

THE FIRST DEAL AGREEMENTS 2019-2023: Setting the Path for Open Access and Transparency



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SETTING THE PATH FOR OPEN ACCESS AND TRANSPARENCY

The landscape of scholarly publishing has undergone a fundamental change in recent years. A key driver of this change in Germany has been the DEAL consortium, which has negotiated nationwide open access (OA) agreements with leading scientific publishers to help shape the transition to an OA-based academic publishing system. Find out more about the aims, objectives and achievements of the first phase of DEAL agreements with Wiley and Springer Nature.

THE ROAD TO DEAL

The DEAL initiative was launched in 2014 when the German Alliance Science Organisations commissioned the German Rectors' Conference to negotiate nationwide licensing agreements with the three largest academic publishers (Elsevier, Wiley, Springer Nature), initially as a response to the increasing pressure on library budgets due to rising journal prices, which meant that many libraries could no longer guarantee their researchers and students access to key research literature.

The DEAL project, set up and funded by the Alliance partners, aimed to negotiate better terms with the three largest academic publishers and, if possible, to standardise conditions for all institutions in the country. It quickly became clear that the contracts to be negotiated would also have to make substantial progress in the area of open access, that is, permanent free access to research literature and the right of scientific authors to retain their copyright, a goal to which academic institutions in Germany and around the world have been committed since the early 2000s.

THE GOALS OF DEAL

Reflecting the initiative's shared commitment to improving access to scientific publications in Germany, DEAL has set three key negotiating objectives:

OPEN ACCESS:

Scientific authors in Germany should have the opportunity to make their research results immediately and freely accessible worldwide, so that their work can be used and built upon by peers around the world.

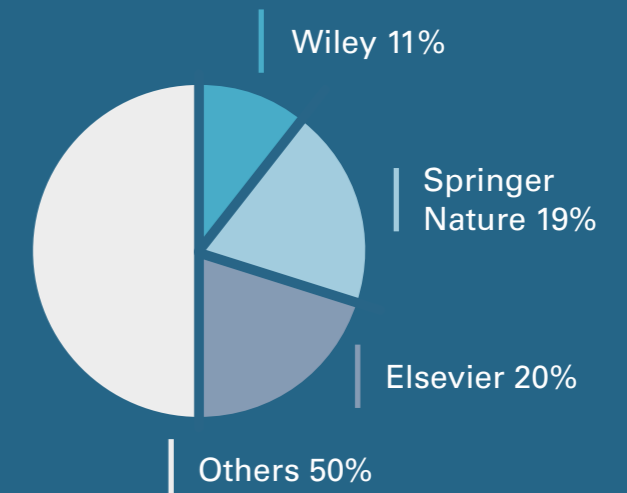
EQUAL ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE:

All research, teaching and learning institutions in Germany should have permanent and equal access to scholarly journals.

FAIR PRICING MODEL:

Achieving these goals will require a new pricing model based on the actual number of publications by German institutions, taking into account their total expenditure on journal subscriptions, and adapting it to the new terms. A transparent price per publication will ultimately provide the basis for informed negotiations and price reductions.

WITH WHICH PUBLISHING HOUSES DID RESEARCHERS IN GERMANY PUBLISH THEIR WORK IN 2023?



According to the Open Access Monitor, half of the publications in scientific journals originating from German institutions in 2023 were published by Elsevier, Springer Nature and Wiley.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE 1ST AGREEMENT PHASE: OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING

TOTAL PUBLICATIONS
UNDER THE 1ST DEAL
AGREEMENT PHASE

OVER **105,000**

SHARE OF
OPEN-ACCESS
PUBLICATIONS:

97%

As part of the publication process, researchers can opt out of the open access option offered by DEAL. On average over the entire contract period and across both publishers, only 3% made use of this option, meaning that over 97% of articles invoiced under DEAL were published under a free open access licence.

Publication figures as of June 2024,
subject to minor changes.

What is open access publishing?

