

Research in the Open: How Mandates Work in Practice

# The UK Research Councils and access to scholarly publications

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# Research Councils UK

- Strategic partnership of 7 research councils
  - Arts & Humanities RC
  - Biotechnology & Biological Sciences RC
  - Engineering & Physical Sciences RC
  - Economic & Social RC
  - Medical RC
  - Natural Environment RC
  - Science and Technology Facilities Council  
(merger of Central Laboratory of the Research Councils, and Particle Physics & Astronomy RC)
- Operates through working groups
  - including the Research Outputs Group (ROG)



# Research Councils and OA - drivers

- Value for money and generating impact: RC's fund research which needs to be communicated and exploited through e.g. publications
- Ensuring the health of the science base, which includes high-quality infrastructure to support research with no major access barriers
- Exploiting the potential of technological developments, such as e-science
- Stakeholder expectations and activities of other research funders



# RCUK open access principles for research outputs (2006)

- Ideas and knowledge derived from publicly-funded research must be **made available and accessible** for public use, interrogation and scrutiny as widely, rapidly and effectively as practicable
- Effective mechanisms must be in place to ensure that published research outputs are subject to **rigorous quality assurance**, through peer review
- The models and mechanisms for publication and access to research results must be both **efficient and cost-effective** in the use of public funds
- The outputs from current and future research must be **preserved** and remain accessible not only for the next few years but for future generations

# Current status

- Independent study (SQW/LISU) published April 2009
- Purpose: to identify the effects and impacts of open access.
- Included surveys of HE libraries and of researchers/post-grads.
- Provides options for research councils to consider

