

Q & A on HHMI's Public Access Publishing Policy

Q. When does HHMI's policy on public access publishing take effect?

A. The policy applies to manuscripts of original research articles submitted for publication on or after January 1, 2008, on which an HHMI scientist is a major author.

Q. How does HHMI define major author?

A. "Major author" normally includes those authors listed first and last; if a middle author is designated in the paper as the corresponding author, then that author is considered to be the major author.

Q. How does the policy affect original research articles for which an HHMI scientist played a contributing (but not major) role?

A. We strongly encourage HHMI scientists to advocate that an original research article and supplementary materials be made freely available and downloadable within six months of publication.

Q. Are review articles, commentaries, and other publications subject to the policy?

A. Not at this time, but HHMI scientists are strongly encouraged to make them available through the appropriate repository within six months.

Q. To whom does the policy on public access to publications apply?

A. This policy applies to all HHMI laboratory heads, including investigators and group leaders and fellows at the Janelia Farm Research Campus. It does not apply to HHMI grantees.

Q. What responsibilities does an HHMI scientist have under this policy?

A. HHMI scientists are responsible for ensuring that each original, peer-reviewed research article on which he or she is a major author is freely available and downloadable online within six months of publication. The Institute has assembled resources to ease the administrative burden related to this policy, but scientists are responsible for understanding the public access policies of journals

in which they hope to publish and for completing the review process required by PubMed Central (PMC) or other repository.

Q. Will HHMI pay the costs associated with complying with the policy?

A. HHMI will pay most of the costs associated with this policy.

Q. Will the costs be paid from HHMI Investigators' laboratory budgets?

A. No, most of the costs will not come from HHMI Investigators' laboratory budgets. The Institute has concluded agreements with several major publishers, most notably Elsevier, Blackwell, and BMC, for central handling of open access charges. In other cases, if HHMI investigators are billed by the publisher for an open access option, the laboratory budget will be reimbursed for this expense, up to a maximum of \$2,000 per paper. For those journals where open access costs exceed \$2,000, the investigator may utilize either his laboratory budget or other funding to cover the balance.

Q. Do HHMI scientists have to wait until January 1 to meet the expectations established by the new policy?

A. Many HHMI scientists already meet or exceed the expectations of our policy and the Institute has provided support to scientists publishing in open access journals, including those published by the Public Library of Science. The agreement with Elsevier will take effect on September 1, 2007; other agreements are expected to become effective in the coming months.

Q. What assistance will HHMI provide in helping its scientists comply with this policy?

A. The staff of the Purnell W. Choppin Library are available to answer questions about journal policies and to provide other help as needed. They can be reached at public_access@hhmi.org and will update the set of online resources on a regular basis. In addition, the Institute has worked with the National Library of Medicine to develop an interface to PMC for HHMI authors that is now being tested and will be available for use in October.

Q. Which repositories meet the requirements established under the new policy?

A. For journals in the biological sciences, we have designated PMC as the relevant repository. We are in the process of identifying appropriate repositories in disciplines outside the biological sciences, including engineering and physics.