



OPEN ACCESS POLICY

Policy number	06REG2026	
Previous Policy Number(s)	CO2019/177	
Policy Owner	Registrar	
Accountable Executive	Deputy Vice Chancellor Research Innovation and Partnerships	
Responsible Office or Structure	Library and information Services	
Status	Final ☒	
Final Approving Authority	Council ☒ Senate ☐ EMC ☐	
Policy Approval Pathway	Senate Library and Information Services Committee, Executive Committee of Senate, Senate, Council	
Date Approved	18 September 2026	
Policy Implementation Date	01 October 2026	
Certification of approval by Accountable Executive	 Signature	01 October 2026 Date
Policy Review Cycle	Every three years	
Date of the Next Review	01 January 2030	
Responsible Committee	Senate Library and Information Services Committee	

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ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

Article Processing Charges	APC
Electronic Theses and Dissertations	ETDs
Institutional Repository	IR
LIS	Library and Information Services
Open Access	OA
Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition	SPARK
University of Limpopo	UL
University of Limpopo - Library and Information Services	UL LIS

1. INTRODUCTION

Open access is realised and embraced as the viable option to support free flow of information and accessibility online. As an indication to active commitment to open access, the University of Limpopo became a signatory to the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities in 2014.

Several declarations and statements have been advanced globally in support of open access publishing, also advocating that open access publications be recognised in promotion and tenure evaluation. In south Africa, the National Research Foundation published a statement in 2015 urging South African Universities to promote Open Access, stating that “From 01 March 2015, authors of research papers generated from research either fully or partially funded by NRF, when submitting and publishing in academic journals, should deposit their final peer-reviewed manuscripts that have been accepted by the journals, to the administering Institution Repository with an embargo period of no more than 12 months” (NRF, 2015). Subsequently, the South African Open Science Policy (2026) reinforces open access as a critical enabler of universal knowledge access and the democratisation of information.

The University has also established an Institutional Repository, a platform into which research output, theses and dissertations and conference proceedings by UL staff, researchers and students can be uploaded. To regularise the process of populating the Institutional Repository, the University must have a policy that will guide members in promoting, maximising and facilitating visibility and access to UL research output.

2. PURPOSE

The policy provides the basis for preservation and free open availability of scholarly material published by UL staff and students. Open Access publishing support the free flow of information and contribute to the sharing and verification of research findings.

2.1. Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- 2.1.1.** Ensure the university complies with the mandate to make publicly funded research output available in open access.
- 2.1.2.** Ensure the deposit of the University's research output in the Institutional repository for preservation and wider accessibility.
- 2.1.3.** Promote open access to the University's research output aligned with the principle of freedom of access to information and equitable access.

3. SCOPE

This Open Access Policy is applicable to all UL employees and students and any other person doing work for the University by virtue of being an external official from another institution(s). It applies to all scholarly and research work authored and/or co-authored while the student or staff member is the member of the UL Community, except for works completed before the adoption of this policy. Unpublished personal works or works not published under the auspices of the University will not be affected.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The UL Open Access Policy aims to guide the process of publishing, access and management of research output of the University. Open Access research published under this Policy will be deposited in the UL Institutional Repository. UL authors must comply with the procedures outlined in this Policy to ensure consistency across the University.

5. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions shall apply:

Authors: An employee(s) and/or students who is the creator of the original scholarly publication

Embargo: A period during which access is not allowed for certain users in terms of a specified agreement

Institutional Repository (IR): An officially designated repository for the University of

Limpopo archiving and publishing purpose, managed by the University of Limpopo Library and Information Services.

Metadata: An aggregation of data elements used in representing the entity's important description features.

Open Access: Open Access is a set of principles and a range of practices through which research outputs are distributed online, free of cost or other access barriers. Open access can be achieved by following many possible routes. Several routes have become prominent:

(a) **Green open access:** also referred to as self-archiving, authors publish their research in their preferred venue and upon acceptance, an electronic copy of their peer reviewed publication and related research data is deposited in an institutional repository. The archived version is the one accepted for publication and is made freely available to anyone. Copyright usually retained by the publisher.

