FAQs
For the HRA/NLM Public Access Compliance Process

These FAQ's are for awardees of Health Research Alliance (HRA) member organizations that require deposit of final accepted manuscripts for publication in the National Library of Medicine (NLM) PubMed Central (PMC) repository. If you have questions not answered by these FAQs, first get in touch with the point of contact for your award. Questions regarding linking accounts may be directed to info@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov. Questions regarding manuscript submissions may be directed to nihms-help@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.

RETAINING AUTHOR RIGHTS TO COMPLY WITH THE PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY

How do I retain the appropriate author rights when submitting a manuscript for publication?
Many journals will automatically deposit articles in PMC. Here is a list of such journals. If the journal in which you plan to publish your article does not appear on this list, you must reserve the rights to make your article available in PubMed Central according to the terms required by the funding agency providing your award, and then deposit the accepted manuscript via the NIH Manuscript Submission System. Most journal publishers are accustomed to similar requirements of other funders. As resources for researchers, SPARC developed an introduction to copyright for authors, and a SPARC/Science Commons Author Addendum.

What do I do if the publisher refuses to accept modification of its standard author agreement?
First, get in touch with the point of contact for your award. In general, you should not sign any publication agreement related to articles or other publications subject to the public access policy unless you are certain that the agreement complies with the policy. The same advice applies to electronic click-through agreements that may be part of the journal's manuscript submission system. If the publisher balks at accepting a modification of its standard agreement, you may reiterate the conditions of your funding and remind them that the requirement is similar to that of the National Institutes of Health, HHMI, and other funders. There is no evidence of financial or other material harm to publishers as a result of embargoed free public access to research articles. Authors should work with the publisher before any rights are transferred, to ensure that all conditions of the HRA member funding agency's access policy can be met.

IDENTIFYING YOUR HRA MEMBER FUNDING AGENCY AWARDS IN THE HRA PORTAL

Why do I need to use a Gmail address to identify my award in the HRA portal?
Each HRA member grant needs to have a unique investigator identifier that NLM can recognize when investigators deposit their manuscripts in PMC. Because Gmail and NLM use a shared authentication technology, using your Gmail account helps NLM recognize you as an HRA member award recipient that is authorized to make manuscript deposits related to the award into PMC. HRA recognizes that using Gmail has limitations and is working toward replacing it in favor of a different researcher identifier.

I see some of my previous awards when searching in the HRA portal. Can I retrospectively deposit all of the final accepted manuscripts resulting from those awards into PMC?
This is possible but it is up to your funder. If you desire to make retroactive deposits into PMC contact your funder first. HRA members can adopt a public access policy prospectively or do so retrospectively. HRA notifies NLM of which specific awards from HRA members can be expected to make manuscript deposits. If your funder agrees, they will notify HRA, who in turn will notify the NLM to make past awards available for you to deposit publications in PMC.

I have an award from an HRA member funding agency, how do I know if the award has access policy requirements?
The best way to determine if your award has a public access policy requirement is to check your award agreement, or to contact the funder's point of contact for your award.

Why does the Health Research Alliance have data about my award?
All HRA member organizations agreed to deposit award information in a database of privately funded awards. The following award information is uploaded into HRA database: investigator name, degree, institution, project title, abstract, award start date and duration, award amount and research categorization. The Health Research Alliance (HRA) aggregates this data for its member organizations and for periodic publication of findings.

What the details of my award does HRA share with NLM?
The only award information that is transmitted to NLM is the following: Your name, the name of your funder, your project title, and your funder's unique award ID number.

ASSOCIATING AN AWARD WITH A PUBLICATION CITATION IN PMC USING AN NCBI ACCOUNT

Can I log into NCBI using my eRA Commons credentials instead of Gmail?
You can log into NCBI using your eRA Commons credentials however this isn't recommended until you have linked your Gmail to your existing NCBI account. Logging into NCBI with eRA Commons credentials won't allow you to see HRA member sources of funding linked to your Gmail until the Gmail account has been associated with your NCBI account.

Why do I have to link my Gmail to an existing NCBI account?
Linking your Gmail to an existing NCBI account will allow consolidation of your HRA member organization award information with other award information such as NIH grants associated through eRA Commons.

What do I do if I can't find my HRA member funding agency award when I log into the NIH Manuscript Submission System?
Did you visit the HRA portal as described in step 1 of the Public Access compliance guide? To find your awards listed when you log into NCBI, you must have first completed that step. If you already completed that step and the problem persists you might have to wait 24 hours. Awards will be available in NCBI within 24 hours of completing step 1. If you have linked your awards to your Gmail account in the HRA portal, at least 24 hours have elapsed and you still cannot find your award, please get in touch with the point of contact for your award.

Is there a time delay between when I link my Gmail account to my award at the HRA portal and when my award is available in in the NIH Manuscript Submission System?
Yes – data from the HRA portal is transmitted to the National Library of Medicine each weeknight. Please allow 24 hours for your linked awards to be available in your NCBI account.

What is the difference between a final peer-reviewed manuscript and final published article, and which version of my paper should I submit?
The final peer-reviewed manuscript before final formatting and typesetting is often called a postprint. The postprint version is similar but not identical to the final published version of the article, which is the authoritative copy. Your HRA member funding agency's public access policy requires award recipients to submit the postprint (the final, peer-reviewed manuscript that includes all modifications from the publishing and peer review process) to PubMed Central.

MISCELLANEOUS

My paper is based on research only partially funded by the HRA funding agency with a public access requirement. Does the access policy still apply?
Yes, the access policy applies to any manuscript that arises from any amount of direct funding from the HRA funding agency with an access policy requirement.

I plan to publish in an Open Access journal. Do I still need to submit my paper to PubMed Central?
Yes, unless the journal has an agreement to deposit its papers in PubMed Central. Here is a link to an updated list of these journals). Not all Open Access journals have agreements with PubMed Central.

My article is listed in PubMed. Why do I need to deposit it in PubMed Central?
PubMed is a citation database, while PubMed Central is a free digital database of full-text scientific literature in the biomedical and life sciences. The HRA member funding agency's policy requires that the full text of publications resulting from your award be made available in PubMed Central as a condition of your award. The only way to comply with that requirement is to reserve the necessary rights under copyright and to deposit the publication as outlined in the public access policy compliance guide.