

## SFI Open Access policy 2022 – FAQs

Updated: 11/2022.

### What is Open Access?

According to The European Commission,<sup>1</sup> “Open access (OA) can be defined as the practice of providing on-line access to scientific information that is free of charge to the user and that is re-usable. A distinction is usually made between OA to scientific peer reviewed publications and research data.”

### What is subject to SFI’s Open Access Policy?

All research publications arising in whole or in part from SFI-funded research are subject to [SFI’s Open Access Policy](#). Any peer-reviewed publications (i.e., original articles and conference proceedings - this requirement does not currently cover books, book chapters, or review articles) must be immediately available from the date of publication (no embargo permitted), under a Creative Commons attribution licence (CC-BY)<sup>2</sup> with Rights Retention wording<sup>3</sup>.

### Why does SFI require peer-reviewed publications to be openly available?

SFI is a member of cOAlition S<sup>4</sup> – a consortium of funders who support Plan S<sup>5</sup>. Plan S is an initiative for Open Access (OA) publishing which was launched in 2018.

SFI has aligned its Open Access Policy<sup>6</sup> with the principles of Plan S and, therefore, since 01/01/2021 all peer-reviewed publications (i.e., original articles and conference proceedings – this requirement does not currently cover books, book chapters, or review articles) must be immediately available from the date of publication (no embargo permitted), under a Creative Commons attribution licence (CC-BY) with Rights Retention wording. The publications can be Open Access on the publisher’s platform (see Gold Open Access, Transformative Agreement, and Diamond Open Access), or through self-archiving, by using the Rights Retention wording and depositing the publication in an Open Access repository (see Green Open Access).

Furthermore, as a public funder, SFI has an obligation to ensure that we achieve value for money from the public investment and making outputs available to all stakeholders (including members of the public, practitioners, policy advisers and industry) helps us to achieve that goal.

### What are the benefits of publishing Open Access?

Open Access to scholarly outputs improves the speed of research, increases the potential for global collaboration and ensures maximal economic and societal benefit can be realised.

Making your outputs openly available also increases the visibility of your research which has been associated with higher citation rates. For more information on the benefits of OA publishing see McKiernan et al (2016)<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-11/ec\\_rtd\\_background-note-open-access.pdf](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-11/ec_rtd_background-note-open-access.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://creativecommons.org/about/cclicenses/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.coalition-s.org/resources/rights-retention-strategy/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.coalition-s.org/>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.coalition-s.org/plan\\_s\\_principles/](https://www.coalition-s.org/plan_s_principles/)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://elifsciences.org/articles/16800>

**I'm ready to publish my article/conference proceeding, but I'm not familiar with OA requirements.**

**How do I make sure I'm complying with SFI's Open Access policy?**

Please take a look at the step-by-step [Publishing Guide](#), which will help you navigate the steps for publishing Open Access.

**Won't publishing OA hurt my metrics (like H Index)?**

To complement and support SFI's open access mandate, SFI became a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)<sup>8</sup> in 2019, making a formal commitment to assess the quality and impact of research through means other than journal metrics, such as journal impact factors. In January 2022, SFI reinforced its existing commitment to the core principles by joining DORA as a member at the Contributor level. As a member signatory, SFI has aligned its grant evaluation processes with DORA principles. To this end, the grant evaluation process now focuses on quality, content and creativity and does not focus on quantitative journal-based metrics and H-index indicators as proxies for quality. To support this, SFI introduced a narrative style CV in 2019, in-line with DORA principles. The declaration has become a worldwide initiative and to date, more than 2,400 organisations and 18,500 individuals in 153 countries have signed up to DORA.

**How do I make my publication Open Access?**

Please refer to our [Publishing Guide](#) for a step-by-step checklist for publishing Open Access.

There are four routes to make your research publications openly available: The Gold OA route, the Green OA route, the Diamond OA route, and with a Transformative Agreement (TA). **Please note that your existing SFI grant funds can be used as a contribution towards costs to publish via these routes.**

If choosing the Green OA route, including the required Rights Retention statement applies a Creative Commons attribution licence (CC-BY), to an Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM)<sup>9</sup> arising from a submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

**The Journal Checker Tool**<sup>10</sup>, developed by cOAlition S, is a helpful way of checking if your journal of choice is compliant with SFI's Open Access Policy, and what Open Access routes are available to you.

