

Offers from Publishers

Sometimes students get offers from publishers to publish their thesis.

If you get such an offer, you should be aware of the legal and financial circumstances.

Legal Aspects

Students are the owners of intellectual property rights for their thesis. A thesis is a work written autonomously by the student. Contributions of supervising tutors do not change that. During the process of enrolment every student grants a right to publish the thesis in a public library to the university. All other rights remain with the student.

To this rule there are exceptions:

If the student writes an external thesis, where a company is involved or if the thesis is part of a third-party funded project, other rules can be applicable. In these cases you have to study agreements concluded between the university and the funding party. Probably the agreements will contain a transfer of rights to the funding party. The amount of transferred right will differ in each individual case.

So you have to be aware, that there can be restrictions to your rights concerning your thesis. That is of importance, because the publisher will also conclude an agreement with you. This agreement will also contain a transfer of rights to the publisher. In many cases you will have to confirm, that your thesis is free from third-party rights. If your thesis is not free of third-party rights you are not able to conclude the agreement with the publisher.

If a publisher wants you to transfer an exclusive right of publication, you must indicate to the publisher, that you already transferred a publication right to your university. You may transfer an additional right to the publisher. You can not transfer an exclusive right to the publisher.

In general you can not transfer rights, you already gave to others.

Financial Aspects

Publishers have different business models. There are many models, in which authors are the ones who pay. Sometimes authors have to pay the printing. Sometimes they do not pay for the printing, but have to buy a certain amount of books. A charge for the author is rare.

You should study the financial implications of a contract carefully.