



Response from the Royal Musical Association to the cOAlition S Implementation Guidance on Plan S¹

The Royal Musical Association welcomes the move to align research-funder Open Access Policies. It also recognises that research and publication are global and collaborative ventures and that collaborators do not all have equal access to research funding, nor are most of them supported by funders with open access policies and aims.

At present it is estimated that across all scholarly and scientific disciplines, cOAlition S signatory funded research results in the production of <8% global published outputs and that wholesale changes within current business models are likely only once that funder base increases substantially. In the meantime, a mixture of models will need to continue to exist.

Nonetheless, the Royal Musical Association has recently taken active steps, through the re-negotiation of its contract to publish its journals to ensure that for research published in RMA journals from 2020 onwards authors will retain copyright, and outputs can either be made immediate OA (hybrid) or can be self-archived with a zero-month embargo.

As they stand, the *Implementation Guidelines* present issues which may render RMA outputs non-compliant with Plan S aims, reversing a trend with this learned society which seeks to support and enable OA for its publications. At worst we fear that this may result in the perpetuation of the subscription model – and limit funding available for exploring new publishing business models, particularly models which would support learned societies such as ours. They also risk alienating a scholarly community which is relatively new to OA and, for the RMA, is now actively engaging with OA. The suggestions below offer some proposals to address those issues and concerns.

Summary of feedback

- The RMA seeks clarification as to whether cOAlition S recognises transformational library deals at the publisher level. The Association believes that such deals could offer a route to making full and immediate OA a reality. If the intention is that each Journal undergoes transformation, then we fear

¹ <https://www.coalition-s.org/implementation-guidance-on-plan-s-now-open-for-public-feedback/>

that cOAlition S aims will fail until the *Guidelines* are supported by funders globally.

- The RMA wishes to draw attention to the timelines usually required for a change of publisher, noting that many learned societies outsource their publishing activities to a third party publisher. The RMA is in the final year of a three-year process to change publisher – our new contract, under discussion since 2017 commences in 2020
- The RMA urges cOAlition S to move away from a “one size fits all” policy, recognising that for some disciplines, the full and immediate open access of the Version of Record is essential, whereas for other disciplines, an author accepted manuscript made available immediately but under a slightly more restrictive licence may be the means by which immediate OA can become a reality. We accept that for many science disciplines, immediate OA under a liberal licence is required but would question whether this also needs to be the case for the disciplines which we represent, which are typically relatively new to the concept of OA, and where longstanding concerns about third party rights, translation, modification and other non-sanctioned commercial uses prevail amongst our membership.

About the Royal Musical Association (RMA)²

The Royal Musical Association was founded in 1874 ‘for the investigation and discussion of subjects connected with the art and science of music’. It is the second oldest society of its kind in the world. Its activities have evolved to embrace every conceivable aspect of music research, whether expressed in words, notation or sounds. The Association aims to sustain and enhance musical culture in the United Kingdom, while liaising with other subject organisations at home and abroad where appropriate and recognizing outstanding scholarly and creative achievement by individuals worldwide, including through publication. It further aims to support the education and training of emerging scholars and practitioners.

The Association’s chief activities in pursuit of these aims are:

- the promotion of conferences, symposia, study days, workshops and other public meetings;
- the publication and dissemination of books, journals, and other outlets for research of international standing. The three regular publications include the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, the *RMA Research Chronicle* and the RMA Monographs series;
- the sponsorship of awards and prizes;
- the advocacy of musical studies with public and private policy-making bodies, and with repositories of musical resources;

² <https://rma.ac.uk/>

- engagement with the student body in the United Kingdom.

RMA membership is drawn from over 30 countries across the globe, including USA, Australia, and Asia, and our members are variously members of the public, academics (active and retired), performers, composers and research students.

The RMA is a hub for other national and international organizations concerned with the study of music.

RMA publications

Since its foundation in 1874, the RMA has been actively engaged in communicating the research of its members both through public events and through publication.

The Association's primary publication³ is *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* (JRMA), established in 1987 as a biannual peer refereed journal in place of its predecessor, *Proceedings of...* (which commenced publication in 1874). Among other publications are the peer refereed *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* (1961-), with the intention to publish annually what its first editor called 'musicological raw material – lists, indexes, catalogues, calendars, extracts from newspapers, new fragments of biographical information" etc.. Following a bequest, the RMA established its series of monographs.

The RMA has appointed Editors and Editorial Boards for its publications.

The RMA derives a small surplus from its publication activities. This, along with surplus generated elsewhere amongst our activities enables the association to offer training and support to young scholars as well as to reward outstanding achievement in our field.

RMA publication and distribution: the role of third party-publishers

The practicalities of publication and distribution of RMA publications are undertaken by third party publishers. Over the last two years we have reviewed our publication contract for our two journals and, following deliberation, have recently signed a contract with a new provider. **The decision to move was informed by a number of factors, including that of Open Access.** We are now in our final year with our existing publisher. **Publications from January 2020 will be with a publisher which allows the Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) to be made public immediately on publication of the Version of Record.**

In total, this move of publisher for our two journals will have taken three years.

