



Plan S Consultation response from the Arts and Humanities Alliance

The Arts and Humanities Alliance (AHA) is an association of fifty learned societies that work together to promote the interests of the arts and humanities, particularly with respect to higher-education and research policies at UK and EU level. The combined membership of the learned societies whose interests we represent number well over 20,000 academics across the UK. AHA is a member of the UUK Open Access Monograph Working Group.

We note that like many learned societies, the AHA depends entirely on volunteer labour, and that the consultation period for Plan S has been extremely short. AHA, together with the British Academy, will be soliciting quantitative evidence from those of its member associations which produce one or more journals on the income they receive from those journals, and the activities which that income enables them to support, but the consultation period for Plan S has been too short to allow us to gather that intelligence in hard figures at this stage. Although AHA member organisations are committed to the benefits of OA publication in principle, they and we are very alarmed at some of the aspects of Plan S, including the alacrity with which it is projected to be rolled out. This response focuses on articles. The issue of longer-form publications raises particular implications which will need to be addressed in due course.

Our primary concerns are:

Licensing and Copyright issues.

- AHSS disciplines, where form is often indivisible from content, are likely to require the adoption of more restrictive licenses (CC-BY-NC-ND) than those commonly adopted by STEM subjects. There are particular issues in this regard for disciplines such as ethnography and oral history where the quotation of precise words is fundamental to the ethical practice of the discipline. In disciplines such as Law, Philosophy, Literary Studies, Film Studies, Modern Languages and Translation Studies, exact language matters and tiny differences in phrasing can have enormous significance for meaning. The latitude allowed by the CC-BY licence would constitute plagiarism in many AHSS disciplines. This is the main issue for our disciplines, not royalties, which are relatively rare. In addition, the new restrictions on OA repositories also pose a threat to free academic-organised and maintained repositories, which are central to some Arts and Humanities disciplines, notably Linguistics.
- 3rd party rights, especially for disciplines such as Art History, Archaeology, Music that treat creative work (music, lyrics, photographs, paintings and in some cases contemporary literatures) are a serious problem for the CC-BY licences. There is a lack of consistency in the policy of providers (such as museums and galleries) with regard to permissions for the reproduction of such non-text sources.

Publication rights are normally time-limited (for example, three to five years); renewal of rights may be costly and burdensome for OA work, or permissions given only for poorer quality reproduction.

Financing Implications of Plan S

- We are very concerned by the rejection of the hybrid model in favour of Gold OA only. Diversity of models has benefitted the adoption of OA; the hybrid model in particular has worked well for Arts and Humanities disciplines, and has significantly advantaged the wider OA agenda, allowing research to be openly available in repositories after relatively short embargo periods, and changing hearts and minds of Arts and Humanities academics in their attitudes to the benefits of OA publication. To suggest prohibition of the hybrid model is to undermine the optimal OA system for the Arts and Humanities.
- Very few Arts and Humanities articles are funded directly by research grants with APCs included. A very high proportion are produced from QR money, or are even self-funded. This is especially true for early career scholars, ever larger numbers of whom exist in the precariat: in serial and/or multiple temporary and part-time contracts or as hourly-paid. In such contracts they are likely to have no access to research time, no status from which to bid for funding to research grants and no source for APCs. The same obtains for some disciplines, such as History, which may publish research by lay or amateur historians. Very few Arts and Humanities academics have easy access to APCs, neither from their institutions nor from any external source, and even the Wellcome Trust is scaling back on high-cost APCs. They don't exist for us in the way they do for STEM.
- Without APCs, and denied a subscription model, learned societies might not be able to produce the very high quality journals they currently produce, to the detriment of the worldwide reputation of UK arts and Humanities. That reputation makes many of these journals the venues of choice for academics internationally, who also have no access to funding sources for APCs. An alternative might be for some journals to continue on a subscription model, but to focus on publishing research from academics in countries which have not adopted Plan S. At the same time, UK scholars would be barred from publishing in non-compliant international journals. Neither of these are desirable outcomes.
- Many Learned Societies currently depend on profits from subscription journals to fund the range of other services they offer to their members: conferences, grants, book and journal article prizes, workshops, public engagement events, newsletters etc. (as well as contributions to policy consultations such as these). At the time of writing there is no plan to offer government funding to replace the monies brought in by journals, and even if such replacement funding were made available, there is a risk that vulnerable disciplines, or new ones, would find it more difficult to access that support. Plan S as it is currently formulated could result in the demise of many learned societies and the intellectual infrastructure they currently (and hugely efficiently) sustain.

Conclusion. The Arts and Humanities Alliance is committed to the benefits OA publication can provide, but we have profound reservations about the strategy and timelines embedded in Plan S. We do not believe that Plan S has engaged with the needs of particular disciplines, and note that if implemented in its current form it could do substantial damage to the European Arts and Humanities research landscape.

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