



Plan S and the Hybrid History Journal Landscape

RHS Interim Working Paper

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Executive Summary:

This is a very preliminary working paper. It uses the first 50 responses to an ongoing Royal Historical Society survey, which is designed to assess current (summer 2019) awareness of and preparation for Plan S open access requirements among UK and international History journals and learned societies. The working paper begins by outlining what we know about Plan S, and then assesses areas of ambiguity, contradiction or complexity in Plan S policies. It explores the different ‘compliance’ regimes associated with Plan S funders, such as UKRI and the Wellcome Trust. With respect to UKRI, it explores the potential distinctions between research funded by RCUK and research funded by REF, and the ways in which these distinctions potentially complicate understanding and implementation of Plan S in the UK.

Using very preliminary data from the survey, the paper explores the ‘zero embargo AAM self-deposit’ route to Plan S compliance. It also uses these preliminary data to examine Plan S’s ‘transformative agreement’ compliance route. The working paper notes that many learned societies, journal editors and publishers—in response to the known ambiguities and the ‘known unknowns’ of Plan S—are adopting a ‘wait and see’ approach to Plan S. Other journals, especially outside the UK, appear to be largely disengaged from Plan S. The paper finds that reliance on publishers for open access policy decisions is widespread both among learned society and proprietary History journals.

The working paper draws attention to the great diversity of History journals, and the fundamentally international character of History research. It notes that these characteristics, and the funding and staffing norms of History learned societies and journals, pose significant challenges for Plan S implementation. It encourages editors of national and international History journals to complete and return the RHS Plan S survey no later than 10 September 2019, in order to generate a discipline-specific evidence base for UKRI’s ongoing and forthcoming open access consultations in autumn 2019 and winter 2020. The Royal Historical Society plans to publish an updated version of this working paper, incorporating additional evidence, by 1 October 2019, in keeping with the dates of these UKRI consultation exercises.

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Note on terminology

Some of the terminology in this paper is highly technical, and may be unfamiliar to readers from outside the UK in particular. Part 8, below, provides a 'Glossary and Abbreviations' list. For ease of comprehension, terms defined in the glossary are *set in bold italic type* at first usage in the text. Readers unfamiliar with the Plan S agenda are advised to first read the 'What is cOAlition S' section of the official Plan S website,¹ and its 'Principles and Implementation' guidance.² Part 2, below, also provides a short précis of *cOAlition S* and Plan S requirements.

1. INTRODUCTION

This interim working paper offers a preliminary mapping of current (29 July 2019) preparedness for Plan S open access (*OA*) implementation among a small sample of UK and international '*hybrid*' History journals. It is based on survey responses provided by 50 UK and international History journals. The working paper's primarily audience is scholarly editors and editorial boards, History *learned societies*, publishers of Humanities journals, and funding bodies—rather than individual History researchers. **As an interim working paper, this report is designed to elicit further evidence, feedback and corrections for a more comprehensive**

¹ <https://www.coalition-s.org/about/> .

² <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/> .

analysis. The Royal Historical Society (*RHS*) intends to publish this further report by 1 October 2019, to inform stakeholders' contributions to the *UKRI* Open Access Review.³

This report does not seek to advise journal editors or learned societies that own/sponsor research journals whether or not to implement changes to become Plan S 'compliant'. Nor does this paper seek to steer journals or societies that do opt to embrace new OA protocols toward a specific compliance route within the Plan S framework. Instead, our goal is to enhance the quality of business planning and policy-making by providing a preliminary map of the current state of play for History, and to identify a list of issues—'known unknowns'—about which additional information should be sought in the next several months.

In April 2019 RHS published a preliminary analysis of the implications of Plan S for Wellcome Trust funded researchers in medical humanities, the first cohort of UK History researchers to whom OA requirements aligned with Plan S will apply. This analysis suggested that identifying high quality Plan S compliant OA journals (Route 1 of the 3 available Plan S compliance routes) will prove challenging for History researchers.⁴ By far the largest number of high-quality UK and international History journals are 'hybrid', rather than offering full, immediate OA for all research articles they publish. (Hybrid journals use subscriptions to keep portions of their research article content behind paywalls, but allow some articles to be published fully OA). **In this context, our priority in preparing this working paper has been to survey the current provisions of hybrid History journals, rather than extending our investigation of available OA journals.**

We believe it is vital that historians in general, but particularly those who have responsibility for journal publishing, understand the implications of Plan S and its potential effects on academic publishing. **Within a very fluid and highly differentiated publication landscape, this working paper aims to provide the History subject community with up-to-date, discipline-specific information to aid effective business planning and encourage engagement with funding bodies' consultations on OA policies.** As detailed below, multiple factors hamper our ability to provide this information. These include: the ambiguities of Plan S terminology and policy; the current lack of clarity on UKRI's relationship to Plan S; the limited availability of granular data on History journal policies; the high level of internal (and international) differentiation that characterises History journal publishing and the lack of definition that surrounds so-called '*transformative agreements*'. OA policy deliberation is also impeded by the fundamentally adversarial tenor of much Plan S debate.

³ UKRI's Open Access Review involves four phases of work (Autumn 2018 - Spring 2020). This includes a public consultation on the UKRI draft policy during September to November 2019. The Review will report in March 2020: <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/open-access/open-access-review/>.

⁴ <https://royalhistsoc.org/rhs-working-paper-history-researchers-and-plan-s-journal-compliance-april-2019/>. See esp. pages 2, 15-23 and 30-39.

2. PLAN S - WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Known 1. What is cOAlition S?

Launched in September 2018, Plan S is a radical open access publishing initiative formulated by cOAlition S, a confederation of 16 predominantly European national funding bodies ('Funders' in cOAlition S parlance). Supported by the European Commission, cOAlition S's core group of Funders includes two UK-based bodies. These are UKRI (which includes both the 7 UK government funding councils of *RCUK* and *Research England*, the body that orchestrates the UK *REF* exercise) and the Wellcome Trust, a registered charity.⁵

Known 2. What is Plan S?


In September 2018, cOAlition S made a preliminary statement of its Plan S requirements, specifying an implementation date of 1 January 2020. It released version 2.0 of Plan S on 31 May 2019. Version 2.0 delayed the onset of implementation by a year, to 1 January 2021.

Funding bodies that adhere to Plan S guidelines are now due to begin to implement its requirements with respect to EITHER new grant calls OR new grants initiated OR scholarly articles newly submitted for peer-review from 1 January 2021.

Plan S is predicated on **10 shared principles** (see Figure 1).⁶ It aims to accelerate the transition toward full and immediate open access publication of all peer-reviewed journal articles based on original research. Principle 8 of Plan S asserts that cOAlition S 'Funders do not support the "hybrid" model of publishing. However, as a transitional pathway towards full Open Access within a clearly defined timeframe [until 1 January 2024], and only as part of transformative arrangements, Funders may contribute to financially supporting such arrangements.' cOAlition S intends to extend its requirements to books and book chapters at an unspecified future date.

⁵ Plan S: Who's Involved: <https://www.coalition-s.org/funders/>.

⁶ To ensure clarity and consistency, this working paper uses the version of Plan S Principles and Implementation 2.0 dated 31 May 2019, downloaded on 23 July 2019. It is available on the RHS website here: <https://royalhistsoc.org/policy/publication-open-access/rhs-working-paper-plan-s-hybrid-history-journals/>. All subsequent references to Plan S Principles and Implementation refer to this document. Much of the content on the Plan S website is not date-stamped and may change over time without notice or previous versions being made available. Thus, our downloaded document should be checked against any potential updates / alterations on the cOAlition S website here: <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/>.



Plan S
Raising the standards of Open Access research

Why Plan S
Principles and Implementation
Who's involved
About
Contact

Part I: The Plan S Principles

"With effect from 2021, all scholarly publications on the results from research funded by public or private grants provided by national, regional and international research councils and funding bodies, must be published in Open Access Journals, on Open Access Platforms, or made immediately available through Open Access Repositories without embargo."

In addition:

01 Authors or their institutions retain copyright to their publications. All publications must be published under an open license, preferably the Creative Commons Attribution license (CC BY), in order to fulfil the requirements defined by the [Berlin Declaration](#).

02 The Funders will develop robust criteria and requirements for the services that high-quality Open Access journals, Open Access platforms, and Open Access repositories must provide.

03 In cases where high-quality Open Access journals or platforms do not yet exist, the Funders will, in a coordinated way, provide incentives to establish and support them when appropriate; support will also be provided for Open Access infrastructures where necessary.

04 Where applicable, Open Access publication fees are covered by the Funders or research institutions, not by individual researchers; it is acknowledged that all researchers should be able to publish their work Open Access.

05 The Funders support the diversity of business models for Open Access journals and platforms. When Open Access publication fees are applied, they must be commensurate with the publication services delivered and the structure of such fees must be transparent to inform the market and funders potential standardisation and capping of payments of fees.

06 The Funders encourage governments, universities, research organisations, libraries, academics, and learned societies to align their strategies, policies, and practices, notably to ensure transparency.

07 The above principles shall apply to all types of scholarly publications, but it is understood that the timeline to achieve Open Access for monographs and book chapters will be longer and requires a separate and due process.

08 The Funders do not support the 'hybrid' model of publishing. However, as a transitional pathway towards full Open Access within a clearly defined timeframe, and only as part of transformative arrangements, Funders may contribute to financially supporting such arrangements.

