



Royal College of Art

Postgraduate Art & Design

Royal College of Art statement on Open Access

Cover sheet

Policy Owner	Scholarly Communications Librarian
Policy Overview	This policy supports and enables Open Access at the Royal College of Art. It is intended to guide researchers at the College in understanding the principles of Open Access, and how they can make their research output openly available. The policy covers all forms of research output, including journal articles and conference proceedings; books and book chapters; non-textual and practice based research. The policy also includes a Rights Retention Statement, applicable to journal articles and conference proceedings, which enables archiving and immediate Open Access of these types of research.
Related Policies and Guidance	Research Data Management Policy Intellectual Property Rights Policy
Current Version Number	3.0
Approved by / Date	Approved by the Research & Innovation Committee on 15 July 2026
Overview of Changes to Current Version	Addition of a Rights Retention Statement, applicable to journal articles and conference proceedings, which enables archiving and immediate Open Access of these types of research under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence. Amendment of reference to the RCA Research Repository to include mention of Pure.
Version History	1.0 - October 2019 2.0 - May 2022
Date of Last Review	May 2026
Date of Next Review	May 2029

Introduction

Open Access to research ensures the freedom to digitally access, read, download, copy, distribute, print, search and link to, or use for any other lawful purpose research materials without financial, legal or technical barriers. The only restrictions to these rights should be to give authors and creators control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited.

Statement of principle

The Royal College of Art (RCA) acknowledges that scholarly research produced within the College is a public good and that the fruits of research activity should be publicly available free of charge or other restriction wherever possible. Access to research is potentially beneficial to all elements of society including the public, industry and commerce, the global research community and the academic institutions in which they practice. Furthermore, the College understands that art and design research and practice is not always carried out within institutions with budgets to cover the costs of access to research locked behind paywalls. As a result, the RCA recognises the benefits that Open Access initiatives can offer to the wider artistic and design community, particularly those that practice outside of large publicly and privately funded institutions.

College commitments

The College commits to advocating for the principles of open research and the sharing of scholarly research for public good.

The College commits to making its research open through the maintenance, promotion and development of the RCA Research Repository and Pure.

The College commits to provide support and training around the principles and practice of Open Access to its research community.

The College commits to uphold the freedom of its academic staff to publish, showcase and curate their work in the venue and manner that they feel to be most appropriate for their research. This statement does not seek to limit that freedom in any way.

Benefits of Open Access

To researchers - Open Access increases the potential audience for their works; offers researchers the opportunity to curate a digital, shareable portfolio; widens the access that they have to research materials created by others; and can facilitate and encourage meaningful collaboration.

To the global public - Open Access ensures that they have access to world leading research which is often funded by public money. In this way Open Access helps to democratise research and knowledge by improving access and removing barriers to them.

To industry - Open Access gives industry and businesses access to research that could spark innovation and improve services.

To the academy - Open Access helps research institutions to showcase the research they produce whilst also increasing the size of the audience for their outputs.

Routes to Open Access

There are a number of routes to achieve Open Access:

Journal Articles and Conference Proceedings

1. The RCA confirms that its current practice is that researchers can control the use of copyright in their scholarly works.
2. Upon acceptance of publication each researcher agrees to grant the RCA a non-exclusive, irrevocable, worldwide, royalty-free licence to make manuscripts of their scholarly articles publicly available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence.
3. After granting such a licence, on acceptance of publication researchers will deposit an electronic copy of the Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) of each article in the RCA Research Repository via Pure.
4. The RCA will usually make article metadata available immediately upon deposit, with the AAM being made accessible to the public on the date of first online publication (or the conference end date for conference proceedings), or as soon as is practically possible thereafter, under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence.
5. This policy applies to all scholarly articles, including conference proceedings, authored or co-authored while the person is a staff member and also includes any third party content where rights to use or reproduce that content have been secured. Any articles submitted, or accepted, for publication before the date of adoption of this policy are exempt.
6. The RCA recognises that there may be situations outside a staff member's control where it is difficult to follow this policy exactly. In this case it will be permissible for staff to voluntarily opt out of the requirement for immediate open access upon publication, or the assignment of a CC BY licence. However, this may cause the research output to be non-compliant with funder or REF policies. To opt-out we simply ask authors to contact the Scholarly Communications Librarian with details of the publication.

Books and book chapters

For books and book chapters formally published through a commercial, society or other publishing company the RCA preference is for green Open Access. Green Open Access involves authors depositing the Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM, the final author manuscript as accepted for publication, incorporating any peer review) of their chapter or book in the RCA Research Repository, via Pure. Where it

is legally allowed to do so the RCA will make publications available on an Open Access basis through the RCA Research Repository, whilst respecting publisher embargo periods where they apply.

Practice research, exhibitions, shows, performances, teaching materials etc.

For practice research, exhibitions, shows, performances, teaching materials and other artistic works that are not formally published and distributed through a commercial, society or other publishing company, researchers are encouraged to make these outputs available Open Access by depositing a digital copy or representation of the work as soon as possible after completion in the RCA Research Repository via Pure.

Gold Open Access

The College will support gold Open Access where this is required by funder policies and where the funds are in place to do so. Gold Open Access involves a publisher making a work available Open Access through the publisher's platform at the point of publication, often requiring payment of an Article Processing Charge (APC) from the author to do so. The RCA supports the payment of APCs through the maintenance of the UKRI Open Access Block Grant for UKRI funded authors, and through other internal funds where available. Researchers publishing their work through the gold Open Access route should still deposit the Version of Record (VoR, the final published version of their work) in the RCA Research Repository via Pure.

For enquiries or support around Open Access at the RCA please contact Tom Cridford, Scholarly Communications Librarian thomas.cridford@rca.ac.uk, or Susan Hamilton, Head of Research Development susan.hamilton@rca.ac.uk.