



L-Università
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University of Malta Open Access Policy

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Abbreviations

AAM	Accepted Author Manuscript
APC	Article Processing Charges
BASE	Bielefeld Academic Search Engine
CORE	Connecting REpositories
IR	Institutional Repository
OAR@UM	Open Access Institutional Repository of the University of Malta
PV/VOR	Publisher Version/Version of Record
UM	University of Malta

Preamble

The Benefits of an Open Access Policy

The formal adoption of Open Access through an institutional policy allows institutions to become part of the evolving research and academic ecosystem where access to research is immediate and open to the benefit of both researchers and citizens. An institution and its researchers may expect multiple benefits from the implementation of an Open Access Policy:

The Institution:

- Collects and preserves its scientific output and disseminates it through its institutional repository
- Provides the possibility of indexing and tracking the scientific output of the institution from international Open Archives Initiatives and search engines on the internet such as Google Scholar, OpenAIRE, CORE and BASE
- Monitors the number of visits and use, and collects data and indicators that can be used in institutional planning, and the search for sources of funding
- Provides opportunities for the use and re-use of the institution's output for scientific purposes
- Strengthens international communication and collaboration channels and the institution's international profile

The Researchers:

- Enhance the visibility of their research and their citations
- Increase the usage of their research
- Increase the impact of their research
- Obtain a permanent link for each of their research output

1. Introduction

The University of Malta (UM) is the highest educational and research institution in the Maltese Islands, supporting a wide range of research programmes. Under this remit, the UM is committed to ensure the identification and preservation of its research output. This Open Access Policy will support the institution's attainment of this goal, and shall apply to all the intellectual output of the UM.

Open Access will facilitate wider dissemination of the UM's research output and a broader visibility for the University and its researchers alike. This policy has been drawn up to provide standard guidelines for researchers in making their research output available in Open Access. Therefore, researchers are to adhere to this Policy.

This Policy shall be managed and implemented by the Library, whose duties shall include the following:

- To drive and support the correct application, implementation and interpretation of, and compliance with this Policy
- To propose amendments to this Policy, in consultation with UMASA, to Senate with the aim of enhancing it and adapting it to prevailing scenarios

2. Definitions

The **Article Processing Charge (APC)** is the fee which some journals charge authors to publish their articles in Open Access. This fee may be covered by the research organisation or the researcher.

Copyright refers to the rights that creators have over their literary and artistic works.

An **Embargo** is a period of time that may be set by the publisher in the copyright transfer agreement during which access to the archived version of an article in a digital repository is restricted. Typical embargo periods range from 6 to 24 months, though some publishers may require an embargo of up to 48 months.

Gold Open Access refers to the publishing of a peer-reviewed article in an academic journal which makes the article openly available on the publisher's platform. A growing number of journals charge APCs for Open Access but there are many Open Access journals which do not charge any APC.

Green Open Access refers to the depositing or self-archiving of a copy of the final version (or post-print) of a peer-reviewed article, regardless of the journal (Open Access or non-Open Access) where it is published. If the article is published in Open Access, the copy to be deposited can be the Accepted Author Manuscript (AAM) or Publisher Version/Version of Record (PV/VOR). For articles published in non-Open Access journals where no APC is paid, there will usually be an embargo period to Open Access set by the publisher.

An **Institutional Repository** (IR) is an online archive which collects, preserves and disseminates the intellectual output of an institution. OAR@UM is the UM's institutional repository. It serves as an online platform for the submission and dissemination of Open Access research produced under the auspices of the UM. OAR@UM is managed by the Library.

Intellectual Property refers to creations of the mind, such as inventions, literary and artistic works, designs, and symbols, names and images used in commerce.

Metadata is structured information describing a resource for the purpose of indexing, discovery and identification. It includes elements such as title, author, abstract, institutional affiliation and name of journal that has accepted the scholarly work.

Open Access means the practice of providing online access to scientific/academic information which is free of charge to the end user and is also reusable. 'Scientific' refers to all academic disciplines. In the context of research and innovation, 'scientific/academic information' refers to peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, books and book chapters.

Peer review is part of the pre-publication process which ensures that the academic standards required of a particular discipline are met. A board of independent reviewers assesses the quality of content and evaluates the document for accuracy and validity.

