# **Strategic framework for the acquisition of open access monographs 19th December 2023**

## **1.Context**

Whilst books and chapters do not currently feature in the N8 Rights Retention Statement[[1]](#endnote-1) and fall outside the definition of ‘relevant works’ in the UoM Publications Policy[[2]](#endnote-2), the latter states that “the University strongly encourages researchers to make any such works as openly available as possible in line with our [Position Statement on Open Research”](https://www.openresearch.manchester.ac.uk/about-us/position-statement/). In helping researchers to understand the policy, the Library explains that ‘where a funding body requires it, other publication types must also be OA, including monographs and book chapters”[[3]](#endnote-3).

Moves towards increasing openness for monograph publishing have gained momentum in recent years. Funders have now begun to mandate OA to accelerate this change, with UKRI joining The Wellcome Trust in bringing monographs into the scope of their OA policy from 2024. UKRI funded monographs, book chapters and edited collections published after 1/1/2024 must “be free to view and download via an online publication platform, publishers’ website, or institutional or subject repository within a maximum of 12 months of publication’[[4]](#endnote-4). At time of writing Research England note that ‘the scope of an open access policy for REF2028 is much broader than the UKRI open access policy’ with OA consultation scheduled for Autumn/Winter 2023 followed by the publication of OA requirements in Spring 2024[[5]](#endnote-5).

The immaturity of OA monograph business models however acts as a barrier. Those based on book processing charges (BPCs) are characterised by unaffordable and unsustainable pricing with little transparency as to how these costs are calculated[[6]](#endnote-6). BPCs also threaten bibliodiversity with an underrepresentation of outputs from early career researchers, independent researchers and those from the global majority[[7]](#endnote-7). A wide range of more innovative models continues to appear and evolve and, whilst libraries are united in their opposition to unsustainable BPC-based models, they have yet to reach a consensus as to the specific model that they are willing to champion/fund.

The Library actively supports many diamond OA monograph schemes[[8]](#endnote-8) and our experience in evaluating and participating in these schemes as well as our experience of facilitating BPC payments for funded authors and for non-funded authors (via the OA monograph competition) has enabled us to develop a set of acquisition principles and acquisition practices for OA monographs.

## **2.Acquisition Principles**

### Sustainability

1. We will identify schemes that align with university policies with regard to sustainability (especially UN Sustainable Development Goals).
2. We will prioritise schemes that eschew unsustainable and inequitable BPCs; we will prioritise schemes that do not mirror the title/unit price points typical of BPC-based models.
3. We will provide parity of support to innovative community-funded open access publishing schemes and to schemes that support community-governed open infrastructure, whose providers “develop the platforms and software solutions that enable open access books to be found, read and engaged with … the often unseen but vital backbone of the open access publishing ecosystem.[[9]](#endnote-9)”
4. As open infrastructure is fundamental to academic research we will prioritise schemes that embed community governance in order to guard against commercial acquisition and ‘to ensure that at least some of these essential structures will be unenclosed, open and owned by the academic communities that rely on them.’[[10]](#endnote-10)

### Social responsibility

1. The University is committed to developing a more open and responsible research environment and we will identify schemes that align with key university policies relating to social responsibility.
2. As a national research library we see our participation in innovative open access monograph schemes as a key element in establishing this more equitable and responsible research environment.
3. We will balance this long-term strategic perspective with an acceptance that funds are limited and we will prioritise schemes with content that clearly supports the research and teaching produced/ required by our staff, researchers and students.

Equity

1. To secure equity, diversity and inclusion, we will evaluate whether schemes offer support to early career researchers and independent researchers or if they feature measures that increase participation from researchers and institutions from the global majority.
2. Whilst we will prioritise and champion schemes run by community-based not-for-profit organizations we will also consider innovative and sustainable schemes run by commercial publishers.
3. We will support small-scale innovative schemes and those operating at scale.