While the subscription model requires readers or their institutions to pay for access to scholarly publications, open access publishing allows scholarly work to be made available without financial, legal or technical barriers. Instead of the rights to use the publications being held exclusively by the publishers, which restricts the dissemination and re-use of research results, free licences such as Creative Commons allow others to use, share and build on the works under clearly defined conditions.

Who has published under DEAL?

The first generation of DEAL agreements were negotiated on an "all-in" basis, i.e. all research articles in Wiley and Springer Nature journals submitted and accepted for publication by researchers from German DEAL-eligible institutions (approximately 1,000) were cleared by the DEAL consortium, so that authors could take advantage of open access publishing, regardless of whether their institution had actively participated in the agreements or not.

OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING

HYBRID AND GOLD OPEN ACCESS PUBLICATIONS UNDER THE 2019-2023 DEAL AGREEMENTS BY PUBLISHER

WILEY

	2019*	2020	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
HYBRID	4.780	10.039	9.747	8.656	8.454	41.676
GOLD	500	882	1.054	1.130	1.437	5.003
TOTAL	5.280	10.921	10.801	9.786	9.891	46.679

*Contract start date for the Wiley hybrid component is 1 July 2019. 2019 figures not exactly captured.

SPRINGER NATURE

	2019	2020*	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
HYBRID	-	10.236	11.548	10.586	10.414	42.784
GOLD	-	1.842	4.760	4.565	4.704	15.871
TOTAL	-	12.078	16.308	15.151	15.118	58.655

*Start of contract 2020; start of SN Gold component 1 August 2020.

Hybrid and gold open access, what's the difference?

Hybrid and gold open access (OA) are two ways of publishing articles openly in scholarly journals. Hybrid journals are a mixture of subscription-based and OA publications, and authors are required to pay extra to make their individual articles OA. Gold OA journals publish all their articles as open access by default. DEAL agreements support both types of OA publishing, although hybrid journals make up the larger part of publishers' journal portfolios and DEAL helps to increase the proportion of OA content in these journals.

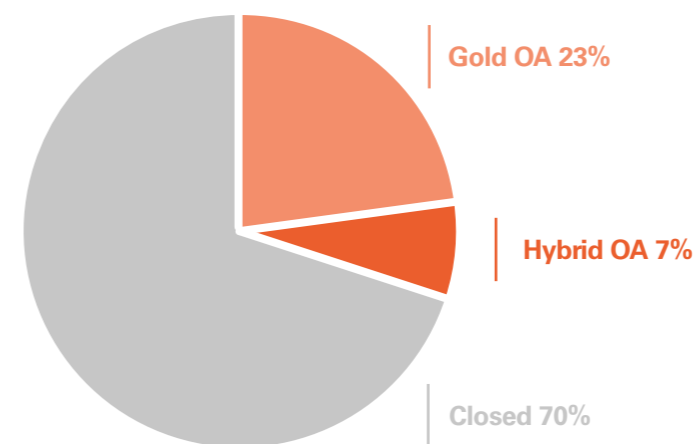
OPEN ACCESS PUBLISHING

GROWTH IN OPEN ACCESS

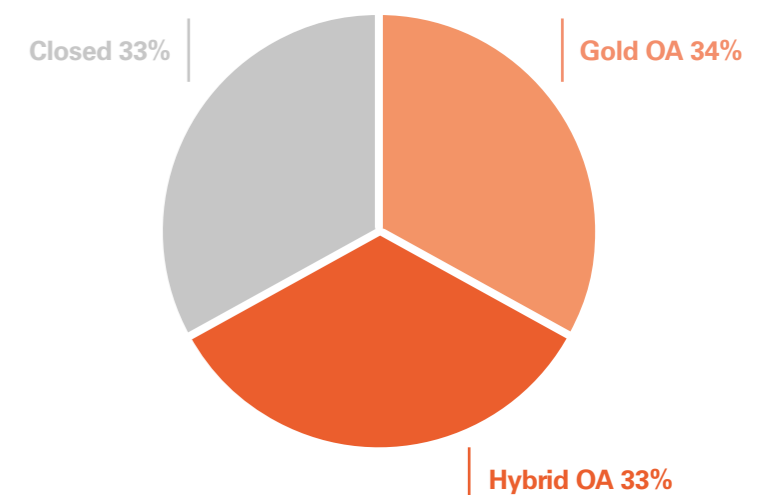
The Open Access Monitor platform provides data on the development of open access publishing. The charts show the distribution of publications by corresponding authors* from Germany in the years 2014-2018 (before DEAL) and in the first phase of the DEAL agreements between 2019 and 2023 across the publication models "gold open access", "hybrid open access" and "closed Access".

