

Using your own previously published works: A guide

*Resources and Examples at the bottom.

As you begin work on your ETD, you may be tempted to use part or all of another related work you have previously published. Before you utilize the related work, you should remember to do three things:

1) Check

First, you need to check whether you have the right to use the previously published work. You may be thinking “Well, I wrote it, so of course I have the right,” but that may not be the case if you published it previously. Before publishing your work, a publisher likely asked you to sign their publishing agreement that gives up some of your rights in your own work. In some cases, you may have given up everything! Every publishing agreement is different, so if you want to use your previously published work you should first check the agreement you signed to see just what rights you still have. Some publishing agreements may specifically allow for re-publication in a dissertation. Others may impose an embargo on republishing the content for a specific period of time.

2) Ask

Second, if you have co-written your published work, you may need to ask your co-authors first if it is okay to use the work in your dissertation.

3) Cite

Finally, if you use your own previously published work, you must cite it. You should remember to first check your publishing agreement because it might specify the format of the citation. If your publishing agreement does not specify, please use a standard citation (APA, MLA, etc.). Not citing a work, even if it is your own, is a form of plagiarism that is unacceptable in academia.

What if I do not have permission to use my previously published works?

First, you should try to get permission. Most journals provide contact information specifically for this purpose. Contact the journal or publisher and explain that you would like to use your work for a dissertation/thesis. The journal or publisher may request that you only use a certain portion of your work, or place other restrictions on its use. If your publisher denies permission, you still have options. While what you published is copyrighted, the data behind your study is not. You could go back to your data and use it to rewrite some of your findings. You can, of course, reference and cite your original work like any other. If you are going to rewrite some of your findings for your dissertation, be sure you do not express your ideas in the same way as in your original work. Think of how the West Side Story tells the same tale as Romeo and Juliet. Same story, different expression.

Next Steps:

After you have made sure that you have permission to use your previously published work, how do you proceed? We ask that you include a statement indicating the dissertation/thesis is based on a previously published work (i.e. journal article or conference proceeding), in full or in part, [on a separate page in the front of the document, chapter, or essay, in the dissertation/thesis.](#)

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- b. Students are required to place both pieces of information prior to the abstract of the full dissertation or in the case of a three-essay format, immediately prior to the abstract for that specific essay.
- c. **Sample Text:**

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Resources and Examples:

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