

FAQs about the SNSF provisions on Open Access & scientific publications

1. According to the SNSF provisions, in which scientific journals may I (still) publish my articles?

You are still free to publish in whatever scientific journal you wish.

2. What am I required to do under the terms of the SNSF provisions?

The SNSF provisions require you to use the so-called “green road” to open access (also referred to as ‘self-archiving’), i.e. after your publication has been published in a scientific journal, you are required to store it digitally on the document server of your home institution or a professional document server (repository of an organisation or of a specific discipline), thereby also archiving it.

3. Are monographs exempt from the SNSF provisions?

Yes, but there are also options for using the green road (self-archiving) for storing monographs in repositories (see also Question 15).

4. Are there any costs involved in digital self-archiving (the green road to open access)?

The green road to Open Access costs a bit of time at the start, but other than that there are no costs.

5. How do I set about digital self-archiving?

After you propose to publish in the journal of your choice, you send the publisher concerned an e-mail asking whether and when you may “deposit” your article electronically in a repository of an organisation or a specific discipline (if such a repository exists).

6. What version should be used for self-archiving?

The publisher PDF (published PDF) or the accepted manuscript after peer-reviewing (post-print) and not the author’s PDF (pre-print) should be stored in the repository for self-archiving.

7. Does the SNSF preference for post-prints over pre-prints (see Question 6) mean that an author has to forgo a potentially interesting leverage because it would mean becoming dependent on publisher 'goodwill'?

The SNSF prefers the publisher PDF because this is the definitive print version and, at the same time, it increases the harvesting benefits. The final decision of author-PDF or pre-print, however, is up to the author.

8. What should I do if my home institution does not have its own repository?

A digital version of your publication – the publisher PDF (published PDF) or the accepted manuscript after peer-reviewing (post-print), not the author’s PDF (pre-print) – can be stored on your personal homepage, if you have one.

Please note: Digital publication in a repository is preferable to storing on your personal homepage because harvesting benefits at repositories (search strategies) can be made better use of.

There are also professional repositories and libraries that will accept publications for their repositories depending on their collections. – Targeted searches can be performed for repositories with defined specialist subject content at the Directory of Open Access Repositories ([OpenDOAR](http://www.openaccess.org/)).
<http://www.openaccess.org/>

9. What should I do if no document server exists and I do not have a personal homepage?

You have done what is required. – Your enquiry about the status of a repository at your home institution may possibly help speed up its establishment.

10. Do all journal publishers permit digital self-archiving ([green road of OA](#)) ?

Believe it or not: 90% of all journal publishers do permit it. The best approach is parallel self-archiving. However, not infrequently short-term or longer embargo periods (6-24 months) imposed by the publishers apply and these must be observed after publication of your article. The following applies: The shorter the embargo period the better it is for you because your article will be available on the Internet as quickly as possible, i.e. the visibility of your publication, and thus the chances of it being cited improve markedly.

With the few publishers that do not permit self-archiving, your hands are tied (apart from asking yourself whether you should consider this publisher another time, provided you see the green road to open access as advantageous).

11. What can I do if the contract does not mention an embargo period?

This is the case with monographs and journals which do not allow self-archiving or which make individual decisions. Ask the publisher to negotiate simultaneous self-archiving or at least a short embargo period.

12. How can I protect my copyright?

Before you conclude a contract with the journal publisher, make sure that copyrights are transparent and regulated to your satisfaction in the copyright transfer agreement (e.g. "Licence to Publish"). Regulation of rights varies according to publisher and/or journal and can be broader or more restrictive. Summaries of author rights at various journals or publishers can be searched at [SHERPA/ROMEO](http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php) (Publisher Copyright Policies & Self-Archiving) <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php> . The non-profit organisation [Creative Commons](http://creativecommons.org/), which draws up flexible copyright licences appropriate for Open Access, is also helpful.
<http://creativecommons.org/>

13. How can the right to Open Access publication be asserted in contract agreements?

Many authors modify publisher contracts that restrict their rights to store their publications on a document server by clearly deleting terms such as "exclusive" transfer of "all" rights, as well as other restrictive phrasing. A cover letter should draw attention to the modifications.

Alternatively, authors can include an addendum to the publisher's contract (countersigned by the publisher to be legally valid). The Author's Addendum from [SPARC](http://www.sparc.org/) (The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) is the most well-known and accepted of these. The addendum and instructions for use can be found at the website.

Example: "I hereby declare that I do not wish to assign the exclusive copyright to (name of publisher) but reserve the right to publish the article in full on an open access platform."

14. Can I also publish in a so-called Open Access journals ([gold road of OA](#)) ?

Of course you may choose the "gold road" option, i.e. publication in peer-reviewed Open Access journals. However, this approach is not funded by the SNSF as the publication costs of these Open Access journals are still horrendously high at present. In other words: You are free to use this route but you are not entitled to any financial support from the SNSF for author's costs in an Open Access journal; this also applies to so-called hybrid journals that work with mixed financing models.

15. Are there also options for publishing monographs as Open Access?

Open Access publication for monographs and collections is done by certain institutional or disciplinary repositories as well as university presses. Check the websites of potential publishers for publishing information.

16. Does the SNSF control fulfilment of the electronic publishing requirement?

Promoting Open Access (faster and greater visibility for research data financed with public funds) is important to the SNSF. It is not concerned with creating a monitoring system. It decided to establish a mandatory determination because the recommendation approach at other research funding institutions resulted in very few OA deposits. At the same time the SNSF has provisionally decided to waive monitoring the determination and setting penalties for its enforcement. With that, it wants to be considerate of the fact that awareness and knowledge regarding Open Access among many researchers is still in the growth phase.

17. Where can I find further information about Open Access on the SNSF website?

For more information on this topic, go to Current > Dossiers > Open Access at the SNSF website <http://www.snf.ch>

18. Where can I get more information if I have further questions?

Contact gs@snf.ch by e-mail and you will receive an answer as soon as possible.

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In case of dispute, the original German version is binding.