(b) **Gold open access:** authors publish their scholarship in an open access journal or monographic series. Copyright is retained by the author. Publishing is done in fully open access journals or in hybrid journals (subscription base journals that offers open access option). Publisher of the scholarly journal provides free open access to the full content of the journal. In some cases, the publisher charges the author's institution or funding body for article processing charge (APC).

(c) **Diamond Open Access**

"If an open access publication does without Article Processing Charges entirely, this special type of gold open access is referred to as diamond open access ." (IFLA Open Access Vocabulary). These journals are usually run by universities, research institutions, or scholarly societies (community-driven).

Researcher: A researcher is any member of the research/academic/support staff of UL, irrespective of their employment status and all UL registered students.

Scholarly publication: An article or paper submitted for publication in a journal, which may or may not be open access, or in conference proceedings.

6. PRINCIPLES

The University advocates for Open Access to all research output to enhance transparency, research acceleration, innovation and societal benefit.

The values that serve as a framework for the Open Access Policy are as follows:

Free Availability: Research output must be immediately and widely accessible, and free of charge for the readers.

Transparency: Ensure access to research to support verification of research findings in support of quality and integrity.

Research acceleration and Innovation: Support reproducibility or reuse to accelerate new research work and innovation.

Societal benefit: Potential for Open access to reduce inequality and accelerate progress towards the implementation of the 2030 agenda / SDGs.

7. POLICY GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURE

7.1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1.1. Authors responsibility

Each author who is a member of the University shall:

- (a) Provide an electronic copy of the author's final version of each scholarly and research work, and all supplemental materials, no later than the date of its publication and at no charge to the appropriate representative of the institutional repository.
- (b) The items will be submitted for depositing (and thus published) in an appropriate standard electronic format (pdf, Jpeg, *etc*).
- (c) In so far as may be required, authors must grant copyright permission to the University to make publicly available all scholarly and research works produced while

in the employ of the Institution.

(d) This policy does not in any way prescribe or limit the venue of publication. This policy neither requires nor prohibits the payment of fees or publication costs by University authors for other modes of publication.

7.1.2. Authors responsibility

Each author who is a member of the University shall:

- (a) Provide an electronic copy of the author's final version of each scholarly and research work, and all supplemental materials, no later than the date of its publication and at no charge to the appropriate representative of the institutional repository.
- (b) The items will be submitted for depositing (and thus published) in an appropriate standard electronic format (pdf, Jpeg, etc).
- (c) In so far as may be required, authors must grant copyright permission to the University to make publicly available all scholarly and research works produced while in the employ of the Institution.

This Policy does not in any way prescribe or limit the venue of publication. This Policy neither requires nor prohibits the payment of fees or publication costs by University authors for other modes of publication.

7.1.3. IR Staff Responsibility

In an effort to digitise, archive and ensure access to submitted works, the librarian in charge of IR will:

- (a) Make the full-text of publications openly available to the public in an open access repository
- (b) Attach metadata to enable easy retrieval and make the work searchable on Open access.
- (c) Ensure safe archival of the work for long-term preservation purpose.
- (d) Exercise the copyright of the deposited works.
- (e) Exercise embargoes as for a specified period upon request by the author or the responsible Department. In this case metadata should be openly accessible.
- (f) Works with confidentiality or privacy and embargo period issues will be published under the terms formally agreed upon with the author.

- (g) Support availability of its content to the wider public, also allowing harvesting by reputable collective information resources platforms.
- (h) Support further development of the IR to promote discoverability and access to items in its collections using up-to-date and efficient technology.

7.2. Implementation plan

On approval from the University Council, the LIS:

- a) Informs the University Secretariat to lodge the approved policies with the University Records Manager.
- b) requests the University Records Manager to place the approved Policy on the University Library Policy Repository.
- c) sends a soft copy of the approved Policy to the Marketing and Communication Office for dissemination to the University community.

The Faculties have ultimate responsibility to implement the Policy in tandem with the relevant structures of the University.

