



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Open Access Policy concerning UNESCO publications

OPEN ACCESS POLICY

“Equal access to science is not only a social and ethical requirement for human development, but also essential for realizing the full potential of scientific communities worldwide and for orienting scientific progress towards meeting the needs of humankind”.

The World Conference on Science, 1999, held under the auspices of UNESCO and ICSU

Objective

Advancements in education, science and culture are made possible through broad and unfettered access to research and knowledge, enabling policy-makers, researchers, practitioners and the general public to use and build upon this knowledge. In line with its mission to share knowledge, UNESCO is responsible for transferring to society all its achievements and findings, especially publications, data and resources, making them easily available to the widest possible audience.

The UNESCO Open Access (OA) Policy, approved by the Executive Board at its 191st session, grants an irrevocable right of access to copy, use, distribute, transmit and make derivative works in any format within certain constraints. It applies to all UNESCO Publications published from July 31, 2013.

With this publishing model, UNESCO reinforces its commitment to encourage and protect universal access to information and knowledge, which is key to the advancement of innovative solutions for the challenges of international development.

In principle, all of UNESCO's publications are protected by copyright. Through the Open Access Policy, UNESCO is providing online access to all of its research outputs without many of the restrictions commonly imposed by copyright. Printed copies of the publications are also openly-licensed and can be photo-copied and transcribed for example.

Position statement

As part of its OA Policy, UNESCO has adopted the IGO Creative Commons licenses, which is one of the existing copyright licensing systems that give the public the right to re-use a work as freely as possible. Creative Commons licenses are model agreements. The fewer restrictions a license contains, the better the licensed work can be distributed and used.

All UNESCO publications which are published on or after 31 July 2013 must be licensed using the Creative Commons 3.0 IGO licenses, as follows:

- Any publication created by a staff member for whom the Publications Board has given its approval on or after 31st July 2013 shall be published under CC BY SA license. As a reminder, according to UNESCO's Rules and Regulations, all intellectual property rights concerning any work produced by a member of the Secretariat as part of his/her official duties, shall be vested in the Organization.

- Any person external to UNESCO who co-authors a publication with a member of the Secretariat shall assign copyright to UNESCO. UNESCO authors are responsible for informing co-authors of the Open Access Policy and for obtaining the rights of the external co-authors. A permission form is provided by ERI/DPI for this purpose.

Therefore, all co-authored content shall be published under CC BY SA license.

- For any publication produced in whole by a member of the Secretariat and published by an external publisher, UNESCO should retain the copyright of the publication. ERI/DPI shall negotiate an agreement with the publisher and determine the CC license under which the publication will be released. If permitted by the publisher, CC BY SA will be used.
- Resources published by external publishers that have received funding in whole or in part from UNESCO shall be made available under one of the CC IGO licenses, with an embargo period acceptable if required by the publisher that should not exceed 12 months. In this context, external publishing partners will be strongly encouraged to apply the most liberal license possible.

All other UNESCO resources published by external publishers are subject to the requirements of the publisher. Nevertheless, UNESCO will retain ownership and complete control of the copyright for its own content.

Any content published prior to 31 July 2013 and for which UNESCO owns the rights, is considered in Open Access and is released on a case-by-case basis under one of the three following licenses: CC BY SA, CC BY NC SA and CC BY ND. Users should refer to the type of restricted license attached to the publication for specific terms of use.

The Policy does not apply to publications where UNESCO has entered into special agreements with donors, external agencies or publishers before 31 July 2013.

Any material (such as images, illustrations, graphics, etc.) used within a publication is not covered by the Policy, unless (1) UNESCO owns the full rights or (2) its use is completely unrestricted (under a CC BY license or equivalent).

Requirements

On publication, the authoring Unit shall submit to the Open Access Repository an electronic copy of the relevant work, together with any source files and XML files where available.

Transmission, reproduction, use or transformation of any content, beyond that allowed by this Policy, require the express written permission of the copyright owners.

To avoid any distortion or interpretation that could affect UNESCO's image, adaptation/translation/derivatives should not carry any official emblem or UNESCO logo, unless they have been approved by the Publications Board and/or validated by the Organization.

Repository

Hosted within the UNESDOC system, the Open Access Repository provides digital publications in full text to the public without cost or other restrictions (other than embargoes and specific clauses restricting use). Its interface is in six languages.

Shall be deposited in the OA Repository:

- immediately after the official date of publication, all resources published by UNESCO on or after 31 July 2013;
- resources published by UNESCO before 31 July 2013 and for which UNESCO owns the rights to all parts;
- resources published by external publishers on or after 31 July 2013.

A written permission shall be obtained, allowing free online access to the publication. Some restrictions on use and an embargo period (12 months maximum) are acceptable if requested by the external publisher.

Users of the Open Access Repository are responsible for compliance with copyright restrictions and are expected to adhere to the terms and conditions defined by the rights holder.

Roles and obligations

As stipulated in UNESCO's Rules and Regulations, ERI/DPI is responsible for managing the quality control framework for all UNESCO publications.

In addition, ERI/DPI provides guidance to the Publications Officers and other specialized staff of the Secretariat on all aspects of OA.

Together with MSS/BKI, ERI/DPI/PBM is in charge of the OA Repository updates and maintenance.

Publications Officers are responsible for providing assistance on all issues arising within their respective Sectors concerning the application of the Policy.

The UNESCO Publications Board is responsible for interpreting and monitoring the Policy, as well as resolving disputes concerning its application, and making recommendations to senior management on any proposed changes. The UNESCO Publications Board shall review the Policy after 18 months (EX/195) and present a report to the Senior Management Team.