

Dungeons & Dragons® 4th Edition Game System License FAQ

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This FAQ answers questions about the D&D 4E Game System License (GSL), System Reference Document (SRD) and the supporting documents. This is not a legal document and is not a replacement for professional legal advice.

Q: What is the Dungeons & Dragons 4th Edition Game System License?

A: The Dungeons & Dragons 4th Edition Game System License (GSL) is a license that allows third parties to use certain intellectual property owned by Wizards of the Coast® with the company's permission in order to create products compatible with the 4th Edition of the Dungeons & Dragons Roleplaying Game.

Q: How do I get a copy of the Game System License?

A: You can access the Game System License at www.wizards.com/d20.

Q: What is the System Reference Document (SRD)?

A: The SRD is a reference document detailing Terms, Tables and Templates that are available for license under the GSL. It is a reference document and not a reprinting of the rules.

Q: What parts of Dungeons & Dragons is Open Game Content?

A: None of the 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons product line is considered Open Game Content made available to third parties through the Open Gaming License (OGL). Certain content from 4th Edition is available royalty-free for specified uses subject to the GSL.

Q: What is the D&D 4E Compatibility Logo?

A: It is a rectangular graphic incorporating the Dungeons & Dragons logo and text identifying a licensed product's compatibility with the 4th Edition core rulebooks. There are two versions: full color and black & white. Under the terms of the GSL, licensed publishers may use this logo to identify compatibility between their products and the 4th Edition of the Dungeons & Dragons Roleplaying game. The logo(s) can be found at www.wizards.com/d20/files/GSLLogo.pdf or www.wizards.com/d20/files/GSLLogoBW.pdf.

Q: What is the purpose of the D&D 4E Compatibility Logo?

A: The compatibility logo is a method of communicating to consumers that materials published by third parties under the GSL are compatible with Dungeons & Dragons 4th Edition Roleplaying Game and that the Core Rulebooks (Player's Handbook®, Dungeon Master's Guide®, Monster Manual®, Player's Handbook 2, Monster Manual 2, and Adventurer's Vault™) are necessary for usage with the materials.

Q: What are the guidelines for using the Compatibility Logo?

A: The Compatibility Logo can be printed in the following areas – for physical products: in the lower third of the legal page and lower left quadrant of the back cover; for downloadable products (pdfs): last page; promotional materials: lower left quadrant.

The logo may not be altered and further, it must be printed at exactly the size as provided in the file.

Q: What is the Statement of Acceptance?

A: The Statement of Acceptance is a signature form that must be submitted to, and accepted by, Wizards of the Coast prior to publishing materials under the GSL. By completing and submitting it to Wizards of the Coast you and/or your company are stating you agree to the terms of the Game System License. The Statement of Acceptance can be found at www.wizards.com/d20/files/SOA.pdf.

Q: What happens if I do not submit a Statement of Acceptance?

A: Should there be a concern about something you've published, and we do not have a Statement of Acceptance on record, your use of any Wizards of the Coast intellectual property is considered unauthorized and not under license.

Q: How will I know if a new version of the Game System License has been released?

A: There will be no formal notification process. You should periodically check www.wizards.com/d20 for notice of any changes.

Q: Will there be a Game System License for non-fantasy d20-based roleplaying games?

A: Yes. We plan to release a Game System License for non-fantasy setting products in the future. This license will be named the d20 GSL and will be posted when final.

Q. What do I do on my website if I can not use the GSL?

A. Wizards will release a fan site policy in the future that will offer a limited license for specified uses. Websites are not licensed under the GSL.

Q: Do I have to use the Defined Terms in my product?

A: No, you are not required to use any specific Defined Term although it would be difficult to avoid using them. You are, however, required to reprint the legal text identified in the GSL.

Q: Can I extend the definition of a Defined Term?

A: Yes, as long as you do not change the substance or the meaning of the definition. For example you may add a new use for the Athletics skill as this does not redefine the whole skill.

Q: Can I define a new class?

A: Yes.

Q: Can I reference the Player's Handbook or core rulebook?

A: The GSL and the Usage Guidelines in the SRD explain how you should make references to the D&D 4E Core Rulebooks.

Q: Can I use page numbers?

A: No. Future versions of the books may be repaginated, so material won't reliably appear on the same page in various printings of the books.

Q: Can I define a different method of determining ability scores?

A: Applying ability scores is a pivotal part of character creation and describing character creation is prohibited under the GSL. The GSL also prevents third party publishers from redefining terms.

Q: Section 4.1 states that, "Licensee will not define, redefine, or alter the definition of any 4E Reference in a Licensed Product." What does this mean?

A: This means you that if you want to use a 4E Reference listed in the GSL SRD (for example, Dragonborn), you must not alter the definition in such a way as to define or redefine, or alter the definition as found in the Player's Handbook (e.g. "Classes that use Dragonborn get an additional +1 to Strength and +1 in Intimidate). You may, however, extend a definition by adding to the original content. As an example: "...if you want to play a Dragonborn please refer to the Race Chapter of the 4th Edition Player's Handbook. For a Greatmountian Dragonborn take and additional +1 Strength and +1 in Intimidate."

