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Open Access and the ASPP

Draft Policy Position

May 2014



FEDERATION FOR THE
HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Background

In October 2013, the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences embarked on a multi-year project to develop an Open Access policy for the Awards to Scholarly Publications Program (ASPP). The initial phase focused on research and information gathering, including a scan of international and Canadian policy and practice, and informal discussions with several groups from Canada and around the world.

This document describes a draft policy position for consultation. The draft policy is based on the following principles:

- The Federation supports Open Access; and
- A dynamic Canadian scholarly publishing sector continues to be of utmost importance to the dissemination of Canadian research.

The Federation supports Open Access

Open Access allows research outputs to be obtained free of charge to the reader on the internet. In 2011, the Federation signed the Berlin Declaration¹ to demonstrate its commitment to Open Access. The Berlin Declaration describes the following conditions for Open Access:

Open Access contributions must satisfy two conditions: The author(s) and right holder(s) of such contributions grant(s) to all users a free, irrevocable, worldwide, right of access to, and a license to copy, use, distribute, transmit and display the work publicly and to make and distribute derivative works, in any digital medium for any responsible purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship (community standards, will continue to provide the mechanism for enforcement of proper attribution and responsible use of the published work, as they do now), as well as the right to make small numbers of printed copies for their personal use.

A complete version of the work and all supplemental materials, including a copy of the permission as stated above, in an appropriate standard electronic format is deposited (and thus published) in at least one online repository using suitable technical standards (such as the Open Archive definitions) that is supported and maintained by an academic institution, scholarly society, government agency, or other well-established organization that seeks to enable Open Access, unrestricted distribution, inter operability, and long-term archiving.

Most Open Access discussions to date, both in Canada and internationally, have focused on academic journals. For example, in Canada the Tri-Councils, comprised of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and the Social Sciences and

¹ <http://oa.mpg.de/lang/en-uk/berlin-prozess/berliner-erklarung/>



Humanities Research Council, have held public consultations on a draft Open Access policy for the dissemination of Tri-Council funded research in journal articles.²

The discussion on Open Access and journals is important, but it is not sufficient to inform the discussion on Open Access for scholarly books. Therefore, as part of the research phase of its policy development project, the Federation commissioned a thorough review of international policy and practice of Open Access for monographs. (See Appendix for the draft report.) This review clearly shows a growing trend worldwide to implement Open Access for monographs whose research and/or publication is supported by public funding.

Based on the Federation's commitment to Open Access and the clear direction of international policy and practice towards Open Access for scholarly books benefiting from public funds, it is the Federation's position that it is desirable to facilitate Open Access for ASPP-funded books.

The Federation believes this would improve access to Canadian scholarship published in the form of monographs, benefiting i) authors whose research will be disseminated more broadly, ii) Canadian, international and independent scholars who will be able to consult Canadian scholarship more easily, and iii) the broader public who will gain access to a broad range of scholarly works that directly address the social, cultural and intellectual debates affecting Canada.

A dynamic Canadian scholarly publishing sector continues to be of utmost importance to the dissemination of Canadian research

A dynamic Canadian scholarly publishing industry is vital to the dissemination of Canadian research in the humanities and social sciences. The Federation is particularly well-positioned to recognize this as it represents over 85,000 scholars, researchers and students through more than 80 member associations and 79 institutional members. As the administrator of the ASPP, the Federation recognizes the critical role the program plays. In particular:

- The ASPP provides financial support to help fund the publication of high quality scholarly monographs, thus facilitating dissemination of knowledge; and
- The ASPP helps defray the negative financial returns associated with scholarly book publishing, thus contributing to the health and stability of a diverse Canadian scholarly publishing industry.

The Federation recognizes that many of the books funded by the ASPP are on topics that are uniquely Canadian and that due to their Canadian focus these books may not be published by international publishers. Therefore, a dynamic Canadian scholarly publishing industry directly benefits Canadian scholars, who are the Federation's members.

Although some Canadian scholarly presses, such as Athabasca University Press, University of Calgary Press, University of Ottawa Press and Presses de l'Université de Montréal, publish some or all of their books in Open Access, there is currently little evidence on the effect of Open Access on scholarly

² http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/policies-politiques/OpenAccess-LibreAcces_eng.asp



publishing in Canada, and no widespread study is underway. Although anecdotes abound that Open Access both invigorates sales, and leads to huge economic losses, these case studies are often based on a single book. The Federation's preliminary consultations revealed that adopting a mandatory Open Access policy for the ASPP could lead to serious and unpredictable effects on Canadian scholarly publishing, and may even threaten the viability of some presses.

