**Information on Copyright**

Here are two useful resources available for students to learn more about how copyright relates to their work:

[Copyright and Your Dissertation or Thesis: Ownership, Fair Use, and Your Rights and Responsibilities](https://media2.proquest.com/documents/copyright_dissthesis_ownership.pdf)

This document will explain what copyright means for a thesis or dissertation, both in protecting the student’s own work, and in making sure that the student’s work does not violate a copyright held by another party. It focuses on choices that students can make ahead of times to save their work from future copyright issues.

[Rowan University Libraries Copyright](https://libguides.rowan.edu/c.php?g=248016&p=2102274) LibGuide

This LibGuide developed by Rowan University Libraries houses links to information about registering a copyright, the University’s copyright policies, and your rights as the copyright holder for your original work.

**Registering Your Copyright Through ProQuest**

When you submit your thesis or dissertation to ProQuest ETD for your formal formatting review, you will be offered the opportunity to allow ProQuest to register your copyright with the U.S. Copyright Office. This is not a requirement; by virtue of having created the work, you already own the copyright to that work. Choosing to formally register your copyright, though, will allow you to “enforce the exclusive rights of copyright through litigation” – i.e., it will allow you to pursue legal action if your copyright is violated.

ProQuest charges a fee to file copyright on your behalf. If you choose not to file using ProQuest, you will be able to file for a fee directly through the [U.S. Copyright Office](https://www.copyright.gov/registration/) at a later date.

ProQuest also allows students to place an “embargo” on their work. An embargo is a set amount of time chosen by the student (usually 6 months, one year, or two years), during which the work in question will not be made available to the public. You can choose to embargo both on ProQuest and on Rowan’s Institutional Repository, [Rowan Digital Works](http://rdw.rowan.edu/). If you are considering patenting your intellectual property, publishing pieces of your thesis or dissertation in a journal, or publishing your entire dissertation as a book, then this is a valuable option to you.

**Things to Consider About Copyright**

Copyright is not just about protecting your work from being plagiarized; it is also about making sure that your own work does not violate someone else’s copyright. This can be an issue both in (1) cases where you are using material from another source, and in (2) cases where you are re-using your own material that has already been published elsewhere.

It is important to be aware of what constitutes “Fair Use” when using material that you did not yourself write or create; images, tables/figures, and long quotations are at risk of falling outside of the realm of “Fair Use.” For more information on Fair Use and how to be sure that your work is not violating a copyright held by another person, please visit the [website of the U.S. Copyright Office.](https://www.copyright.gov/fair-use/more-info.html)

It is also important to be sure that you are aware of who holds the copyright on any work that you have previously published. If your thesis or dissertation is made up of several articles that have already appeared in journals, then it is up to you to be aware of what your rights are to reproduce, distribute, or copy that work. This requires you to pay careful attention to any agreements you have signed with your publisher. If your thesis or dissertation contains work that has already been published, and that publisher holds the rights to reproduction and distribution, then you will need to reach out to the publisher in order to obtain permission for your thesis or dissertation to appear on ProQuest and Rowan Digital Works. You may be required to pay the license holder a fee to reproduce that work, graphic, or portion of work.

**Academic Integrity Policy**

[Rowan’s Academic Integrity Policy](https://confluence.rowan.edu/display/POLICY/Academic+Integrity+Policy) is an important resource for students to understand what does and does not count as plagiarism for academic purposes. Plagiarism (using another’s ideas or words without acknowledging the source) or fabrication (false citation or the faking of data or information) in a graduate thesis or dissertation is automatically elevated to a Level 4 violation, the sanctions for which include suspension and expulsion from the university. Arming yourself with an understanding of the Academic Integrity Policy will help you to prevent any future issues.