# University of Stirling Open Access (OA) Fund (Guidance)

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# Introduction

* 1. The University of Stirling is committed to an inclusive approach to open access and has established an Open Access (OA) Fund (formerly known as the Article Processing Charge (APC) Fund) to reserve funding in support of open access dissemination of research outputs.
	2. UKRI-funded authors of research articles and longform publications arising directly from their UKRI-funded research should consult the separate [UKRI Open Access Funding Guidance](https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/professional-services/information-services-and-library/current-students-and-staff/researchers/writing-and-research/publishing-and-impact/open-access/university-open-access-policy/)[[1]](#footnote-1).
	3. To manage the administration of the OA Fund, the University has prepared this guidance document to capture the scope, eligibility criteria, application process, and other relevant information about open access funding available to University of Stirling authors.
	4. The University’s Open Access Fund is managed in compliance with the [University’s Open Access Policy](https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/professional-services/information-services-and-library/current-students-and-staff/researchers/writing-and-research/publishing-and-impact/open-access/university-open-access-policy/)[[2]](#footnote-2).
	5. As and when funder or institutional policies change, this guidance document will be updated. The University’s [Open Access Glossary](https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/professional-services/information-services-and-library/current-students-and-staff/researchers/writing-and-research/publishing-and-impact/open-access/glossary-of-open-access-terms/)[[3]](#footnote-3) may be helpful in defining terms used in this guidance document.

# **General**

## **2a Eligible costs**

Eligible costs under the OA Fund include:

* Article Processing Charges (APC) for fully open access journals;
* APCs for [Jisc-approved transformative (hybrid) journals](https://v2.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/tjlists.html)[[4]](#footnote-4) until 31 December 2024;
* where funds allow and the sum requested is reasonable, Book Processing Charges (BPC) for open access monographs, book chapters or edited collections;
* where funds allow and the sum requested is reasonable, publisher-related charges which, if otherwise unpaid, would prevent publication (e.g. page or figure charges, journal submission charges);
* the ‘publish’ element of publisher agreements which facilitate discounted or no-cost open access publication for Stirling-affiliated authors; and
* support for open access publishing initiatives which facilitate unlimited open access publication at no cost to Stirling-affiliated authors and in some cases, all authors.

## **2b Ineligible costs**

Ineligible costs under the OA Fund include:

* APCs for hybrid journals which are not Jisc-approved transformative (hybrid) journals.
This is to bring the OA Fund into alignment with Plan S Funders and protects Stirling authors from funder sanctions.
* Publisher-related charges which, if otherwise unpaid, would not prevent publication (e.g. colour charges for print version).
	1. Subject to the specific outputs criteria below, all research outputs are eligible for support from the OA Fund whether the underpinning research is funded by an external funder or not.
	2. There is no limit to the amount of funding which can be applied for in a single instance or cumulatively over any given period by an author.
	3. Per the University’s Open Access Policy (clause 8.4.), the costs of APCs should be factored into the costs of a research grant application where these are eligible costs from the funder. These funds should be maintained within the project funds and should not be allocated to the OA Fund. However, researchers in receipt of such funds can still benefit from a reduced APC under certain publishing agreements and should advise the Open Access team by email when submitting to such a journal so that appropriate arrangements for managing invoicing can be made.
	4. Supporting open access is an additional cost for the University alongside journal subscription costs in excess of £1.57 million per year (with an average inflation of approximately 7% per annum). Eligibility criteria (for applicants and outputs) has been developed in line with the principles that underpin the University’s Open Access Policy and are reviewed on a regular basis by the University’s Research Committee.
	5. The OA Fund is an annual fund, which is replenished at the start of each financial year. The OA Fund will operate on a first come, first served basis. It will be administered by Research, Innovation & Business Engagement in association with Information Services. A report on OA Fund commitments will be made annually at the May meeting of the University’s Research Committee and, should a potential shortfall become apparent, additional funds will be sought as appropriate. The Chair of the Committee will have delegated authority to address shortfalls when time critical action is required which cannot wait until the next formal Committee meeting.

# Applicant Criteria

* 1. All researchers affiliated to the University, including staff members, postgraduate research and taught students, and undergraduates are eligible to apply to the OA Fund.
	2. Any student applications must relate to research being carried out at the University of Stirling and require support from the student’s supervisor/course coordinator.
	3. The application must meet the following criteria:
1. Authorship:
	1. the Applicant is the sole or primary author of the publication; or
	2. one of the Stirling authors is the grant holder (and grant funds are available, or the primary author does not have access to other funds); or
	3. one of the Stirling authors makes a convincing case why the funds should be paid by Stirling rather than any project partner or co-author
2. Publication
	1. the Applicant must be able to detail why the chosen journal/publisher is the best choice of publication outlet; and
	2. the Applicant has identified, where applicable, how the chosen journal/publisher allows a compliant route to open access which meets funder requirements
3. Affiliation and Acknowledgements
	1. the Applicant must be a current member of staff or registered student at the University of Stirling; and
	2. the Applicant must include in the published output the University of Stirling as their affiliation; and
	3. the Applicant must include in the published output an appropriate funder acknowledgment (per the funder’s guidance) and a statement on how underlying research materials (such as data, samples or models) can be accessed.
4. External Funding
	1. If externally funded, the funder does not allow open access costs within eligible project costs.

