Open Access Publishing Guide

Open Access Defined

Open Access is the free, immediate, online availability of research articles combined with the rights to use these articles fully in the digital environment. Open Access is the needed modern update for the communication of research that fully utilizes the Internet for what it was originally built to do—accelerate research. [Open Access - SPARC](https://www.sparc.org) 

Quick Links

- DigitalHub – Northwestern Medicine’s institutional repository
- Northwestern University Open Access Fund – find university funding to publish in an open access journal
- Open Access Spectrum Evaluation Tool – rates journals based on openness
- SHERPA/RORMEO – find your publisher’s copyright transfer agreement
- Open Access Overview – historical overview by open access champion, Peter Suber

Finding and Evaluating Open Access Journals

The open access movement has removed barriers to access, dissemination, and publishing of information. However, the publishing landscape is complex and there are varying degrees in the meaning of open access. Additionally, there has been a proliferation of open access publishers with questionable reputations and misleading claims about their peer-review process, members of their editorial board, and their indexing status in certain databases.

Consider these helpful resources in finding and evaluating OA journals:

- Search for the journal in the [Directory of Open Access Journals](https://doaj.org)
- Review the journal’s score in the [Open Access Spectrum Evaluation Tool](https://openaccessspectrum.org)
- Determine if the journal is indexed in reputable database:
  - [Scopus](https://www.scopus.com)
  - [Web of Science](https://www.webofknowledge.com)
  - [Ulrichsweb](https://www.ulrichsweb.com)
- Look for the publisher’s membership in a reputable organization:
  - [Open Access Scholarly Publisher’s Association](https://www.oaspa.org)
  - [Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)](https://publicationethics.org)
- Review the checklists available from [Think, Check, Submit](https://thinkchecksubmit.org)
**Using an Institutional Repository**

Authors should consider making published works openly available using an institutional repository. DigitalHub is Northwestern Medicine’s institutional repository for making scholarly outputs openly available.

Examples of items accepted by the repository:

- Research papers, published or unpublished
- Conference papers and presentations, including lectures
- Educational materials
- Supplemental images
- Open access books
- Datasets (up to 2GB)

Please note: If you are interested in depositing your published outputs into DigitalHub, you must check if the publisher allows deposit in a repository, and if so, which version of the manuscript is allowed for deposit. See the Copyright and Licensing section below for more information. Or contact DigitalHub for assistance.

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**Open Access: Free or Fee?**

While open access implies that information doesn’t cost anything to access, it does sometimes involve costs to the author to publish the work. Hybrid journals (a subscription journal in which some of the articles are open access) and fully open access journals often require an article processing fee or charge.

The Northwestern University Open Access Fund supports Northwestern scholars who wish to make their journal articles openly available immediately upon publication. Authors must publish in a journal that publishes all of its articles as open access and allows for freely available access immediately upon publication, with no embargo of any content. See the fund’s website for more information.

NIH funded researchers may consider including the cost of publishing in their NIH grant applications, according to the NIH Grants Policy Statement.

**Membership discount for research staff and students at Northwestern University**

A membership discount is available for BioMed Central and SpringerOpen article-processing charges (APCs).

If you submit your manuscript from an IP address that has been registered by your institution, the membership discount will be automatically applied.

If you submit your manuscript using a non-registered IP address:

1) Please choose the option “I believe that I am covered by an institutional membership arrangement” on the APC agreement page

2) Select your institution from the drop-down list

3) Our Customer Service team will then handle your discount request before sending instructions on how to complete your submission
PubMed Central and Public Access

PubMed Central (PMC) is a free repository of full text scholarly articles. In compliance with the NIH Public Access Policy, researchers are required to submit a copy of any manuscript that resulted from their NIH-funded research (from April 7, 2008 onward).

Some publishers submit content to PMC simply to make their content openly available. If your publisher does not participate in uploading content to PMC, or if your research was not NIH-funded, then your work will not be found in PMC.

If you want your work to be made available in an online repository, see the section on above on “Using an Institutional Repository” to learn more about DigitalHub.

See our NIH Public Access Policy guide for more information on the logistics of submitting papers to the NIHMS system and maintaining compliance with the NIH’s Public Access Policy.

Copyright and Licensing

Copyright is a protection given to authors for “original works of authorship.” In the publishing process, authors sometimes give away some or all of their copyrights to publishers by signing a copyright transfer agreement.

Copyright Status

Sure what copyright transfer agreement you’ve agreed to?

- Check the publisher’s website for the copyright transfer agreement (the most reliable source for information).
- Look up the publisher’s copyright transfer agreement using the SHERPA/RoMEO service.

Author Addendum

Consider these addenda that authors can add to publishers’ contracts to ensure rights to archive their manuscripts in open access databases, and more:

- Science Commons Scholars Copyright Addendum Engine
- SPARC’s Author Addendum
- The Big 10 Academic Alliance Author Addendum page (click on the link “Authors Copyright Contract Addenda” near the top of the page)
- List of author addenda at the Open Access Directory wiki

Licensing

A license allows a copyright holder to retain copyright while granting permission to others to copy, distribute, or make use of their work.

As a copyright holder, consider applying one of these licenses to your publically available work:

- Creative Commons Licenses – consists of 6 licenses for granting permission to copyrighted work
- Rights Statements – consists of 12 standardized rights statements to communicate copyright and re-use status of digital objects to the public

To Learn More

To learn more about copyright and creative commons licensing, check out these links:
Additional Open Access Resources

There are many helpful resources surrounding open access. Here are a few you may be interested in:

- OAD (Open Access Directory) wiki site – contains a complete history of OA, lists of OA journals, institutions with OA policies, educational materials, and a lot more
- OASIS – Open Access Scholarly Information Sourcebook. Click the "Researchers" link in the left menu bar
- SPARC – Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) works to enable open sharing of research outputs and educational material
- PLoS – Public Library of Science (PLoS) is an open access scientific publisher
- Open Access Health Information - a guide by Galter Library on health resources that are freely available

Support from Galter Library

- Your Liaison Librarian can help you:
  - find open access journals that relate to your research
  - determine if an open access journal is indexed in reputable databases
  - review how to deposit a manuscript into the DigitalHub repository
- Check out Galter Library’s NIH Public Access Policy guide describing the logistics of submitting papers to the NIHMS system and maintaining compliance with the NIH’s Public Access Policy.

Printed: Tuesday, April 25, 2017 5:32 PM
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