions for the 2013 REF will have to be made available on OA immediately on publication.

Will the RCUK mandate stop me from publishing where I want to?

No, the RCUK supports both Gold and Green OA, it only expects you to publish via gold open access where it is available. If the journal does not have a gold open access option, you are expected to use the green open access route. This only applies to peer reviewed journal articles and conference papers, books and other formats are not affected.

What is Gold and Green Open Access?

Gold or author-pays

- Authors (supported by their funders) pay the costs of publishing in an open-access or hybrid journal so that peer-reviewed articles then appear online and can be accessed immediately for free.

Green

- Authors self-archive the final peer-reviewed versions of their articles in institutional repositories, where they are available for anyone to view.

What is an APC?

Instead of a library subscription to a journal, which enables you to read the content, an article-processing charge (APC) is levied at the beginning of the process. The cost of the APC covers the full publication process including peer-reviewing, editing, publishing, maintaining and archiving, and allows immediate access to the full text versions of the research articles, both on the Journal’s website and the University Repository.

How much do they cost?

APC’s vary from publisher to publisher and journal to journal; typically they average around £1,400 per article. Some journals, such as Nature are far more expensive, other journals, e.g. in the humanities and social sciences can be much cheaper – as little as £99 and many more, often society journals, are completely free.

Computing and Library Services has negotiated discounts with a number of publishers including BioMed Central, Chemstry Central, SpringerOpen, the Royal Society, the Royal Society of Chemistry and Sage (coming soon).

How do I pay an APC?

The University is currently setting up the process for gold OA and APC charges. We will announce more news as soon as we receive it.

Further information

For further information please contact Graham Stone, g.stone@hud.ac.uk