# Outputs and Charges Criteria

* 1. The application must meet one of the following applicable criteria regarding the publication model or route or the nature of the charges requested:
	2. the journal or publishing platform only allows open access publication via the payment of a fee (i.e. APC in a fully open access journal); or
	3. the funder requires that the Version of Record of the article be available in open access in the journal or publishing platform, which requires the payment of a fee (i.e. APC); or
	4. the funder requires that a book chapter/monograph be published in open access and the only suitable publishing route requires payment of a fee (e.g. BPC); or
	5. the only suitable publishing route for a book chapter/monograph without a funder requirement is in open access via the payment of a fee (e.g. BPC); or

Note: in these cases, the OA Fund will only cover reasonable costs and only where this can be met by the current budget level.

* 1. publisher-related charges (e.g. page charges) are required in order to publish the research output.

Note: while it is not required that the research output also be published in open access, it is strongly encouraged via the publisher *or* repository route.

# Application Process

* 1. Applications to the OA Fund should be made **before** submitting an output for publication or so that funds can be confirmed.
	2. Where an existing publishing agreement will mean there is no cost to the author to publish in open access, an application is not required. Whether an application is required is usually noted on the University’s website under [Where to Publish](https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/professional-services/information-services-and-library/current-students-and-staff/researchers/writing-and-research/publishing-and-impact/where-to-publish/#item%202)[[5]](#footnote-5).
	3. To apply to the OA Fund:
* Login to the [University Portal](https://portal.stir.ac.uk/)[[6]](#footnote-6) and select ‘Apply for APC Funding’ from the bottom right panel headed ‘I Want to..’
* Complete the OA Fund Application Form by providing all required information (fields marked with \*) and as much relevant information as possible.
* Your application will be delivered to openaccess@stir.ac.uk and you should receive a response within a reasonable period. If more information is required, or additional approvals (e.g. student’s supervisor), this will be requested from you.

# Decision Making

* 1. As funds are limited, a number of factors are evaluated and there is a hierarchy of approval. In addition to the eligibility criteria above, the following is considered (in order of priority):
1. Is the basic eligibility criteria met?
2. Is this the most suitable publishing route?
3. Has the Applicant made a convincing case that the University should bear the publishing costs despite other criteria not being met?
4. If an alternative publication route is available with an embargo period, is this a reasonable period?
5. Is there a need or important benefit to immediate open access via the publisher route for this research output where a no-cost repository route is otherwise available?
6. Is this hybrid journal part of a transformative arrangement?

If not, from 1 January 2021, these costs will not be supported by the University, in alignment with Plan S funders.

* 1. An overall evaluation of the application will also consider:
1. Is the requested amount for the APC or BPC under the publisher route reasonable and able to be supported by the current budget level of the OA Fund without jeopardising other requests?
2. Is this a known publisher or publishing platform?

Authors are responsible for also evaluating the publishers to whom they intend to submit. See notes on [Predatory Publishing](#PredatoryPublishing).

# Predatory Publishing

* 1. Predatory publishing generally refers to publishers who exploit open access models by charging a fee for the publication of material without providing the services an author would expect such as peer review and editing which can allow poor quality research into circulation.
	2. Prior to agreeing to pay fees for open access publishing, various checks can be performed to evaluate a journal, publisher, or publishing platform.
	3. Note: Publication practices vary from country to country, and it is important to consider cultural differences. There are several factors to evaluate and there may be valid reasons that a journal or publisher does not pass certain checks. Use your best judgement when determining a place of publication for your research outputs. More information is available on the University’s website [How to Spot Predatory Publishers](https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/professional-services/information-services-and-library/current-students-and-staff/researchers/writing-and-research/publishing-and-impact/where-to-publish/how-to-spot-predatory-publishers/#d.en.67205) page[[7]](#footnote-7) and a number of online tools and guides also exist.

# Additional Support

Queries about open access publishing at the University of Stirling or the OA Fund should be directed to openaccess@stir.ac.uk.

1. <https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/professional-services/information-services-and-library/current-students-and-staff/researchers/writing-and-research/publishing-and-impact/open-access/university-open-access-policy/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/professional-services/information-services-and-library/current-students-and-staff/researchers/writing-and-research/publishing-and-impact/open-access/university-open-access-policy/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/professional-services/information-services-and-library/current-students-and-staff/researchers/writing-and-research/publishing-and-impact/open-access/glossary-of-open-access-terms/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://v2.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/tjlists.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/professional-services/information-services-and-library/current-students-and-staff/researchers/writing-and-research/publishing-and-impact/where-to-publish/#item%202> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://portal.stir.ac.uk> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.stir.ac.uk/about/professional-services/information-services-and-library/current-students-and-staff/researchers/writing-and-research/publishing-and-impact/where-to-publish/how-to-spot-predatory-publishers/#d.en.67205> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)