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Microbiology Society launches an innovative open research platform

The Microbiology Society is delighted to announce that our sound science journal, *Access Microbiology*, has been re-launched as an innovative open research platform and is now open for submissions. It is free to submit and publish on the platform during the first year of launch, so we encourage early submission to take advantage of this.

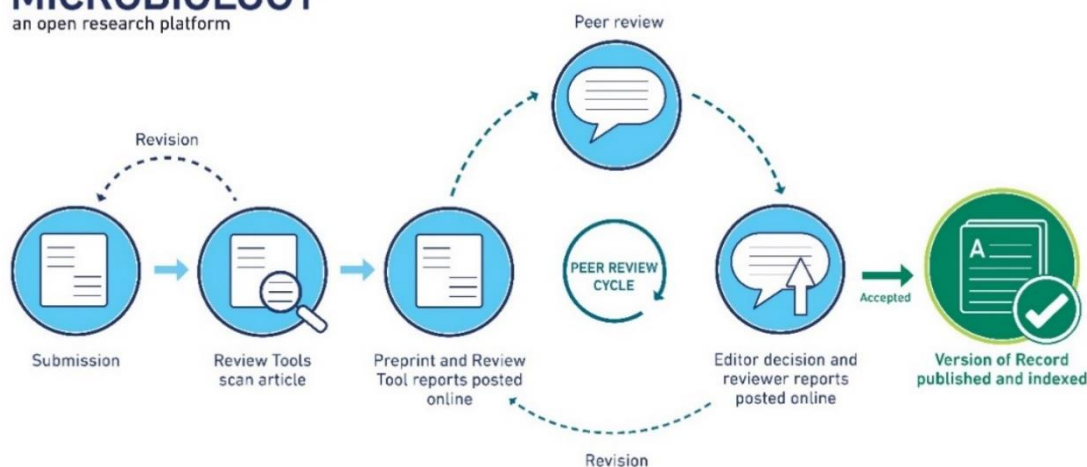
Access Microbiology was originally launched in 2018 as a new service to members of our community, allowing the publication of replication studies, negative or null results, research proposals, data management plans, additions to established methods, and interdisciplinary work. By 2020 the number of submissions had exceeded expectations, showing that there is demand for a Society-owned, sound-science microbiology journal.

In recent times, there has been a complete overhaul in the way research is being both undertaken and shared. Researchers need to rapidly share their work and are increasingly being required to share the data underlying their research. The Council of the Society is keen to be at the [forefront of these changes](#), and we recognised there was a need for a trusted place for our community to disseminate their work rapidly, rigorously, and transparently. In response to this need, we applied for and won a grant from the Wellcome Trust and Howard Hughes Medical Institute to convert *Access Microbiology* into an open research platform.

Where the *Access Microbiology* journal operated under a single-blind peer review model and only the published Version of Record was made publicly available, the new open research platform turns the entirety of the peer review process inside out, to ensure a fully transparent process. This includes posting all article versions as preprints on the platform, and posting the reviewer reports, Editor decision and comments, and author responses to reviewers alongside these.

The platform also features the manuscript review tools [Penelope.ai](#), [SciScore](#) and [iThenticate](#). Designed to give submitting authors immediate feedback, these easy tools will help authors navigate publication requirements and policies, improve the chances of quicker review and publication of the article, and increase the rigour and reproducibility of their research. The results of iThenticate and SciScore will also be posted alongside the preprint, meaning readers will be able to assess the validity and reliability of the preprint themselves prior to full peer review.

**ACCESS
MICROBIOLOGY**
an open research platform



The sound science scope of the platform ensures that all rigorous research can be published – a critical component in advancing the understanding of microbiology. As well as benefitting the wider microbiology community, it crucially provides our early career researchers with an opportunity to publish much of the research that they generate that may otherwise remain unseen because it has not historically been seen as ‘worthy of publication’.

Access Microbiology is more than just a new platform for the Microbiology Society; it will be a home for our members to communicate all the innovative and wonderful types of work that they generate – not just traditional research. It is a symbol of the wider transformation that is yet to come at the Society and of what we can achieve. We are listening to our members’ needs and are prepared to push the boundaries to ensure that we are continually amplifying their work. Microbiology Society member and Chair of Publishing Panel, Paul Hoskisson, explains why the platform is so important:

‘The transformation of Access Microbiology into an open research platform is a significant step in ensuring there is accountability in our research and the peer review process, as well as offering researchers the opportunity to improve their work right from the beginning of the submission process. It is a globally unique platform that has been developed by our community, for our community, and I can’t wait to see it embraced.’

The launch of the platform is just the beginning of its evolution and feedback from our community is critical for its success. We would love to hear from you regarding how it can be improved, and if you would like to get involved, so please do get in touch.

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