Q: Can I redefine non-mechanic materials ("fluff")?

A: No. You may add new material, but you cannot define, redefine, or alter any 4E Reference, including "fluff." Please refer back to Section 4.1 on redefining 4E References. As an example: "In this world Eladrin are between 5' 9"- 6' 5" in height and can use Fey Step as an At-Will Power" would redefine the definition of Eladrin, whereas the statement: "The isolation of the Deepwood Eladrin have allowed them to evolve with several unique traits including being slightly taller in height, between 5' 9"- 6' 5", and after generations of meditation can use Fey Step as an At-Will Power" would extend the definition by adding a Deepwood sub race while allowing the term Eladrin to maintain its original definition as found in the 4th Edition Player's Handbook.

Q: Section 5.5 states that interactive products are not available under the license. What does this mean?

A: Interactive products include, but are not limited to, video games, software, or other programs that offer rules adjudication. Products that accept input from human players or their agents, and use rules to resolve the success or failure of those inputs, and return the indication of the results of those inputs to the users are considered interactive products. This includes random determinations of hit points, ability scores, dice rolls and the like. These types of products are not available under the GSL.

Q. Section 5.5 states that Character Creators are not available under the license. What does this mean?

A: Character creation means the process of generating and assigning initial scores to abilities, selecting a race, selecting a starting class, assigning initial skill points, selecting initial feats, selecting initial talents, selecting an occupation, and picking an initial alignment. You should refer readers to the section Character Creation in the 4th Edition Player's Handbook for the process of Character Creation. Character Creation does not

include creating or modifying the description of a race, class, skill, talent, or feat in accordance with the rules of the GSL.

Q: Aside from the items spelled out in Section 5.5 as not available under the license, what constitutes a roleplaying game accessory or supplement? Can I publish novels, apparel or other merchandise under the license?

A: Items not directly related to roleplaying games are not permissible licensed products. Novels, apparel and merchandise related to Dungeons & Dragons are created and sold under agreements separate from the Game System License.

Q: Section 5.5 states that no licensed product will “refer to any artwork, imagery or other depiction contained in a Core Rulebook” What does this mean?

A: This means that you cannot duplicate our materials exactly. Expect as identified in section 5.7, you may create derivative images of 4E of artwork, imagery or other depictions as long as you are not directly copying something from a Core Rulebook (plagiarism). If it is not in the GSL SRD (e.g. Beholder) you may not use it.

Q: Why was Section 6 removed from the license?

A: The decision was made after listening to the concerns of the industry and community. Many publishers were concerned about adopting the GSL because of Section 6. We want publishers to create products under the GSL, not go around it, so we removed Section 6 to make the GSL easier to adopt.

Q: Can I use the GSL and OGL in the same title?

A: There is no provision in the GSL preventing the use of the OGL but publishers must take care to not assume content in the OGL SRD is the same as like-named content in the GSL SRD. For example, using the definition of “Cleric” from the OGL SRD in a product licensed under the GSL would violate the GSL. GSL definitions and provisions supersede like terms and provisions of the OGL (for example, GSL restrictions on explaining the process of assigning ability scores with respect to Character Creation)

Q: What happens to original material a third party publisher creates? A 3PP might create an original aspect (Race, Class, Monster, Item, etc) for the game which WotC could later put into a D&D book but not into the SRD. Will that 3PP then be in violation of the GSL?

A: Wizards of the Coast does not wish to cause undue damage to third party publishers that have accepted the GSL and are supporting the 4th Edition of D&D. The GSL allows and assumes that development of original aspects (Race, Class, Monster, Item, etc) may happen separately, but in parallel, with neither party having knowledge of the other’s actions. In the unlikely event that this situation occurs, a publisher can petition for their original work to be entered into the SRD although WotC reserves the right under the license to incorporate its original aspect into the GSL SRD.

Q: Can a publisher request a review of the product from WotC to make sure it conforms to the GSL?

A: No. Wizards will not participate in a pre-approval process. It is up to the third party publishers to ensure their products conform to all aspects of the Game System License.

Q: What happens if WotC updates the GSL with a provision that I find unacceptable for my business?

A: Publishers who wish to terminate their previous acceptance of the GSL (for reasons beyond their own material breach) may submit a Notice of Termination that will formally terminate their use of the GSL. The GSL has a sell off period provision of 6 months effective upon receipt of the Notice of Termination. The Notice of Termination can be found at www.wizards.com/d20/files/NOT.pdf

Q: What happens if WotC terminates the entire GSL and thus all third party use of the licensed materials?

A: In the unlikely event of a wholesale termination of the GSL, publishers previously bound to the GSL will, upon termination, cease publishing under the GSL and will have 6 months to sell off any inventory on hand.