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OPEN ACCESS AT THE IMT SCHOOL

2018 – 2024 Report on Open Access Practices and Trends

LIBRARY REPORT

IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca

Piazza San Ponziano 6, 55100 Lucca

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ABSTRACT

This report provides an analysis of the adoption and impact of Open Access at the IMT School for Advanced Studies in Lucca from 2018 to 2024. Building on the guidelines set forth in the IMT School's Open Access Policy, the analysis examines the various approaches taken by affiliated authors to publish in Open Access. A particular focus is given to transformative agreements with major publishers, highlighting the substantial cost savings compared to the theoretical Article Processing Charges (APCs). The report also tracks expenditures outside these agreements, often covered by project funding. Additionally, the analysis evaluates the practice of depositing Open Access content in the IMT School's IRIS institutional repository, noting a significant increase in the number of submissions with Open Access rights over time.

Keywords: Open Access, IMT School for Advanced Study, Article Processing Charges, Transformative agreements, Institutional repository IRIS IMT.

1. Introduction

To promote the broadest possible dissemination of research outputs, the IMT School for Advanced Studies in Lucca (hereinafter referred to as the “School”) supports and funds their publication and distribution in Open Access (OA). Through the Policy on Open Access to Scientific Literature (see Section 2), which has been in effect for several years, authors are encouraged to make their research findings accessible to both the scientific community and the public.

This report is organized according to the various Open Access strategies implemented by the School. These include the publication of OA articles through transformative agreements with publishers, an analysis of costs related to Article Processing Charges (APCs), and an overview of the deposit of Open Access materials in the institutional repository, in compliance with both the Open Access Policy and European guidelines for publicly funded scientific research.

This inaugural report, prepared by the Library, analyses Open Access data from 2018 to 2024. It serves as a foundational document for future annual reports, ensuring ongoing and transparent monitoring of the evolution of OA practices at the institution.

2. The IMT Policy on Open Access to Scientific Literature

In 2017, the School adopted the “IMT School Policy on Open Access to Scientific Literature[1]” (Director's Decree No. 06159(342).29.11.17) to promote and regulate access to the scientific output of its authors, particularly through the IRIS IMT institutional repository.

This policy aligns with the Berlin Declaration[2] and European Union recommendations[3] and is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Enhance the global dissemination of scientific research
- Reduce the duplication of scientific studies
- Strengthen interdisciplinary research
- Ensure the long-term preservation of scientific output
- Foster knowledge transfer to industry

[1] https://library.imtlucca.it/en/imt-open-access-policy
[2] https://openaccess.mpg.de/Berlin-Declaration
[3] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32012H0417

- Increase transparency for the public
- Improve the use of scientific contributions in educational contexts

The Institutional Repository plays a crucial role in meeting these goals by adhering to the highest technical standards for Open Access. It implements protocols for interoperability and long-term preservation and is indexed by major general and specialized search engines to maximize the visibility and dissemination of registered works. This ensures easy access for users both within and outside the School, while also meeting the requirements of funding bodies regarding Open Access (e.g., European Commission funding programs, MUR, etc.).

The policy outlines procedures for depositing and publishing works, clarifying the distinction between "Open Access" and "Free Access", and defining license rights and embargo periods. It also mandates that all authors within the School's community deposit an authorized version of their work (preprint, postprint, or published version) in IRIS IMT with public access rights. This allows their publications to be visible and downloadable at no cost to the publisher, institution, or reader (i.e., "Green Open Access").

The IMT Library[4] serves as a central point of support for the inclusion of works in the institutional repository. Library staff ensures compatibility with publishers' copyright policies and patent procedures and advises authors to upload the permitted version of their work as soon as possible. Additionally, the Library provides practical support for metadata entry and overall copyright management in the context of Open Access.

3. Transformative agreements

To support the implementation of Open Access (OA) principles and the institutional policy, the IMT School has signed several transformative agreements, facilitated by the CARE[5] group (Coordination for Access to Electronic Resources) of the CRUI association of Italian universities.

A "Transformative Agreement" refers to contractual arrangements aimed at reshaping traditional models of scholarly communication, facilitating and accelerating the full transition to OA. The main objectives of these agreements are as follows:

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[4] https://library.imtlucca.it/en/how-to-register-publication-iris
[5] https://risorselettroniche.crui.it/

- Transformation of the economic model: Shifting from a subscription-based 'read' model to one based on payments for Open Access publishing services (pay-to-publish).
- Cost containment, addressing the issue of "double dipping", where institutions pay both for journal subscriptions and Article Processing Charges (APCs) to publish in the same journals.
- Facilitating compliance with European Union Open Access policies, which mandate that publicly funded research be published in OA.
- Ensuring authors retain copyright over their works.

These agreements are designed to streamline the path to OA, reduce financial barriers, and support the broader academic community's transition to Open Access publishing.