There is a clear shift towards open access, including a halving of the proportion of publications that are not freely accessible.

2014-18 PRE DEAL



2019-23 DEAL



Corresponding author publications from Germany in the respective period in total, rounded (according to OA Monitor):

2014-2018	2019-2023
296.000	389.000

* Corresponding authors are responsible for submitting a multi-author publication to a journal, liaising with the editors throughout the review and publishing process, and acting as the primary contact for reader queries.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE 1ST AGREEMENT PHASE: READING ACCESS

IMPROVED NATIONAL INFORMATION PROVISION THROUGH A STABLE AND HIGH LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION

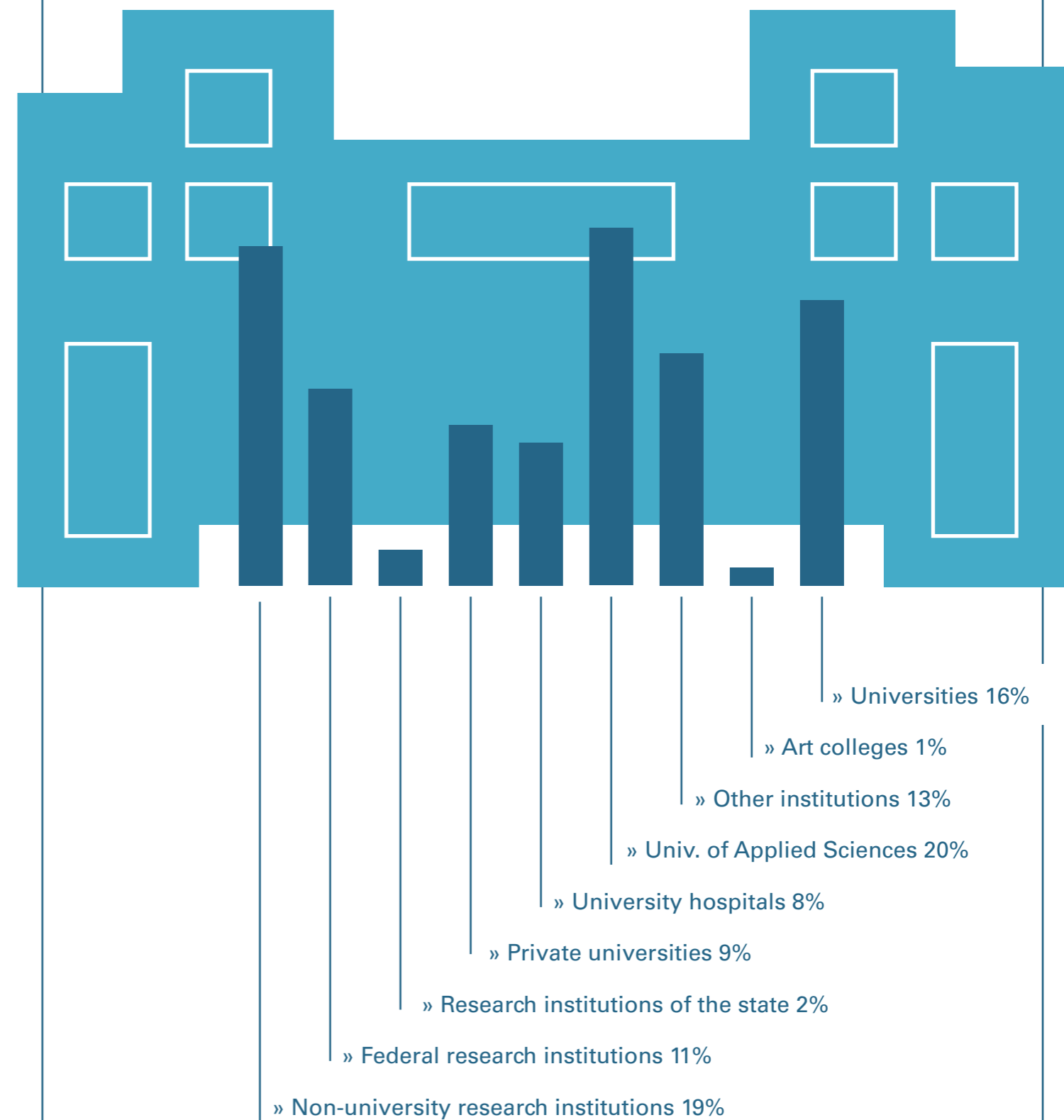
The nationwide information provision for universities, research institutes and many other institutions such as public authorities and hospitals has been significantly improved by the DEAL agreements by enabling equal and comprehensive access to scientific journals for institutions that actively participated in the agreements.

