

UKRI open access policy: clarifications for technical requirements

Introduction

To support implementation of the UKRI open access policy, UKRI commissioned [MoreBrains Cooperative](#) to develop recommendations for improving the open access research information landscape. This included consulting with the repository and publishing communities (including relevant vendors) on their current state of readiness to meet the technical requirements set out in the policy. Between September and November 2023, MoreBrains helped facilitate a series of community discussions on practical steps needed to enable policy compatibility. The outputs will be published as part of the final project report later in 2024. Through these community discussions UKRI and MoreBrains identified a need to provide clarification on elements on the technical requirements set out in the UKRI open access policy. This question-and-answer document has been developed to share more information and respond to this need. It may be updated in future as tools and standards emerge or are updated.

Repositories

There are several possibilities for article-level PIDs, including OAI-IDs, Handles, DOIs, etc. Does UKRI have a requirement or preference for which is used? Will there be a requirement for a specific PID in the future?

There is no current requirement / preference for specific article level PIDs. Any future requirement would be based on strong evidence from international best practice.

How do we choose which PIDs we should be using, and for what entities?

Current best practice includes the five high-priority PIDs identified as part of [Jisc's work to develop a national persistent identifier strategy](#). Outputs and outcomes from this current project should also help with decision-making.

The policy requires 'support for ORCID', what does this mean practically? Is ORCID single sign-on mandatory? Are repositories / institutions responsible for ensuring that authors have ORCID IDs on all their UKRI-funded articles?

This requirement is for integration of repositories with ORCID at the most basic level. At a minimum this means they must be collecting validated ORCID IDs (requiring authors to sign into their ORCID account as part of the collection process). Single sign-on is not mandatory. UKRI does not currently have any requirements for author ORCID IDs on articles that acknowledge UKRI funding, though this is encouraged.

There's a technical requirement for PIDs for research management. Which PIDs are required to be supported?

The policy states that PIDs for research management are strongly encouraged rather than required. We recommend following current best practice around commonly used PIDs, such as [the five high-priority PIDs](#) as a starting point.

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It's difficult for repository and research managers, and for librarians, to explain what UKRI needs repositories to implement. For what purpose does UKRI need PIDs to be implemented, and what workflows need to be supported? This information will help in designing approaches to compliance and explaining needs to technology providers.

PIDs can be beneficial throughout the research lifecycle to enable automation, efficiency, new discovery tools, and analysis. They also support greater transparency and reproducibility in research activities and communications. Funding and publication are the most relevant workflows for open access; [PID-enabled versions of both can be found here](#). UKRI's policy requirements are intended to support the research information landscape and to align with institutional strategies on this, rather than focusing on compliance.

What is required to make Data Availability Statements (DAS) compliant with the policy? Would it be sufficient to have a link between the manuscript and the dataset pointing to where the data is available? If so, then RIOXX 3 provides this. Also, when are DASs not required?

The current requirement is at the most basic level - inclusion of a statement on how data can be accessed. There are no format requirements at present, although machine-readability is encouraged. The statement can include links where applicable. The [UKRI good research resource hub](#) provides information on writing a data access statement. We understand that some journals do not yet have established practices around DAS, and we encourage authors / institutions to get in touch (openresearch@ukri.org) to discuss challenges.

Which specific dates are needed for compliance with the Date of Deposit mandate, and how does UKRI define those dates?

The author's accepted manuscript (AAM) must be deposited no more than one month after the date when the version of record (VoR) is first made publicly available (usually the 'early online' date).

Is there a metadata requirement around acknowledging UKRI funding? If so, where should that be expressed? Is a specific PID required, for example, ROR?

There is no metadata requirement around acknowledgements and no specific PIDs are required; please see [current UKRI guidance on the format](#).

Why do repositories need to be registered in OpenDOAR? And do they need to do anything to show that they are registered in OpenDOAR?

