

Top Tips on Publishing Costs (re article processing charges, waivers and discounts) for Authors, Editors and Publishers

This document contains information for authors, editors and publishers. For authors, the tips help understand how to find waivers and discounts to remove or lower the barrier of publishing costs for open access. For editors and publishers, the tips show how to help enable authors to access a journal's information on waivers and discount processes.¹

A 'waiver' is a discounted or free Article Processing Charge (APC). Be aware that waivers do not always translate into offers for removing all Article Processing Charges for a particular author or submitted manuscript type. For background information on increasing equity and open access see [OASPA](#).

Advice for authors

1. Authors can check with their institution to see if a policy or budget exists to cover Open Access publishing costs. If support is not available, then explore the following options:-
2. When choosing where to submit your article, be aware that APC amounts vary considerably. Check the Directory of Open Access Journals ([DOAJ](#)) for APC charges and authors' rights details regarding Open Access journals across disciplines.
3. Publishers often offer APC waivers or discounts for fully open access journals. Check [Research4Life resources](#) listing publishers that provide waivers and discounts, and the [Sherpa Romeo services](#), where you can find publisher Open Access policies from around the world and summaries of publisher copyright and open access archiving policies on a journal-by-journal basis.
4. Explore the journal contact page for information about what waiver or discount options exist, including discretionary waivers outside of stated policies. Reaching out for a waiver will not impact the editorial assessment of the article in any way.

¹ This document should be read in conjunction with the [Top Action Tips for Promoting Equity](#)

5. Hybrid journals provide authors with the option to choose between Open Access (and paying an APC fee) or publishing without APCs and limiting access to those with subscriptions or those that pay to access a specific article. Check individual journal home pages for relevant information. If not choosing Open Access, we recommend that authors share the preprint or archive their manuscript in a repository (see Green Open Access below).
6. Where waivers are not available, you can choose to post your manuscript to a repository ([Green Open Access](#)). If you post your Original Manuscript ([preprint](#)), your manuscript will receive a DOI and be openly licensed and publicly accessible immediately, depending on the choice of repository. You may also be allowed to post your Accepted Manuscripts (post print) after acceptance following peer review. Please check your funder policy. Please also check the publisher website for guidance on their Green Open Access policies.

Advice for publishers and editors

1. Consider adding the availability of discretionary case-by-case waivers for authors not supported through their work or institutions but falling outside the stated guidelines (eg, practitioners and those not attached to a research-supporting academic institution).
2. Ensure that authors have easy access to information on waivers, including discretionary waiver information for those that fall outside geographical limits/guidelines or other stated policies. Clarify how exceptions are made beyond standard criteria. Add this information on the publisher website and/or journal homepage.
3. Publishers should have a clear contact page for requesting waiver requests outside of stated policies and a clear communications process for how to address these waivers. Publishers should provide clear guidance and not create excessive burdens on the author to share information when applying for the discretionary waivers.
4. See the Committee on Publication Ethics ([COPE](#)) website for information on ethical issues around waivers and discounts, the role of editors, the need to avoid conflict of interest and ensure that editors do not discriminate against authors who request assistance with APCs.
5. Publishers should protect editors from all commercial considerations when assessing content for inclusion in their journals.
6. Publishers should try to simplify the waiver/discount application process, clearly stating the availability of waivers/discounts and eligibility criteria on journal websites and in submission guidelines. Information only provided in submission guidelines tends to get lost.

7. Consider standardizing eligibility criteria in cooperation with editors and other scholarly stakeholders in the world region concerned.