

Submission of the British Academy of Management to the cOAlition S Consultation on Plan S

February 6, 2019

The [British Academy of Management](#) (BAM) strongly supports Open Access (OA) publishing and the goal of increasing sustainable OA to allow for the wider dissemination of knowledge and an open exchange of ideas within society. We also believe that any plan to broaden OA in the UK must be well-evidenced and take into account the disciplinary differences that exist within our broader research community. Time should also be allowed for strategic planning, review, and evaluation, if we are to avoid unintended consequences to a science and research ecosystem that is globally recognised to '[punch above its weight](#)'.¹

BAM is the leading authority on the academic field of business and management (B&M) in the UK. As a learned society, we support the community of scholars in this inter-disciplinary field and foster engagement with our international peers. We have around 2000 members, almost a quarter of whom are based outside of Britain, and who range from world-renowned thought leaders and top academics in our field to early career researchers and doctoral students.

Our submission to the cOAlition S consultation on Plan S and its implementation concentrates on those issues that will have the greatest impact on the business and management research community, and for which we can provide unique evidence alongside organisations such as the Chartered Association of Business Schools. We also fully support – and have contributed evidence to – the submissions of the British Academy and the Academy of Social Sciences, which cover a wider set of concerns for the sciences, social sciences and humanities.

Plan S

Plan S sets an ambitious goal of attaining comprehensive and immediate Open Access by 2020 for all journals, with OA for monographs to quickly follow. Currently, researchers wishing to publish their work open access may choose from a variety of Green- or Gold-OA options.² A number of business models underpin the latter, from hybrid-journals (which are largely subscription based, but offer Gold-OA to those willing or able to pay an APC) to fully Gold-OA journals that might be funded by APCs, institutional subsidies, crowd-sourcing, or even endowments.³

Yet, by explicitly seeking to phase out hybrid-journals and disallowing embargoed Green-OA, the preamble, principles, and implementation guidance of Plan S make it clear that the intent is to reduce future OA options down to one of Gold-OA only. In the UK – as in many countries – this is most likely to be based on a 'pay to publish' business model.

This reduction in choice of OA options and (potentially) business models, raises a number of concerns. We highlight these below, along with some specific evidence from our community that provides cutting-edge research with proven impact on productivity, innovation, work quality, and other areas vital to the UK economy and Industrial Strategy. This high-quality research has been achieved despite the decline in UK government funding to B&M research from 2011-2017, in part because of the rich ecosystem of academic freedom and alternative opportunities for funding and support in which our researchers currently operate.

Communication and Dissemination of Business & Management Research

In order to maintain high-quality research publishing in our field, we recommend that alternative OA options are re-considered by cOAlition S, as what works for one discipline may not be appropriate for others. We outline why below.

Current landscape. Hybrid-journals are the norm in business and management, allowing for OA publication when researchers have available funding. The British Academy of Management publishes two of these [high-ranking](#) hybrid-journals: the *British Journal of Management* (BJM, rated four in the Chartered ABS Journals list and ranked 10th in the field by JCR with an impact factor of 3.059) and the *International Journal of Management Reviews* (IJMR, ranked 7th in the field by JCR with an impact factor of 6.489). Like many B&M publications, these are international journals in terms of reach, scope, and contribution: a third of BJM authors and almost half of IJMR authors are from other countries that have signed up to Plan S, and many institutions from across the globe pay subscriptions to read these journals. Yet, less than 1 in 25 authors to these journals received support from cOAlition-S funders in 2017. The highest-ranking B&M journals are published in the United States.

Plan S & Transformational Deals. Plan-S guidance indicates that authors with ‘public funding’ will not be allowed to publish in hybrid-journals after 2020, unless those journals have signed ‘transformational deals’ moving them towards full and immediate OA. We understand that this will most likely mean that authors will be charged an APC to publish, currently indicated to be capped around €2000 (with some amelioration for authors/institutions of limited means). In the UK, the term ‘publicly funded’ could potentially be interpreted to include all researchers at UK universities that receive quality-related [\(QR\) research funding](#). *In practical terms, this would mean that after 2020 researchers based at UK universities would only be able to publish their work if they (or their funders) pay an APC to a fully OA journal or a hybrid-journal that has signed up to a transformational deal in compliance with Plan-S.*

There are a number of unintended impacts and consequences of this for B&M research:

1. **Academic Freedom.** At the moment, UK-based researchers have the academic freedom to publish their work in the outlet and form they deem appropriate in terms of its effective communication and dissemination. In the B&M community, an important component of this is the ability to publish in the highest-ranking journals in our field with international reach and scope. *Yet, as the top B&M journals are published in the United States, which are unlikely to become Plan-S compliant in the near future, publicly-funded researchers in Plan-S countries would no longer have the academic freedom to publish in these journals.*
 - a. This will impact career progression for many UK-based researchers in the B&M field, where publications in leading journals (many of which are in the US) is widely regarded as necessary for career advancement, and it will actively disadvantage them in the *global* career market.
 - b. Beyond limiting individual careers, it would also severely limit the global influence of UK research in the B&M field, as these top journals have dedicated readerships, and benefit from reputations built on careful curation and quality output.
 - c. It may impact international collaboration, vital to maintain in context of Brexit, as researchers in countries not supporting Plan-S (such as the US) will be less likely to seek collaborations with UK- or European-based researchers, if it means they are unable to publish the fruits of their collaborative research in the top journals in the field.
 - d. It is not just about the ability to publish in different places, but also about the freedom to access different sources of funding and to publish without funding. Few B&M researchers are funded by cOAlition-S supporters and most high-quality social science research is not necessarily funded at a level that includes publication costs. Under Plan-S, publicly-funded researchers will need to find money for APCs if they wish to publish, and will no longer have the option to publish without such funding (through either Green-OA or non-OA options). Depending on how individual nations

define who qualifies as a ‘publicly-funded’ researcher, this could have sweeping implications for our discipline and others.

- It is unclear where the money to fund APCs will come from in future. Many in the B&M field are currently able to access funding from business, governments, and learned societies. As discussed below, learned societies may no longer be able to help provide such support. Foreign private and public funding may be unavailable to researchers without the academic freedom to publish where they choose. Moreover, while some businesses may welcome the opportunity to read journal articles open access, others may be less-inclined to fund research in partnership with public bodies, if they can no longer benefit from embargoed access to the findings of the research they are paying for.
- Early career researchers and doctoral students at UK universities are unlikely to be prioritized within institutional pots for APC funding, making the UK a less attractive place for them to work and thrive. Even if capped, APCs will be unaffordable for independent and practitioner researchers, who contribute valuable knowledge to the field.
- Despite efforts to cap APCs, it is possible that they will be higher in the most well-rated journals where rejection rates are higher to retain research quality (as discussed below). This could have unintended distributional consequences within and across disciplines.

2. Research Quality

- a. Curtailing academic freedom would have a deep effect on UK research quality, lowering our global competitiveness and ability to collaborate internationally as a research nation.
- b. In the B&M field, as with many others, peer review and high rejection rates play a critical role in maintaining the research quality and integrity. As the AcSS submission makes clear, this process allows for research knowledge in the social sciences to be appropriately and efficiently filtered, and for attention to be drawn to the work of highest quality in top journals. The push towards a model that would encourage lower rejection rates, ‘mega-journals,’ and even threaten the peer-review model in the name of economic efficiency would not be appropriate our field.
- c. Moreover, it will be difficult for many in the B&M community to publish their research under the CC-BY license intended by Plan-S, unless they are allowed to do so in a way that does not allow derivative reproduction of their work (i.e. under a CC-BY ND license). In B&M research, content *must* be understood within the context of the argument as a whole. Some B&M research also includes citation and brief reproduction of proprietary data and information, that is allowed for embargoed or limited use, but which would not be possible to include in articles under a CC-BY license without the ND option. For the B&M community, simple CC-BY licensing would therefore not lead to useful data sharing, but instead lead to the *inability* to share information with intended or limited audiences. It would also lead to the potential for the spread of derivative arguments that muddy, rather than further, scholarship and innovation.

Moving to a model that is based solely on ‘pay-to-publish’ Gold-OA would therefore limit academic freedom, affecting top career academics and early career researchers alike. In B&M, it would impact the career progression of UK-based academics and the global reach of UK research, while fundamentally changing the nature and quality of research that can and will be published in future.

Wider Impact on Learned Societies and the Business & Management Community

The UK is unusual in Europe for having a strong and independent learned society sector, which is a thriving example of small business and innovative enterprise. As a learned society that is both representative and independent, BAM supports the B&M research community in way that would be difficult to replicate or replace by government. As an organisation, we strongly support the move to greater open access, but are concerned

that the current model under consideration in Plan-S will threaten many of the key ways that we are able to provide support to the B&M research community, and to evidence-based policymaking, in the UK.