09 The Funders will monitor compliance and sanction non-compliant beneficiaries/grantees.

10 The Funders commit that when assessing research outputs during funding decisions they will value the intrinsic merit of the work and not consider the publication channel, its impact factor (or other journal metrics), or the publisher.

Fig. 1. Plan S Part 1: The Plan S Principles (version 31 May 2019, screengrab 23 July 2019) Credit:
<https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/>

The cOAlition's ambition is global. Its goal is to '*flip*' (or convert to full, immediate OA publication) all research articles published in subscription-based academic journals. This goal has major implications for both academic journals owned by learned societies and *proprietary journals* owned by university or commercial presses, as well as for UK and international researchers who publish in these outlets.

Known 3. What constitutes Plan S compliance?

There are **three alternative routes to Plan S compliance** for researchers who publish scholarly articles funded by cOAlition S members:

ROUTE 1. Publish in a fully OA journal or platform which meets the technical specifications set out in Part III of the 31 May 2019 Plan S 'Principles and Implementation' guidance;⁷

⁷ cOAlition S has committed to 'support the development of a tool that researchers can use to identify whether venues fulfil the requirements' of Plan S at an unspecified future date (Part II, 'Principles and Implementation').

ROUTE 2. Publish in a hybrid journal that allows author self-deposit of either the AAM (Author Accepted Manuscript) or the VoR (Version of Record). Authors must be able to deposit this document for immediate release upon publication of the VoR (that is, with “zero embargo”). Again, the journal must meet the technical specifications set out in Part III of the ‘Principles and Implementation’ document. No publication fees (for example, an *APC* for ‘Gold’ OA publication of the VoR), will be paid by the cOAlition S funder for authors publishing by Route 2 in hybrid journals;

ROUTE 3: Publish in a hybrid journal that meets Plan S’s technical specifications AND has signed a cOAlition S approved ‘transformative agreement’ to ‘flip’ to full, zero embargo OA publication by 1 January 2024. In this case, fees such as author processing charges (APCs) can be paid by the cOAlition S funder to cover publication costs.

In addition:

Regardless of the compliance route chosen, **‘the publication must be openly available immediately with a Creative Commons Attribution license (CC BY) unless an exception has been agreed by the funder’.**⁸

Copyright must also be maintained either by the author or their institution, rather than by the journal, learned society or publisher (Principle 1 of Plan S).

This RHS working paper explores historians’ current access to Plan S compliance through Routes 2 and 3, bearing in mind these additional specification with respect to CC BY. In the final, autumn 2019 version of this paper, we hope as well to be able to supply information about copyright assignment and on History journals’ current alignment with the ‘Basic mandatory conditions for all publication venues’ set out in Part III, section 1.1 of the current Plan S ‘Principles and Implementation’ document.

Known 4. Plan S OA requirements do NOT apply to REF2021

The current (that is, submission in 2020, with results published in 2021) UK REF exercise will NOT operate in alignment with Plan S. Its OA protocols are not affected by UKRI’s status as a cOAlition S ‘Funder’. Any alignment with Plan S will attach to future REF exercises, not to REF2021. This is made explicitly clear in UKRI guidance that, pending the outcome of their January-March 2020 REF OA review, they ‘ask the sector to work on the basis of continuation of existing REF 2021 policy at this stage’.⁹

Known 5. The Wellcome Trust timeline for Plan S compliance

Although the details and requirements of Plan S implementation for UKRI funded research are unknown and subject to consultation, the Wellcome Trust has a clear and emphatic schedule for implementation. It has opted for the earliest of the three potential Plan S implementation

⁸ See Part II, point 2 of the ‘Principles and Implementation’ document.

⁹ <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/open-access/open-access-review/>: ‘Open access policy for the REF after next’.

timescales. The Wellcome Trust's policy applies to all scholarly articles containing original research submitted for peer review with effect from 1 January 2021.¹⁰

3. PLAN S - WHAT DON'T WE KNOW?

Unknown 1. Timeline for Plan S Implementation

The description on the official Plan S website of cOAlition S's required implementation timeline is marked by internal contradictions. These inconsistencies may cause confusion as UK and international stakeholders consider their publishing options within the Plan S framework.

The first major section of text encountered by a visitor to the Plan S website is highlighted in bold (see Fig. 1, above, immediately below 'Part I: The Plan S Principles').¹¹ It states: **"With effect from 2021, all scholarly publications on the results from research funded by public or private grants provided by national, regional and international research councils and funding bodies, must be published in Open Access Journals, on Open Access Platforms, or made immediately available through Open Access Repositories without embargo."**¹²

However, as subsequent sections of this official website note, "The timeline for implementation of Plan S will vary among member organisations."¹³ This statement appears to directly contradict the official website's initial articulation of the core principles of Plan S.

Moreover, whereas the initial declaration (Part I, bold unattributed citation, cited above) specifically refers to **'all scholarly publications...funded by public or private grants'** and specifies implementation with 'effect from 2021', subsequent statements in the document qualify those parameters:

- 'Principles and Implementation', Part II, point 1 ('Aims and Scope') clarifies that the policy at present applies only to **'scholarly articles'**;
- 'Principles and Implementation', Part II point 1 states that the 'target set out in Plan S...[is] **'publications resulting from research funded by cOAlition S members' grants under calls published as of 1 January 2021 (or earlier at individual members' choice)'**. Within the text of the Plan S website, the 2021 implementation timeline thus shifts from referring to all scholarly publications published from 1 January 2021, on the one hand, to all articles funded by new grant calls issued by cOAlition S Funders, on the other.

¹⁰ <https://wellcome.ac.uk/funding/guidance/open-access-policy>.

¹¹ The text is presented as an unattributed quotation, but the use of " " perhaps instead simply indicates, together with the **bold text**, that this is the main aim of cOAlition S. This is suggested by the reiteration of the "quotation" on the 'What is cOAlition S?' tab of the official website: <https://www.coalition-s.org/about/>.

¹² <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/> (21 July 2019). This unattributed text, in **bold** on the website, is the first statement in Part I of 'The Plan S Principles'.

¹³ Plan S Principles and Implementation, Part II, point 8.

Version 1.0 of Plan S helpfully spelled out the full range of available implementation dates within Plan S.¹⁴ It specified 3 potential points at which cOAlition S Funders could choose to implement Plan S for researchers they support: 1) the start dates of *calls* for new grant applications; 2) the start dates for new *grants awarded* by Funders; and 3) the *submission dates* for peer-reviewed articles based on existing or future grants by Funders. These three alternative implementation points appear to have become implicit rather than explicit in the text of Plan S version 2.0. **Plan S version 2.0's 'Principles and Implementation', Part II point 1 thus represents a significantly different timescale than the bold text that prefaces the Plan S Principles.** Pragmatically, in History, most grant *calls* issued on or after 1 January 2021 are unlikely to produce active new individual *projects* or new collaborative *research teams* substantially earlier than 1 January 2022. These funded researchers are unlikely to submit significant numbers of scholarly *articles* to journals until 2023 or 2024. The Wellcome Trust has opted for the earliest of these 3 implementation points for its funded researchers. It is unknown whether the other 15 cOAlition S Funders, including UKRI, will follow suit.

Unknown 2. The Extent of UKRI's proposed 'alignment' with Plan S

It is unclear from the official cOAlition S website precisely what obligations being a 'Funder' entails. The website states that 'cOAlition S funders...have agreed to implement the 10 principles of Plan S in a coordinated way, together with the European Commission and the ERC.' On the same page, it reiterates the problematic statement that **"With effect from 2021, all scholarly publications on the results from research funded by public or private grants provided by national, regional and international research councils and funding bodies, must be published in Open Access Journals, on Open Access Platforms, or made immediately available through Open Access Repositories without embargo."**¹⁵ Further, Part II, point 7 of 'Principles and Implementation' outlines Plan S expectations with respect to 'Compliance and Sanctioning'. It states that 'The individual members of cOAlition S will align their grant agreements and/or contracts with Plan S and monitor compliance and sanction non-compliance. Each funder will determine how best to monitor compliance and what sanctions to introduce.'¹⁶

It is unclear in Plan S version 2.0 whether 'alignment' and/or 'compliance' entail wholesale acceptance and implementation of all of the requirements specified on the Plan S website. Further, whether UKRI intends to 'align' the policies of each of its constituent councils fully with Plan S is unknown. Like the Wellcome Trust, UKRI is a founding member (or 'Funder') of cOAlition S. UKRI's website states that 'The Plan S principles broadly align with current Open Access policies and will be considered as part of the UKRI Open Access Review. Final decisions on UKRI policies will be made via the UKRI Open

¹⁴ At least, the author believes that this was the case. The lack of time-stamped, archived versions of Plan S versions 1.0 and 2.0 renders tracking changes over time problematic.

¹⁵ <https://www.coalition-s.org/about/>.

¹⁶ It further specifies: 'Possible sanctions could include: withholding grant funds, discounting non-compliant publications as part of a researcher's track record in grant applications, and/or excluding non-compliant grant holders from future funding calls.' <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/>.

Access Review.¹⁷ The public portion of this consultation on RCUK and OA is scheduled for September to November 2019 and is due to report in March 2020.¹⁸ It will be followed (January-March 2020) by a consultation on new REF OA requirements.

