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TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION

Elsevier restores journal access for German researchers

Publisher takes decision despite still having no deal agreed with German universities

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By [David Matthews](#)

Elsevier has restored access to German research institutions that have been cut off from its journals since the new year after negotiations over a new contract broke down.

In a [statement](#), the publisher said it had “chosen to continue providing access” to affected institutions with the “expectation that an agreement can be reached”.

[Deal impasse severs Elsevier access for some German universities](#)

Negotiations between Elsevier and German universities and research centres broke down at the end of last year, and about 60 institutions’ subscription deals ceased at the end of 2016 without a new deal in place.

This is the first time German research organisations have negotiated collectively with Elsevier, and they are demanding more from the publisher on open access.

Last month, one of those leading the German side of the negotiations told *Times Higher Education* that losing journal access was less of a problem for researchers than it once had been, given that there were now many other ways to share papers such as academic social networks or the pirate site Sci-Hub. In addition, Elsevier pointed out that researchers had only lost access to new papers published in 2017, not all journal contents.

Now the publisher has restored access even though no new deal has been agreed.

“We strongly believe that access to high quality research is important for German science,” it said in its statement, released on 13 February. “The continuing access for the affected institutions will be in place while good-faith discussions about a nationwide contract carry

on. This reflects our support for German research and our expectation that an agreement can be reached.”

When asked whether the institutions were paying for renewed access, Harald Boersma, Elsevier’s director of corporate relations for science and technology, told *THE* that it was “customary in these situations for institutions to retain access to content after a contracted period is concluded and as long as renewal discussions are ongoing”.

He said that “meetings have continued in January”, but that negotiating a new national agreement “will take time”.

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