3.1 Transformative Agreements at IMT

In the reporting period, the School activated the following transformative agreements:[6]

Publisher	Object	Duration
ACM	Publications in ACM Digital Library	2022-2025
Elsevier	Hybrid journals in Science Direct	2023-2027
IEEE	Selected journals in IEEE Xplore	2022-2024
Springer	Hybrid journals in Springerlink	2020-2024

ACM

The contract with the publisher ACM is a "Read & Publish" agreement, providing access to all publications on the ACM Digital Library platform (Read) and enabling authors to publish articles in Open Access at no additional cost. This applies to both hybrid and gold Open Access journals, as well as conference proceedings (Publish).

[6] https://library.imtlucca.it/en/facilitations-for-open-access-publishing

Table 1 shows the number of articles published Open Access each year under the terms of the agreement, along with the corresponding Article Processing Charges (APCs) paid. The publication trends for the years 2022-2024 are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

ACM 2022-2025				
	2022	2023	2024	**TOTALE**
Articles published OA	2	6	8	16
APC market value	$2.600,00	$6.800,00	$8.000,00	$17.400,00

Table 1: number of articles published OA and correspondent APC market value (2022-2024)

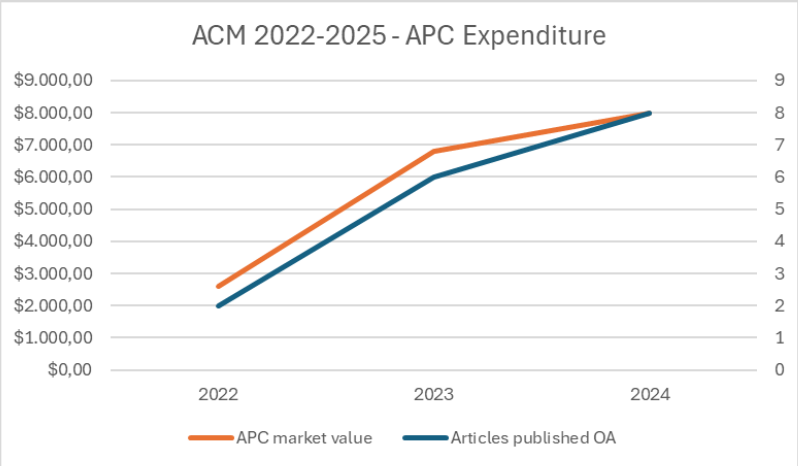

Figure 1: trends in Open Access publications resulting from transformative agreements (2022-2024)

Elsevier

The agreement signed with Elsevier is a Read & Publish model, which provides access to the full text of the collections included in the subscription (Read) and enables publication in hybrid journals within the subscribed collections, as well as in all Cell Press journals (Publish). For 2023 and 2024, the contract also included an experimental phase for gold Open Access journals, offering a discount on the list price of APCs. This option was not renewed in 2025. Additionally, the contract allowed for a limited number of OA publications for all participating institutions during the first two years (8,496 articles for 2023 and 8,796 for 2024). Starting in 2025, there will be no restrictions on the number of OA publications covered by the contract.

Table 2 summarizes the number of Open Access articles published between 2023 and 2024, benefiting from the terms of the agreement. The "APC Value" column shows the fees the institution would have paid each year for publishing the same number of articles, based on the publisher's list prices in the absence of the contract. The "Expected Publishing Quota" column displays the agreed-upon rate for OA publication as defined in the contract.

ELSEVIER 2023-2027		
	2023	2024
Articles published OA	16	13
APC market value	58.590,00 €	42.120,00 €
Contracted publishing share	13.429,27 €	13.697,25 €

Table 2: number of articles published OA, estimated costs and publishing quotation as defined by the contract – 2023-2024 surveys.

The graph integrates the three parameters considered, illustrating how the share allocated to publishing remains constant in comparison with the actual APC costs for the number of articles published.

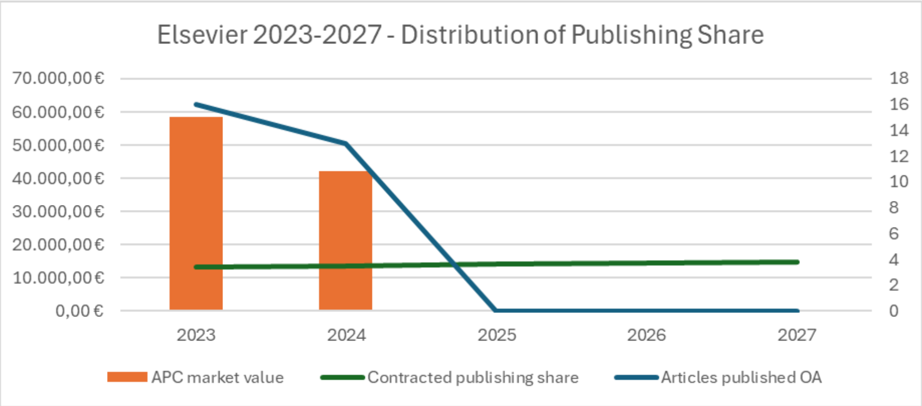

Figure 2: number of articles published (2023-2024), actual cost of APCs and expected publishing share according to the transformative agreement.

