

## Choosing the right copyright

This guidance is intended to help University authors choose the right copyright for their research and academic works. It is intended to provide a brief summary, and not an exhaustive outline of all possible legal outcomes. You may wish to consult expert advice.

### Open Access

The University strongly encourages authors who are engaged in research to make research outputs openly available by depositing the appropriate version of their research outputs into the University's open access institutional repository. This is further set out in the University's:

- [Open Access Policy](#)
- [Open Access Guidelines](#)

### Ownership of copyright

You will retain ownership of copyright, even if your works are deposited in the open access institutional repository. The repository only makes works available, it does not affect your ownership.

### Choice of licence

You may select whatever licence you choose to apply to your works. The license you choose will determine how your work can be used by others and what control you retain over it.

Some specific areas of study may have preferred or recommended options (for example, software licences). You may have your own views about the licence applying to your works. If you are not sure, the three main licences (and pros and cons) used for research works are outlined below.

### Standard copyright, all rights reserved

“Standard” copyright (or “all rights reserved”) provides you the most control over how your work is used and disseminated. This provides a monetisation option – you might license your work for money. Since you own all rights, you have robust legal options to enforce your copyright if your work is used without your permission.

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However, it is a very broad licence that can lead to some loss of control of your work. In particular, your work could be used for commercial purposes that you might not agree with or are unfair. We are aware of examples of student theses being printed and listed on commercial websites for sale. There is also a risk that attribution is overlooked, meaning you might not always get credit. Finally, this licence allows your work to be used commercially without you being paid for it.

## **Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial (CC BY-NC)**

The [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial](#) (CC BY-NC) provides something of a middle ground between a standard copyright and CC BY licence. You maintain some rights, limiting the use of your work to non-commercial settings. Your work can be freely used for educational purposes, encouraging wider academic engagement. However, it cannot be used for commercial purposes.

An important factor in considering this licence is that there is some ambiguity about the exact scope of “non-commercial”. The Creative Commons definition is:

NonCommercial means not primarily intended for or directed towards commercial advantage or monetary compensation.

Creative Commons emphasises that the **use** is the key factor, not the **user**. A not-for-profit entity (e.g., a University) may not use a CC BY-NC work for its business purposes. While many situations are clearly commercial or non-commercial, there are some situations where it is less clear. Further information is available on the [Creative Commons website](#).

## **Other licences**

Other licences may be appropriate in some situations, including Creative Commons “share alike” and “no derivatives” licences. These licences do have specific uses, but are more complex. Authors considering such licences should carefully consider the pros and cons of these licences and may wish to consult expert advice.

## Choosing a licence

In summary:

