

University of Cambridge  
**Open Access Project Board**

**Minutes – 16 May 2013**

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Meeting held at 16.30-17.30 on Thursday 16th May 2013  
in the PVC Meeting Room, The Old Schools

Present: Professor Lynn Gladden (Chair), Professor Steve Young, Professor Howard Chase, Professor Martin Daunton, Professor Paul Luzio, Mrs Anne Jarvis, Mr John Norman and Dr Gill Rands (Secretary)

Apologies: Professor Andy Parker, Mrs Peta Stevens

Declaration of Interest: No new declarations were made.

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## **1. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising – OAPB-10**

1.1 The draft minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2013 were approved (OAPB-10). Actions from that meeting had been completed. The University's response to HEFCE's pre-consultation letter about OA and the post-2014 REF had been submitted on 15 March 2013; it had been copied to the Research Policy Committee and was available on the open access website <https://www.openaccess.cam.ac.uk/about>.

## **2. Project report and analysis – OAPB-11**

2.1 John Norman introduced the project report (OAPB-11), which provided a summary of progress since the last meeting and outlined the key issues that had arisen since the implementation of the RCUK policy on 1 April 2013.

2.2 It was noted that awareness of OA within the University was still low and that the communications plan was moving into a new phase. In particular, there was now a plan to reach all research-active staff by email, either directly or via Schools, Faculties and Departments; and also to target key Faculties and Departments for face-to-face sessions following the Council of School meetings. Decisions taken at the current meeting would inform the communications message.

2.3 It had become clear that it was necessary for the OA team to be proactive in investigating the green OA options for authors, in the face of many publishers' determination to drive authors towards gold payment. Early data on the relatively low availability of RCUK-compliant green licences versus gold options (OAPB-11 appendix A) was of concern, since it might jeopardise the University's approach of preferring green deposit.

2.4 Following discussion of the recommendations in OAPB-11, **the Board agreed that:**

- a) **The central distribution mechanism for the RCUK block grant would be continued until the next review by the Board.** The current system was working well and was delivering two crucial elements: availability of detailed, prompt and consistent advice for academics; and capture of data and experience to inform future decisions by the University.

- b) **The University would in future pay APCs from the RCUK block grant as articles were accepted for publication (i.e. subject to RCUK criteria except for submission date), and that this would be backdated to 1 April 2013.**

Considerations in this decision were: the number of author enquiries relating to articles accepted rather than submitted after 1 April 2013; the recognition that article acceptance represented a key 'touch point' at which academics would consider OA options and seek advice; the need to give academics a simple and logical message; the small number of APC payments approved so far and the need to demonstrate full use of the block grant in this first year; the evidence that in calculating spend on the block grant, RCUK had not factored in the lag effect in the first year of using submission rather than acceptance as the date criterion; and the correspondence (circulated by John Norman at the meeting) between Michael Jubb of RIN and RCUK in which Mark Thorley of RCUK stated: "*we think it would be acceptable to spend APC block grant on paying for papers which, strictly speaking, fall outside of the scope of the policy, in that they were submitted for publication before the 1st April.*"

- c) **As a corollary of 2.4(b), a sum would be allocated from the transition funding to serve as a contingency in the publication fund** (see 3.1(b)i below). This decision was made in recognition of the risk that extending the eligibility as in 2.4(b) could cause the 2013-14 block grant to run out early. In such an event, the contingency sum would continue to support authors who chose to publish in journals where APC payment was unavoidable. It was known that other universities were using transition funds to make pre-payment deals with publishers; such deals were likely to be less equitable and less effective than the proposal recommended here.

2.5 **Action:** John Norman and Gill Rands to prepare a message for all research-active staff in light of decision 2.4(b), and determine effective ways to get it to all PIs, postdocs and research students. The Research Policy Committee had asked that such a message be approved by RPC circulation before mailing by the PVC Research.