IEEE

Throughout its entire duration, the contract signed with this publisher provided access to all content available on the IEEE Xplore platform[7] (Read) and allowed for the publication of an unlimited number of articles in Open Access within a selected package of the publisher's journals, including both hybrid and fully Open Access titles, at no additional cost (Publish).

Table 3 follows the same structure as Table 2. It highlights the actual APC costs corresponding to the number of articles published each year under the terms of the agreement.

[7] https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/Xplore/home.jsp

IEEE 2022-2024			
	2022	2023	2024
Articles published OA	2	4	6
APC market value	$3.802,50	$7.675,25	$12.904,75
Contracted publishing share	$2.543,10	$3.666,70	$4.999,68

Table 3: number of articles published OA, estimated costs and publishing quotation as defined by the contract – 2023-2024 surveys.

As in the case of Elsevier, the graph below integrates the three parameters considered, showing that while the number of Open Access publications increases over the three-year period, the share allocated to publishing rises only slightly, as defined by the contract.

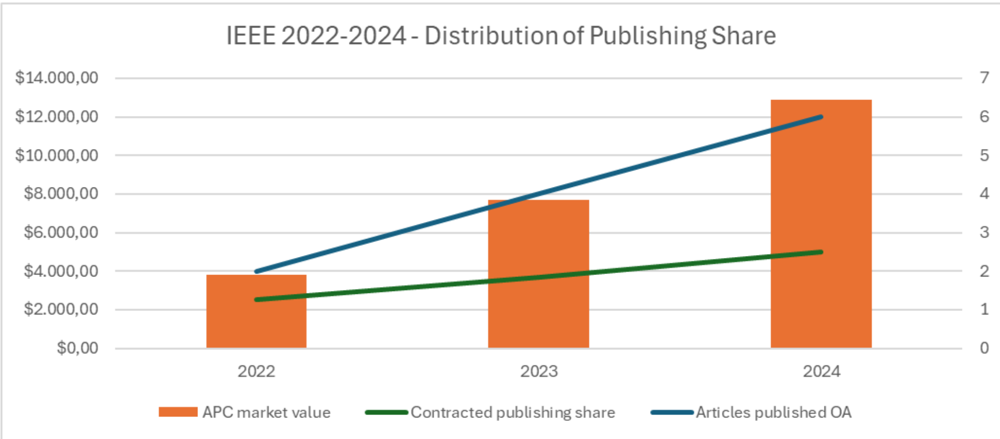

Figure 3: number of articles published (2023-2024), actual cost of APCs and expected publishing share according to the transformative agreement.

Springer

Like the agreements described above, the contract signed with Springer in 2020 followed a Read & Publish model. It therefore included a fee for access to the full text of articles available on the SpringerLink platform, as well as a fee covering the publication of a limited number of Open Access articles. Table 4 and the graph below illustrate the actual APC costs that would have been incurred in the absence of the agreement, based on the number of articles published in Open Access and in relation to the publishing quota defined in the contract.

SPRINGER 2020-2024					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
cles published OA	7	6	5	10	6
market value	18.530,00 €	15.940,00 €	12.650,00 €	26.000,00 €	15.640,00 €
Contracted publishing share	11.797,77 €	13.253,48 €	14.040,16 €	14.915,26 €	15.872,09 €

Table 4: number of articles published OA, estimated costs and publishing quotation as defined by the contract – 2023-2024 surveys.