The LIS in collaboration with the Research Office, and Faculties have the responsibility to support the implementation of the Policy, including arrangements for training of staff whose functions may be affected by the new policy.

7.3. Support and monitoring

The University through the Faculties, in collaboration with the Research Office and the LIS takes responsibility for:

- (a) Monitoring policy compliance
- (b) Adopting an author addendum, which allows the author to retain rights needed to implement the University policy.
- (c) Providing necessary human resources and infrastructure for the support of the Open Access Policy
- (d) Providing resources to maintain subscriptions and maintenance of the IR database.

7.4. Copyright

The copyright Act no.98 of 1978 (as amended) will be applicable to all the works with

rights restrictions (e.g. journal articles, ETDs., etc.)

The authors should negotiate rights with publishers, ceding to publishers only those rights necessary for publication. The SPARC author addendum and the copyright toolbox can be used to secure the authors' rights. The University should be granted non-exclusive rights for open access. For protection of author's right refer to the attached addendum.

7.5. Related UL Policies

This policy should be read together with the following documents which form part of the University open access initiatives: -

- (a) Electronic Theses and Dissertations Policy;
- (b) UL Copyright Policy
- (c) Research Development and support, incentives, and Awards Programmes and Procedures Policy
- (d) Plagiarism Policy
- (e) UL Research Data Management Policy
- (f) UL Research and Innovation Strategy

8. POLICY REVIEW AND REVISION

The policy will be reviewed, at least once, every three (3) years.

Revision to the Policy and Procedures will be submitted to the Senate Library and Information Services Committee and Senate for approval.

The LIS will review the links periodically to ensure that they are functioning. When modifications to the Policy are limited to updating links, the Policy will not need to go through the formal policy approval process.

9. POLICY DEVIATION

Deviations that may occur due to policy implementation challenges by the Faculties or other University divisions, or unintended consequences, must be approved in advance and their causes must be corrected and modified. Further efforts will be implemented to prevent policy deviation recurrence. All actions taken must be documented by the

Faculties.

10. POLICY RESCISSION

The process for rescinding the Open Access Policy will require approval from the office of the University Registrar.

The Executive Director: LIS will submit a motivation to repeal the Policy to the Senate Library and Information Services, and for final approval by the Senate.

The Executive Director: LIS will communicate the repeal of the policy to the University Community, and ensure that replacement is made available on the University Intranet.

11. POLICY MANAGEMENT

The Library and Information Services, under the supervision of the Executive Director: LIS will request the University Records Manager to place the approved Policy on the University Policy Repository. A soft copy will be sent to Marketing for dissemination to the University community

The Library and Information Services, under the supervision of the Executive Director will be responsible for the implementation of the Policy, and collaborate with Director: Research who will provide advice, guidance and support for the implementation of the Policy.

12. POLICY EXCLUSIONS

The Policy will remain in full force and effect until amended or rescinded. Publications done outside the scope of open access mandates will remain excluded from this policy.

It is the responsibility of the author to verify if the work he/she publishes fall within or outside the scope of the open access requirements for research outputs.

13. EFFECTS OF POLICY NON-COMPLIANCE

Failure to comply will have negative impact in terms of the following **benefits to authors and the institution:**

Open access publishing mode increases the visibility of researchers and the University. The probability of citation of researchers increases, with potential to improve their impact factor. Researchers and authors of scholarly publications can more easily and collectively reserve rights that might otherwise be signed away, often unnecessarily, in agreements with publishers. Open access publishing enforces a system that increases public access to knowledge, unlike commercial publishing, open access publishing does not undermine the level of recognition the author receives. With such recognition comes the financial rewards through promotion, merit pay, and job opportunities.

Non-compliance with an Open Access policy is not merely a procedural issue. It can directly affect funding, institutional income, research visibility, and legal standing. Policies, declarations, and other legislations, including the NRF Open Access statement, and the South African Open Science Policy, enforce Open Access compliance as a condition for receiving funding, and ensuring that the funded research outputs are widely available for the benefit of society. Increasingly, universities regard Open Access compliance as a critical component of the research lifecycle

14. POLICY EFFECTIVE DATE

The Policy will be effective immediately after Council approval.

