

# Copyright

## Copyright

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## Copyright and ResearchGate

ResearchGate was developed by scientists to make collaboration, sharing, and communication between researchers easier. We respect the intellectual property rights of others and ask that you do the same.

ResearchGate lets you:

- Upload *public* copies of your full-texts
- Store *private* copies of your full-texts that are accessible to you and your co-authors
- Share *private* copies of your full-texts with others

You are responsible for any content you upload or share, so it's important that you check *in advance* that you have all the necessary rights to do so.

Knowing whether you have the rights to upload or share content isn't always easy. If you've signed an agreement with a publisher, this will probably define your rights. Usually, these agreements assign the copyright or exclusive licenses to the publisher. However, you may also retain some rights to use and possibly share the work. These rights can vary significantly from publisher to publisher and should always be checked. If you have *any* doubt about your permission to share, we strongly encourage you to review your license agreement and any information your publisher makes available on its website *before* you *upload* the content.

Specific policies of some publishers can be found here:

[Directory of Publisher Copyright Policies](#)

## General principles

While publisher policies vary, some generalizations can be made. There are often different versions of the publication, including:

- A preprint (a draft or final version prior to peer review or publication). [Learn more about preprints](#).
- An accepted manuscript (an **accepted** final, post-peer-review version, but not yet published).
- A VOR (Version of Record) (which is the final version that gets published).

Publishers can define these versions slightly differently, so it is important to check the definitions with the relevant publisher before posting the work. Many publishers do not allow the VOR to be shared publicly at any time. This is true even though you're the author of the work. Accepted manuscripts and preprints are sometimes subject to different rules. Some publishers allow authors to share these under certain circumstances or within a certain timeframe. Sometimes preprints, accepted manuscripts, and even VORs are subject to "embargo" periods, which only allow you to share after a certain date.

Some licenses may let you share your work privately with others. These rights may be defined in your license agreement, and often require that the recipient be a colleague, fellow researcher, or other group. Even with private sharing, it is important that you make sure that you understand your rights *before* sharing your full-texts with others.

Copyright compliance is serious. If you upload or share content in a way that infringes a publisher's rights, the publisher can file a notice claiming copyright infringement. That notice may request removal of the content, or specify a different action. When a copyright or license owner submits a notice in accordance with international law, ResearchGate will comply with their request. If there are repeat instances of infringement, ResearchGate may be required to restrict or permanently lock your account.

In addition to reviewing your publisher's policies, you can read more about [what ResearchGate is](#) and [how it works](#), and learn more about copyright and our policies in this section.

## Rights in and responsibility for content on ResearchGate

ResearchGate lets you share various types of content publicly, store it privately, and share it privately.

By uploading and publicly displaying your work on ResearchGate, you are making it publicly available to all users of ResearchGate – both to ResearchGate members using the site logged in, and people without an account who access it logged out. ResearchGate does not require you to relinquish any rights that you may have in your work. Nor do you transfer or assign copyright to us. You have the right to remove any content you've added to your profile from ResearchGate at any time. The copyright ownership in the work is determined by copyright law in various jurisdictions, and by any license agreement you may have signed. In some cases, authors assign all or part of their rights to their publisher, but also retain certain rights. You need to check your license agreement to be sure.

ResearchGate is not a publisher and does not accept articles or papers for publication. Rather, members can track their publications, store private copies, and make their published or unpublished work publicly available on ResearchGate – if they have the rights to do so.

No. ResearchGate does not hold copyright for any publications on the platform. That means we can't grant you permission to reuse any content that you find in a publication that has been made available on ResearchGate. To make a copyright permission request, you'll need to get in touch with the authors of the publication, the journal in which it was published, or the relevant publishing company. Many publishers have information on their websites describing how their content can be used, and/or a contact email address for requesting permission to use their content.

You are responsible for any content that you upload on ResearchGate. That's why we display your name next to any content you upload.

