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**A series of  
one-page, jargon-free  
briefing papers  
on hot topics  
and live issues**

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**COPYRIGHT**

## What is copyright?

Copyright is all around us, yet most of us have only a fuzzy understanding of what it is or how it works. Because copyright is a legal concept, it's very easy to feel intimidated by it, and to hide our heads in the sand! Fundamentally, copyright is the right that enables any creator (such as an artist, musician, designer, writer or inventor) to own the fruits of their creativity. It provides a way for creators to retain an element of control over how their work is used, and to receive a fair financial reward from that use.

## When is a work 'in copyright'?

For copyright to exist, the work must be original. This does not mean it has to be innovative - but it must be the result of original skill and labour. Copyright is automatic, and begins the moment something is created in material form, whether published or unpublished. In the UK, copyright does not need to be officially registered (though some other intellectual property rights, such as patents or trademarks, do). Copyright usually lasts for the lifetime of the creator + 70 years. The [Public Domain Calculator](#) is a useful tool for establishing if a work is in or out of copyright.

## What is allowed and not allowed under copyright?

Whenever a work is in copyright, the creator has the right to be credited, to authorise or prevent publication, and to have their work protected from derogatory treatment (such as additions, deletions, alterations, or adaptations that distort their intentions). The creator (or their agents) may also seek payment for the use of their material. You cannot copy, perform, display, broadcast, publish or adapt a work, unless you gain permission. If you fail to respect these rights, you are infringing copyright, and the copyright holder can request the immediate take-down or destruction of the material, and/or seek financial damages. Some limited exemptions do exist however. For example, you can photocopy or scan 1 article from a journal, or 1 chapter from a book, for educational purposes. You can find out more about exemptions for education on the [Copyright User website](#).

## How does this affect me as a researcher at GSA?

If you are undertaking research or teaching and wish to use someone else's (or "third party") material, you are responsible for checking if copyright exists in the work that you wish to re-use. You therefore need to identify who owns the copyright, and seek their permission to use it; be aware that the copyright symbol © does not *have* to be displayed for copyright to exist in a work! For example, if an image you want to use has already been used on the GSA website, this does not automatically mean it is in the public domain and that you can freely re-use it.

You should also consider protecting the copyright of your own works of art, design and writing when using them in presentation slides or posters, or when uploading to [RADAR](#), the GSA research repository. When uploading files to RADAR, you can choose a [Creative Commons license](#) to communicate the rights you reserve, and those you waive for the benefit of users. You should also include the international copyright symbol ©, the name of the copyright owner, and the year of publication, so that this is visible on your document or alongside your image, for example. If you are unsure who owns the copyright, please discuss this with colleagues and / or the Research Office.

## What do I need to do?

To ensure you do not infringe copyright, always seek permission to re-use third party materials. It is always best to err on the side of caution! Information to help you identify the copyright holder can be found in the [copyright InfosmART module](#). If you do not get a response to your request, you should consider using different material.

If you wish to upload a research output that you have produced to [RADAR](#), you must still check who owns the copyright. Even if you are the creator, you may have shared your copyright with co-creators or funders, or assigned it to your publisher. For journal articles, you can use the [SHERPA Romeo](#) service to discover if your publishers' copyright rules allow you to deposit the full text of your article in RADAR. For book sections and images, you usually need to seek permission directly from the publisher or copyright owner.

## How can I find out more?

[InfosmART](#) from the GSA Library provides a module on copyright, including several common scenarios in the arts and research. For practical advice you might also find the [Own It](#) resource from UAL useful. The [CREATE](#) hub from Glasgow University provides more discursive information. <http://www.create.ac.uk/> You can also contact GSA's Research Information Co-ordinator ([Dawn Pike](#)) or the Institutional Repository and Records Manager ([Nicola Siminson](#)) with any queries, and we will do our best to help.