
PASTEUR4OA Case Study

Funder Open Access Policy Implementation at the Health Research Board Ireland

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Summary

The Health Research Board (HRB) is the lead funding agency in Ireland for health research. Their most recent Open Access policy, published in 2014, requires researchers to deposit their publications in an Open Access repository and ensure they are discoverable, accessible and re-usable. The policy is supported in a number of ways including discussions with key Irish Agencies through the National Steering Committee for Open Access policy, on-going dialogue with researchers and others within the Irish research system and increased emphasis on Open Access in documentation and advocacy work. This case study looks at Institutional Open Access Policy Implementation at HRB.

1. Introduction

The Health Research Board (HRB)¹ is the lead funding agency in Ireland for health research, and is a statutory body under the Irish Department of Health (DoH). In 2014 Health research, funded through the HRB, was €36.4 million, representing approximately 85% of the budget for the organisation, and 0.3% of the total health service budget in Ireland of €14 billion. It has funding commitments of almost €100 million across hundreds of awards and a revenue budget of €31 million, a capital allocation of €11 million and 57.8 staff. The HRB funds a wide range of health-related research in approved host institutions, after open calls and international peer review. An approved Host Institution for the purpose of administering HRB research awards must be a legal entity which fulfils the responsibilities of “Host Institution” as set out in the

¹ Health Research Board (HRB): <http://www.hrb.ie/>

HRB General Terms and Conditions for research awards². The HRB is currently developing a new strategic plan, which will direct activity over the period 2016 - 2020.

The scope of funding is driven by the four goals of the HRB:

- Goal 1: Driving the development of excellent clinical research, including applied biomedical research, within a coherent health research system
- Goal 2: Building capacity to conduct high-quality population health sciences and health services research
- Goal 3: Working with key partners to develop and manage high-quality national health information systems
- Goal 4: Generating and synthesising evidence, and promoting the application of knowledge to support decision-making by policy makers and relevant practitioners

Areas of particular interest include: clinical research, including applied biomedical research; high-quality population health sciences research and health services research; patient-oriented research; increasing diversity of health professionals and researchers.

Schemes include: Cochrane Training Fellowship; Health Research Award³; Clinician Scientist Awards, Clinical Trial networks, Research Leaders Awards, Interdisciplinary Capacity Awards, Research Training Fellowship for Health Professionals; Joint Programme in Neurodegenerative Disease (JPND) and Healthy Diet Health Life (HDHL); Cancer Prevention Fellowship; Wellcome Trust-HRB-SFI Biomedical Partnership etc. A list of awarded funding is available from the HRB website.

In addition to its extramural research support, the HRB manages five national health information systems in the areas of alcohol and drugs, disability and mental health and provides an evidence generation and knowledge brokering service to the DoH. Data from these information systems are routinely reported at a regional, national, European and international level.

These are:

- The National Drug Treatment Reporting System [<http://www.hrb.ie/health-information-in-house-research/alcohol-drugs/ndtrs/>]
- The National Drug-Related Death Index [<http://www.hrb.ie/health-information-in-house-research/alcohol-drugs/ndrdi/>]

² HRB: Policy on Approval of Host Institutions for HRB Research Awards:

<http://www.hrb.ie/research-strategy-funding/policies-guidelines-and-grant-conditions/policies-and-position-statements/approval-of-host-institutions/>

³ HRB Funding Awarded: <http://www.hrb.ie/research-strategy-funding/open-grants-and-fellowships/funding-awarded/>

- The National Psychiatric In-Patient Reporting System [<http://www.hrb.ie/health-information-in-house-research/mental-health/information-systems/npirs-national-psychiatric-in-patient-reporting-system/>]
- The National Intellectual Disability Database [<http://www.hrb.ie/health-information-in-house-research/disability/nidd/>]
- The National Physical and Sensory Disability Database [<http://www.hrb.ie/health-information-in-house-research/disability/npsdd/>]

2. Open Access Policy

The HRB works to ensure that its policies and procedures are in line with international best practice. Policies and positions of the HRB are available from the HRB website⁴. The Open Access to Published Research policy⁵ provides the following conditions to which HRB funded award recipients should adhere:

1. All researchers are required to deposit their publications resulting in whole or in part from HRB - funded research in an Open Access repository and these publications should be made publicly discoverable, accessible and re-usable as soon as possible.
 - a. Authors must deposit post - prints (or publisher's version if permitted) plus metadata of articles accepted for publication in peer - reviewed journals and conference proceedings.
 - b. All peer reviewed journal articles and conference publications must be deposited as soon as possible, ideally at the time of acceptance by the journal/conference and no later than the date of formal publication. Other research outputs such as monographs, books, book chapters, technical reports, research theses, and reports should be deposited where possible.
 - c. Metadata shall comprise the full bibliographic and/or descriptive data and should comply with national and international standards and agreements for harvesting, reporting and interoperability.
2. Repositories should release the metadata immediately upon deposit. Open Access to the full text paper should be made immediately upon deposit or once access restrictions, as required by certain publishers, have expired. Access restrictions should not normally exceed six months after publication for scientific, technical and health science research publications and 12 months for arts, humanities and social sciences research outputs.
3. Researchers should agree terms of deposit with publishers. Clarity should be sought on copyright, licensing and embargo policies and agreed policies with publishers must be respected.

