

Open Access Explained

As of May 1st, 2015, open access is mandated by the [Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications](#). Open access refers to scholarly research that is made freely available on the internet. In a scholarly environment, open access often focuses on journal articles.

[What is Open Access?](#)

Open access is a growing international movement that continues to gain momentum worldwide. Based on the principle that all research should be freely accessible online after publication, open access removes barriers that once restricted public access to scholarly research and knowledge.

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[Is Open Access my choice or is it mandated?](#)

The [Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications](#) has required all researchers funded by [NSERC](#), [SSHRC](#), or [CIHR](#) from May 1, 2015 to make their peer-reviewed journal articles freely available online within 12 months of publication.

The compliance requirements for health researchers have not changed, but CIHR-funded researchers must now refer to the [Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications](#)

Several funding agencies already mandate open access. Visit [SHERPA/JULIET](#), a database of research funders' open access policies, to learn more.

McMaster University Senate recently passed a motion to sign the [Berlin Declaration](#) encouraging McMaster researchers to make their work open access.

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[Why Open Access?](#)

Open access journals make research freely available online to anyone with access to the internet.

It can provide immediate, public access to research funded by taxpayers.

Open access means greater dissemination of knowledge, a larger research impact, and potential for higher citation rates. Evidence for increased citations with open access can be found at the [Open Access Citation Advantage Service](#) website.

Altmetric tools such as [ORCID](#) are available to help track your research impact with accuracy.

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[Where do I find Open Access scholarly research?](#)

- [Directory of Open Access Journals](#) (DOAJ): provides access to full text, quality controlled, scholarly open access journals in a variety of disciplines.
- [MacSphere](#): An online institutional repository of McMaster's open access scholarly output.
- [OpenDOAR](#): A global directory of open access institutional or subject-based repositories

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[Is Open Access compatible with peer-review?](#)

Yes. Many open access journals are peer-reviewed. Most self-archived articles have also been peer-reviewed.

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[Who pays for Open Access?](#)

Open access is free to users, but all publishing has a cost. A number of business models support open access publishing. Some open access journals charge a publishing fee to offset these costs.

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[Who pays author fees?](#)

Some open access journals charge authors a publishing fee. Many non-open access journals also make page or author charges in addition to subscription charges to readers. The Tri-Agency Open Access Policy identifies the cost of publishing as an eligible expense under the Use of Grant Funds

Use [SHERPA/JULIET](#) to find more info about research funders' open access policies

McMaster University does not offer grants for Author Processing Charges (APC). However, researchers at McMaster are currently eligible for some open access publishing discounts as a benefit of subscriptions paid for by the McMaster University Libraries. To learn more about the discounts, please see the [Library Support for Open Access](#) web page.

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Published on McMaster University Library (<https://library.mcmaster.ca>)

Funding Sources - Some granting agencies allow author costs as an eligible expense. Grant opportunities and their related policies can be accessed through the following websites:

- [ROADS](#) (Research Office for Administration, Development and Support)
- [HRS](#) (Health Research Services)

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