LONDON METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

# Open Access and Rights Retention Policy

| Document Control Information | |
|---|---|
| Version control | Version 1.0 (supersedes Open Access Policy) |
| Owned by: | Research and Knowledge Exchange |
| Latest amendment on: | |
| Approved by: | Academic Board |
| Approved on: | 4 November 2026 |
| Coming into effect on: | 4 November 2026 |
| Review date: | November 2028 |



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## 1. Introduction

1.1 The University is committed to promoting excellence in research and to ensuring that the outputs of its research are disseminated as widely as possible for the benefit of society, the economy, culture, public policy and future research.

1.2 The University recognises that open access to research outputs increases their visibility, accessibility and reuse, fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange and innovation, while maximising their intellectual, social, cultural and economic impact.

1.3 Through its Institutional repository and supporting research infrastructure, systems and services, the University enables research outputs to be preserved, discovered and shared more widely, supporting research impact and enhancing the profile, reputation and career development of its researchers.

## 2. Purpose and scope

2.1 This policy outlines the University's overarching approach to open access, including:

- publication routes,
- mandatory output repository submission rules, regulations and expectations and responsibilities,
- the systems and processes in place to support open access,
- regulatory compliance and funder requirements,
- the principles of rights retention and who is responsible for what.

2.1.1 Research outputs for the purposes of this policy include journal articles, published conference papers with an ISSN, books and monographs, book chapters, and doctoral theses.

2.1.2 Open Access requirements apply across the full range of research outputs.

2.1.3 The Rights Retention provision outlined in this policy applies specifically to journal articles and published conference papers with an ISSN only applies to first copyright in authored research publications. It does not extend to other intellectual property rights in research, which are already covered in the University IP Policy.

2.2 This policy applies to:

- All research-active staff (with a research component to their role), during the period of their employment by the University.
- Postgraduate research students registered for doctoral degrees at the University are subject to the thesis deposit requirements set out in Section 3.2 of this policy. The Rights Retention provisions in Section 4.5 do not apply to PGR students as standard; however, PGR students who wish to

apply Rights Retention to their own journal articles or conference papers are welcome to opt in by contacting library@londonmet.ac.uk.

# 3. Open Access publishing

## 3.1 General principles

3.1.1 Open Access publishing is defined as making research outputs available electronically, free at the point of use, and with as few restrictions on further reuse as possible.

3.1.2 The University supports repository-based Green Open Access as the default route and aims to make all in-scope research outputs available in the London Met Repository at the earliest stage permitted by copyright and licensing restrictions.

## 3.2 Deposit of research outputs in the London Met Repository

### 3.2.1 For Staff

3.2.1.1 All in-scope authors and co-authors are required to create a record for each research output in the London Met Repository, providing key descriptive metadata in line with guidance from Library Services & Special Collections.

3.2.1.3 Library Services & Special Collections provides guidance on how to meet the descriptive metadata requirements for their output to support authors in meeting their deposit obligations.

3.2.1.4 Where possible, and as required, staff should include:

- Data Access Statements where applicable.
- Publications linked to underlying research data.
- Sensitive and restricted data considerations.
- Funder acknowledgements.

3.2.1.5 For journal articles and published conference papers with an ISSN, authors and co-authors must deposit the full text of the publication - as the Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) - in the London Met Repository no later than three months after the date of acceptance for publication, or earlier if required by a funder.

3.2.1.6 For all other in-scope research outputs (books, book chapters, etc.), authors and co-authors are encouraged to deposit the full text where permitted by copyright law and/or licence permissions.

3.2.1.7 University staff should not create Repository records for outputs authored before the commencement of their employment at the University, except in cases where the output is not already included in another university's repository and falls within the current REF assessment period.

### 3.2.2 For Postgraduate Research students

3.2.2.1 All postgraduate research students **must** deposit an electronic copy of the final approved version of their thesis in the University's

Institutional Repository following the successful completion of all examination requirements and prior to the award being formally conferred, unless otherwise agreed by the University under exceptional circumstances.

