

Copyright Registration of Scripts or Films in Nigeria



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Upon completion of your film or if you are at the script stage, you may consider registration with the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC). The NCC through the Nigerian Copyright e-Registration System (NcERS) allows for online registration of copyright works and for users to search through its database for works previously registered.

Some of the important sections to complete in registering your film or script with the NCC include:

1. **Name, Address, Email and Telephone number of the Copyright Owner:** You should list the full names, addresses, date of birth and contact information of all writers. In addition, you should provide a description of what each writer contributed to the work. If there is only one author, you should state so.
2. **The Type or Nature of the work:** The type you select must apply to your work as it exists at the time of submission. Types include literary, musical and artistic works, cinematographic films and sound recording.

For example, if you have written a song, you can register the lyrics under the literary works category but if the song is in the form of a musical composition, you can register it under the musical works category.

3. **Title/alternative title of the work:** You must provide some form of title for the work. For example, if you are making a documentary about the film industry in Nigeria, you could say “Making movies in Nigeria, a documentary”. However, if there is no actual title, you can simply write “untitled”. Again, where the work is part of an unpublished collection, in submitting the work to the NCC, you should provide the collection title.
4. **Information relating to assignments, transfers and creation of work as an employee:** This is crucial in determining who owns copyright in the work. If the work was made for hire or created by an employee as part of his/her regular duties, then the employer is considered the author and not the employee who created the authorship. Also state if the work was previously assigned or transferred.

5. **Year of Publication:** You should provide the year the work was created and/or published. The year of publication is important for photographs, films and sound recording as it provides information about how many more years copyright in the photographs, films and sound recording will last. A work is created when it is in a fixed and tangible form.
6. **If the work is a script, has it been previously published, is it an original or is it based on a book?** Where the work is a script, you must state if the work has been previously published. You need to also state the date of publication and where it was published. Confirm whether or not the work is an original or if it is based on a book.
7. **Name and Contact Information of the Applicant:** Finally, you must provide the name and address of the individual (or company) that seeks to register the work with the NCC. The NCC does not require that the applicant must be the author or the owner of the work. The Applicant could be an author, assignee, agent or the copyright owner.

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