

UKRI OPEN ACCESS BLOCK GRANT CALL CONDITIONS 24/25

2024/25 UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Open Access Block Grant (OABG)

UKRI contributes approximately £40m per year to research organisations to support implementation of the UKRI Policy on Open Access for research articles. The UKRI Open Access policy applies to in-scope research articles submitted for publication on or after 1 April 2022.

UKRI's funding contribution is distributed to research organisations using an algorithm which determines the value of their OABG. The algorithm is based on the total labour costs on research grants for the preceding three-year period as a proxy for research volume. OABGs are paid at 100% and are not subject to Full Economic Costing (fEC).

This award covers the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. It will be paid via the EPSRC Research grants pay run process in four quarterly instalments. The first instalment will be paid in June 2024.

NOTE: It is a requirement of the award that the start date must be the 1 April 2024.

For the purpose of the terms and conditions below, reference to UKRI includes the following Councils:

1. Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
2. Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)
3. Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
4. Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)
5. Innovate UK (IUK)
6. Medical Research Council (MRC)
7. Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
8. Research England (RE)
9. Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)

Further information on the UKRI Open Access Policy is available at: <https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/publishing-your-research-findings/making-your-research-publications-open-access/>. The Open Access Policy and associated Guidance document is available at: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-open-access-policy/>

In these OABG Terms and Conditions of Grant, the words "We", "Our" or "Us" refer to UKRI "You" or "Your" refer to the Research Organisation in receipt of the OABG.

These OABG Terms and Conditions should be read in conjunction with the UKRI Open Access Policy and associated Guidance: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-open-access-policy/>

In the event of any conflict the terms of these Conditions should prevail.

Use of Grant Proposal Information

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) handles all personal data in accordance with current UK data protection legislation and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) where appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation to ensure that both students it funds from UKRI funding and individuals who receive grant funding, or who are later involved in the award, are made aware of how personal data may be used by both UKRI and the Research Organisation. This includes information relating to groups such as students, supervisors, project partners, investigators, named researchers and support staff.

To meet UKRI's obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, contents of funded research proposals will also be made available on the Councils' websites and other publicly available sources. As a condition of funding, UKRI may use the data to publish information on awards made. We may also share information with third parties to support, for example, open access publication and reporting outcomes via ResearchFish. This includes data submitted through Je-S Student Details (SD).

UKRI is also subject to the UK Freedom of Information Act (2000) and the Environmental Information Regulations (2004) and may be required to release grant information on request, subject to appropriate exemptions.

Further information is provided by the UKRI Use of grant proposal information addendum (www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/before-you-apply/your-responsibilities-if-you-get-funding/meeting-ukri-terms-and-conditions-for-funding/) and via the UKRI Privacy Notice (www.ukri.org/about-us/privacy-notice/)

OABGC 1 Variation to Terms and Conditions

1.1 UKRI reserves the right to amend and vary these Terms and Conditions at any time.

OABGC 2 Use of Grant

2.1 Subject to these Terms and Conditions, You may use the UKRI OABG to support the aims and implementation of the UKRI Open Access Policy for research articles. Separate funding arrangements apply to long-form publications.

2.2 The UKRI OABG can be used flexibly to cover costs that enable You to meet the aims of the policy, which can include a variety of different types of costs. You are responsible for ensuring the eligibility of any costs charged to the UKRI OABG. You must ensure that the OABG is used in a reasonable way to meet the aim of the policy and that any use of the funding is auditable.

Further guidance on eligible costs can be found in the FAQs that accompany the policy: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-open-access-policy/>

Examples of eligible costs include:

- article processing charges (APCs) and charges through other types of funding models (for example, membership fees) that support publication in fully open access journals and platforms.
- publish elements of Jisc-approved transitional agreements. From 24/25 We have clarified our position that organisations may charge costs associated with Jisc-approved transitional agreements to their OABG for fees due during the period of the OABG, irrespective of agreement dates or when articles are likely to be published open access.
- open access fees in journals approved by Jisc as meeting the research sector's requirements for transition to open access.
- costs associated with open access through 'route two' of the policy, for example making the author's accepted manuscript (or version of record, where the publisher permits) available in an institutional or subject repository at the time of final publication, or relevant repository provision.
- staff costs associated with meeting the aims of the policy, for example staff supporting researchers, repository management or any associated administration.
- supporting actions that enable You to meet the aims of the policy, including improvements to digital infrastructure, infrastructure to support sustainable models of compliant open access, and activities relating to enhanced technical standards in line with the aims of the policy as well as associated administration, communication, engagement, guidance, and advocacy.

2.3 UKRI does not set limits on expenditure on particular types of cost from the OABG.

2.4 You should contact UKRI if You are uncertain about the eligibility of a cost.

2.5 You are expected to ensure that equality, diversity, and inclusion is considered and supported when allocating funds from the OABG, in alignment with Our policies and principles at: www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/good-research-resource-hub/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/ for equality, diversity and inclusion. Your approach to supporting equality, diversity and inclusion is expected to at a minimum to meet all relevant legal obligations, including but not limited those of the Equality Act 2010 and equivalent legislation when acting in Northern Ireland. You are required to ensure suitable training, information and support is provided to ensure compliance with Your obligations under all equality legislation. Inclusive practices should be built into the design of systems, policies and processes to address issues of inequality.

