



HARVARD LIBRARY

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Harvard Exempts Its Librarian-Scholars From the Work-For-Hire Doctrine

Key Point:

- Under a new policy, Harvard librarians who write works of scholarship will now own the copyrights.

CAMBRIDGE, MA— Starting now, works of scholarship by Harvard librarians and library staff will be exempt from the work-for-hire doctrine. That means that library staff will hold copyright in their scholarly works, just as Harvard faculty hold the copyright in theirs. Previously, this privilege was limited to faculty, and the new policy puts library staff and faculty on a par in this respect.

“I’m proud of the high-quality scholarship published by Harvard librarians,” said Sarah E. Thomas, Vice President for the Harvard Library and University Librarian; Roy E. Larsen Librarian for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. “Now, for the first time at Harvard, librarians will own the copyright to their research and can make their work freely available to all.”

For more details see the [public statement from Sarah Thomas](#) authorizing the exemption. At its heart it proclaims that “as of this announcement, Harvard Library states that it does not consider works written by librarians or library staff to be ‘works for hire’ under copyright law when the works are: [1] scholarly articles, [2] written principally on non-work time; and [3] written outside the scope of employment.”

The exemption frees willing librarians to sign [Harvard’s new Individual Open Access License](#), clearing the way to make their scholarship open access through [DASH](#) (Digital Access to Scholarship at Harvard), Harvard’s open-access repository.

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