

## CAUL position on the end goal of Open Access to journal articles

In 2020 the CAUL Board consulted with CAUL members to ensure a position and strategy relating to the end goal of open access to journal articles is aligned with institutional requirements while continuing to maximise collective benefits including for the CAUL Consortium. The intended audience for the position includes CAUL Council Members and the staff in CAUL member institutions to assist with providing clarity around the path to increased open access to journal articles that is imperative for research, development, innovation and education in Australia.

This document outlines CAUL's rationale and strategy to achieve the end goal of open access to journal articles articulated as universal, immediate and perpetual open access to the version of record.

**Note:** This position statement should be read in conjunction with:

- The [CAUL Statement on Open Scholarship](#)
- The [CAUL Principles & Framework for Pricing Digital Content](#).
- [The Background Briefing for the first Roundtable on Open and FAIR Dissemination of Research](#)

This position only concerns CAUL's approach to open access to **journal articles**, hence there are no broad overarching statements about open scholarship more generally. The position is being developed in parallel with CAUL's ongoing work with other stakeholders to develop a national strategy for open research in Australia. In addition CAUL is not speaking on behalf of individual institutions who may have a different position locally.

### Background

When CAUL began the pursuit of transformative agreements after members embraced the concept at the March 2019 Council meeting, it was stated that the focus would be on journal publishing with the aim of transforming the nature of the agreements from subscription based access to content as the starting point, to service-based publishing (in line with [Plan S principles](#)) and open access to content as the end point. The aim was articulated as a future state of immediate and perpetual open access to content ([CAUL Newsletter, 15 August 2019](#)).

### Current status

Various forms of open access for journal publishing are currently working in tandem:

- CAUL has signed five transformative agreements and is in ongoing negotiations with other publishers for further agreements based on the principles of no transactional APCs, no caps on publishing and bringing together current publishing and reading costs in order to ultimately pay to publish and read for free
- At the same time, CAUL member institutions have continued to populate institutional repositories with pre-publication versions of published journal articles produced by their researchers. Institutional Repositories have played an important role in providing open access over the last two decades and it is recognised that they also serve as necessary infrastructure for other content and for university functions such as in supporting ERA submissions. CAUL has also supported national and international efforts and strategies to ensure authors at Australian universities are able to retain necessary rights to deposit their articles in institutional repositories, and supports the [Plan S principles](#) on re-use rights. The

institutional repository landscape has changed somewhat since CAUL undertook a review of IR infrastructure a few year ago

- Publishing in preprint repositories and through not-for-profit open access publishers has continued and CAUL continues to work with OA publishers such as PLOS
- CAUL recognises the need for long-term preservation to ensure perpetual open access and works with initiatives such as CLOCKSS and Portico

To date, CAUL has not yet articulated what the end goal of open access looks like in terms of designating a preferred version of the research journal article to be open access. The CAUL Statement on Open Scholarship mentions “Actively work with our research communities to adopt open scholarly publishing practices especially Green OA through existing well established institutional repositories”. This is taken to apply only to the extent necessary to ensure green open access when open access to the version of record is not possible.

The Board is now proposing that CAUL adopts this position to enable CAUL to allocate resourcing to pursue a clearer path and more rapid progression to increased open access to journal articles:

**End goal of open access to journal articles:**

Universal, immediate and perpetual open access to the version of record

**Reasons for asserting open access to the version of record should be the end goal**

- The version of record is the final, official, published version of the scholarly record as a product of research (whether published by a large commercial publisher, an open access not-for-profit publisher or a learned society or academy). The term “version of record” has broad application to records of research outputs across STEM, medicine, the humanities and social sciences and also includes indigenous research outputs and non-traditional research outputs. However, this position paper is concerned with the version of record of journal articles
- Making CAUL’s position on the end goal of open access to journal articles clear and public is in line with the approach taken by international library consortia and does not weaken CAUL’s negotiating power
- Focusing on the version of record addresses the significant barriers arising from perceptions that pre-publication versions, open access publishers and open access publishing platforms are inferior in terms of efficiency (not quality of the published content)
- Focusing on the version of record aligns with institutions’ metrics orientation focused on publisher versions
- It is becoming more difficult to source the author’s accepted manuscript as publishers change the submission and review process. The business case for continuing to source and manage AAM’s in institutional repositories is becoming harder to justify with increasingly constrained resources in CAUL member institutions. However, it is acknowledged some institutions may prefer to continue with this, especially in the short term
- There appears to be growing consensus that support for hybrid journals is rapidly diminishing and CAUL does not support the hybrid option, in line with Plan S principles

