

Jisc Open Policy Finder

How to check publisher embargo periods.

Important Policy Notice — REF Open Access Embargo Rules (2026):

Updated Research Excellence Framework (REF) Open Access requirements took effect in 2026, introducing stricter maximum allowable embargo periods across academic disciplines. For **Main Panels A and B** (STEM subjects, Medicine, Engineering, and Life Sciences), the maximum permitted embargo period for accepted manuscripts deposited in institutional repositories is **6 months**. For **Main Panels C and D** (Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities), the maximum allowable embargo period is **12 months**. When checking journal policies in Jisc Open Policy Finder, researchers at Liverpool Hope University must ensure their chosen journal's embargo length complies with these discipline-specific REF caps prior to publication.

1. Searching for a Journal in Jisc Open Policy Finder

Jisc Open Policy Finder (formerly Sherpa Romeo) allows researchers to search for academic journals and view their open access policies, copyright terms, and self-archiving conditions. To check a journal's embargo rules, navigate to the Jisc Open Policy Finder homepage and enter the journal's title or ISSN into the central search bar.

The screenshot shows the Jisc Open Policy Finder homepage. At the top, it says "Welcome to open policy finder" and "Inspiring confident choices in open access publishing for authors and institutions." Below this is a search bar with the text "Begin your search...". The search bar contains the text "sports medicine" and a blue search button. Below the search bar, there are three search suggestions: "Sports Medicine [ISSN: 0112-1642] [eISSN: 1179-2035]", "Sports Medicine - Open [ISSN: 2199-1170] [eISSN: 2198-9761]", and "Apunts Sports Medicine [eISSN: 2666-5069]".

Figure 1: Jisc Open Policy Finder homepage and initial search interface.

In this guide, we use the journal **Sports Medicine** (published by Springer) as an illustrative example. Selecting the journal from the search suggestions opens its dedicated policy page.

The screenshot shows the search result entry for "Sports Medicine". At the top, there are three tabs: "Journal (30)", "Publisher (2)", and "Funder (0)". The "Journal (30)" tab is selected. Below the tabs, there is a "Journal" button. The main content area displays the journal name "Sports Medicine" in a yellow box. Below this, the ISSN is 0112-1642, the eISSN is 1179-2035, and the Country is United Kingdom. The Publisher is Springer. At the bottom, there is a "View record" link with a right arrow.

Figure 2: Search result entry displaying publisher metadata for Sports Medicine.

2. Article Versions and Embargo Period Analysis

Publishers define distinct open access and archiving rules based on the **version of the article** being shared. Understanding these three core article stages is critical for compliance with university and funder policies:

- **Submitted Version (Pre-print):** The author's draft manuscript prior to peer review. Most publishers allow immediate self-archiving on personal websites or pre-print servers with **no embargo period (0 months)**.
- **Accepted Version (Author Accepted Manuscript / AAM):** The peer-reviewed manuscript incorporating referee edits, but prior to publisher typesetting and formatting. This version can typically be deposited in **HIRA** (Hope's Institutional Research Archive), but is subject to a publisher **embargo period** (e.g., 12 months for *Sports Medicine*).
- **Published Version (Version of Record / VoR):** The final published article with full publisher formatting, layout, and DOI. Unless published via Gold Open Access (requiring an Article Processing Charge / APC), archiving the VoR in repositories is usually prohibited or restricted.

☒ Accepted

Option with 12 months embargo

☐ Hide

Embargo
 12 months

Copyright Owner
 Authors

Locations
 Non-Commercial Repository

Figure 3: Journal metadata header for *Sports Medicine* showing ISSNs and policy navigation tabs.

When inspecting the publisher policy options in Jisc Open Policy Finder (as shown in Figure 4), you can toggle between the *Published*, *Accepted*, and *Submitted* version tabs to view specific conditions.

Sports Medicine

Publisher **Springer** | ISSN 0112-1642 | eISSN 1179-2035

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Figure 4: Manuscript version tabs and policy pathways overview.

