



University of Saskatchewan Library Criteria for Investing in Open Scholarship

The University Library champions open scholarship as a key goal of our [Strategic Framework 2025](#). We will take the criteria discussed in this document into consideration when assessing open scholarship investment opportunities. Other library subscriptions follow a similar process. Such opportunities may include collections and content, infrastructure, and membership in advocacy organizations.

Our objective is to support collections models and other initiatives that are aligned with the mission and values of the academic community and that have a long-term potential for advancing open scholarship practices in a more ethical, equitable, and financially sustainable direction. This is typically achieved by scholar-led organizations or those that demonstrate a clear commitment to mission-driven (as opposed to profit-driven) publishing models.

These criteria are for:

- Direct, non-consortial open access offers for infrastructure, publishing, content, advocacy organizations, etc.
- Direct non-consortial transformative agreements (TAs) (includes Read & Publish or Publish & Read agreements)

These criteria are not for:

- Consortial TAs
- Other more conventional subscription collections

The points under each criterion below are non-exhaustive, and it is not expected that each criterion will be relevant to each investment opportunity.

Criteria:

Quality Considerations

When evaluating offers, we will consider the academic or scholarly quality of the resource as demonstrated through the provider's reputation and commitment to ethical editorial practices, rather than controversial proxies for quality such as impact factors. In the case of memberships in advocacy organizations we will consider the potential value of their activities or initiatives.

- Commitment to ethical editorial practices and research integrity may be demonstrated through membership in OASPA (Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association) and/or COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics), indexing in DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), evidence of clear and carefully considered editorial policies posted on websites, and other indications of transparency or good faith practices in publishing.



- Provider is established, with a proven publication record, reputation, and governing body.
- Membership in advocacy organizations which demonstrate potential leadership and influence in advancing open scholarship; the organization need not always produce tangible outputs.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility, Indigenization (EDIAI) Considerations

When introducing the library to a new open access electronic resource, the provider demonstrates commitment to EDIAI considerations through their values, their processes and procedures, and their outputs.

We will also look for the following qualities where applicable:

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:
 - The provider/resource mobilizes open scholarship from equity-deserving, diverse scholars located in all parts of the world, including those from the Global South.
 - The terms support the inclusive rights of all researchers to participate in the scholarly communications ecosystem as knowledge creators.
- Accessibility:
 - The resource is inclusive and provides equitable access to everyone, especially people with disabilities.
 - The resource is created and disseminated by a provider that undertakes the development of products with the consideration of users with disabilities in the provider's designs, for example, the [a11y Project](#).
- Indigenization
 - The resource assists in moving the institution's decolonization and reconciliation goals forward.
 - When Indigenous knowledges (IK) are included, local considerations for availability of information and respect for cultural practices will be foremost.
 - Where data are by/about Indigenous and First Nations peoples, the resource/investment is guided by the [CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance](#) and/or the First Nations Information Governance Centre's principles of ownership, control, access, and possession ([OCAP Principles](#)).

Privacy & Author Rights Considerations

We will endeavour to partner with organizations and negotiate agreements that share our respect for patron/data privacy and strive to protect that privacy. We also support authors in retaining rights to their outputs. This includes:

- Freedom from surveillance online, including unnecessary collection and harvesting of users' data.
- No requirement for authors to waive any institutional or funder open access policy to publish in any of the publisher's journals.



- No author requirement to relinquish copyright and the right to deposit in institutional repositories.
- Provision of options that enable publication while providing authors with generous reuse rights.
- Provide unlimited coverage for all users with no limits on the amount that authors can publish within a given year.

Technical Considerations

Technical considerations are foundational, but investments that meet these requirements must also effectively maintain principles of open scholarship.

- The platform is interoperable, discoverable, and usable, including article-level metadata in compliance with accepted industry standards (e.g., OpenCitations, OpenAIRE).
- The provider has a preservation strategy (e.g., LOCKSS, Portico) for their content and it is indexed in appropriate resources for the field (e.g., DOAJ).
- We support open scholarship infrastructure (e.g., persistent identifiers, open standards, open-source software) and open architecture that integrates well with evolving models of scholarly communication where applicable.
- Where technology requires integration with our systems (funding, workflows, IT), it should be able to be implemented without requiring onerous changes.

Financial Considerations

Publishing practices and pricing models are financially sustainable, clear, and transparent, and closely align with the actual costs of publishing and producing output. Transparency in business practices enables equitable access to information, fosters trust, and leads to fair negotiations and agreements.

We will also look for the following qualities where applicable:

- Fiscal stability:
 - The provider helps shape a diverse scholarly publishing landscape, where learned societies and not-for-profit publishers can compete and thrive; where innovation is incentivized and rewarded; and where reasonable profit margins are the norm.
 - Sustainable access to content is ensured—perpetual access is critical in a quickly changing publishing environment.
 - There is long-term digital preservation and accessibility of content through publisher participation in trusted digital archives.
 - Collective infrastructure and collective ownership are supported.
 - Minimal staff time is required to maintain the resource(s).
- Pricing:
 - Subscriptions and APCs (Article Processing Charges) are not charged at the same time ('double dipping').
 - Price increases are predictable and justifiable.
 - Unrequested content does not increase cost.



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- Transparency:
 - No non-disclosure clauses in agreements, allowing for the free and open public sharing of those agreements.
 - A clear breakdown of fees in the pricing provided to us.
 - The provider openly shares financial statements.

Local Considerations

We will favour resources that are useful and beneficial to the USask community in various ways, including:

- Relevant to the needs of local research, such as the [Signature Areas of Research](#), and are desirable venues for hosting research outputs by USask authors.
- Reflect the mission or strategic goals of key campus stakeholders, especially ones that seek to create a more open and equitable research ecosystem for all.

These criteria were developed by the USask University Library's Open Collections Working Group (J. McLean (chair), S. Bolton, D. Dawson, & V. Wilson) with inspiration from similar documents by peer institutions and consortia. This is a living document that will be reviewed regularly. Please contact open.collections@library.usask.ca with questions or vendor offers.

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