**Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Open Access Policy**

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is committed to information sharing and transparency. We believe that published research resulting from our funding should be promptly and broadly disseminated. We have adopted an Open Access policy that enables the unrestricted access and reuse of all peer-reviewed published research funded, in whole or in part, by the foundation, including any underlying data sets.

As of January 1, 2015 our Open Access policy will be effective for all new agreements. During a two-year transition period, publishers will be permitted to apply up to a 12 month embargo period on the accessibility of the publication and its underlying data sets. This embargo period will no longer be allowed after January 1, 2017.

Our Open Access policy contains the following elements:

1. **Publications Are Discoverable and Accessible Online.**  Publications will be deposited in a specified repository(s) with proper tagging of metadata.
2. **Publication Will Be On “Open Access” Terms.**  All publications shall be published under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Generic License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) (CC BY 4.0) or an equivalent license. This will permit all users of the publication to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format and transform and build upon the material, including for any purpose (including commercial) without further permission or fees being required.
3. **Foundation Will Pay Necessary Fees.**  The foundation would pay reasonable fees required by a publisher to effect publication on these terms.
4. **Publications Will Be Accessible and Open Immediately.**  All publications shall be available immediately upon their publication, without any embargo period.   An embargo period is the period during which the publisher will require a subscription or the payment of a fee to gain access to the publication. We are, however, providing a transition period of up to two years from the effective date of the policy (or until January 1, 2017).  During the transition period, the foundation will allow publications in journals that provide up to a 12-month embargo period.
5. **Data Underlying Published Research Results Will Be Accessible and Open Immediately.**  The foundation will require that data underlying the published research results be immediately accessible and open.  This too is subject to the transition period and a 12-month embargo may be applied.

Email questions to [openaccess@gatesfoundation.org](mailto:openaccess@gatesfoundation.org)

**Open Access Policy Frequently Asked Questions**

The following questions are updated as new information becomes available. Email questions and comments to [openaccess@gatesfoundation.org](mailto:openaccess@gatesfoundation.org).

**ABOUT THE POLICY**

**Why did the foundation adopt an** [**Open Access Policy**](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/General-Information/Open-Access-Policy)**?**

The foundation is committed to broad and rapid dissemination of the research it funds, which is crucial for accelerating innovation as we work to reduce inequity. Free, immediate, and unrestricted access to research will help create a world where every person has the opportunity to live a healthy, productive life. For more information, read [Knowledge is Power: Sharing Information Can Accelerate Global Health Impact](http://www.impatientoptimists.org/Posts/2014/11/Knowledge-is-Power), a blog post by Trevor Mundel, MD, the foundation's President of Global Health. Read more about the policy’s formation on the [SPARC website](http://sparcopen.org/our-work/innovator/gates-foundation/).

**When did the** [**Open Access Policy**](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/General-Information/Open-Access-Policy) **go into effect?**

The policy has been included in agreements since January 1, 2015, with a two-year transition period before it takes full effect. As of January 1, 2017, 100% of foundation-funded, peer-reviewed research is required to be published according to the [Open Access Policy](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/General-Information/Open-Access-Policy).

Agreements with a start date prior to January 1, 2015 – including supplements or amendments to those agreements – are not required to comply with the policy; however, pre-2015 grantees that choose to publish under the policy’s terms can receive funding for open access fees.

**When receiving funding from multiple institutions, whose policy should grantees adhere to?**

The [Open Access Policy](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/General-Information/Open-Access-Policy) applies to all peer-reviewed, published research funded by the foundation, whether the funding is in whole or in part. Agreements with a start date as of January 1, 2015, are required to comply with all elements of the policy.

If other funders of a multi-funded grant are concerned about adhering to the policy, the foundation will engage in a discussion with the other funder to understand their concerns. Grantees can contact their Program Officer or [openaccess@gatesfoundation.org](mailto:openaccess@gatesfoundation.org).

**Where will publications be made accessible?**

Peer-reviewed articles accepted by a publisher are posted on the publisher’s website. The foundation has also selected PubMed Central as its publication repository. The foundation will work directly with the publisher and PubMed Central to ensure that articles are deposited on the author’s behalf.

**Why does the policy require publication under a Creative Commons Attribution Generic License (CC BY 4.0) or equivalent license?**

Transforming the lives of the world’s poorest people will require the collaboration of many partners, and it is crucial that they can access and use research without restriction. A [CC BY license](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) allows users to build upon the research without restriction.

**Will the foundation make an exception if a grantee wants to publish in a journal that is not compliant with the** [**Open Access Policy**](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/General-Information/Open-Access-Policy)**?**

Open access publishing is a non-negotiable term included in all grant agreements as of January 1, 2015. Our policy will only be impactful if it is applied consistently, without exception. We have found that approximately 90% of the articles based on Gates-funded research are published in journals currently compliant with our policy.

**PAYMENT AND BUDGETING**

**Who will pay for the fees to enable policy compliance?**

The foundation is responsible for individual article processing charges and fees to the extent required to enable grantees to comply with the foundation’s [Open Access Policy](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/General-Information/Open-Access-Policy).

**Should grant and contract budgets include open access fees? Can grantees be reimbursed if they used their own funds to pay open access fees?**

Grant and contract budgets should not include open access fees. The foundation will pay these fees from a central budget directly to the applicable publisher or service provider. A central budget ensures that all published, peer-reviewed research is funded regardless of the agreement end date.

