

# Creative Common Licensing and Public Domain FAQ

## **Is choosing a Creative Commons license required?**

No, you can still submit your item without selecting a Creative Commons license. Only the Repository Agreement is required.

## **Why are Creative Commons licenses useful?**

They are useful because they allow you to identify the ways your work can or cannot be used by others. For more information on the range of options please visit <https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/licensing-types-examples/> .

## **How is a CC0 license different from identifying something as being in the public domain?**

An item is in the public domain when any copyright restrictions it had have expired or if they were not applicable upon the item's creation. These are usually very old items and they are most often identified as being in the public domain by someone who did not create them.

A CC0 license is a way for the **creator** to waive all their rights in a work.

## **What kinds of items might be identified as being in the public domain?**

Some examples are works published before 1923 (Shakespeare, Moby Dick), US laws and court decisions, and works created by US government employees as part of their employment.







## **As a creator, why can't I just dedicate my work to the public domain?**

When making something openly accessible on the internet, it is available globally across a wide range of legal jurisdictions. There is currently is not a consistent way for a creator to waive all of their rights in every jurisdiction before the expiration of the term of copyright. If a creator want to get a close as possible to dedicating their work to the public domain they should chose a CC0 license.

## **By choosing one of these options does this affect or override the Repository Agreement?**

No, the license you agree to with the repository only gives your university's repository a non-exclusive license to reproduce, publicly display, and distribute the material at no cost to users world-wide, provided that it does not alter the content of the material.

The chart below was created by Annamarie Klose Hrubes, the Digital Projects Librarian at Frostburg University, and explains the difference between various Creative Commons License options.

	License	Attribution required	Commercial use allowed	Use, share, and adapt the work	Derivative works must use the same CC license
	<b>Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC BY-NC-ND)</b>	X			
	<b>Attribution-NonCommercial (CC BY-NC)</b>	X		X	
	<b>Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike (CC BY-NC-SA)</b>	X		X	X
	<b>Attribution-NoDerivs (CC BY-ND)</b>	X	X		
	<b>Attribution (CC BY)</b>	X	X	X	
	<b>Attribution-ShareAlike (CC BY-SA)</b>	X	X	X	X

Adding a Creative Commons license is generally recommended. Visit [the Creative Commons website](https://creativecommons.org/) or contact your repository administrator to find out which licensing options are best for your work.