

National Open Access Agreements (IReL)

A practical guide for researchers at TU Dublin

[National Open Access Agreements](#) are country-wide deals negotiated by IReL (the Irish Research eLibrary) on behalf of Irish universities, including TU Dublin. These agreements allow researchers to both read subscription journals and publish their work open access without paying individual fees.

Why they matter for TU Dublin researchers

- Open access is required by many funders and TU Dublin's own policy.
- These agreements allow you to comply without paying APCs yourself.
- TU Dublin does not fund APCs outside of these agreements, so IReL deals should always be your first option.
- Funders may cover APCs in some cases (usually for fully open access journals only), but this is secondary; **IReL agreements should always be checked and used first where possible.**

Using these agreements in funding proposals

National Open Access Agreements are a key part of dissemination planning.

When writing a proposal, you should:

- State that you will publish open access via IReL national agreements where available.
- Note that these agreements allow APCs to be covered centrally at no cost to the project.
- Confirm that you will comply with funder and TU Dublin open access policies.
- Include deposit to the institutional repository (via PURE) as a backup route.

This demonstrates cost-effective dissemination, compliance with open research policies, and awareness of national infrastructure, and since many funders require open access, referencing IReL agreements shows that you have a clear, realistic plan while minimising unnecessary APC costs.

Important practical points

Quotas and timing

Some agreements have annual article quotas, with funding allocated based on the article acceptance date, meaning quotas often run out later in the year and submitting earlier increases the likelihood of coverage. If the quota is exhausted, you may need to use an alternative route such as repository deposit or funder-supported APC funding.

Not all journals are included

Agreements do not cover all journals, and some publishers offer only partial coverage or discounts, so it is important to check eligibility before submission.

Green open access

Even if APC funding is not available, you can usually meet open access requirements at no cost through green open access by depositing an accepted manuscript version of your article in PURE, which will be made available open access via the institutional repository, often after any publisher embargo period. **You must ensure that you select journals that allow Green open access** (also called 'self-archiving').

The Researcher Process (step-by-step)

Understanding the process is essential, as the funding is built into the publisher workflow rather than applied for separately.

1. Choose your journal carefully

Before submission:

- [Check if the journal is part of an IReL agreement](#)
- Confirm whether the terms are suitable for your requirements (e.g., hybrid or fully OA depending on publisher, quota-dependent)
- Consider funder requirements (some do not allow hybrid journals)

This step is critical: eligibility determines whether your APC will be covered.

2. Ensure you are the corresponding author

To use an agreement, you must:

- Be the corresponding author (the person managing the submission and publication process)
- Be affiliated with TU Dublin at acceptance

3. Submit your article

During submission:

- Use your TU Dublin affiliation and email
- The publisher system may show you OA options, but final selection usually happens later

4. Article acceptance triggers the process

The key stage is after your article is accepted:

- You will receive an email inviting you to complete the post-acceptance process
- The system will check your institution, eligibility, and available OA funding

5. Select open access under the agreement

- Choose open access publishing
- Agree to a licence (typically CC BY)
- Confirm affiliation and funding details

At this point, the publisher identifies whether:

- Your article is covered under the IReL agreement
- There is still available quota (if applicable)

6. Institutional approval

- TU Dublin ([via the Library/IReL contact](#)) verifies your eligibility
- If approved, you receive confirmation that the APC will be paid centrally

7. Publication

- Your article is published immediately open access
- It is freely available worldwide
- You should also ensure your publication is recorded in PURE to ensure it is deposited in TU Dublin's institutional repository (green open access), in line with University policy.

Key message for researchers

1. **Check IReL first, always:** start with national agreements before considering any APCs. This is the primary route for TU Dublin researchers.
2. **Don't assume other funding exists:** TU Dublin does not provide APC funding outside IReL agreements, so these should always be your first route, with funder support used only where necessary.
3. **Be the corresponding author:** eligibility depends on you holding this role and being correctly affiliated at acceptance.
4. **Plan early, journal choice is critical:** selecting an eligible journal at the outset determines whether your article can be covered.
5. **Use green open access as your safety net:** repository deposit ensures compliance even when APC funding is not available.

Quick Links

- [Library Guide on Open Access Publishing Agreements](#)
- [IReL agreements by journal, with up-to-date availability information](#)
- [Open Access Publishing](#)