OPEN ACCESS

FAQS

A GUIDE FOR
RADAR USERS

Open Access FAQs for GSA depositors

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May 2025

What is Open Access?

'Open Access' (OA) refers to unrestricted, online access to the published findings of research. There are two models of open access: Green OA involves authors depositing a version of their paper in a repository (such as RADAR); and Gold OA usually involves paying an Article Processing Charge (APC) to make the paper fully accessible through the publisher's website.

Peter Suber (Director of the Harvard Open Access Project) states that "Open Access (OA) literature is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions" (Peter Suber, 2004, https://legacy.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm). The principles of OA were established in the **Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities** (2003)**.**

Please refer to the GSA Open Access Policy and to the briefing paper Open Access to Research for further information.

What is an Article Processing Charge (APC)?

An article processing charge (APC), also known as a publication fee, is sometimes charged in order to publish an article in an academic journal as 'Gold' open access.
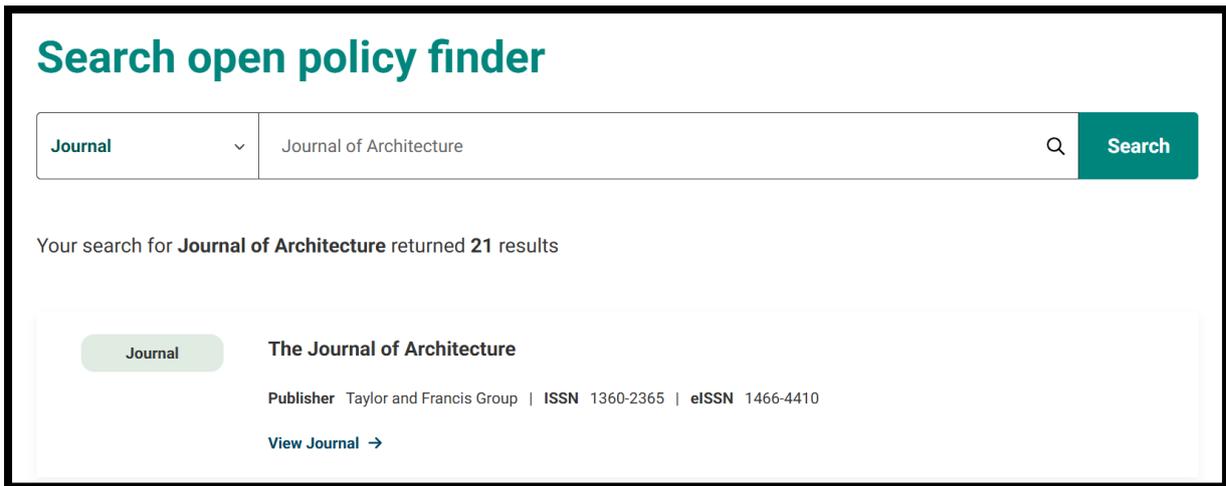The GSA preference is for 'Green' OA through the RADAR repository; whilst the GSA receives no funding from UKRI to support Gold OA through APCs, some external grant funding may permit use for APCs.

Please contact the RADAR team (via radar@gsa.ac.uk) for further information and support.

How do I check if I can make my paper open access?

If you are unsure about whether you can make a document that you are uploading openly available and "Visible to: Anyone" in RADAR, you can check the Open Access (OA) policies of journals and publishers by using the Jisc Open Policy Finder tool. You can also access this tool whilst you are depositing an output in RADAR.

Select 'Journal' under the menu 'Search across open policy finder' and then enter the journal title or ISSN in the search box (see screenshot below).

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Search open policy finder

| Journal ⌄ | Journal of Architecture | 🔍 | **Search** |

Your search for **Journal of Architecture** returned **21** results

Journal	**The Journal of Architecture**
	Publisher Taylor and Francis Group	**ISSN** 1360-2365	**eISSN** 1466-4410
	View Journal →

You can also contact the RADAR team (radar@gsa.ac.uk) for further information and support.

What are embargoes?

Embargoes are restrictions that a publisher may place on certain versions of a document (such as a journal article) before it can be made openly available. Embargo periods can range from anything between 3 months to 3 years, and you should check this with your publisher before publishing.