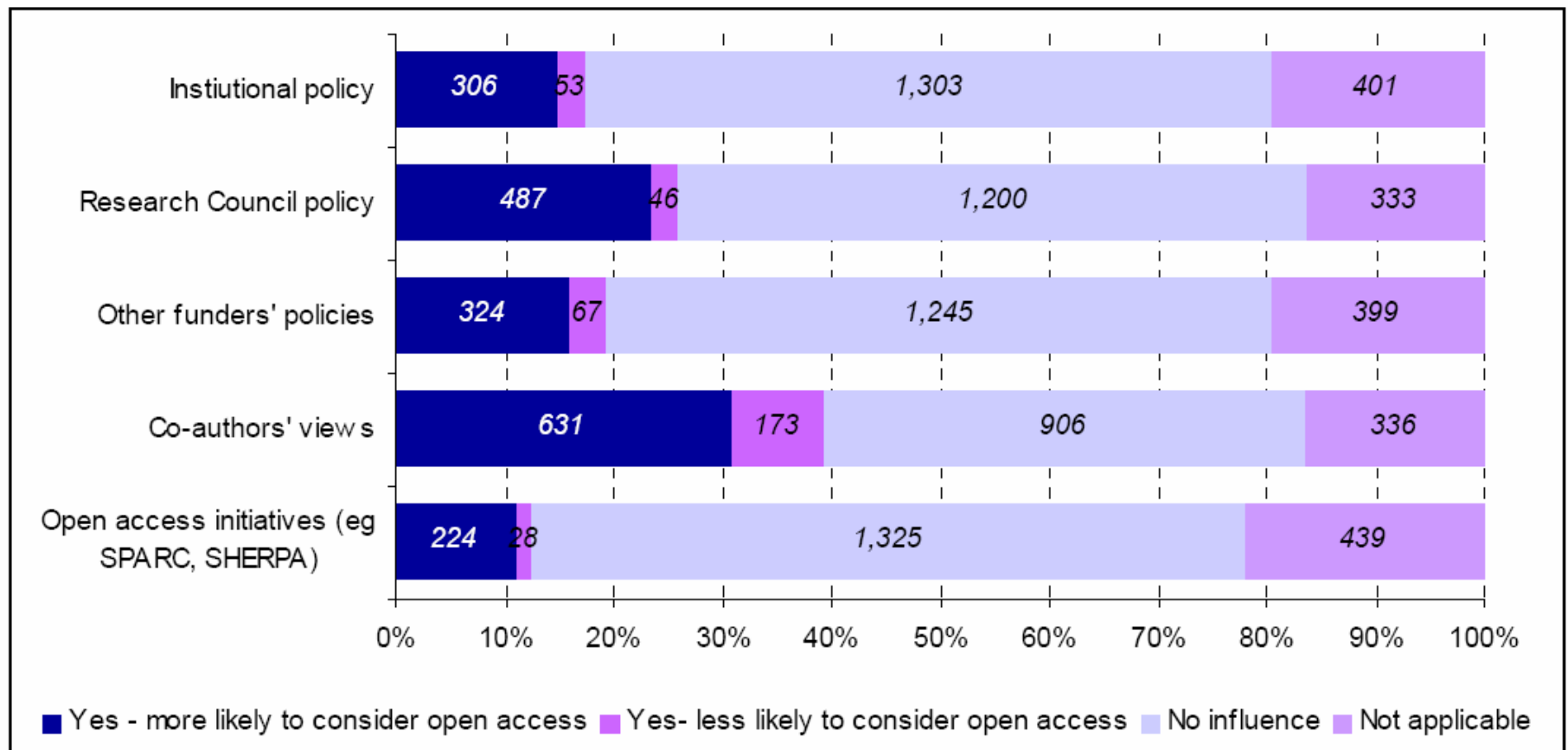
# General findings from the report - I

- Significant shift in favour of OA in last decade
- Knowledge and awareness of key features of OA remain limited, e.g. still confused with online access
- Engagement with OA debate varies by subject area
- Too early to assess impact of RC's policies, but some role in awareness raising and influencing policies

# General findings from report - II

- Drivers to use OA:
  - ! Speed of dissemination
  - Principle of free access for all
  - Availability to researchers with limited access to subscription journals
  - Possibility of increased citations
  - Very few listed mandates as a reason

Figure B-5 Have any of the following factors influenced your decision on whether to publish open access research outputs in the last 5 years?



## General findings from report - III

- Initial evidence that OA increases citation rates immediately after publication
- Limited compliance monitoring by funders
- Concern about impact of transition for learned societies but no evidence (yet) that libraries are cancelling subscriptions because of OA
- Little evidence on use by non-researchers, but indications are that this is limited

# Pay-to-publish OA model – RC support

- Authors choose where they publish
- Both pay-to-publish and subscription models supported through full economic costs by all RC's: level playing field
- Publication costs are part of allowable costs of a research proposal
  - Directly – if within the lifetime of a grant
  - Indirectly – through institutional schemes
- “Paying for open access publication charges” (RIN/UUK publication)

# Pay-to-Publish – report findings

- Limited use, in 45% cases paid by project funder, only 28% through indirect costs
- Barriers:
  - ! RAE and impact factors
  - Concern about peer review
  - Costs
  - Lack of awareness

# Pay-to-publish – report findings II

- Would lead to redistribution of costs
  - Towards research intensive universities
  - From non-academic to academic sector (RIN study)
- Ongoing debates on
  - Sustainability of the model, i.e. are OA journals able to cover their costs
  - at what level should fees be set?

# OA Deposit

- For awards from grant applications submitted from 1 October 2006 (STFC: 1 Dec 2006)
  - Requirement to deposit published articles from journals or conference proceedings
  - in an appropriate e-print repository, wherever such a repository is available
  - Within current copyright and licensing policies, such as embargo periods
  - At earliest opportunity (MRC: within six months)
- EPSRC: agreed (Dec. 08) to mandate open access publication – details to follow