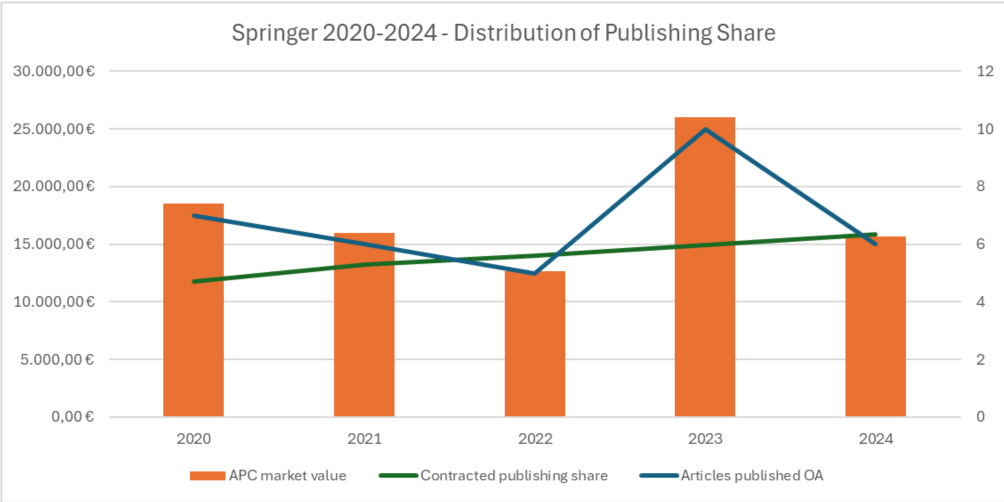

Figure 4: Number of articles published (2020-2024), actual cost of APCs and expected publishing share according to the transformative agreement.

4. Monitoring of APC costs

In cases where a contribution is published with a publisher for which no transformative agreement is in place, the costs associated with Open Access publication (APCs) must be covered by the authors or their institutions.

The section below presents data resulting from the analysis and monitoring of the expenses incurred by the School for APC payments over the period 2018–2024. The data were extracted from the School's accounting system (U-Gov), from which expenditure items attributable to the publication of scientific contributions were identified, as the School does not have a dedicated budget line for this purpose.

Expenditure by Publisher	*Year*							
Publisher	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Grand Total
UNKNOWN							2.599,33	2.599,33
AAAS							4.145,94	4.145,94
ACS							1.734,75	1.734,75
APA							2.780,61	2.780,61
APS					2.360,00	4.974,71	9.054,20	16.388,91
Elsevier	6.009,30			9.618,50	12.273,50	12.293,00	11.756,00	51.950,30
Frontiers		2.674,00	1.680,23	7.750,00	16.218,45	3.005,21		31.327,89
Hindawi		1.812,72						1.812,72
IEEE				1.200,00	1.476,47		929,54	3.606,01
IOP		1.482,00	1.520,00		1.715,00			4.717,00
MDPI	1.315,85				2.029,81	2.448,92	2.303,66	8.098,24
MEDWIN PUBLISHERS LLC						2.908,43		2.908,43
Oxford University press				1.700,00			920,86	2.620,86
PLOS - Public Library of Science		1.433,97						1.433,97
PNAS				5.005,00		1.157,26	5.300,00	11.462,26
Society for Neuroscience	2.503,39					3.165,26	3.304,98	8.973,63
Springer						15.185,00		15.185,00
Springer Nature	3.262,50	12.225,00	2.680,00	10.930,00	13.085,00	3.972,00	23.485,00	69.639,50
Taylor & Francis					3.190,00	3.385,00		6.575,00
Wiley							3.673,15	3.673,15
Grand Total	**13.091,04**	**19.627,69**	**5.880,23**	**36.203,50**	**53.901,59**	**52.494,79**	**71.988,02**	**253.186,86**

Table 5: Breakdown of expenditure incurred for the payment of APCs (2018-2024)

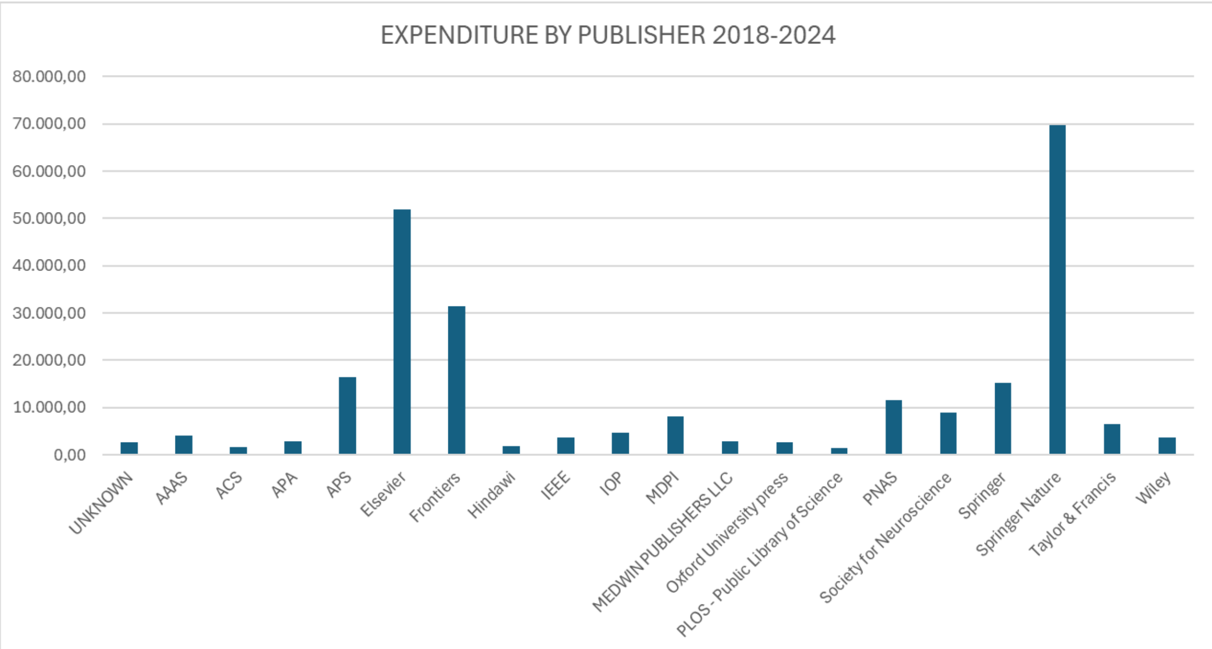

Figure 5: Total APC expenditure by publisher (2018-2024)

The table shows the details of the costs incurred for the payment of the APCs with each publisher.

The table and graph below summarize the increase in the total expenditure incurred by the School for the payment of APCs from 2018 to 2024. Again, the values are in euros:

Year	APC costs
2018	13.091,04
2019	19.627,69
2020	5.880,23
2021	36.203,50
2022	53.901,59
2023	52.494,79
2024	71.988,02

Table 6: Total expenditure on the payment of APCs for each year (2028-2024)

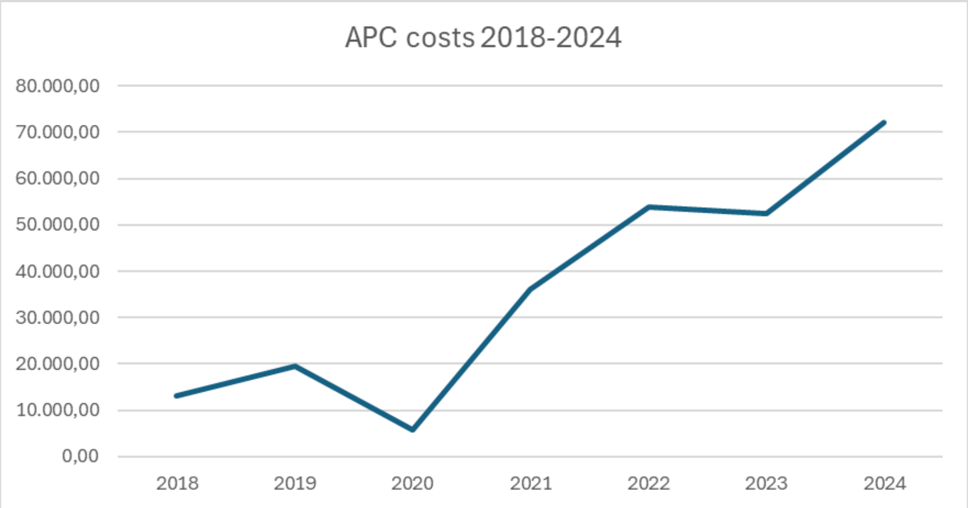

Figure 6: Evolution of expenditure on the payment of APCs from 2018 to 2024

Figure 6 illustrates a steady increase in expenditure on Open Access publishing, notwithstanding the sharp decline observed in 2020. This trend can be attributed both to the overall growth in Open Access publishing and to rising publisher list prices for individual APCs.

With regard to the first factor, it should be noted that in recent years the policies of universities and research institutions - and, most notably, those of major research funders - have increasingly introduced mandatory Open Access requirements in grant and funding agreements, requiring research outputs to be made freely accessible to the public.

This interpretation is at least partly supported by the distribution of costs by funding source, as shown in the graph below:

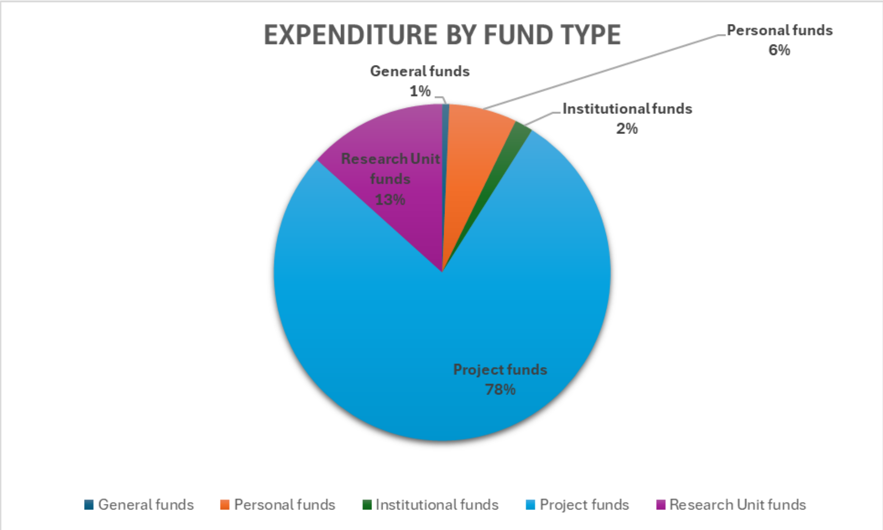

Figure 7: Distribution of APC spending by funds.

It is evident that the majority of APCs are covered through project-based funding. The systematic monitoring and analysis of APC data are therefore essential to ensure financial transparency in Open Access expenditure, to optimize the use of benefits deriving from transformative agreements and to assess new ones, and to provide informed support for institutional policies and researchers.

In this context, a critical issue has been identified: the available data do not always allow expenditure to be clearly linked to a specific article or publisher. To address this limitation, in 2026 the Library and Research Evaluation Office will promote improvements in the quality and consistency of data entry by the responsible offices, with the aim of enabling more accurate and effective monitoring of the Institution's Open Access publishing strategies.

5. Open Access deposits in IRIS

As noted in the section on the IMT Open Access Policy, the School maintains its institutional repository, IRIS IMT, where affiliated authors can deposit their scientific outputs.

Depositing in IRIS offers multiple advantages, including compliance with the School's policy and with any clauses in agreements with external parties, such as publishers or funders. The repository serves as the designated platform for depositing the version of a work permitted for

Open Access. Depending on the type of contribution, the allowed versions may be preprints, postprints, or the published version[8].

While certain metadata fields are mandatory, the inclusion of the actual file is not. For data extraction purposes, only records with one or more attachments have been considered.

The data presented here refer to Open Access versions of works published and archived between 2018 and 2024, extracted using IRIS reporting functions, with the latest update on June 20, 2025. This section shows aggregated data for the entire period, considering both document types and attachment types. Detailed year-by-year tables are provided in the appendix.

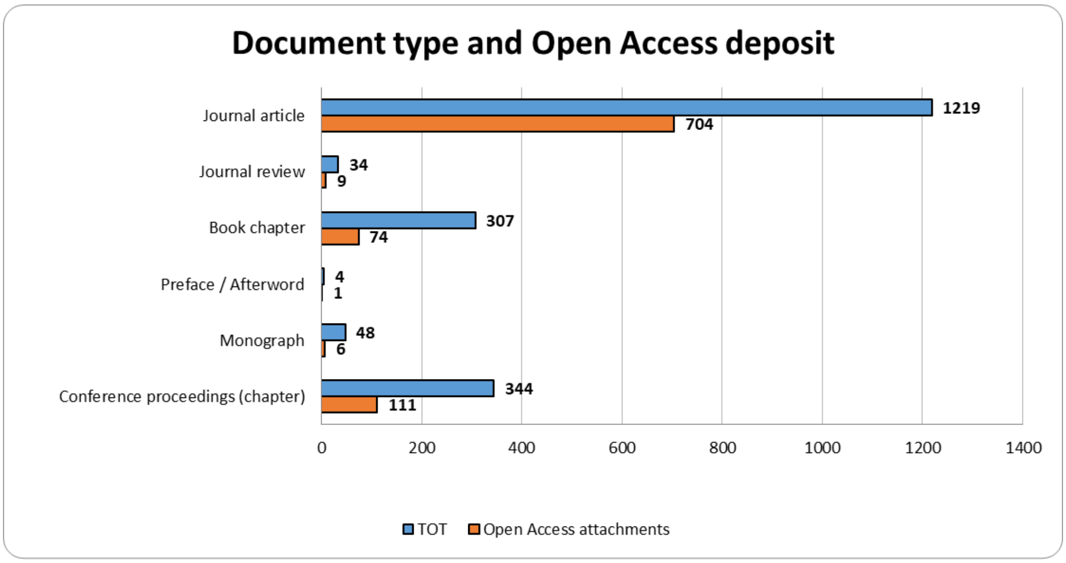

Figure 8: document types, total attachments, and Open Access attachments

As shown in the graph, the most common document types deposited in IRIS are, in order: journal articles, conference proceedings, and book chapters.

For journal articles, more than half of the records include a version of the work freely accessible from the repository, with 57.75% of attachments available in Open Access. This percentage

[8] For definitions of these terms and details on which files to attach and how to upload them in IRIS, please refer to the guidelines on the submission of attachments.

decreases for the other two major types: 32.26% for conference proceedings and 24.10% for book chapters.

This pattern is likely influenced by publisher policies, which often restrict the deposit of versions prior to the published one in institutional repositories, particularly for book chapters.

Looking at the trend in Open Access deposits from 2018 to 2024, there is a general increase in this practice. Focusing on the three document types mentioned above, the published version (Version of Record - VoR) is the most frequently deposited (Fig. 9).

