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## Oxford Journals takes bold step towards free access to research

Oxford Journals, a Division of Oxford University Press (OUP), announced today that its flagship journal *Nucleic Acids Research* (NAR) is to move to a full 'Open Access' (OA) publishing model from January 2005. This represents a significant step towards maximum dissemination of scholarly research, a core part of OUP's mission as a leading University-owned Press.

NAR will adopt a mandatory OA model whereby authors pay a fee once their paper has been accepted, and all articles published online are immediately available without charge.

NAR is a highly respected journal, listed by ISI as one of the top ten 'hottest' journals of the decade in biology and biochemistry<sup>1</sup>, and with a world-renowned editorial team. It has been published under a subscription model for 32 years and includes around 1000 original research papers per year, making NAR the first journal of such stature to make a complete switch from a subscription to OA model.

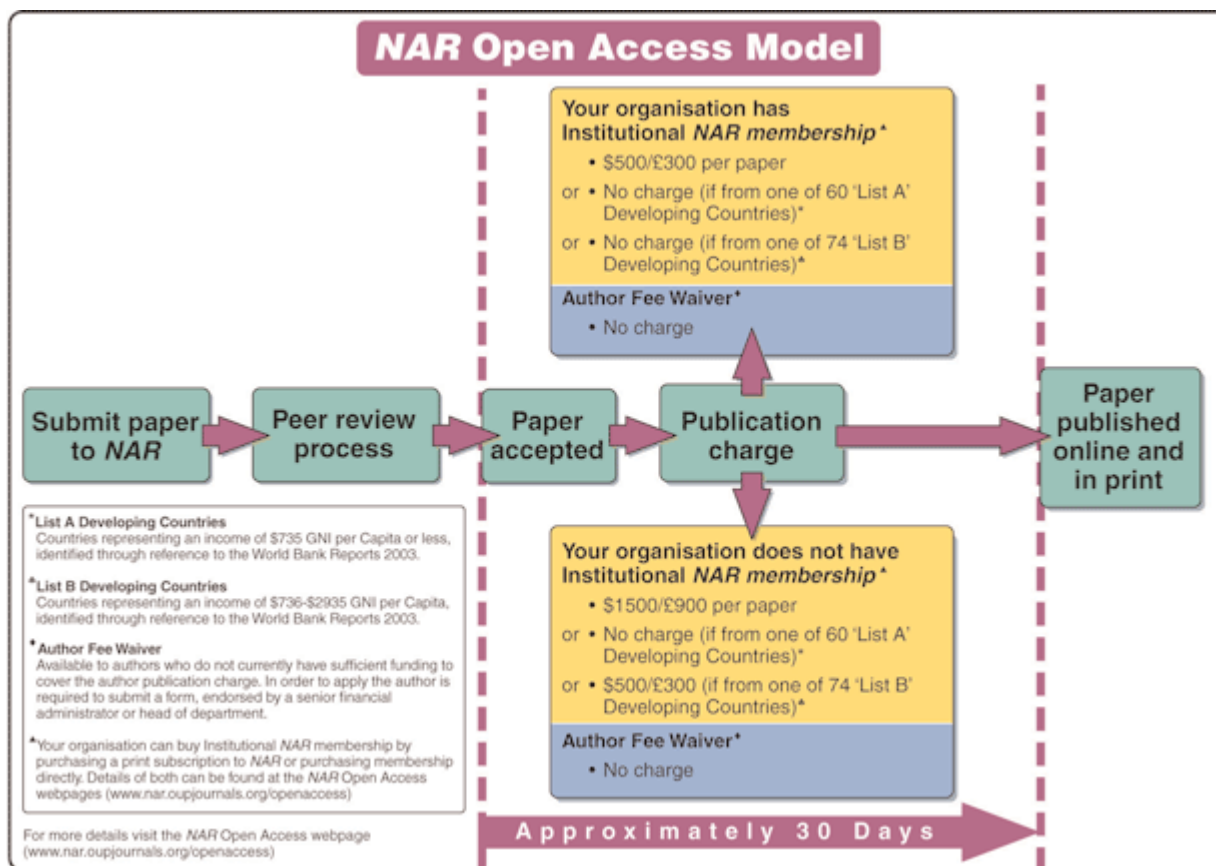
Open Access is undoubtedly the most debated topic in scholarly publishing at the moment. To fulfil our role as a University Press we felt a responsibility to the scholarly communities we represent to explore it as a viable publishing model," explained Martin Richardson, Managing Director of Oxford Journals. "Our year-long experiments with a small part of NAR have allowed us to consult authors, readers, and librarians on their views and also to monitor results. So our decision to take NAR to a full Open Access model is based on solid research, and a clear desire for such a move by this part of the academic community."