2.6 Funds must not be used to meet the costs of an activity that will fall outside the Grant period. From 24/25 We have clarified our position that organisations may charge costs associated with Jisc-approved transitional agreements to their OABG for fees due during the period of the OABG, irrespective of agreement dates or when articles are likely to be published open access.

2.6 Expenditure may be incurred and subsequently charged to the OABG from either the start date of the OABG or the date that the Offer Letter was issued on, whichever is earlier.

OABGC3 Starting Procedures

3.1 The OABG must be formally accepted by completing and returning the Offer Acceptance with 10 working days of the issue of the Offer Letter.

3.2 The Start Confirmation must be submitted within 42 (calendar) days of the OABG starting. The date entered on the Start Confirmation will be the Official Start Date of the OABG. It is a condition of the OABG that the start date must be 1 April 2024.

OABGC4 Extensions

4.1 The UKRI OABG cannot be extended. The Grant will end on 31 March 2025.

OABGC 5 Financial Conditions

5.1 The total award value of the OABG will be divided into four equal amounts and paid in four quarterly payments (Q1-Q4). As the UKRI OABG is administered by EPSRC, payment dates will be the same as EPSRC research grants.

5.2 Payment for Q4 will be automatically held and is contingent to the submission of the Final Expenditure Statement (FES) via Je-S [or The Funding Service if this has been implemented], by the 30 June 2025.

5.3 If You do not supply details of expenditure when requested to do so, it will be presumed that no funds have either been spent or committed and this could result in award amounts being adjusted.

5.4 UKRI reserves the right to amend and/or suspend future payments if funds have not been spent or committed.

5.5 Any under-spend from the 2024/25 OABG as reported in the FES will be fully recovered and reconciled.

5.6 Research Organisations' overspending of the UKRI OABG will not be met by UKRI.

5.7 UKRI reserves the right to amend the payment profile, vary the value of the OABG during its lifetime, or to take into account any other Government decisions affecting the funding available to UKRI at its discretion. Research Organisations will be advised, in advance, of any such change, which may affect the overall value of the OABG.

5.8 UKRI reserves the right to terminate the OABG at any time, subject to reasonable notice and to make any payment that UKRI agrees may be necessary to cover outstanding and unavoidable commitments. If a Grant is terminated or reduced in value, no liability for payment, redundancy, or any other compensatory payment for the dismissal of staff funded by the Grant will be accepted.

5.9 If any provision of these Terms and Conditions is found by a court or other legitimate body to be illegal, invalid, or unreasonable, it will not affect the remaining Terms and Conditions which will continue in force.

OABGC 6 Reporting and Audit Requirements

6.1 Expenditure from the OABG must be auditable and kept separate from Open Access expenditure paid from other sources of funding.

6.2 OABGs will be subject to review as part of UKRI's Funding Assurance programme. Further details can be found here: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/funding-assurance-programme/>

6.3 If we request it, You must provide information that demonstrates compliance with the OA policy for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

OABGC7 Sanctions

7.1 UKRI reserves the right to impose financial sanctions and/or additional measures if Research Organisations do not comply with their obligations as set out in these Terms and Conditions.

7.2 If the Financial Expenditure Statement is not received within 3 months of the end of the Grant Period, UKRI will recover 20% of expenditure incurred on the Grant. All payments will be recovered if the report or statement is not received within 6 months of the end of the Grant. You may appeal against a sanction but must do so within 60 days of the pay run in which the sanction was imposed.

OABGC 8 Monitoring

8.1 You are responsible for ensuring UKRI has up-to-date information by providing a main contact for general queries. Please email the open access mailbox at openaccess@funding.ukri.org to notify us of any changes.

8.2 PI or Department changes on the OABG should be submitted via the Je-S Grant Maintenance function. You must ensure that your OABG is updated in a timely manner should the grant holder change.

OABGC9 Disclosure and Inspection

9.1 We shall be entitled to inspect any financial or other records and procedures associated with the Grant as are reasonably required to verify the regularity and propriety of OABG expenditure, or to appoint any other body or individual for the purpose of such inspection. This includes expenditure by Third Parties. We shall use reasonable endeavours to ensure that any confidential information disclosed shall be treated with the same care and discretion to avoid disclosure as We use with Our own similar information. We may disclose Confidential Information to the minimum extent required by any law or regulation (provided, in the case of a disclosure required under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or Environmental Information Regulations 2004, none of the exceptions within such Act or Regulations applies to the information disclosed), any governmental or other regulatory authority, or a court or other authority of competent jurisdiction.

9.2 If We request it, You must provide a statement of account for the OABG, independently examined by an auditor who is a member of a recognised professional body, certifying that the expenditure has been incurred in accordance with the OABG Terms and Conditions.

9.3 It is a requirement that any instances of Fraud or attempted Fraud relating to funding received by You from Us, should be reported to FundingAssurance@ukri.org.

9.4 We will undertake periodic reviews of Research Organisations within the Funding Assurance Programme to seek assurance that OABGs are managed in accordance with the Terms and Conditions under which they are awarded. We reserve the right to introduce further reporting requirements should it be necessary to demonstrate use of this grant in line with the requirement of the UKRI Policy on Open Access.

By accepting the OABG in Je-S you are agreeing you accept the grant and the Terms and Conditions as stated above. OABGs will only be paid if the Research Organisation has confirmed acceptance of the OABG and completed the Start Certificate by 1 June 2024.

If you have any queries regarding the UKRI OABG, please contact openaccess@funding.ukri.org.