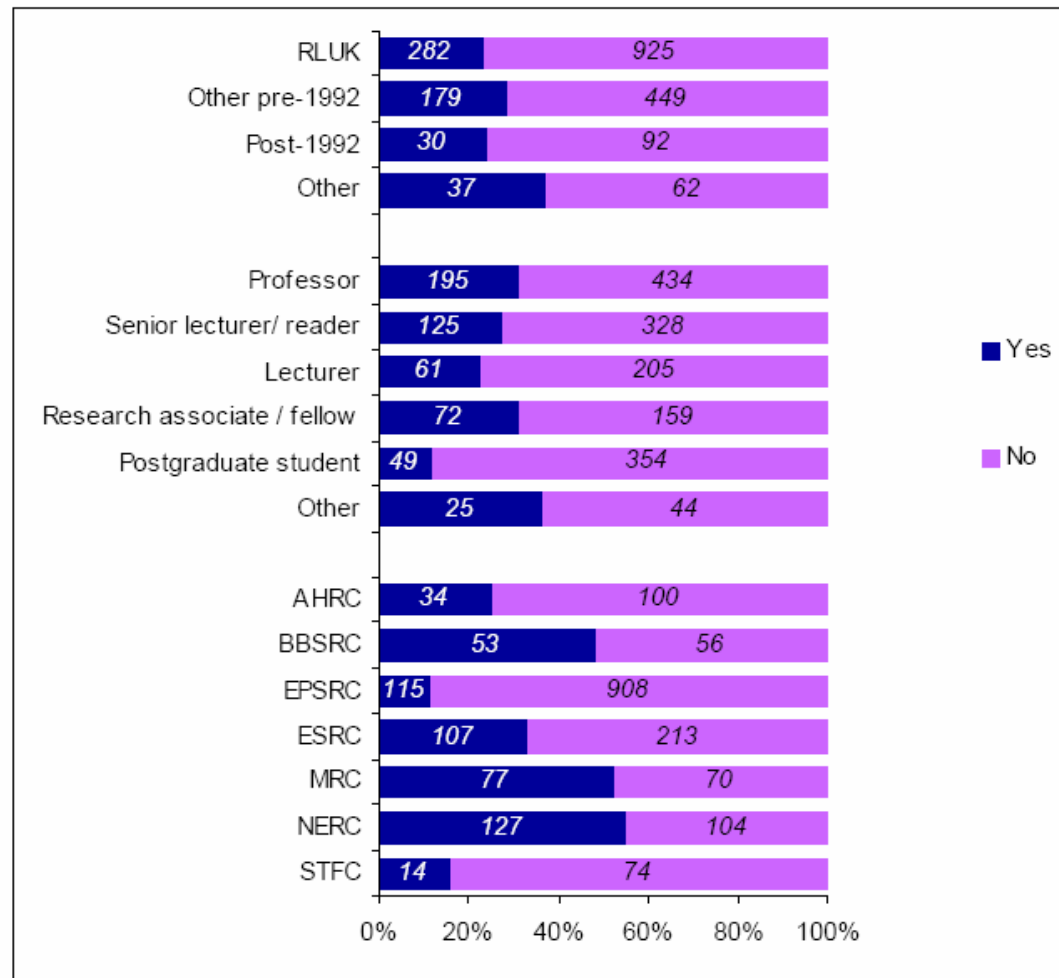
# OA repositories

- Repositories:
  - Direct support and management, eg:
    - ESRC Society Today
    - UKPubMed
  - Indirect support of institutional repositories through full economic costing regime
- Impact will take 3-4 years, considering length of research projects and publication lead times

# OA deposit – report findings

- Slow adoption by academics: in general no active deposit.
  - < 1/3 deposited in last 5 years
- Lack of awareness of RC's mandates
  - 3/4 not aware
  - Diversity across institution types researcher categories and research council
- Consultees argue funder mandates are key to influencing self-archiving – but 72% of survey respondents disagree. Is this just a time issue?

# Awareness of RC OA policy



## OA deposit – report findings II

- Value and role of peer review is complex
  - Differs by subject areas
  - Important if outside of immediate expertise of reader
  - Confusion about version (quality) control could be barrier to deposit and use

# Next steps

- In response to the study, the UK Research Councils will support increased open access, by:
  - extending their support for publishing in open access journals, including through the pay-to-publish model.
  - building on their mandates on grant-holders to deposit research papers in suitable repositories within an agreed time period, and;
- RCUK is now beginning this implementation process through a number of cross-Research Council working groups

# Pay-to-publish OA model - issues

- Indirect costs are 'hidden'
- Requires universities to setup infrastructure to be able to charge these
- The principle and funding can be extended to cover non-research councils grants
- Would allow funding to be transferred between subscriptions and pay-to-publish model at university level
- Can we extend direct support?

# OA deposit - issues

- What to do with embargo periods?
- Difficult for funders to manage and monitor, but are there incentives we can use?
  - Financial rewards
  - Reputation and visibility
- Depends on existence of repositories
- Multiple deposit options are confusing to researcher
- Awareness and understanding – what more can we do?

Thank you

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