Year	Preprint OA	Postprint OA	VoR OA
2018	19	7	56
2019	23	20	54
2020	17	26	14
2021	19	21	104
2022	27	22	104
2023	20	13	97
2024	18	11	125

Table 7: number of preprints, postprints and published versions deposited in Open Access from 2018 to 2024.

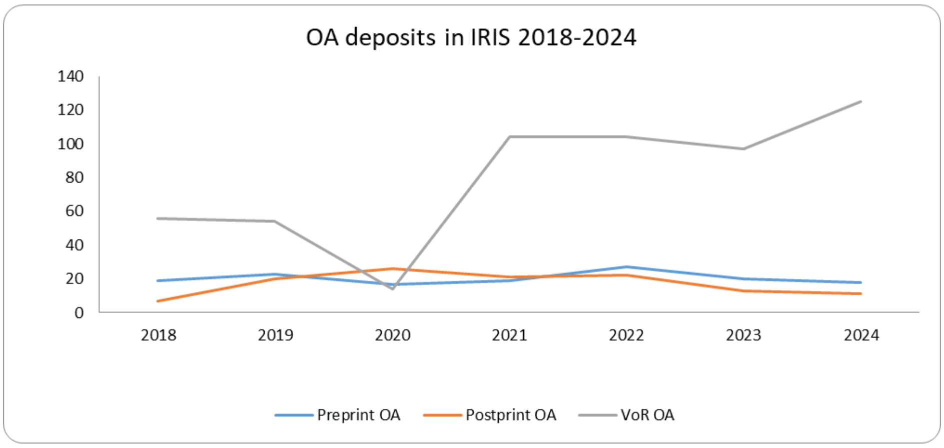

Figure 9: Open Access deposits in IRIS by attachment type (2018–2024)

Finally, we also looked at how the presence of an attachment in a contribution relates to its access status in IRIS.

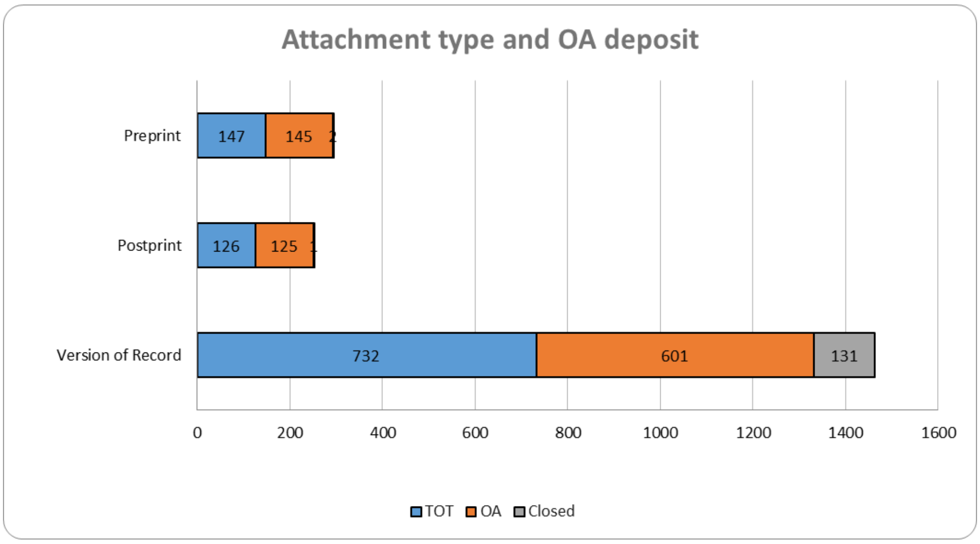

Figure 10: Type of attached version and access right in IRIS

This final graph confirms that the published version is the most common attachment for the document types considered, with the vast majority of files (82.10%) freely accessible directly from IRIS records. Preprints and postprints are almost entirely available in Open Access.

6. Conclusions

This report has examined the dissemination of Open Access practices at the IMT School, focusing on key document types such as journal articles, contributions to conference proceedings and volumes, monographs, journal reviews, and prefaces/afterwords. Grey literature was not included, as the focus was on material typically published by commercial publishers.

Analysis of the School's transformative agreements shows that the costs for the "publishing" portion remained lower than the APCs that would have been incurred otherwise. At the same time, publications in journals not covered by these agreements highlight the need to assess both the continuation of existing contracts and the potential establishment of new ones, including alternative models. The high number of APCs for Frontiers journals, for example, suggests that negotiating a dedicated agreement could be strategically advantageous.

The survey also confirms the extensive use of research project funds to cover APCs, reflecting both compliance with funder requirements and the inclusion of Open Access in project budgets.