For further information on OA journals, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)<sup>11</sup> provides an online directory of high-quality, OA, peer-reviewed journals. However, please be aware that DOAJ may include hybrid journals (which are not compliant with SFI's Open Access Policy, unless a Transformative Agreement (TA) is in place) in their records.

SHERPA ROMEO<sup>12</sup> is a useful resource to find information on copyright and self-archiving policies (including embargo periods) of different publishers.

**Why should I include Rights Retention wording?**

Rights Retention<sup>13</sup> enables you to retain intellectual ownership rights in your work, allowing you to make it Open Access at the time of publication.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://sfdora.org/>

<sup>9</sup> An Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) is the version of the work as accepted for publication, including all changes made during the peer review process.

<sup>10</sup> <https://journalcheckertool.org/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://doaj.org/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://v2.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.coalition-s.org/rights-retention-strategy/>

Publishers commonly require authors to sign exclusive publishing agreements which restrict what authors can do with their research findings. The Rights Retention Strategy allows researchers to publish in their journal of choice, including subscription journals, and provide Open Access in compliance with Plan S.

By using the Rights Retention wording in a peer-reviewed article or conference proceeding, Open Access can then be achieved by depositing the Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) (the version of your work as accepted for publication, including all changes made during the peer review process) in an open access repository (i.e., the Green Open Access Route).

SFI's requirement for grant holders to use the Rights Retention statement is included in the Grant General Terms & Conditions<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, when an applicant accepts an award from SFI, they will be agreeing to SFI's Grant Terms and Conditions which takes precedent over any subsequent contract such as that from a publisher.

### What needs to be included in the Rights Retention wording?

One of the two following statements (whichever is most appropriate) should be included in all submissions of original research to peer-reviewed journals:

*'This publication has emanated from research conducted with the financial support of Science Foundation Ireland under Grant number [ ]. For the purpose of Open Access, the author has applied a CC BY public copyright licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission'.*

Or

*'This publication has emanated from research supported in part by a grant from Science Foundation Ireland under Grant number [ ]. For the purpose of Open Access, the author has applied a CC BY public copyright licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission'.*

### What is Gold Open Access?

Gold OA refers to making your publication available through the publisher's platform, where the payment of an Article Processing Charge (APC) is often required (Your SFI grant funds can be used to contribute to costs in this instance).

In cases where the journal has a Transformative Agreement (TA) in place, the APC has been included in the contract between the publisher and your institution/organisation, and you will not be required to pay an APC.

### What is a Transformative Agreement, and how can I avail of them?

A Transformative Agreement (TA) is a contract negotiated between institutions (libraries, national and regional consortia) and publishers that allow anyone (i.e., the general public) to access content in a journal without paying any fee and can allow researchers to publish OA free of charge.

IReL<sup>15</sup> has negotiated a number of TAs with publishers for Irish institutions. **TAs typically allow researchers to publish OA free of charge** – to check if you are eligible, see IReL's website or contact your library services in your institution.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/sfi-general-terms-and-conditions/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://irel.ie/>

### **What is the Green route to Open Access?**

The Green OA route involves depositing the Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) (the version of your work as accepted for publication, including all changes made during the peer review process) in an OA repository. This is achieved by using the Rights Retention wording and is referred to as self-archiving.

SFI, as a member of cOAlition S, supports the Rights Retention Strategy, which allows authors to retain ownership of their work by using a Creative Commons or 'CC-BY' licence. As a result, SFI requires that the Rights Retention wording is included in all research publications before submission to peer-reviewed journals or platforms.

### **What is the Diamond route to Open Access?**

The Diamond OA route refers to publishing in a journal free of charge, that is entirely open access to readers.

### **What is 'Creative Commons' or CC-BY licensing?**

Creative commons or CC-BY<sup>16</sup> is a type of copyright licence where the original creator (author(s)) grants the public permission to reuse, distribute and build upon their existing work. Importantly, the original author/s must be attributed to any reuse of the original work.

