



EMORY
LIBRARIES

NIH Public Access Policy: Understanding and Compliance

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NIH Public Access Policy

Effective July 1, 2025



PURPOSE

The NIH Public Access Policy ensures that the public has free and immediate access to peer-reviewed publications resulting from NIH-funded research, which promotes transparency and equity and accelerates scientific progress.



KEY CHANGE IN 2024 POLICY

- **Immediate Access:** Removes the previously allowed 12-month embargo period. Author accepted manuscripts (AAMs) must be made publicly available without delay on the official date of publication.
- **Submission requirement:** AAMs must be submitted to PubMed Central upon acceptance for publication.

DEFINITIONS

- **Author accepted manuscript (AAM):** The version of an article accepted by a journal after peer review but before final formatting.
- **Final published article:** The journal's authoritative version, even if not yet assigned to a volume or issue, aka "version of record."
- **Official date of publication:** The date the final version is first made available online or in print.



COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Researchers must comply as a condition of NIH funding.



Public access vs. open access

- **Public access**

- Work is openly shared online with no barriers to access.
- Two types
 - Author accepted manuscript version made available in an open repository like PubMed Central, **OR**
 - Open access, but **open access is not mandatory to comply with federal public access policies.**
- Usually distributed without an open license (unless it is OA).

- **Open access**

- A subcategory of public access.
- The work is openly shared online with no barriers to access, AND it carries an open license allowing downstream users to copy, distribute, and reuse it.

No-Fee Options for Publishing in Compliance with NIH Policy

Important! Open access (OA) publishing is NOT required by any federal public access policy, including NIH's.

Option 1: Non-OA

Publish non-OA in a **subscription** or **hybrid** journal with no APCs. Must choose a journal from this list of publishers that allow zero-embargo sharing of author-accepted manuscript version or **AAM** (after peer review but before publisher typesetting).

Option 2: OA

Publish in a journal from a **publisher that the Libraries have an OA publishing agreement with.** Your APC is paid for by the agreement.*

Option 3: OA

Look for an OA journal that does not charge APCs in the **Directory of Open Access Journals** by clicking "without fees" after searching your topic.

FINAL STEP! Submit AAM (if non-OA) or final published version (if OA) to PubMed Central.

Problems with submitting? Email nihms-help@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

*Must have valid university netID & password.

Questions? Contact the Scholarly Communications Office for help.

Beware of tricky publishing agreements

- Read publishing agreements carefully! Some contracts may state that you agree to . . .
 - **An exclusive license** to publish your article OA. Even though you keep your copyright, the contract may restrict what you can do with your article if you grant your publisher an exclusive license. More info from cOAlition S: [Exclusive licence to publish – now here's a thing.](#)
 - **Pay an OA fee** (APC) if you deposit your accepted manuscript in PMC with no embargo in violation of your publisher's policy.
- *Contact the [Scholarly Communications Office](#) if you need help understanding your publishing agreement!*

Questions about topics in this webinar?

Contact

- Jody Bailey, jody.bailey@emory.edu or scholcomm@listserv.cc.emory.edu
- Jeremy Kupsco, jkupsco@emory.edu

Questions about library research and resources?

Contact

- Your subject librarian or informationist at Emory University Libraries