

What work is involved in author fees at the library?

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Published 11.11.2021

Abstract

The background work included in open access fees (APCs) ranges from negotiating contracts to processing and advising researchers on funding requests and monitoring fees. In a large research-intensive university like the University of Helsinki, the workload associated with APCs is not insignificant. The goal of the library is to streamline administrative practices and free up researcher time from the payment process.

The article was originally published on the Think Open blog: <https://blogs.helsinki.fi/thinkopen/apc-series-3/>

The library maintains the APC guide that provides up-to-date information on current agreements.

The goal of the University of Helsinki is to make the practices related to open access fees (article processing charge, APC) as smooth as possible for researchers. The results of the work – APC services – were introduced in the [previous part of this article series](#). Now we provide an overview of what it takes to provide a service.



At the University of Helsinki, work related to APCs is a joint game between the library, several publishers and the financial administration of university services. The library plays a key role as a coordinator of this co-operation and as a producer and marketer of services. The library:

- **negotiates** open access agreements and institutional memberships with publishers and cooperates with FinELib consortium [in national agreements](#)
- **maintains** the [APC Guide](#), which provides up-to-date information on current agreements
- **verifies** that the researcher meets the terms of the contract when applying for APC funding; the terms and conditions usually specify that the corresponding author must be a researcher at the University of Helsinki – the library checks the affiliation and confirms it to the publisher
- **handles** APC funding requests and related invoices and monitors financial performance
- **compiles** article-level statistics by publisher and includes the information on the author's unit – in this way the distribution of open access publications in different disciplines can be monitored
- **advises** on issues related to APCs and negotiates with the publisher in problematic situations; there is a lot of need for advice because contracts as well as other practices (e.g. APC process interfaces) are publisher-specific
- **communicates** contracts and services to the research community.

Work related to APCs is done, among other work, by four people in the library. The number of APC tickets processed has increased significantly as funding for open access publishing has been [centralised in the library](#). At the beginning of the year, there were about 350 tickets per month, compared to 218 per month in 2020.

Researchers can propose new contracts

The library also collaborates closely with researchers. Researchers can propose new open access agreements with publishers to the library (hulib-apc@helsinki.fi). The library evaluates open access deals from the perspective of e.g. publication statistics, contract terms, and available funding.

Work related to APCs is done at various universities and nationally, and the Helsinki University Library is involved in these networks. Internationally, one of the key forms of cooperation is related to the monitoring of APC payments, and the University of Helsinki also aims to join the [OpenAPC service](#), which promotes the transparency of price information.