Strategic publication framework of Leiden University

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This document presents the strategic publication framework of Leiden University. It has been written by the thinktank Open Scientific Publishing as part of Leiden University's Academia in Motion program, based on input received from many colleagues in our university. Firstly, it explains why we need a strategic publication framework at Leiden University. Secondly, it provides four values for scientific publishing, leading to a framework university staff at Leiden University are expected to consider in their publication decisions. It also describes the responsibilities with respect to scientific publishing of university staff, faculties and institutes as well as the university library.

Why do we need a strategic publication framework at Leiden University?

Open science helps to increase the scientific and societal impact of research by sharing scientific knowledge in an open, timely, fair, and sustainable manner. Making open science the norm requires a significant cultural change in our way of working at Leiden University, including the way in which we publish our research.

This strategic publication framework offers a guideline for future policy developments involving scientific publishing. This includes the development of strategies and policies in the area of open science, criteria for dissertations, policies related to recognition & rewards (e.g., career paths and appointment criteria), and agreements between faculties and the university library regarding collection development. Rather than prohibiting or endorsing specific publishing approaches, the strategic publication framework aims to support faculties and institutes to make policy choices related to scientific publishing in a well-founded systematic way that aligns with open science principles.

We need a strategic publication framework to address three pressing issues in the current landscape of scientific publishing. Without a systematic perspective on scientific publishing, we expect that:

- Scientific publishing will remain a slow and non-transparent process in which research results are shared only at the end of a research project (no early sharing of research plans or research results) and only after time-consuming non-transparent peer review processes;
- Our publishing practices at Leiden University will no longer be financially sustainable, as the cost of scientific publishing will increase further while our budgets are under strong pressure.
- Efforts made by university staff to adopt more open and sustainable scientific publishing practices will not be sufficiently recognized and rewarded.

This publication framework concerns the publication of narrative research outputs, such as research articles, books, policy reports, blog posts, etc. The principles introduced in this framework may also be useful in the context of the publication of other types of research outputs, such as data sets and software, but the publication of these outputs raises additional issues that the policy does not cover. The publication of non-narrative research outputs therefore falls outside the scope of this framework. For the publication of non-narrative research outputs, such as data sets and software, we refer to the [Leiden Employer Copyright Regulations](#)[1]. For research that may result in patentable inventions, we

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[1] [Employer Copyright Regulations - Leiden University](#)

refer to the [Leiden Regulations on Knowledge Exploitation](#)[2]. Furthermore, the framework focuses on the publication of research outputs and does not consider the archiving and registration of these outputs. Finally, in the humanities and social sciences, the term 'scholarly publishing' instead of 'scientific publishing' is commonly used. This framework uses 'scientific publishing' in a broad way, also encompassing 'scholarly publishing'.

Leiden University's values for scientific publishing

Leiden University's publication framework is based on four values for scientific publishing: **Fit-for-purpose**, **Open**, **Sustainable**, and **Equitable**.

Fit-for-purpose	Open
We publish our research in ways that are fit-for-purpose. Depending on the nature of our research and the audiences that we aim to engage with, we may publish our research in a variety of different ways, for instance as an article in a peer-reviewed journal, as a preprint, as a book, as a policy report, as a blog post, etc. We may publish our research in Dutch, in English, or in other relevant languages.	We publish our research as openly as possible. We make our research, and ideally also the underlying materials (e.g., data and software), openly accessible without unnecessary delays. We foster open dialogues about our research (e.g., by sharing preliminary results and by supporting open peer review and other forms of open feedback) and try to improve our research based on what we learn from these dialogues. We do not give away the copyright of our publications.
Sustainable	**Equitable**
We publish our research in ways that are sustainable. We support career trajectories for our academic staff by recognizing and rewarding their publishing activities in line with the contribution to the strategy of a research unit. We also recognize the cost of publishing. We support publishing models that are financially sustainable for all stakeholders involved.	We have a responsibility to contribute to equitable publishing models. To optimize the exchange of scientific knowledge, everyone in the world should ideally have equal opportunities to access and share scientific knowledge. We support sustainable publishing models that promote global equity in scientific publishing.

The above four values offer high-level principles for dealing with dilemmas in scientific publishing, while also providing flexibility to enable these dilemmas to be handled in a way that considers the specific context of an institute, department, or research project.

Leiden University's framework for publication decisions

The four values discussed above can be translated into three criteria that offer concrete guidance for making publication decisions:

- **Audience & Quality**: We publish our research in a way that enables us to reach the relevant audiences and to show that our research meets the quality standards expected by these audiences.
- **Openness & Timeliness**: We publish our research in an open and timely way.
- **Cost effectiveness**: We publish our research in a cost-effective way.

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[2] [Regulations on Knowledge Exploitation - Leiden University](#)

These criteria may sometimes be in tension with each other (e.g., to optimally reach our target audience, we may need to publish our research in an expensive journal). We then need to strike a balance between the different criteria based on the specific context in which we are working. In the longer term, scientific publishing practices will hopefully develop in a direction in which the three criteria will be more aligned. Below, the three criteria are explained in more detail.

Audience & Quality

The Audience & Quality criterion emphasizes the importance of publishing our research in a way that enables us to reach relevant audiences and to show that our research meets the quality standards expected by these audiences.