In contrast to the Wellcome Trust, UKRI's complex internal structure comprises multiple councils of different types. The 7 research councils that operate under the umbrella of RCUK each annually offer several public *calls* for competitive grants. Funding bodies configured along these lines—rather than government funding bodies that provide multi-year core grants to all universities within their nations or states—appear to be the normative 'type' of cOAlition S 'Funder'.¹⁹ However, UKRI's component councils also include Research England. As discussed in the next section ('Unknown 3'), Research England's presence and complex role in the UK funding landscape may complicate Plan S implementation in the UK.

Whether UKRI will (like the Wellcome Trust) opt for a 'hard Plan S'—applied to all peer-reviewed *articles* submitted from 1 January 2021—or instead for a 'soft Plan S'—applied only to articles funded by its RCUK grants based on *calls* issued from 1 January 2021—is unknown at this time. The intermediate option of applying Plan S requirements to *grants initiated* from 1 January 2021 onward is also presumably available within the cOAlition's guidelines.

Unknown 3. The Status of QR and REF Funding

It is at present (July 2019) unknown whether UKRI will apply Plan S requirements uniformly to all scholarly articles funded by QR income derived from REF and/or will require all outputs submitted to future REF exercises (that is, after REF2021) to meet Plan S OA specifications.

- One logical interpretation of UKRI's commitments to open access as a founding 'Funder' of cOAlition S would be the extension of Plan S requirements to all journal articles—and, subsequently, all book and book chapters—supported by QR (Quality-Related) research funding. QR allocations to individual UK universities are based on the results of periodic REF exercises. Research England, which is a council of UKRI and thus a component body of a cOAlition S 'Funder', orchestrates REF exercises on behalf of English, Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh funding bodies. It also allocates QR funding based on REF results to English universities. (The devolved funding bodies undertake this latter role for Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh universities). QR block grants to universities contribute to research costs that include researchers' salaries.²⁰ In

¹⁷ UKRI currently (July 2019) cites a Plan S target date for implementation of 1 January 2020. This date appears to reflect a failure to update its website since the publication of version 2.0 of Plan S, which shifted cOAlition S's implementation date from 1 January 2020 to 1 January 2021. <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/open-access/open-access-review/>: 'Plan S, paragraph 3'.

¹⁸ <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/open-access/open-access-review/>.

¹⁹ The list of cOAlition S 'Funders' is, in fact, (unhelpfully) a webpage of logos: <https://www.coalition-s.org/funders/>. The author believes that her statement with regard to the normative 'type' of cOAlition S funder is accurate, but will correct this statement in the full report if this is not the case.

²⁰ Research England is a constituent Council of UKRI; the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, the Northern Ireland Department for Economy and the Scottish Funding Council are not, nor are they listed among

this context, there are those, including cOAlitionS ‘Ambassador’ Professor Martin Eve, who have argued that QR is fully in scope for Plan S compliance;²¹

- Alternatively, as appears more consistent with the current wording of its website, UKRI (through Research England and the devolved funding councils) could use REF to implement Plan S OA requirements *in part*. That is, the funding bodies could require that either all or instead a portion of future journal outputs (and subsequently book outputs) submitted to REF would need to meet Plan S requirements. This would have the effect of broadly, but not exhaustively, linking QR-funded research to Plan S OA mandates.²²

With respect to REF exercises **after** REF2021, the UKRI website currently states: ‘It is the intention to align as closely as possible to the UKRI OA policy, whilst taking into account the differences for a policy associated with grant funded research and research that is submitted to a UK-wide research assessment exercise.’²³ **In sum, the extent to which UKRI considers Research England and RCUK to be fully and equally bound by Plan S mandates is not currently clear.** The UKRI website states that Plan S ‘will be considered *as part of* the UKRI Open Access Review’ (my emphasis).²⁴ **This wording strongly suggests that UKRI recognises the anomalous position it occupies as a cOAlition S Funder that comprises both a body that makes calls for competitive, peer-reviewed grants and a body that allocates multi-year block grants to sustain core research capacity to all UK universities.**

4. Open Access Publishing in History Journals: RHS Survey

In July 2019 the RHS sent a short survey to the editors of c.130 UK and international History journals that publish peer-reviewed original research articles. **This working paper includes data from the first 50 completed surveys we received.** A list of the 50 journals whose surveys have been included can be found in the Appendix (Part 10, below). **We welcome additional surveys completed by UK and international History journal editors and**

the current members of cOAlition S. More on QR funding: <https://re.ukri.org/research/how-we-fund-research/>.

²¹ cOAlition S ‘Ambassadors’ are listed here: <https://www.coalition-s.org/ambassadors/>. Professor Eve’s comments of July 2019 can be found here: <https://eve.gd/2019/07/24/the-british-academy-response-misrepresents-plan-s-and-oa/>.

²² Not all peer-reviewed QR-funded research is submitted in REF exercises. Thus, if REF were used to ‘police’ Plan S ‘compliance’, not all QR-funded research would be captured, and not all QR-funded research would need to be Plan S OA compliant. However, pre-selecting particular outputs for Plan S compliance and thus for REF-eligibility in advance of agreed Research England REF guidelines and Research England approval of universities’ individual REF Codes of Practice would both be a logistical nightmare for universities and an open invitation to violate **EDI** (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) as protected by legislation such as the 2010 Equality Act (for England, Scotland and Wales).

²³ <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/open-access/open-access-review/>: ‘Open access policy for the REF after next’.

²⁴ <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/open-access/open-access-review/>: ‘Open access policy for the REF after next’.

returned by 10 September 2019. These surveys will be included in the full, autumn 2019, RHS report. The survey can be downloaded from the RHS website.²⁵

Survey methodology

The survey methodology was designed to generate data for a rapid and very preliminary snapshot of History journals and their publishers with respect to Plan S awareness and planning. **These data are neither systematic nor comprehensive.** However, they are more substantive than no data whatsoever, and significantly more robust than speculation of the potential impact of Plan S in the UK that is based on an absence of subject-specific data. It is hoped that they may thus contribute to an evidence-based analysis of Plan S and OA publishing in the Humanities.

We contacted c. 130 History editors individually and asked them to complete a simple survey to determine the current alignment of their journal with Plan S requirements, and any future plans to become Plan S ‘compliant’. An option for including free text commentary was available, and many respondents made use of this opportunity to comment on their strategic thinking. Several also volunteered comments and evidence in separate emails or conversations to the author of this report. Questions relating to technical aspects of Plan S compliance were also included in the survey, with a request to provide this technical information by mid-September 2019. We hope to include an analysis of these data in our October 2019 report.

Some editors replied that they were unable to complete the survey because they lacked time, expertise or information to do so. Many editors sought assistance in completing their survey from their publisher; a minority simply forwarded the survey to their publisher contact to complete it for them. A representative of one major History publisher sent a response covering their entire list on behalf of all editors.²⁶ **We have included generic publisher information in the report, but can include only individual surveys completed by journal editors (or their publisher contacts) for specified journals in our quantitative data.**

The overall response rate to date has been high, given that History journal editors typically undertake their editorial duties in addition to full-time university employment. (Tellingly, many editors responded to the survey at weekends or during evening hours; these were also the times at which most of them were contacted by the RHS). Several additional surveys have been completed since receipt of the first 50 responses; others have been promised before the 10 September 2019 survey deadline.

About the journals included in this Working Paper

The resulting preliminary sample of 50 journals is thus neither fully systematic nor exhaustive. However, it includes:

²⁵ The text of this survey can be viewed here: <https://royalhistsoc.org/policy/publication-open-access/rhs-working-paper-plan-s-hybrid-history-journals/>.

²⁶ Sage responded on behalf of all their History journal editors, providing a full link to their History list: <https://journals.sagepub.com/action/showPublications?category=10.1177/social-sciences-and-humanities-history>

- journals that publish articles on the histories of all regions of the world;
- journals spanning a chronology that stretches from early medieval to contemporary History, and includes some (albeit limited) coverage of ancient history as well;
- journals with a methodological orientation including (for example) area studies, cultural history, diplomatic history, gender history, intellectual history, medical history, military history, religious history, the history of science and social history;
- both publications sponsored by UK and international learned societies and proprietary journals owned by publishers;
- journals that self-publish, and journals published by both large and smaller university presses, independent presses and a range of UK and international commercial presses.

Our preliminary sample size is small, and there are known ‘skews’ within it.

- Excluding self-publishing journals, 13 individual presses are represented in the sample. (See Chart 1). These publishers are predominantly UK-based. University and large commercial presses dominate our first 50 survey responses. Their representation in our results is **unlikely** to correspond directly to their overall representation in the market for History journal articles;
- History scholarship is an inherently international endeavour, and determining whether a journal is ‘UK-based’ is complicated and problematic. Journals owned by UK learned societies with UK-based editors and editorial boards can readily be described as UK-based, although it is essential to recognise that they typically publish articles from international as well as UK-based authors. However, many journals, including those owned by UK learned societies, have international editors and/or editorial boards, as well as international authors. We have classed only 26 of the 50 journals so far with respect to location, and these data are highly provisional.²⁷ However, the great majority of journals in this preliminary sample appear to be UK-based. (See Chart 2).
- All of the journals in our initial 50 surveys are Anglophone and publish in English. The RHS has many members outside the UK, and many of our UK-based researchers research and publish in languages other than (or in addition to) English. We recognise that journals published in languages other than English and outside the UK are vital to the health of the discipline within the UK and internationally. However, journal editors outside the UK are clearly finding deciphering Plan S and its requirements to be a challenge. We are working actively to redress this imbalance in the autumn version of this report;
- Most of our first 50 respondents represent journals associated with learned societies. (See Chart 3). Given the role that journal subscriptions play in sustaining learned societies and the widespread and well-known concern that Plan S will damage these organisations and lead to the closure of their journals, this skew is unsurprising. Chart 3 likely significantly **over-represents** learned society journals within the wider History journal landscape;

²⁷ If a journal is linked to a learned society, we determined its location in relation to the Society. For journals without links to a Society or similar organisation, we determine the journals location by considering the Editors and Editorial Board (particularly when published by an international publisher).

