

PLS Clear

# Clarifying Permissions

## A Guide for Authors

Navigating permissions can be a daunting and time-consuming task, especially if you're new to the process. To get you started, we've compiled a list of frequently asked questions about the permissions process and how PLSclear can help.

**This guide should only be used as a point of reference; it is not legal advice on copyright. When in doubt, we always recommend seeking permission from the rightsholder.**



### What is a permission request?

Permissions means getting legal approval from a rightsholder to use their content in a new project. **If you intend to use work that is protected by copyright, permission will need to be requested from the rightsholder.**

A rightsholder for a published work can be the:

- Publisher
- Original author, or the author's estate
- Author's agent

Typically, the rights to a published work are held by the publisher, so we advise you to seek permission from them as your first step.



### When don't I need to request permission?

There are some circumstances where you might be able to reuse content without needing permission. This includes when the content that you intend to use is:

- [Out of copyright](#)
- Covered by a [Creative Commons licence](#), that allows commercial reuse or adaptation, depending on your reuse
- Licensed under the [Open Government Licence](#)

- Falls under a [copyright exception](#)



## What happens if I use material without asking permission?

Using copyrighted work without a licence can lead to a range of negative outcomes, such as:

- Your work may be retracted, or removed from public access
- The rightsholder may demand you add an acknowledgement to appear in the work
- Payment of a fee or revenue share may be required
- A public apology may be requested by the rightsholder
- Reputational damage to you and your publisher
- Legal action may be taken



## I only want to reuse a small amount of work. Do I still need to request permission?

There is no minimum limit that can be reused without permission and it shouldn't be assumed that a small amount of reuse is permitted without consent.



## What if the work I want to use has been adapted or translated?

If the original content has been modified, you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders of both the original and the adapted material.

Translated work is considered a form of adaptation that creates a new copyright. In this instance you would need to seek permission from the rightsholders of the translated work, and potentially the copyright holder of the original content.



## What is my responsibility as an author wanting to use third party material?

If you want to use third-party material in a new project, ensure that you have cleared all the rights you need for your new work. To do this, you will need to identify the rightsholder and then submit a formal request.

If you are working with a publisher on your new work, they will ask you provide them with all permissions licence agreements that have been approved for the project.

If you are self-publishing, ensure you document all correspondence and agreements related to the permissions you have obtained, should you need to refer back to them in the future.



## What information do I need before I submit a permissions request?

Rightsholders will require comprehensive details of the content that you want to use and how you're going to use it.

To ensure a smooth and efficient permissions clearance process, essential details you should provide include:

- Details of the third-party material that you want to use, such as a list of titles and identifying information (e.g., ISBN, ISSNs and DOIs)
- Title of the new work and description
- Formats the new work will be distributed in (e.g., print, digital, audio)
- Specific rights required such as language, territory and duration of use
- How much of the third-party material will be used (e.g., word count, chapter numbers, illustrations, etc.)

The more information you can provide upfront, the better. If you're working with a publisher on your new work, they should be able to help provide some of this information.



## How long does it take to get permission?

At PLSclear we actively work with our participating publishers to try and make responses to requests faster. We recommend submitting your request as early as possible. Around 4–6 weeks before your deadline should be sufficient.

Some publishers are able to respond quickly, even instantly, to requests. However, others might take slightly longer if they have many requests or need to check rights with authors, agents or illustrators.

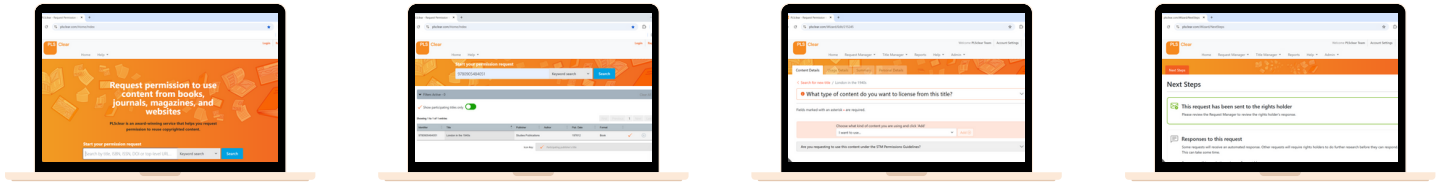
While we understand that waiting can sometimes be frustrating, it's important **not to use** the material until you get approval.



## What is PLSclear & how can it help?

[PLSclear](#) is an award-winning permissions platform that makes it quick and easy to request permission to reuse content from books, journals, magazines and websites published by hundreds of publishers globally.

PLSclear simplifies the entire process of requesting permission, which can otherwise be confusing and time-consuming.



## As an author, can I use PLSclear to clear permissions?

Absolutely. To submit a request you just need to [register for a free PLSclear account](#). PLSclear's [Knowledge Hub](#) also has a range of helpful resources for using this service, including:

- [Permissions Checklist](#), to help determine if you're ready to start clearing permissions
- [Clearing Permissions Through PLSclear](#), an introductory guide



## Can you pay for licences through PLSclear?

If your publisher has agreed to pay your permissions fees, you can make payment by credit or debit card.

We also offer an [invoicing option](#), however, this payment method is reserved for businesses and organisations, not for individuals.



## Can I still use PLSclear if I'm not based in the UK?

Certainly. No matter your location, simply [sign up for a free PLSclear account](#) to submit your request.

Have more questions?

✉ [plsclear@pls.org.uk](mailto:plsclear@pls.org.uk)  
🌐 [www.plsclear.com](http://www.plsclear.com)  
☎ 020 7079 5940

