3. Gold Open Access

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What is the Gold route (Gold OA)?

The Gold route (Gold OA) refers to articles that are freely accessible *immediately* at the time of publication.

This is possible either through Open Access journals or with the publisher's agreement for books.

- The Directory of OA Journals (DOAJ) lists the various Gold OA journals that meet scholarly publishing standards;
- The Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB) lists academic books. OpenEdition is another platform for Open Access books, primarily in French. Both are excellent sources for identifying publishers that already publish in Open Access.

Works published in Open Access are often protected by an open Creative Commons licence.

Scientific publishing is not free. The Gold route shifts costs from the reader to the author. Gold OA is therefore an "author-pays" model and often involves the payment of article processing charges (APC) for articles, and book processing charges (BPC) for books. APC and BPC fees for purely Gold OA publications arising from research projects it funds are covered by the SNSF and, according to certain criteria, may be covered by UNIL's Gold Open Access Fund.

What should I do if there is no Gold Open Access journal in my field?

The Gold route has developed considerably in recent years; however, you may not find a suitable journal in which to publish your results. In that case, you will need to explore other publication routes and choose a title of interest that will allow you to publish via either the Hybrid route or the Green route.

The SNSF primarily requires publication via the Gold route and tolerates the Green route if there is no embargo on the dissemination of the manuscript. UNIL does not impose any particular publication route — all are accepted — and recommends publishing in Open Access whenever possible.

Do all Open Access journals charge Article Processing Charges (APC)?

No.

Many OA journals do not charge publication fees (APCs). Indeed, 74% of journals listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals, DOAJ, do not charge APCs.

The publishing process is not without cost. Gold OA journals that do not charge APCs rely on funding from universities, academies, funders, libraries, etc., to operate. These are subsidised OA journals and constitute the Diamond OA model, in which articles are free both for the author and for the reader.

Why do we have to pay Article Processing Charges (APC)?

Gold Open Access journals fund themselves through advertising and through the fees associated with publishing articles (APCs). These charges vary from €1,000 to more than €6,000 per article. There are no standard rules; each journal or publisher determines the amount it considers appropriate.

Through Read & Publish agreements, it may be possible to obtain either a reduction on the APC — which generally allows the amount accepted by the Gold OA Fund (FGOA) to be reached — or full coverage, meaning no cost to the author.

If the fees exceed the amount accepted by the FGOA and there is no agreement for full coverage, the cost of the publication falls to the author or their department.

Since the Gold route is the preferred route for the SNSF, the SNSF covers Gold route publications according to its own criteria.