Regarding the IRIS IMT institutional repository, Open Access deposits have grown steadily since 2020, driven by the School's OA policy, contractual obligations, and the recent VQR (2020–2024), which mandated the submission of open versions of published works. This combination of factors has strengthened awareness and engagement with Open Access among IMT authors.

Looking forward, the continued expansion of Open Access publications is critical for enhancing the free availability of publicly funded research. Strategic efforts should focus on reducing subscription costs, redirecting resources toward Open Access publishing, and increasing deposits of publisher-allowed versions (Green Open Access). These practices ensure compliance with institutional policy, strengthen the repository, guarantee accurate metadata management and long-term preservation, and maximize visibility and accessibility for internal and external evaluations.

In conclusion, a coordinated approach to Open Access - combining transformative agreements, repository deposits, and institutional policy - will ensure broader dissemination of research outputs, greater transparency, and more efficient use of resources, reinforcing IMT School's commitment to open and accessible science.

APPENDIX – BREAKDOWN OF IRIS FILINGS BY YEAR

2018-2024		
Document types	TOT	OA attachments
Journal article	1219	704
Journal review	34	9
Book chapter	307	74
Preface / Afterword	4	1
Monograph	48	6
Conference proceedings (chapter)	344	111
TOTAL	1956	905

Table 8: Total IRIS data (2018–2024) by document type

Records with attachments validated - TOTAL 2018-2024	**1956**
Open Access attachments - Total	**925**
Preprints	147
OA Preprints	145
Closed preprint	2
Postprints	126
OA Postprints	125
Closed postprints	1
Versions of Record (VoR)	732
OA VoR	601
Closed VoR	131
VoR - No attachments	174

Table 9: Total IRIS data (2018–2024) by attachment type

Records with attachments validated - TOTAL 2018	**300**
Open Access attachments - Total	**89**
Preprints	19
OA Preprints	19
Closed preprint	0
Postprints	7
OA Postprints	7
Closed postprints	0
Versions of Record (VoR)	71
OA VoR	56
Closed VoR	15
VoR - No attachments	16

Table 10: IRIS data (2018) by attachment type

Records with attachments validated - TOTAL 2019	**262**
Open Access attachments - Total	**102**
Preprints	23
OA Preprints	23
Closed preprint	0
Postprints	20
OA Postprints	20
Closed postprints	0
Versions of Record (VoR)	71
OA VoR	54
Closed VoR	17
VoR - No attachments	28

Table 11: IRIS data (2019) by attachment type

Records with attachments validated - TOTAL 2020	**288**
Open Access attachments - Total	**110**
Preprints	17
OA Preprints	17
Closed preprint	0
Postprints	26
OA Postprints	26
Closed postprints	0
Versions of Record (VoR)	75
OA VoR	61
Closed VoR	14
VoR - No attachments	33

Table 12: IRIS data (2020) by attachment type

Records with attachments validated - TOTAL 2021	**308**
Open Access attachments - Total	**156**
Preprints	19
OA Preprints	19
Closed preprint	0
Postprints	21
OA Postprints	21
Closed postprints	0
Versions of Record (VoR)	122
OA VoR	104
Closed VoR	18
VoR - No attachments	30

Table 13: IRIS data (2021) by attachment type

Records with attachments validated - TOTAL 2022	**276**
Open Access attachments - Total	**162**
Preprints	29
OA Preprints	27
Closed preprint	2
Postprints	23
OA Postprints	22
Closed postprints	1
Versions of Record (VoR)	142
OA VoR	104
Closed VoR	38
VoR - No attachments	18

Table 14: IRIS data (2022) by attachment type

Records with attachments validated - TOTAL 2023	**264**
Open Access attachments - Total	**146**
Preprints	20
OA Preprints	20
Closed preprint	0
Postprints	13
OA Postprints	13
Closed postprints	0
Versions of Record (VoR)	116
OA VoR	97
Closed VoR	19
VoR - No attachments	27

Table 15: IRIS data (2023) by attachment type

Records with attachments validated - TOTAL 2024	**258**
Open Access attachments - Total	**160**
Preprints	18
OA Preprints	18
Closed preprint	0
Postprints	11
OA Postprints	11
Closed postprints	0
Versions of Record (VoR)	135
OA VoR	125
Closed VoR	10
VoR - No attachments	19

Table 16: IRIS data (2024) by attachment type

The IMT Library

The Library supports the teaching and research activities of the IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca by ensuring the continuous development, preservation, and accessibility of its bibliographic collections, and by providing services tailored to the needs of an international scholarly community. It manages subscriptions with publishers for access to electronic resources and actively supports Open Access publishing. Library staff are also responsible for the management and validation of research outputs deposited in the institutional repository, IRIS IMT. Within this framework, the Library monitors compliance with the IMT School's Open Access Policy for scholarly literature.

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