3.2.2.2 Where there are legitimate grounds for restricting access, including but not limited to commercial sensitivity, intellectual property protection, confidentiality obligations, publication plans, security considerations, or ethical requirements; research students are responsible for requesting any applicable embargo periods or redaction of thesis content for copyright, commercial confidentiality or data protection reasons via the Research and Postgraduate Office.

3.2.2.3 Such requests must be approved in accordance with University procedures and will normally be granted only for a defined period.

### 3.3 Gold Open Access and Article Processing Charges

3.3.1 If opting to publish via the Gold (publisher-provided) Open Access route, authors must confirm that a funding mechanism is in place to cover any Article Processing Charge (APC) or Book Processing Charge (BPC) before selecting this publication route. The University currently does not provide a central budget for payment of these charges.

3.3.2 In some cases, journal article APCs may be covered through the University's existing institutional agreements with specific publishers, often referred to as Read & Publish Agreements. Authors should verify eligibility with Library Services if they have questions about their eligibility for a Read & Publish agreement covering their work. Authors should discuss funding availability for other forms of Gold Open Access with the Research Coordinator in their Academic School in the first instance.

3.3.3 For grant-funded research projects where immediate Open Access publishing is required by the funder, grant awards should be used to cover APCs or BPCs where available and permitted.

### 3.4 Compliance with funder Open Access requirements

3.4.1 Authors must ensure they are able to comply with funder requirements for Open Access publishing before accepting grant funding for a research project, including any requirements for immediate, embargo-free Open Access at the time of publication.

3.4.2 Authors in receipt of grant awards must comply with funder requirements for open licensing of research outputs and any requirement to deposit outputs in specific external repositories.

### 3.5 Open licensing

3.5.1 For journal articles and ISSN-bearing conference papers, the Rights Retention licence set out in Section 4 below applies. This grants the University the right to make the AAM available under a Creative Commons

Attribution (CC-BY) licence. While REF2029 does not mandate a specific licence, using CC-BY ensures the widest reuse and compatibility with funder requirements.

3.5.2 For doctoral theses, the author grants the University a global, non-exclusive and irrevocable licence to make the final submitted manuscript available on Open Access in the London Met Repository and related external discovery platforms, unless an embargo or redaction has been approved by the Research and Postgraduate Office. Thesis authors are encouraged to apply a Creative Commons licence to their thesis, but this is not mandatory.

3.5.3 Authors are encouraged to apply a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) licence to other types of research output deposited in the London Met Repository, where permitted by copyright law.

### 3.6 Use of persistent author identifiers

3.6.1 All University staff are strongly encouraged to register for a personal ORCID identifier and to apply this identifier to all research outputs through publisher submission systems and the London Met Repository.

3.6.2 ORCID provides researchers with a unique, persistent digital identifier that improves attribution, discoverability and interoperability of research outputs, while reducing administrative burden and supporting compliance with funder and publisher requirements and support monitoring of Open Access compliance.

**Note, this is mandatory for all research-active staff** (with Research Plan and Research Personal Workload Allocation).

## 4. Rights Retention

### 4.1 Principle

4.1.1 London Metropolitan University adopts a Rights Retention approach to ensure that access to research publications produced at the University is as open as possible and that authors retain intellectual property rights over their accepted submissions.

4.1.2 Rights retention enables researchers to retain the rights to make their Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) openly available, while retaining full freedom to publish in journals of their choice. It is not necessary for an author to transfer copyright or grant a publisher an exclusive licence in order to have their work published.

4.1.3 The University confirms the existing position that academic staff own the copyright to their scholarly works, consistent with standard practice in UK higher education.

### 4.2 Licence grant

4.2.1 Upon acceptance of a journal article or ISSN-bearing conference paper for publication, the researcher grants London Metropolitan University a non-exclusive, irrevocable, worldwide, royalty-free licence to make the Author

Accepted Manuscript (AAM) publicly available in the London Met Repository under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution CC-BY licence, with immediate effect upon deposit.

4.2.2 This license is granted prior to submission to a publisher and therefore takes precedence over any subsequent license a publisher may seek to impose. The intellectual property in the research output remains with the researcher.

4.2.3 This also ensures output eligibility for inclusion to the research assessment exercises, including but not limited to the Research Excellence Framework (REF). CC-BY also supports eligibility for REF2029, which accepts CC-BY, CC-BY-NC and CC-BY-ND licences.

