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Greg Walters

University of Glasgow

Seeking Permission to use someone else’s work

Version 1

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# Seeking Copyright Permission

If the use of the work(s) isn’t covered by the fair dealing exceptions or universities licences/ services, (i.e., [CLA](https://www.cla.co.uk/), [BoB](https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/)), or openly licenced alternative, then you should seek permission from the rights holder(s). Obtaining permission isn’t a difficult process, but it does require time and some planning.

The following items would be advisable protocol to adopt when seeking copyright permission.

* Identify the rights holder(s)
* Specify the material you wish to use, including the title of publication, page numbers, etc.
* If you are intending to make multiple copies of the work, remember and specify the exact number you intend to make
* If you’re an educator, who will receive copies of the distributed work, will it be students?
* Remember to keep records of all correspondence
* Ensure you leave plenty of time for this process, think along the lines of it potential taking weeks or months
* If permission is granted, be sure to give acknowledgement to the rights holder

N.B, it is very important to obtain formal written permission, this ensures there is evidence of your agreement to use the copyright protected work. Written permission does not have to be printed document; an email that contains the date of agreement will suffice. You may experience some rights holders do not have access to an email, in which case written correspondence will have to be utilised (which will take longer, so factor this into your time management and planning).

In the following pages, you’ll be given guidance on how to obtain permission when seeking to use work(s) from print, audio, sound recordings and film.

# Obtaining permission to use print related works

When a work has been published, the copyright statement on the reverse of the title page will state who the copyright holders are. Usually, the author will be the rights holder to the printed work, however they have signed rights over to the publisher. This practice is common with journal articles. The publisher will usually own the copyright for the typographical layout. Photographs and illustrations may have separate copyright owners, which are normally indicated underneath or in a separate list.

When obtaining permission to use a piece of work protect by copyright law it is normally good practice to contact the publisher. They may even be able to act on the copyright owner’s behalf, saving you the additional task of contacting them, in some cases they may redirect you to the relevant licensing body or pass your request directly to the copyright owner directly.

Materials that are published on the internet, the best starting point would be to contact the website directly. Images posted on Websites often have different copyright holders.

# Obtaining permission to use film

You may intend to use film, which are complex works, due to the large number of stakeholders involved from, director, script, composers, studios etc. In which case, you’ll need to identify all the copyright owners and obtain their permission. The UK recognises the principal director and producer as first copyright owners. However, if the film was made during the normal course of the director’s employment, in which case directors’ employer would be the owner, unless an alternative agreement was arranged. You’ll also need to factor in other parties, like distributors, who may hold some rights.

# Obtaining permission to use music (sound recording)

The creation of music is another complex type of work, as there are multiple groups of creators, all of whom need to give permission. For example, the lyrics could have been written by an individual, and the song composed by another. Whatever the case, the collecting society [PRS for music](https://www.prsformusic.com/), can sell you the rights to use their music. Rights to the sound recording are held by the performers and label that produced the sound recording. Permission can be acquired from the [PPL](https://www.ppluk.com/) (Phonographic Performance Limited). Whether you intend to play a track in public or make it available online, you’ll require permission from both societies.

# What if I don't receive a reply from the rights holder?

If the rights holder does not reply to your request to make use of their copyrighted materials, **do not assume** it is OK to go ahead and use their materials. It is at this point you would have to consider your options available to you.

1. Try contacting them again
2. Look for alternative materials to use
3. Are there Creative Commons materials that could be used instead?
4. Buy/purchase copyright

# Agencies or bodies that will help you obtain permission

#### The links below within the various sections will take you to applicable bodies or organisations who may be able to help you obtain permission.

### Music

[PRS for music](http://www.prsformusic.com/users/Pages/default.aspx)

[PPL](http://www.ppluk.com/)

### Visual based work

[Design and Artist Copyright Society (DACS)](https://www.dacs.org.uk/)

### Performers Rights

[British Equality Collecting Society (BECS)](http://www.equitycollecting.org.uk/)

### Print based material

[Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA)](http://www.cla.co.uk/)

[Publishers Licensing Society (PLS)](http://www.pls.org.uk/default.aspx)

[Authors Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS)](http://www.alcs.co.uk/)

[NLA Media Access](http://www.nlamediaaccess.com/default.aspx?tabId=40)

[Printed Music Licensing Limited (PMLL)](http://www.printmusiclicensing.co.uk/)

[Society of Authors (UK)](https://www2.societyofauthors.org/)

[WATCH (Writers, Artists and Their Copyright Holders)](https://norman.hrc.utexas.edu/watch/index.cfm)

### Recording and broadcasting of television programmes by educational establishments

[Educational Recording Agency (ERA)](http://www.era.org.uk/)

[Box of Broadcasts (BoB)](http://bobnational.net/)

### Films

[Motion Picture Licensing Corporation (MPLC)](http://www.mplc.org/index/worldwide)

[Film Bank](https://www.filmbankmedia.com/)

[British Film Council (Archive)](http://film.britishcouncil.org/resources/libraries-and-archives%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self)

[London Screen Archive](https://www.londonsscreenarchives.org.uk/public/index.php)

[Find any Film](http://www.findanyfilm.com/)