REF Open Access FAQs

Q1. Will the REF panels be assessing the Open Access version of my output? What if it is still under embargo?

A1. No. In most instances, REF panels will have access to the published version of your output. The purpose of the REF Open Access policy is not to provide a copy for assessment, but to create an environment where all published work is made Open Access for public benefit. Therefore, it doesn’t matter if your output is still under embargo at the time of the REF, as long as the embargo doesn’t exceed the stated maximum (see A7 below).

Q2. Which research outputs do I need to put on DORA?

A2. You need to upload the Author Accepted Manuscript onto DORA for the following:
   i) Journal articles accepted for publication from 1 April 2016 onwards;
   ii) Conference contributions accepted for publication from 1 April 2016 onwards, and published with an ISSN

   For all other research outputs, you need to put the metadata on DORA (ie. Information about the output) but not the full text, unless your funder requires.

   See the REF Open Access leaflet for a detailed flowchart.
   Also, check your funder’s requirements – they may be different to those for the REF.

Q3. When do I need to put my research outputs on DORA?

A3. For outputs that fit the criteria in A2i) and A2ii) above you need to upload the Author Accepted Manuscript onto DORA within 3 months of the acceptance date.

Q4. What is the acceptance date?

A4. This is the date when the publisher accepts the article content, following peer review and amendment. See the REF Open Access leaflet for a useful diagram.
Q5. What is the Author Accepted Manuscript?

A5. This is the version of the article that is accepted by the publisher following peer review and amendment, but before the publisher does the proof reading and typesetting. See the REF Open Access leaflet for a useful diagram.

Q6. My publisher has been paid to make my article Open Access on their website (Gold Open Access). Do I still need to put it on DORA?

A6. As long as the publisher makes it Open Access on their site without embargo from the date of first online publication, you have met the REF Open Access requirements. However, DMU still needs you to put the metadata (information about the output) onto DORA. You can provide a link to the Open Access version of the article.

Q7. I haven’t paid for Gold Open Access and my publisher requires an embargo period before the DORA copy can be made publicly available, does this meet the REF Open Access requirements?

A7. An embargo period is allowed, as long as it doesn’t exceed the following:

- For REF panels A & B – 12 months
- For REF panels C & D – 24 months

Q8. Why do I need to give my DORA copy a licence? And what licence should I use?

A8. When someone downloads your article from DORA, the Creative Commons licence lets them know how they can use it. For the REF Open Access requirements, you can give your article any of the following commonly used licences. However, firstly, check whether your funder and/or publisher specifies which licence you can use.

- CC-BY
- CC-BY-NC
- CC-BY-ND
- CC-BY-NC-ND

The Open Access Libguide includes a handy guide to Creative Commons licences.

Q9. What if I’m not able to meet the REF Open Access requirements?

A9. Research England (who run the REF) allow for some limited exceptions. If you cannot meet the requirements, check the list of exceptions to see whether one applies to your situation and what you need to do. If in doubt, please contact openaccess@dmu.ac.uk.