- Outside the UK, knowledge and understanding of Plan S is limited, in turn restricting our ability to access a wider range of discipline-specific information. **Several international editors indicated that they consider Plan S to be illegible and/or irrelevant.** Our survey inevitably over-represents journals with are willing and able to engage with responding to the Plan S initiative. This skew, which we have limited means of correcting in the final report, will likely reinforce the predominance of UK-based English language journals published by the larger commercial and university presses.

Journal Publisher

50 responses

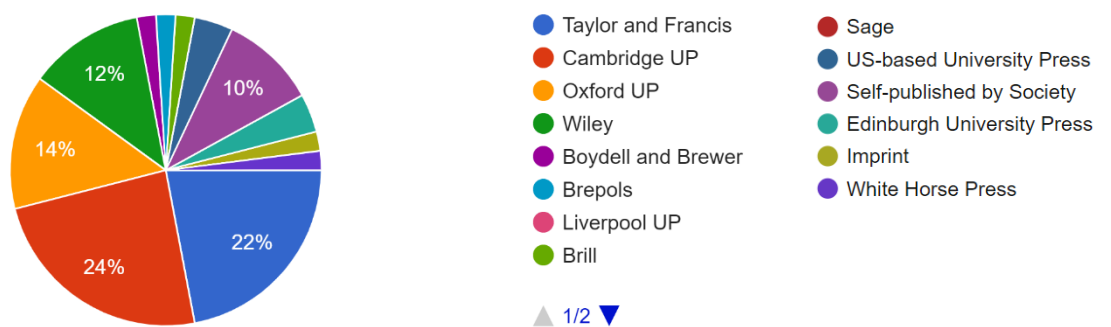


Chart 1: Journal Publisher

Where is journal entirely/mainly based?

26 responses

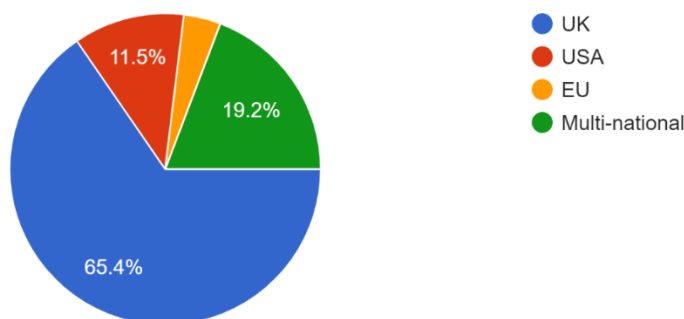


Chart 2: Journal Location

Is the journal linked to a Learned Society or similar Organisation?

50 responses

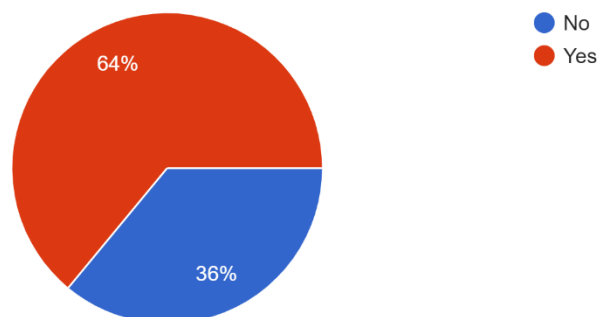


Chart 3: Learned Society compared to Proprietary Journals

Our survey has known skews and includes only a small number of UK and international History journals. It nonetheless provides a useful starting point to reflect on the potential impact of Plan S in the Humanities. The preliminary sample includes high-quality journals that publish articles in all fields of History. It includes high-quality journals that are leading international outlets in their sub-fields. It also registers information about smaller, highly specialised journals. We would expect most UK-based History heads of Department/Faculty and most History REF Managers/Directors of Research to recognise and recommend journals from this preliminary list as ‘target journals’ for RCUK grant applicants and/or for potential REF outputs.

5. Open Access Publishing in History Journals: Preliminary Findings

Our survey offers comparative information on different journals’ publishing options, policies, strategies and thinking with respect to OA and Plan S. Many journal editors and editorial boards in the UK have already discussed Plan S with their publishers; others, especially outside the UK, have now done so in response to our survey. This working paper offers learned societies, individual journal editors and editorial boards and their publishers a wider national and international context in which to view their current and prospective OA policies.

Responses to our survey fall into 4 broad categories:

1. Journals that appear to be moving toward Plan S compliance via Route 2 (that is, zero embargo AAM self-deposit);
2. Journals that do not allow self-deposit of zero-embargo AAMs, but whose publishers are contemplating—but have not yet implemented—Route 3 Plan S compliance (that is, signing Plan S-approved ‘transformative arrangements’);
3. Journals that are adopting a ‘wait and see’ strategy;
4. Journals with no current plans to comply with Plan S requirements.

Overview of Key Findings

1. **Publishers are predominantly driving the OA policies of individual History journals, regardless of whether these outlets are learned society or propriety journals.** This policy tendency appears to be especially marked with respect to embargo periods for AAMs. Learned societies and their journals as a whole appear to have relatively limited understanding of their options, beyond their publishers default OA policies;
2. Around one third of journals in our preliminary sample (33%, 16 of 48 respondents for whom we could make a determination) may potentially become Plan S compliant via Route 2. That is, **a third of journals in our sample allow zero embargo AAM self-deposit (a key requirement for Route 2 Plan S compliance).** However, very few of these journals currently allow publication of a zero embargo AAM by a CC BY licence. CC BY is the default licence of Plan S, which allows other licences only by exception. These exceptions appear to exclude CC BY-NC licences but to include CC BY-ND licences.²⁸ **Preliminary evidence suggests that CC BY poses a major obstacle to Plan S compliance via Route 2.** (Transfer of copyright to the author or the author's institution, a further Plan S requirement, appears from our preliminary data to pose less challenges than its CC BY provisions);
3. **There is very little visible evidence (that is, visible to learned societies, editors or journal authors) of progress toward Route 3 'transformative agreements'.** One editor of a Wiley journal noted that they understood that such agreements were under active discussion, but were complicated by Brexit. The recent (23 July 2019) British Academy response to Plan S version 2.0, further, notes that so-called 'Read-and-Publish' versions of transformative agreements 'may also prove problematic for states and jurisdictions where there is a significant imbalance between authorship and reading', as appears to be the case for UK Humanities researchers.²⁹ More broadly, there is a fundamental lack of clarity about how the phrase 'transformative agreement' is used, and whether any/all agreements termed 'transformative' are Plan S compliant;
4. **Many journals, in line with their publisher's approach, are adopting a 'wait and see' strategy.** Given the current lack of clarity regarding cOAlition S Funder's obligations and (more narrowly) UKRI OA policies going forward, this is unsurprising. Publishers provide History learned societies and journals with knowledge, expertise, staffing and funding to which they would otherwise lack access. The 'wait and see' approach is arguably a sensible option given History learned societies' multiple charitable

²⁸ 'For any chosen route to compliance, the publication must be openly available immediately with a Creative Commons Attribution license (CC BY) unless an exception has been agreed by the funder.' Part II, point 2, <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/>. This point further elaborates: 'cOAlition S members may approve the use of the CC BY-ND license for individual articles, provided that this is explicitly requested and justified by the grantee.' It thus appears that cOAlition S Funders will not accept CC BY-NC licences. This interpretation is consistent with the Wellcome Trust's statement that, from 1 January 2021, 'published under a Creative Commons attribution licence (CC-BY), unless we have agreed, as an exception, to allow publication under a CC-BY-ND licence'. <https://wellcome.ac.uk/funding/guidance/open-access-policy>.

²⁹ <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/news/british-academy-publishes-commentary-coalition-s-final-version-plan-s>, page 7.

functions (of which publishing journals is only one, albeit an essential one). Likewise, for unpaid journal editors and editorial boards undertaking these duties in addition to other full-time employment, the ‘wait and see’ approach may represent the best short-term investment of scarce personal resources (notably time);

5. **Of those journals that are currently not in a position to comply with Plan S, the majority have no current plans to do so.** As with the ‘wait and see’ policy noted above, this position appears to reflect two factors in particular. One is the nature of UK learned societies’ obligations as charities with diverse portfolios of scholarly endeavour. The second is the reliance of History journals on wholly or largely unremunerated volunteers.

Key Finding 1. Publishers are predominantly driving journals’ OA policies

Regardless of whether they are learned society or proprietary journals, the OA policies described in our initial 50 surveys appear to be predominantly determined by publishers rather than by learned societies or editors. Given the preponderance of learned society journals in our sample, the preponderance of publisher policies is especially striking. There is an especially interesting contrast between **Chart 3**—which breaks our sample into learned society journals (64%) and proprietary journals (36%)—and **Chart 4**. Chart 4 suggests that in nearly 73% of journals in the sample, the publisher determined the embargo policy. ‘Mutual agreement’ in this process was registered by less than 16% of the journals, notwithstanding 64% of the journals are owned by learned societies. However, these data are based on only 33 usable responses. They are thus suggestive, but highly provisional.

