

OPEN SCHOLARSHIP

position statement from
the Biochemical Society
and Portland Press

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Open scholarship is the name given to a change in the culture of scholarly research, enabled by developing technologies and new opportunities for communication and collaboration. It encompasses topics including open access, open data, metrics, research integrity and public engagement. The change in culture resulting from open scholarship affects all stages of the research cycle, from conceptualization of research through to publication and wider dissemination.

Open access (OA): We support sustainable open access that maximizes availability and accessibility of research while maintaining ethical and technical standards, equitable pricing, and high quality for researchers, institutions and funders around the world.

Currently:

- We publish two fully-OA journals, and one of these is currently sustained by article publishing charges (APC) at an article-by-article level; in addition, we publish five hybrid journals where authors may opt to pay an APC to have their article published OA.
- For titles on the hybrid model we avoid 'double dipping' (charging twice for the same articles) through two routes: APCs are discounted for corresponding authors based at subscribing institutions; in addition, subscription prices are set, each year, based on the number of paywalled articles in the preceding years to account for OA content published in hybrid titles.
- There are a variety of mechanisms employed by different publishers to avoid double-dipping. We are supportive of efforts to standardize and agree common principles around transparent pricing of hybrid journals that demonstrate, objectively, the avoidance of double dipping.

Looking ahead:

- We are seeking to transition our hybrid journals to full-OA in a way that supports researchers and keeps the Society financially viable.
- **We strongly believe that the ability to publish research should not be linked to individual researchers' ability to pay;** we are enthusiastic about all opportunities to remove author-facing invoices from OA publishing. To enable a transition away from paywalls, we seek to offer as much APC-free OA as possible that will be supported through continuing and new partnerships with institutions, consortia and funders.
- It is important to us that we remain financially viable, and that Portland Press continues to be able to support the Biochemical Society through this transition and beyond.

Initial thinking around transitioning commercial models:

- In the short term, we see a transition being achieved by combining institutional subscription spends (spend to read paywalled content) and APC spends (supporting OA publishing) under so-called 'transformative' agreements. For 2020, all articles from corresponding authors based at an institution that takes up our pilot 2020 'transformative' read and publish renewal will be published OA.
- As a possible route to transitioning, we expect that when most content in our (currently hybrid) journals is published OA under a transformative deal, we will be able to transition these journals to being fully OA.
- We support a continual review of available models and routes to sustainable OA; while our starting position for 'read and publish' offerings is based on historical spend, we also support a re-evaluation of the basis for pricing 'read and publish' or 'publish and read' offerings over the longer term. We seek to co-develop principles around such pricing through collaboration with institutions as well as funders and other learned societies.
- We recognize our approach involves rewiring of budgets and spending that exists within the publishing system. We are committed to an open dialogue and co-developing future approaches with subscribing and publishing institutions, and with the wider research community.
- The Biochemical Society's approach is inclusive. We will champion the needs of early career researchers based at institutions that have not signed up to transformative deals. We will ensure that we answer 'read' and 'publishing' needs of researchers based in countries that do not have a 'gold-first' approach, and therefore may lack access to funding that supports OA publishing either through APC or via currently described transformative deals. In addition, we seek future models that will include not just those based in research institutions and higher education, but also researchers at small and medium-sized enterprises, in industry, within government facilities, and those who are independent academics.

Open data

We support the principle that research data should be Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable (FAIR). The Society is committed to working with the molecular bioscience, and wider life science, communities to support scientists in making data open in the way that best enables the future development of life science research. We currently encourage researchers to upload their data to open data repositories on acceptance of their article. The data policy for the Society's journals can be found at www.portlandpress.com/pages/data_policy.

Research metrics

We support measures to change and improve how research is currently assessed, and we are a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment ([DORA](#)). We believe that while journal and citation metrics can form part of a holistic assessment of research, they should not be used alone to assess its value. From Q4 2019 onwards, each published article will carry the [Altmetric donut](#) as well as information on article-level downloads.

Public engagement

We believe that enabling the widest possible engagement with science and participation across all sections of society is fundamental to the principles of open scholarship. We are committed to supporting students and researchers to communicate their work and promote public engagement with biochemistry and the molecular biosciences.

Research integrity

We believe that maintaining ethical standards in the practice and publication of scientific research is essential, and we consider a robust, responsible peer review process to be central to the maintenance of these standards. Our journals are published in accordance with guidelines from the Committee on Publication Ethics ([COPE](#)). Our journal processes support consultation between editors to improve peer-review and we facilitate reviewer-credit mechanisms. Our Editorial Boards and the Publications Committee of the Society will, over the coming three year period, reconsider peer review practices to encourage transparency, diversity and equal opportunity, and to foster conservation of reviewer effort.

Technology

The Society, along with Portland Press, is committed to maintaining the technological standards needed to enable open scholarship, such as provision of good article metadata, supporting and rewiring of workflows to support OA publishing (including new APC-free workflows) and facilitating reliable and consistent reporting mechanisms, for example, by applying persistent identifiers. Our corresponding authors must provide [ORCIDs](#), which are displayed on the final version of the published article, and from Q4 2019 onwards we will be able to harness [Crossref](#) technology that clarifies whether there are newer, corrected or different versions of a published article. Over the coming three year period we will scope and investigate structured, machine-readable reporting for research funding, author contributions and institutional affiliations of authors.

Collaboration

The Biochemical Society recognizes the interconnected, global and multidisciplinary nature of scholarly communications. We believe that influencing policy, developing innovative offerings and creating best practices in transitioning towards open scholarship can be better achieved by working with like minded learned society publishers and other partners. We are members of the Society Publishers' Coalition ([SocPC](#)), the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association ([OASPA](#)) and the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers ([ALPSP](#)). We support an equitable and sustainable transition to open scholarship across the scholarly research sector, and wish to work with other societies, institutions, consortia and researchers to co-develop a more open future.