Policy exceptions
Research England has identified a number of exceptions to their policy. However, Research England advises that these are expected to apply only in a small number of cases.

- Author unable to secure use of a repository at point of acceptance.
- Author experienced delay securing the Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM).
- Author not employed in UK at the time the output was submitted for publication.
- Author employed at different UK Higher Education Institution (HEI) which failed to comply with the policy.
- Output published under Gold Open Access.
- The output was not deposited upon acceptance, but it was deposited within 3 months of the earliest date of publication (exception in place for the rest of REF2021 publication period).
- Deposit would be unlawful.
- Deposit would present a security risk.
- Publication depends on reproduction of 3rd party content for which access rights could not be granted.
- Publisher embargo exceeds Research England stated maxima and yet was the the most appropriate publication for the output.
- Publisher does not permit repository deposit, and yet was the the most appropriate publication for the output.
- Repository experienced transient technical failure.

For details of how to request an exception, please consult the REF Database Open Access Guide available on the Research and Innovation Services webpage:

REF OA Help & Advice
Contact the Open Access Team and we will do our best to assist you.

Key areas - Green Open Access and DRO:
 Repository manager: Heather Ewington
 Repository assistant: Elena Carlaw
 Phone: 0191 334 1586
 Email: dro.admin@durham.ac.uk

Key areas - Gold Open Access and Research Councils’ Open Access block grant (administered by UKRI):
 Publications officer: Sarah Hyland
 Phone: 0191 334 1586
 Email: openaccess.publishing@durham.ac.uk

For any query or doubt concerning the best approach to disseminate your research, please contact your Academic Liaison Librarian for Research Support:
James Bisset
Phone: 0191 334 1589
Email: james.bisset@durham.ac.uk

In line with the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, from 1st April 2018 UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has brought together what was RCUK and the research and knowledge exchange functions of HEFCE under a single organisation. This might impact on terminology as below:

- The RCUK OA Block Grant will be officially referred to as the Research Councils’ open access block grant, administered by UKRI.
- The RCUK Policy on Open Access, however, will continue to be referred to using the same title.
- HEFCE’s responsibilities for research and knowledge exchange (including the REF and the Open Access policy for the REF) have been taken on by Research England.
- Although RCUK no longer exists as a separate entity, the 7 individual Research Councils continue to operate under the new UKRI organisation.
What is REF and why does it matter to you?

REF (Research Excellence Framework) is a research assessment system conducted by Research England, the new council within UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) that replaced HEFCE from 1st April 2018. Research England is responsible for implementing the REF on behalf of the other funding bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Among other objectives, the REF results are used to allocate quality-related research funding to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the UK.

In order to be eligible for this public funding, we are required to prepare a REF submission showcasing our research outputs and impact case studies.

The results of next REF are due in 2021, but outputs are to be submitted for evaluation in November 2020.

REF2021 will assess the quality of our research outputs published between 2014 and 2020. If you are - or have been - affiliated to Durham University within this period, your outputs within scope of the REF Open Access (OA) policy must comply with its requirements.

Policy basics

The REF OA policy only applies to journal articles and conference papers published in a conference proceedings with an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) and which were accepted for publication from 1st April 2016 onwards. Articles and conference proceedings accepted before this date and all other types of output do not need to comply with the policy and can be submitted for REF as previously.

Where a higher education institution (HEI) can demonstrate that it has taken steps towards enabling open access for outputs outside the scope of this definition, credit will be given in the research environment component of REF2021.

Authors must deposit their Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) in either an institutional or subject repository within 3 months of acceptance for publication. Please note the following:

- The Author Accepted Manuscript is the version which has been updated or revised following peer-review (see diagram below).
- Durham researchers must provide their Author Accepted Manuscripts for deposit in Durham Research Online (DRO), this University’s Open Access institutional repository.
- Further revised versions can be added to DRO but we do not swap files. Rather, we close-off access indefinitely to earlier deposited versions, because replacing files would delete evidence of the earlier deposited file.
- Please do not provide proof copies.

Going Gold?

Even if you are planning to take the Gold route to Open Access, do not take any unnecessary risk!

We recommend you should still provide your Author Accepted Manuscript for deposit in DRO in case your plans fall through. The DRO Team will deposit the published version of any Gold published article later when it becomes available.

How do I comply with the REF Open Access Policy?

In order to comply with the REF OA policy you should deposit the Author Accepted Manuscript in DRO by following one of the two routes outlined below:

️ Either: Create a record in the Staff Profile system about your publication and attach your Author Accepted Manuscript. Please also add the date when your paper was accepted for publication to the Profile record.

For instructions about how to create a Profile record, please check: dur.ac.uk/resources/library/dro_depositguide.pdf

0: Email your Author Accepted Manuscript to: dro.admin@durham.ac.uk

Please include in your email the journal/proceedings title, publisher name and date of acceptance. The DRO Team will deposit your manuscript and apply any embargo required by the publisher.

If your Department provides this service, please send your Author Accepted Manuscript together with details of your publication to your Research Administrator, who will create a Staff Profile record for you and attach your manuscript. The record and file will then be queued for processing by the DRO Team.

What is the Author Accepted Manuscript?

This is the version which was accepted for publication by the journal, and which includes changes based on peer reviewers’ or referees’ suggestions, but before copyediting, typesetting and proof corrections.

Research England’s diagram below indicates the Author Accepted Manuscript's position in the publication process.

For further information, see: www.hefce.ac.uk/rsrch/oa/FAQ/