Open Access Article Processing Charge (APC) Support

Definition. An article processing charge is a flat fee an author pays to have their article published in an OA journal. This fee is used by the journal to cover its’ publishing costs. Other terms for APCs: publishing fee, article processing fee, OA fee

APCs are only one economic model. Other ways OA journals cover their costs: advertising, sponsorships, society dues surcharges, grants, in-kind support, partnerships, offline media editions, convenience-format licenses, value-added services, voluntary fees. (from https://sparcopen.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/incomemodels_v1.pdf)

Two Common Questions

How can researchers cover the cost of an APC? Typically these are allowable expenses in grants.

Full/partial coverage of APC by:
- Publication funds (University, individual Colleges/Departments)
- Reduced fees or discounts

For more information: https://libguides.usask.ca/c.php?g=16375&p=90315

Faculty may have heard from colleagues at other institutions that their library has an “author’s funds” to support researchers in paying APCs. They may want to know what similar services we provide.

Researchers may not use jargon (e.g. “author’s funds,” “APCs,” etc.) when asking this kind of question, so you may need to probe a bit further to be clear what they are asking. Listen for something about publishing (could be a journal’s name or publisher’s name), and something about funding/fees/financial support.

Examples of how faculty might ask library for support with OA APCs:
- “Can the library pay my PLoS* fee?”
- “Does the library have an account with publisher X?”
- “I want to publish in journal X but don’t have funding - I heard the library might help”
- “Does the library fund author’s fees?”

The U of S Library does not have an “author fund” but we do have memberships and subscriptions that can help reduce the cost of APCs.

If you need guidance in answering their question refer them to the OA LibGuide page called “Info for Authors” - the first box at the top has a list of the APC support available. And advise them to follow up with their liaison librarian.

1 Morrison, Salhab, Calvé-Genest & Horava (2015). Publications, 3(1), 1-16