Around **500**
INSTITUTIONS

of different types and sizes have been granted access to the extensive portfolio of journals published by Wiley and/or Springer Nature.

In Germany, **around 1,000 institutions are potentially eligible** to participate in the DEAL agreements. During the first agreement phase, around 98% of DEAL publications originated from around 500 actively participating institutions.

DEAL CONSORTIUM



Shares of types of institution in the DEAL consortium (as in 2022)

READING ACCESS

FIRST-TIME ACCESS TO SCHOLARLY JOURNALS THROUGH DEAL

The DEAL initiative has significantly expanded access to scholarly journals for many institutions, giving many of them access to journals from leading publishers for the first time. In detail:

24%

OF PARTICIPATION AGREEMENTS FOR SPRINGER NATURE, AND

14%

OF PARTICIPATION AGREEMENTS FOR WILEY

were concluded with institutions that had not previously subscribed to these publishers' journal content.

LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION AND EVOLUTION

Participation in the DEAL agreements has been characterised by a high and stable level of participation throughout the first phase of DEAL agreements. In fact, there has been a slight increase in the number of newly participating institutions each year, underlining the growing recognition and support for DEAL. At the end of 2023, this positive development is reflected in the following participation levels:

SPRINGER NATURE: **397**

WILEY: **374**

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENTS SIGNED

SPRINGER NATURE: **513**

WILEY: **511**

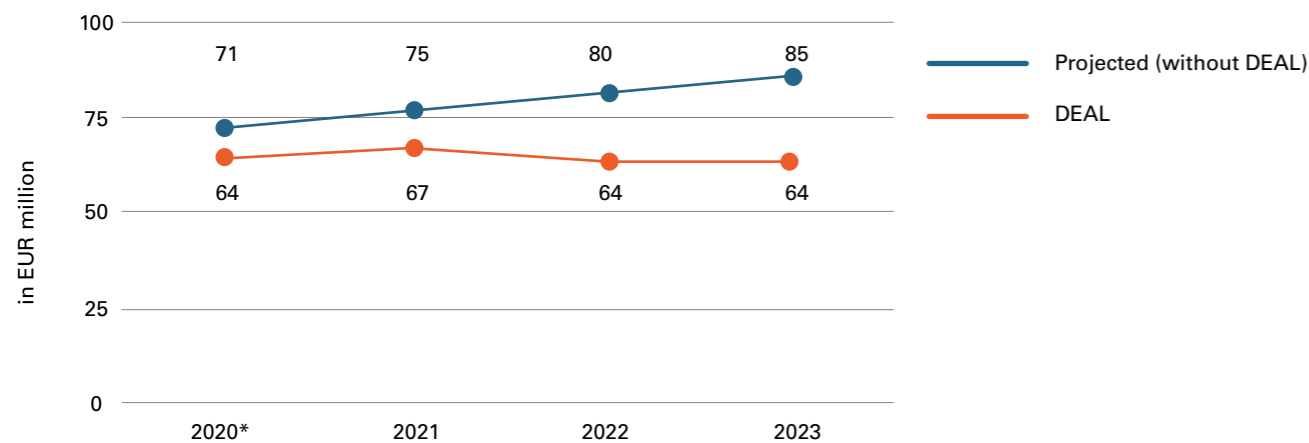
INSTITUTIONS COVERED BY A PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

