

Policy Statement on Article Processing Fees

Open access journals offer an alternative to the traditional subscription-based model for disseminating academic knowledge: they are available free of charge to any reader. Open access journals will be crucial to a new model of scholarly publishing designed to make all research output openly available to everyone. However, such journals are not “free” from editorial, production and maintenance costs.

Charging authors a fee (an Article Processing Charge, or APC) for publishing in open access journals is, in the short term, one way such journals can meet their costs. It is not preferable, nor is it a long-term solution, but where necessary, it should be supported to enable the wider distribution of academic knowledge in general, and to benefit the careers of individual academics. However, the costs imposed on potential authors can inhibit their publication productivity, and raise serious equity issues. Some academic staff can afford to pay fees ‘out-of-pocket’, while others cannot, with adverse impact on tenure/promotion and annual review decisions. Contract academic staff, independent researchers and those from less well-funded institutions.

Accordingly, CAUT recommends the following policy guidelines:

1. Universities and colleges should reimburse authors, regardless of rank or employment group, from their own institutions for a reasonable amount of publication fees.
2. Universities and colleges should encourage and facilitate self-archiving of publications.
3. Hybrid journals that “double-dip” (taking author processing charges without reducing the cost of a subscription for a closed publication) should not be supported.
4. Universities should collaborate with other institutions and with open access publishers so that individual APCs are not necessary, for example by making pools of money available sufficient to support all accepted articles from the institutions, or by changing the entire financial model of journals. Such pools of money should not reduce existing research funds.
5. Research granting agencies should permit researchers to include such authors’ fees in their dissemination budgets.

APCs are a potentially serious impediment for the exchange of socially beneficial knowledge. Where such fees are unavoidable, they should not be the responsibility of the author.

**New draft Policy Statement approved by the
CAUT Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, March 2019.
Draft revision approved by the CAUT Executive Committee, May 2019.**