Detailed Policy Breakdown for *Sports Medicine*:

Version: ☒ Show all ☐ Published ☐ Accepted ☐ Submitted

☒ Published

Option with associated OA fees, no embargo & CC BY-NC-ND licence
[v Show](#)

☒ Published

Option with associated OA fees, no embargo & CC BY licence
[v Show](#)

☒ Accepted

Option with 12 months embargo
[v Show](#)

☐ Submitted

Option with no embargo
[v Show](#)

Figure 5: Policy terms for the Accepted Version (AAM), detailing the 12-month embargo period and repository deposit criteria.

Figure 5 confirms that for *Sports Medicine*, authors retaining copyright can deposit their Accepted Manuscript (AAM) into an institutional repository like **HIRA**, subject to a **12-month embargo period** following online publication.

OA Fee
This option has an Open Access fee associated with it
OA Publishing
This option includes Open Access publishing
Embargo
No embargo
Licence
CC BY
Locations
Any Website
Journal Website

Figure 6: Policy details for Gold Open Access publishing (Published Version / VoR).

Figure 6 illustrates the Gold Open Access pathway for the Published Version (VoR), which requires payment of an APC or coverage under a university agreement, making the final paper immediately open under a Creative Commons license with **no embargo**.

Summary Matrix: Article Versions & Embargo Rules

Article Version	Embargo Period	Publishing Fee	HIRA Deposit Allowed?	Key Conditions
Submitted Version (Pre-print)	None (0 months)	Free	Yes	Can be shared immediately on pre-print servers or personal sites.
Accepted Version (AAM)	12 Months*	Free (Green OA)	Yes (HIRA)	Authors retain copyright; deposit allowed in institutional repository HIRA after embargo.
Published Version (VoR - Gold OA)	None (0 months)	APC required (or agreement)	Yes	Published under CC BY / CC BY-NC license; immediate open access.

**Note: Check that 12-month publisher embargoes comply with your subject panel's REF 2026 cap (STEM max 6 months; Social Sciences/Humanities max 12 months).*

3. Checking Research Funder Compliance

Many research funders (such as UKRI, Wellcome Trust, and NIHR) mandate immediate open access with zero embargo. Jisc Open Policy Finder includes an **Open Access Compliance** tool to automatically verify if a journal meets your funder's policy requirements.

Sports Medicine

Publisher Springer | ISSN 0112-1642 | eISSN 1179-2035

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Journal Policy

Open Access Compliance

United Kingdom Only

Funder *

Choose a funder from the list

Select funder

v

Figure 7: Open Access Compliance tab in Jisc Open Policy Finder, showing funder selection drop-down.

To test compliance: select your funder from the drop-down menu under the *Open Access Compliance* tab and click **Check compliance**. The tool will evaluate whether self-archiving in **HIRA** or Gold Open Access meets the funder's embargo and licensing rules.

4. Checking Liverpool Hope University Transitional Agreements

Liverpool Hope University participates in various **Transitional Agreements** (also known as Read & Publish deals) negotiated by Jisc. These agreements allow Hope authors to publish Gold Open Access in participating journals without paying individual Article Processing Charges (APCs).

Sports Medicine

Publisher Springer | ISSN 0112-1642 | eISSN 1179-2035

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Journal Policy

Open Access Compliance

Transitional Agreement Look-up

United Kingdom Only

Institution *

Choose your institution from the list

Liverpool Hope University

v

☐ Remember my institution

Check agreement

Figure 8: Transitional Agreement Look-up tab with Liverpool Hope University selected.

To confirm whether a journal is covered: navigate to the **Transitional Agreement Look-up** tab, select **Liverpool Hope University** from the institution drop-down list, and click check. If covered, your open access publishing fees may be fully funded by the university's institutional agreement.

Researcher Action Checklist:

1. **Before Submission:** Search Jisc Open Policy Finder to check the journal's embargo period for Accepted Manuscripts (AAM).
2. **Check REF 2026 Rules:** Ensure the embargo period does not exceed 6 months (STEM) or 12 months (Social Sciences/Humanities).
3. **Check Funder Terms:** Use the Open Access Compliance tab if your research is grant-funded.
4. **Check Institutional Deals:** Use the Transitional Agreement tab to see if Liverpool Hope covers APC fees for this journal.
5. **Upon Acceptance:** Deposit your Accepted Manuscript into **HIRA** immediately to ensure full compliance.

Please contact Matthew Adams, Research Services Librarian on adamsm2@hope.ac.uk with any queries