

Science Europe Position Statement



Principles for the Transition to Open Access
to Research Publications

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Principles for the Transition to Open Access to Research Publications

Science Europe Member Organisations are committed to ensuring that publicly-funded research and innovation in Europe has the maximum impact, leading to new discoveries, and providing solutions that deliver societal benefit.

Research publications are one of the main results of the research process and the Research Performing and Research Funding Organisations that comprise Science Europe share the vision of increasing the impact and reducing the costs of research publications by moving to a system of Open Access.

Benefits of Open Access

Open Access, as defined in the Berlin Declaration¹, means unrestricted, online access to peer-reviewed, scholarly research papers for reading and productive re-use, not impeded by any financial, organisational, legal or technical barriers. Ideally, the only restriction on use is an obligation to attribute the work to the author.

Open Access improves the pace, efficiency and efficacy of research, and heightens the authors' visibility, and thus the potential impact of their work. It removes structural and geographical barriers that hinder the free circulation of knowledge and therefore contributes to increased collaboration, ultimately strengthening scientific excellence and capacity building.

Open Access enables re-use and computational analysis of published material, sparks innovation and facilitates interdisciplinary research, as well as scholarly exchange on a global scale.

Full access to research results strengthens the dissemination, testing and uptake of scientific breakthroughs, not only for the benefit of the research community but also for the economy and society as a whole.

Transition to Open Access

The benefits of Open Access are clear; furthermore, the technology available allows for a decisive move towards making Open Access a reality. The ultimate goal is to move to a new and sustainable system of scholarly communication of Open Access that guarantees the highest quality of publications and maximises the impact of research results. Science Europe Member Organisations acknowledge that the transition towards such a system presents challenges and that a common understanding of these challenges, and a collective approach to tackle them, is the most efficient way forward to accomplish the transition.

The Principles

For these reasons the Science Europe Member Organisations have agreed on a set of common principles to support the transition to Open Access.

Each organisation will have to implement policies according to their own needs; however, by committing to the principles below they will ensure consistency and coherence in their efforts. The principles are the basis on which the Members of Science Europe will continue to co-operate, by exchanging experience and information and engaging in collective activities to support the transition to Open Access. In this spirit, Science Europe views these principles as a contribution to the indispensable dialogue and co-operation with other partners and stakeholders.

Ultimately the transition to Open Access is a world-wide process and Science Europe wishes to contribute via these principles to the discussion at global level in such fora as the Global Research Council, which involve research organisations from all regions in the world.

The Science Europe Member Organisations have agreed on the following vision and principles:

With regard to Open Access to research publications, Science Europe Member Organisations share the view that:

- publication and dissemination of results are an integral part of the research process. The allocation of resources within the research system must take this into account;
- Open Access to the published results of publicly-funded research will have huge value for the research community and will offer significant social and economic benefits to potential users in industry, charitable and public sectors, to individual professionals, and to the general public;
- Open Access, as defined in the Berlin Declaration, is not only about the right of access, but also about the opportunity to re-use information with as few restrictions as possible, subject to proper attribution;
- the common goal of Science Europe Members is to shift to a research publication system in which free access to research publications is guaranteed, and which avoids undue publication barriers. This involves a move towards Open Access, replacing the present subscription system with other publication models whilst redirecting and reorganising the current resources accordingly.

Science Europe is committed to playing a role in accomplishing the transition to Open Access as quickly as possible, in an efficient and sustainable way, and thus avoiding unnecessary costs. This transition process must be as co-ordinated and transparent as possible.

Therefore the Science Europe Member Organisations:

- will continue to support any valid approaches to achieve Open Access, including those commonly referred to as the 'green' and 'gold' routes;
- recognise repositories and related facilities as key strategic research infrastructure which should comply with high quality standards;
- stress that research publications should either be published in an Open Access journal or be deposited as

soon as possible in a repository, and made available in Open Access in all cases no later than six months following first publication. In Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, the delay may need to be longer than six months but must be no more than 12 months;

- require that as part of the publication services provided against the payment of Open Access publication fees, effective mechanisms are in place to ensure that the publication of research outputs is subject to rigorous quality assurance;
- will co-ordinate efforts to ensure the efficient and cost effective use of public funds, and combine programmes for covering Open Access costs with budget control mechanisms and to build up monitoring systems for these costs;
- accept that it is essential that Open Access transactions need to be managed efficiently, with the co-operation of all parties involved;
- require that funding of Open Access publication fees is part of a transparent cost structure, incorporating a clear picture of publishers' service costs;
- expect publishers to apply institutional-, regional-, or country-based reductions in journal subscriptions, in line with increases in author- or institution-pays contributions;
- stress that the hybrid model, as currently defined and implemented by publishers, is not a working and viable pathway to Open Access. Any model for transition to Open Access supported by Science Europe Member Organisations must prevent 'double dipping' and increase cost transparency;
- recognise that some redirection and reorganisation of current budgets will be necessary. Governments should give due consideration to the fact that public funds for journal subscriptions often come from other ministries or institutions than those directly responsible for funding research; consequently, some rebalancing of budgets may be required.

Science Europe wishes to encourage the European Commission, national governments, research funding and research performing organisations and other stakeholders across the world to adopt this approach to Open Access and to actively nurture collaboration in this area.

Science Europe is a Brussels-based association of 51 European national research organisations. It was founded in October 2011 with the aim of promoting the collective interests of members and providing them with a platform to collaborate at both policy and activity level. More information is available at www.scienceeurope.org

¹ <http://oa.mpg.de/lang/en-uk/berlin-prozess/berliner-erklarung/>