

Submitting your thesis – a guide for research students

Contents

Contents	1
1. Introduction	1
2. ORCID ID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID).....	2
3. Research Data	2
4. Notice of intention to submit your thesis for examination	2
5. Submission of your thesis for examination.....	3
6. Submission of your final thesis for award and other requirements	3
7. Award and Conferment of Degree	5
8. Access to your final thesis	6
Document Information	8

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance is intended for research students at the University of Southampton. Unless otherwise stated, this guidance applies to submissions for a Doctoral or Master of Philosophy degree.
- 1.2 This document sets out the administrative arrangements that apply from notifying your intention to submit through to award. Separate guidance is available on producing your thesis in the document [Producing your thesis – a guide for research students](#). If you have any questions, please contact your Doctoral College (Faculty) Team.
- 1.3 The processes for the notification of intention to submit through to award are conducted via [PGR Manager](#) for students who commenced their studies on or after 1 August 2016. Students who commenced their studies prior to 1 August 2016, are required to use paper-based forms for which links are provided in this guidance document.

2. ORCID ID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID)

2.1 If you don't already have one, now is a good time to consider getting an ORCID identifier, and including this in your thesis. An [ORCID](#) identifier is a unique researcher identifier, used worldwide, that you keep throughout your life and retain even if you move institution. It is used to unambiguously link people with their published work and also with funding. It can help, for example, to get credit for your work, by uniquely identifying you as an author across all systems with the ORCID registry. Your ORCID record is owned and managed by you. You should consider including your ORCID identifier in your thesis. Further details available from the [ORCID website](#).

3. Research Data

- 3.1 In accordance with the University's [Research Data Management Policy](#), you should normally deposit your Research Data via the Institutional Repository. This should be done in sufficient time to allow a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) for the data to be included in your thesis. Data should be uploaded to [Pure](#). You should consult the guidance on research data management on the Library's [Research Data Management website](#) and [Thesis Data Deposit](#) guide.
- 3.2 Restrictions on access to research data, where required, should be appropriate to the data. For the avoidance of doubt, the requirements of the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#) concerning embargo length do not apply.
- 3.3 If you have large files (4GB+) contact researchdata@soton.ac.uk to discuss upload and storage options.

4. Notice of intention to submit your thesis for examination

4.1 In accordance with the [Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision](#) (known hereon in as the 'Code'), you must inform your Doctoral College (Faculty) Team of your intention to submit your thesis for examination no later than two months prior to the date of submission via [PGR Manager](#) (or, for students who commenced their studies prior to 1 August 2016, by completing the [Research Thesis -](#)

[Intention to Submit form](#)). Once you have given this notice, arrangements will be made for your examination, including appointing your examiners and scheduling your *viva voce*. A student in suspension is not permitted to indicate intention to submit, and may only do so on their return giving the required two months' notice as specified above.

- 4.2 You must discuss with your main supervisor at an early stage (and at least in advance of the examination), any potential embargo period for your thesis (and any underpinning research data) and complete the necessary processes in [PGR Manager](#) or via the [Permission to deposit thesis Form](#) at the time of submitting your final thesis for award. This is to ensure that deposits are not made contrary to intellectual property rights, agreements with industrial sponsors or other partners. If you have any concerns about the confidentiality of the abstract or bibliographic information, this is the time to discuss this with your supervisor. Faculty approval is required for this (access paragraph 8.2 below).
- 4.3 If you wish to attend in person at a Graduation ceremony in July, you must give notice of your intention to submit your thesis by the previous 31 January. For a Graduation ceremony in December (where available), you must give notice of your intention to submit a thesis by the previous 31 July. If you submit your thesis later than these timescales, your degree may still be awarded, but you will have to ask to attend the next available Graduation date.

5. Submission of your thesis for examination

- 5.1 One electronic copy of your thesis must be submitted for examination.

6. Submission of your final thesis for award and other requirements

- 6.1 The examiners' independent reports and their joint recommendation will be scrutinised by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School (in their capacity as Chair of the Faculty Graduate School Subcommittee). If you are successful, your award will be made by the University Senate on the recommendation of the Faculty Education and Student Experience

Subcommittee. Before your award can be processed, you must submit the following:

- One electronic copy of your final thesis (e-thesis), including all corrections/amendments made in portable document format (PDF), with PDF/A-3 required. Further information on electronic submission and file formats can be accessed via the [Library's Thesis deposit via PGRManager and Pure](#) page.
- You must check that your e-thesis contains the thesis copyright statement. Access the Library [thesis template page](#) for guidance
- The pdf file must be unencrypted and searchable. It should conform to pdf archival (pdf/a) and accessibility standards; access the [accessible thesis PDF support guide](#) for further information.
- Do **not** include a scanned copy of your signature on the [Declaration of Authorship](#) in the e-thesis, but all other details should be completed.
- Update the date on the title page to the date of your final thesis submission.
- There is currently no upper limit on the file size, however, the Institutional Research Repository has a maximum of 4GB per file – you should contact researchdata@soton.ac.uk for further guidance.
- Research students are encouraged to use a variety of content and media to express themselves. There are no limitations imposed on content other than issues of copyright/IPR and of course, any School regulations as listed in the [Code of Practice](#). It is possible to create a PDF Portfolio file that includes your thesis plus any related image, audio, video and data files. If you do this, you must still produce a plain PDF file conforming to PDF/A-3 and uploading any additional embedded materials as separate files.
- Incorporate links to underpinning data and other online supplementary material

If you gave your intention to submit via [PGR Manager](#), you should upload your final thesis and deposit the research data underpinning your thesis to [Pure](#) (on-campus or VPN is required). You should also upload your final thesis to PGR Manager. The guidance document [Submitting your thesis for award](#) provides detailed advice.

