

# OA is A-OK!

## Challenging Open Access Publishing Fear in the Humanities

# **So you are not so excited about Open Access Publishing...**

**WHAT EVEN IS AN OA AGREEMENT?**

**Why should I care? Traditional publishing  
hasn't bothered me!**

**What are the author fees like?**

**WHAT JOURNALS ARE OA? DO THEY  
EXIST? DO THEY MATTER?**

**THIS WILL BE MORE WORK TO DO ON TOP OF MY BUSY  
SCHEDULE.**

**...this guide just might change  
your mind!**

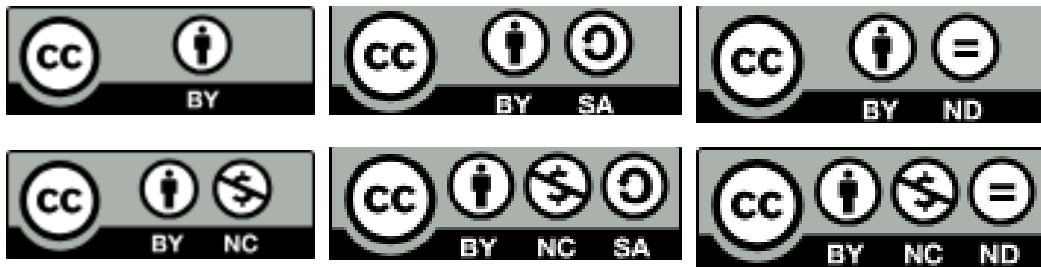
# What even is Open Access?

An open access publishing agreement means that the resource you create and publish (journal article, monograph, other published work) is available to viewers for free, without a paywall. Paywalls are financial barriers that bar information access and require the payment of journal subscriptions or one-time fees to access information.

## Does this mean my work is in the public domain??

Absolutely not...unless you want it to be! Works published via open access have Creative Commons licenses assigned to them. These licenses help authors protect their work and let them determine the use and re-use rules for their publication.

If you've ever seen these symbols and wondered what they are...



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**Here is my CC license for this work!**

# Why does it even matter??

## More visibility, more citations

According to the Author's Alliance, open access resources are prioritized in search engine results, and without paywalls, more people stick around to examine the contents. With easy access to quality information, people from around the globe are more likely to cite this information, boosting citation numbers, visibility, and information exchange.

## More equitable knowledge sharing

With information being available for free, more people have access to it. This means students, instructors, and researchers from less endowed institutions, with limited library funds, or with limited access to academic institutions can still access quality information on a topic they care about.

Theoretically, this can positively stimulate the destabilization of academic research from the global north or the wealthiest countries, creating waves of diversity in thought and origin of information.

## Fighting the System

So many academics have been burned by over-priced publishing fees on mandatory publications, been the victim of big publishing houses, and felt powerless in the publishing process. OA publishing is fundamentally based on proliferating author and human rights in publishing and information access. OA publishing may be an easy way to fight against global publishing conglomerates. Or at the very least it lets Big Publishing know that the people want change.

### Information adapted from:

Rubow, L., Shen, R., & Schofield, B. L. (2016). Understanding Open Access: When, Why & How to Make Your Work Openly Accessible. Authors Alliance. <https://go.umd.edu/2b6n>

# **OA publishing is NOT one size fits all; there is an appropriate option to fit your use needs and comfort!**

## **Closed Access**

This is the traditional model of publishing a journal article or monograph. You submit your work to a journal and sign a contract with the publishing agents. People have to pay a fee or subscribe to a journal to access your work. You also have to pay publishing fees.

## **Hybrid Access**

This involves negotiating with a traditional publisher to argue for an open access option. This depends on the publication standards and subscription models used by a journal or publishing house. This might mean an embargo on a work being Open Access until a specific date, or simply paying a fee and checking off a box. This option almost always has an APC.

### **Information adapted from:**

Oberländer, A. & Open Access Network. (2025, October 21). Green, Gold, and Diamond Open Access. Open Access Network. <https://go.umd.edu/2b6d>

# Green OA

This is a combination of the traditionally published manuscript, with a “self-archived” twist. Basically, in a green OA agreement, you agree to make a copy of your work, either a pre-print or a post-print available in an open access repository. This could be your academic institution’s (such as UMD’s DRUM) or a general OA pre-print space like SSRN. This option may or may not have a cost associated.

# Gold OA

What makes a work “Gold OA” is its publication in a born open access journal or collection. These works still go through the rigorous pre-publication process and authors may have to pay fees, however the article/work is available open access from the beginning. No one has to pay to access this resource.

# Diamond OA

A diamond open access publication is a gold publication on steroids. Basically, it has all the same principals as the gold with the fees waived. These publications put more emphasis on knowledge sharing than commercial enterprise.

## Information adapted from:

Oberländer, A. & Open Access Network. (2025, October 21). Green, Gold, and Diamond Open Access. Open Access Network. <https://go.umd.edu/2b6d>

# The costs have to be outrageous...

Not necessarily! APCs (article processing charges) are massive problems in academic publishing, even when publishing open access. However there are ways to circumvent these outrageous costs. Here are some quick tips to reduce your costs or negotiate them down, when trying to publish OA.

## Utilize institutional Research or Publishing Funds

Academic institutions with endowments and a goal of producing publications may have funds to pay for your APCs. Sometimes you have to generate an argument as to why you want to publish open access or sometimes you just have to apply for funds.

## Look for Diamond Open Access Publications

Diamond OA journals have fees waived or no fees at all, to support the free exchange of information. If you have reduced funds, a diamond OA journal might just fit your needs and wants!

## Use your Institutional Repository!

An institutional repository is an academic institution's way of archiving the research that was produced at the institution. It is free to use and uploading information can be made simple with the help of a librarian. Did I mention its free?

# Where can I find OA journals?



## The Directory of Open Access Journals

The Directory of Open Access Journals is a great place to search for open access journals. Articles indexed in this database may also be indexed in your institution's library catalogue, making searching and accessing even easier. For each journal listing on DOAJ, it tells you if there are APCs, what CC license is used, and a brief overview of each resources' publication process.

## What about impact factors?

### Still available for OA or Hybrid OA journals!

Many open access journals, or hybrid access journals, have impact factors calculated for them using Clarivate's Journal Impact Factor tool. This is especially true for journals that have transitioned to hybrid access, or optional open access; many of these journals have a long legacy of publication, but have become open access to adjust to modern information wants and needs. Some born-OA journals do not have a JIF available to them on the Clarivate platform, but that is not to say they never will. This may be due to many factors like the size of the publication or the recency of its creation.

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# A quick guide to your most pressing Open Access publishing questions for the humanities.

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