Scientific publishing is often equated with publishing research articles in peer-reviewed journals. However, there are many other ways in which we can publish and share our research. For instance, research can be published on a preprint server or in Leiden University's institutional repository Scholarly Publications, it can be published in a professional journal or a policy report, or it can be shared in a blog post or a newspaper article. Different approaches to publishing enable us to reach different audiences and offer different ways to demonstrate the quality of our research. Publishing in a peer-reviewed journal, for example, may be the most effective way to demonstrate the scientific quality of our research and to bring our research to the attention of academic peers. On the other hand, publishing a policy report may be more effective in drawing the attention of policy makers and maximizing the societal impact of our research.

It is important that we avoid publishing our research through channels that behave in misleading or otherwise problematic ways. For example, when we choose to publish our research in a peer-reviewed journal, we need to be aware of the risks of predatory journals. These journals give the impression to perform rigorous peer review and to maintain certain quality standards, while they perform only superficial peer review or no peer review at all. Predatory conferences adopt similar practices. Publishing our research through these problematic channels is incompatible with the Audience & Quality criterion, since it does not help to reach relevant audiences and to demonstrate the quality of our research. It may also conflict with the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.[3]

Openness & Timeliness

The Openness & Timeliness criterion emphasizes the importance of publishing our research in an open and timely way.

To publish our research in an open way, we aim to

- publish our research under an open license, preferably CC-BY;
- retain the copyright of our publications;
- ensure the full text of our publications is openly available in a machine-readable format;
- ensure the metadata of our publications is openly available in a machine-readable format.

When our research goes through a peer review process, publishing the outcomes of this process is an important way to further increase openness in scientific publishing. This is referred to as open peer

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[3] The blog post: 'Questionable and Predatory journals' explains how predatory and questionable journals can be recognized and avoided. The Think.Check.Submit website also provides good advice.

review, or sometimes transparent peer review. Open peer review is becoming increasingly common in many research fields. Whenever possible, the use of open peer review is strongly recommended. As open peer review makes visible the rigor of the peer review process of a journal, it also offers a powerful way to address the problem of predatory journals mentioned above.

To publish our research in a timely way, we may publish our research not only at the end of the research process but also at intermediate stages. This enables others to benefit from our work as early as possible and allows us to benefit from early feedback, e.g. on research methodology. This can help to improve the quality of our research. Powerful ways to publish our research at intermediate stages in the research process include preprinting (i.e., publishing a research article on a preprint server such as arXiv, bioRxiv, ChemRxiv, medRxiv, OSF Preprints, PsyArXiv, or SocArXiv before the article is peer reviewed), preregistration (i.e., publishing a research plan before a study is carried out), and modular publishing (i.e., publishing a study in a modular step-by-step way on platforms such as ResearchEquals, Octopus or Research Catalogue[4]).

Sometimes publishers allow a publication to be made openly accessible only after a certain period. Such open access embargoes delay the dissemination of research and are therefore problematic. They can be circumvented in different ways, from depositing an article in our institutional repository based on the Taverne amendment[5] (Scholarly Publications for Leiden University or Converis for the LUMC) to publishing an article on a preprint server (submitted version and/or author accepted manuscript).

Cost effectiveness
The cost effectiveness criterion emphasizes the importance of publishing our research in a cost-effective way. Providers of publishing services, both commercial and non-commercial ones, may incur significant costs. We have a responsibility to cover the costs of the publishing services we use. However, these costs must be proportionate to the value of the publishing services. What is considered to be proportionate is subject of further discussion.

Responsibilities related to scientific publishing
Publishing our research in accordance with the above-mentioned values and criteria is a joint responsibility of university staff, faculties, institutes, and the university library. Their respective responsibilities are outlined below.

University staff have the responsibility to publish their research in accordance with the above-mentioned criteria of Audience & Quality, Openness & Timeliness, and Cost effectiveness. They are expected to consider these criteria in planning and executing their research.

To support university staff, faculties, institutes, and the university library also have a number of responsibilities. Faculties and institutes, together with the university library, will provide guidance to university staff in publishing their research in accordance with the criteria of Audience & Quality, Openness & Timeliness, and Cost effectiveness. Faculties and institutes, together with the university library, give university staff access to relevant publishing services that enable them to publish their

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[4] Research Catalogue is a digital, not-for-profit platform for the publication of artistic research, often used by the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts at the Faculty of Humanities. It offers multimodal, non-linear web portfolios.
[5] Leiden University Open Access Policy - Leiden University

research in accordance with these criteria. University staff are free to use other publishing services, but Leiden University may choose not to financially support those. Faculties and institutes also have a responsibility to recognize and reward their staff for publishing their research in accordance with the criteria of Audience & Quality, Openness & Timeliness, and Cost effectiveness, for instance in GROW (Conversations on Performance, Development and Well-being) interviews, PhD regulations, and career policies.

Leiden University, being a relatively well-resourced university, also has a responsibility to contribute to the development of more equitable approaches to scientific publishing, in which ideally all researchers globally, including those with very limited resources, have equal access to certain publishing services. Moving to more equitable approaches to scientific publishing is challenging, but Leiden University is committed to exploring relevant opportunities and to contributing to dialogues about equity in scientific publishing.