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National goals and guidelines for open access to research articles

Openness about the results of research is a core academic value. Open access enhances the development and application of knowledge as users in the wider research community, the private sector and the general public share in the results of research. Results of publicly funded research should therefore be publicly available.

Greater openness in research is also important with regard to the ongoing work in improving the way research is evaluated, cf. the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). This declaration includes a set of best practice recommendations for how to improve ways in which research output is evaluated. It strongly argues for the removal of the journal impact factor as the basis upon which decisions on funding, hiring and promotion are based. Instead, evaluation of the individual research results should be used.

Academic publishing is international, and any formulation of national goals for open access in Norway must be in line with developments in other countries and in the EU in particular. The Council of the European Union agreed in May 2016 that immediate open access to scientific publications should be the default by 2020.¹

The goal of the government is to make all publicly funded Norwegian research articles openly available by 2024. Norway shall be a driving force for all publicly financed research articles to be made openly available at the time of publishing. Research institutions, research funders and the wider research community must all play a part in order to reach this goal of full open access. The research community in particular is expected to play a vital role in promoting open access through their national and international networks, and to convert important journals within their subject areas from closed subscription based journals to open access titles.

¹ 'Council conclusions on the transition towards an Open Science system', Council of the European Union, 27 May 2016, Doc. 9526/16



The government has established the following national guidelines to ensure all stakeholders work towards the same goal, including measures that shall support the ongoing work:²

1. Publicly funded research articles are to be made openly available. Researchers shall examine the possibilities for publishing their articles in open access journals and choose open access journals where academically acceptable. Only in exceptional circumstances may articles that are publicly funded be published in journals that do not allow the article to be made available in an academic repository.
2. All publicly funded research articles must be deposited in a suitable academic repository. This shall take place at the latest on the publication date, irrespective of the publishing channel and when the article can be made openly available.
3. Institutions and consortia that negotiate agreements with publishers shall ensure that these agreements promote open access without increasing total costs, and that the terms and conditions are open and transparent.
4. Institutions that fund research projects shall contribute to cover the costs associated with open access publishing. In research performing institutions costs associated with open access publishing shall be seen as part of research budgets, just as costs associated with other key activities. Researchers and research performing institutions are encouraged via their networks to contribute to the promotion of publishing services that deliver the required quality at an appropriate price.

Measures:

To contribute to a successful implementation of the guidelines, the government will:³

1. Improve the functionality associated with depositing an article via the Cristin system.
2. Investigate how a national repository can be realised.
3. Introduce a requirement for articles to be deposited in a local or national repository in order to be counted in the performance based funding scheme. This requirement will not take effect until the necessary repositories and infrastructure are available to all research institutions.
4. Contribute to the development of new and sustainable models for the funding of open access publishing nationally and internationally
5. Develop indicators and statistics covering open access.

² The guidelines pertain to publicly funded research and agencies in the public sector. Private organisations that fund and carry out research are also encouraged to follow the guidelines.

³ Measures that require increasing budgetary limits will be put forward in the annual budget process.