The potential length of your output's embargo period is particularly important if it is a journal article, or a conference proceeding with an ISSN; if these outputs are to be submitted to the next REF, the REF 2029 Open Access policy requires that embargo periods for Art and Design outputs **"should not exceed 12 months",** for outputs published between 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2028. (see paragraph 7.6.4. of the REF 2029 Open Access Policy).

For outputs published between 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2025, the REF 2021 Open Access policy applies, which states that the maximum embargo period for Art and Design outputs "should not exceed 24 months" (see paragraph 5.5.5. of the REF 2029 Open Access Policy).

What does the REF Open Access Policy mean for me?

The REF 2029 Open Access policy was published in December 2024, with updates to policy wording and FAQs issued in March and May 2025. The policy currently applies only to **journal articles** and **conference proceedings** with an **ISSN** which have been accepted for publication after 1 April 2016.

The REF 2021 Open Access policy continues to apply to outputs published between 1 Jan 2021 to 31 December 2025. The 2021 Open Access policy requires outputs to be deposited in an institutional or subject repository (such as RADAR) within 3 months of the date of acceptance.

The REF 2029 Open Access policy states that to be eligible for the next REF, authors' final peer reviewed manuscripts or Author Accepted Manuscripts (AAM) must be deposited in an institutional or subject repository within 3 months of the date of publication. This represents a minimum standard if compliance. **We strongly encourage all GSA researchers to deposit at the earliest opportunity following the date of acceptance.**

Deposited material should be discoverable, and free to read and download, for anyone with an internet connection. Note that allowable embargo periods are halved in the REF 2029 OA policy, relative to the 2021 policy (see above section on embargoes).

Where an output is made fully open access on publication (commonly referred to as 'Gold', 'Diamond' or 'Platinum' Open Access), no further action is required, conditional to its also fully meeting the discovery and access criteria.

There is currently no requirement to make other forms of research output such as exhibitions, books and creative work openly accessible in the same way as journal articles. However, Open Access for other publication types is encouraged and supports the People, Culture and Environment section of REF.

The REF team have stated that Open Access requirements will apply to 'long-form' outputs – books and book chapters – in the next REF.

What is meant by the date of acceptance?

The date of acceptance is the point at which the author is notified that:

- Their output has been reviewed by the journal or conference (normally via peer review)
- All necessary changes have been made in response to that review

- The paper is ready to be taken through the final steps toward publication (normally copy-editing and typesetting).

At this stage the journal editor or conference organiser normally notifies the author (e.g. by email) that their paper has been 'firmly' accepted (as opposed to any earlier point of provisional acceptance) and is ready for copy-editing or typesetting; the date of this notification should be taken to mean the acceptance date.

What is the "author accepted manuscript" (AAM)?

The author's final, accepted manuscript is the one that has been updated to include all changes resulting from peer review, as well as any changes of an academic nature requested by the journal editor or conference organiser.

The accepted manuscript is not the same as the copy-edited, typeset or published paper – these versions are known as 'proofs' or 'versions of record', and publishers do not normally allow authors to make these openly accessible.

The diagram below shows which version of a paper is the author accepted manuscript (AAM).

What if my publisher has specified an embargo?

The REF 2029 OA policy respects publisher embargoes (the period when you can only access an article with paid access). However, manuscripts must be free to read and download after a maximum of **12 months** from the date of first publication (online or print, whichever comes first) for REF Main Panel D outputs (which includes Art and Design).

What are the licensing requirements of the REF 2029 OA policy?

The REF 2029 Open Access policy states that "Outputs should be shared as openly as possible; the funding bodies' strong preference is for licensing as CC-BY or other licence formats meeting this standard of openness" (see paragraph 7.5.2.).

The policy FAQs clarify that "authors/institutions are able to apply any suitable licence meeting this level of openness at minimum". This means that other licences which allow for the same level of permissiveness regarding sharing and use would be compliant with the policy – an example would be the Open Government Licence for public sector information. Guidance is available via the Creative Commons website and also via our RADAR guide 'Creative Commons licences explained'.

What do I need to do to be eligible for submission to the next REF?

To make sure you comply with the REF 2029 Open Access policy, upload your author accepted manuscript to RADAR as soon as your research output has been accepted for publication, as indicated in the acceptance letter or e-mail from the publication's editor to you as the author.

For further information and support please contact the RADAR team (**radar@gsa.ac.uk**).