15. REFERENCES

- a. Authors alliance. Rights reversion portal.
<https://www.authorsalliance.org/resources/rights-reversion-portal/>
- b. Berlin Declaration (<https://openaccess.mpg.de/Berlin-Declaration>)

- c. Department of Science and Technology and Innovation. 2026. South Africa Open Science Policy. Pretoria. DSTI. Available at:
<https://assafoopenscience.co.za/uploads/2026/03/Final-Sotuh-African-Open-Science-Policy-2026.pdf> (Accessed 11 April 2026)
- d. NRF Open Access Statement. 2015.
<https://alp.lib.sun.ac.za/handle/123456789/10214>
- e. SPARC Author rights addendum. <https://sparcopen.org/our-work/author-rights/>
- f. University of Cape Town Open Access Policy. 2014

16. REVISION HISTORY

Version	Date	Summary	Changed by
3.0	April 2026	Policy Review	

ADDENDUM A

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO AUTHORS ADDENDUM FOR ARTICLES

This Author Addendum allows researchers to keep certain rights to their work such as the right to redistribute. Authors can only do this by understanding the differences between different publishing agreements or options required by publishers before entering into an agreement with a publisher. This author addendum has been adopted and adapted from the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) Author addendum and University of Michigan publication agreement.

1. THIS ADDENDUM hereby modifies and supplements the attached Publication Agreement concerning the following Article:

(manuscript title)

(journal name)

2. The parties to the Publication Agreement as modified and supplemented by this Addendum are:

(corresponding author)

(Individually or, if more than one author, collectively, Author)

(Publisher)

3. This Addendum and the Publication Agreement, taken together, allocate all rights under copyright with respect to all versions of the Article. The parties agree that wherever there is any conflict between this Addendum and the Publication Agreement, the provisions of this Addendum are paramount and the Publication Agreement shall be construed accordingly.

4. **Author's Retention of Rights.** Notwithstanding any terms in the Publication Agreement to the contrary, AUTHOR and PUBLISHER agree that in addition to any rights under copyright retained by Author in the Publication Agreement, Author retains:

- (a) the rights to reproduce, to distribute, to publicly perform, and to publicly display the Article in any medium for non-commercial purposes;
- (b) the right to prepare derivative works from the Article; and
- (c) the right to authorize others to make any non-commercial use of the Article as long as Author receives credit as author and the journal in which the Article has been published is cited as the source of first publication of the Article.

For example, Author may make and distribute copies in the course of teaching and research and may post the Article on personal or institutional Web sites and in other open-access digital repositories.

5. **Publisher's Additional Commitments.** Publisher agrees to provide to Author within 14 days of first publication and at no charge an electronic copy of the published Article in a format, such as the Portable Document Format (.pdf), that preserves final page layout, formatting, and content. No technical restriction, such as security settings, will be imposed to prevent copying or printing of the document.

6. **Acknowledgment of Prior License Grants.** In addition, where applicable and without limiting the retention of rights above, Publisher acknowledges that Author's assignment of copyright or Author's grant of exclusive rights in the Publication Agreement is subject to Author's prior grant of a non-exclusive copyright license to the University of Limpopo and/or to a funding entity that financially supported the research reflected in the Article as part of an agreement between Author or University of Limpopo and such funding entity, such as the National Research Foundation (NRF) or any other such entity.

7. For record keeping purposes, Author requests that Publisher signs a copy of this Addendum and return it to Author. However, if Publisher publishes the Article in the journal or in any other form without signing a copy of this Addendum, such publication manifests Publisher's assent to the terms of this Addendum.

AUTHOR PUBLISHER

(corresponding author on behalf of all authors)

_____(Date) _____

NB. Note that some publishers may be unwilling to revise parts of their publishing agreements. If this is the case, authors can consider whether they are willing to negotiate the terms articulated in this addendum or if they would prefer to work with a different publisher who would be amenable to the terms of the addendum as written.