That both journals will, from January, offer both a self-archiving route and a hybrid gold route of open access enables the RMA to continue to support the publication of quality research and to communicate that quality research to a global audience

³ <https://www.rma.ac.uk/publications/>

irrespective of author ability to pay to publish or reader ability to pay to read. Given the international profile of our author base, and the fact that most of our published work is from authors not in receipt of cOAlition S funding, this is an important factor to us.

RMA journals in the context of a commercial publisher

As noted above, the RMA receives its publishing services from a commercial publisher and has recently agreed a move to another commercial publisher. The move has in part been informed by the opportunities for Open Access publishing, particularly by any of our authors covered either by funder OA policies or wishing their work to be eligible for the UK Research Excellence Framework.

Our journals, both under our current agreement, and its replacement that comes into force from January 2020, are distributed to the library community as part of larger “big deals”. We are aware that those deals are often negotiated by consortia of libraries and are at the publisher level, rather than at the level of journal. We are also aware that there is a move towards “read and publish” / “publish and read” deals which, when negotiated by consortia, allow all the research of the member institutions of the consortia to be published open access. To this end, where either our current or new provider of our publisher services can strike such a deal, all work at institutions taking the deal and covered by cOAlition S funding can be made open access at the point of publication, and that it is the Version of Record that will be made OA.

Transformative AGREEMENTS: by publisher or by journal?

It is essential that we seek clarification as to how Plan S interprets journals covered by transformative agreements⁴ and that we analyse and communicate the consequences of that clarification. The [Guidance on the implementation of Plan S](#) includes the following two requirements:

- Authors publish in a Plan S compliant Open Access **journal**
- Authors publish Open Access with a CC BY licence in a subscription **journal that is covered by a transformative agreement** that has a clear and time-specified commitment to a full Open Access transition

To understand the implications of these guidelines, it is important to understand how content is licensed by libraries, how current and emerging transformative deals work and to recognise that universities, often as part of wider consortia, mostly

⁴ Typically, these are deals negotiated at a **publisher** level. They are becoming known as “Read and publish” or “Publish and Read” deals and over time they allow read access to all content from that publisher covered by the deal and allow an institution’s academics to publish open access in all journals covered by the deal.

subscribe to publishers (Big Deals) and not to individual journals. If Plan S really means journals then we anticipate considerable challenges, challenges which essentially set Plan S up to fail unless an exceptional set of circumstances come into alignment within the very short transition timeline indicated:

Publishers:

- Libraries subscribe to bundles of content – typically via a publisher
- cOAlition S currently funds <8% of global research outputs
- Read and Publish (R&P) deals are negotiated at the publisher level, not at the journal level, but they do ensure that over time, 100% of the outputs by academics at institutions taking the R&P Deal can be published OA in journals covered by that publisher R&P deal
- If all institutions covered by cOAlition S funders negotiate R&P deals with all publishers with whom their academics publish, then 100% of cOAlition S funded work published in journals published by those publishers is OA (i.e. whatever % of the ~8% global publishing that those publishers represent). However, not all journals will be OA under this scenario because some journals will attract few or no articles from cOAlition S funded research.

Journals

- For any given large publisher portfolio, the cohort of journals in which academics publish will change and evolve. Whilst an academic may still publish in a Publisher X journal, it may not always be the same Publisher X journal. RMA members will sometimes be accepted for publication in one of the RMA's own journals and at other times, seek to publish in another journal which publishes musicological research. The new publisher to whom the RMA has contracted its publishing services also publishes a number of other quality journals in our field (again, one of the attractions of the move).
- This gradual evolution of publishing choice, combined with the <8% funding coverage (cOAlition S funded research currently funds significantly less than 10% global published research outputs), create a challenge for publishers if cOAlition S are evaluating success at the journal level (as was understood from a recent cOAlition S funder discussion): the likelihood of a publisher flipping each journal in which an academic covered by cOAlition S funding publishes is very remote – certainly whilst the % publishing covered by those funders remains this low. Unless the journal is only publishing cOAlition S funded work or is publishing a growing % cOAlition S funded research, it will almost certainly not be in position to flip to OA. RMA journals are firmly in this category
- If cOAlition S means *journal* rather than *publisher*, our reading is that unless all the following conditions are met, Plan S will fail:

- cOAlition S successfully bring on board all other significant funders of research
- All publishers of cOAlition S funded outputs are willing to offer an affordable R&P deal to all institutions covered by cOAlition S funders
- All institutions covered by cOAlition S funders take the deal.

If, however, we are talking about publishers, then under the publisher scenario above, it is possible for academics at cOAlition S funded institutions to meet Plan S aims where the deal is affordable to institutions, and scales to 100% of that institution's publishing over time and it is possible for the RMA journals to continue to publish a broad range of quality research irrespective of the funder of that research.

