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Practical Information for Research Performing Organisations on Policy Development, Implementation, Effectiveness and Alignment

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Summary

The number of Open Access (OA) policies that have been adopted by universities, research institutes and research funders has been increasing at a fast pace. The Registry of Open Access Repository Mandates and Policies (ROARMAP) records the existence of 733 OA policies across the world, of which 520 have been adopted by universities and research institutions. In order to understand and contextualise how OA policies are developed and how they can be effectively implemented and aligned, this brief overviews the processes evolving around policy making, policy effectiveness and policy alignment. In particular, it summarises the criteria and elements generally specified in OA policies, it points out some of the relevant steps informing the development, monitoring and revision of OA policies, it outlines what OA policy elements contribute to policy effectiveness, and highlights the benefits in aligning OA policies.

I. Open Access policies: making knowledge free for all

Open Access policies: criteria and elements

OA policies generally cover specific sets of criteria. They generally include requirements for depositing research outputs in repositories, for making the deposited outputs open access, and for publishing outputs on open access. Within these sets of criteria, OA policies usually include the following **elements**: kinds of research outputs to be deposited, version of outputs to be deposited, where to deposit, date of deposit, deposit exemptions, date to make deposited outputs available on open access, embargo length, licensing conditions, kinds of research outputs to be published in open access form, where to publish (open access and/or hybrid journals), funding for publication costs, and conditions on use of publication funds.

Importantly, OA policies can be distinguished between being **mandatory** or **non-mandatory**. Mandatory OA policies are those that a) require authors (the author must or is obliged) to deposit the research outputs in a repository and/or b) require authors to publish the research output on open access through a publisher. Non-mandatory OA policies merely request, recommend or encourage authors to a) deposit the research outputs in a repository and/or b) publish the research output on an open access form through a publisher.

By and large, OA policies usually specify a preference for research outputs to be either **deposited in a repository** (Green OA) or to be **published in open access** or hybrid journals (Gold OA). In the first case, research outputs become freely available online following a determined embargo period. In the second

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case, research outputs become immediately available online following, in most cases, the payment of an Article Processing Charge (APC).

Overall, OA policies elements and requirements vary. The emphasis that is placed in the policies wording can vary depending on the issues deemed as more relevant for a Higher Education Institution (HEI), depending on the resources available to implement open access, and depending on whether external OA policies (for instance research funders OA policies) exert some influence or have implications on the institutional OA.

Developing or revising an Open Access policy

The major benefits in developing OA policies are that more research outputs become freely available online. By making research outputs available on open access, researchers are facilitating knowledge transfer, accelerating scientific research, advancing technological progress, and heightening social well-being. Importantly, open access to research outputs also contributes to increase the impact and visibility of the research conducted in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and raises their research profiles. Therefore, when adopting OA policies HEIs often need to consider a number of steps that can inform the effective development, implementation, monitoring and revision of policies. The table below discusses in more detail what some of these steps are.

I. Policy development and implementation
1. Start the consultation and preparation process to develop or revise the OA policy: • Establish a working group; • Consult relevant institutional stakeholders to discuss awareness about OA as well as what issues they consider the OA policy should cover.
2. Draft the OA policy: • Examine guidelines for the development of OA policies[1]; • Look at major research funders OA policies (for example: RCUK, HEFCE, Wellcome Trust, EC)[2] to understand the requirements and the emphasis of those policies; • Look at examples of HEIs whose policies that have been successful in ensuring that a significant amount of content is made available on open access[3]; • Consider including the <u>5 important elements of a policy</u> in the institutional OA policy[4].
3. Consider human and financial resources available to support effective implementation of OA policy[5]

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1 Good practices for university OA policies (**link**);
MedOANet Guidelines for implementing open access policies: research performing and research funding organizations (**link**);
Policy guidelines for the development and promotion of open access, pp 45-57 (**link**);
Open access policy options for funding agencies and universities (**link**);
MedOANet Guidelines for implementing open access policies: research performing and research funding organizations (**link**).
2 HEFCE OA policy (**link**); RCUK OA policy (**link**); European Commission Horizon 2020 OA policy (**link**).
3 A series of case studies on institutional policy implementation will be made available in the PASTEUR4OA website (**link**).
4 PASTEUR4OA report: OA policies (**link**).
5 A brief overview of issues involving human and financial resources considerations on OA policy implementation is presented in the 'Collaborative Institutional Assessment of Open Access' tool (**link**) which assesses HEIs readiness for Open Access (OA) compliance.

- Assess the financial resources[6] required to implement open access in the institution. For instance: whether a repository needs to be developed, whether the repository software needs to be upgraded, whether the institution will make funds available for open access publishing, whether it will manage block grants, and whether new staff needs to be hired;
- Consider the human resources skills and training required for research support staff to facilitate an effective implementation of the policy.

4. Consider infrastructure, systems and processes required to support OA at the institutional level

- Examine what infrastructure (for example: repository software, repository hosting services) are needed to support the implementation of the OA policy[7];
- Consider what internal systems, processes and workflows are required to support the effective implementation of the policy[8].

