

6. No Deal situation

This FAQ aims to answer the main questions related to the current No Deal situation between Swiss universities and certain major scientific publishers, notably Springer Nature and Sage. Following national negotiations to obtain “Read & Publish” agreements—allowing both access to journals and Open Access publication—the proposed terms were not deemed to be in line with the objectives set by swissuniversities. As a result, new temporary practices for publishing, accessing articles, and editorial evaluation are now in place. The answers below explain what this means in practical terms for UNIL researchers and what alternatives to prioritize during this period.

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What is a Read & Publish agreement and why are we in a No Deal situation with Springer/Sage?

A Read and Publish agreement is an agreement with publishers that not only guarantees access to scientific publications (Read part) but also allows open publication for researchers (Publish part). These agreements are negotiated at the Swiss level with major scientific journal publishers (Elsevier, Wiley, Springer Nature, Sage, Taylor and Francis, Ovid, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Karger). The annual costs cover access to journals and publication fees for a limited or unlimited number of articles, depending on the agreement, in a single payment.

The terms offered by these publishers did not meet the requirements set (see below), and we are therefore currently in a no-deal situation.

Who negotiates Read & Publish agreements and how are decisions made?

Read and Publish licenses are negotiated by the Consortium of Swiss Academic Libraries (CSAL). Acting on behalf of swissuniversities, the Consortium represents more than 40 Swiss universities and institutions. This collective representation strengthens Switzerland's position in negotiations with scientific publishers.

Decision-making processes vary depending on the publisher:

- **For Elsevier, Springer Nature, and Wiley (the “Big Deals”):** The [negotiation objectives](#) are defined by the Open Science Delegation (DelOS) and then approved by the members of swissuniversities. By signing, the universities, institutions, and libraries concerned support these objectives and undertake not to conduct parallel negotiations. The results and experiences of previous negotiations are regularly discussed between the various stakeholders (universities, libraries, institutions). The final decision on whether to accept the agreement is taken by the Open Science Delegation (DelOS).
- **For other publishers:** Negotiations are based on the same principles and objectives as those for Big Deals. However, decisions are made directly by the libraries and institutions concerned.

Can I still publish with Sage/Springer Nature?

In order to support the national negotiating team and in accordance with the recommendations of swissuniversities, researchers are invited to temporarily refrain from publishing in Springer Nature/Sage journals and to favor alternatives, with the support of libraries to guide them.

Researchers are encouraged to prioritize publishing their articles in journals included/covered by other agreements. Please consult the [complete list of agreements with OA components](#).

When publication with these publishers is still desired or necessary, the conditions will depend on the type of journal:

- **Gold OA journal (publishes only OA articles):** Neither UNIL, the libraries, nor the SNSF will cover gold APCs during a no-deal period for articles submitted after the contract has ended.
- **Hybrid journal (publishes both closed and OA articles simultaneously):** Neither UNIL, the libraries, nor the SNSF will cover hybrid APCs during a no-deal period. The university also recommends that its researchers do not pay publication fees individually. The preferred route is the green route: depositing and sharing the publication in IRIS, in accordance with Open Access requirements.
- **For gold or hybrid journals,** it is also possible to request the transfer of the corresponding author position to a co-author affiliated with an institution that has an agreement in place.

Is the green route sufficient?

Yes, the green route is a legitimate Open Access route, both for UNIL and for many funders, subject to certain conditions.

The SNSF authorises secondary publication in institutional (IRIS) or general (arxiv.org, PubMed, Europe PMC or Zenodo) databases for:

- Articles initially published in closed access, provided that access to the publication is possible without embargo. However, if the article is the result of a project submitted to the SNSF before 1 January 2023, a six-month embargo is permitted. Exceptions may be granted by the SNSF provided that it can be proven that an attempt was made to ask the publisher to lift the embargo and that the publisher refused.

- Final manuscripts, i.e. the latest version of the article incorporating all the changes requested by the peer reviewers, but before layout by the publisher. This version must be distributed under a CC-BY licence.

It is important to note that archiving on personal pages or academic social networks (such as ResearchGate or Academia) does not guarantee long-term archiving, access without an account, or good visibility. This type of archiving is therefore not considered Open Access.

What happens if I have submitted my article to an Open Access publisher and it is accepted after the No Deal situation begins?

The situation depends on the type of journal and the timing of the submission and acceptance of the article.

- If the article was submitted to a Gold journal:
 - Coverage of publication charges (APCs) depends on the funding available at the time of acceptance (institutional funds, SNSF funds, funding by the department or faculty).
- It is recommended that you contact the publication support service at Unil (open.access@unil.ch) and CHUV/Unisanté (open.access@chuv.ch) as soon as possible to assess the available options (change of journal, green road deposit, publication deadlines, etc.).
- In the case of a hybrid journal:
 - Neither Unil, the libraries nor the SNSF will cover hybrid APCs during a no-deal period. The university also recommends that its researchers do not pay publication fees individually. The preferred route is the green route: depositing and sharing the publication in IRIS, in accordance with Open Access requirements.

Case-by-case assessment

Aware that these situations can be problematic for researchers, UNIL and BCUL will examine specific cases on a case-by-case basis and will seek, as far as possible, appropriate solutions, taking into account the context of the submission, publishers' constraints and Open Access requirements.

Please note that Unil will not cover Gold OA costs for articles submitted after the start of the situation without a contract.

Can I continue to peer review for these publishers or serve on the editorial boards of their journals?

Scientific editors involved in journals published by these publishing houses are invited to critically reflect on their editorial commitment in the current context. While it is recognized that scientific editors generally have very limited room for maneuver with regard to the strategic decisions of publishing houses, certain forms of positioning are nevertheless possible.

In particular, when deemed relevant and feasible, editors may consider collectively or individually communicating their concerns to the journals concerned, for example by temporarily suspending their editorial activities for the duration of a no-deal scenario and explaining the reasons for this decision to the operational editorial teams.

As for peer review activities for journals published by these publishers, they should be critically reevaluated in the current context and should not be considered a priority.

How can I access articles in a No Deal situation?

We recommend searching for articles in their Open Access version, which is made easier by installing search “buttons” ([Unpaywall](#) or [Core Discovery](#)) in Firefox, Chrome or Edge browsers, searching for versions available on institutional platforms (e.g., [IRIS](#)), or requesting a copy directly from the author.

The BCUL and the various faculty libraries are also available to assist you in your research through the following services:

- Print subscriptions and electronic access until the end of 2025
- [BCUL interlibrary loan \(ILL\) service](#)
- The information desk at your BCUL site
- [The BCUL question and answer service](#)
- [The BiUM article delivery service](#) (see conditions at [bium.ch](#))
- [The BiUM information service](#)

Can I subscribe to one or more individual journals/articles?

Both are strongly discouraged:

- Paying for an article directly from the publisher is detrimental to the successful outcome of negotiations, as it represents a financial flow to the publisher. In addition, the price of articles is often very high.
- Paying for an individual subscription is detrimental to the successful outcome of negotiations, as it represents a financial flow to the publisher.