Open Scholarship at the University of Melbourne

Why Pursue Open Access?

Open Access Publications, Part 1

**Video transcript**6 February 2023

# Introduction

Welcome to the first of three videos on open access publications. In this video, we will introduce the concept of open access and ask: why pursue open access? We will consider the benefits, the University's principles, and grant funding policies. Finally, we'll introduce the pathways to open access that will be the focus of the next two videos.

The open access movement took off in the early 2000s with the goal of bringing research publications out from behind paywalls.

Paywalls are the notices you receive if you try to access scholarly publications in subscription journals or ebooks when you don't have an individual or institutional subscription. One-off access costs for individual articles or book chapters are often around 40 to 65 AUD. This makes the cost of accessing research unmanageable for most students and researchers not affiliated with institutions, or at institutions unable to afford ever-more-expensive subscriptions, not to mention professionals and the general public.

When authors and publishers embrace open access, they bring their research publications out from behind these paywalls. But more than just being freely available online, truly open access publications use open licenses which allow others to access, download, use, adapt and share the work. Creative Commons licenses are the most frequently used open licenses for publications as they clearly communicate what readers can do with a work.

Now, importantly, when we talk about open access publications, here, we're talking about open access versions of peer reviewed research publications. So we're not looking here at preprints or submitted manuscripts, which have not yet been through the editorial and peer review processes. Rather, we're looking at two possible versions: either the final published paper, which is available through the publishers website; or the Author Accepted Manuscript, or AAM, which is the author's final manuscript after peer reviewed and revisions, but before the publisher's typesetting, formatting, and copy editing.

It's worth noting that the term "open access" is sometimes used to refer to other aspects of open scholarship and open research. Open access data or open access software, for example. But here we're just looking at peer reviewed journal articles, conference papers, books, and book chapters.

# Benefits of Open Access

Let's look at some of the key benefits of open access.

First and foremost, removing financial barriers to research allows it to reach a wider audience and get more exposure. This, in turn, means that there is greater potential for research to impact public policy, including state and federal government policies, and to reach practitioners such as teachers, engineers, nurses, curators, and scientists.

Importantly, open access is inclusive of researchers around the world, including those in the Global South who may not have access to expensive journal subscriptions or academic ebooks.

Pursuing open access also means being compliant with grant requirements - requirements that are often based on the principle that taxpayer-funded research should be accessible to taxpayers.

Finally, we will find that open access research is associated with higher citation rates.

Let's take a closer look at that...

# Open Access Citation Advantage

Open access publications often benefit from what's become known as the open access citation advantage.

The figures here cover University of Melbourne affiliated journal articles published between 2016 and 2021. From those on the left, we see that open access articles have a higher average number of citations than their closed or paywalled counterparts (23.7 citations compared to 14.1).

And on the right, we also see that a higher proportion of open access articles receive online engagement, such as on social media, in news articles, and in policy documents, compared to closed articles (74.1% of open access papers receive attention, compared to 57.8% of closed papers).

# Principles for Open Access to Research Outputs at Melbourne

The University also has a position on open access expressed in the Principles for Open Access to Research Outputs at Melbourne.

This articulates our commitment to making our research as open as possible to improve the public good.

The Principles also note the responsibilities of our researchers towards open access, which includes depositing peer reviewed manuscripts of paywalled research in a suitable repository, such as our institutional repository Minerva Access.

# Open Access Pathways

To finish this video, let's take a look at today's scholarly publishing ecosystem, including the publisher and repository pathways to open access.

So, on the one hand, we have fully open access journals and publishers, sometimes referred to as "gold" open access.

On the other, we have subscription journals and traditional academic book publishers. The majority of these are now hybrid journals or publishers, meaning they offer open access publishing for an additional fee. However, a few fully closed journals and publishers remain, not offering any open access publishing options.

One pathway to open access is through the publishers themselves. We call this "publisher open access".

For open access journals and publishers, this may require payment of fees, although many open access journals, and even some book publishers, do not levy fees at all. Instead, they are financially supported by institutions, organisations, or societies.

For hybrid publishers, open access publishing fees tend to be quite high, averaging about 4,500 AUD, but ranging from a few hundred dollars to over 15,000 AUD.

Authors can sometimes avoid having to pay open access publishing fees if their institution has signed an open access publishing agreement with the publisher.

Under the publisher open access pathway, the article, book, or book chapter is immediately available as open access upon publication, usually being published under a Creative Commons license.

Publications not published open access will end up behind a paywall. Paywalled articles and book chapters, however, are usually eligible for the "repository open access" pathway.

This involves making an approved version of the work, usually the Author Accepted Manuscript, open access in a repository.

Publisher policies will often impose an embargo before it can be made open access, with 12 months being most common.

Sometimes called "green" open access, this pathway is always free.

# Outro

Thank you for joining us for the first of three videos on open access.

In our next video, we'll look more closely at publisher open access, discussing how to find open access journals and how to use open access publishing agreements.

Then, in part three, we'll delve into repository open access, looking at how you can make your Author Accepted Manuscripts open access for free in our institutional repository, Minerva Access.

# Contact a librarian

For enquiries relating to open scholarship, including open access, open research, and open educational resources (OERs), please email your discipline's [Liaison Librarians](https://library.unimelb.edu.au/liaison), or arrange a time to [consult a librarian](https://unimelb.service-now.com/student?id=sc_cat_item&sys_id=6398b1e1dbc763c00032cae43a961971&category_id=2768ae9d4fae22807861a90f0310c7f0).

Alternatively, you can [contact the library](https://library.unimelb.edu.au/contact_the_library) by emailing [library-enquiries@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:library-enquiries@unimelb.edu.au).