5. Submit draft OA policy for approval by the University Senate, the Research Committee or other

6. Implement an advocacy and communication plan to raise awareness about OA policy, compliance requirements and available support mechanisms[9]

II. Monitoring and revision

7. Monitor OA policy effectiveness and collect data on policy compliance levels

- Look at examples on how to monitor policy effectiveness and how to collect data on compliance for reporting purposes[10].

8. Implement systems to report on compliance with research funders OA policies requirements

- Examine what the major research funders (for example: HEFCE, RCUK, Wellcome Trust, EC) reporting requirements are;
- Determine to which funders the institution needs to report, how and when;
- Consider what steps the institution needs to follow to ensure that reporting is accurate.

9. Regularly review the university's OA policy effectiveness and collect feedback from university stakeholders

10. Periodically assess the need to revise OA policy in order to encompass changes in the national and international policy landscape

Table 1: OA policy development, implementation, monitoring and revision

Open Access policies effectiveness

When developing or revising an OA policy, HEIs must consider how to ensure that policies are effective. The existence of OA policies per se is not sufficient to ensure that more research outputs become freely

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6 For some information on financial resources see the Open Access Business Models for Research Funders and Universities report (**link**)
7 For some information on OA infrastructure see the Sustainability of Open Access Services report (**link**)
8 For an example of an HEI OA workflow see the Imperial College approach to making open access simple (**link**).
9 See an example of an advocacy toolkit developed collaboratively by UCL, Nottingham and Newcastle Universities (**link**).
10 For example, the Funding Councils have issued a statement with the information and audit requirements for Open access in the post-2014 Research Excellence Framework (**link**).

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available online. At the policy making and subsequently at the monitoring level, some factors can contribute to ensure that policies are effective and that they achieve the expected outcomes. Based on previous studies that acknowledged that mandatory OA policies are more effective than non-mandatory policies[11], PASTEUR4OA has examined 120 universities mandatory OA policies to assess their effectiveness. This was measured in terms of the percentage of OA material available from each institution compared to the total number of articles published from those institutions each year.

Accordingly, this research exercise has indicated that the most successful policies – those that ensure that higher levels of research outputs are made available on open access – are the ones that include the following important policy elements[12]:

- The policy states that *research articles must be deposited* in the institutional repository (that is, the policy is mandatory);
- The policy states that *this action cannot be waived*: that is, whatever the conditions of embargo, the article must be deposited at the point specified by the policy;
- The policy states that *deposited items must be made Open Access*, and if there is an embargo then they must be made Open Access immediately the embargo comes to an end;
- The policy links the deposit of articles with *research assessment/performance evaluation* procedures within the institution: that is, the policy states that articles that are not deposited in line with policy requirements will not count towards performance reviews or research assessment exercises;
- If the policy states that an author should *retain certain rights* over the published work, this action is mandatory and cannot be waived.

In sum, a policy that includes all these criteria and that considers the policy development, implementation and monitoring steps highlighted in Table1 is more likely to succeed in gathering a large volume of OA content.

Open Access policy alignment

Beyond the development, implementation, monitoring and revision of OA policies there is also another relevant factor, that of policy alignment. The benefits in promoting the alignment of OA policies are manifold. In particular, policy alignment can contribute to create a simpler policy landscape for researchers and increase the prospect that researchers will comply with one or multiple OA policies (for example: an institutional and/or a research funder OA policy (-ies). It could also have an impact on researcher mobility if the same OA policies compliance criteria were applicable at a global level. Policy alignment can also reduce the burden on research support staff who need to provide advice on OA policies and monitor and report on policy compliance. Ultimately, policy alignment increases consistency between research funders and institutional OA policies.

Policy alignment can be achieved by converging all or the majority of the institutional OA policy elements with another OA policy model. For instance, a research funder OA policy. The table below highlights three key issues to be considered in order to align an institutional OA policy to another policy model.

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11 4 Gargouri, Y., Hajjem, C., Lariviere, V., Gingras, Y., Brody, T., Carr, L. and Harnad, S. 2010. Self-Selected or Mandated, Open Access Increases Citation Impact for Higher Quality Research. PLOS ONE, 5 (10). e13636 (**link**).
12 PASTEUR4OA report: OA policies (**link**).

I. Policy Alignment

1. Examine major research funders strategies and policies for open access (for example: national research funders OA policies and the European Commission's OA policy)

2. Consider what research funders OA policies have a greater impact in the respective institution but also what policy model can promote greater alignment at the national, EU and global levels

3. Assess how the institutional OA policy can become fully or largely aligned with another policy model

- Look at research funders OA policies and examine the policy elements where there are greater similarities between policies. Can the institutional OA policy apply the same requirements in the respective policy elements? What are the implications for adopting those policy elements in terms of internal systems, processes and resources?
- Conversely, look at the areas where there are greater divergences between research funders OA policies. Can the HEI adopt the same requirements as those applied by the most pertinent policy model? What are the implications for adopting those policy elements in terms of internal systems, processes and resources?

Note: information about major research funders OA policies can be found in SHERPA/JULIET and ROARMAP. Information comparing some funders' requirements can be retrieved from these databases.

Table 2: OA policy alignment