

swissuniversities

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A National Open Access Strategy: Toward the Unrestricted Publication of Research Output

At its plenary assembly on Tuesday, 31 January 2017, the Rectors' Conference of Swiss Higher Education Institutions, adopted a [national Open Access Strategy](#). The strategy aims to provide public access to research publications via the Internet or via open databases as soon as possible. Currently, access to much research output is restricted by the terms and conditions of commercial publishers. Commissioned by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), the strategy will now be submitted for approval to the Swiss Conference of Higher Education Institutions.

The Open Access Strategy envisages that all publicly funded publications must be freely accessible by 2024. The general desiderata is that all scientific publications will be open access in Switzerland in 2024. This vision is oriented toward current European models. To implement this vision, various fields of action have been determined so as to align open-access practices in Switzerland, to strengthen negotiations with publishers, to enhance incentives among researchers, and to consider new types of publishing. In spring 2017, swissuniversities will devise an action plan in association with various partners (SNSF, SERI, university libraries). Following its analysis and a consultation phase this coming autumn, the plan will be adopted definitively. [The analysis of financial flows](#) in the field of scientific publications, which has been undertaken by British experts commissioned by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and by swissuniversities' "Scientific Information" Programme, and which recommends a pragmatic and flexible model, will also serve as a working basis for the action plan.

Over the past ten years, Open Access has undergone strong development. Many countries are pursuing clear policies in this area. Open Access policies are gaining increasing significance worldwide: They indicate that publicly funded research results are a public asset, whose full utilization rests on free and unlimited access. Conscious of both the importance of these international initiatives and the costs of accessing scientific information in Switzerland, SERI commissioned swissuniversities to devise a national Open Access Strategy in association with the SNSF. swissuniversities subsequently set up a working group comprising representatives of the various partners. The working group prepared a draft strategy, which was submitted to all universities for consultation last autumn. The outcome was first adopted by the SNSF and on 31 January 2017 by the plenary assembly (i.e., all members of swissuniversities).

3001 Bern, 01.02.2017

Press release

The strategy adopted by swissuniversities will now be submitted for approval to the Swiss University Conference at its meeting in February 2017. Once the action plan and the implementation of the necessary steps and resources have been clarified, it will be submitted to the Swiss Conference of Higher Education Institutions for its comments on the national Open Access Strategy.

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