

Response to consultation on Plan S from the Institute of Classical Studies, London

We have expressed our position by supporting the ‘Open Letter from History Journal Editors in Response to Consultation on Plan S’ (publicly available on the past & Present website).

In brief, we would like to emphasise (as stated in that letter) that:

1. We laud the aims of Open Access (OA) publication, which Plan S attempts to realise: to make publicly funded research freely accessible.
2. We are concerned however about the practicalities of implementing Plan S, in particular for those publishing in the Humanities and Social Sciences. We speak as a publisher of a journal and journal supplements in the area of Classics, broadly defined (including ancient history and archaeology). In particular, we think that a transition to 100% Gold OA from Jan. 2020 is unworkable, and we think it might lead to undesirable consequences. We fear that it might mean that learned societies such as ourselves would be forced to choose non-compliance, i.e. to move away from OA; that would certainly be undesirable. This is as stated at more length in the 'Past & Present' letter.
3. Our journal is currently a hybrid, enabling Gold OA on payment of an APC, and allowing Green OA after an embargo period. We believe that hybrids and Green OA represent a way of enabling and broadening free access to publications. We would be disappointed to see them disallowed as venues for the publication of publicly funded research, as Plan S proposes.
4. We also have concerns about licence types, and believe more discussion is needed.
5. The proposed schedule for implementation of Plan S leaves little time for further discussion of the many matters of principle and practice which are at stake.

Publications, Institute of Classical Studies, London