

AKOA Recommendations for Open Access Publication Funds at Swiss Institutions

1 Introduction

In March 2021, the AKOA defined eligibility criteria for the institutional Open Access Funds to promote the creation of an Institutional Gold OA Fund standard across Switzerland. These criteria were binding for all institutions participating in the National Open Access Fund of the National OA Fund Action Line of swissuniversities (2022–24)¹.

The present recommendations were developed by the AKOA Working Group on Open Access Publication Funds in 2024 and updated in 2025. The current version was ratified by the AKOA on 13 November 2025. They aim to carry forward the idea of a Swiss standard for institutional Gold Open Access funds and apply only to funds that support individual payments of OA fees. Read and Publish and other agreements with publishers have not been taken into account.

Due to the focus on Gold Open Access funding, these recommendations do not address issues related to Diamond Open Access funding.

2 Overarching criteria

2.1 Price cap

The revised Open Access Strategy points out that it is important to avoid long-term price spirals². The AKOA therefore recommends the setting of price caps for publication funding. The price caps recommended for different publication formats are set out below.

2.2 Quality control

To ensure that funding is limited to publications of high quality, all publications funded by institutional OA funds should have undergone quality control. The accepted quality control procedures may vary, as there are discipline-specific quality control mechanisms (such as peer review, editorial review, etc.).

2.3 3rd-party funding

Publications by authors who have access to other sources of funding (e.g. SNSF, EU, etc.) should not be financed by institutional OA funds.

¹ [DeLOS09_07-a_National_OA_Fund_v2.pdf \(swissuniversities.ch\)](#)

² [Swiss-National-Open-Access-Strategy-2024-en.pdf](#)

2.4 Other fees

OA funds should not finance charges that are not directly related to OA publishing, such as front-page charges, color charges, etc.

3 Specifications for journal articles

3.1 Price cap and partial payment

Despite increasing APC prices, the AKOA recommends that the cap should remain at 2,500 CHF (excl. VAT).

The AKOA stands by its recommendation not to make partial payments to higher APCs. This is to send a signal to the publishers. Also, partial payments contradict the idea of a cap and the principle of cost neutrality, especially since the remainder of the APC is often paid by the institutes/faculties.

3.2 Licences

The recommended choice of license is CC-BY. However, there may be cases and academic fields where other CC licences are called for and thus need to be considered.

3.3 Quality criteria

All journal articles should go through a quality check before publications are funded. The standard quality check for articles is peer review. In some disciplines, other forms of review, such as editorial review, may be appropriate. If a journal is listed in DOAJ, it can be assumed to be a trustworthy journal, due to the DOAJ's strict criteria. For other journals, the DOAJ criteria will help with evaluation.

3.4 Publications in hybrid journals

To avoid double dipping (payment for reading the journal as well as for the OA publication of articles in the journal), it is highly recommended to exclude publications in hybrid OA journals and exclusively fund publications in pure Gold-OA journals.

4 Specifications for books and book chapters

4.1 Price cap and partial payments

4.1.1 For books

The AKOA recommends that the price cap for books should remain at a maximum of CHF 8,000 (excl. VAT). Partial payments for book publications should be considered.

4.1.2 For book chapters

For book chapters, the price cap should be set at 2,500 CHF (excl. VAT), as is the case for journal publications. Partial payments to higher Book Chapter Processing Charges (BCPC) for book chapters are not recommended.

4.2 Licenses

Book publications should be published under a Creative Commons license. While CC-BY should be strongly recommended, the AKOA recognizes that there are cases and academic fields where other CC licenses are more common and should therefore be accepted. The license must be included in all formats of the work.

4.3 Quality criteria

There is a diversity of discipline-specific quality control mechanisms for books. Publishers should at least be transparent about the nature of the quality assurance process performed for their books on their website and/or in the publishing contract. The chosen quality assurance mechanism should be consistent with the best practices in the discipline concerned. Further criteria defined by the membership criteria of DOAB³ or the AG Universitätsverlage⁴ may be helpful when checking an application for book funding (e.g. visibility, long-term preservation, licensing). The same applies to book chapters.

4.4 Publisher Contract / Cost Details

For book publications, the AKOA recommends that an itemized invoice and/or the publisher's contract be requested with the application. This enables the fund management to check the credibility of the costs invoiced and to exclude costs not directly linked to open access publishing. It may be useful to first define internally which book-publishing costs the fund can cover.

4.5 Book chapters in hybrid books

Although the funding of OA book chapters is important, the aim should be to make the whole book open access, not just individual chapters. The AKOA therefore recommends that chapters in hybrid books should not be funded.

³ <https://www.doabooks.org/en/publishers/join-doab>

⁴ Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Universitätsverlage. (2023). Quality Standards for Open Access Books (Version 2). Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7743833>