Further unintended consequences:

1. **Publishing Income.** As a registered charity, we are bound by law to demonstrate our use of charitable funds for public benefit. Our publishing activity ensures the continued existence of quality-assured homes for both users and producers of B&M research. The publishing income raised from our hybrid-journals is also ploughed fully back into supporting the B&M community. We are concerned that the move towards an OA model based only on Gold-OA will severely curtail this publishing income – and thus the activities that we are able to support as a charity – if we are to maintain the high standards that are integral to our role in supporting the health of our discipline.
 - a. Unlike some STEM disciplines, the B&M field does not have the option to simply ‘publish more’ articles in order to maintain income levels under an APC-based Gold-OA model. The curation of valuable high-quality knowledge in B&M in part depends on the high-rejection rates of top journals.
2. **Activities Supported by Publishing Income.** BAM’s publishing income is used to provide funding for research grants, capacity and career building activities, and policy work – all of which would be in jeopardy under current plans.
 - a. **Grant Funding.** Around 25% of BAM’s publishing income is used to provide direct grant funding for research. This is done via five separate grant schemes in addition to other ad hoc projects. They are aimed at early-career and mid-career researchers, as well as blue skies initiatives, and are valued in the community not just for career support, but also because of the interdisciplinary and international opportunities they provide. These grants are aimed at career transformation in an environment where wider funding is largely non-existent.
 - b. **Capacity & Career Building.** Some of BAM’s publishing income is also used to subsidize the capacity building workshops that we run. Because of constraints within universities and the wider funding landscape, we must be able to provide these affordably, providing a benefit for both universities and individual researchers. While facilitator time is normally provided on a voluntary basis for professional development workshops, travel and venue costs must still be covered. We also use publishing income to provide some free events for capacity building and career development for academic researchers, as part of maintaining the high standard of UK HE through cross-institution collaboration.
 - c. **Policy Work.** Our publishing income is also used to fund our policy and engagement work. This work is for the public benefit of not only the B&M community, but also the wider UK policymaking community, as it aims to help foster the engagement of B&M researchers with policymaking. We help and train researchers to translate their work for policymaking and encourage our experts to make submissions to parliamentary inquiries and government consultations. We also make submissions to such inquiries and consultations on behalf of our community where appropriate, facilitating policymakers’ access to high quality, evidence-based advice from the B&M research community.
 - d. **Other.** Our remaining publishing income allows us to help foster research collaboration activities, as well as interdisciplinary and international networking/outreach.

We would no longer be able to support many of these activities for the B&M research community without the publishing income from our journals. All of the other activities we undertake as a learned society (such as our annual conference), when fully costed, just about cover their own costs. Like many Learned Societies, we are able to provide such services independently in an environment where public resources are stretched, and are

able to do so with a level of autonomy that allows us to support our research community in discipline-appropriate ways.

Key Recommendations

- We support the goal to increase *sustainable* OA publishing, but believe that a single model of OA is unlikely to be appropriate for all disciplines. Plans to broaden OA publishing in the UK must be well-evidenced and take into account the disciplinary differences that exist within our broader research community. They must also avoid unintended consequences, such as the lowering of research quality and reputation, the limiting of academic freedom and career progression, and the reduction of alternative sources of disciplinary support.
- We therefore encourage further consultation to understand the full systemic, distributional, and disciplinary effects of the current implementation intended for Plan S. Towards this end, we believe the UK's Academy of Social Sciences and the British Academy should be included in a broader working group to help consider these issues.
- We encourage cOAlition S to consider and investigate other models to reach the goal of dramatically increasing OA. For example, Green-OA and hybrid Gold-OA models may continue to be appropriate in some disciplines, like Business and Management. If these are ruled out, other business models for achieving fully Gold-OA journals (such as institutional subsidies of the type reached in Germany with Project-DEAL or forms of crowd-funding) should also be investigated and encouraged to avoid the unintended consequences of a 'pay-to-publish' system.
- Time should also be allowed for strategic planning, review, and evaluation, if we are to avoid unintended consequences to a science and research ecosystem that is globally recognised to 'punch above its weight.'

NOTES

¹ *International Comparative Performance of the UK Research Base*. (2016). Elsevier and the Department for Business, Energy, & Industrial Strategy. Available at: https://www.elsevier.com/research-intelligence?a=507321&utm_source=EC&utm_medium=EC-BEIS&utm_campaign=EC-BEIS.

² With Green-OA, researchers may publish their work in an OA repository, but in a form – and often after an embargo period – set by their publisher. With Gold OA, researchers are usually charged an Article Processing Charge (APC) in return for full and immediate OA publication of their work, though the APC may be paid by a funder or institution on their behalf.

³ http://oad.simmons.edu/oadwiki/OA_journal_business_models#Hybrid_OA_journals.