

The terms pre-print and post-print are used to mean different things by different people. This can cause some confusion and ambiguity.

One usage of the term pre-print is to describe the first draft of the article - before peer-review, even before any contact with a publisher. This use is common amongst academics for which the key modification of an article is the peer-review process.

Another use of the term pre-print is for the finished article, reviewed and amended, ready and accepted for publication - but separate from the version that is type-set or formatted by the publisher. This use is more common amongst publishers, for whom the final and significant stage of modification to an article is the arrangement of the material for putting to print.

Such diverse meanings can be confusing and can change the understanding of a copyright transfer agreement.

To try to clarify the situation, this listing characterizes pre-prints as being the version of the paper before peer review and post-prints as being the version of the paper after peer-review, with revisions having been made.

This means that in terms of content, post-prints are the article as published. However, in terms of appearance this might not be the same as the published article, as publishers often reserve for themselves their own arrangement of type-setting and formatting. Typically, this means that the author cannot use the publisher-generated .pdf file, but must make their own .pdf version for submission to a repository.

Having said that, some publishers insist that authors use the publisher-generated .pdf - seemingly because the publishers want their material to be seen as a professionally produced .pdf that fits with their own house-style.

This listing tries to separate out the differing definitions and conditions implied by the use of the

terms within each publisher's copyright transfer agreement and categorizes the permissions and conditions accordingly. All information is correct to the best of our knowledge but should not be relied upon for legal advice.

Source: [Pre-print and Post-print](#)