University of Cambridge
Open Access Project Board

Minutes – 26 February 2013

Meeting held at 09.30-10.30 on Tuesday 26 February 2013
in the Syndicate Room, The Old Schools

Present: Professor Lynn Gladden (Chair), Professor Steve Young, Professor Howard Chase, Mrs Anne Jarvis, Mrs Peta Stevens, Professor Andy Parker, Mr John Norman and Dr Gill Rands (Secretary)

Apologies: Professor Martin Daunton and Professor Paul Luzio,

Declaration of Interest: No new declarations were made.

1. Minutes of the previous meeting and any matters arising

1.1 The draft minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2013 were approved (OAPB-4). Andy Parker reported on the OA workshop that he had attended at the Royal Society on 25 February.

2. Model for distribution of RCUK block grant across the University

2.1 After discussion of the possible fund distribution models outlined in OAPB-5 (paragraphs 7-14) it was agreed that the RCUK block grant would ideally be administered centrally with an indicative allocation to Schools, which could then oversee academic decision-making measures at the appropriate local level. However, there were very significant uncertainties and risks during the current stage of transition, and new issues were continuing to emerge.

2.2 It was therefore agreed that the RCUK block grant should be held centrally for the first year (i.e. 2013-14), subject to quarterly review by the Board, and would be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. During this initial period, there would be no central involvement other than to check eligibility according to RCUK terms, but researchers would be expected to adopt the Green OA option whenever this option was available, and there were no other obstacles that made this route unsustainable.

2.3 Key considerations in this decision were:

   a) The evidence that the block grant would fall far short of what would be needed to meet RCUK's expectations for Gold OA.
   b) The analysis in Appendix A of OAPB-5, which indicated that if the grant was distributed to departments, around a third of departments would receive a sum equivalent to less than two APCs.
   c) The present level of uncertainty as to RCUK's intentions for page and colour charges, which had emerged as a key factor in planning the use of the grant. At present, it appeared that RCUK intended that, in addition to APCs, all such publication charges must in future be taken from the block grant (rather individual research grants). In certain disciplines, these would be very significant costs that were not related to OA.

This added a further area of uncertainty during the period of transition to the new regime.

d) The requirement from RCUK that the University report in detail on the use of the block grant, although the exact conditions were not yet known.

e) The expectation in the newly released consultation from HEFCE (see 6.1) that the University would track the OA status of all publications that might be eligible for the next REF, although HEFCE would not express any preference for Gold over Green OA.

f) The need to establish appropriate support for authors and efficient systems for payment of charges to a very large number of different publishers.

g) The resourcing implications of immediate devolution to School/Department level.

2.4 It was recognised that adopting this model for a transition period would:

a) Preclude local decision-making which might make it difficult to inform and influence academic behaviour. However, it would have the advantage of avoiding arbitrary decisions on the distribution or allocation of funds, and make it possible to respond to demand as it arose across the University, while gathering sound intelligence that could be used to modify policies, procedures, systems and distribution models, for the future. It would also help ensure greater consistency in the application of rules and guidance, and reduce the burdens of reporting and monitoring, since much of the information would be gathered or generated centrally. Finally, it would make much simpler the task of building a user-friendly web-based system for use by authors in guiding them through the decisions they need to make in order to comply with RCUK policies.

b) Place the University in a position where it would transparently 'run out of funds' at some point during the first year. This would be the basis for discussion with RCUK.

2.5 It was agreed that this decision would be subject to approval by all Heads of School (**Action: Secretary)**, and that Schools would be invited and encouraged to work closely with the implementation team during the transition period.

2.6 It was noted that Oxford's draft proposal for allocating the RCUK block grant (OAPB-6) prioritised funds on the basis of RCUK grant income and also assumed a different interpretation of RCUK's position on page/colour charges. Further clarification on the latter was expected when RCUK issued its revised OA guidance shortly.

2.7 In view of the uncertainties around costs and spend profile, the Board agreed that the University should not enter into any publisher's membership scheme at this stage (OAPB-5 paragraph 18). This position would be reviewed at a later date.

3. Communications plan

3.1 The Board approved the Communications plan for the OA transition project (OAPB-7). The Chairman thanked the project team led by John Norman for their assistance in drafting letters in response to concerns raised by academics in the History, Divinity and Mathematics Faculties. John Norman reported that he was now being invited to discuss OA implementation at meetings at School and Department level, and would attend the first of these within the week.

4. Web support for academic workflow

4.1 John Norman presented initial ideas on the web interface that will guide any Cambridge academic through a small number of steps in order to meet RCUK's OA requirements and to

request payment of charges (OAPB-8). The aim was to create a simple and comprehensive process for the academic, and real-time monitoring of expenditure for the project team.

5. Project report and use of transition funding

5.1 The Board received the project report on progress since the last meeting (OAPB-9). At the last meeting, it had been agreed that the majority of the £455K provisionally allocated in the transitional funding budget for payment of open access charges ahead of 1 April 2013 could be redirected to activities that supported Green open access; this has not yet been allocated. A sum of around £50K was to be retained for payment of APCs requested before 1 April, and these payments would be used to test and refine procedures. The project team was creating a checklist with clear criteria regarding eligibility, and would publish it.

5.2 It was agreed that:

    a) The Board would consider a proposal for around £400K to enhance the capabilities of the institutional repository in line with the requirements suggested in the HEFCE consultation and in partial preparation for HEFCE and RCUK requirements on open data. The proposal should also provide a short-term post in the Research Office to support implementation of the new systems and data analysis.
        Action: John Norman and Peta Stevens.
    b) Any eligible requests for APC payments from the transition funding, up to a maximum of £50K in total, could be approved by the OA Transition Project Manager, the University Librarian and the Head of the Research Office.
        Action: John Norman, Anne Jarvis and Peta Stevens

6. AOB

6.1 On 25 February HEFCE had issued a 'Call for advice on OA' to inform the development of consultation proposals on implementing an OA requirement in the post-2014 REF; the consultation itself would run later in 2013. The deadline for responses to the initial call was 25 March 2013. It was agreed that input to the University's response would be sought from the Heads of School and other members of the Research Policy Committee and Project Board, and from any other relevant groups.
Action: Secretary.

6.2 The Board would meet again in early May 2013.
Action: Secretary.