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- Comply with copyright law.
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- Understand your rights as a copyright owner and the limitations on those rights.
- Manage your copyrights effectively in compliance with the law and in the service of the university’s mission to disseminate knowledge. Effective copyright management increases discovery, use, citation and impact of your work.

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COPYRIGHT PRIMER

What is copyright?
Copyright is a bundle of exclusive rights held by the copyright owner: the right to reproduce and distribute the work, create derivatives of the work, and perform and display the work publicly.

What is the purpose of copyright?
Copyright promotes the progress of science and the useful arts. By granting the copyright owner exclusive rights over a work for a limited time, copyright encourages people to create new works. When the copyright term expires, the works enter the public domain, where anyone can copy, distribute, create derivatives, and perform or display them publicly.

What does copyright protect?
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Who is the copyright owner?
The copyright owner is the creator of an original work in fixed form, unless the person was hired to create the work, in which case the employer owns the copyright.

CMU hires faculty to create works (e.g., syllabi, articles), so by law these works could be considered “works for hire,” in which case CMU would own the copyright; but CMU’s intellectual property policy and widespread academic tradition grant faculty copyright ownership of their works. In contrast, CMU hires staff to create works for the university and CMU owns the copyright to those works. CMU students own copyright to their works unless they are hired by CMU to create those works.

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