

Open access and the *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*

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This editorial offers a brief overview of open access (OA) publication and how the *British Journal of Occupational Therapy* (*BJOT*) supports it.

OA publishing started in the early 1990s (Laakso et al., 2011) when groups of researchers started putting their work online via university Web servers. Their aim was to facilitate knowledge exchange and remove the financial barriers between author and reader. Since then, OA publishers such as the *Public Library of Science* (PLOS) and BioMed Central have brought science research to many thousands of people who might not otherwise have access to it. In recent years, established journal publishers have developed completely OA journals and/or allow authors to publish their articles as OA within a subscription journal – this is commonly known as hybrid OA publishing, and is possible in *BJOT* through SAGE Choice.

In the United Kingdom, universities have responded to government policies supporting OA (The Finch Group, 2013, and the Research Council UK Policy, 2013). The Higher Education Funding Council for England (2014) recommended that peer-reviewed research, in particular journal articles, should be open access (either ‘gold’ or ‘green’, see below) to be eligible for submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

While there is still some confusion about the different types of OA, even among established publishers (Suber, 2013), there are essentially two options: ‘gold’ OA, whereby an article is published as OA in a journal;

‘green’ OA, self-archiving a version of a journal article in an OA repository. OA publication within a subscription journal such as *BJOT* is ‘gold OA’. The author normally pays an ‘article processing charge’ (APC) that covers the publication costs of their article. The published article is OA.

It is important to note that an OA article is not simply a ‘free article’ (and a free article is not necessarily OA). Generally, free articles cannot be reprinted or copied without permission whereas OA articles may be freely reproduced, excerpted, copied, and even used for commercial purposes in some cases. If a published article is OA the author and publisher must allow liberal reusability. OA articles are usually published under a ‘Creative Commons (CC)’ license, often displaying a logo (as SAGE does). For authors who publish their article as OA in *BJOT*, authors may select a CC-BY-NC license that permits non-commercial use with attribution. CC-BY licenses that require attribution only are available to authors whose funders require them. The author retains the copyright in both cases.

Increasingly, universities provide funds to support staff in publishing as gold OA and some funding bodies build APC charges into their grants. But for authors who do not want to or cannot pay OA charges, green OA permits them to comply with government and funding body requirements by self-archiving. Authors can place their accepted article (the final version before it is edited and typeset) on their university OA repository, and publishers often permit archiving the final published version after an embargo period. For more detailed information on SAGE’s policy for self-archiving, see <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/author-information>. In addition, the final published article appears ‘in print’ as usual, but is not OA within the journal.

Now that OA is becoming part of the mainstream for publishers and institutions, there is much information online to help authors understand what is involved; some reliable resources are listed below. If you are interested in publishing your accepted article as gold OA in *BJOT*, visit the journal at bjot.sagepub.com or feel free to contact the *BJOT* editorial office for further information.

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This issue contains an article published as OA, by Yeliz Prior and colleagues (Prior et al., 2015).

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