Creative Commons Licencing: one size does not fit all

As mentioned above, the RMA will, as of January 2020, move to a publisher which has a self-archiving policy which has a zero-month embargo period and where copyright is retained by the author.

The RMA, along with its new publisher, has concerns regarding the cOAlition S aim of an immediate CC BY (or equivalent) licence. We know that there are scholars within our disciplines who are extremely concerned about the unrestricted commercial re-use and derivative versions of their work that can be made under this license (allowing the 'remixing' or re-contextualising of work in ways that might be seen as inappropriate). Whilst some of our community agree that CC BY should be the longer-term aim, others would be immediately appeased were there a period during which they could chose a more restrictive licence to begin with, particularly for self-archived outputs. Such a move by cOAlition S would remove one of the most significant issues for those researching and publishing within the arts, humanities and social sciences fields. These communities are less engaged with OA where the language of "science" prevails and is therefore not seen to be applicable or relevant to them. Acknowledging this variety amongst the research base, and accepting that a more lenient approach to licensing might keep those communities – our community – on board will, in the longer run, advance cOAlition aims of making full and immediate OA a reality.

Timescale

To which entity (journal or publisher) any cOAlition S funder policy applies, and from which date are key factors in ensuring that Plan S aims are achievable. Library Publisher negotiations can sometimes take two or more years to reach a conclusion and negotiations are generally staggered so as to be manageable by institutions and consortia. Learned Societies do not yet necessarily have alternative publishing

service providers to turn to, and the length of time from a decision to consider a move of provider to first publishing with a new provider can be over three years. We recommend that the guidelines recognise these timelines and that these will be directly influenced by the pace at which the cOAlition S group grows.

Open Access Repositories

As written, the guidance appears to require publishers to undertake/facilitate the work of repository deposit and the repository criteria appear to have been drawn up with this in mind. However, we envisage a scenario, particularly in the early years of Plan S implementation, whereby an Institutional Open Access Policy⁵ incorporating rights retention and Plan S compliant licensing and embargo periods will be needed in addition to publisher negotiations for transformative publisher deals, particularly in the event that those deals prove to be unaffordable. That being the case, author self-archiving will most likely be the means by which Author Accepted Manuscripts will be deposited and made available through repositories, including AAMs deposited under the zero month embargo agreement of the RMA's publisher-to-be from 2020. To this end, it would be helpful if the current repository infrastructure were also considered as a valid and valuable mechanism to meet Plan S aims.

With the above in mind, we support the COAR response⁶ to the Plan S repository requirement statement.

Global research and Learned Society publishing

- Academics are members of learned societies many of which have outsourced their publishing activities to commercial publishers
- Academic research is collaborative and global. The most appropriate venue for publication may not necessarily operate in a cOAlition S region, nor may the majority of the researchers/authors necessarily be in receipt of cOAlition S funding.
- Typically, as with the RMA, it can easily take three years for a learned society to move from one publisher service to another, and typically, a learned society is receiving and reviewing content now that will not be published for approx. 2 years (2021).
- Viable alternative publishing service providers which support Plan S aims are not yet readily available in all disciplines and may need support at the discipline level from cOAlition S funders.

⁵ E.g. the UKSCL Model Institutional Open Access Policy: <http://ukscl.ac.uk/> . See also their more detailed response to Plan S: <http://ukscl.ac.uk/ukscl-community-response-to-plan-s/>

⁶ <https://www.coar-repositories.org/files/COAR-response-to-implementation-of-Plan-S-February-6-2019.pdf>

- Many learned societies publish a significant proportion of research which is not covered by cOAlition S funding. To restrict cOAlition S funded researchers from publishing in these journals would create an artificial barrier to research communication
- In a global context, institutions covered by cOAlition S research funding are at the wealthier end of the university market. Meanwhile, many learned societies actively encourage global collaboration irrespective of means. A world in which those less able to pay found themselves moving from paying to read to paying to publish would not be a world which has resolved inequalities of access to scholarship and sharing.
- Academics are aware that current OA funding, even where it only supports publication in journals listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), or hybrid – either where a viable self-archiving option is not available, or where a ‘read and publish’ deal via hybrid funding is available – is no longer sufficient to support publishing at that institution, let alone to support the emergence of new business models which would support society publishing.

Maintaining choice of publication venue for RMA members

In addition to our wish to continue to accept relevant articles for publication by academics not covered by cOAlition S funders, the RMA would also be concerned at any policy intervention which might excessively limit the choice of publication venue for its own academic members, many of whom publish in journals that are based in territories currently not covered by cOAlition S funders or who are themselves publishing outputs of researchers not covered by cOAlition funding. Where those journals are licensed as part of “Big Deals” to libraries, the clarification sought above regarding journal/publisher becomes essential in ensuring that cOAlition S funded research does not become ghettoised in a few journals to the detriment of our discipline which is of its very nature a global one.

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