

Book Processing Charges

Perhaps the most common way of funding Open Access publishing is for the publisher to charge a so-called 'Book Processing Charge' (BPC) (even if publishers do not always use this term) to cover production costs and, in some cases, book sales revenue that might be lost by a book being made available on an Open Access basis. It is common for large commercial publishers to charge BPCs that are in excess of £10,000 for a standard academic book. Smaller and/or scholar-led Open Access presses tend to charge less. In either case, there is often the expectation that BPCs would – if funding allows – be paid for either by institutions that authors are affiliated with or by research grants, where the budget/funder permits. Many smaller academic presses state that editorial decisions are made independent of whether funds are available to pay for BPCs.

BPCs have come in for criticism for the potential inequalities they generate in the academic publishing landscape. Within the Open Book Collective, [we have argued](#) that BPCs do not provide a viable means for scaling an equitable Open Access book publishing landscape.

Case studies

- [African Minds'](#) hybrid publishing model uses BPCs. Their Gold Open Access publications require authors to fund publications, which allows for the cross-subsidisation of publication costs for the Diamond Open Access. This levels the playing field for researchers from Africa who may not have access to such funding for publication ([Business Models for OA Books](#)).
- A similar strategy is used by [Mattering Press](#) who charge BPCs to the institutions that can afford to pay them, and the "standard 'fee' of £6,000 [is] set so as to cover the costs not just of the book in question, but other books too", while offering discounts of up to 100% for authors who do not have access to institutional support ([Business Models for OA Books](#)).
- [meson press](#) uses Book Processing Charges but, like other Open Access publishers, tries to keep them low (1,500–5,000 EUR per book). It also makes use of the relative distinctiveness of its German context: according to meson press, author-facing charges for books are common and seen as an acceptable funding model in the German publishing tradition ([Business Models for OA Books](#)).