

## University of Groningen Open Access Regulations

The University of Groningen (UG) is committed to ensuring immediate open access to its research outputs, while safeguarding academic excellence and long-term sustainability of the scholarly publishing system.

In line with its [Institutional Publication Framework](#) and the [national Open Access Strategy](#), the UG promotes a value-driven approach to scholarly publishing, grounded in openness, academic quality, integrity, cost-effectiveness, sustainability and equity. These open access regulations support that approach by encouraging cost- and value-aware publishing choices.

This document sets university-wide guidelines for publishing **short academic works** (i.e. journal articles). Faculties and research institutes may adopt additional guidelines reflecting disciplinary norms, and continue discussions on publication practices, diverse scholarly contributions, and associated forms of recognition and reward.

### 1. Core Principles (University-wide)

#### 1.1 Open Access as the Standard

All works must be made openly accessible. This can be achieved through:

- Diamond open access and community-led models.
- Publishing under UNL or institutional read-and-publish agreements, or, where justified, by paying Article Processing Charges (APCs), subject to the conditions set out in this document (hybrid and gold open access)
- Green open access: if open access provisions are unavailable, publication in a subscription journal is acceptable, provided that the publisher's version is deposited in the institutional repository and made openly available after the applicable embargo period.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.2 Diamond Open Access and Community-Led Models

Staff are encouraged but not obliged to:

- Publish in diamond open access outlets where appropriate.
- Support community-led and scholar-governed publishing initiatives.
- Consider editorial and reviewing activities for diamond, community-led and/or non-profit publishers.
- Use preprint servers and emerging Publish-Review-Curate models, where appropriate, to accelerate dissemination.

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<sup>1</sup> In line with the Taverne amendment, [Open access procedural regulations for short academic works by UG staff members or UMCG staff members](#) apply here. The UG will further strengthen green open access by exploring rights retention strategies that enable immediate access, while safeguarding author rights.

The UG [supports diamond and community-led publishing](#).<sup>2</sup> The University Library will explore the strategic reallocation of expenditure from revenue-driven towards community-driven and non-profit publishing, in close consultation with the faculties.

#### **1.4 APC-Funded Models (Hybrid and Gold Open Access)**

The UG recognises that certain fully gold and hybrid open access journals play an important role in scholarly communication. At the same time, it notes the continued escalation in APC costs associated with these revenue-driven publishing models, including under read-and-publish deals which are paid for institutionally. Sustainable management of publishing expenditure is therefore a shared responsibility.

##### **1.4.1 Hybrid Open Access**

The UG does not allocate faculty or central funds for APCs in hybrid journals. Where these are not covered by a read-and-publish deal or external grants authors may use green open access (see 1.1). This provision reflects concerns about “double dipping” in hybrid models and the extent to which their cost structures align with the UG’s values.

##### **1.4.2 Gold Open Access**

All faculties will implement one of the models described under **Part 2**, to ensure that gold open access publishing remains academically justified and financially sustainable.

#### **1.5 Monitoring and Periodic Review**

The UG and its faculties recognise that scholarly publishing is evolving and will monitor the implementation and impact of these regulations, including publication patterns, costs, and broader developments, such as new publishing models, funder mandates, and policy changes. The University Library will track developments across all open access models and help align institutional and national strategies, ensuring a coherent and value-based approach in collaboration with the academic community.

The guidelines will be reviewed annually and adjusted as needed, with faculties able to switch between the models described in **Part 2** where appropriate. Through this adaptive approach, the UG seeks to contribute responsibly to the wider transition toward open, equitable and financially sustainable scholarly publishing.

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#### **Starting Date and Transition Period**

These regulations go into effect on **September 1, 2026**. For papers that were submitted for publication before this date, these new regulations are not yet in effect.

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<sup>2</sup> See more about national developments to strengthen diamond open access: [openaccess.nl](https://openaccess.nl) and [nups.nl](https://nups.nl).

## **2A – Selective Gold Model**

Given the continued rise of APCs, including under read-and-publish agreements, and variation in quality and editorial practices across journals, the Faculty aims to promote deliberate and cost-aware choices.

### **2A.1 Gold Open Access Publishing**

Gold open access publishing is only allowed under the following conditions:

- a. There is a university-wide or UNL deal that gives [100% discount](#) on the APC (while noting that deals are funded institutionally and are not cost-free);
- b. The APCs are fully paid for by co-author(s) not affiliated with the Faculty;
- c. Open access is required by the funding organisation, and the APC are covered by the funder;
- d. All other situations where external parties cover the full publishing costs.