Who decides the embargo?

33 responses

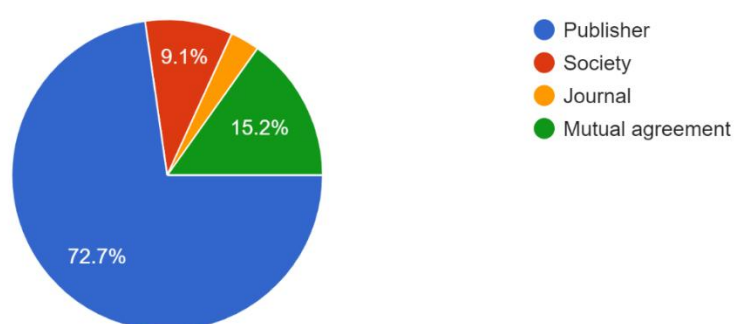


Chart 4: Embargo Decision-making

Qualitative comments from the free text portion of the survey support this preliminary finding. For example, all respondents with journals published by Oxford University Press (OUP) reported an embargo of 24 months on the AAM deposit (n=7). Two learned society journals’ responses quoted OUP policy around embargoes to explain their OA strategy:

‘OUP does not currently endorse the green route to compliance as we believe this free and unpaid for access is a real threat to subscriptions, especially should this mode of depositing be standardised across the industry. For Gold open access authors can publish their Version of Record via a link to the final article as this has been paid for.’ ‘There is no plan to change the policy and move to a zero embargo for green open access. OUP are operating a watching brief to track and monitor developments.’³⁰

One specific concern (expressed to the author at a conference in July 2019, in the specific context of drilling down into these survey responses) is as follows. If learned society journals are published OA with self-deposit of all AAMs and zero embargo, commercial entities will ‘scrape’ institutional repositories, reassemble issues of their journals using this AAM content, and sell this content as a journal in the market under a subscription model. This type of usage, of course, is precisely what CC BY is designed to enable. For extant History journals, this potential reuse poses 2 challenges. First, it disseminates the lowest quality version of the article (that is, the AAM rather than the copy-edited, corrected, proofread and re-corrected VoR). Second, over time, it undercuts the subscription base that allows the sponsoring learned society or the journal to pay for quality measures such as copy-editing, typesetting and digital enhancements. Here the fact that 80% or more of History research is not supported by competitive grants is relevant. This core attribute of most Humanities (and much Social Science) research appears to obviate the alternative model of ‘flipped’ journals that offer ‘Gold’ OA via payment of APCs.³¹

Key Finding 2: A third of journals in our sample (33%, 16 of 48 usable responses) already allow one central provision of Route 2 Plan S compliance by allowing zero embargo and AAM self-deposit. However, CC BY licence requirements complicate use of this pathway, and may reduce the number of History journals willing to follow Route 2 to Plan S compliance.

Journals in our small sample of initial survey responses exhibit a wide range of embargo periods. These range from zero embargo of the AAM to embargo periods of 10 years. However, for journals that do not allow zero embargo AAM self deposit, embargo periods predominantly fall in the range of 18-24 months. Chart 5 illustrates this point.

³⁰ Both of these responses came from surveys submitted by UK-based learned society journals..

³¹ This is a point made in the February 2019 RHS response to Plan S version 1.0 (<https://royalhistsoc.org/policy/publication-open-access/>), and most recently elaborated on pages 6-7 of <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/news/british-academy-publishes-commentary-coalition-s-final-version-plan-s>.

If your journal does not currently allow publication of zero embargo AAM/VoR, what is the current embargo ...ublic use of self-archived document?

30 responses

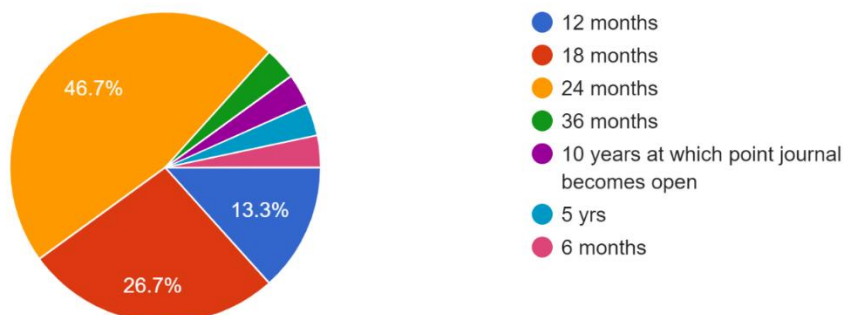


Chart 5: Duration of embargos for journals with embargos

Self-deposit of zero embargo AAMs appears to represent the simplest route toward Plan S compliance. **Chart 6** visually represents zero embargo journals in our survey responses. All journals in this sample published by Cambridge University Press (CUP, n=11) or by Edinburgh University Press (n=2) met this criteria for Route 2 compliance. So did one self-published journal, one journal by a US University Press and one journal by a small independent press.

Does the journal currently allow authors to Self Archive (AAM and/or VoR) AND do so with a Zero Embargo?

48 responses

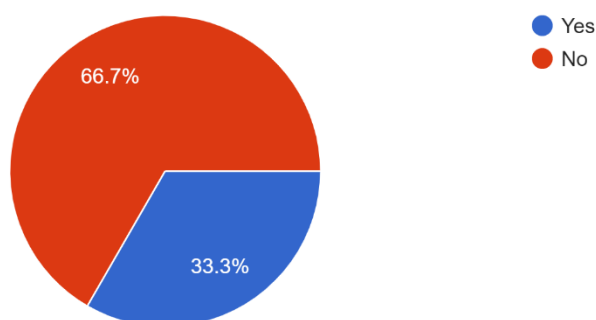


Chart 6: Journals in our preliminary sample to allow zero embargo AAM

These preliminary figures should be treated with considerable caution. CUP is likely over-represented in our initial 50 responses (see Chart 1: 24% of responding journals). Its default policy for propriety journals allows deposit of zero embargo AAMs. Its list also includes learned

society journals that do not allow deposit of zero embargo AAMs.³² The limited number of SAGE journals in our initial 50 surveys likely deflates the proportion of History journals that allow zero embargo AAM in our preliminary sample. SAGE, like CUP, has a liberal default policy for AAMs.³³ Responses to our survey from individual SAGE editors would allow for an enhanced assessment of the potential availability of Route 2 Plan S compliance for historians.

No less significantly, Plan S requires publication of the AAM by CC BY or CC BY-ND.

Of the 16 journals reporting that they allow self-deposit zero embargo AAM,³⁴ 10 specified a CC-BY-ND, CC-BY-NC or CC-BY-NC-ND license. **Figure 2** visualises these data in a bar chart. This is a **tiny** sample. In it, over a third our journals would (by virtue of an NC licence) not be Plan S compliant. As Plan S currently stands, all of the authors publishing with journals that require CC BY-ND licences would be required to individually request an exemption from CC-BY publication.³⁵ Only one journal (*Environment and History*) reported allowing a CC BY license, three that their policy was unknown, and two that no CC license was required of their authors.

Count of Which CC license is allowed for self-archived AAM / VoR?

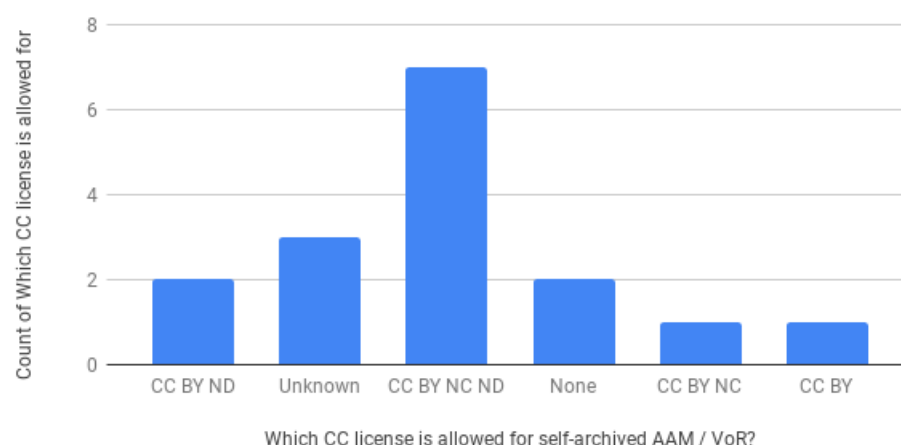


Figure 2: CC BY and zero embargo AAM/VoR journals

Data from our wider sample of 50 respondents—including those that do **not** allow zero embargo AAM deposit—are limited to less than half of our respondents. Again they must be treated with extreme caution. However, as seen in **Chart 7** below, it appears likely that a CC BY

³² <https://www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/cambridge-open-access/green-open-access-policy>.

³³ As a SAGE representative, by email, noted: “Most SAGE journals allow authors to reuse their contributions in accordance with SAGE’s Green Open Access policy; this allows authors to reuse their appropriately credited original submission (Version 1) anywhere with no embargo, and to deposit their author accepted manuscript (Version 2) within their institutional repository (or on departmental or personal website) after publication in the journal, with no embargo.” See also: <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/journal-author-archiving-policies-and-re-use>.

