

Thesis Availability Policy

Last Modified	May 2021
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Approval Authority	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Contact Officer	Dean of Postgraduate Research – Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Introduction

This document describes the conditions under which theses are made available, and the conditions and procedures by which they may be embargoed.

Policy Statement

The University endorses the principle that research theses are generally available for public inspection and consultation for research and study purposes, and that reasonable quotations may be made from such theses, provided that proper acknowledgement is made.

The University generally requires that the outcomes of its research should be publicly available. However it recognises that, from time to time, restrictions on availability may be necessary where intellectual property (“IP”) is at stake, commercial contracts must be honoured, public sensitivity and national security must be protected, or cultural or personal privacy must be respected.

Theses are usually held by the University in electronic form, and are kept in the UC Research Repository.¹ The University Librarian is the University's official custodian of such documents, although academic departments/schools may also hold copies. This policy applies to all copies.

Borrowing and Consultation

A copy or reproduction of the whole or any part of a printed or digital copy of a thesis may be made only in accordance with the [Copyright Act 1994 \(New Zealand Legislation website\)](#) and

¹ Prior to 2007 theses were also held in print copy in the library.

with the consent, in writing, of the author (which is normally granted at the time the thesis is submitted).

Access to theses is normally through the electronic copy. However, where there is no electronic copy available a print copy will be provided for use in the Library only.

Embargo of Theses

The University recognises that the author of a thesis has a right to request that conditions be imposed restricting access to that thesis. Decisions on embargoes will be made by the Dean of Postgraduate Research, except in the case of a sensitive thesis, which will be considered by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC). Students should consult their supervisors before deciding whether or not to request embargoes on their thesis.

Circumstances in which a thesis might be embargoed include:

- i. There is a prior agreement with a sponsoring entity or research collaborator connected with the research that publication should be delayed for the purpose of protecting information of commercial value.
- ii. Either the applicant or the University is making, or intends to make, a patent application concerning the subject of the research.
- iii. The applicant plans to publish all or some of the thesis and believes public access will jeopardise IP rights. Students should establish whether the thesis reports IP that is jointly held with other parties, and whether they have permission to share that IP.
- iv. The subject of the thesis is a person who is alive or recently deceased, and whose right to privacy or cultural respect is in danger of being infringed.
- v. An embargo is necessary to ensure compliance with the law or to protect public safety (e.g., where it refers to objectionable material, issues of national security or contains materials that might be considered offensive).

The maximum period of an embargo shall normally be two years from the date of receipt of the thesis by the library. However, if the standard embargo period does not meet the student's or supervisor's needs, then a longer embargo can be discussed with the Library. An embargoed thesis may not be placed on the web.

Note that most medium to large publishing organisations recognise theses as 'prior publication'. That is, making theses available in the UC Research Repository should not impact the chances of a paper based on it being published. However, students should check with publishers and ask their Subject Librarian for advice.

Procedure

Applications are made to the Dean of Postgraduate Research or DVC (for sensitive theses) using the *Thesis Submission Declaration* form (available via the University's [Forms webpage \(University Postgraduate website\)](#)). The library can explain and advise on whether the thesis should be considered 'sensitive'. The student's Senior Supervisor (or nominee) must sign the form before it is submitted. Approval of the request requires the signature of the Dean of Postgraduate Research or DVC (for a sensitive thesis). Copies of the completed form must

accompany copies of the thesis deposited in the Library or held by an academic department or school.

UC Research Repository records for embargoed theses will only include the thesis title, author and classification metadata. The thesis will not be available, the abstract will not be displayed, and there will be no opportunity to request a copy of the thesis.

Definitions

Embargo – a restriction placed on access to, and availability of, a thesis for a defined period of time.

Thesis – for the purposes of this policy, includes dissertations as well as masters and doctoral theses.

Sensitive thesis – a thesis that contains material that is objectionable, offensive, contrary to public safety or national security.

Related Documents and Information

Legislation

- [Copyright Act 1994 \(New Zealand Legislation website\)](#)

UC Policy Library

- [Intellectual Property Policy \(PDF, 502KB\)](#)
- [Research Work for a Master's or Doctoral Thesis \(PDF, 356KB\)](#)

UC Website and Intranet

- [Forms \(University Postgraduate website\)](#)
- [PhD and EdD Examiners \(University Postgraduate Studies website\)](#)
- [PhD Oral Examiners \(University Postgraduate Studies website\)](#)
- [Thesis Guide \(University Library Subject Guides website\)](#)
- [UC Research Repository - Pātengi o te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha \(University Research Repository website\)](#)

Document History and Version Control Table			
Version	Action	Approval Authority	Action Date
<i>For document history and versioning prior to 2013 contact ucpolicy@canterbury.ac.nz</i>			
1.00	Converted document onto new template. Pushed document out. Updated hyperlinks	Policy Unit	Sep 2013
2.00	Major review of document – no changes.	Dean of	Mar 2014

	Approval Authority changed from Chair, Academic Board to DVC(A&I).	Postgraduate Research	
3.00	Scheduled review by Contact Officer with Postgraduate Committee, minor changes.	Policy Unit	Feb 2015
3.01	Approval Authority updated to reflect appropriate delegations.	Policy Unit	Feb 2015
3.02	Changes made to bring in line with 2016 Delegations Schedule: sign off on embargo changed from Dean of PGR to DVC(R).	Policy Unit	Apr 2016
4.00	Scheduled review by Contact Officer. Updated Approval Authority title to Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), and abbreviation to DVC(R and I). Procedure section changed to reflect existing process and hyperlinks updated.	DVC(R and I)	May 2017
4.01	Updated Approval Authority to Deputy Vice-Chancellor and updated Contact Officer to Dean of Postgraduate Research – Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor from Vice-Chancellor's Office.	Policy Unit	Oct 2017
5.00	Scheduled review by Contact Officer, minor changes to content.	Policy Unit	April 2020
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