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Open Access Policy



Spreading knowledge about mankind and the world through research and teaching is one of the underlying principles of Heidelberg University. The university's mission statement asserts its aim to make this knowledge extensively available and to pass it on to following generations. In the spirit of our comprehensive university, this responsibility relates to the whole range of disciplines - the humanities, social sciences and law, as well as natural and life sciences including medicine.

Open access has proven to be an effective model for publishing academic works, providing for the worldwide, free and unrestricted access to research results. According to the principles of open access set forth in the "Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities" of 2003, publications can be freely read, downloaded and used via the internet. At the same time, open access publication creates an unlimited visibility of research results.

In view of its responsibility for comprehensive access to academic knowledge, Heidelberg University is pressing ahead to expand open access. The governing bodies of the university encourage academics to publish their research results in open access. In addition, they promote the acquisition of editorships in open access journals. The university supports both primary publications in an open access publication (golden road) and secondary publications on a publication server (green road).

Heidelberg University has mandated the University Library to coordinate its open access activities and engage in appropriate promotion. That includes setting up a publication fund, making software available for open access publications and operating publication servers. The University Library has provided an established institutional publication server for primary and secondary publications – HeiDOK, the Heidelberg document server, available through the library services.

The Open Access Policy of Heidelberg University represents a recommendation, not an obligation. Academic freedom also extends to the free choice of publication form. The university is concerned to underline that, ultimately, it is entirely up to the authors themselves to decide where they publish their works and under what access conditions. In the case of publishing a document with limited access, the university recommends that authors refrain from assigning exclusive rights of use to the publisher and that they reserve a simple right of use to public access, in order to facilitate a later, second publication on the university's publication server. The University Library offers advice and support in this matter.

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