## The path to the end goal

- Since significant funds are already expended to pay the costs of publishing the version of record, the question arises about the extent to which additional costs should be incurred by institutions to provide a pre-publication open access ecosystem which leads to multiple versions and potentially diluting of the quality of the scholarly record
- Pre-publication versions in repositories nevertheless achieve the goals of open access to some extent in that they provide open access, albeit not to the final version of record
- It thus appears that populating repositories with pre-publication versions is a necessary interim step in some cases as a transition towards the end goal of open access to the version of record, including as an interim step to meet funder open access mandates. In other cases, individual institutions may choose to continue to populate repositories with pre-publication versions regardless of whether there is open access to the version of record
- CAUL will be directing its effort towards achieving the end goal of universal open access to the version of record and allocating resources and funding on this basis. Repositories of pre-publication versions will eventually become unnecessary in the broader, universal context as the end goal is progressively achieved, although it is acknowledged that in some institutional contexts, repositories could continue to provide infrastructure for digital preservation, if desired

## What should CAUL do to achieve the end goal?

- Scale up the progress towards transformative agreements. CAUL has recently introduced a “FastTrack to OA” initiative to simplify and speed up the process towards open access through transformative agreements, with the aim of neutralising cost impacts to members as far as possible. This initiative includes the stated principle that there is sufficient money in the publishing ecosystem and that there should be *no additional cost* for transformative agreements. It is also acknowledged that transformative agreements are one strategy towards the achievement of the end goal of open access to journal articles
- Negotiate transformative agreements with major publishers as soon as practically possible, ensuring no additional cost to members and consider optional pricing models to suit various ways in which institutions account for expenditure on content subscriptions
- Ensure greater collaboration and cooperation between the CAUL Content Procurement Service and the CAUL Advancing Open Scholarship Program. (This is considered in the plans for the new position of Director, Strategy & Analytics in the CAUL National Office in 2021)
- Ensure more resources are put into data analytics and the necessary work required to evaluate the suitability and effectiveness of a range of payment models. The aim would be to ideally develop a model that can be implemented in member institutions to ensure a streamlined payment channel for a single fee for publishing that enables reading for all (also considered in the CAUL National Office plans for 2021)
- Work with the DVCsR Committee of UA and all of CAUL’s stakeholders as appropriate to ensure full endorsement of the version of record as the key element in the end goal of open access (this would include funding agencies, the academies and other sector related bodies)
- Continue to support initiatives to strengthen rights retention for authors while the need for pre-publication repositories remains a necessary step on the path to the end goal

## What could CAUL member institutions do to achieve the end goal?

- Commit to achieving universal open access to the version of record as the end goal and supporting transformative agreements negotiated by CAUL in pursuit of that goal, acknowledging that when transformative agreements are negotiated, the aim is open access

to the version of record and therefore it is not necessary to insist on open access copies for repositories simultaneously

- Commit to applying funds and resources as far as possible to the achievement of this end goal, while still applying funds as necessary to optimise institutional repositories for institutional needs such as ensuring adherence to funder mandates and for other purposes such as profiles, metrics and data, grey literature, NTROs, etc.
- Work at the institutional level to achieve endorsement of the version of record as the key element in the end goal of open access to journal articles
- Commit to progressively repositioning institutional repositories for uses other than hosting pre-publication versions (i.e. as more and more versions of record are made open access so the need for inclusion of pre-publication versions in repositories will decline)

**CAUL Board**

**3 February 2021**