There are some variations of the CC-BY licence and further information on this can be found on the Scholarly Kitchen Blog<sup>17</sup>.

As an exception, you can request that your publication is published under a CC-BY-ND<sup>18</sup> licence. If you choose to use this licence, you must apply to SFI for approval in advance.<sup>19</sup>

### **What routes are not an option for me as an SFI-funded researcher?**

To check whether your journal of choice is compliant with SFI's Open Access Policy, and which routes are available to you, refer to the [Journal Checker Tool](#).

If your publication has resulted from research supported by SFI funding, you are not permitted to publish in Bronze OA journals (due to the inability to apply a CC-BY licence). You can only publish in a journal that applies an embargo to a publication if you immediately upload your Author Accepted Manuscript on an Open Access repository (i.e. the Green OA route).

### **What is a Hybrid Journal?**

A 'hybrid' journal operates both a subscription and OA model. The author can choose to pay an APC to have their publication made OA in a journal where a subscription is already supported by their institution. The publisher has already been paid annual subscription fees for access to its content and for processing the submission of scholarly papers. If the author pays an APC for OA, the publisher is paid twice to do the same amount of work. This is called 'double-dipping' and is an unnecessary use of already limited resources. For this reason, Hybrid journals are not compliant with SFI's Open Access policy, unless a Transformative Agreement is in place.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://creativecommons.org/about/ccllicenses/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2020/04/20/copyright-creative-commons-and-confusion/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/2.0/>

<sup>19</sup> Please contact [researchpolicy@sfi.ie](mailto:researchpolicy@sfi.ie) for any queries.

### **What is the bronze Open Access route and why is not compliant with SFI's Open Access Policy?**

The bronze OA route is when an author publishes a peer-reviewed paper in an OA journal that does not support CC-BY licensing. As CC-BY licensing is a requirement of [SFI's Open Access Policy](#), the Bronze route is not considered a compliant OA route.

### **What about a subscription journal – can I still publish here?**

Yes, it is possible to still publish in a subscription journal that either has a Transformative Agreement in place, or if you deposit your Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) in a suitable repository (i.e., the Green OA Route).

### **Will SFI pay for Article Processing Charges (APCs) in Open Access journals?**

As per the Grant Budget Policy<sup>20</sup>, your existing SFI grant funds can be used to pay APCs for Plan S compliant OA journals. **SFI will not offer specific additional funding for OA charges outside of your grant budget.**

More specifically, SFI recommends the use of up to 1% of the total grant awarded for article processing charges; this is referred to in the final approved budget accompanying the Letter of Offer. For example, if you have a grant of 300,000 euro, then 3000 euro of the grant may be assigned to cover publication costs. However, grant holders are afforded flexibility in the use of their budget during the term of the award and as such, may move funds between categories<sup>21</sup>. SFI encourages grant holders to consider the appropriateness of an APC and to satisfy themselves that the cost associated with an APC is justified.

SFI is aware that this is an evolving situation and how we provide support to our community will be reviewed iteratively, based on changes to average APCs, as well as the prevalence of transformative agreements in Ireland and how they operate. Also, in line with Plan S, SFI expects that the costs associated with publishing are fair, reasonable, and transparent.

### **I have not allocated any budget for Article Processing Charges in my grant – what should I do?**

You can remain compliant with SFI's OA policy by taking the Green OA publishing route, or by availing of the TAs that are currently in place in Ireland<sup>22</sup>.

Furthermore, according to SFI's Budget Reallocation Policy<sup>23</sup>, as a grant holder, you are able to move funds between categories (there are exceptions) and so, if you find that you have under-expenditure in certain budget lines, these monies could be utilised to cover the costs associated with OA publishing.

### **Should I include Article Processing Charges (APCs) as a separate budget line?**

Yes, you can include costs associated with APCs in a separate budget line in your grant application. This will support SFI's Finance and Grants team in tracking expenditure associated with OA publishing.

### **Does SFI's Open Access Policy apply to Discover Awards?**

Yes, it applies to all SFI Grants (awards).

