
Open Access

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[Introduction to open access](#)

Open access is the practice by which research outputs are distributed online free of cost. As a movement, it started in the 90s, but it is now that funders' policies are being implemented. There are many benefits to open access, to the wider economy and society, to researchers and to institutions, as this diagram shows:

There are two main routes for open access, gold and green. To understand them, it is essential to be familiar with the different types of manuscripts resulting from the publishing process:

First we have the **submitted manuscript (also referred to as pre-print)**. This is the first version of a research output that is sent to the journal by the author. After this, the manuscript usually goes through a peer-review process, where other experts on the discipline review the text. After this process, some changes may be suggested to the original submitted text. Once these changes have been implemented by the author, we have a new version of the output that is referred to as the **accepted manuscript (also referred to as post-print)**, and it's the version that includes peer-review comments and has been accepted for publication. It is usually a plain Word Document or PDF. This is the version that we can generally use in the repository for Open Access purposes. Before the final version is published, there may be **Proofs or preliminary versions** meant for review and proofreading and often have extra-wide margins. This version is not acceptable for self-archiving purposes. Finally, the journal will publish the article adding typesetting, copyediting and the copyright statement. This is the final **published version (or version of record)**. The publisher will often restrict authors from depositing this version to a repository unless it has a Creative Commons license.

Gold open access

The gold route means that the research output is made freely available via the publisher's website. An APC (article processing charge) is usually applied and the version made available is the final publisher's version. The work is available immediately, with no embargo periods.

If you would like to make your work available under gold open access, you will need to have access to appropriate funding from your funder. APCs vary across publishers, but will typically cost around £3000. Please note that there is no institutional funding available to cover these costs.

Green open access

Green refers to the route whereby the author, deposits the author's accepted manuscript in an institutional or subject repository. This version will be made Open Access freely, without a charge and embargo periods may apply.

Traditionally, journals were subscription only. To access the content for these journals, the university had to pay a subscription to publishers that increased every year. With the introduction of open access practices, this model changed, and:

- Some journals are now **fully gold open access** and the only way to publish is by paying an APC. In these journals, all the content is published gold, with a CC-BY licence.
- Other journals became "**hybrid**": they are subscription-based journals but they allow authors to make individual articles gold open access immediately upon payment. Hybrid journals receive payments from institutions in two ways: through the subscription fees and through the APCs. It is what is referred to as double-dipping. Funders have started creating Open Access policies that are trying to eradicate this.

Funder's policies

Some funders have open access requirements for the publications resulting from their funding. If your studies have been funded by **UKRI, Wellcome Trust, Horizon Europe, BHF, NIHR or Cancer Research**, it is important that you familiarise with their policies and the type of outputs that are in scope, which varies across funders. The Information Services team has some guidance in their website: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/publish-research/open-access/request-apc-payment>

UKRI, Wellcome Trust and **Horizon Europe** are part of **Plan S**, an Open Access initiative from a consortium of European funders. For more information on Plan S, you can visit <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

You will be able to comply with Plan S by publishing in:

1. fully gold open access journals or platforms that meet Plan S requirements - funders will pay the APCs through the block grant managed by Information Services. If you are publishing in a fully gold open access journal, you apply to have the charges paid by the university by filling the form at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/publish-research/open-access/open-access-publication-charges-claim-form> Please note that the University only covers the APCs of articles published in gold open access journals.

2. subscription journals (known as hybrid journals), by making the author's accepted manuscript available in Pure within a month of publication. Submissions must include the following text in the funding acknowledgement section of the manuscript and any cover letter/note accompanying the submission:

'For the purpose of open access, the author has applied a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence [where permitted by UKRI, 'Open Government Licence' or 'Creative Commons Attribution No-derivatives (CC BY-ND) licence may be stated instead] to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising'

3. subscription journals with a gold open access option that are included in UoE transformative agreements (also called Read & Publish deals). The database of journals is in the Information Services website. Please be aware that in order to benefit from these deals you need to be the corresponding author and be a current PhD student <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/publish-research/open-access/read-and-publish-journals>

University of Edinburgh publications policy

In order to comply with funder requirements, and to enable the University to disseminate its research and scholarship as widely as possible, the University of Edinburgh adopted a publications and copyright policy. The policy applies to all staff on research contracts, but PhD students opt-in when requesting to have a visible Pure account, so you will need to comply with it.

The policy applies to articles and conference proceedings submitted for publication from the 1st April 2022. More information can be found here: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/about/policies-and-regulations/research-publications>

There are some steps to comply with this policy, they can be found at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/publish-research/open-access/open-access-checklist-for-uo-e-authors>

Read and Publish deals

The University of Edinburgh has signed up to several transitional agreements, also called Read and Publish deals. Read and Publish deals are intended to ensure that journal subscription budgets in institutional libraries are converted to pay for a suite of open access publishing services.

All corresponding authors from the University of Edinburgh can publish open access in a number of journals for no extra cost. The list of journals can be found here <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/publish-research/open-access/read-and-publish-journals>

In order for PGRs to publish open access in those journals, you need to:

- Be the corresponding author; and
- Be a current student or have finished your studies within a year of the acceptance of the article.

Predatory publishing

The development of digital technology has led to the emergence of publishers with dubious practices. They contact you to promise that your work will be rapidly published, but they do not guarantee editorial quality and an effective peer review process. They often charge a fee for publication. For further information on how to identify them and what to do, visit the Information Services guidance page at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/publish-research/scholarly-communications/predatory-or-bogus-journals>

Copyright

As the author of research outputs like journal articles or book chapters you will initially own the copyright in the work. Your rights as an author can be divided into two groups:

Your moral rights include:

- the right to be identified as the author
- the right to prevent any derogatory treatment of your work
- the right to not have creations falsely attributed to you
- the right to privacy, for example withholding a photograph of yourself

Your economic rights include:

- the right to copy your work
- the right to issue copies to the public
- the right to rent or lend your work
- the right to perform, show or play your work in public
- the right to communicate your work to the public
- the right to make an adaptation of your work

As the copyright holder you are able to sell or give away your economic rights, but you will always retain your moral rights. When publishing your work with a commercial publisher it is likely that you will sign a publishing agreement. Commonly, these agreements include a transfer of copyright from the author to the publisher. This process means that you have given away your economic rights (the right to make money from your work) to the publisher.

It is important that you always read any publication agreement carefully before signing it to ensure that you are happy with what it says. If you are not happy with any part of the agreement you can talk to the publisher before signing and they may agree to change parts of the contract.

[Creative Commons](#) provides a way to licence the use of material you create and share. It allows creators to build a licence which suits their needs and authorise the appropriate use of their work. Using an open licence such as Creative Commons allows researchers to get more exposure for their work whilst maintaining control over its use. This helps the spread of information and the creation of new knowledge. Using a licence also means that other people know how to use your work in an appropriate way without infringing copyright.

Links

Information on open access funders' requirements: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/publish-research/open-access/request-apc-payment>

Plan S: <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

If UKRI/Wellcome Trust funded, applying for APCs for fully gold open access journals: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/publish-research/open-access/open-access-publication-charges-claim-form>

Database of journals with a transformative agreement with the University of Edinburgh: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/publish-research/open-access/read-and-publish-journals>

University of Edinburgh publication and copyright policy: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/about/policies-and-regulations/research-publications>

Steps for complying with the University of Edinburgh publications and copyright policy: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/publish-research/open-access/open-access-checklist-for-uoed-authors>

Predatory publishing information: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/publish-research/scholarly-communications/predatory-or-bogus-journals>

Read and Publish deals: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/research-support/publish-research/open-access/read-and-publish-journals>