Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This section contains answers to the most frequently asked questions that we encountered in deploying Opening the Future. These FAQs can be used in response to queries about the model or simply to answer these questions if you have them yourself. The numbers in these FAQ responses pertain to the model at the Central European University Press's implementation of Opening the Future. They may be more or less relevant to your own institution, but may in any case provide a helpful jumping off point.

Why OA and Why Now?

In line with our mission and following all the evidence of expanded readership of our books when OA, we are working with this model because it is the most effective way to reduce costs to libraries and provide equitable access to publishing for authors who do not have BPCs available to them.

We agree on the positive benefits of OA as listed in the OAPEN Books Toolkit:

- Increased readership, usage and citation
- Wider and more diverse audiences
- Real-world impact and public engagement
- Quicker and more lasting impact
- More possibilities for readers to engage with and improve research
- Greater author control
- Compliance with funder mandates

Opening the Future is compliant with funder mandates and most importantly is used alongside BPC funding where available so as not to 'double dip' and only apply library funding for those books that do not have alternative sources of funding.

Most of these FAQs are for librarians, but we urge anyone interested in OA for books to read on.

Why now when library budgets are under so much pressure?

The Covid pandemic exposed how vital open access is to the future of scholarly communications while also ripping the heart out of the library budgets that can make that transition possible. Opening the Future is designed to be affordable to yield excellent value per book. At an average projected cost of €16.00 per backlist title, €32.00 per frontlist title, or €10.67 per book on aggregate. Whichever way you look at it, Opening the Future provides a good return on library investment.

What happens if a frontlist title has access to other funding as a BPC from a research grant?

Our policy is to first seek funding from other sources and only if that is not available (which it is still not in most cases) would we apply the funds raised from this project to make books open.

Can this model scale for use by other publishers without inundating libraries with lots of tiny deals?

We hope that with the documented success of Opening the Future we will have a model that could lead to the widespread transition of university presses worldwide to OA.

What are the key features about Opening the Future that are of interest to librarians?

The model is designed to service different types of libraries.

If you already have most or all of our backlist books it is likely that you would continue to buy our books in the future, but the more we can make OA the fewer books you would need to purchase. On the other hand, if you want a smaller selection of titles for a very economic price, then buying

our backlist packages is for you. All the proceeds go to funding the OA frontlist and again this will broaden the range of books for your readers.

You can either purchase the backlist package(s) if your procurement policies require content in exchange for payment, or you can pay through your OA funds. And we offer an ‘OA membership’ option which comes with no backlist titles but which still helps to fund our open access efforts on the frontlist.

Either way, we are seeing a shift to supporting OA models from acquisitions budgets and we are hoping that this will be the source of support for OA, not only for us, but for all OA initiatives for books. Otherwise it will be impossible to move from pilots to regular practice. Regular revenue like this will greatly ease the way for new initiatives to become established and reliable funding for publishing activities.

How does Opening the Future help libraries use their budgets efficiently?

Whether you’re interested in acquiring additional backlist titles, or if you have them all already and want to support the frontlist going OA, the cost of our programme is very attractive. Our members are banded according to their size, as recognised by Lyrasis and Jisc, and a three-year subscription for even the highest band library is equivalent to less than an industry average single BPC.

What is the goal of this model?

Nothing less than to show a route to sustainable and equitable OA for foundational publications in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

We understand that as a small publisher we cannot change the world alone and that the next few years will require adjustments all along the supply chain including the role of intermediaries and aggregators. We are working closely with others to ensure this transition happens.

Is this like a ‘read and publish’ deal, but for books?