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/SFI-Grant-Budget-Policy-November-2021.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://irel.ie/open-access/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/budget-finance-related-policies/>

### **Should data arising from SFI-funded research be made openly available?**

Yes, SFI recommends that all research outputs (including data, accompanying metadata, software etc) arising from the research it funds should be submitted to discipline-specific OA repositories that are recognised by your research community, and should be aligned with FAIR principles - Findable, Accessible, Interoperable & Reusable<sup>24</sup>. However, SFI also recognises that this may not be possible in certain circumstances and therefore, the data should be as open as possible and as closed as necessary. The associated publication should include information on how to access the related resources. Science Europe's Practical Guide to the International Alignment of Research Data Management<sup>25</sup> provides some guidance on selecting trustworthy repositories. In line with Science Europe recommendations, many SFI Programme Calls now require a Data Management Plan (DMP)<sup>26</sup> at the submission stage, detailing data management responsibilities and resources, including adherence to FAIR principles.

### **How do I find a suitable repository?**

In the first instance, you should consider uploading your Author Accepted Manuscript (AAM) to your institution's repository. Where an institutional repository does not exist and/or to maximise the visibility of your work, OpenDOAR<sup>27</sup> is a useful resource for identifying appropriate repositories to deposit publications and other research outputs in. Your institutional librarian may be able to provide guidance about suitable data repositories. CoreTrustSeal<sup>28</sup> is another useful resource for browsing available research data repositories.

A list of mandatory and recommended requirements for repositories has been developed by cOAlition S<sup>29</sup>.

SFI acknowledges that many repositories are still transitioning towards the mandated and recommended requirements.

### **Where should I deposit associated data and software?**

SFI recommends that data, accompanying metadata and/or software should be submitted to discipline-specific repositories that are recognised by your research community. The Science Europe 'Practical Guide to the International Alignment of Research Data Management'<sup>30</sup> provides some guidance on selecting trustworthy repositories. Where no specific repositories exist for your research area there are a number of generalist repositories that can be used, e.g., Open Science Framework<sup>31</sup>, figshare<sup>32</sup>, Zenodo<sup>33</sup>, GitHub<sup>34</sup>, Mendeley Data<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/practical-guide-to-the-international-alignment-of-research-data-management/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://v2.sherpa.ac.uk/opensoar/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.coretrustseal.org/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.coalition-s.org/technical-guidance-and-requirements/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.scienceeurope.org/our-resources/practical-guide-to-the-international-alignment-of-research-data-management/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://osf.io/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://figshare.com/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://zenodo.org/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://github.com/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://data.mendeley.com/>

Your institutional librarian may be able to provide guidance about suitable data repositories. CoreTrustSeal<sup>36</sup> is another useful resource for browsing available research data repositories.

### **What are preprints?**

Preprints are publications that are made openly available before peer-review and publication in a journal. Preprints accelerate dissemination, increase transparency and reproducibility, allow you to establish priority of discoveries and ideas and provides the opportunity to showcase recent achievements.

SFI recognises pre-print articles (associated with a persistent identifier, e.g., DOI) as valuable research outputs in application and evaluation processes. However, they cannot be used when confirming your eligibility for calls, i.e., when a particular call requires a minimum amount of publications to be eligible to apply, those publications must be peer reviewed.

### **Does depositing a preprint make my publication compliant with SFI's Open Access policy?**

No. SFI encourages researchers to publish preprints however [SFI's Open Access Policy](#) requires that the Version of Record (VoR), or Authors Accepted Manuscript **after** peer-review must be made openly available. A preprint would not fulfil this criterion.

### **Does my masters or PhD thesis have to be Open Access when I submit it to my institution's library to comply with SFI's Open Access Policy?**

No, **only** peer-reviewed publications must be immediately available from the date of publication (no embargo permitted), with a Creative Commons attribution licence (CC-BY) and a Rights Retention Statement.

### **Do books, book chapters, or review articles have to be immediately available upon publication?**

No. At present, only peer-reviewed research articles and peer-reviewed conference proceedings must be made immediately open without embargo. SFI encourages that academic books, book chapters, review articles, research data or other outputs that may arise from SFI funded research are made as open as possible and as closed as necessary after publication.

**SFI will update this FAQ document regularly.**

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.coretrustseal.org/>