Policy for the Administration of the RCUK Block Grant for Open Access to Fund Article Processing Charges

The attached Policy builds on a paper that was approved by Research Committee in February 2013. The Policy was approved by Research Committee in May 2013 and was amended in November 2013. The Policy was subsequently amended in August 2015.
POLICY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE RCUK BLOCK GRANT FOR OPEN ACCESS TO FUND ARTICLE PROCESSING CHARGES

1 Aims of the Policy

1.1 To ensure Royal Holloway is compliant with Research Councils UK (RCUK) Policy on Open Access\(^1\) and funders guidelines.
1.2 To ensure Royal Holloway keeps its content as open as possible, in line with the College’s Open Access Publications Policy.

2 Background

Since 1 April 2013 Royal Holloway has been in receipt of a block grant from RCUK to cover the cost of Article Processing Charges (APCs) for OA publications that result from RCUK funded research grants. The grant was £81,627 in the 2013-2014 year, £96,031 in the 2014-2015 year and £104,019 in the 2015-2016 year.

The RCUK policy supports both ‘Gold’ and ‘Green’ routes to Open Access. With Gold OA the journal provides, via its own website, immediate and unrestricted access to the final published version of the paper, which should be made available using the Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) license. This may involve payment of an ‘Article Processing Charge’ (APC) to the publisher. To achieve this preference RCUK has made available funds to cover the cost of APCs.

The alternative OA route, Green OA, is made possible when the journal consents to the deposit of the author’s final peer-reviewed version in any repository, without restriction on non-commercial re-use (CC-BY-NC) and within a defined embargo period. In this model no APC will be payable to the publisher.

In the latter case, and when a publisher does not provide a Gold OA route, RCUK will accept an embargo period of no more than six months in the Sciences, Technology, Mathematics and Sciences (STEM). In the case of papers in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), the maximum embargo period will be twelve months. In some circumstances, where the publisher provides the Gold OA route but funding for APCs is unavailable, longer embargo periods may be allowable; 12 months for STEM and 24 for HSS.

3 Scope

This Policy covers only APCs that relate to the publication of peer-reviewed research articles (including review articles) and conference proceedings that acknowledge funding from the UK’s Research Councils. It is anticipated that the Policy will need to be updated or a parallel policy may need to be produced if additional APC funds need to be administered.

Any journal articles or conference proceedings, wholly or partly funded by RCUK, that are submitted for publication from 1st April 2013 must be compliant with the RCUK Open Access Policy. The Royal Holloway RCUK-funded authors should first seek compliance with the RCUK Open Access Policy via the Green OA route. If the journal does not provide a Green OA route, then authors can comply with the RCUK Open Access Policy via the Gold OA route if funding at Royal Holloway is still available.

The Policy includes any journal articles or conference proceedings wholly or partly funded by one of the 7 UK Research Councils, which are: Arts and Humanities Research Council; Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council; Economic and Social Research Council; Medical Research Council; Natural Environment Research Council and Science and Technology Facilities Council.

The RCUK block grant is intended to cover APCs and additional publishing costs, such as colour page charges and image charges. Royal Holloway will use the block grant received from the RCUK to cover these additional costs only where the APC has also been paid. For
pre-existing Grants where funds have already been made available to cover publication costs, no additional funds from the block grant will be allocated to cover APC costs.

This Policy is designed to reflect the current RCUK policy, and is likely to be updated in the light of changing requirements. RCUK carried out a comprehensive, evidence-based review of the effectiveness and impact of its Open Access policy in 2014.  

4 Allocation of the Funding

It was recommended and agreed by the Research Committee that the Library should lead in administering the APC block grant, ensuring that mechanisms are in place to receive internal applications for use of the block grant and verifying that applications meet the identified essential criteria (detailed under point 6).

The block grant is divided into separate funds for each Faculty. Staff from all faculties are able to apply for funding. If Faculties wish they can further divide the grant for each department. The division should be proportional to the RCUK Research Grant Funding received by each Faculty. Given the relatively small block grant budget and the potential administrative burden in managing it, it is suggested that funds from the APC block grant should then be allocated on a first come, first served basis, with the Library carrying out administrative support.

Corresponding authors should make an application to the Library for an APC to be funded by the block grant prior to submitting an article for consideration by a journal or conference proceeding. Applications can be made after the article has been accepted; however, staff should be aware that the publisher must offer an RCUK compliant OA route in order for the APC to be paid. RCUK requires the College to provide audit information on the expenditure from the fund and it is essential that all expenditure supports RCUK compliant OA. Staff should check Sherpa FACT and contact Open Access staff in the Library to confirm the compliance of the journal. This is especially important where the journal is a full OA journal and an APC must be paid to publish.

Decisions on awarding funds for APCs will not be based on academic criteria but only on verification that the essential criteria listed under point 6 have been met. Once the criteria have been met, the Library will check that funds are available in the block grant budget for the appropriate Faculty and approve the request. In case funds were not available, unsuccessful applicants will be asked to comply via the Green OA route. If a Green OA route is not available, they will be placed on a waiting list, with funding being awarded if and when it became available.

