

Journal subscription costs and procedures

OIST Library Committee

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Why this document?

The OIST Graduate University Library¹ strives to ensure the broadest journal access into the future. Estimates from the Library suggest that the Library budget will not keep up with the exponential increase in journal subscription costs expected from publishers in the next few years. To address such a challenge, the Library is consulting with the OIST Library Committee (a board of OIST Administratives, Faculty Members, Researchers and Students), which gives advice on Library policies and Library resources based on the needs of the OIST community.

We, the OIST Library Committee, believe that the OIST community should be aware of how the Library will maintain maximal journal access into the future. To this end, we provide some details about current policies and costs in journal subscriptions at OIST.

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¹Library in the rest of the document.

The Library defines journal subscriptions with Faculty Members through the Library Committee

The mission of the Library is to provide access to scientific publications that are relevant to the daily work of OIST research units. To achieve its mission, **the Library shapes the OIST subscription portfolio by consulting with Faculty Members and other OIST Researchers through the OIST Library Committee**. Specifically, the Library Committee:

1. asks Faculty Members to suggest and justify new journal subscriptions of interest (*Figure 1*);
2. checks each year with Faculty Members if research units truly need the journal subscriptions marked for cancellation (*Figure 2*).

The Library Director (Dean of Faculty Affairs) then uses recommendations from the Library Committee to decide which journal subscription should be purchased or cancelled.

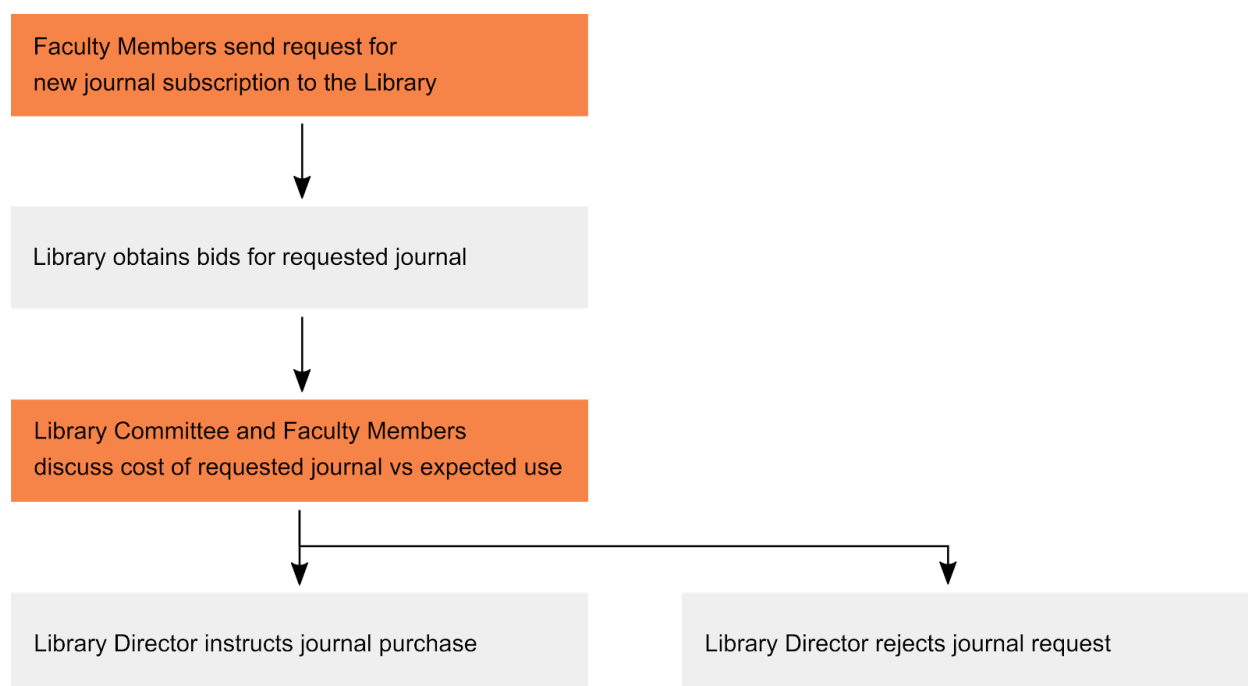


Figure 1: The Library asks Faculty Members to suggest and justify new journal subscriptions of interest.

