

# **S20 Flat Fee Pilot – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**Publisher: American Society for Microbiology (ASM)**

## **1. How are the S20 Flat Fee Pilot fees calculated?**

Fees are calculated using historical research output as a key reference point. This includes past publication volumes as well as page charges previously incurred in S20 journals.

## **2. Are fees based solely on past publication data?**

No. While historical data is an important factor, fees are **not** determined solely by past publications. The model also considers projected future publication behaviour.

## **3. Does the uncapped model influence the fee calculation?**

Yes. Because the S20 Flat Fee Pilot is an **uncapped** model, projected publication growth—especially in years two and three—is incorporated into the calculations.

## **4. What role does the tier framework play?**

The tier framework helps align institutions' publication projections with adjusted flat fees, ensuring a fair and consistent structure across participants.

## **5. How is cost neutrality ensured?**

The fee structure is designed to remain as cost neutral as possible. Institutions will no longer pay separate page charges or fees for supplemental materials, and all publications by corresponding authors are uncapped.

## **6. Are fees linked to Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)?**

No. Fee calculations are **not** based solely on FTEs. Instead, they focus primarily on research output and expected publication activity.

## **7. How are authors identified for the purpose of assigning publications to institutions?**

Authors are identified using a combination of:

- ROR-ID
- Institutional email domain
- Ringgold data

This multi-source identification method ensures accurate attribution of research output.

## **8. If we choose option 1, will the published articles remain permanently open access?**

Yes — under Option 1, all articles published by their authors will remain permanently Open Access. This applies regardless of future subscription status.

## **9. Would the invoices also go directly to the authors?**

The invoice can be sent either directly to the author or to the library, depending on the institution's preference. We are flexible on this point and can follow whichever internal process works best for them.

## **10. Does ASM offer a dashboard, where institutions can easily view and download their statistics themselves?**

For usage stats, librarians/administrators can log into <https://journals.asm.org/> to pull usage stats for your institution. If you want further information about the login, please contact Jason Kraft (Jason Kraft [jkraft@asmusa.org](mailto:jkraft@asmusa.org)) and Kathleen Weaver (Kathleen Weaver [kkurtts@asmusa.org](mailto:kkurtts@asmusa.org)).

For author statistics or output please contact us directly.

## **11. Does the 2.5% price increase apply to the reading share? Or will the flat fee also increase by 2.5% in 2027 and 2028?**

Yes, the 2.5% annual price increase applies to both components: the reading-share and the flat fee. This 2.5% uplift will be applied each year during the term of the licence (2026–2029).

## **12. What does the sentence “Flat fee model ... grows with the publication volume” mean? (Will the flat fee increase within the three years if we publish more? Or will this apply from 2029 onwards?)**

The sentence “Flat fee model ... grows with the publication volume” refers to the principle that the flat-fee model follows your overall publication output over time. In the current agreement, this is implemented through the same 2.5% annual increase of the flat fee during the licence term 2026–2029, as described in point 11.

**13. Is there a “free OA publication guarantee” in the six S2O journals for participants, i.e., will articles by authors from our institution still be published in open access at no extra cost if the journal fails to meet its S2O funding target and the volume is published in closed access?**

Yes. If your institution participates via the **S2O Flat Fee Pilot option**, there is a *free OA publication guarantee* in the six S2O journals. This means that articles by authors from your institution will be published Open Access at no additional cost, even if an S2O title does not reach its funding target and the corresponding volume is otherwise published closed access.

**14. Under which licenses are OA articles published in S2O journals? Can authors select CC-BY?**

If an article is published under the **S2O (Subscribe-to-Open) model**, it is made available Open Access under a **CC BY license**. In other words, authors can have their articles published under **CC BY** in the S2O journals.

**15. Is it possible to switch between options 1 and 2 within the 3-year contract?**

Yes, it is. Only the end of each year (meaning, no mid-year upgrades/downgrades/switching).

**16. What exactly is meant by “funder compliance” (in the product sheet = “grant compliance”)?**

The DFG (The German Research Foundation) has expressed that they will not cover anything labelled as “Page Charges” for authors, even if those charges are for open access content (as

it is with our S2O model). ASM's S2O Flat Fee Pilot model aims to be compliant for all funders by eliminating the page charges that authors may ask a funder to cover.

**17. Are the discounted page charges in model 1 payable from page 1 of a publication, or does the publisher only charge them once a certain number of pages has been exceeded?**

The page charges are discounted from page 1. There is not a 'minimum page' threshold that needs to be met.

**18. We are an institution with the highest FTE level. Here, the prices for the basic package and the all-inclusive package are the same, i.e., we are “automatically” assigned the all-inclusive package?**

Yes.

**19. Do authors from institutions that do not participate in the S2O model still have to pay APC for publications in the 6 journals in question?**

There are currently no APCs for the six journals, even for authors that belong to non-subscribing institution. The only way for an author to guarantee that their article be published open access in one of the six journals is for their institution to subscribe.

**20. Does the publication component only apply to the six S2O titles, i.e. the APC for the eight Gold OA journals must be handled outside the consortium agreement?**

That is correct, however for 2027, ASM would be willing to discuss a potential agreement where all articles could be covered.

## **21. Does the flat fee only cover additional costs such as page charges, otherwise no APC is charged for either model?**

In the standard S2O model, authors will incur page charges and supplemental fees. In the flat fee model, authors will not incur any costs – it is covered by the amount paid by the institution.