



University of
St Andrews

Copyright for students

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Purpose	When studying at the University of St Andrews you'll be using and creating works protected by copyright. This page gives you the general information you need to help you in your studies and future career.

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1.1	Updates		Sean Rippington, Copyright Officer, University Libraries and Museums	09/06/2022

1. Introduction

When studying at the University of St Andrews you'll be using and creating works protected by copyright. This page gives you the general information you need to help you in your studies and future career.

2. Using other people's copyright works

Creative works such as books, photographs, music and film are all protected by copyright automatically when written down, recorded or saved.

This gives the copyright owner the right to decide what you're allowed to do with that work. You should make sure your use of copyright works is legal.

If you infringe copyright by using someone else's work unfairly and without permission you may be liable for legal action.

3. Licensed resources

Most of the books, journals, databases and software you use in your studies are protected by copyright. The University pays licence fees that allow us to provide you with the resources you need.

These licences allow you to access these resources for your studies, but don't allow you to share them with others online. You can learn more about them in the Copyright Overview guidance document.

You may want to copy or share works that are not covered by a licence paid for by the University. In some cases you'll need permission from the copyright holder:

- if you want to publicly perform a play, you need to contact a theatrical agency such as [Concord Theatricals](#)
- if you want to show films to a public audience in a non-educational setting, you need to get permission from an organisation like Filmbank.

In other cases your activity may be covered by copyright exceptions even if you don't have a licence.

4. Copyright exceptions

There are exceptions to copyright that allow you to make copies of copyright works and use them when writing coursework, essays and other projects without a licence. For example, you may:

- quote some text from a book in an assignment or incorporate film clips into a multimedia work
- make copies or adapt works if you have a disability.

It's important that your use of copyright material is 'fair' to the copyright owner. This means you must:

- only use what is necessary and relevant to your work
- accurately acknowledge the source, author, artist or creator of the work
- give a title or other identifying description of the work being copied.

The law does not define how you should acknowledge the source, author, artist or creator of the

work, nor how you should provide the title or other identifying description – following the academic citation method recommended by your lecturer or School is likely to be sufficient.

If you have specific questions about using other people’s copyright in a fair and legal way, we can [help](#).

5. Copyright in your work

The [Intellectual Property Policy](#) details the University’s position towards ownership of intellectual property generated by students, including the copyright in your work.

6. Copyright and your thesis

You own the copyright in your thesis.

If you have used other people's work in your thesis, please follow the advice in the [‘Copyright and Theses’](#) guidance document.

7. Copyright infringement and plagiarism

Plagiarism and copyright infringement are not the same thing – you should avoid doing either.

Plagiarism means presenting someone else’s work as your own, even if you don’t copy their precise words or creative expression.

Copyright infringement means copying or sharing someone else’s creative work without their permission – this can happen even if you're not representing their work as your own.

You can learn more about plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct at the [Good Academic Practice web page](#).

8. Help

We provide advice, training and specific guidance on copyright law to support you in your work and study. If you have any questions about copyright, email: copyright@st-andrews.ac.uk

9. Related Documents

- [Copyright Overview](#)
- [Copyright for Researchers](#)
- [Copyright for Teaching](#)
- [Copyright and Theses](#)

10. Bibliography

[‘Copyright: What you Need to Know’](#) by Chris Morrison and Angela Groth-Seary

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1.0			Sean Rippington, Copyright Officer, University Library	02/10/2020

1.1	Updates		Sean Rippington, Copyright Officer, University Libraries and Museums	09/06/2022