³⁴ 90% of journals in our sample specified that only the AAM (not the VoR) could be deposited in a repository. The focus in this working paper has thus been on AAMs, not VoRs.

³⁵ It remains unclear, other than for Wellcome Trust researchers, to whom such requests are to be made.

or CC BY-ND requirement (to the exclusion of CC BY-NC licences) may dampen journals' enthusiasm for considering the zero embargo AAM route to Plan S compliance.

Which CC license is allowed for self-archived AAM / VoR?

21 responses

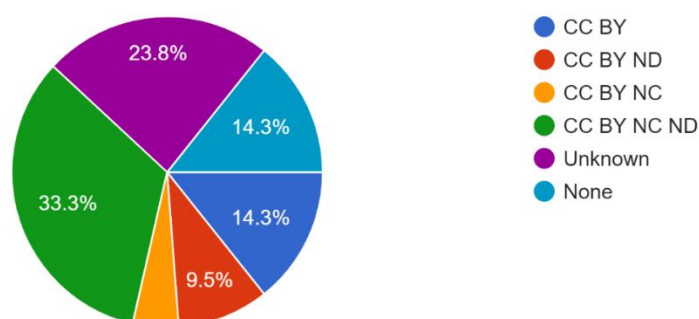


Chart 7: Types of CC BY licence allowed (all journals, regardless of embargo)

In sum, although Route 2 (zero embargo AAM self-deposit) appears to be a potential pathway to Plan S OA compliance for some journals, it also appears from our very preliminary survey results to be available only with a relatively small proportion of History journals. The ability to self-deposit an AAM with zero embargo is offered by a small number of journals. Within the journals published by these presses, several journal titles fail to meet other Plan S requirements. In some cases, this reflects decisions taken by learned societies to protect their subscription base, in the interests of remaining financially viable.³⁶ In other cases, it instead (or in addition) reflects Plan S's requirement for CC BY licences, or CC BY-ND by exception.

Main preliminary findings from our data re Route 2 policies:

- 1) AAM self-deposit: 16 out of 50 journals (32%) in this sample allow AAM self-deposit with zero embargo on openly available documents. Only one journal allows both AAM and VoR deposit with zero embargo.
- 2) However, of these journals, 10 specified a CC-BY-ND, CC-BY-NC or CC-BY-NC-ND license.
- 3) Thirty journals (60%) reported an embargo period. Of these, 14 (47%) were for 24 months; 8 for 18 months; 4 for 12 months; and one each stipulated 6 months, 5 years, or 10 years.
- 4) Embargo decisions appear to be primarily driven by publisher policies, though often with implicit or explicit agreement of the Society / journal editors.

³⁶ It is not clear whether the claim that there is "no evidence" that zero embargo periods harm publishers' takes full cognizance of CC BY issues. Nor is it clear that this assertion can be extrapolated from 'publishers' to 'learned societies' or individual journal titles. Evidence on these issues would significantly enhance debate and decision-making. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/open-access-no-evidence-zero-embargo-periods-harm-publishers>.

Key finding 3. There is very little visible evidence (that is, visible to learned societies, editors or journal authors) of progress toward Route 3 ‘transformative agreements’

Route 3 to Plan S compliance, via ‘transformative agreements’, represents both the most alluring theoretical proposition on offer and—pragmatically—the least legible of the 3 Plan S routes to compliance. **Few historians responding to our survey view zero embargo self-deposited AAMs as an excellent means of achieving full and immediate OA.** Instead, they worry that it will disseminate the least satisfactory, most prone to error, version of articles they publish. They worry that it will potentially increase discrimination against researchers with disabilities such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, by placing in wider circulation versions of articles that have not benefitted from copy-editing and proofreading by professionals employed by publishers. They express similar reservations with respect to the publication of articles by historians whose first language is not English. They note that the AAM (in sharp contrast to the VoR) lacks stable pagination that can be included in the scholarly apparatus of footnotes, endnotes and bibliographies.

In this context, a model of Plan S compliance based on OA publication of the VoR rather than the AAM is instinctively appealing. Yet, no journal surveyed reported Plan S compliance via a ‘transformative agreement’ to ‘flip’ to full and immediate OA by 2024. One editor of a Wiley journal (Wiley publishes 6 journals in our sample, or 12%) reported that their press is actively seeking “Read and Publish” agreements similar to the Projekt DEAL in Germany (see below). Another editor (based in the Republic of Ireland, representing a journal with a multi-national base) reported that current uncertainties with respect to Brexit are complicating efforts to negotiate transformative agreements.

What is a transformative agreement? Part II, point 3 of the ‘Principles and Implementation’ statement defines transformative agreements as ‘strategies to encourage subscription publishers to transition to Open Access’. It notes that its support for any publication fees associated with such agreements will end on 1 January 2024 and refers to unspecified cOAlition S Funder support for flipping hybrid journals through these agreements.³⁷ It provides no meaningful criteria for a transformative agreement, much less for a Plan S compliant agreement.

Four main obstacles appear to impede Route 3 Plan S compliance for History (and likely many other Humanities journals). The first obstacle is that there do not appear to be any existing models of a Plan S compliant transformative agreement. The second obstacle is that the term ‘transformative agreement’ appears to be being used by publishers to describe contracts with university systems or states that, by virtue of their parochial remit, cannot serve to ‘flip’ international journals. The third obstacle is that, given the relatively low (20% or less) proportion of Humanities research funded by APC-paying research councils and charities, it is difficult for survey respondents (and this author) to see how ‘transformative agreements’ would be viable, especially in the context of international scholarship. The fourth obstacle concerns *EDI* (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) issues.

Confusingly, and perhaps misleadingly, the term ‘transformative agreement’ is used within the publishing industry to describe bundled subscription contracts (within

³⁷ <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/>.

university systems or states) that seek simultaneously to lower libraries' subscription charges and to afford a specific cohort of researchers with the ability to publish Gold OA in the journals within these bundled system- or state-wide agreements. These agreements do not appear capable of 'flipping' journals to full and immediate OA (Plan S's key goal). Rather, they afford a means for a select population of researchers to publish without holding a grant from a funder that pays APCs. A few time-limited contracts denominated 'transformative agreements' have been signed by European and US higher education institutions. It is unknown whether or how they comply with Route 3 of Plan S. In January 2019, Wiley Press announced a 'transformative' partnership with Projekt DEAL, which represents c. 700 German academic institutions.³⁸ German national funding bodies are, however, not among cOAlition S's members. Part 1, Article 1, Section 3 of the German Federal Government's Basic Law specifies that 'Art and scholarship, research, and teaching shall be free.'³⁹ This 'Basic Right' precludes German academics' adherence of Plan S's restrictions on academic freedom.⁴⁰ Wiley, however, reports that Projekt DEAL is 'in line' with Plan S.⁴¹ In the US, Cambridge University Press signed a 3-year 'transformative agreement' in April 2019 with the University of California system. This agreement 'is designed to maintain UC's access to CUP journals while also supporting open access (OA) publishing for UC authors' on the system's 10 campuses.⁴² It is not clear in what sense, from the perspective of Plan S, this is 'transformative' and will lead to flipped journals.

The absence of a fully-costed model for Humanities journals to operate without a subscription base or paywall and without an external grant **at scale and over time** is a key obstacle to reducing scepticism among History editors about Plan S Route 3. It was notable in the RHS's April 2019 paper on Wellcome Trust funding and Plan S, how few of the 'History' journals identified via the Directory of Open Access Journals had a stable record of publication.⁴³

Because transformative agreements are shrouded in mystery, their EDI implications are unknown. Researchers with 'protected' characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act (such as gender and race) are disproportionately represented at the ECR level in History. Whether they would enjoy equal access with more established researchers to Plan S compliant transformative agreements is unknown. Age is a protected characteristic under the 2010 Act. It is unknown whether retired researchers would enjoy equal access to Plan S compliance via transformative agreements as younger researchers.⁴⁴

³⁸ Benedicta Page, 'Wiley in 'transformative' partnership with German academic institutions', *The Bookseller* (15 January 2019): <https://www.thebookseller.com/news/wiley-transformative-partnership-german-academic-institutions-935016>

³⁹ <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/chancellor/basic-law-470510>.

⁴⁰ For the wider content of academic freedom in Germany, see Otto Hüther and Georg Krücken, 'Germany debates whether academic freedom is an individual or organisational right', *Times Higher Education* (9 May 2019). <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/opinion/germany-debates-whether-academic-freedom-individual-or-organisational-right>

⁴¹ FAQ Wiley Contract. <https://www.projekt-deal.de/faq-wiley-contract/>.

⁴² Benedicta Page, 'CUP in OA Partnership with University of California', *The Bookseller* (11 April 2019), <https://www.thebookseller.com/news/cup-oa-partnership-university-california-988666#>.

⁴³ <https://royalhistsoc.org/rhs-working-paper-history-researchers-and-plan-s-journal-compliance-april-2019/>. See esp. pages 17-19 and Appendix I.

⁴⁴ For an earlier overview of these issues, see <https://royalhistsoc.org/rhs-working-paper-history-researchers-and-plan-s-journal-compliance-april-2019/>, esp. pages 7-9.

