



Open Access and the ASPP

Policy Position



April 2015

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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. The next phase focused on drafting a policy position followed by an open consultation period, which took place between May and September 2014. The responses received during the consultation period were synthesized, analyzed, and informed the policy.

This document describes the current policy as of April 1, 2015. The 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.

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



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 Humanities Research Council, released an Open Access policy for the dissemination of Tri-Council funded research in journal articles on February 27, 2015.²

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 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.

² <http://www.science.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=F6765465-1>

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 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. More data is needed to better understand the impacts. Certainly the Federation's consultations revealed that adopting a mandatory Open Access policy for the ASPP could lead to serious and unpredictable effects on Canadian scholarly publishing. At the same time, as noted, a number of publishers and platforms are moving forward with open access for books, both internationally and in Canada.

Given this context, the Federation will take steps to actively support the Open Access publication of ASPP-funded books through the promotion and facilitation of Canadian participation in Open Access projects for monographs.

The policy

In developing the 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. In all cases, the two guiding principles outlined above were considered. As a result of this detailed consideration, the Federation has developed the following policy position:

The Federation will actively promote and facilitate Open Access publishing of ASPP-funded books.

As a national convenor of Canada's humanities and social sciences community, the Federation will embrace the roles of **promoter** and **facilitator** of Open Access publishing projects for monographs, with a particular view to engage those that could include ASPP-funded books.

To encourage innovation and experimentation, the Federation will use its resources and networks to **facilitate** the participation of Canadian publishers, libraries and authors in promising, scalable projects that provide practical (i.e. financial or in-kind) support for Open Access monograph publishing.

To support the ongoing efforts of some Canadian publishers, the Federation will **promote** existing and future ASPP-funded Open Access books.

The Federation would also be willing to participate in and provide resources for promising Open Access projects for monographs that would:

- Be open to a broad range of Canadian works on topics in the humanities and social sciences, which may include ASPP-funded works;



- Make books Open Access immediately upon publication (no embargo) as DRM-free PDFs or full-text HTML, using the final published work as the version of record;
- Track and report on downloads and/or usage;
- Use Creative Commons licences;
- Host Open Access publications in at least one recognized repository that provides permanent links;
- Follow accepted protocols for metadata.

The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences recognizes that the scholarly communications ecosystem will continue to evolve rapidly, so regular review and updating will allow this policy to evolve over time in order to accommodate new advancements in Open Access and to find new ways to support publishers as they innovate and develop their business models.

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

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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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