If you gave your intention to submit using the [Research Thesis – Intention to Submit form](#), you should deposit the research data underpinning your thesis to [Pure](#) (on-campus or VPN is required). You should also submit your final thesis and a completed [Permission to deposit thesis form](#) (attaching any copyright permissions that have been obtained) to the Doctoral College (Faculty) Team. In all instances, your final thesis will be uploaded to the Institutional Repository.

6.2 In advance of your award you must also ensure that you have returned the following, where applicable:

- Research material that is part of a wider project must be handed over to the members of your research group and not left in personal file storage areas (e.g. My Documents, Office 365, Laptop hard drive, OneDrive for Business) as it will be deleted. Otherwise research data should be deposited in the Institutional Research Repository.
- Laptop and other IT equipment (to the iSolutions' stores in Building 35).
- Books and other resources that have been borrowed from the University Library. The library service desk can provide you with details of all items recorded as being on loan to you, and you are also able to check this online.
- Locker/office key.
- An exit questionnaire, as required by your Faculty.

7. Award and Conferment of Degree

7.1 Recommendations for awards are normally ratified by the Chair of Senate approximately every 4 weeks during term time. Deadlines for the approval of awards can be found on the [Awards and Certificates](#)

website. You must therefore ensure that you allow sufficient time for your award to be processed before the approval of award deadline. If you have made your final thesis submission via [PGR Manager](#), you must allow four weeks for the relevant approvals to be made and for the Library to process your final thesis in Pure. You should therefore submit your final thesis for award as soon as possible and no later than four weeks in advance of the next award date in order to ensure your award is processed within the required timescales.

- 7.2 After Senate has ratified a degree, certificates are posted within 2 weeks to either your 'certificate address' or your 'permanent address'. It is your responsibility to ensure that your address is accurately maintained within your student record.
- 7.3 You will be invited to attend the next Graduation ceremony and, for research students whose awards are approved just prior to the Graduation ceremonies in July, you will normally receive your certificate at the ceremony. If you are awarded at another time, you will have your certificate posted to you.
- 7.4 Arrangements for Graduation ceremonies are made by the University's Exams, Award and Graduation Team. The Team will contact you directly with information on dress, gown hire and other arrangements.

8. Access to your final thesis

- 8.1 Your thesis should be open and available from as early as possible and in line with any requirement stipulated by your funder. For example, UKRI expects that "*a full text version of the thesis should be available no longer than 12 months following award of the doctorate.*" ([UKRI Training Grants: Standard Terms and Conditions of Training Grant, TGC 11.5](#)).
- 8.2 With the agreement of your Faculty, it is possible to restrict access to your thesis, further information is available in the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#)). Normally a restriction shall not exceed three years from the date of the examination for one or more of the following reasons:

Restriction to access

- commercial grounds

- The contract with a sponsor states that the research must remain confidential for a given number of years.
- pending patent application(s)
 - The University or a sponsor has lodged, or intends to lodge, a patent application relating to an invention described in a thesis. The thesis should be embargoed until after publication of the patent by the relevant patent office
- where it is necessary to maintain confidentiality
 - This will usually have been considered when the research proposal was being considered by the ethics committee
 - Publication Pending

Some publishers in some disciplines consider publicly available electronic theses as prior publications. If you have not finished publishing from the thesis, you may request that the electronic thesis is embargoed, where this applies.

- Third party copyright

Permission to include third party copyright material should be obtained where necessary – access [Library thesis copyright](#) web page for further guidance. If you have been unable to clear third party copyright material, not covered by fair dealing exceptions, you must deposit a complete electronic copy of the thesis with the material removed which will be openly available after any other embargoes have ended. The full and redacted versions must meet the PDF/A-3 requirements.

If only part of your thesis needs to be restricted (e.g. an appendix which contains commercially sensitive material), you should deposit both a complete version of the thesis which will be embargoed as appropriate, and a redacted version with the material removed but the page numbering intact, which will be immediately available in the repository. Both versions must meet the PDF/A-3 requirements. Visit the [Library thesis deposit](#) web page for guidance.

- 8.3 The timeframe and reason for any restriction on access to your thesis must be noted in [PGR Manager](#) (or for students who commenced their studies prior to 1 August 2016, on the [Permission to deposit thesis form](#)), and signed by the main supervisor and Faculty Director of the Graduate School. Discussions regarding restriction of the thesis should take place with your supervisor as early as possible (visit paragraph 4.2 of this guidance).
- 8.4 The thesis will be made publicly available automatically at the end of the restricted period. As the research student, you are responsible for contacting the University (via eprints@soton.ac.uk) **a minimum of 20 working days in advance** of the expiry of the embargo if there are any circumstances that warrant an extension to the original restriction. Any such request to extend an embargo will require the approval of the Director of the Doctoral College and such a period of extension may not exceed one year in duration. If you make a request for an extension where the original embargo period has already ended, this will not generally be considered.
- 8.5 You will find further information on restricting access on the University [Library thesis restricting access](#) webpage.

Document Information

Author: Quality Standards and Accreditation Team

Owner (committee): Academic Quality and Standards Subcommittee

Approved Date: August 2019

Last Revision: September 2023

Type of Document: Guidance