4 HRB: Policies and position statements: <http://www.hrb.ie/research-strategy-funding/policies-guidelines-and-grant-conditions/policies-and-position-statements/>

5 HRB Policy on Open Access and Unrestricted Access to Published Research (Open Access): http://www.hrb.ie/uploads/media/HRB_Policy_on_Open_Access__1_May_2014__01.pdf

4. The repository should ideally be a local institutional repository that supports interoperability with other repositories and harvesting by national portal/s and international aggregators. Suitable repositories are those that provide free public access to, and make provision for long - term preservation of, published research findings.
5. Research publications deposited in an Open Access repository must contain a link from the deposited version to the publication site, a URL/ DOI (Document Object Identifier) must be used.
6. Research publications in Open Access Journals must also be deposited in an Open Access repository in the same way as other publications.
7. In accordance with the National Principles on Open Access Policy Statement, where possible, research data supporting the publication should also be made available in an Open Access repository whenever feasible and linked to associated publication. European and national data protection rules must be taken into account in relation to research data, as well as concerns regarding trade secrets, confidentiality or national security.
8. All research publications must acknowledge the HRB as the source of research funding, and also include details of the award within the metadata. Researchers will be required to provide acknowledgment of Open Access publishing as part of the grant evaluation process. Software, together with methods and algorithms, are not directly covered by Open Access repositories. However, in keeping with best practice of scientific reproducibility, key scientific results should be made available openly wherever.

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The policy applies to research publications where funding arises in whole or in part from HRB and the policy has been in effect from 1 May 2014. The policy is aligned with the Irish National Principles for Open Access Policy Statement⁶, and also aligned with the European Commission's Horizon 2020 Programme Open Access Requirements and European Commission's Recommendation to Member States of July 2012.

3. Open Access Policy support

To support its Open Access policy the HRB has a number of actions:

- The HRB General Terms and Conditions for Research Awards have been updated to include details of its mandatory Open Access policy. These Terms and Conditions are used for all new HRB grants awarded. In addition, all active Host Institutions were informed of the new policy and given the opportunity to clarify meaning and openly discuss the implications of the policy change.

⁶ National Principles for Open Access Policy Statement: <http://www.oaireland.ie>

- Policy discussions continue with key Irish Agencies through the National Steering Committee for Open Access policy, and with other EU Member States through previous membership of Science Europe Open Access Working Group and current membership of the Science Europe Research Data Working Group. Following publication of the national Open Access principles other Irish funding agencies have also updated their own individual Open Access policies so that they are now aligned and relaying a single message to the research community.
- HRB became a member of the newly expanded RIAN Board, which is responsible for the RIAN⁷ national Open Access harvester infrastructure.
- Ongoing dialogue with researchers and others within the Irish research system. For example, in 2014 the HRB presented at the Dublin City University Celsius Science Society meeting, the Government Librarians Group conference and the Policy Panel of the Research Data Alliance third Plenary Conference
- Sharing of Open Access policy with key Irish stakeholders responsible for research data who were interviewed as part of a HRB Research Data Project, considering long-term issues of data access, storage, sharing, and linkage for Irish health researchers.
- Importance of Open Access policy has been referenced in current preparations of the new HRB strategy and the new national research strategy both of which are due to be published in 2015, and with the Irish Horizon 2020 National Support Network.

4. Open Access Policy monitoring

HRB defines as a suitable repository one that provides free public access to its contents, supports interoperability with other repositories and with other research information and reporting systems, is harvestable by national portal/s and international aggregators and takes steps toward long-term preservations. In Ireland, institutional repositories, including those within academic institutions and within the health service executive, are available through RIAN. This project aim is to harvest to one portal the contents of the Institutional Repositories of the seven university libraries, in order to make Irish research material more freely accessible, and to increase the research profiles of individual researchers and their institutions.

In terms of advocacy and coordination, HRB is committed to coordinating mechanisms and monitoring processes to support the implementation of the policy. The HRB End-of-Grant evaluation survey⁹ that extends beyond the close of the grant now includes questions on compliance with the HRB Open Access policy asking for details of repositories used and if appropriate reasons why individual publications have not been deposited.

⁷ RIAN: <http://rian.ie/>

⁸ In Ireland the contents of institutional repositories, including those within academic institutions and within the health service executive, are available through RIAN.

⁹ HRB Grant related forms including End-of-Grant reporting form: <http://www.hrb.ie/research-strategy-funding/grant-holder-information/grant-related-forms/>

All those involved in the Irish research system, including publishers, editors, referees, librarians, funders and researchers should be made aware of standards of professional conduct for Open Access publishing, for example on licensing, editorial process, soliciting submissions, disclosing ownership, the handling of publication fees and the benefits of Open Access publishing. Responsibility for Open Access education lies with institutions and individuals, but training has been available through programmes such as 'FOSTER training on Open access and research data management: Horizon 2020 and beyond'¹⁰.

Regarding Gold Open Access, the HRB is explicit that it does not provide additional funds to cover Gold Open Access fees.

Acknowledgment

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It was revised by Dr Patricia Clarke, Senior Policy Analyst / National Delegate for H2020 Health at the Health Research Board. PASTEUR4OA would like to express sincere gratitude for her contribution.

¹⁰ A two-day training session on Open Access and Research Data Management organised by the University College Cork (Ireland), Repository Network of Ireland and Teagasc took place in Cork on April 14 and 15, 2015: <http://bit.ly/1Kdj81A>