NIH Accelerates Timeline for Public Access to Research Results: What You Need to Know

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The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has taken a significant step forward in its commitment to transparency and public trust by accelerating the implementation of its revised Public Access Policy. Originally scheduled to go into effect on December 31, 2025, the policy will now become effective on **July 1, 2025**. This change is part of NIH's continued efforts to ensure that the results of publicly funded research are made freely and immediately available to the public.

Since the launch of the NIH Public Access Policy in 2008, more than 1.5 million articles reporting on NIH-supported research have been made available to the public through PubMed Central (PMC). However, the original policy allowed for an embargo period of up to 12 months before those articles became accessible. The updated policy update eliminates this delay, requiring that all peer-reviewed manuscripts resulting from NIH funding be made publicly available in PMC immediately upon publication – including when the article is first made available online, such as in epub ahead of print formats.

Under the revised policy:

- Embargoes are no longer allowed. Researchers are required to submit their final peer-reviewed manuscripts to PubMed Central for immediate release.
- Importantly, authors do not need to pay to comply with the policy.
- The submission process using the NIH Manuscript Submission system (NIHMS) remains free
- APCs for hybrid journals are not allowable as a direct charge to NIH grants, even if you select the open access option. Instead, take advantage of the special governmental license and deposit the author accepted manuscript (AAM) in the NIH Manuscript Submission (NIHMS) system to ensure compliance.

Other elements of the policy remain unchanged, including the use of two submission pathways:

- Authors may deposit their accepted manuscript to PubMed Central using NIHMS
- Authors may publish in a journal that has an agreement with the National Library of Medicine for automated deposit.

Authors must also grant NIH the right to make their manuscripts publicly available without restriction or delay, consistent with a federal purpose license.

Failure to comply with the policy may affect future NIH funding decisions or delay ongoing award continuations. NIH reminds grantees that full adherence to public access requirements, including proper acknowledgment of federal funding, is essential for continued eligibility.

The move to eliminate the embargo period is a clear signal that NIH is prioritizing transparency and scientific access. The public deserves timely access to research results. In doing so, NIH is not only advancing health and discovery but also honoring the social contract between science and society.

To learn more about the Policy, access the updated guidance: NIH Notice NOT-OD-25-101 and the NIH Public Access Policy pages.

We can help! Galter Library is your dependable partner for the transition to this new era of open science. Sign up for support at our weekly virtual office hours class page, view Galter's NIH Public Access Policy Guide, or invite us to present at your department, institute, or center meeting.

For questions or support, please reach out to Pamela Shaw, NIH Public Access Compliance Reporter, or email our reference desk at ghsl-ref@northwestern.edu.

Resources

- Jorgenson L. Transforming Transparency Through Policy. April 30, 2025.
- Bhattacharya J. Accelerating Access to Research Results: New Implementation Date for the 2024 NIH Public Access Policy. April 30, 2025.
- Revision: Notice of Updated Effective Date for the 2024 NIH Public Access Policy (NOT-OD-25-101). April 30, 2025.