

## General Information

No. 37

18 May 2022

### **DFG Position Paper on Academic Publishing as a Foundation and Area of Leverage for Research Assessment**

Definition of challenges and fields of action / Changes will require a cultural change in all areas of research

Academic publishing faces a number of challenges that can have a negative impact on science and the humanities. In particular, research assessment based on metrics can provide problematic incentives, thereby preventing the system of academic publication and research as a whole from developing in a way that is appropriate to its purpose. As a contribution to critical debate and with a view to rectifying developments, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) has published a position paper entitled “Academic Publishing as a Foundation and Area of Leverage for Research Assessment: Challenges and Fields of Action”.

“The DFG is committed to an open publishing system and a culture of assessment that is geared towards content,” says DFG President Professor Dr. Katja Becker. “The DFG’s aim in presenting this position paper is to initiate a change in culture, especially at the management level of research institutions and the major research funding bodies. At the same time, we want to promote confidence in this change so as to make it easier for academics to put quality first when it comes to the publication and assessment of scholarship.” The position paper also served as a guideline for the actions of the DFG itself in its function as the central self-governing body for research and the largest research funding organisation in Germany, said Becker.

The position paper seeks to contribute to strengthening the framework conditions in the research system in a way that is appropriate to scholarship as well as providing input to national and international debate on the further development of publication and assessment systems. Starting with a definition of the basic functions of academic publishing, the first section (“Fundamental features of the publication system”) describes the most common forms of academic publishing as well as how scholarship is disseminated and subjected to quality review. Secondly, the following aspects are identified as current challenges and discussed in greater depth: the findability of academic publications, market structures and business models, fraudulent publishing, quality review and peer involvement, and the reciprocal effects of research assessment and publishing.

In the third section, areas of action are identified with regard to the two main addressees of the position paper: the idea put forward here is that it is the responsibility of research communities (in particular at the management level) to establish new ways to assess the quality of publications, to enhance addressee orientation in academic publishing and to strengthen additional systems of attributing reputation, as well as ensuring that scholarship has control over its own data.

On the other hand, it is the responsibility of the funders of research to broaden the spectrum of accepted publication formats, require more content-oriented proof of performance and strengthen the recipient side.

The position paper “Academic Publishing as a Foundation and Area of Leverage for Research Assessment: Challenges and Fields of Action” was developed by means of a thorough process under the leadership of DFG Vice President Professor Dr. Julika Griem by members of the DFG Executive Committee and Senate representing all four academic disciplines as well as the Head Office, while also drawing on the input of experts.

### **Further information**

Position paper “Academic Publishing as a Foundation and Area of Leverage for Research Assessment: Challenges and Fields of Action”:

[www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/grundlagen\\_dfg\\_foerderung/publikationswesen/positionspapier\\_publikationswesen\\_en.pdf](http://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/grundlagen_dfg_foerderung/publikationswesen/positionspapier_publikationswesen_en.pdf)

Please send feedback and questions on the position paper to:

[publikationswesen@dfg.de](mailto:publikationswesen@dfg.de)

DFG website “Publishing system”:

[www.dfg.de/publishing](http://www.dfg.de/publishing)