No, the model is not based on the support of individual titles. If anything it’s more like a ‘Subscribe to Open’ offer. Participating libraries get unlimited, DRM-free access to curated selections of backlist eBooks at a much cheaper price than buying them in print one at a time. The subscription fees are then used to publish new, frontlist books in OA format. It’s that simple. There are no BPCs charged. Authors at participating libraries do not get ‘preferential’ or ‘discounted’ publishing deals: OA books are chosen on merit, through the normal editorial proposal process and are rigorously peer reviewed. The cost of producing OA books is paid for by the collected library subscription fees: so the more libraries sign up, the more books can be published as OA. If we can get to a fully open frontlist then any authors, including those based at subscribing member institutions, will be able to publish openly with us.

Can this model scale for use by other publishers without inundating libraries with lots of tiny deals?

We believe that with the documented success of Opening the Future we have a model that could lead to the widespread transition of university and mission-driven presses worldwide to OA. Others, including the Copim Community and the Open Book Collective, are working on reducing the friction of OA publishing through managing and selling funding schemes to libraries.

Information for librarians

When will you make frontlist books open access?

All new frontlist titles are at first planned as traditionally-sold ‘closed’ books. But as soon as we have accrued enough library support to fund a book, we change the metadata before any sales are made and our distributors move the book to an OA status. This happens well before the book is published: so far, we’ve estimated between 2-3 months. In this way we hope to avoid libraries buying books because their OA status was announced too late.

Please note that GOBI now indicates if a book is available OA and does so as soon as our metadata is changed to OA status. You are still able to purchase print or digital retail editions as usual.

You can keep track of our OA publishing progress by clicking the button below:

Is this programme open to library consortia deals?

Yes. We've already signed a deal with the California Digital Library (CDL) Consortium and are in discussion with others. We aim to pass on any savings in administration costs to libraries. Please contact us to discuss: openingthefuture@copim.ac.uk

What happens if a frontlist title has access to other funding such as a BPC from a research grant?

Our policy is to first seek funding from other sources and only if that is not available would we apply the funds raised from this project to make books open. In this way we are ensuring we do not 'double-dip'.

How can the Press revenue targets be reached? And what happens if and when they are reached?

If it is not reached, how does the Press decide what will be published OA?

Revenue targets can be reached as more libraries join up. Once we get there we can make more books open access, and we can consult our member community on how else we can support open infrastructures and publishing. We wrote a news piece in early 2024 outlining our planned OA frontlist trajectory, which you can read here: ceup.openingthefuture.net/news/111/

We have several relevant criteria regarding what titles to make available OA through OTF funding; primarily that the authors want (or need) to publish their monographs OA, and that there is no other funding available. After that, we assign titles in order of publication date, with as much notice to the libraries as possible through our metadata distributions to ensure they are aware of the

status change to OA.

Questions about Signing Up - Money and Conditions

What do subscribing members get for their money?

Members receive access to packages of 50-200 titles from CEU Press’s extensive backlist on Central and East Europe and the former Soviet Union - the history of the region dating back to the middle ages, communism and transitions to democracy (and in some cases backsliding on democracy).

There are five book packages to choose from and each contains titles proven by recent download figures to be popular and current according to data from Project MUSE. One package has been curated by an independent panel of subject expert library colleagues (the ‘Librarian Selection’). While not a pick and mix model entirely there is sufficient choice for libraries to select what meets their collection and reader requirements best. The newest package, ‘East Meets West’ concentrates on Russia, Ukraine and the context of the Full Scale Invasion.

Do member libraries/institutions have unlimited access to the books in the subscription packages? And what happens at the end of three years?

Member libraries and institutions have unlimited concurrent/simultaneous access to all titles in the package(s) you’ve subscribed to during the term of your three-year membership. You will be entitled to perpetual access to the package(s) at the end of your three year membership. There is no ‘bait and switch’ and packages won’t suddenly change after you have joined.

What is the format of the book subscription package and what services are available to members?

The books in the subscription packages are hosted on Project MUSE in their standard DRM-free, unlimited-use model for eBooks. Full-text searching is available across all books and within individual titles. MUSE supports authentication via IP, Shibboleth, and referring URL. Participating libraries can make use of MUSE's Library Dashboard to access MARC records and KBART files customised to their holdings, and retrieve COUNTER 5-compliant usage statistics.