### 3. Financial report and proposals for further allocation of transition funds – OAPB-12

3.1 OAPB-12 summarised current and anticipated expenditure in relation to the OA transition award, and provided proposals for allocation of the remaining funds. Following discussion of the paper, **the Board:**

- a) **Approved expenditure relating to phase 1 of the infrastructure and services project to a total of £349K, as outlined in OAPB-12 Table 1.** Categories of expenditure were: Dspace hardware; helpdesk and other software; consultancy services; staff costs and expenses. This work was on track to complete in July 2013 as planned. The services of Michael Jubb of the Research Information Network (RIN) had proved to be an excellent investment, providing independent and extremely well-informed advice, guidance and information to the PVC Research and the OA project team.
- b) **Approved financial commitments for the remainder of the transition fund (£450K) as outlined in OAPB-12 Table 2,** with an agreed emphasis on using this funding mainly to engage in activities that would increase the University's understanding and evidence base as a foundation for future decisions around OA. Categories of expenditure would be:
- i. A contingency sum of £172K to be transferred to the publication fund, as per 2.4(c) above. This would represent an addition of around 15% to the 2013-14 block grant of £1.15M.

- ii. Work to scope and develop a sophisticated web application that would encourage academic engagement and enable sharing and reporting of publication and OA data (£150K).
- iii. A one-year data analyst post in the Research Strategy Office to analyse the potential impact of HEFCE and RCUK OA policies and to capture and report data on article flows through the Symplectic-DSpace integration (£50K).
- iv. The initial license for a Symplectic-DSpace connector (Symplectic Research Tools) to encourage open access deposit of articles at the point of academic confirming authorship of an article (£18K).
- v. A small number of pre-payment experiments such as PeerJ membership and Royal Society institutional membership (£50K). A relatively small investment in PeerJ could be used to send a useful signal to traditional publishers about the University's willingness to engage with alternative publishing models.
- vi. Other small amounts allocated to, for example, incorporating ORCID (a registry of unique researcher identifiers) and making a contribution to the Wellcome Trust study on APC market forces (£10K).

3.2 It was noted that in summer 2013 the PVC Research would need to provide a brief report to RCUK confirming the allocation of the transition funding.

#### 4. Membership of Learned Societies – OAPB-13

4.1 OAPB-13 provided an example of a case where paying for an author to become a member of a learned society, and therefore being eligible for a reduced APC charge, would obtain open access at a lower total net cost to the University. Although there would be an administrative cost in handling the transaction, paying for one-year membership could be worthwhile where the saving was substantial: in the American Chemical Society case, the saving would be \$1350 i.e. around 45% of the non-member charge. The University should not be responsible for membership renewal unless this was associated with a further publication.

4.2 In making such payments from the RCUK block grant, the University would rely on this part of the RCUK policy: *"Institutions may use the block grant in the manner they consider will best deliver the RCUK Policy on Open Access in a transparent way that allocates funds fairly across the disciplines and across researchers at different stages in their careers. RCUK expects that the primary use of the block grant will be for payment of APCs."*

**4.3 The Board agreed that the University would offer to make single-year society membership payments for Cambridge authors publishing in society journals where this would result in a substantial net saving for Open Access publishing.** Authors would be encouraged to consider membership as a way of reducing costs but no author would be required to take out membership. The membership fee would be paid by the author at the point of acceptance for publication, when the APC was requested, and the fee would be reimbursed from the RCUK Open Access block grant. It would be made very clear to authors that any future renewal of membership was their own responsibility. The policy would be reviewed in the light of experience during the first year.

#### 5. AOB

##### 5.1 Publisher behaviour

Concern was expressed about the behaviour of certain publishers in the wake of the introduction of the RCUK OA policy. Examples included cases of substantially increasing the APC for a CC-BY licence or misrepresenting RCUK policy to authors. It was agreed that such cases should be reported via the Russell Group, and that authors coming to the

University's OA request system should be warned about the possibility of receiving misinformation from these publishers.

**Action:** Anne Jarvis and John Norman to forward examples of unreasonable behaviour by publishers to Lynn Gladden, for transmission to the Russell Group.

#### 5.2 Wellcome Trust OA Fund

John Norman confirmed that plans were in hand with the relevant Schools and individuals (particularly Chad Pillinger) to bring the Wellcome Trust and any other OA publication funds into the same process as the RCUK block grant. It was agreed that this would provide a helpful one-stop shop for researchers.

#### 5.3 Next meeting

The next meeting would be scheduled for early in Michaelmas Term. In the meantime, any urgent business or routine reporting would be conducted by email.

**Action:** Secretary.