

# Open access, the challenge of paying APCs: some practical options for accessing funds

Gold' standard open access publishing, where authors (or their funders) pay an article publication charge (APC) so that articles are free to access immediately after publication to anyone with an internet connection, presents both opportunities, and challenges, for geographers.

Publishing open access means that research outputs are available to a wider audience, including the general public, media, charities, government employees and businesses. This could open up new opportunities and potentially result in your paper having further reach, greater impact and, according to some, being cited more heavily. Some open access journals also offer a range of creative commons copyright licenses, this gives the author greater say over the terms on which their research articles are used and shared.

The open access publishing model is, however, imperfect; there is no escaping that gold open access publishing routes are not equally available to all geographers. One of the main challenges associated with open access publishing for researchers is finding funds to cover the cost of APCs. There are, however, more resources available for meeting the costs of APCs than is commonly recognised; here are some key questions to bear in mind:

1. **Are you eligible for an APC discount or waiver based on your geographical location?** Open access journals often offer automatic full, or partial, discounts to authors in the global South through Research4Life programmes. See, for example, details about the [waivers and discounts on article publication charges](#) available for Wiley open access journals, including the Society's open access journal, [Geo: Geography and Environment](#).
2. **Will your university cover the cost of the APC?** The situation varies from institution to institution, but many universities do have open access funds that are available to geographers (usually via a RCUK block grant in the UK), and some also hold institutional accounts with publishers which allow APCs to be paid centrally. Some universities in the UK and elsewhere will cover the APC cost for any member of staff, and in a number of cases postgraduates, who wish to publish through the 'gold' open access route. Others restrict access to researchers who are in receipt of particular types of funding (in the UK, usually RCUK funding). Most universities require authors to submit an application for APC funds. Information specific to your institution tends to be available on the university library website, rather than departmental webpages.
3. **Will your funder cover the APC cost?** Some funders, for example the Wellcome Trust, stipulate that research outputs derived from its funding must be published through open access routes and provide grants to support OA publishing. Other funders, for example the Leverhulme Trust, will cover the cost of APCs so long as any open access charges are incurred during the period of the award.
4. **Are you eligible for any other discounts or waivers offered by the open access journal?** For example, are you a member of a learned Society associated with the publication?

As a learned Society and a publisher, we are actively engaged in, and sensitive to, debates surrounding open access. We offer a suite of publishing options, and support both subscription and gold open access publishing routes.