Because of the lack of evidence on the effect of Open Access on scholarly book publishing, and the importance of a vibrant scholarly publishing industry to the Federation and its members, the Federation proposes it incentivize, not mandate, Open Access for ASPP-funded books.

Developing a draft policy

In developing a draft policy on Open Access for the ASPP, the Federation researched widely, and met with various individuals and groups including publishers, librarians, and funders, offering a broad range of views on Open Access. The Federation considered options across a spectrum of possible approaches, from maintaining the status quo of no Open Access policy to a mandatory Open Access requirement and other options in between. In all cases, the two guiding principles outlined above were considered. As a result of this detailed consideration, the Federation has developed the following draft policy position for consultation:

The ASPP will actively support Open Access publishing of ASPP-funded books.

Details of the draft policy:

- The ASPP policy on Open Access would come into effect for new applications received on or after April 1, 2015.
- Open Access will be optional, not mandatory, for ASPP funded books.
- Applicants will be encouraged to publish their book in Open Access, and on the application form will have an opportunity to request a financial incentive.*
- To qualify for the incentive, books will have to become Open Access within 12 months of publication.
- As a condition of the incentive, publishers will be asked to report regularly on the number of downloads and sales of the book.
- There will be a limited number of Open Access incentives available per year, with priority determined by the scores received from the ASPP Publications Committee.
- In the event that over the year there are fewer requests for the Open Access incentive than anticipated, backlist titles having received ASPP funding at anytime in the past will be able to apply for a smaller incentive to make the book Open Access retroactively.
- The Federation will not require any particular type of copyright licencing for ASPP-funded books that are published Open Access, but generally encourages publishers to adopt the most flexible licence possible.



- Recognizing that, in general, publishers prefer to host Open Access titles on their own websites, ASPP-funded titles will not be required to be placed in any particular repository, but the Open Access version of the book should be easily found via an internet search, and the Federation may also host links on its website.

*Note that the Federation has not yet secured funding for this incentive.

Next Steps

The Federation is seeking input on this draft policy for the ASPP. A public event will be held at the Congress for the Humanities and Social Sciences (Sunday, May 25 at 2:30 pm in the Expo Event Space). There will also be an online consultation beginning shortly which will be announced on the Federation's website. To be notified when the online consultation opens, or with any questions, please contact consultations@ideas-idees.ca.

About the ASPP

The ASPP is a key activity of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences. It is a competitive funding program designed to assist with the publication of scholarly books on topics in the humanities and social sciences.

Under the program's mandate to support books of advanced scholarship in the humanities and social sciences that make an important contribution to knowledge, the ASPP has supported the publication of over 6,000 books that have helped to enrich the social, cultural and intellectual life of Canada and the world.

Each year, the ASPP offers 180 Publication Grants of \$8,000 and five Translation Grants of \$12,000, contributing 1.5 million dollars to the dissemination of Canadian research. The ASPP currently has no Open Access policy.

The ASPP is funded by the [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council](#) of Canada.

Acknowledgements

The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences would like to thank everyone who provided time and expertise in the development of this policy. In particular the following individuals provided valuable guidance, Eelco Ferwerda, OAPEN Netherlands; Cecy Marden, Wellcome Trust UK; Ben Johnson, Higher Education Funding Council of England; Gerald Beasley; Anne-Marie Fortier; Rowland Lorimer; Peter Millroy; Brent Roe; members of the Association of Canadian University Presses, and particularly ACUP's President, John Yates; staff from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council; as well as a number of contributors who have asked to remain anonymous. Thank you also to our research consultant Dr. Josephine Asmah.



The **Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences** works to promote the value of research and learning in the humanities and social sciences. Its membership comprises over 80 scholarly associations, 79 post-secondary institutions and six affiliate organizations, representing 85,000 researchers, educators and students across Canada.

In advancing equity, diversity, knowledge, excellence and innovation, the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences contributes tangibly to a free and democratic society.

The Federation:

- Organizes Canada's largest annual gathering of academic researchers, the **Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences**
- Brings leading scholars to Parliament Hill to discuss public policy and public relevance in our **Big Thinking** lecture series
- Supports the publication and sharing of new ideas through our **Awards to Scholarly Publications Program**

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