

# Checklist for Consultations About Transitioning Journals to OA

Scholarly society and journal editorial boards interested in transitioning their journals from subscription-based to open access (OA) publishing may need community support in identifying their needs, understanding publishing options, and planning next steps.

We developed this checklist for libraries and institutions who engage in consultations with journal boards and editors about these issues. The checklist should help facilitate conversations about journal operations, finances, and strategies—so that journal boards and editors can come away from the conversation with a clearer understanding of how to proceed with an OA transition.

If the society boards and journal editors need more background about any of the questions or assistance in tracking down answers, we recommend that they read our [Guide to Transitioning Journals to Open Access Publishing](#) which provides further detail.

## Goals

*To make the most of this consultation, we should start with understanding the impetus for this conversation. Journals can have very different reasons for desiring an OA transition, and these different needs can suggest different OA publishing strategies. So, it's important to understand what you are hoping to achieve through a transition to open access publishing.*

- Why are you interested in transitioning your journal(s) to OA?
- What are you hoping to learn or gain from this consultation?
- Where are you so far in the OA transition process?
- Are there any specific hurdles you anticipate with a transition?

## Background & Administration

*Factors related to journal history, ownership, agreements, and other aspects of journal administration can be instrumental in shaping how the journal can be adapted to OA publishing. Although it may seem farther afield to be asking these questions now, answering them is actually essential to understanding what next steps are possible or advisable.*

- What is the journal title?
  - Who owns or licenses the name or title?

- Do you wish to carry on with the current title?
- What is the general publication history of the journal?
  - Print: (e.g. run dates, whether any print volumes have been digitized and/or digitally archived)
  - Online: (e.g. run dates, associated website(s), publisher partners)
- What is the audience for the journal? (e.g. practitioners, scholars, general public)
- What types of articles are published in the journal? (e.g. original research, review, case study, commentary, letter to the editor, editorial)
- Are any the contributions or articles peer reviewed? If so, what percentage are peer-reviewed?
- Is the journal associated with a professional society?
  - What is the nature of that relationship?
  - Is there a publication committee?
- Who owns copyright in the individual journal articles?
  - Are any of the articles licensed with a Creative Commons license?
  - Has this changed over time?
- How many total articles are published by the journal annually?
- Who publishes the title?
  - For online journals, what is the publisher platform?
  - For society journals put out by a separate publisher:
    - Can you locate a copy of that contract?
    - When does that contract expire?
  - Are you looking to change publishers?
    - Why or why not?
  - Who contractually retains editorial control?
- Is there currently an OA option (e.g. hybrid OA, or green/repository OA after embargo)?
  - If green/repository options, what are the terms?

- If hybrid, how much does the journal charge per article?

## Finances

*OA is an outcome—meaning, it refers only to the fact that the journal articles are open access. As such, there are a number of business models and/or funding strategies that could be used to sustain open access publishing. Different strategies may be better fits given the particular needs of a journal, so understanding journal finances is key.*

- How much income or revenue does the journal earn?
  - What operations/personnel are supported by this income/revenue?
  - To what other purposes is the income/revenue put?
  - Who earns the income/revenue from the journal? If shared with a publisher, what portion and how much flows to the journal or society?
- What are the journal's operations costs?
  - How are these costs covered? (i.e. what income/revenue sources cover costs)
- Does the journal currently charge page or color charges that are additional to a subscription charge? If so, how much?
- What other sources of income support the journal's costs (e.g. advertising, licensing etc.)?
- Does the journal pay any archiving fees for long-term preservation of content?
- Are current financial arrangements desirable or sustainable?
  - Does the journal operate at an acceptable profit or loss?
  - What would you like to see change about journal publishing finances?
- Are you familiar with various OA funding strategies? (opportunity as needed to discuss options; for more, see <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/leap.1056>)
  - If so, do you have a preferred funding strategy for transitioning this journal?

## Platforms

*Particularly for journals that have not yet made the transition from print to digital, understanding their needs around online platforms can be quite daunting. These questions are meant to help journals begin to evaluate online publisher platforms.*

- What services does the journal need from any online platform?
  - Hosting
    - PDF only
    - PDF and HTML versions
    - PDF, HTML, and other versions
  - Article submission management
  - Peer review management
  - Article payment processing
  - Archiving
  - Indexing
  - Promotion / advertising
- Roughly, what would need to change about journal workflows to integrate online publishing outputs?

## Licenses

- Under what license do you plan to release articles once the journal becomes open access? (e.g. Creative Commons Attribution, Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial, etc.)
  - Will authors choose their own license?

## Communications

*Transitioning a journal to OA requires thoughtful communications from “start to finish” throughout the transitioning process—everything from garnering support from the journal board and other editors to communicating publicly about the upcoming transition. Getting a handle on existing and future communications strategies is essential for staying organized and transparent in the transition process.*

## Internal Communications

- What discussions if any, have there been with editors, board, or society members?
  - What were the outcomes?

- What materials or information do you have or need to facilitate internal (i.e. board, society, other editors) discussions about a transition?
- What are your next steps for internal discussions?

## External Communications

- How has the journal engaged with journal article authors or the subscribing/reading community about open access?
  - What were the outcomes?
- What materials or information do you have or need to facilitate external (i.e. author, society, other editors) discussions about a transition?
- What materials or information do you need to communicate with authors about rights and licenses issues?
- What are your next steps for external discussions?
  - Pre-transition outreach plans:
  - Post-transition outreach plans: