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## Open Access and Plan S: Explanatory Note

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# Open Access and Plan S: Explanatory note

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## The Colours of Open Access

<b>Green</b> 	Published in open access journals/final draft on personal website or repositories. A version of an article accepted into a journal can be lodged on an open access repository on acceptance. Can mean the authors starts accruing citations prior to publication.
<b>Platinum</b> 	Freely available from the publisher's website and no publishing charges are paid by authors.
<b>Gold</b> 	Articles published in Open Access Journals where it may be free to publish or the author pays a fee (known as article processing charges- APCs)
<b>Blue</b> 	Articles can be archived post print (post peer review) either publisher's version or authors final version.

## Open Access publishing

While the colour coding above is useful, generally it is not that black and white for example, many commercial publishers have open access articles; blue publishers can also be green if they allow the author to upload their final draft to a repository. The following scenarios are the most common forms of open access publishing.

### Scenario 1: Self-archiving (Green)

A journal accepts the article and it goes through the peer-review process. After the peer review process, the author lodges the final draft version on the institutional repository with or without an embargo (12-36 months). This version has a [Creative Commons](#) licence attached, which states that the article can be read and reused by anyone as long as it is attributed to the author/s. The article is subsequently formatted and published in the journal. However, that version can only be read by those who have subscribed to the journal

### Scenario 2: Author pays a conventional publisher (blue)

The journal publishes the article and the author pays to have it available as open access. Typical charges are about €2,500 but can be much higher, dependent on how popular the article is likely to be. Journals that charge a subscription for access to the journal and charge the author for individual articles are termed **hybrid journals**. This is also known as paid open access and is seen as compensation for loss of the subscription

### Scenario 3: Author publishes in an Open Access Journal. (Gold)

There may or may not be charges. If charges are applied, they are likely to be a lot less than a hybrid journal and will be to cover costs.

**Scenario 4:** Author publishes through an academic press or through the institutional repository.  
**(Platinum)**

This approach can offer peer review, editorial expertise and so on just like a conventional publisher but it can depend on the institution. Publishing tends to be subsidised by the home institution and does not involve charges for authors

An easy way to establish the publisher's policy on open access is to use the [Sherpa/Romeo](#) website. This is not comprehensive and if the journal is not listed here, the next step is to look at the publisher's website for their open access policy.

## What is Plan S?

Science Europe launched Plan S on 4 September 2018. It is an initiative of cOAlition S, a consortium launched by the European Research Councils and a number of major national research agencies and funders from a number of European countries (one of which is Science Foundation Ireland). It aims to accelerate the move to open access publishing. Its key principle is that, by 2020, all research funded by public grants must be published in open access journals or platforms.

The 10 principles of Plan S:

1. authors should retain copyright on their publications, which must be published under an open license such as [Creative Commons](#);
2. the members of the coalition should establish robust criteria and requirements for compliant open access journals and platforms;
3. they should also provide incentives for the creation of compliant open access journals and platforms if they do not yet exist;
4. publication fees should be covered by the funders or universities, not individual researchers;
5. such publication fees should be standardized and capped;
6. universities, research organizations, and libraries should align their policies and strategies;
7. for books and monographs, the timeline may be extended beyond 2020;
8. open archives and repositories are acknowledged for their importance;
9. [hybrid open-access journals](#) are not compliant with the key principle;
10. Members of the coalition should monitor and sanction non-compliance.

## What does it mean?

Authors keep their copyright. They must not sign it away to publishers. Plan S seeks to encourage publishers to move to an open access model so it states that, during the transition period, publishing in a hybrid journal will be permitted as long as the journal is covered by a transformative agreement. This agreement must state publically that the journal is on track to become an open access journal. Publishing in any journal will be permitted as long as that journal accepts the author's right to lodge the final draft or the published version immediately on publication in an approved open access repository. In order to facilitate re-use, proper attribution and a worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive, irrevocable licence to share and adapt the work for any purpose including commercially, needs to be given to authors. Scholarly articles must be published under a [Creative Commons](#) Attribution license CC BY 4.0 or alternately CC BY-SA 4.0 Share-alike license.

## World Reaction

There has been broad acceptance and a welcome for Plan S; despite the acknowledgment, that moving from principles to implementation is not without its difficulty.

Stephen Curry, a structural biologist and open access advocate at Imperial College London, called the policy a "*significant shift*" and "*a very powerful declaration*". Ralf Schimmer, head of the Scientific Information Provision at the Max Planck Digital Library, told *The Scientist* that "*This will put increased pressure on publishers and on the consciousness of individual researchers that an ecosystem change is possible ... There has been enough nice language and waiting and hoping and saying please. Research communities just aren't willing to tolerate procrastination anymore.*"

According to Wikipedia, Elsevier's share price fell by 13% between 28 August and 19 September 2018.

On 7 September 2018, the European University Association ([EUA](#)) published a statement in which it generally welcomed the Plan's ambitions to turn Open Access into reality by 2020, but stated that, while the plan developed a bold vision for the transition, it hinged on turning principles into practice. On 5 December 2018, it emerged that the Ministry of Science and Technology (China) would support Plan S and the goal of immediate Open Access for publicly funded projects. In 2018 China became the world's largest producer of scientific articles, in terms of volume. On 17 January 2019, the UK National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) pledged support for Plan S and announced that their current Open Access policy will be reviewed. The NIHR is the largest national clinical research funder in Europe with a budget of over €1.2 billion. On 12 February 2019, K. VijayRaghavan, the principal scientific adviser of the Government of India, announced that India is joining Plan S. India is the third biggest producer of scientific papers in the world. Earlier in 2019, Jordan and Zambia signed up Plan S. [Allea](#) (the European Federation of Academies of Science and Foundation) has also responded favourably to Plan S. The launch of the Irish National Principles for Open Access to Publications and Data has been delayed so that their alignment to Plan S can be investigated.

**What Happens Next?** Science Foundation Ireland is one of the original 12 agencies that signed up to Plan S and is currently working on an implementation plan. [The Irish Research Council](#) has stated its support for Plan S while noting some issues:

- The need to safe-guard the career prospects of early career researchers
- The fact that open access to books will take longer relevant for AHS
- Different disciplines have different outputs
- The role of repositories and archives
- The need for funding and infrastructure to implement Plan S.

Open Access to publications is now a hot topic, discussed at every level by all stakeholders. This may be the start of a cultural shift among researchers, that results in scholarly output being freely available to all. However, it is the details of the implementation that will determine whether Plan S moves from being merely aspirational to becoming the means to affect a paradigm shift.

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