As we don't have any information on the rights you may hold, or any license terms or other restrictions which might apply to your content, we rely on you to understand your rights and act accordingly. For this reason, we request that you fully investigate and confirm that you have sufficient rights to share your content on ResearchGate (for both public and private sharing) before you do so. If you have any doubts about your permissions to upload content, we encourage you to check your license agreement and/or contact your publisher first.

If you're unsure about your rights to share your content on ResearchGate, you should first review the license agreement you signed with your publisher and any policies they may display on their website. If you still have questions, we recommend that you get in touch with them directly.

If you've already made the content publicly available, we recommend that you make it private or remove it while you confirm your rights. You may be allowed to share another version of the content, such as an accepted manuscript, or to privately store a copy on ResearchGate. Again, that will depend on any agreement you have with your publisher.

To review which of your publication pages have a full-text publicly available:

1. Go to your [Research](#) tab
2. Select the **Full-texts** filter underneath Research Items from the menu on the left-hand side. This filter shows you any of your research items that have publicly available full-texts.
3. Any research items that have a publicly available full-text added by you will have a green message above the title that says 'You added a full-text to this item'.

Find out how to make your content private or remove it [here](#).

## Am I allowed to share or store my research on ResearchGate?

It is not possible for ResearchGate to provide you with advice about copyright or what copyright restrictions may apply to your content – if any. However, we can provide some general information which we hope will be helpful.

In general, your ability to share your work on ResearchGate will depend on the rights you hold in the content, which may be determined by an agreement that you have with your publisher.

When you upload content to ResearchGate, you can choose to make it publicly available or to store it privately. Publicly available content can be viewed by anyone, regardless of whether they are registered for ResearchGate or logged in. If you choose to store your content privately, it will only be visible to you and the co-authors.

Your permissions to make content public on ResearchGate depends on the rights you hold in the content. If you have published your content in a journal or book, your rights are likely governed by a license agreement between you and the publisher. There are thousands of journals and they each have their own form of license agreement. ResearchGate does not have access to information on this.

Your right to **publicly share** content may depend upon the version of the content you want to upload. Some journals allow publication of non-final versions, such as drafts, [preprints](#), and accepted manuscripts – but many restrict publication of the final published version, sometimes called the version of record ("**VOR**"). To learn more about the differences between these versions, check out our section on [Understanding the terminology](#).

Some versions of content may be subject to embargo periods imposed by the publisher. This means that after a certain period of time has passed since publication, you may be able to share the content or otherwise make it publicly available.

Other content is subject to Open Access licenses. Such content is often subject to more liberal rules regarding publication but may still have certain restrictions.

Your starting point for understanding any of your options and rights is the agreement you have with your publisher or other rights owner. Read it carefully to determine what rules apply to your content. Many publishers also issue helpful guidelines about their sharing policies and how their content can be used. If you're unsure about what you're allowed to share on ResearchGate, we recommend that you get in touch with them.

On ResearchGate, it is possible to upload content for private storage only. In this case, the content will be available only to you and the co-authors. Even if you're not permitted to publicly share a full-text version of your work, you may be permitted to store a full-text privately for your own use. Again, we recommend that you always fully investigate and confirm that you have sufficient rights to privately store any content before doing so.

ResearchGate lets members share content privately with others. No sharing of content happens automatically. Each author must independently assess whether they have the necessary rights to share specific content with a particular person before doing so. Some publishers have policies that allow a certain amount of private sharing within strict confines. However, you must check your license or contact your publisher to determine the exact restrictions that apply to you and your content.

If you're unsure about your rights to share your content on ResearchGate, you should first review any applicable license agreement that you have signed with your publisher and any policies they may have available on their website. If you still have questions, we recommend that you get in touch with them directly.

If you've already made the content publicly available, we recommend that you make it private or remove it while you confirm your rights. You may be allowed to share another version of the content, such as an accepted manuscript, or to privately store a copy on ResearchGate. Again, that will depend on any agreement you have with your publisher.

To review your publication pages that have a full-text publicly available:

1. Go to your [Research](#) tab
2. Select the **Full-texts** filter underneath Research Items from the menu on the left-hand side. This filter shows you any of your research items that have publicly available full-texts.
3. Any research items that have a publicly available full-text added by you will have a green message above the title that says 'You added a full-text to this item'.