### 4.3 Rights Retention Statement

4.3.1 While the policy establishes the University's position on rights retention, and prior license, as outlined in section 4.2, it is best practice and a standard expectation that researchers include the following Rights Retention Statement in the acknowledgements section of manuscript submissions and in any covering letter to the journal, as this provides explicit notice to the publisher that a prior license exists before any publisher copyright agreement is signed:

> *For the purpose of Open Access, the author has applied a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission.*

4.3.2 Where a Researcher is not the lead or corresponding author on a submission, they should request that the corresponding author includes this statement on their behalf and ensure that all co-authors are made aware of this policy as early as possible.

### 4.4 Repository deposit

4.4.1 Authors must deposit the Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) of journal articles and ISSN-bearing conference papers in the London Met Repository no later than three months after the date of acceptance for publication, or earlier if required by a funder. The deposited AAM will be made immediately and openly accessible under a CC-BY licence upon deposit.

4.4.2 Researchers should deposit their AAM directly in the London Met Repository and notify the RPO of the acceptance. Library Services will apply the appropriate CC-BY licence and make the AAM publicly accessible.

### 4.5 Exemptions

4.5.1 The University recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances in which it is not possible or appropriate to comply with the Rights Retention requirements of this policy. Grounds for an exemption may include:

- The research output contains third-party copyright material which cannot be licensed under CC-BY.

- A co-author on the publication does not consent to the application of a CC-BY licence.
- Compliance would conflict with a specific funder or sponsor requirement that takes precedence.
- Compliance would conflict with a confidentiality obligation or a legal restriction.

4.5.2 Researchers wishing to request an exemption must contact the Research & Postgraduate Office in advance of submission, providing details of the publication and the reason for the exemption request. Exemption requests will be assessed by the RPO, which may consult with Library Services or the Researcher's School RKE Head as appropriate. A record will be kept of all exemption requests and outcomes.

4.5.3 An exemption from this policy may affect the publication's eligibility as a REF output unless a relevant REF Open Access Policy exception applies. REF exceptions may still permit submission where deposit, timing or licensing requirements cannot be met but this is not guaranteed.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

### 5.1 Researchers

All researchers in scope are responsible for:

- Creating a record for each in-scope research output in the London Met Repository with accurate metadata.
- Depositing the AAM of journal articles and ISSN-bearing conference papers in the London Met Repository no later than three months after acceptance.
- Including the Rights Retention Statement in the acknowledgements and covering letter of all in-scope manuscript submissions.
- Ensuring that all co-authors are aware of this policy and the Rights Retention Statement before submission.
- Registering for an ORCID identifier and providing it to publishers and the London Met Repository.
- Ensuring compliance with funder Open Access requirements, including any specific licensing or deposit requirements.
- Requesting an exemption from the RPO in advance if compliance with the Rights Retention provisions is not possible.

### 5.2 Library Services & Special Collections

Library Services & Special Collections is responsible for:

- Overseeing the operation and development of the London Met Repository
- Checking submitted research output records for accuracy and metadata completeness prior to public visibility.

- Applying CC-BY licences to deposited AAMs and making them publicly accessible upon publication.
- Notifying publishers of the University's Rights Retention Policy and maintaining records of publisher communications, including any objections or takedown requests.
- Ensuring that all journal articles and ISSN-bearing conference papers are made available on Open Access in the London Met Repository in line with the REF Open Access Policy.
- Ensuring doctoral theses are accessible in the Repository and discoverable in external platforms.
- Investigating any reported copyright-infringing content on the Repository and acting under the Takedown Policy as necessary.
- Providing advice, guidance and training to staff and research students on all aspects of Open Access publishing, Rights Retention and repository deposit.
- Administering the University's institutional Open Access agreements with publishers.

