



Canadian Research
Knowledge Network

Réseau canadien
de documentation
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Assessment Guidelines for Open Access Publishers

The Content Strategy Committee (CSC) arrived at the list of criteria below through a consultation with the CRKN membership, the results of which were presented to and supported by members at the 2021 Conference. These are meant to be guiding principles that the CSC may use in assessing whether proposals from vendors and publishers meet with the CRKN membership's stated goals and objectives with respect to supporting open access. We have purposefully not assigned any weighting to the criteria as the CSC is better positioned to have as much latitude as possible in assessing the offers it receives from providers. Therefore, there is not an expectation that each provider will meet every criterion.

Financial Sustainability

When evaluating open access resources or models from vendors or publishers, CRKN will consider the financial sustainability of the entity offering the resource. CRKN may consider the vendor's ability to provide transparency through financial statements or other information that speaks to its financial health. Prospective vendors must also demonstrate commitment to and sustainability of their open access models and offer transparency in terms of the sources of funding that support that sustainability. Additionally, the origin and nature of funding sources and the vendor's status as a for-profit or not-for-profit entity might be considered.

- Provider is transparent with financial statements
- Provider does not charge, or provides a discount on Article Processing Charges (APCs)
- Provider is non-profit
- Provider is established (i.e., has a proven publication record and reputation)





Academic Quality

When evaluating offers, CRKN will consider the academic quality of the resource. Academic quality can be measured in traditional ways but should also not exclude resources that fall outside of traditional conceptions of academic work. Indications of a commitment to ethical editorial practices, cogent mission statements, and a demonstrated focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) issues are critical. Academic quality could be measured through other lenses, such as EDIA, Indigenous ways of knowing, or other facets required to support equity and inclusion. Preference may be given to researcher/academy-led organizations and providers.

- Provider demonstrates commitment to ethical editorial practices and research integrity, e.g. through membership in OASPA (Open Access Scholarly Publishing Association) and/or COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics), indexing in DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), clear editorial policies posted on website, etc.
- Provider demonstrates commitment to being mission-driven and/or researcher-focused
- Provider demonstrates commitment to EDIA issues
- Provider is a scholarly society or researcher/academy-led

Operations

When evaluating offers, CRKN will also take into account evidence of good operational practice on the part of the provider. This could take many forms, including, but not limited to, the use of open licenses (e.g., Creative Commons) the establishment of a platform that is interoperable, contains high quality metadata, provides robust data (e.g., usage, publishing) and is usable, and that has established a comprehensive preservation strategy.

- Provider's platform is interoperable, discoverable, and usable
- Provider uses open licenses (e.g., Creative Commons)
- Provider offers APC discount
- Provider is based in Canada
- Provider has a preservation strategy (e.g., is a participant of Portico or LOCKSS)
- Provider's content is indexed in OA abstracting and indexing (A&I) services (e.g., DOAJ, etc.)
- Provider reports article-level metadata in compliance with accepted industry standards (e.g. OpenCitations, OpenAIRE)