The foundation is unable to reimburse grantees for payments already made to a publisher or service provider.

**How are the open access fees paid?**

Grantees should not pay these fees out of their budget or seek reimbursement from the foundation. Rather, [Chronos](http://chronos-oa.com/), a new service developed by the foundation, will manage payment of these fees from a central budget directly to the applicable publisher or service provider.

**CHRONOS - Coming Soon!**

**What is Chronos?**

* Chronos is a new service for Gates-funded researchers co-developed by the foundation. Chronos will help simplify and manage the process of publishing under the foundation's [Open Access Policy](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/General-Information/Open-Access-Policy) terms.
* We want grantees and employees focus on the research – not the process of publishing research.

**How does Chronos work?**

* Gates-funded researchers and Gates employees will use this service to help manage the open access publishing process. They will be able to search for journals offering open access options and submit their articles directly to the publisher. Chronos will take care of publisher payment processing, the foundation's compliancy checks, and tracking publishing activity along with its impact.

**Why is Chronos only available to Gates Foundation grantees and employees?**

* While Chronos is currently available to foundation grantees and employees, we've built the service to scale to other funders and institutions. We anticipate making Chronos available to a wider audience in the Fall 2016.

**UNDERLYING DATA GUIDELINES**

The [Open Access Policy](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/General-Information/Open-Access-Policy) requires that data underlying published research results will be accessible and open immediately.

The following guidelines focus on data underlying published research. Activities around pre-publication data planning, collection, analysis, storage, sovereignty, informed consent, interoperability, and the use of disciplinary standards are addressed at the individual grant and contract level by the grantee and program officer during the proposal stage.

These guidelines are aligned with existing industry best practices, including data availability policies required by several publishers. As new practices emerge, the guidelines will be reviewed and updated as needed.

**What is underlying data?**

Underlying data encompasses all primary data, associated metadata, and any additional relevant data necessary to understand, assess, and replicate the reported study findings in totality.

Underlying data can be compiled into any file type, including any necessary access instructions, code, or supporting information files, to ensure the file(s) can be accessed and used by others.

*Note:* We do not require sharing of data that is ethically unsound or legally encumbered.

**Why is access to underlying data important?**

Providing access to underlying data is key in fulfilling the foundation’s mission of rapid and free exchange of scientific ideas to move humanity forward by improving and saving lives. Without barriers the scientific community can freely benefit from data and build upon each other’s work.

Access to underlying data allows for:

* + Barrier-free and timely access to data
  + Reassessment of current data interpretations and analysis
  + Ability to verify, reproduce, and reuse data in new ways
  + Data provenance and preservation

**Where should grantees deposit data?**

*Best practice*: Deposit data in a repository already established for your research domain according to the recognized standards of your discipline. Required or suggested repositories are often identified within a journal’s author guidelines.

For further suggestions, see:

* + Re3data.org’s [Registry of Research Data Repositories](http://www.re3data.org/about/)
  + PLoS’s [Recommended Data Repositories](http://journals.plos.org/plosone/s/data-availability#loc-recommended-repositories)
  + Wellcome Trust’s [List of Data Repositories & Database Resources](https://wellcome.ac.uk/funding/managing-grant/data-repositories-and-database-resources)
  + Scientific Data’s [Recommended Data Repositories](http://www.nature.com/sdata/data-policies/repositories)
  + Elsevier’s [Supported Data Repositories](http://www.elsevier.com/?a=57755)

*When no established repository is available*: Deposit data in your institutional research data repository or in a generalist repository, such as:

* + [Dataverse](https://dataverse.harvard.edu/) – an open source web application developed by Harvard University to share, preserve, cite, explore, and analyze research data.
  + [Dryad](http://www.datadryad.org/) – a curated resource that makes the data underlying scientific publications discoverable, freely reusable, and citable.
  + [Figshare](http://figshare.com/) – a repository where users can make all of their research outputs available in a citable, shareable, and discoverable manner.
  + [Zenodo](http://zenodo.org/) – a repository developed and hosted by [CERN](http://home.web.cern.ch/) that enables researchers to share and preserve research outputs in any size, any format, and from any science.

**How should grantees make data accessible and open?**

The repository you choose should:

* + Enable immediate open access to the underlying data upon publication of your article.
  + Allow reuse with licensing no more restrictive than [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Generic License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) (CC BY 4.0).
  + Assign your dataset with a persistent and unique identifier, such as a DOI (digital object identifier) to facilitate linking and citation.
  + Provide long-term storage and preservation, such as those that meet the [ISO’s trustworthy digital repository standards](http://www.iso16363.org/).

**How will the foundation ensure compliance with this element of the** [**Open Access Policy**](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/General-Information/Open-Access-Policy)**?**

The foundation will check and track compliancy through [Chronos](http://chronos.gatesfoundation.org/), a new service to help you manage the process of publishing under the policy’s terms.

**How can grantees get support for the process of depositing my underlying data?**

Technical assistance and user support is provided by the specific repository; visit their website for further information.

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At the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Visitor Center, you’ll find stories of work that is improving lives, from Seattle to South Africa.

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 CHRONOS

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