MRC Guidance on Open Access to Published Research

This guidance is based upon that of the Research Councils UK, and updated by the MRC on 1 October 2006.

MRC guidance

Further information about UK PubMed Central

MRC guidance

1. For applications submitted from 1 October 2006 the MRC requires that electronic copies of any research papers accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, which are supported in whole or in part by MRC funding, are deposited at the earliest opportunity – and certainly within six months – in UK PubMed Central (UKPMC). It is expected that UKPMC will be available in early 2007.

2. This applies to all award holders, including MRC staff.

3. The availability of a research paper from PMC (and other PMCI repositories) does not prevent authors from also depositing a copy in their own institutional or another subject-based repository should they choose to do so or be required to do so by their employing institution.

4. The MRC also encourages, but does not formally oblige, all award holders and MRC staff to ensure deposit of articles arising from grants awarded as a result of applications submitted before 1 October 2006.

5. The MRC strongly encourages authors to publish in journals that allow them (or their institutions) to retain ownership of the copyright. The MRC will pay ‘Author pays’ (article processing charges) where these have been included in applications for MRC grant funding.

6. If author/institution-ownership of copyright is not permitted by the publisher, authors should publish in journals that permit the paper to be made available in the PMC and PMCI repositories (such as UKPMC) within six months of publication. If a researcher wishes to publish a paper in a journal that is unwilling to agree either to author/institution ownership of copyright, or to allow the article to be made freely available from the PMC and PMCI repositories within six months, the MRC may, in very exceptional cases, grant permission for authors to submit the paper for publication in such a journal. This position will be reviewed in 2008.

7. The MRC will work with publishers to put in place mechanisms for publishers to deposit publications directly, on behalf of authors, where this is possible.

8. The MRC’s grant conditions have been amended to reflect the above changes.
9. From 1 January 2006, all applicants submitting funding proposals to the MRC are expected to include a statement explaining their strategy for data preservation and sharing. MRC data sharing policy indicates that, where possible, published results should provide links to the associated data.

Further information about UK PubMed Central

The MRC is part of an initiative led by the Wellcome Trust, in association with a number of other UK biomedical funders, to establish a UK version of PubMedCentral (UKPMC). The contract to run UKPMC has been awarded to a partnership between the British Library, the University of Manchester and the European Bioinformatics Institute. The MRC is a major funder of UKPMC.

The aim of this initiative is to create a stable, permanent and free-to-access digital archive of the full text, peer-reviewed research publications (and datasets) that arise from research funded by the MRC, the Wellcome Trust and other members of the UKPMC Funders Group. UKPMC will comprise three key systems:

- A mirror of the data held in PMC, subject to permission from those publishers that participate in PMC.
- An author manuscript submission and tracking system, with supporting document conversion services.
- A system to provide authenticated login services to the submission system. Further details of the proposed system can be found on the UKPMC project pages of the Wellcome Trust website.