Find out how to make your content private or remove it [here](#).

By uploading and publicly displaying your work on ResearchGate, you are making it publicly available to all users of ResearchGate – both to ResearchGate members using the site logged in, and people without an account who access it logged out. ResearchGate does not require you to relinquish any rights that you may have in that work. For some types of content, ResearchGate lets you select a particular license which will apply to your content. For example, you may choose to make your content available subject to a Creative Commons license. If you are planning to eventually publish your work, we recommend that you determine whether pre-publication may affect your ability to have your content accepted for publication later.

Just because your article is freely available elsewhere online, doesn't necessarily mean you have the rights to share it on ResearchGate. You'll still need to make an independent assessment about whether you have sufficient rights to publicly or privately share the content on ResearchGate before you do so.

For more information, see the above FAQ: **Am I allowed to publicly display my work on ResearchGate?**

There's no place on a [publication page](#) to include a link redirecting the reader to the journal's or publisher's own webpage.

## Copyright infringement

You are responsible for your own content. That's why we display your name next to any content that you have uploaded to ResearchGate. Sometimes we receive reports from copyright owners alleging that content is being made available on ResearchGate in a way that infringes their rights. To find out more about this process, you can read our [Intellectual Property Policy](#). We also answer some questions below.

We have a process for disabling access to any allegedly infringing content when we receive a report from an authorized copyright owner. If you're not a copyright owner or someone authorized to act on behalf of a copyright owner, we must ask that you contact the copyright owner and ask them to submit a notice of claimed infringement.

If you are a copyright owner, US, European, and other laws require that your notice of copyright infringement follow a specific format. The easiest way to do this is to complete our [Notice of Claimed Copyright Infringement](#) form and send it to [copyright@researchgate.net](mailto:copyright@researchgate.net). It provides us with a required signature and information about your company that we'll keep on file. If you do not wish to use our form, you can use your own form or send an email, as long as it contains all the legally required information. For more information about our reporting policies and the required information, see our [Intellectual Property Policy](#) page.

The term "plagiarism" has different meanings, but it usually includes copying somebody else's work without permission. If you own your work and someone has copied it, or parts of it, without permission, it may be a copyright infringement. If you are the copyright owner and believe there is copyright infringement, you may report the content and request that it be removed from ResearchGate. To do so, you'll need to submit a notice of claimed infringement, as described above. If your copyright interests have been assigned to a publisher, you may need the publisher to report any infringements to us.

Note that generally the copying of ideas and concepts, while potentially unethical or inappropriate, is probably not legally actionable.

If you are concerned that your co-author has uploaded your joint work without your permission, we recommend that you get in touch with them first to try to resolve the issue. If you are unable to resolve the issue with them, the possible solutions will depend on the rights in the work.

While we cannot provide you with legal advice, national laws often allow a joint owner of a copyright to grant non-exclusive licenses to the work without obtaining the permission of their co-authors. Depending on which laws apply to you and your work, this could mean that your co-author has the right to upload your work to ResearchGate without your permission. If, on the other hand, the authors signed an agreement with a publisher that assigned copyright in the work to the publisher, it may be that the upload is an infringement of the publisher's rights.

You need to determine what any applicable laws mean in your case. If you conclude that copyright infringement has occurred, and you are prepared to confirm in a sworn statement that you have a good faith belief that publication of the content infringes your rights, you can submit a notice of claimed copyright infringement, as explained above. Please be aware, however, that filing a report of copyright infringement is a serious matter. If you are unsure about whether you have the rights to do so, you may wish to seek legal advice.

**Note:** If your main concern is that your co-author may be infringing your publisher's copyright by uploading your work, bear in mind that they are the one who is ultimately responsible for the content they have uploaded to ResearchGate. That's why they are identified as the uploader next to the content. If the publisher files a notice of claimed copyright infringement, that notice will be directed at the uploader and not all of the authors.

