



University of
Strathclyde
Glasgow

Institutional Rights Retention Policy for Research Publications

Prepared by:	Open Research Action Group (ORAG)
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Related policies and procedures:	Sector/Funder: UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Open Access Policy (Feb 2023) REF 2021: Overview of open access policy and guidance (Nov 2019) Coalition S University of Strathclyde: Intellectual Property and Commercialisation Policy (March 2023) Research Code of Practice (March 2023) Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students (Sept 2023) Open Access Policy (March 2025) Research Publications Guidance (Feb 2023) Research Data Management and Sharing Policy (March 2023)

Introduction

1. This policy recognises that it is not necessary for an author to sign over their copyright or grant an exclusive licence to a publisher in order for their scholarly work to be published or disseminated. This policy sets out the steps authors should take to retain control over their published research to enable full Open Access.
2. When publishing journal articles and other research outputs, authors at the University of Strathclyde have traditionally signed a copyright transfer agreement which assigns their copyright to academic publishers. This has resulted in many research publications being under partial or complete ownership of the academic publishers. Reuse of the published work is subsequently controlled by the publishers while authors retain certain limited rights about when, where, how and with whom their output can be shared. This approach is increasingly divergent from the principles of Open Research and funder expectations, including requirements for the Research Excellence Framework (REF).
3. The University of Strathclyde is committed to the values, principles and culture of Open Research, as set out in our [Open Research Statement](#). The term Open Research covers Open Access approaches to research outputs and data through open research platforms, tools and services. It includes the drive for greater collaboration and transparency within the research lifecycle with the aim to deliver improved research quality and impact with greater engagement with the public. Not retaining the copyright of publications may diminish the extent to which a member of staff or postgraduate research student can make their work open.
4. To address the conflict between promoting Open Research and assigning partial or complete ownership of work to a publisher, this policy supports authors to retain rights to their work to allow them to increase the visibility of all their research outputs and comply with funding body requirements for Open Access.
5. The purpose of this policy is to:
 - support authors to retain the copyright to their publications and comply with funder requirements; and
 - enable the University to disseminate its research and scholarship as widely as possible, whilst enabling its authors to publish their articles in a journal venue of their choice.
6. Questions relating to this policy should be directed to the University's Open Access team at openaccess@strath.ac.uk.

Scope

7. This policy applies to all authors or co-authors who are affiliated with the University of Strathclyde (hereafter 'authors'). This includes postgraduate research students, subject to requirements of section 4.5 of the University's [Intellectual Property and Commercialisation Policy](#).¹
8. This policy applies to all articles, authored or co-authored while the person is a member of staff or student at Strathclyde, including conference proceedings (with an ISSN) and any third-party content where rights in that content have been secured. Any articles submitted for publication before the date of adoption of this policy are exempt.
9. This policy applies to all Strathclyde articles regardless of whether they are published Gold Open Access or not. This is an extension of applicable funders' Open Access policies, in which the Rights Retention mechanism only applies when there is no way to make an article Gold Open Access, either by paying an Article Processing Charge (APC) or via the University's Read and Publish deals. To promote Open Research, Strathclyde has chosen to apply this Institutional Rights Retention Policy to all journal articles and conference papers.

¹ See also Clauses 27-34 [Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students](#).

10. This policy only applies to first copyright (the right to control use which automatically arises when an individual or collective authors a work) in authored research publications. It does not extend to other intellectual property rights in research which are covered by the University's [Intellectual Property and Commercialisation Policy](#).
11. This policy does not apply to monographs, books, book chapters, edited collections or other research outputs although the University strongly encourages authors to make them as openly available as possible.
12. This policy does not apply to preprints. A preprint is a version of an article that precedes formal peer view and publication in an academic journal.

Policy requirements

13. The adoption of this Institutional Rights Retention Policy means that Strathclyde authors do not, as a rule, need to include a rights retention statement in their manuscript at point of submission to retain copyright. In addition, over 100 publishers, including those used most frequently by Strathclyde researchers, have been formally notified that this policy is in effect. Generally, therefore, **no specific wording** needs to be added to the acknowledgements section of the manuscript for a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence to be applied to the full-text accepted manuscript once the submission is accepted by the journal.

Where a funder requires it, or if a publisher has not been notified about the IRRP, authors should include the following wording in the acknowledgements section of the manuscript:

'For the purpose of open access, the author(s) has applied a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission.'

Authors are advised to check with the Open Access team at openaccess@strath.ac.uk if they are unsure if the wording should be included in the manuscript.

14. Upon acceptance for publication, each author with a responsibility for the research agrees to grant the University a non-exclusive, irrevocable, worldwide licence to make the accepted manuscript of each article publicly available under the terms of a CC BY licence. The licence is granted to the University by uploading a copy of the full-text accepted manuscript in Pure, whereupon the manuscript will be deposited in the Strathprints institutional repository to satisfy the technical, compliance, and discovery requirements of relevant open access policies.
15. The University will make the full-text of the AAM publicly available on the date of first online publication (or the conference end date for conference proceedings) under a CC BY licence.
16. The University recognises that there may be cases, and outside of an individual's control, where it is not possible to follow all aspects of this policy. Examples include:
 - An alternative Creative Commons licence may be used on the deposited AAM where a funder allows it, or if there is no external funder mandate or REF requirement. The author must inform the Open Access team of their preference for an alternative licence.
 - If removal of third-party content would make the AAM unsuitable for sharing, an exception will apply and the AAM will be retained as 'closed' access in Pure and Strathprints.
 - If an existing contract with a publisher has been signed that prevents compliance with this policy, an opt-out may be considered. Potential alternatives may be available, including negotiating with publishers on amending copyright licences. Appropriate support will be provided if/where needed by the University's Copyright Officer
 - Institutional authors should bring the need to meet the Institutional Rights Retention Policy requirements to the attention of their co-authors as early as possible in the publishing cycle. If full compliance turns out not to be feasible, there may be an option to apply an opt-out.

In such cases, it will be permissible for authors to voluntarily opt out of the requirement for immediate open access upon publication, or the assignment of a CC BY licence. This, however, may cause the

research publication to be non-compliant with funder policies or ineligible for future REF exercises. To opt out, authors must contact the Open Access team at openaccess@strath.ac.uk.

Related policies and guidance

17. This policy aligns with clause 4.5 of the University's [Intellectual Property and Commercialisation Policy which states that](#) authors own the copyright to their scholarly works and grant the University a perpetual and royalty-free licence to use such Scholarly Rights for non-commercial teaching, research and academic purposes.
18. This policy should be read in conjunction with the related University policies and guidelines listed on the cover page.