Post-print is the final version of the output as accepted for publication, including all modifications arising from the peer review process. Post-print versions may have two forms: the Accepted Author Manuscript (AAM), or the Publisher Version (PV), also known as the publisher PDF or Version of Record (VOR).

“Request a Copy” Button appears on an institutional repository (IR) page describing the metadata of a scholarly work whose full-text is deposited in the IR but is not available in Open Access. This button allows would-be readers to request an electronic copy of the scholarly work for individual research purposes directly from the author.

Research means any systematic investigation or study funded by the UM, and intended as a contribution to scholarship. It refers to the research output created by the researcher in accordance with the UM’s Collective Agreement, and/or any research conducted through a research grant secured by virtue of the researcher’s affiliation with the UM.

Research Organisation means the University of Malta (UM) and/or any public organisation providing the researcher with funds/grants which are managed by the UM.

A **Researcher** is a member of staff of the UM who has a Council appointment of employment and who performs research as defined in this document.

3. Policy

The aim of this Policy is to support UM researchers in providing Open Access to their peer-reviewed research publications through deposit in OAR@UM.

- 3.1 Researchers are to deposit all research produced under the auspices of the UM in OAR@UM as soon as possible upon publication. Books are precluded from the scope of this Policy. Nevertheless, researchers are encouraged to upload a copy of their book/s whenever possible.
- 3.2 The full-text of all publications is to be made openly available at the time of deposit, or as soon as possible thereafter, subject to publishers’ agreements and/or the UM’s Intellectual Property Policy unless a justification from the academic is provided – in which instance this is to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by a Committee composed of a Rector’s delegate, the Director Library Services or his delegate and an UMASA representative.
- 3.3 Researchers may also opt to deposit a copy of the peer-reviewed research publication upon acceptance for publication accompanied by the publisher’s dated acceptance letter.
- 3.4 Researchers are free to publish in journals of their own choice.

- 3.5 In the case of publications that cannot be made immediately openly accessible because of publishers' restrictions, the deposit in OAR@UM is still required; but open access would only be secured when or if the publisher's embargo period lapses.
- 3.6 In all cases, the necessary metadata of all peer-reviewed research publications is to be made immediately openly accessible at the moment of deposit and the 'Request a Copy' button is available to provide immediate individual access.
- 3.7 As the author of the work, the researcher is the first copyright owner of the research output. Copyright is conferred automatically to all eligible works listed in the Copyright Act, Chapter 415 of the Laws of Malta. Ownership of Intellectual Property generated at the UM is covered by the [University of Malta Intellectual Property Policy](#). Where the teaching and scholarly materials are created through collaborative or contracted research, copyright may be subject to the terms and conditions of the respective contract.
- 3.8 The researcher should be aware of copyright obligations when signing contractual agreements with academic publishers. Authors must also ensure that a [Creative Commons Licence](#) of their choice is indicated when their research publication is made available in Open Access.
- 3.9 In the case of research that may potentially disclose commercially valuable Intellectual Property, the researcher is advised to consult the [University of Malta Intellectual Property Policy](#).
- 3.10 The UM is also committed to provide support with regards to copyright. See [University of Malta Copyright Guidelines](#).
- 3.11 The UM recommends that data sets are made available in Open Access. Data sets containing sensitive/confidential data can be placed in closed access.

4. Support and Monitoring

- 4.1 Adoption of Open Access shall be supported through the organisation of seminars, awareness raising events, and educational and training ventures.
- 4.2 The Library shall monitor policy compliance by comparing the content in OAR@UM against information gathered from indexing services.

- 4.3 The Library shall provide the necessary human resources to support the uploading of content in OAR@UM. Procedures of uploading research publications on OAR@UM can be found at <https://www.um.edu.mt/library/guidelinespolicies/oarpolicies>.
- 4.4 The Library shall undertake the necessary background checks to determine the status of peer-reviewed material submitted for inclusion in OAR@UM, in the light of any relevant copyright terms and agreements.
- 4.5 The Library shall provide and maintain the required infrastructure for the support of this Open Access Policy.
- 4.6 The Library shall also provide links and interoperability with other databases such as Google Scholar.
- 4.7 The Library shall implement search engine optimisation techniques to obtain high ranking placement of OAR@UM in the search results.

17th June 2021