### 5.3 Research and Postgraduate Office

The Research and Postgraduate Office is responsible for:

- Working with School RKE Heads to disseminate the requirements of this policy to academic staff and research students and ensuring compliance.
- Advocating for Open Access publishing and providing support for external funding mechanisms.
- Collaborating with School RKE Heads to identify funding for Gold Open Access charges where necessary.
- Coordinating the upload of doctoral theses to the Repository by postgraduate research students by requesting they include the Library in their submission email providing the full text copy.
- Monitoring compliance with this and funder Open Access policies and reporting on this to the relevant committee.
- Assessing exemption requests from Researchers and maintaining records of decisions.

## 6. Compliance and review

6.1 The RPO and Library Services will monitor compliance with this policy and provide an annual report to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. The report will include data on repository deposit rates, Open Access compliance for REF-eligible outputs, and Rights Retention exemptions granted.

6.2 School Heads of Research and Knowledge Exchange are responsible for supporting compliance within their Schools. Compliance with funder Open Access policies is the joint responsibility of individual researchers with

oversight from the Research and Postgraduate Office.

6.3 This policy will be reviewed biennially or updated as required.

## 7. Related policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The University's Code of Good Research Practice
- The Concordat to Support Research Integrity
- The University's IP Policy
- Handbook for Research Students and Supervisors and Code of Practice 2026/27
- Section 22 of the Research Degree Regulations

## 8. Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

## Appendix A: Glossary of terms

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| **Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM)** | The version of a journal article or conference paper accepted for publication following peer review, incorporating any changes arising from the review process but before the publisher's copyediting or typesetting. This is the version used for repository deposit under this policy. |
| **Article Processing Charge (APC)** | A fee charged by a publisher to make a journal article available as Gold Open Access on the publisher's website. |
| **Book Processing Charge (BPC)** | A fee charged by a publisher to make a book or monograph available as Gold Open Access. |
| **CC-BY licence** | A Creative Commons Attribution licence. This is an open licence that permits users to distribute, adapt and build upon a work in any medium or format, including for commercial purposes, provided the original author is attributed. CC-BY is the licence required by UKRI and most major research funders for open access outputs. |
| **Corresponding author** | The researcher who takes primary responsibility for a manuscript during submission, peer review and the production process. |
| **Embargo** | A period during which a deposited file in a repository cannot be made publicly accessible. Embargoes are commonly imposed by publishers for Green Open Access. This policy does not permit embargo periods for Rights Retention deposits. |
| **Green Open Access** | Also known as self-archiving. A form of Open Access in which the Author Accepted Manuscript is deposited in a repository and made freely available, either immediately or after an embargo period. This is the primary route supported by this policy. |
| **Gold Open Access** | A form of Open Access in which the publisher makes the Version of Record freely available on their website, typically in exchange for payment of an Article Processing Charge. |
| **ISSN** | International Standard Serial Number. An internationally recognised identifier applied to serial publications, including academic journals and conference proceedings series. ISSN-bearing conference papers are within scope of this policy. |
| **London Met Repository** | London Metropolitan University's institutional research repository, hosted on ePrints. The Repository provides open access to London Met research outputs and supports compliance with REF and funder Open Access requirements. |
| **ORCID** | Open Researcher and Contributor ID. A unique persistent identifier for researchers that distinguishes individuals from other authors with the same or similar names and enables research outputs to be unambiguously attributed across systems. |
| **Read & Publish Agreement** | A contract between the University and a publisher that shifts payments from subscription-based journal access to Open Access publishing, typically enabling researchers to publish Open Access at no additional cost under the terms of the agreement. It also grants read access to that publisher’s journals for members of the University.<br><br>Also known as **Transformative or Transitional Agreement** |

| Term | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| **Rights Retention** | An approach to scholarly publishing in which an institution establishes, through policy, that researchers grant the institution a prior licence to make the Author Accepted Manuscript openly available. Because this licence is granted before the manuscript is submitted to a publisher, it takes precedence over any restrictive licence a publisher may subsequently seek to impose. |
| **Rights Retention Statement (RRS)** | A short statement included in the acknowledgements of a submitted manuscript and/or in a covering letter to the publisher, notifying the publisher that a prior licence to make the Author Accepted Manuscript openly available has been granted under the institution's Rights Retention Policy. |
| **Version of Record (VoR)** | The final published version of a research output as it appears in the journal or other publication, following publisher copyediting and typesetting. The VoR is distinct from the Author Accepted Manuscript. |