In sum, greater clarity is needed in cOAlition S Funders' definition and criteria for transformative agreements. Without additional information, learned society journals are poorly positioned to comment intelligently on this route to OA.

Key Finding 4: Many journals currently using an embargo are adopting a “wait and see” approach

It is unsurprising that many journal editors are adopting a ‘wait and see’ approach to Plan S in this context. Within our preliminary sample, Taylor and Francis (T&F) journal editors often articulated this response. 11 journals (22%) in our sample are published by T&F. Of these, 8 reported an embargo of 18 months on AAMs submitted to institutional repositories, which is the general policy of the publisher.⁴⁵ Two journals (both learned society journals) reported embargoes of 24 months. One T&F journal reported an embargo of 12 months, a decision reached by mutual agreement between society and publisher.

Of the 11 T&F journals, the three editors with 12 and 24 month embargoes confirmed that they did not intend to alter their policies in relation to Plan S, while several of the journals with 18 month embargoes referred to Taylor and Francis policy of adopting a ‘wait and see’ approach.

Moreover, Taylor and Francis have asked cOAlition S to:

- ‘provide more detail on how they will obtain the necessary support to allow us to effect a transition within the timeframe outlined’;
- ‘review the embargo question and work with publishers and academic librarians to test various scenarios’.⁴⁶

These queries suggest that, as with Route 2 Plan S compliance, zero embargo policies are an obstacle to Route 3 pathways to OA. They also underline the impact exerted on decision-making by the lack of fully-costed models (at scale) for ‘flipping’ Humanities journals.

Key Finding 5: Journals with no plan to become Plan S compliant

Perhaps the most revealing early result from our survey is the proportion of journals adopting either a “wait and see” approach to Plan S compliance, or who have no current plans (17, or 59% of those in this category) to change their policies to comply. **Of those journals that are currently not in a position to comply with Plan S, the majority have no current plans to do so.** Of 29 respondents who reported that their journal currently does not allow self-deposit of AAM with zero embargo, only one reported that their journal was intending to become compliant. (See Chart 8). Several journals report keeping their OA policies under review, typically in dialogue with their presses. However, there is a significant disconnect between this review process and journals’ ability to identify a viable Plan S publication strategy that preserves high-quality peer-review.

⁴⁵ <http://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Sharing-Your-Work.pdf>

⁴⁶ Taylor and Francis Commentary on cOAlition S’s revised Plan S:
<https://editorresources.taylorandfrancis.com/welcome-to-tf/policies-guidelines/plan-s/>

If your journal does not currently allow publication of zero embargo AAM/VoR, does the journal plan to change its policy to be Plan S compliant?

29 responses

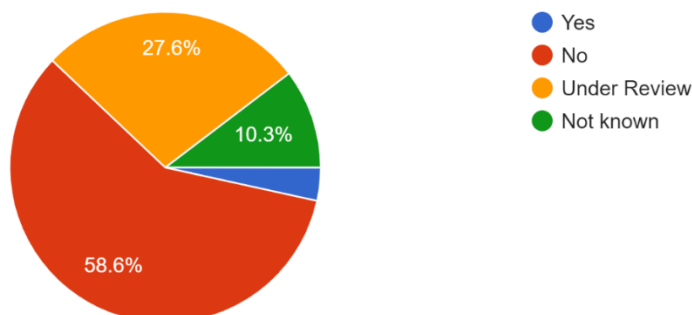


Chart 8: Plan S planning

6: Preliminary Analysis:

Knowledge of the existence of Plan S is widespread among UK journal editors. This knowledge is greater than among non-UK editors in our small, preliminary sample. **In general, however, understanding of Plan S's basic and technical requirements, is patchy and uneven.** It relies significantly on individual journals' publisher contacts. As one US-based editor wrote, 'As an American academic I've been following these developments with interest, but I confess that I'm baffled by what seems to be the technical language of "Plan S". I'm going to have to rely on...[my publisher contact] to be of assistance'.

The internal contradictions and opacity of the information on the Plan S website, especially the 'Principles and Implementation' document, are a significant obstacle to stakeholder engagement in Plan S discussions. In part, this confusion likely reflects the rapidity of change in cOAlition S and Plan S. But it also suggests—ironically, given what is at stake in Plan S—the need for and importance of rigorous copy-editing and proofreading. In short, The Plan S website badly needs a skilled, professional editor. These weaknesses are exacerbated by the absence of time-stamped archived versions of Plan S documentation and by a persistent, increasing lack of transparency with respect to who 'owns' Plan S, and who is bound by it.

With the publication of version 2.0 of Plan S on 31 May 2019, cOAlition S allowed greater autonomy to individual Funders in interpreting Plan S requirements. Plan S version 1.0 was exceptionally rigid, and one founding Funder (the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, or Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences) left the cOAlition in May for this reason. At one level cOAlition S's shift towards a less rigid regime is welcome, affording Funders greater

opportunity to devise variations on the basic Plan S theme. At another level, not least because this shift is predominantly implicit rather than explicit, it represents a new challenge. For researchers, editors, editorial boards, learned societies and publishers alike, Plan S version 2.0's putative liberalisation has added substantial and increasing new internal differentiation to the OA agenda and market. To date, it has done so without additional financial resources, staffing or finding aids.

In the UK, this internal differentiation means that there are at least 3 potential versions of Plan S for journal articles in play for the 2 UK-based cOAlition S funders:

- 1) **Wellcome Trust:** will implement Plan S requirements with respect to all newly submitted articles it funds from 1 January 2021 onward;
- 2) **UKRI with respect to RCUK funding:** appears likely to implement new OA policies 'aligned' with Plan S for either articles submitted or grants or calls funded by UKRI, presumably from 1 January 2021;
- 3) **UKRI with respect to future REF exercises:** may implement new OA policies 'aligned' in an unspecified manner with Plan S (and with UKRI's RCUK policies) with respect to some or all journal outputs submitted to REF at an unspecified time after 1 January 2021.

Significantly, other UK funding bodies that provide major support for History research are not aligned with Plan S. UKRI's decision on REF funding and Plan S will have potential implications for these funders, with respect to UK-based researchers:

- **The Leverhulme Trust:** does not require OA publication, and covers OA publication costs only during the award period;⁴⁷
- **The Nuffield Foundation:** has no OA policy for archiving or publishing.⁴⁸

Navigating this complex policy landscape is inherently challenging. There does not appear to be a consensus among History learned societies, journals or publishers about either the desirability of changing current OA policies to reflect Plan S proclamations, or the viability of doing so. Some learned societies, journals and presses already allow self-deposit of zero embargo AAMs (Route 2 to Plan S). Whether these journals meet the many other criteria for Plan S compliance, including CC BY or (by exception) CC BY-ND licensing, author/institutional retention of copyright and the many other strictures detailed in Plan S's 'Basic mandatory conditions for all publication venues' is unknown.⁴⁹ Route 3 to Plan S appears so little understood by learned societies and journal editors at present, and to be so inchoate in definition, that no meaningful commentary on it can be offered here. Many societies and journals, like their publishers, are understandably adopting a 'wait and see' approach to Plan S. Others, not less understandably, but much more worryingly, are declining to engage with the OA agenda in response to Plan S.

UKRI clearly recognises the vital role played by international collaboration in UK research. 'The UK is among the world's top research nations, but its research base can only thrive if it engages

⁴⁷ <https://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/funding/frequently-asked-questions/associated-costsresearch-expenses> .

⁴⁸ http://v2.sherpa.ac.uk/view/funder_by_oa_publ_req/no=5Fpolicy=5Ffor.html#group_N .

⁴⁹ <https://www.coalition-s.org/principles-and-implementation/> : Part III, point 1.1.

with the best minds, organisations and facilities wherever they are in the world’ UKRI asserts. ‘A thriving research base is essential to ensure that the UK maintains its world leading position in research and innovation and to bring benefit to the society and economy of the UK.’⁵⁰

The fundamentally international character of scholarship—including History scholarship—offers a significant challenge to Plan S implementation. Both nationally in the UK and internationally, cOAlition S Funders support only a modest proportion of Humanities research and publishing through competitive individual and collaborative grants. This shared pattern of funding is one of many factors that likely renders OA models that are viable in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) unworkable for subjects such as History. Moreover, while cOAlition S’s vision is international and global, it has yet to gain significant traction outside of STEMM subjects and outside of Europe. Our preliminary discussions with History journals based in North America in particular suggest limited enthusiasm, and very limited levers, for Plan S pathways to OA. If rigid, uniform, Plan S OA requirements are imposed by UKRI, all UK-based History mentors will be in the counter-intuitive situation of actively discouraging researchers from publishing in many of the most rigorous peer-reviewed international journals in order to be Plan S compliant. Some may question both the wisdom of this decision and its value for money for UK taxpayers.

In the UK, learned societies that own and orchestrate a significant proportion of UK-based History scholarly journals, and the editorial boards of History journals more broadly, will need to become increasingly literate about the OA landscape. This is a matter of considerable urgency: key UKRI consultations are being undertaken in September-November 2019, and in January-March 2020. **Learned societies and their editors need to understand the choices they have in owning their journals, in contradistinction to the editors of proprietary journals.** All History journal editors may wish to familiarise themselves now with Plan S’s ‘Basic mandatory conditions for all publication venues’ (Part III, point 1.1 of the ‘Principles and Implementation’ guidance. They may also wish more systematically to examine who publishes in their journals and which funding and OA regimes those authors are subject to, nationally and internationally. The RHS’s February 2019 analysis of the proportion of research articles funded by cOAlition S in a small sample of History Journals suggested that this figure varies significantly among journals.⁵¹ Different journals will clearly be affected differently by Plan S. This in turn will make different choices the optimal choices for different journals.