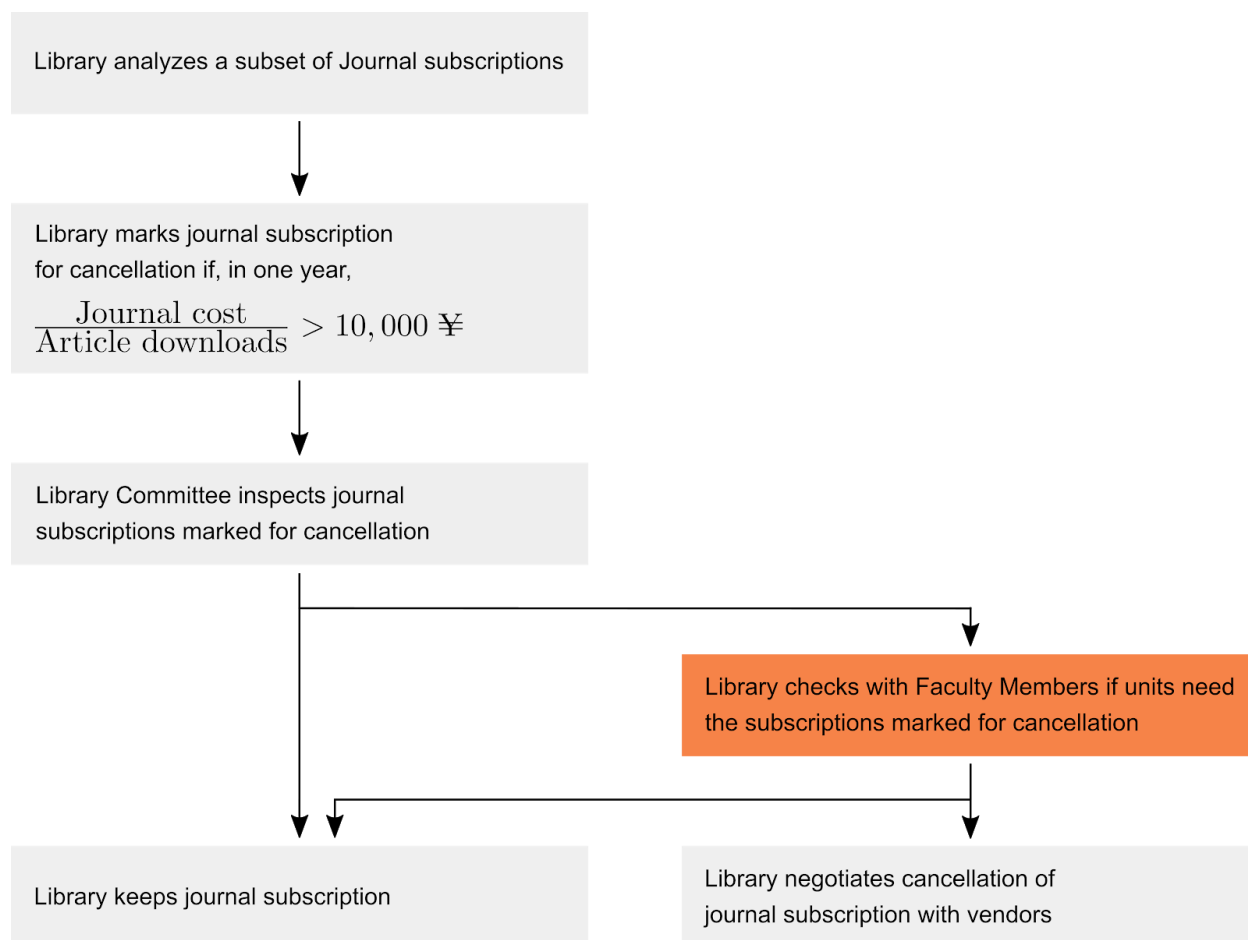


Figure 2: The Library checks each year with Faculty members if research units truly need the journal subscriptions marked for cancellation.

Pricing model of large publishers

Journal publishers bundle popular journals and specialized journals in packages to take maximum advantage of a university's budget. A typical pricing model from a large publisher consists of two options (*Table 1*). The first option is the *core content subscription*, which gives access to ~100 journals with permanent archive rights. The second option is the *expanded subscription* which adds ~1000 journals without archive rights to the core content subscription. In addition, some publishers offer tokens for purchase, where each article download spends one token.