Repositories should be registered in OpenDOAR in recognition of the benefits for research information management – see here [the benefits of OpenDOAR](#). Repositories do not need to show they are registered in OpenDOAR. We may assess levels of registration as part of our monitoring and evaluation activity.

Which metadata fields are required for the policy, and where do they fit into schemas?

Specifically to support:

- **Licensing information**
- **Data availability statements**
- **Date of deposit**

The policy does not currently mandate specifics around metadata fields and schemas. UKRI would want to work with others to further develop standards to make this possible in the longer term. This will aid tracking, compliance, and business decisions.

Publishers and platform providers

Some small publishers struggle with the cost of DOIs and, as a result, some don't provide them. Does the policy mean that researchers cannot publish in journals that don't register DOIs?

No, we recognise that there needs to be a phased approach to the implementation of technical requirements; there are different levels of stakeholder readiness, and we need to set the right level of expectations. At the same time, we want to support progress in this space, therefore, publishers that can implement this should be doing so.

What is technically needed to be compliant with the ORCID requirement? Is it necessary for all authors to have ORCID IDs? Is it limited to UKRI-sponsored authors? Is it limited to corresponding or submitting authors? Are ORCID IDs required to be verified through ORCID single sign-on?

This requirement is for integration of journals and publishing platforms with ORCID at the most basic level. At a minimum this means they must be collecting validated ORCID IDs (requiring authors to sign into their ORCID account as part of the collection process). Single sign-on is not mandatory. UKRI does not currently have any requirements for author ORCID IDs on articles that acknowledge UKRI funding, though this is encouraged.

Who is responsible for ensuring that the ORCID requirement is met?

The requirement is for ORCID to be integrated with the publisher's system, making it the publisher's responsibility if they choose to offer a policy compliant route.

Will any support be provided to publishers who find it difficult to comply, or will there be a phased approach taken to enforcement?

We recognise a phased approach is needed and setting appropriate expectations. We are happy to explore if there are further actions UKRI can take to support publishers who find it challenging to implement the technical requirements.

What are the requirements for Data Availability Statements to make them compliant with the policy? And when are DASs not required?

The current requirement is at the most basic level - inclusion of a statement on how data can be accessed. There are no format requirements at present, although machine-readability is encouraged. The statement can include links where applicable. The [UKRI good research resource hub](#) provides information on writing a data access statement. We understand that some journals do not yet have established practices around DAS, and we encourage authors / institutions to get in touch (openresearch@ukri.org) to discuss challenges.

Does the requirement for licensing information mean that publishers need to use a specific standard like the NISO ALI standard? Does this information need to be in the article metadata, or will any expression of the licence suffice?

Machine-readable information on the open access status and the licence must be embedded in the article metadata in a standard, non-proprietary format. The NISO ALI standard meets UKRI's requirements.

Is there a requirement for publishers to express funding information in article metadata, if so, what are the minimum requirements? Are specific PIDs required?

No, at present there is no requirement. We may consider including this requirement in the future as standards progress.

What are the specifics around open citation data? How should that data be represented, who does it need to be shared with or sent to and how can that be technically done?

The current requirement is for openly accessible data on citations to be made available according to the standards set out by the Initiative for Open Citation (I4OC). The policy does not currently mandate further specifics. UKRI would want to work with others to further develop standards and/or infrastructure to make this possible in the longer term and therefore promoting openly available scholarly citation data.

What are the criteria for being compliant with the preservation location requirement? How will that be monitored?

Publishers must participate in [CLOCKSS](#), [Portico](#), or an equivalent preservation organisation/initiative. UKRI is considering options for assessing levels of participation as part of its monitoring and evaluation activity.

There are other platforms besides SHERPA that document open access and rights policies. Why does UKRI specifically require the use of SHERPA when the Coalition S journal checker does pretty much the same thing?

Sherpa is an online resource that aggregates and analyses publisher open access policies from around the world on a journal-by-journal basis. To our knowledge Sherpa is the only place where policies can be registered in a standardised way.