Many STEMM journals employ paid editors. History journals, like History learned societies, typically rely predominantly on voluntary labour—providing value to the academic publishing ecosystem at little or no financial cost. History learned societies also engage in a wide range of scholarly activities, of which journal publication is only one. Most learned societies are, moreover, registered UK charities, a status that entails legal obligations that fall outside the remit of UKRI. **To many learned society journal editors, Plan S appears to offer a choice between Scylla and Charybdis.** On the one hand, ‘flipping’ their journals may ensure that they can continue to publish university-based UK researchers in a Plan S compliant environment. On

⁵⁰ <https://www.ukri.org/research/international/>.

⁵¹ <https://5hm1h4aktue2uejbs1hsqt31-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/RHS-Plan-S-Feb-2019.pdf>, pages 35-44, esp. 41-43.

the other hand, losing their subscription base will, they fear, reduce their income by 50-95%, threatening their societies and thereby endangering the journals they sponsor.

If learned societies are unable to survive Plan S—as many now fear—will proprietary journals successfully fill this void? What alternative structures will UKRI devise to fulfil the scholarly functions now undertaken by learned societies, and how and when will it fund them? These are among the many concerns expressed in our preliminary research on Plan S version 2.0 and History. Journal editors willing to provide the RHS with completed surveys (by 10 September 2019) will substantially enhance historians' ability to contribute to UKRI's ongoing and forthcoming OA policy-making.

7: How to Provide Feedback and Corrections on this Working Paper:

Editors/learned societies/presses whose journals provided survey information by 28 July 2019 are asked to check that they are listed in the Appendix (Part 10, below) **no later than Monday 10 September 2019**. We will continue to accept new surveys and responses to the technical portions of our survey until this date as well. These new data will be included in our autumn report of c. 1 October 2019. Editors can download a copy of the survey and submit it to rescommsofficer@royalhistsoc.org. We especially welcome surveys from presses, sub-fields, language communities and regions of the world under-represented in this working paper. Free text feedback independent of surveys from stakeholders is also welcome, and can be provided independently from the survey, to president@royalhistsoc.org. The deadline for receipt of this feedback is also **Monday 10 September 2019**.

8: Glossary & Abbreviations

AAM (Author Accepted Manuscript): The version of a scholarly article that has been accepted for publication by a journal but has not yet been copy-edited by the journal or its publisher.

APC (Article Publication Charge): A fee charged by some journals to enable content (typically the VoR) to be published with full and immediate 'Gold' OA. Within Plan S, cOAlition S Funders will pay APCs only for hybrid journals that have signed an approved 'transformative agreement'. Under Plan S, this interim agreement to pay APCs expires on 1 January 2024.

CC BY: A licence by which 'Licensees may copy, distribute, display and perform the work and make derivative works and remixes based on it only if they give the author or licensor the credits (attribution) in the manner specified by these.'⁵²

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⁵² This definition and those for CC BY-NC and CC BY-ND are taken from page 15 of <https://5hm1h4aktue2uejbs1hsqt31-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/UK-SCL-March-2018.pdf>.

CC BY-ND: A licence by which ‘Licensees may copy, distribute, display and perform only verbatim copies of the work, not derivative works and remixes based on it.’

cOAlition S: A coalition of predominantly European funding bodies committed to a radical acceleration of full and immediate OA, first for scholarly articles and subsequently for books and portions of books (also known as chapters).

ECR (Early Career Researcher): postgraduate researchers registered for a research degree and recent recipients of the PhD. Different funders define ‘Early’ differently. It can extend to 10 years beyond the PhD award but more typically entails a shorter time period.

EDI (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion): The rubric under which programmes and policies that protect statutory equal rights fall. In England, Scotland and Wales, this statutory framework is provided by the Equality Act 2010.

Embargo: In the context of this paper, the period between publication of the VoR of an article and publication/release of an AAM deposited in a repository.

‘flip’, ‘flipping’, ‘flipped’: In the context of this paper, a journal that changes from either ‘fully closed’ status (that is, allowing no content to be published OA) or from ‘hybrid’ status to immediate full OA has ‘flipped’. ‘Flipping’ hybrid subscription journals is a key goal of cOAlition S.

Gold: ‘Gold’ OA in the context of this paper refers to article content in hybrid journals that has been published OA with zero embargo in its VoR format. Typically, ‘Gold’ OA requires payment of an APC. In History, APC charges are at the time of writing typically in the range of £1,500-2,000 per article.

Hybrid: A hybrid journal charges readers or their institutions a subscription, protecting its content behind a paywall. However, hybrid journals also allow a portion of their content to be published OA, either with or without a period of embargo.

Learned Society: For the purposes of this paper, a learned society is a free-standing organisation devoted to the production and dissemination of research in a specific field of study or scholarly discipline. The term is used broadly in this paper, encompassing national subject associations and local bodies dedicated to specific sub-fields of research. Most UK-based learned societies are registered charities.

OA (open access): OA publication entails access to digital content (for example, scholarly articles) that is freely available to the reader without payment of a subscription or other access fee.

Proprietary journal: A journal owned by a publisher, in contradistinction to a journal owned by a learned society.

QR (Quality Related): QR income is provided through multi-year block grants awarded by the 4 UK funding bodies to universities in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The amount of each block grant is determined by relative success in successive REF exercises. QR typically contributes to, but does not fully fund, research costs such as academic salaries.

RCUK (Research Councils UK): The portion of UKRI composed of 7 individual research councils that annually announce public calls for research grants and disburse funds to support successful candidates. For History researchers, the main RCUK funders are the Arts & Humanities Research Council and the Economic & Social Research Council.

REF (Research Excellence Framework): A periodic assessment of research quality undertaken by Research England on behalf of UKRI and the 3 (Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh) devolved funding bodies. REF exercises typically occur every 6-7 years. The current REF, REF2021, accepts submissions in November 2020 and reports its findings in December 2021.

Repository: An online repository, typically funded and maintained by a university or other research organisation (or, in the case of the Wellcome Trust, by a funder) that is designed to hold and give access to research outputs. Some content in repositories is made available by full and immediate OA. Other content is held for a period or indefinitely under an embargo.

Research England: The council within UKRI that undertakes the REF exercise on behalf of English, Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh university funding bodies.

RHS (Royal Historical Society): A UK-based international learned society and registered charity which publishes edited scholarly editions of primary sources (*Camden* series), an open access book series (*New Historical Perspectives*) and a hybrid annual journal, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*. Its other charitable and scholarly activities are detailed at: <https://royalhistsoc.org/>. Information on the criteria for membership and annual deadlines for applications can be found at: <https://royalhistsoc.org/membership/>

Self-deposit: Deposit by an author (hence, ‘self’) of the AAM or (less often) VoR of a scholarly output in a repository

Transformative arrangement/agreement: An agreement to ‘flip’ a journal or bundle of journals to full and immediate OA within a specified time period. Within Plan S, transformative agreements must ‘flip’ their journal(s) by 1 January 2024.

UKRI (UK Research & Innovation): The overarching body responsible for government research strategy and funding for universities (among other research organisations) in the UK.

VoR (Version of Record): The official version of a research output (for example, a scholarly article). For History outputs, crucially, the VoR has been copy-edited, corrected, typeset, proofed by the publisher and author and published in a format that allows future citation. In History, a key characteristic that allows scholarly citation from the VoR is stable pagination.

Zero embargo: Immediate publication. In the Plan S context, zero embargo typically refers to the OA publication/release of the self-archived AAM simultaneously with the publication of the VoR (with the VoR typically remaining behind a paywall, for an interval or indefinitely).

9: Acknowledgements

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10: Appendix: Journals that have answered the survey (as of 28 July 2019)

Journals in the first 50 responses (included in this working paper's preliminary sample):

Agricultural History Review; American Nineteenth Century History; Architectural History; British Journal for the History of Science; Canadian-American Slavic Studies; Central European History; Continuity and Change; Diplomatic History; Early Medieval Europe; Economic History Review; Environment and History; Family and Community History; Foundations; French History; French Colonial History; Garden History; German History; Historical Research; History; History of Education; History of Political Thought; History of Retailing and Consumption; History Workshop Journal; The Innes Review; International Journal for the History of Engineering and Technology; Journal of African History; Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies; Journal of Design History; Journal of Ecclesiastical History; Journal of Economic History; Journal of Global History; Journal of Latin American Studies; Journal of Legal History; Journal of Medieval History; Journal of Medieval Military History; Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research; Journal of Victorian Culture; Law and History Review; Local Historian; Medieval Low Countries; Northern History; Parliamentary History; Past and Present; Reformation & Renaissance Review; Scottish Historical Review; Slavery and Abolition; Social History; Speculum; Studies in Church History; Transactions of the Hist Soc Lancashire and Cheshire; Transactions of the RHS.

Journals received after the first 50 responses (to be included in the autumn report):

Ambix; Bulletin of the History of Medicine; Contemporary European History; Irish Historical Studies; Journal of Historical Geography; Social & Cultural History; Welsh History Review.