

Position Statement on Open Access

Open access refers to the online version of published research being made available free at the point of use to anyone.

1. Background

As a learned society, charity and independent publisher, the Microbiology Society supports sustainable open access models which maintain the scholarly publishing environment that is fundamental to how microbiologists improve, validate and share their research.

The mission of the Microbiology Society is 'advancing the understanding and impact of microbiology by connecting and empowering communities worldwide'. In keeping with this mission, the Society publishes six high quality scientific journals, namely, *Microbiology*, *Journal of General Virology*, *Journal of Medical Microbiology*, *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology*, *JMM Case Reports*, and *Microbial Genomics*.

The surplus the Society generates from the sale of its peer-reviewed journals is its primary source of income. This surplus is used to support its charitable remit, for example, by working with schools to support their teaching of the importance and activities of microbes, funding career development for undergraduate and post-graduate students, and organising scientific conferences.

Readers of microbiological papers must have confidence that the science they read is peer-reviewed, published and archived to the highest standards. The Society's journals help to maintain and define these standards.

Microbiologists can support the Society by publishing high-quality science in its journals, which in turn encourages wider readership and increased income, thus enabling the Society to meet its charitable goals. This a unique way for scientists to 'pay forward' and support their academic discipline, as well as to communicate vital research.

2. Open access and recovery of publication costs

The Society believes that the recovery of publication costs via an Article Processing Charge is the most sustainable form of open access. This 'Gold' Open Access model allows the final version of the article to be made freely available immediately, without embargo. The Society supports funding being made available to authors to allow them to publish in this way. The Society has demonstrated its support for sustainable open access by launching *JMM Case Reports* and *Microbial Genomics* with Gold Open Access models.

The Society recognises that there are other models of open access, and that a mixed economy is likely to exist throughout any transition from a subscription model to a full open access environment.

The Society also believes that authors must be allowed to exercise their individual professional judgement in deciding when, and where, to submit and publish the products of their research. There is the potential for this principle to come under threat in the UK through the central management of open access publishing funds in higher education institutions, and this must be guarded against.

3. Position Statement

In response to these issues the Society will:

- Champion financially-sustainable models of open access through our own journals (see OpenMicrobiology).
- Continue to define and maintain high standards of peer-reviewed scientific publishing.
- Engage with government, universities, and the scientific publishing community to ensure academic freedom to publish in the author's journal of choice is maintained.

4. OpenMicrobiology

Through the 'OpenMicrobiology' option, each of our subscription journals provides authors with the ability to make their article open access through payment of a fee on acceptance. Discounts on the fee are available to Society members, and to authors based in institutions subscribing to the journal.

Authors who do not choose the OpenMicrobiology option have their article made freely available following an embargo period. The embargo period for *Microbiology*, *Journal of General Virology*, *Journal of Medical Microbiology* and *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology* is 12 months.

The Society has demonstrated its support for sustainable open access by launching *JMM Case Reports* and *Microbial Genomics* which follow the Gold Open Access model.

5. Further information

- OpenMicrobiology: www.microbiologyresearch.org/about/open-access-policy
- Society policy information: www.microbiologysociety.org/policy

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