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12-20-2022

Frequently Asked Questions: 2022 Public Access Policy Guidance

White House Office of Science and Technology Policy

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White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, "Frequently Asked Questions: 2022 Public Access Policy Guidance" (2022). *Copyright, Fair Use, Scholarly Communication, etc.*. 238.
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Frequently Asked Questions: 2022 Public Access Policy Guidance

What is meant by public access to federally funded research?

Public access refers to the free availability of federally funded research materials, including data and research results, to the public.

How was the policy guidance of the Memorandum developed?

The 2022 Memorandum to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies (2022 Memorandum), "[Ensuring Free, Immediate, and Equitable Access to Federally Funded Research](#)," was developed by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) in collaboration with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Federal departments and agencies, and, in consultation with a wide range of external stakeholders.

How is the 2022 Memorandum being implemented across the Federal government?

OSTP coordinates the interagency National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) [Subcommittee on Open Science](#). Through this body, departments and agencies have provided input and feedback to OSTP on public access policy guidance proposals. The 2022 Memorandum asks agencies to coordinate planning and implementation strategies through the NSTC Subcommittee on Open Science to coordinate efforts and leverage the knowledge resources of this important community of practice. Additionally, departments and agencies have purview over their own implementation and compliance strategies, in accordance with their respective missions and internal processes and regulations.

What kind of federally funded scholarly publications are covered by the guidance?

The 2022 Memorandum defines scholarly publications to always include peer-reviewed research articles or final manuscripts published in scholarly journals, and may include peer-reviewed book chapters, editorials, and peer-reviewed conference proceedings published in other scholarly outlets that result from federally funded research. As with the 2013 Memorandum, "[Increasing Access to the Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research](#)," the 2022 Memorandum implementation strategy does not prescribe a one-size-fits-all approach, as agencies—in consultation with their respective research communities and relevant external stakeholders—are best positioned to decide how to ensure that government-supported research outputs or final manuscripts are deposited in designated repositories. OSTP supports this effort through its coordination of the interagency working groups of the NSTC Subcommittee on Open Science, working with agencies to coordinate and align their public access plans and infrastructure to the extent possible.

What is an agency-designated repository?

The 2013 Memorandum requested that agencies designate a specific repository in which agency-funded research would be made publicly available. A [network of agency repositories](#) for research articles is now well-established in the Federal government and many can be found and searched at <http://www.science.gov>.

How will federally funded scientific and research data be shared?

Since data are variable in type, size, and storage medium, the manner of how data will be made public is also variable. According to the new policy guidance, agencies are requested to follow the NSTC's [Desirable Characteristics for Data Repositories for Federally Funded Research](#) in providing guidance to their funded researchers for appropriate data repositories. The document describes the characteristics that agencies will use to gauge the appropriateness of specific repositories for data sharing, such as using a common format, ensuring privacy and security considerations are met, and assigning unique persistent identifiers to the data to facilitate findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability. Many agencies already have robust data repositories and provide guidance to researchers that conform to the provisions in the 2022 Memorandum. The National Institutes of Health maintain a [list of appropriate repositories](#) for general and specific data sharing.

Will Federal agencies comply with the Memorandum?

OSTP worked in close concert with Federal agencies and OMB to provide the updated guidance. The agencies will continue to update their plans in accordance with their missions, policies, and research communities.

What impact will the policy guidance have on specific business models for scholarly publishing?

The 2022 Memorandum does not take a position on specific business models used across the scientific and research publishing industry. OSTP continues to provide guidance to agencies, through the NSTC Subcommittee on Open Science, on how they can minimize the possible unintended impacts of the updated policy guidance on relevant stakeholders, including not-for-profit, small scholarly society publishers, and minority-serving institutions. Importantly, adherence to and implementation of the policy guidance in the 2022 Memorandum does not require expense on the part of the researcher. Impact on publishing costs is a possible, but not a necessary, outcome of the revised policy guidance; the requirement for sharing scholarly articles can be achieved by use of agency-designated repositories with the final peer-reviewed manuscript.

How will the costs of publishing be covered for public access to federally funded research?

The 2022 Memorandum recommends that agencies work with OMB to allow researchers to include reasonable publication costs and costs associated with submission, curation, management of data, and special handling instructions as allowable expenses in all research budgets. Many agencies, including the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health, already allow for publication and data management costs to be included in research budgets by their funded investigators.

How does the 2022 Memorandum intersect with related Federal policy guidance, such as that promoting research security and scientific integrity?

The policy guidance in the 2022 Memorandum demonstrates how public access intersects with scientific integrity in important ways, including through transparent disclosures of conflicts of interest, sources of funding, and the level of peer-review of scholarly materials. These provisions were developed to be consistent with Federal agency expectations to support scientific integrity as identified in the NSTC report titled, [Protecting the Integrity of Government Science](#). The guidance also recommends that agencies employ persistent digital identifiers to track all aspects of the research life-cycle, from awards to researchers to outputs. This provision was designed to be consistent with the NSTC's [National Security Presidential Memorandum-33 implementation guidance](#) for research security. The guidance was also developed to complement existing laws and regulations, including Office of Management and Budget memoranda and the [Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018](#).

What opportunities do non-Federal stakeholders have to comment on Federal agency public access implementation plans?

The 2022 Memorandum reflects extensive engagement with stakeholders across the research publication ecosystem on ways to strengthen equitable access to federally funded research results. OSTP's consultations have included large and small science and academic publishers, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, libraries and universities, scholarly societies, and members of the general public. Stakeholders from across sectors are encouraged to continue engaging with OSTP and Federal departments and agencies by participating in meetings, sending correspondence, and responding to requests for information. Federal agencies have a diverse range of tools for receiving input and feedback from stakeholders and they will follow their internal rulemaking and policy-setting processes to use those tools as appropriate.

White House Office of Science and Technology Policy

Also available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/news-updates/2022/12/20/frequently-asked-questions-2022-public-access-policy-guidance/>