

Open Access Policy

1. Purpose

At Cancer Research UK, we believe that the best way of maximising the impact of the research we fund is to provide open and unrestricted access to published research. This facilitates rapid sharing of knowledge and promotes innovation, ultimately ensuring that patients can access better treatments sooner.

In all cases, Cancer Research UK encourages its researchers to select publishing routes that ensure the work is available immediately on publication in its final published form, wherever such options exist for their journal of choice that are compliant with the requirements set out below.

2. Does this policy apply to my publication?

This policy outlines the obligations for all CRUK-funded researchers, Host Institutions and funded collaborators in relation to peer-reviewed, original (ie. primary data-based) research publications that have been supported, in whole or in part, by Cancer Research UK.

The policy does not apply to book chapters, monographs, editorials, reviews or conference proceedings.

3. Open access: what does Cancer Research UK require of its researchers?

If you have a paper accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, you and your Host Institution must ensure that the following three requirements are met:

- (i) **An electronic copy of final, published form of your paper must be available on Europe PubMed Central (Europe PMC) as soon as possible and no later than 6 months after publication. For articles accepted for final publication on or after 1 January 2022 we require that your paper is made openly available in Europe PMC immediately on publication.**

In some cases, your journal may allow you (or your university) to deposit the article in Europe PMC yourself. Many journals, however, will charge an Article Processing Charge (APC) for deposit within this timeframe and will make the deposit on your behalf.

- (ii) **If you've paid an APC, your paper must be published with a CC-BY 4.0 licence. Other, more restrictive licences will not be compliant with your Grant Conditions.**

If you had to pay an Article Processing Charge (APC) in order to ensure that the final form of your paper is available on Europe PMC immediately, then your paper **must** be published using a **Creative Commons Attribution licence (CC-BY 4.0)**. This will ensure the paper may be freely copied and reused (for example, for text-and data-mining purposes), provided that you and the other authors are properly credited. Other, more restrictive creative commons licences (e.g. CC-BY SA, CC-BY ND) will not be compliant with this policy.

In cases where you have not paid an APC, you are strongly **encouraged**, but not required, to publish the paper with a CC-BY licence. For example, if your publisher does not charge an APC to make the paper available on Europe PMC (because it will permit you to deposit the final version yourself), you are still encouraged, but not required, to select a CC-BY licence.

(iii) **The journal you publish in must be published by a publisher who has agreed to our publisher requirements.**

Cancer Research UK will only fund APCs where the publisher has agreed to these [publisher requirements](#). These publisher requirements set out the open access services that publishers must agree to provide when they charge APCs for CRUK-funded researchers. Most major publishers and many smaller publishers have signed up to these requirements. (A full list of those who have signed up is [here](#)).

If you would like to check that the publisher of your chosen journal is compliant, search the SHERPA/FACT database [here](#). Select the name of the relevant journal and Cancer Research UK as your funder – as long as the results show at least one ‘tick’ (✓), the journal is compliant by that route.

4. How should I pay for APC charges? Can I charge these costs to my Cancer Research UK grant?

Until the end of September 2020 the primary mechanism through which Cancer Research UK funds APCs is via contributions to the COAF, which are allocated to individual Host Institutions as annual block grants. Researchers based at a [COAF-eligible institution](#) should apply to their institution to charge APC costs to the institution’s COAF block grant. Requests to access the COAF block grant must be met on a first come, first served basis.

Researchers based at Cancer Research UK Institutes are not eligible for COAF funding (unless they also hold a post at a COAF-eligible institution) and should use institute core funding to cover APC costs.

Researchers who are:

- not based at a Cancer Research UK Institute;
- not based at a COAF-eligible institution; or
- based at a COAF-eligible institution that has exhausted its COAF allocation for the year,

may cover APC costs using underspend on their Cancer Research UK response-mode grant. Note, however, that APC costs must not be charged to response-mode grants where COAF funds are still available.

Please note that the COAF will end at the end of September 2020.

From October 2020 CRUK will fund APCs via block grants to a number of UK institutions. Authors should apply to their host institutions to access these funds. Researchers that receive funding from us but are not based at an institution which receives CRUK block grants may use any unspent grant funds to pay for APCs. Alternatively, until January 2022, authors can comply with our policy by self-archiving their publication in Europe PMC within 6 months, if the publisher permits.

5. Frequently asked questions

If you have further questions about Cancer Research UK’s expectations for open access publication and/or the funding of APCs, please check the list of [frequently asked questions](#) on our website.

6. Policy versioning information

Version	5
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