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Library Services

Open Access Guide

Unlocking open access at Imperial

Imperial College London

What is
Open access?

Open access (OA) refers to the online availability of scholarly work, free of charge to anyone. We all benefit from open access as it facilitates discovery and sharing of knowledge. This guide has everything you need to know to make your research more visible, including the requirements needed as a research funder.

Why is it
important?

It improves public access to research

Public and charitable funding supports research, yet the results often remain inaccessible. Open access ensures that the public can view the outcomes they have helped fund, such as empowering charities to share health advances. By removing barriers, it promotes equity, invites scrutiny, and strengthens accountability – making research more transparent and trustworthy.

It can broaden your impact

Imperial, UKRI, the Wellcome Trust and many other research funders support open access because it increases readership and impact. Research shows that open access articles are viewed several times more than articles in journals that require a subscription.

Open access content is freely available worldwide

It helps to provide low-income regions with access to scientific knowledge that might otherwise be unaffordable. Even researchers in high-income countries face barriers to subscription-based materials.

Many funders require it

Most funders now have an open access policy which they expect you to comply with as part of the research contract. Making your research articles open access will ensure eligibility for future research grants.

It is a requirement for the Research Excellence Framework (REF)

Ensuring compliance with REF open access policy directly affects whether your research outputs can be submitted for assessment.

Your publisher will ask you about open access when a journal article is accepted for publication. The type of open access

There are two types of Open access – Green and Gold.

available to you will depend on where and how you plan to make your research outputs available.

Green

- By depositing your accepted author manuscript (AAM) in a repository, your work becomes freely accessible to anyone. The AAM contains the same content as the final published version and has been peer-reviewed and accepted for publication.

- There is no cost. Imperial's **Research Publications Open Access Policy (RPOAP)** allows immediate sharing of peer-reviewed articles and conference papers without embargo.

Gold

- Your work is open access on the publisher's website.

- The published version of your article will be free to access immediately.

- Publishing open access often involves a fee, such as an article processing charge (APC) for Gold open access. Library

Services offers funding support and has agreements with publishers that can cover these costs for eligible papers.

- The work will be published under an open access licence. A Creative Commons licence makes it easier to re-use your work, for example in teaching and future publications.

How do I get started? Here are things you can do...

Deposit your next paper

When you have a journal article or conference paper accepted for publication, upload the accepted manuscript, including the date of acceptance, to **Symplectic**.

The manuscript will be deposited in **Spiral**, the Imperial's repository, with any embargo period respected. Depositing manuscripts on acceptance will ensure that articles can be submitted to the REF.

Apply for open access funding

All staff and students are eligible to apply for funding. When your paper is accepted for publication, upload it to Symplectic to apply. You will need your accepted manuscript and date of acceptance.

Imperial's open access agreements let affiliated corresponding authors publish OA at no extra cost or at a discount. Use your Imperial email and check journal eligibility with the Journal Search Tool.

Raise the profile of your research

Share your work online to increase its impact and take advantage of the fact that open access articles can be read, free of charge, by anyone.

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Deposit your reports, briefing papers, working papers and technical documents in Spiral. This will boost visibility, increase impact and citations, reaching global audiences beyond traditional publishing.

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- Log in to your account
- Click the Subscribe button

For non-Imperial users:

Click on the RSS link from the collection page and copy the link into your preferred feed reader (e.g. Outlook, Feedly).

Find out more...

REF Read a summary and FAQs about the open access policy and how we help to make your work eligible for the REF.

Research Publications open access Policy introduced in January 2024. Find out why Imperial introduced the policy and what authors need to know as well as FAQs on Imperial's research publications open access policy page.

Journal Search Tool Use Imperial's tool to check whether a journal is covered by open access publisher agreements for affiliated corresponding authors – search by title, ISSN or keyword.

Jisc open policy finder This tool has been designed to help researchers check that their chosen journal meets their funder's requirements. It provides information on both green and gold open access options.

Open access and Digital Scholarship Blog Keep up to date with open access at Imperial.

Open access channel (Viva Engage) open to all Imperial staff and students who want to stay up to date on open access developments, support services, and training events from the OA Team.

Imperial Open Research Newsletter Keep up to date with open research (Imperial staff and students only).

Glossary

Accepted author manuscript (AAM)

Also known as a post-print. This is the peer-reviewed, final version of an article prior to publication.

Article processing charge (APC)

A fee for making an article immediately available on the publisher's website.

CC BY

Creative Commons Attribution licence. One of the six Creative Commons licences and the licence UK funders prefer. It allows re-use of your publication but requires that you are credited as the author.

Date of acceptance

The date on which your publisher confirms that your work will be published. This is usually after you have made any changes because of peer-review.

Gold open access

Publishers make research articles immediately and freely available on their website. They usually apply an article processing charge.

Green open access

The author makes a version of a research output freely available via an institutional or subject repository.

Publisher's PDF or Version of Record

This is the final published version of an article, including the publisher's copy-editing, proof corrections, layout and typesetting.

Repository

An online archive of scholarly outputs, for example Spiral, Imperial's institutional repository. There are also subject-specific repositories.

Spiral

Imperial's institutional repository.

Symplectic

The system used by Imperial staff to manage scholarly outputs and deposit related publications in Spiral and apply for APC funding.

Help and support

Your Librarian & the open access team

For personalised advice or questions about open access, contact: openaccess@imperial.ac.uk

Or find your subject Librarian

Open access website

Visit website for detailed information, including:

- An overview of open access policies and benefits

- Guidance on depositing publications in Spiral

- Instructions on applying for open access funding via Symplectic

General Library Support

Visit the Library website for broader library-related queries, contact: library@imperial.ac.uk

Contact us

www.imperial.ac.uk/library/contact-us

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