Recipients of block grant funds will need to update the Library if the article was accepted for publication or not. If the article was not accepted for publication then the funds will be released back in to the block grant budget for the appropriate Faculty to be awarded to the next applicant (or the first person on the waiting list).

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2 http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/openaccess/2014review/ accessed on 22/7/15
3 http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/fact/ accessed on 22/7/15
If no block grant funds are remaining, and therefore an APC cannot be covered, the Library will provide advice to the author on alternative publication routes that are in line with the RCUK Policy, specifically via the Green OA route.

Where papers have multiple authors based at different institutions, it is recommended in the first instance that a Royal Holloway staff member who is the Principal Investigator on the grant related to the publication should apply for APC funding and encourage this approach when PIs are at other institutions. There should, however, be room for flexibility in instances of multiple publications related to a single grant and may, in fact, be determined by which of the collaborating HEIs has exhausted their block grant provision.

5 Evaluation and Monitoring

During the first six months of operation this process was reviewed and the Library provided updates to Research Committee. The reviews continue with the purpose to ensure that the Policy aims are being met and updates in the light of changing requirements are being made. The rate with which the block grant is being spent will be monitored, and reported on to Research Committee.

Library staff are responsible for the compilation of audit information as required by RCUK and JISC and will also support the compilation of calls for evidence and consultation as required. The information is put into the public domain and the College will continue to proactively work with other universities to engage in discussions and policy making / amendment with RCUK and JISC.

If it is considered appropriate to allocate APC block grant funds on alternative criteria, i.e. on academic or impact criteria, then the decision process will require an additional strata (presumably the Faculty Dean or their nominee) as this would lie outside of the Library’s area of expertise and remit. This option could be considered by Research Committee if necessary.

6 Essential Criteria

The following essential criteria will need to be met before a decision could be made on whether APCs should be covered from the block grant.

6.1 An application for APC should usually be made prior to a paper being submitted to a journal or conference proceeding, as there is no guarantee that funding is available. Applications can be made after the article has been accepted; however, staff should be aware that the publisher must offer an RCUK compliant OA route in order for the APC to be paid.

accessed 22/7/15
6.2 Details of the forthcoming paper must be entered into the College’s research information system, Pure, with a link made between the research output and the appropriate research grant.

6.3 No APCs will be covered on papers where the related research grant has already funding allocated within the grant application to cover publishing costs.

6.4 APCs will only be covered for articles being submitted to Gold Open Access journals which conform to CC-BY licence (Creative Commons Attribution Licence, which allows commercial and non-commercial redistribution).\(^5\)

6.5 Colour charges and other additional charges will only be paid when an APC has also been paid.

6.6 The PI for the related Research Grant must support the APC application for the paper.

6.7 The paper must include details of the funding that supported the research, and a statement on how the underlying research materials – such as data, samples or models – can be accessed.

6.8 Any additional criteria identified by individual Research Councils need to be adhered to when necessary. For example some Research Councils, such as MRC and ESRC, have a requirement that papers must be deposited in specific repositories, such as Europe PubMed Central and the ESRC Research Catalogue.

6.9 All articles in receipt of APCs must be made available in Royal Holloway’s Institutional Repository after publication. Articles can be added in to the Repository using the College's research information system, Pure.

\(^5\) http://creativecommons.org/licenses/, accessed on 13/3/13
7 Administrative Processes

The processes will be managed within the Library as suggested above.

8 Roles and Responsibilities

Ownership of Policy

The College Library Services Department will have overall ownership of this Policy, working in close collaboration with the College Research and Enterprise Department. This will include responsibility for leading on advocacy and the implementation of the Policy.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Responsible Officer, Library - Amy Warner, Associate Director, eStrategy and Technical Services (Head of Open Access Group)
Senior Responsible Officer, Research and Enterprise – Craig Bryce, Head of Research Services
Library Process and Advocacy Lead – Nicola Cockarill, Research Information Manager (Open Access)

9 Governance

The management of the Policy will be through the College Research Committee.

10 Relationship to Other Policies

10.1 External Policies

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<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RCUK Policy on Open Access (March 2013)</td>
<td>The Policy for the Administration of the RCUK Block Grant for Open Access to fund Article Processing Charges aims to ensure RHUL complies with the RCUK Policy on Open Access.</td>
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## 10.2 College Policies

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<td>Open access publications policy (December 2009)</td>
<td>The Policy for the Administration of the RCUK Block Grant for Open Access to fund Article Processing Charges aims to support the College Open access publications policy</td>
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**Version 1.0:**
Amy Warner and Dace Rozenberga, Library
Craig Bryce, Research and Enterprise
June 2013

**Updated Version 1.1:**
John Tuck and Nancy Pontika, Library
November 2013

**Updated version 1.2**
Nicola Cockarill, Library
August 2015