A Graduate Student Guide to Copyright and the Thesis or Dissertation

The Graduate College
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What happens to my thesis/dissertation after I submit it to the Graduate College?

What is Electronic Thesis and Dissertation publishing?

Can I include materials that I have already published in my thesis/dissertation?

Can I later publish materials that I have included in my thesis/dissertation?
What happens to my thesis/dissertation after I submit it to the Graduate College?

After you have successfully defended and your program has accepted your thesis or dissertation, the GC will check the document to determine whether you have followed the basic formatting guidelines set forth in the GC thesis manual.

Your thesis is checked for the inclusion of copyright permissions allowing you to include previously published material for which others hold the copyright.

If all aspects of the thesis/dissertation are approved by the Graduate College, Masters theses will then be electronically published by the UIC Library and PhD dissertations will be electronically published by the UIC Library and will also be either published in book form or electronically by ProQuest.
Electronic Dissertation and Thesis Publication

**UIC Library:** UIC Indigo is a digital repository for research and scholarship produced at UIC and housed in the Library. Publication options include:

- **Open Access** after date of degree conferral
- **Restricted Access** to University of Illinois community only for a period of 2 years, after which it becomes publically available.
- **Closed Access** for a period of two years (embargo), after which it becomes publically available.

**ProQuest** (PhD dissertations only): There are similar release options available for both book format and electronic format. These are separate from the university’s release options and come with additional cost.

Based on cost considerations the Graduate College recommends traditional publication (book format) through ProQuest and open access publication through the UIC Library.
Can I include materials that I have already published in my thesis/dissertation?

You may want to include previously published material such as a figure, image, chart, table or even a whole manuscript in your thesis/dissertation.

First, you must check your departmental policies and thesis/dissertation format and make sure your thesis/dissertation committee agrees.

Next, you must determine whether the journal/publisher allows reuse of these items in your thesis/dissertation and provide proof that this is acceptable in an appendix to your thesis/dissertation.
How can I demonstrate I have permission to reuse already published materials in my thesis/dissertation?

Include in an appendix:
1. A reproduction of the publisher’s or journal’s webpage giving global permission and outlining requirements for reuse (which you must follow)

OR

2. A formal request to the journal or publisher with a written affirmative response indicating their agreement for you to reuse the previously published material for which they hold the copyright.

Note: Videos or recordings included in your thesis/dissertation may require you to obtain permission from performers.
Obtaining Permission for the Reuse of Previously Published Materials in Your Thesis/Dissertation

Each Journal and Publisher is Different

You must determine the journal and publisher copyright rules and regulations for each of your published works!

Example:

American Chemical Society Journals
Reprinted from the American Chemical Society Policy on Theses and Dissertations

“Copyright permission for published and submitted material from theses and dissertations
ACS extends blanket permission to students to include in their theses and dissertations their own articles, or portions thereof, that have been published in ACS journals or submitted to ACS journals for publication, provided that the ACS copyright credit line is noted on the appropriate page(s).”

(They provide example credit lines)
What if I cannot obtain permission to include materials that I have already published in my thesis/dissertation?

Because “copyright law protects expression and not the underlying ideas,”¹ you may want to consider presenting the material in a different way in your thesis/dissertation.

Many departments and programs do not allow reproduction of entire manuscripts or published works in the thesis/dissertation, and consequently students will have to write an original chapter describing the published work.

References:
Can I later publish materials that I have included in my thesis/dissertation and that have been published online?

Students in the humanities frequently rework their theses/dissertations into books that they publish early in their independent academic careers.

Students in the sciences many times have figures/charts/images that have been included in their theses/dissertations that are later published in journal articles.

If publishers you might use in the future object to the prior distribution of work on-line, then you might want to consider embargoing the electronic distribution of your thesis/dissertation.
American Chemical Society Journals

Reprinted from the American Chemical Society Policy on Theses and Dissertations

“Publishing implications of electronic publication of theses and dissertation material
Students and their mentors should be aware that posting of theses and dissertation material on the Web prior to submission of material from that thesis or dissertation to an ACS journal may affect publication in that journal. Whether Web posting is considered prior publication may be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the journal’s editor. If an ACS journal editor considers Web posting to be “prior publication”, the paper will not be accepted for publication in that journal. If you intend to submit your unpublished paper to ACS for publication, check with the appropriate editor prior to posting your manuscript electronically.”
Web Resources

UIC Graduate College Website
   Go to “Graduate Studies Step-by-Step”
   Then to “Thesis” and “Electronic Thesis/Dissertation” for details on format, electronic publishing and copyright.

Stanford Copyright and Publication Considerations for Dissertation Authors
By Mimi Calter (Google and download powerpoint)

Scholarly Publishing @ MIT Libraries
   Entire website is outstanding. But particularly interesting is a chart summarizing the policies of different publishers for use of previously published materials in theses/dissertations and then the use of electronically published materials from theses/dissertations in their journal articles.