### **2A.2 Exceptions**

Exceptions to 2A.1 are only possible with *a priori* consent from the director of the research institute of the corresponding author, after a motivated request. If this director is co-author of the work for which an exception is requested, the request should be addressed towards the Faculty Board.

Approval may be granted when, e.g.:

- The venue is demonstrably field-leading or strategically important.
- No reasonable alternative exists within the discipline.
- The publication costs are proportionate to the expected academic value and reflect reasonable and transparent publishing services.

### **2A.3 Considerations**

If APC costs are not covered by UNL or institutional agreements, authors will, as part of the regular reimbursement procedure, provide a brief confirmation that:

- Alternative publication routes (including diamond, community-led or green open access) were considered; and
- The chosen journal or venue aligns with disciplinary standards, supports research objectives, reinforces academic integrity, and, where applicable, complies with funder requirements.

Faculties/research institutes will work towards monitoring APC expenditure and review their approach periodically to support continued sustainability and alignment with academic values.

## **2B - Reflective Gold Model**

### **2B.1 Pure Gold Publishing**

The Faculty recognises that gold open access journals play an important role in many disciplines, and are linked to wide dissemination and recognition of research contributions.

At the same time, given the continued rise of APCs, including under read-and-publish agreements, and variation in quality and editorial practices across journals, the Faculty aims to promote deliberate and cost-aware choices.

### **2B.2 Considerations**

If APC costs are reimbursed from individual project budgets and are not covered by UNL or institutional agreements, authors will, as part of the regular reimbursement procedure, provide a brief confirmation that:

- Alternative publication routes (including diamond, community-led or green open access) were considered; and
- The chosen journal or venue aligns with disciplinary standards, supports research objectives, reinforces academic integrity, and, where applicable, complies with funder requirements.

Faculties/research institutes will work towards monitoring their APC expenditure and review their approach periodically to support continued financial sustainability and alignment with academic values.

Note: To ensure that the 2A.3 and 2B.1 requirements do not introduce additional administrative burden, it is proposed to implement this through the existing reimbursement procedure in AFAS. When submitting an APC reimbursement claim, authors would be asked to confirm this via a mandatory checkbox.

#### **Proposed checkbox text:**

*I confirm that I have considered alternative publication routes (including diamond open access and community-led publishing) before selecting this journal, in line with the [University of Groningen Open Access Regulations], and that, where applicable, publication in the selected journal aligns with the publication policies of the funding agency supporting this project.*

## Terminology

- **Closed access.** In closed access outlets, people have to pay to read your work through a subscription or a license, and there's no way for the authors to get it published openly.
- **Green open access** or self-archiving, means that you place a version of the published (e.g. closed access) journal article online yourself, in a repository or on your personal website. This can be the final author version (the accepted version of the manuscript but without journal layout) or, in case of using the UG repository<sup>3</sup>, the published version.
- **Gold open access.** In (full) gold open access, you publish in a fully open access journal that does not charge subscription fees for reading. These journals usually charge a publication fee, known as an Article Processing Charge (APC).
- **Hybrid open access.** In hybrid open access journals, you publish in a traditional subscription journal that offers open access publication for individual articles upon payment of an APC. The hybrid model has been subject to criticism because institutions continue to pay subscription fees alongside APC-related costs, a practice often referred to as “double dipping.”
- **UNL and institutional read-and-publish deals** are agreements between institutions and publishers that combine access to subscription content with the option for affiliated authors to publish open access. Costs are centrally prepaid by the institution rather than charged as individual APCs. In the Netherlands, most deals are negotiated by UNL, covering thousands of journals and enabling open access publication as the default for corresponding authors of the participating institutions. In addition, the UG and the UMCG independently negotiate several institutional agreements.
- **Diamond open access** outlets are run by the academic community, for the academic community. They ensure free access to research for all, without fees for authors or readers, promoting equity, visibility and global impact. It supports sustainable publishing, and includes but is not limited to:
  - Community-led or society journals that operate without APCs;
  - University presses and library-supported outlets;
  - Overlay journals that organise peer review around preprints;
  - Publication models based on the Publish-Review-Curate (PRC) approach, where research is first shared as a preprint and subsequently reviewed and curated in an open and transparent manner;<sup>4</sup>
  - The use of preprint servers recognized within disciplinary norms, enabling rapid dissemination and open feedback prior to or alongside journal publication.

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<sup>3</sup> The University Library automatically adds published versions to Pure, provided it has access to the pdf. If this is not the case, UG-researchers can easily provide the pdf via the '[deposit your article](#)' form, either as a published version, or as a final author version. Authors will receive a notification via Pure prompting them to take action, if necessary.

<sup>4</sup> Please note that under some PRC models, publication may involve a fee.