

# 7. Gradual phase-out of Read & Publish

This FAQ answers questions related to UNIL's decision to gradually phase out “Read & Publish” licenses with certain publishers. Here you will find information, which will be updated as it becomes available, on the phase-out schedule, the reasons for this change, alternatives for accessing publications, and options for publishing in open access.

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# What is a Read & Publish agreement and what is it for?

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.

These agreements were designed primarily to put an end to double dipping, whereby institutions paid twice for hybrid open access journals: once for access to the journal as a whole and once for publication. Read & Publish agreements are temporary in nature and are intended to initiate and continue the [transition from Hybrid Open Access to Full Gold Open Access](#), with the aim of achieving a global shift to a sustainable, fully open access publishing model. However, despite this vision, the transition to this new paradigm remains slow, as highlighted by [cOAlition-S](#), among others.

## 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. Negotiations are conducted by swissuniversities and agreements are concluded in consultation with the libraries and institutions concerned.

# Who finances the Read & Publish agreements for UNIL?

Under the regulations governing the Acquisition Fund for the University of Lausanne of the Canton of Vaud, the Cantonal and University Library of Lausanne (BCUL) is responsible for building the collections necessary for teaching and research at the University of Lausanne. As such, the University of Lausanne allocates an annual budget to the BCUL for this purpose.

The University of Lausanne therefore finances these agreements, while the BCUL is responsible for their financial and administrative management.

## How much does this type of agreement cost?

Several agreements are subject to confidentiality clauses, particularly with regard to their costs. Details, if they can be disclosed, are available on the Swiss Library Consortium (CSAL) [agreements website](#).

In 2025, 63% of the University of Lausanne's subsidy to the Cantonal and University Library of Lausanne (BCUL) for electronic resources was spent on products from ten major publishers, while only 8% was invested in Diamond and Gold models, and 29% in nearly 300 other types of products (specialized databases, journals from small publishers, and ebooks) . Prices are increasing by 5 to 10% each year, feeding publishers' profit margins of up to 40%.

# Why is UNIL withdrawing from Read & Publish licenses?

The University of Lausanne's decision to gradually withdraw from Read & Publish licenses is part of the evolution of its institutional policy on Open Access and its increased alignment with the Swiss national Open Access strategy, revised in 2024.

This strategy aims in particular to reduce the scientific system's dependence on a small number of large commercial publishers, promote academic quality and bibliodiversity, and ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the scientific publishing model.

However, despite the progress made possible by Read & Publish agreements, the current model is now showing its limitations. In 2025, nearly two-thirds of the subsidy allocated by UNIL to BCUL for electronic resources was spent on products from ten major publishers, to the detriment of a wide range of other resources essential to teaching and research (specialized databases, journals from small publishers, electronic books). Furthermore, the costs of these licenses are rising steadily, at a rate of 5 to 10% per year, which calls into question their sustainability in the medium term.

Continuing with this model would ultimately lead to a weakening of the diversity of collections and increased dependence on a few dominant players in the scientific publishing market, without fully achieving the objectives of Open Access.

# How can I access articles without Read & Publish agreements?

At this stage, the precise terms and conditions for exiting Read & Publish agreements have not yet been finalized. They will depend in particular on the contractual conditions specific to each publisher and the results of the analyses currently being conducted by BCUL, in collaboration with the faculties.

It is therefore likely that the conditions and alternatives will vary from one publisher to another. Specific information for each publisher will be published [in this wiki](#) when it becomes available.

In the event that read access is restricted or interrupted, there are several proven and complementary solutions that allow you to continue accessing the articles you need for your research:

We therefore 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 [biu.ch](#))
- [The BiUM information service](#)

# How can I publish in OA without Read & Publish agreements?

Open Access publishing is not limited to Read & Publish agreements. Today, there are a variety of Open Access routes, recognized by UNIL and major funding agencies, that allow research results to continue to be freely accessible.

These include:

- The green route (depositing and sharing in IRIS);
- The Gold route (publication in fully Open Access journals, with payment of APCs);
- The Diamond route (Open Access journals with no publication fees for authors).

As with the “Read” component, the terms of the “Publish” component following the release of the Read & Publish agreements have not yet been finalized. They will depend on publishers, contractual frameworks, and decisions made at the institutional and national levels.

More detailed information will be provided as analyses and negotiations progress and [will be available on this wiki](#).

In the meantime, researchers are encouraged to favor recognized Open Access routes, particularly the green route, and to take advantage of the support offered by the publication support service at Unil ([open.access@unil.ch](mailto:open.access@unil.ch)) and CHUV/Unisanté ([open.access@chuv.ch](mailto:open.access@chuv.ch)).

## Is the green route sufficient?

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

The SNSF authorizes secondary publication in institutional databases (IRIS) or general databases (arxiv.org, PubMed, Europe PMC, or Zenodo) 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 January 1, 2023, a six-month embargo is permitted.
- Final manuscripts, i.e., the latest version of the article incorporating all changes requested by peers, but before layout by the publisher. This version must be distributed under a CC-BY license.

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.