

Libraries call on academic colleagues to help shift to full open academic publishing

SCONUL and RLUK welcomed today's announcement of an agreement with Springer Nature¹ as the best outcome that could reasonably have been achieved but are calling on academic colleagues to work with the library community to deliver the cultural shift needed to make academic publishing sustainable and affordable.

The deal is the result of detailed, hard-fought negotiations on the sector's behalf by Jisc and it will deliver some savings and constrain costs and does deliver the full and immediate transition to open access that librarians have been demanding. However, serious reservations remain.

Libby Homer, Chair of SCONUL Content Strategy Group said:

"The Springer Nature deal is the best that we could reasonably have achieved given the current policy and cultural environment. But the library community has significant reservations about this and all other transitional agreements. We believe we need to flip to a different model altogether which takes research out from walled gardens and into the open where it can reach the most people and have the most impact."

David Prosser, Executive Director of RLUK said:

"We need transparency from Springer Nature and other publishers on the costs of APCs. Huge amounts of money are being spent by institutions and public bodies on these charges, and they have a negative impact on the scope for researchers outside these agreements to publish openly. While appearing to embrace open access, publishers have effectively monetised it. We need to move away from the transitional agreement."

Ann Rossiter, Executive Director of SCONUL said:

"We need to shift the culture of academic publishing to one in which openness is prioritised and costs align more closely with the value of a publisher's service and less to journal "name". This is job for all of us - university leaders, librarians and our academic colleagues."

SCONUL and RLUK are asking academic colleagues to help shift the dial by:

1. **considering how your own decisions help shape academic publishing.** Everyone wants to maximise the reach and benefit of their research so avoid limiting its impact by allowing it to be placed behind a paywall or within any intellectual "walled garden"
2. **being an active advocate for open research dissemination** in your own subject community and consider how your own collective power can help change the publishing landscape
3. **challenging instances where promotion or preferment is based on the journal's reputation** rather than the quality of the research, adopting the principles set out in The

Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) - which around half of UK universities are already signatories to.

4. **holding on to the rights to your own work**; avoiding signing these over when you put your article or monograph forward for publications. Many institutions are putting in place rights retention policies which are designed to ensure that you are able to do this in a straightforward way.
5. **asking what you're getting for the Article Processing Charge** you or your institution is being asked to pay to get your work published. What do you get for that money? How is that cost being justified?
6. and **do the same for any Book Processing Charges** you're asked to pay.
7. **talking to your librarian about how you can support their efforts** to deliver open research dissemination.

¹ *Negotiations with Springer Nature have been led by Jisc on behalf of the UK academic and research library community and covered Springer Nature, Springer Compact and Nature Publishing.*

Notes to Editors:

1. About SCONUL:

SCONUL is the Society of College, National and University Libraries (sconul.ac.uk). We represent all university libraries in the UK and Ireland, irrespective of mission group, as well as national libraries and many of the UK's colleges of higher education. SCONUL promotes awareness of the role of academic libraries in supporting research excellence and student achievement and employability, and represents their views and interests to government, regulators and other stakeholders. It helps academic libraries collaborate to deliver services efficiently, including through shared services, and to share knowledge and best practice. For more information [about SCONUL](#) contact Ann Rossiter at ann.rossiter@sconul.ac.uk

2. About Research Libraries UK (RLUK)

Research Libraries UK (RLUK) is a consortium of 39 of the most significant research libraries in the UK and Ireland. For more information see [about RLUK](#)