Package	Core subscription	Expanded subscription
Contents	~100 titles with archive rights	Core subscriptions + ~1000 titles without archive rights
Cost	¥ 30 Million	¥ 33 Million

Table 1: Example of pricing model from a major publisher

Purchase options and constraints

The Library Committee has several options for annual renewal of subscriptions, but also several constraints. Examples of renewal strategies are:

1. Renew subscribed package: Some publishers allow replacement of some journals in a package with others, whereas other publishers strictly control package contents. Prices usually increase by a few percent each year.
2. Cancel package and subscribe to individual journals: This allows more choice, but prices usually increase by 10% or more each year.
3. Purchase tokens only for individual downloads: As mentioned before, tokens allow the Library to pay for individual article downloads. One token costs between 1,600 JPY and 4,400 JPY, and it expires after two years from purchase.

Library budget is best used for journals with broad usage

Institutional journal subscriptions are extremely expensive and can easily erode the Library's budget. To prevent budget erosion, the Library tries to subscribe only to journals which are in high demand and/or where the average annual article costs less than 10,000 JPY per download. This threshold slightly exceeds pay-per-view costs from publishers to ensure that all units can access journals relevant for their research field.

However, **OIST still subscribes to some journals where the cost per article download exceeds 10,000¥** (Figure 3). Some of these subscriptions are forced upon OIST by publisher pricing models; The remaining subscriptions with high costs correspond to **niche journals that are rarely used even by the units which requested them**.

As a consequence, **Faculty members should request journal subscriptions with broad usage at OIST to prevent erosion of the Library budget**. The Library will consider exceptions for institutional subscription of certain niche journals if the Library Committee judges that such journals are necessary to start new research subjects at OIST. For journals with low usage, the Library may instead recommend units to pay for individual subscriptions or to use pay-per-view access.

Open access journals offer a different solution to prevent the erosion of the Library budget. However, open access journals will thrive only when enough researchers and institutes will embrace the open access culture. To achieve that, we highly recommend making your next paper accessible to everybody by submitting it to good open access journals. Paywalls should not prevent the diffusion of excellent research to fellow researchers.

Estimated cost per article download at OIST from a major publisher

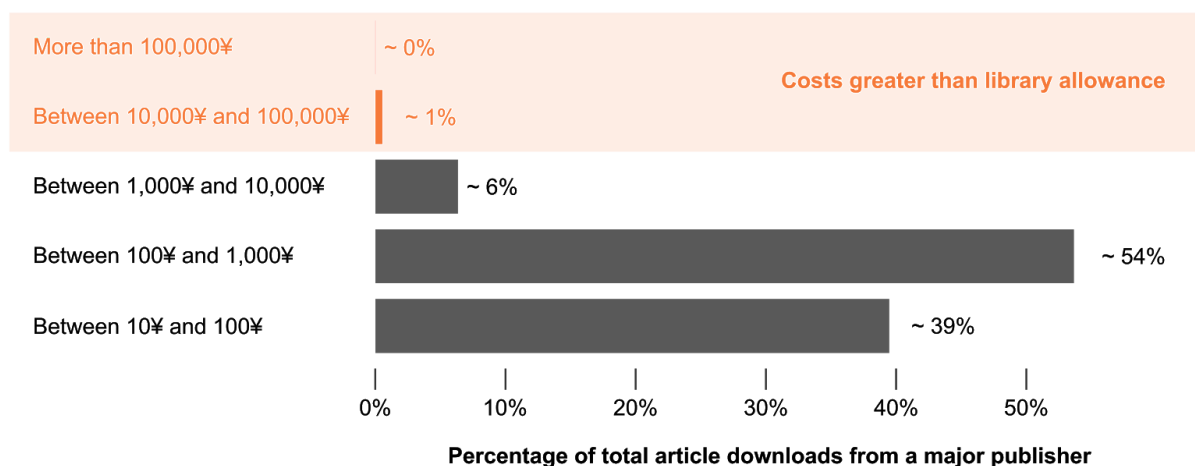


Figure 3: OIST still subscribes to some journals where the cost per article download exceeds 10,000¥