

POLICY ON OPEN ACCESS TO RESEARCH OUTPUTS

OBJECTIVE

To improve access to Foundation-funded research in peer-reviewed journals, thereby contributing to enhanced research use.

RATIONALE

Since its inception, the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation has required that the results of Foundation-funded research be made openly and freely accessible on its web site. In October 2008, the Foundation formalized its Policy on Open Access to Research Outputs. The objective of the policy is to remove barriers to accessing Foundation-funded research that is subsequently published in peer-reviewed journals.

This new direction is consistent with initiatives and policies adopted by many other national and international research funding agencies over the last few years. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research's *Policy on Access to Research Outputs*¹ and the launch of the International Development Research Centre Digital Library² are excellent examples of the uptake of open access in Canadian research.

The development of open access journal publication and open access archives of published papers is a result of the technical capacity, and broad acceptance, of the internet as a primary host and source of knowledge exchange. Traditional sources and means of access to research results, such as subscription journals, are fast becoming insufficient to meet the demands for evidence-informed decision-making. As well, subscription costs and other access requirements may limit the diffusion of research and, ultimately, research use. Libraries cannot now afford to house all available research literature, and it is likely that publishing houses will soon be unable to sustain their pricing models in the face of the internet's expansion into the publishing realm³. Many traditional publishers are now turning to open access and "hybrid" journal models, which feature a mix of open and "pay-for-access" articles⁴.

¹ Canadian Institutes of Health Research. 2007. Policy on Access to Research Outputs, CIHR. Accessed September 11, 2008. http://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/documents/cihr_policy_on_access_to_research_outputs_e.pdf

² International Development Research Centre Digital Library. Accessed September 18, 2008: <https://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace>

³ Suber, Peter. 2007. *Open Access Overview: Focusing on open access to peer-reviewed research articles and their preprints*. Accessed September 11, 2008. <http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm>

⁴ Morrison, H. and Waller, A. 2006. Open access for the medical librarian. *Journal of the Canadian Health Library Association*. 27(3), 69-73.

The Foundation remains committed to its mandate to promote the diffusion and use of evidence to support decisions about the organization and management of the healthcare system. This commitment includes working diligently to remove barriers (real or potential) to accessing the results of research, particularly where access may be limited by factors such as ability to pay or affiliation with institution libraries. The Foundation also understands that open access is not a type of publication, but rather, a type of access to research – one that takes full advantage of digital technologies and the internet to allow rapid access to existing evidence and immediate exchanges of knowledge between researchers and research users⁵.

THE POLICY

Individuals and teams who receive funding from the Foundation for research and related activities are required to make every effort to ensure that the results of their research are published in open access journals (freely available online) or in an online repository of published papers, within six months after initial publication.

Research funded by the Foundation after October 1, 2008, should be limited to online publication on/in:

- Websites of the Foundation, co-sponsors, and administering organizations
- Open access journals
- Journals where the publisher may not make its content immediately openly accessible, but where the publisher agrees to archive the paper in an open access repository (for example, institutional repository or PubMed Central) within six months after initial publication.

Expenses related to disseminating research are eligible to be included as part of Foundation grant proposals. Expenses that researchers may incur related to having their submissions evaluated or published by open access or hybrid journals can be included as eligible expenses as of October 2008. The Foundation also encourages (but does not require or finance) archiving of research papers published by researchers who received grants before October 1, 2008.

The Foundation reserves the right to review individual award agreements, should the Foundation determine that a breach of this policy by the award recipient or the researcher's administering agency has occurred.

REASONABLE EXCEPTION

If a research team considers that the best dissemination vehicle for particular findings is a journal that does not have open access or that does not permit access via a repository, the Foundation requests that program lead submit a publishing addendum to the publisher that reads:

⁵ Suber, Peter. 2008. An open access mandate for the National Institutes of Health. *Open Medicine*, 2(2). E14-16.

“Journal acknowledges that the researcher will be entitled to deposit an electronic copy of the final, peer-reviewed manuscript for inclusion in PubMed Central (PMC), and for this manuscript to be mirrored to all PMC International sites. Manuscripts deposited with PMC (and PMC International sites) may be made freely available to the public, via the internet, within six months of the official date of final publication in the journal.”⁶.

REVIEW

The Foundation will review and update this policy annually or as needed.

⁶ Canadian Institutes of Health Research. *Adhering with the CIHR policy on Access to Research Outputs*. Accessed September 11, 2008. <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/35662.html>