



Open Access (OA) refers to making research outputs freely available online with limited re-use restrictions. Articles can be open access directly via a publisher or be made available in institutional repositories like LSHTM Research Online.

Traditionally, journal articles have only been accessible to researchers whose institutional libraries pay subscription fees to publishers. OA breaks down barriers to access for not only researchers with limited resources but also a wide range of other interested readers, including students, policy makers, journalists and health professionals.

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## LSHTM supports open access

- **To help articles reach more people.** Many more researchers, students, health professionals and members of the public are able to read articles if they are made available openly. OA work is generally read more and cited more than work only available via the publisher
- **To promote the School's research.** Our repository, LSHTM Research Online, showcases the wide variety of research undertaken in the School
- **To meet funders' OA policies.** To ensure a good return on their investment in research, all major funders strongly support open access. HEFCE also mandates OA for all research articles in the next REF (Research Excellence Framework) in 2021

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## How to make your articles open access

Almost all articles can be made open access through one of two routes:

- **Green open access** refers to making articles available in a repository like LSHTM Research Online. This is free for the author and for the reader
- **Gold open access** refers to paying a publisher's open access fee to make the article OA upon publication via the journal website. Fees are usually covered by funders' grants

### Green open access

- Green OA makes use of publishers' re-use policies. Most publishers allow deposit of the 'accepted manuscript' (i.e. final draft after peer review but before typesetting) in a repository
- An embargo period may apply (often 6-12 months), during which the article is locked for download until after that period expires. Journal policies can be checked on [SHERPA/ROMEO](#)
- The important thing is that the article is made open eventually – OA articles receive more downloads than those only available via subscription

### Gold open access

- An advantage of paying for gold OA is that articles are openly available upon publication
- Articles are also published under a Creative Commons copyright license, which lets that article be freely shared, along with other re-uses defined by the particular license applied
- Subscription journals usually offer gold open access (these are called **hybrid journals**), and there are a growing range of **fully open access journals**, which tend to have lower fees (e.g. see publishers such as PLoS, BioMed Central, Frontiers, PeerJ and F1000)
- Some fully open access journals are free to publish in (e.g. Wellcome Open Research, Gates Open Research, and many listed on [DOAJ.org](#))



## Open Access Policy essentials

It is expected that all research staff follow the REF policy and the policy of their funder:

- **REF 2021:** to be REF eligible, accepted manuscripts (final drafts) should be deposited in Research Online within **3 months of acceptance**, unless gold open access is paid for
- **Wellcome Trust/Cancer Research UK/British Heart Foundation** prefer gold OA (under the CC BY license), but allow green OA if the accepted manuscript is made open in Europe PubMed Central within **6 months of publication**
- **RCUK:** green or gold OA is acceptable. If gold, articles should be published under the CC BY license. If green, articles should be deposited in LSHTM Research Online and your journal should have an embargo period of no more than **6 months (MRC) or 12 months (other RCUK bodies)**. If MRC, the article should also be deposited on Europe PubMed Central – the journal may do this on your behalf, but the PI should check
- **The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** only allows gold open access (CC BY license)
- To check that your chosen journal is compliant with your funder's open access policy, use [SHERPA/FACT](#)

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## Funding for open access

- Funds to pay for open access articles emerging from **COAF** (inc. Wellcome Trust, Cancer Research UK, British Heart Foundation) and **RCUK** (inc. MRC, BBSRC, ESRC, NERC) funded research are available upon application via the Library & Archives Service. Please check on ServiceDesk as the funds are not always available year-round
- Some eligibility criteria apply to these funds. These include: the publication should be a research article or unsolicited review, and the grant should be held by the School; for **RCUK** funded papers, applications will only be accepted for **fully open access** journals, to a limit of £2500 per article
- An application form should be submitted via **ServiceDesk** and eligibility and funding availability will be checked. It is best to do this as the point of submission
- **MRC Units** manage separate publication funds
- The **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** centrally manage open access funding
- For other funders, open access allowances can often be written into grant budgets (e.g. **DFID, ERC, NIHR**), and some may have central funds available to cover OA fees
- Waivers and discounts are often available for unfunded research where you are submitting to a fully open access journal. The Library & Archives Service can aid a waiver request made to a publisher by providing a letter in support

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## Making your work open access for free

- To deposit your work in LSHTM Research Online, simply deposit via **Elements** ([elements.lshtm.ac.uk](http://elements.lshtm.ac.uk)). Contact us if you need assistance
- If required, publishers often deposit on Europe PMC automatically, but the lead author should ensure this is done. Follow the instructions on [plus.europepmc.org](http://plus.europepmc.org) to deposit

## Key contacts

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