A participation agreement can allow several institutions to benefit, such as universities and their university hospitals.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE 1ST AGREEMENT PHASE: PRICE TRANSPARENCY AND COST EFFICIENCY

EXPANDED SERVICES WITH REDUCED OVERALL EXPENDITURE

DEAL has succeeded in reducing total expenditure to well below the forecast costs (see [DEAL Cost Modelling Tool](#)), thereby making important progress in the financing of scholarly publishing services in Germany. The agreements are not only an effective tool for cost control, but also improve the scope and quality of the services provided to German institutions.



*DEAL expenditure 2020 extrapolated to a full year

PREVENTING DOUBLE DIPPING

By introducing the Publish-And-Read (PAR) fee, the DEAL agreements have effectively tackled the problem of "double dipping" in hybrid OA scholarly publishing, with library subscription fees on the one hand, and OA fees for individual articles, usually paid by authors, on the other. The DEAL agreements avoid this double burden on institutions and, by introducing the PAR fee, take a decisive step towards a more transparent funding model for scholarly publishing.

PRE DEAL - Subscription costs

- » not transparent
- » annual price increases
- » read-only access, mostly fragmented

rising total expenditure

DEAL - PAR-Fee

- » single, transparent price per publication
- » open access publishing services
- » full reading rights, equally for all participants

decreasing total expenditure

What is the PAR Fee?

The Publish and Read Fee (PAR) is a key component of DEAL agreements and is an article-based flat fee that covers both publishing and reading services under the agreement. This approach facilitates open access publication of research results without imposing additional costs on authors. At the same time, it ensures that participating institutions have access to a wide range of journals.

MORE ACHIEVEMENTS:

IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE AND GREATER TRANSPARENCY

The DEAL agreements have made significant progress beyond the improvement of the agreements themselves, leading to structural changes and improved dynamics between publishers and academic institutions.

STRENGTHENING THE MARKET PRESENCE OF GERMAN ACADEMIC ORGANISATIONS:

DEAL has strengthened its bargaining power by consolidating and enhancing expertise in various areas, including data analytics, model innovation and strategic communication. This robust position has enabled the consortium to successfully navigate negotiations and achieve favourable agreements through unprecedented collaboration.

MPDL SERVICES GMBH AS A KEY INFRASTRUCTURE COMPONENT:

The establishment of MPDL Services gGmbH was a crucial step in addressing the complex challenges of contract implementation and facilitating the transition to open access. By bridging the interests of academic institutions and publishers, it promotes more efficient processes and the standardisation of practices.

FLEXIBLE PARTICIPATION MODELS AS A FRAMEWORK FOR OA TRANSFORMATION:

The development of flexible participation models for the consortium's institutions has led to widespread acceptance of the contracts. These models facilitate the transition to OA by mitigating risk and enabling all institutions to participate.

TRANSPARENCY:

Transparency is another key aspect of DEAL's success, manifesting itself on three levels: in the costs and prices of the contract models, in the disclosure of the contracts themselves, and in the possibility of influencing the workflows and processes in the publication system as a strong contractual partner, allowing better co-design and control by the scientific community.

THE OUTLOOK

With the first agreement with Elsevier, DEAL has now successfully concluded all three of its planned agreements with major publishers, thus fulfilling its original mandate. This paves the way for open access to become the new standard in Germany. The high level of acceptance and participation in the second generation of contracts from 2024 shows that DEAL is on the right track and that the vision of free access to scientific knowledge is becoming more and more realistic.

Links:

[DEAL consortium](#)

[1st DEAL Wiley agreement](#)

[1st DEAL Springer Nature agreement](#)

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