

COPYRIGHT & LICENCES

Photocopying

Under UK copyright law you are only allowed to copy an insubstantial amount for personal use for the purposes of private study or non-commercial research, but the law does not define insubstantial. There is no magic figure or percentage applied as each case would be viewed on the basis of the perceived importance of the extract rather than simply the quantity.

A Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA) licence allows multiple photocopies from books, journals and magazines. Extracts can be up to 5%, one chapter or one article, whichever is the greater. The licence costs in the region of £70.00 p.a. and runs until 31st July each year, regardless of when you actually take it out. U3as can purchase this licence from the Third Age Trust.

NB. It does not allow multiple copies of maps, charts, newspapers or printed sheet music including the words. Licences for copying maps and newspapers can be purchased from the following organisations if you feel you need them

- Ordnance Survey: www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk
- Newspaper Licensing Agency: www.nla.co.uk

Sheet Music

There is no blanket licence available for multiple copying of sheet music; this is always illegal unless it is no longer in copyright. If you would like help and advice on obtaining copyright clearance you can look at Frequently Asked Questions on The Music Publishers' Association website (www.mpaonline.org.uk) or contact them on 0207 580 0126.

There is also some free sheet music available on the internet at choral public domain (www.cpd.org.uk) and this will give you links to other useful sites.

Digital Images

The same principles and legislation which govern copyright in hard-copy works apply to material in electronic formats. The main difference is that, by their nature, they are easy to access, copy and distribute. Information is freely available via the internet but this does not mean it is free to copy; there is a common misconception that anything on the internet is in the public domain i.e. publicly accessible and therefore free to use. A work only falls into the public domain once copyright expires. One option is to search for images published under a Creative Commons (CC) Licence. CC is a non-profit organisation that enables the sharing and use of creativity and knowledge through free legal tools. CC licences do not replace copyright but are based upon it and allow sharing for non-commercial use.

MPLC Umbrella Licence

The MPLC Umbrella Licence allows audio-visual content (including DVDs, downloads and streamed materials) to be screened in a public location, for example a community hall or in a member's home as part of an interest group, provided admission is not charged. The Third Age Trust has an MPLC Umbrella Licence which covers all u3as and allows u3a group members to show all MPLC films for educational and entertainment purposes. The cost of the MPLC Umbrella Licence is included in Third Age Trust membership. It is automatically renewed by the Trust on an annual basis. Not all audio-visual content is covered by the MPLC licence.

PPL PRS Licence

The PPL PRS Licence (also called 'The Music Licence') allows a venue to play music through the radio, TV, other digital devices and during live performances. PPL through PPL PRS Ltd, can license a venue operator or an individual music user, depending on the type of venue and how music is used. The Third Age Trust has a PPL licence for music use for u3as across all venues. This ensures that all recorded music used by u3as is licensed by PPL and eliminates the need to investigate whether the licences held by the venues (if any) are suitable to cover music used by u3as.

Licences for u3a choirs and singing groups

The Third Age Trust does not currently subscribe to the Amateur Choir Licence which has been launched by PMLL.

Member's responsibilities when using the works of others

All u3a members are responsible for respecting the rights of others and should only use the works of others if it is legally permissible. If members wish to use the work of others, they may need to seek permission from the person who owns the copyright. Advice should be sought from the Group's leader, Littlehampton u3a Committee, the region, networks or the Third Age Trust national office.

Any breach of copyright will not be covered by the insurance provided by the Third Age Trust.

Policy reviewed: November 2025

Next review date: November 2027