

FAQ Related to this Proposed Policy:

Question: What is “Open Access”?

Answer: “Open Access” describes a family of copyright licensing policies under which copyright owners make their works available publicly, without access being limited to subscribers or purchasers of the material, and typically in online databases. Material in “open access” archives and databases is still covered by copyright law, but “open access” terms and conditions apply that specifically permit non-profit and scholarly uses of the work and that permit the copyright owner to include a limited number of other conditions, such as attribution of the work to the original author. “Open access” archives may include both copyrighted content and public domain content (such as works created by the federal government) at the same time. Open Access does not mean an “open door” for publication. Open Access archives include works that describe the results of research that Authors give to the world for the sake of inquiry and knowledge without expectation of payment. These works are often, but not exclusively, peer-reviewed.

For more information on the Open Access movement, see the accompanying background paper.

Question: Why should I care about Open Access?

Answer: Open Access offers a number of benefits to authors. Open Access helps authors disseminate their scholarly works to the broadest possible audience by eliminating the price and permission barriers of subscription journals.

Open Access speeds research progress, productivity, and knowledge translation. The quicker and more comprehensively research is made available, the faster other researchers and scholars can learn from, replicate, and otherwise use that work. Making your works available under Open Access principles also allows authors to share their research for the public good, not only with colleagues at the University of Pittsburgh but around the world.

Question: How does Open Access impact copyright for my scholarly works?

Answer: Works published under Open Access principles are protected by copyright. As the copyright holders, authors are simply making Open Access content available to a wider audience than content published in a subscription journal.

According to the traditional publication agreement, all rights—including copyright—go to the journal. Nevertheless, you, as the author of a work, would probably want to include sections of your article in later works. You might want to give copies to your class or distribute it among colleagues. And you would likely want to place it on your Web page or in an online repository if you had the choice. These are all ways to give your research wide exposure and fulfill your goals as a scholar, but they are inhibited by the traditional agreement. Making your articles available under Open Access guidelines helps you achieve these goals.

Question: Can I retain these rights and still publish my article in a ranked journal?

Answer: Yes. A growing number of publishers have adopted policies to allow placement of an author's final copy or in some cases, the published version, in an institutional repository. In these cases, no negotiation is necessary. Please visit the SHERPA RoMEO site, <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/>, to help determine author rights for different journals.

In other cases, you can often retain these rights by negotiating with the publisher for them. The ULS recommends the SPARC Author Addendum, found at <http://www.arl.org/sparc/author/addendum.shtml>, which is a legal instrument that modifies the publisher's agreement and allows you to keep key rights to your articles. The Author Addendum is a free resource developed by SPARC in partnership with Creative Commons, <http://www.creativecommons.org>, and Science Commons, <http://science.creativecommons.org>, established nonprofit organizations that offer a range of copyright options for many different creative endeavors.

Question: Why should I place my article in Pitt's institutional repository?

Answer: Making your articles available under Open Access guidelines via D-Scholarship@Pitt, the University's institutional repository, provides perpetual and stable access to your work, while increasing its visibility and discoverability. You can accomplish many of your scholarly goals—disseminating your research to the broadest possible audience, sharing it freely with colleagues and students, and finding a permanent place for it—by depositing your work in the institutional repository.

Question: The journal I want to publish my research in has a very restrictive policy about depositing in online repositories. Does the University's Open Access policy limit my choices for publishing in the best journals?

Answer: No, this policy is not intended to limit or adversely affect your publishing opportunities. If the publisher will not allow you to post a version of your article to the Pitt repository, you may still publish with that journal.

A citation-only record for your article will be created in the Pitt repository and a link to the permanent URL for your article will be added to the record, directing scholars to your published article on the publisher's website.

It should be noted, however, that often the publisher's requirements regarding posting your article to a repository may be satisfied by restricting access to the locally deposited copy to University of Pittsburgh users only or by restricting access for a period of time. The Office of Scholarly Communication and Publishing will investigate publisher's requirements to determine whether restricting access will allow a copy of your article to be posted to the Pitt repository.

Question: If I deposit my NIH-funded article in PubMed Central, do I also have to deposit it in the Pitt repository?

Answer: No, your only obligation under this policy would be to notify the ULS and provide the PubMed Central ID number (PMCID) for that article. The ULS would then add a record for the work and link to the full-text article from the local repository.

Question: Do I have to provide copies of all my previous publications for the repository under this policy?

Answer: No, the policy only applies to articles written after the policy's adoption by the School or Responsibility Center in which you work. Of course, you are encouraged to consider placing previous publications in the repository. In most cases, the publisher is probably the copyright holder for your articles and would need to give permission for you to place them in the repository. You can check your publishing agreement to determine whether they reserved the right to do this.

Question: This seems like a lot of work for me, and I am already busy teaching, conducting research, and writing. Is there assistance available to help me comply with this policy?

Answer: Yes. The ULS has established the Office of Scholarly Communication and Publishing and that office will deposit the scholarly works on behalf of University

authors. The office will gather bibliographic information about each work, record this information in D-Scholarship, and seek permission from the publisher to deposit the author's final copy (pre-print) or the published version (post-print) in the repository.

Question: How will such policies ultimately affect the economics of journal publishing and/or the viability of the journal(s) I rely on in my discipline?

Answer: The primary subscriber base for scholarly journals is the library market. A recent survey of academic libraries demonstrated that libraries will not cancel journal subscriptions based on the availability of portions of the content in open access venues. Up to 50% of the content of some medical journals is now freely available in PubMed Central and libraries are not canceling those titles. However, all journal publishing is under stress because library budgets have been severely impacted by the recession of the past few years. While libraries will not cancel titles because individual articles are placed into open access repositories, libraries are cutting journal subscriptions and readership is declining for most journals. This policy is in no way designed to impact negatively journal publishing but to increase access to research.

Question: Does this proposed policy apply to monographs, conference proceedings, etc.?

Answer: No, the mandate only applies to journal articles in scholarly journals. However, other kinds of published material (with permission of the copyright holder/publisher) may be placed into the institutional repository.

Question: What if my publisher allows open access in a repository, but requires an embargo for a period of time?

Answer: Embargo periods can be set for articles and other items deposited into the institutional repository. During the embargo period access to the document will be restricted to University of Pittsburgh users.

Question: Why not just encourage faculty to archive their articles on departmental or personal web sites?

Answer: D-Scholarship has been designed to provide permanent, long term storage and preservation of the University's research output. Materials in D-Scholarship are indexed and made searchable in a growing number of Internet search sites. There are many

other advanced features available to authors and readers of D-Scholarship@Pitt, such as sharing through social networking tools like Facebook and Twitter, receiving updates on new deposits through RSS feeds, many options for exporting citations for documents found in the repository and tracking of usage statistics at the document level. Advantages of the repository are that the material is permanently archived and available with a stable URL and registered unique identifier and the articles are indexed in a growing number of search sites.