

Letter to the University of Namur members after the approval of the Institutional Mandate by the University Board on 16 May 2014.

Dear colleagues,

Scientific publication and its procedures are undergoing dramatic changes. Two strong and irreversible trends are apparent.

The first concerns the tendency for research institutions such as universities to enhance their visibility by archiving their research output. In an increasingly competitive research environment (which one might regret), objective is to assess and valorise one's research and, at the same time, provide factual evidence of research activity in the larger framework of university financing, now and in the future. These two purposes are the basis of actions already taken by a number of universities in the French Community of Belgium. These include the creation of "institutional research deposits" in which research output is archived by the research community. The University of Namur has decided to follow this avenue and has created its own deposit, called [PURE](#). For the university's visibility and future, it is crucial that this deposit be kept up to date, as its content will be used as a measure of research activity, and hence as a basis for obtaining funds.

The second important trend is that towards Open Access publishing of scientific output that results from research projects funded entirely or partially by public institutions. The present situation where the uncontrolled growth of subscriptions to scientific journals makes them unaffordable even for universities is difficult to accept for the public authorities. Furthermore, they have to pay the price of science twice: a first time when funding knowledge production itself and a second time for its publication, although the scientists themselves perform most of the publishing work - often including technical typing and typesetting -, in the Internet age.

This situation has given rise to a widespread policy aimed at making access to research publications of universities as free of charge as possible, thereby stimulating exchange of ideas and creativity. This policy extends considerably beyond the French Community of Belgium (where the National Fund for Scientific Research and several universities have already taken action) and which the European Union strongly supports. The University of Namur has thus decided to join the trend by encouraging its researchers to make their publications accessible as widely and as soon as possible, within the limits of existing agreements. The institutional research deposit PURE already enables its users to specify an "embargo period", i.e. the period during which publications are not accessible outside the university.

Like other universities in the French Community of Belgium, the National Fund for Scientific Research and its associated funds, the University of Namur therefore makes the enclosed institutional mandate obligatory. Approved by the University Board on May 16, 2014, it specifies the obligations of the University's researchers. It imposes in particular on each University researcher of the obligation to deposit his or her scientific output in PURE is an obligation.

Only the Research Council or the University Board in the context of personal evaluations or career promotions and for the granting of research funds will take the publications reported in PURE into account.

Information sessions on this topic with question-and-answer rounds will be organized in the coming months, in order to clear up possible misunderstandings and to introduce you to the tools that are available to you for contributing to this positive initiative.

We thank you for your particular attention to this mandate and its consequences for your research practice.

Sincerely,

Y. Pouillet (Rector) & Ph. Toint (Former Vice-Rector of Research)