The OA model being adopted for NAR has been designed to address various concerns raised in the OA debate thus far, as well as to safeguard the quality and financial viability of the journal. The model, which includes a mixture of author

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<sup>1</sup>Source: Science Watch (May/June 2003) Essential Science Indicators - High-Impact Journals in 9 Fields, Ranked by Citations Per Paper, 1992-2002 (Among non-review journals that published continuously, January 1992 to December 2002)

charges, institutional memberships and print subscriptions, as well as significantly lower (or no) charges for authors in developing countries, will mean that no author is prevented from publishing in NAR for financial reasons (see diagram below). However, depending on the degree to which authors across the globe become better funded in the future to pay OA charges, the proportion of publishing costs which can be covered by author charges should be able to rise accordingly.



"We felt it was very important that we listened to our institutional customers as well as the NAR author base in order to get this initiative right," commented Richard Gedye, Sales Director at Oxford Journals. "We instigated talks with a wide-ranging and international group of senior academic librarians, and talked through several potential models which we were considering for NAR. Their feedback and desire to support the journal in its transition encouraged us to adopt a model where buying institutional memberships would keep the cost of author charges low enough to maximise the chances of NAR's long term success as an Open Access journal. "

"I both support and endorse this move," commented Richard Roberts, a Senior Editor for NAR, and a past Nobel Prize winner. "Open Access is the future of scientific publication and one that we should all work hard to make successful. Every scientist can help by embracing the concept of Open Access and supporting journals as they attempt to make it the norm."

"This decision is a bold one for OUP and not without its short-term complexities," continued Richardson, "but we're pleased to be in a position to take this step. As a financially successful University Press, we have the resources and the motivation to undertake these kinds of initiatives. Ultimately we believe that Open Access

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represents the best way to meet the changing needs of authors and readers, at least in this particular area, but we will continue to monitor the impact of our decision, listening to all communities involved in order to respond appropriately in the future."

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Notes to Editors:

Previous releases relating to this announcement:

New Open Access initiative from Oxford Journals – August 2003

<http://www3.oup.co.uk/jnls/press/2003/08/07/index.html>

OUP ‘Open Access experiment – first results encouraging, next phase announced – February 2004

<http://www3.oup.co.uk/jnls/press/2004/02/18/index.html>

More information about the results collected, and the details of the OA publishing model to be used for NAR can be found at [www.nar.oupjournals.org/openaccess](http://www.nar.oupjournals.org/openaccess).

For a digital copy of the diagram, please contact Rachel Goode (available in 4 colour, mono, portrait and landscape).

Oxford University Press (OUP) is the world's largest and most international of university presses. It publishes more than 4,500 new books a year, has a presence in over fifty countries, and employs some 3,700 people worldwide. It has become familiar to millions through a diverse publishing programme that includes scholarly works in all academic disciplines, bibles, music, school and college textbooks, children's books, materials for teaching English as a foreign language, business books, dictionaries and reference books, and journals.

Oxford Journals publishes 184 journals covering a broad range of subject areas, two-thirds of which are published in collaboration with learned societies and other international organisations. The collection contains some of the world's most prestigious titles, including Nucleic Acids Research, JNCI (Journal of the National Cancer Institute), Brain, Human Reproduction, English Historical Review, and the Review of Financial Studies. A full list of the journals and subjects covered can be found at the Oxford Journals web site ([www.oupjournals.org](http://www.oupjournals.org)).

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