MUSE collaborates with all major library discovery vendors and ensures the packages are set up as collections to be activated in all pertinent discovery services. Books on the MUSE platform are preserved through participation in PORTICO's E-Book Preservation service.

Project MUSE is committed to the accessibility of content and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), in a manner consistent with the Web Accessibility Initiative Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 AA. They have a full accessibility statement on their website.

What if we want to access more than one package?

You can sign up to as many packages as you like - simply fill in the form for each package you want access to, or you can contact us if you want to discuss it first.

If my library doesn't have a discretionary OA budget can we still participate?

Yes, absolutely. Funds from any budget are accepted. In fact, we are hoping that as libraries see this to be a cheaper way of building collections they will pay for this type of offer through their acquisitions budgets.

How do we sign up and join?

Joining takes about 1 minute by filling in a form with your details and the package(s) you wish to have access to. We will initiate membership and billing when we receive your details.

USA & Canada: Sign up via Lyrasis [supply a quick link or button to take them straight there]

UK: Sign up via Jisc [quick link]

Rest of the World: Sign up via our site [quick link]

About the Books and Collections

How have the packages been composed?

The first four packages of 50 titles each have been assembled in different ways. The first covers History and is primarily made up of the most accessed titles on the Project MUSE platform. The second is Political Science, again selected by their subject ranking on Project MUSE. The third (Editors' Choice), selected by the editors at CEU Press, is wider in subject areas and includes gems in literature, such as the Classics list, gender studies, Roma, labour, public health, nationalities, Jewish studies, human rights and more. The fourth is a package made up of titles selected from the other three packages, by a small independent panel of librarians ('Librarian Selection').

The fifth package is the newest. Called East Meets West, it is a collection of books that shed light on the war between Russia and Ukraine.

There is also the opportunity to support the programme even without buying any of the backlist packages. Should you already have all or most of our titles then the OA Supporter membership is for you. For a fraction of the cost of a single typical BPC you will be contributing to reducing your future spend on closed titles as more and more of our frontlist books go open.

Are there any DRM restrictions on the backlist?

No, all backlist package titles that you are subscribed to are DRM-free and accessible by multiple users simultaneously.

How are the OA books made available? And how are supporting libraries

informed?

The new titles funded by the programme to be published open access are hosted on Project MUSE, JSTOR, OAPEN, ORL and findable via other aggregators such as Proquest, DeGruyter and EBSCO. OA books are available in PDF format with CC BY NC ND licences. Project MUSE supports open access books with MARC records, KBART files, and metadata sharing with major library vendors, to ensure that OA content is widely discoverable through library systems. The books are also listed in DOAB.

You can keep track of our OA publishing progress at: [link to page where you keep up to date information about published and forthcoming OtF titles].

We update our progress page on the website, and issue news items https://ceup.openingthefuture.net/forthcoming/ as well as send details through listservs. We also include a note of new OA titles in our librarian newsletter, which you should receive as a confirmed customer. All titles get distributed to as wide a network as possible, this includes JSTOR, Project MUSE, DOAB, ORL, ProQuest, EBSCO, De Gruyter etc - this way, if you are set up to receive catalogue data from any of these services, you will get details of our OA titles as well wherever you choose to make them available.

Do CEU Press books also sell print copies of the OA books?

Yes. All OA titles are available to purchase in print form. Print books can be bought through the normal channels.

We already own the backlist titles/don’t need access to the books, but would still like to support the OA programme. Can we do this?

Yes. We appreciate that some institutions may not wish to sign up to a book package, or may not be able to. However they might still want to support, and help to fund, the open access monographs that CEU Press publishes. For these institutions we have created an ‘OA Supporter Membership’. It is simple and quick to join: just fill in the sign up form with your details and we’ll do the rest. No further action is required from you once we have processed the payment.

