

Signing a contract with a publisher

Contracts formalise the relation between a publisher and an author, and set out the parameters of copyright transfer. In the context of digital dissemination and open science, contracts may help or hinder open access, contradicting the requirements of funding bodies. That is why it is important to read them and, if necessary, renegotiate certain clauses drawing on available tools (additional clauses, guides).

By signing a contract with a publisher, the author transfers copyright for exploiting the work for a defined length of time, and for defined media. It is essential to read the contract attentively, or it may prevent you reusing certain elements of your research in other contexts (such as figures and illustrations). If no contract has been signed or accepted online, the publisher does not have exclusive rights.

In the context of open science, it is important to check several points.

- The contract with the editor should not have any clause preventing an author's version from being deposited in an open archive, *a minima* within a time limit greater than that stipulated by funding bodies. In the event of open access publication, it is essential to know under what licence the content will be available.
- [Plan S](#) calls on researchers to retain copyright of their publications, by publishing in compatible journals, informing publishers, and urging institutions to sign global agreements to simplify the steps authors need to take. All publications must be [published under open licence](#), preferably under the Creative Commons Attribution licence (CC BY), in order to comply with the requirements set out in the [Berlin Declaration](#).

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Tools

- [Journal Checker Tool](#)
- [Glossary for the analysis of scientific publishing contracts](#) (French)

Further information

- [Plan S Rights Retention Strategy](#)
- [Implementing the rights retention strategy for scientific publications](#)
- [Amendments to the publishing contract](#) (French)