ResearchGate respects the intellectual property rights of publishers and other owners of content. If a rights owner submits a notice of claimed copyright infringement in accordance with our procedures and international law, we remove the identified content. Failure to do so could possibly expose us and you to legal liability. If this happens, we'll send you notice of our action by email.

We're also required by law to implement a suspension policy for repeat infringers. That means we keep a record of all instances of content removal. Additional infringements can result in further action on your account, including your account being permanently locked.

Bear in mind that rights owners can submit notices of claimed copyright infringement at any time, and in relation to content that you may have uploaded in the past. Because of this, you could become a repeat infringer even if you haven't uploaded any new content since your previous infringement. That's why it's important that you **review any content that you have uploaded** to ResearchGate and ensure that you have the rights to share it.

No. ResearchGate has no knowledge of the rights that might apply to your particular content and has no information about any license agreements you may have with publishers. Thus, we are not in a position to evaluate the correctness of notices of claimed infringement. If a rights owner submits a notice of claimed copyright infringement in accordance with our procedures and international law, we remove the identified content. Failure to do so could possibly expose us and you to legal liability. If this happens, we'll send you notice of our action by email.

If you receive a notice advising that your content has been identified by a rights owner as infringing their copyright, that means the content has already been removed. No immediate action is required by you.

However, we do recommend that you take the time to **review any content that you have uploaded** and make sure you have the necessary rights to share it. Because rights owners can submit notices of claimed copyright infringement at any time, you could become a repeat infringer even if you haven't uploaded anything new since your previous infringement. Further infringement notices could result in your account being permanently locked.

Please also make sure that you have the necessary rights to upload any new content before doing so. If you're unsure about what you're allowed to share on ResearchGate, we recommend that you get in touch with your publisher first.

You may wish to make your existing content private while you review your rights, or remove it altogether. Find out how to remove content or make it private [here](#).

Each time you receive an infringement notice, we keep a record of this on your account. We need this record because we are required by law to implement a repeat infringer policy.

Further infringements may result in action being taken on your account, which could include your account being permanently locked.

Please be aware that because rights owners can report content at any time, including content that you may have uploaded in the past, you can become a repeat infringer quite quickly and without uploading any new content. We therefore suggest that you **review any content that you have uploaded** and make sure you have the appropriate rights to share it. If you're unsure about what you're allowed to share on ResearchGate, we recommend that you get in touch with your publisher first.

You may wish to make your existing content private while you review your rights, or remove it altogether. Find out how to remove content or make it private [here](#).

ResearchGate cannot and does not independently assess the merits of the claims made. We do not have any information about rights you may hold, or any license terms or other restrictions which might apply to your content. Failure to remove the content can possibly expose us and you to legal liability.

We recognize, however, that rights owners sometimes make mistakes in reporting content. If you believe that access to your content should not have been disabled, or your content was removed in error, you should contact the reporting party directly to explain the situation. We usually provide you with their contact email address in our notice of infringement. In general, if the rights owner acknowledges that an error has been made, you can ask them to email us directly and retract their notice of infringement. We can then enable you to re-upload the content.

We are required by law to have a repeat infringer policy. Our policy provides for the locking of accounts, in appropriate circumstances.

If your account has been permanently locked due to repeat copyright infringement, this action is generally irreversible unless a mistake has been made. If you feel that a mistake has been made in relation to a previous removal of your content, we strongly encourage you to contact the rights owner who reported that content. Their email address is provided in the applicable notice of infringement (but please let us know if you're unable to find it). If the rights owner acknowledges their error, you can ask them to email us directly and retract their notice of infringement. In such cases, we may be able to remove the infringement from your account and enable you to upload the content again.

If you're unable to publicly share a file on ResearchGate due to "copyright restrictions," that generally means we have previously received a notice of claimed copyright infringement from a copyright owner, stating that the display of the particular content infringed their copyright. As such, you're now prevented from publicly sharing this particular file. You may be able to share a different file or a different version, but only if it does not violate any agreements you made with the copyright owner. If you have any doubts about your rights in particular content, please check first.