### Transparency

1. We will assess the degree to which schemes comply with OA guidance issued by the relevant funding bodies as well as compliance with technical standards relating to accessibility, interoperability, preservation, metadata and discovery[[11]](#endnote-11).
2. In order to evaluate innovative schemes we require transparency and simplicity with regard to publishing costs, participation costs, benefits and outcomes, workflows and financial stability.
3. We will be mindful of any ‘openwashing’ behaviour from publishers that promote innovative schemes whilst predominantly employing proprietary practices.

## **3. Acquisition Practices**

1. Although we regard all innovative OA monograph models for frontlist content positively (including library membership models[[12]](#endnote-12)), we prefer ‘subscribe-to-open’ or ‘institutional crowdfunding’ models. As the market evolves, our support for less innovative models (e.g., retrospective flip-to-open/embargoed models) will lessen.
2. We will seek to support schemes where the library/university has an input into the governance, future development or promotion of the scheme rather than just the funding of the scheme.
3. We will closely monitor our spend on innovative OA monograph schemes and we will commit a significant portion of our monograph budget to supporting these schemes. We will bring these schemes to the attention of our staff and researchers via the relevant Library Research Services / Office for Open Research webpages; any content associated with these schemes will be made discoverable via Library Search.
4. We require evidence of impact/usage when supporting or continuing to support a scheme.
5. In order to secure value for money, we will be looking for:
   1. schemes that attract support from a national/global audience so that costs are not disproportionately borne by socially responsible subscribers.
   2. schemes that have been evaluated by a trusted advisor (e.g., Jisc, RLUK, Open Book Collective) and that align with existing workflows and with the requirements of the Finance Team.
6. Our acquisition principles and practices criteria will be agile and will be refined in line with the evolving OA monograph ecosystem.

## **4. A note on Open Access Book Chapters**

Models for OA chapters are even less mature than for open access books. Whilst there are models that charge a portion of the BPC there is little evidence of innovation or sustainability in the market. We welcome Jisc’s position of ‘working with publishers to encourage support for a compliant route for the AAM to be made available via Green OA’[[13]](#endnote-13) ; we will prioritise publishers that enable access via our institutional repository, based on AAM, within 12 months of publication.

1. https://www.n8research.org.uk/n8-research-partnership-rights-retention-statement/ [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. <https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=28526> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/services/research/open-research/access/understanding/> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-open-access-policy/ukri-open-access-policy-2/> This applies to either the final version of the record or the author’s accepted manuscript [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/9148/1/research-excellence-framework-2028-initial-decisions-report.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. https://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jep/3336451.0021.101?view=text;rgn=main [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Bibliodiversity in practice <https://hal.science/hal-02175276>; [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. <https://www.openresearch.manchester.ac.uk/connect/news-and-events/oa-monographs/> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. https://www.openbookcollective.org [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. [Introducing Open Book Futures: A Copim Community Project · Community-led Open Publication Infrastructures for Monographs (Copim) (pubpub.org)](https://copim.pubpub.org/pub/introducing-open-book-futures-a-copim-community-project/release/1) [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Technical standards relating to: (1) accessibility: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) international standards. <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/>; (2) preservation: Digital Preservation Coalition's guidance <https://www.dpconline.org/handbook> and the Portico Content Type Action Plan: E-Book Content. <https://www.portico.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Portico-Content-Type-Action-Plan-E-Book-Content.pdf> ; (3) metadata and discovery: NISO RP-29-2022, E-Book Bibliographic Metadata Requirements in the Sale, Publication, Discovery, and Preservation Supply Chain <https://www.niso.org/standards-committees/ebmd> and NAG and SUPC Metadata Profiles: MARC21 Records for Print & Electronic Books <https://nag.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/NAG-SUPC-Metadata-Profiles-MARC21-Records-for-Print-Electronic-Books-v2.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Definitions of these models are available from the [Open Access Toolkit](https://www.oabooks-toolkit.org/lifecycle/10944589-planning-funding/article/10432084-business-models-for-open-access-book-publishing) [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/9190/11/jisc-guide-to-understanding-ukri-open-access-monograph-book-chapter-and-edited-collections-policy.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-13)