For those institutions that want to commit a larger budget, the OA Supporter Package also comes in 2x and 3x the value per year (equivalent to subscribing to 2 or 3 packages per year).

About the CEU Press and OtF Partners

Why do we get invoicing help from partners like Jisc and Lyrasis?

Transitioning to open access is hard and we're in the midst of a transition where we need to accommodate the needs of libraries with a model that is still quite new. We understand that libraries often need to go through extensive deliberations amongst their own stakeholders to see if it is worth investing in our particular offer. As a small press we do not have the resources to talk to every librarian, so we rely on trusted library partners like Lyrasis and Jisc who are already communicating with librarians every day.

What is Copim and how is it supporting Opening the Future?

Copim is a community of people and organisations working to build a fairer, more open future for scholarly books. Together, they collaborate on community-led and values-driven initiatives, which help to support open access authors, publishers and readers. CEU Press has been provided with assistance in implementing the OtF model through Copim.

FAQs for Authors

Is my book eligible for the OtF programme?

Opening the Future is meant to support authors who do not have access to BPCs. Where there is funding from a grant funder or an institution we will use those funds first. Only after these avenues

have been explored will we see if your book meets the criteria we've set for our OtF programme. Our acquisitions editors welcome your enquiry and can discuss your own particular situation.

Is this programme compliant with funder mandates?

Yes. For more detailed information contact us via email at: [add your email] For some general information see the next FAQ.

What if my research grant insists on OA but doesn't guarantee funding for it – either before or after a book contract is signed?

Funding support for OA is variable and is changing all the time as the move towards making more books OA continues. We are working within the guidelines all the time even as they change, making sure that books get funded. This is the case, for example with the new UKRI rules where there is some funding, but not enough to cover all book outputs from grant supported researchers. Talk with one of our acquisitions editors for more information.

I'm not sure about going open access for my book. Can it remain closed if I publish with you?

Yes, it can remain closed – but we'd like to discuss with you whether this is the best way to publish your book. At the moment we don't have sufficient funding to cover all books going OA, and while that is our aspiration, we would not force anyone to go OA - the final choice is with the author.

Do you apply the same peer review process to your OA books as closed ones?

Yes, we do. In fact all the publishing processes are identical, with the same promotional activities as well as making print editions available. For more information see our OA page for authors: [insert your webpage link here]

My University is a member of Opening the Future with CEU Press. Does this mean I can publish OA books with you without need for funding?

There is no linkage between an institution supporting our programme and their own authors being allowed to publish OA. Authors at member institutions do not get ‘preferential’ or ‘discounted’ publishing deals: OA books are chosen on merit, through the normal editorial proposal process and are peer reviewed. Authors are always welcome to submit a monograph proposal through our normal process but membership of Opening the Future is not a factor in the editorial or acceptance process.

Is this a ‘read and publish deal’ or a transformative agreement?

Opening the Future is not like a ‘transformative agreement’ in the journal world. There is no linkage between an institution supporting the model and their own authors being allowed to publish OA, and it’s not based on the support of individual titles. If anything it’s more like a ‘Subscribe to Open’ offer. Participating libraries get unlimited access to curated selections of backlist eBooks at a much cheaper price than buying them in print one at a time. The subscription fees are then used to publish new OA books.

In a sense, the programme is trying to break the link between institutions paying and their own authors being allowed to publish openly, in favour of the press securing a 100% open frontlist and so achieving the former by default. It’s perhaps better thought of as an attempt to build an open, global ‘collection’ that is shared by libraries in common, around the world. There are no BPCs charged, and authors at participating institutions do not get ‘preferential’ or ‘discounted’ publishing deals: OA books are chosen on merit through the normal editorial proposal process and are peer reviewed. The cost of producing OA books is paid for by the collected library subscription fees: the more libraries sign up, the more OA books can be published.

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