Submitting your thesis – a guide for research students

Contents

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 MPhil degree.

1.2 This document sets out the administrative arrangements that apply from 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 Faculty Graduate School Office.

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 University Library ORCID website.

Notice of intention to submit your thesis

3.1 In accordance with the Code of Practice for Research Degree Candidature and Supervision (known hereon as the 'Code'), you must inform your Faculty Graduate School Office of your intention to submit your thesis at least two months in advance using the *Research Thesis – Intention to Submit form*. Once you have given this notice, arrangements will be made for your examination, including: the appointment of examiners and arrangements for the *viva voce*. This process will take some time and it will save inconvenience later if you give notice of your intention to submit your thesis sooner rather than later.

3.2 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, print and electronic, (and any underpinning research data) and complete the *Permission to deposit thesis Form*. 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 (see paragraph 6 below).

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.

Submission of your thesis for examination

3.3

4.

4.1 Two soft-bound copies and one electronic copy of your thesis must be submitted for examination to your Faculty Graduate School Office (for members of staff in candidature for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the requirement is for three soft-bound copies and one electronic copy to be submitted). It is advisable to mark on the outside cover of each of these soft-bound examiners' copies that the copy is for examination on x (when x is the date of your examination). The text should be in a final and correct form. Examiners will be reluctant to accept theses that require substantial typographical correction.

4.2 Candidates for a doctoral degree and for an MPhil degree will be required to attend a *viva voce*. It is the responsibility of your main or co-ordinating supervisor to inform you in good time of the arrangements for your *viva voce*, and you must ensure that you are able to attend on the date of the examination.

4.3 Examiners are not obliged to recommend the award of degree. They will recommend one of the outcomes as listed in paragraph 58 of the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#). Your examiners will provide you with verbal feedback at the end of your *viva voce*, but the formal notification of the outcome will be sent to you in writing from the Faculty Graduate School Office. This letter will also outline follow-up instructions for you as appropriate to the outcome.

Producing a final version of your thesis

5.

5.1 Once you have successfully met the requirements of your examination, and before your award can be considered for approval, you must submit to your Faculty Graduate School Office:

- One final soft-bound copy of your completed thesis, with all corrections/amendments made. The University will keep this copy for the Library.

- One electronic copy of your final thesis, including all corrections/amendments made in PDF format (PDF/A-3 preferred).
    - You must check that your e-thesis contains the copyright statement detailed on the *[Permission to deposit thesis form](#)*. See the Library [website](#) for guidance.
    - The pdf file must be unencrypted and searchable. It should conform to pdf archival (pdf/a) and accessibility standards; see 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.
    - 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 paragraph 8. It is possible to create a PDF Portfolio file that includes your thesis plus any related image, audio, video and data files.
    - Incorporate links to underpinning data and other online supplementary material

- Completed *[Permission to deposit thesis form](#)*.

The research data underpinning your thesis should also have been deposited in the Institutional Repository via [Pure](#).

The paper copy will be catalogued and stored in the University Library and the electronic copy will be uploaded to the Institutional Repository.

Further information on electronic submission and file formats can be accessed via the Library website.

Access to your final thesis

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 requires that "*a full text version should be available within a maximum of 12 months following award.*" (Research Councils UK (2018) [Terms and conditions of Research Council Training Grants)](#)

6.

6.1 With the agreement of your Faculty, it is possible to restrict access to your thesis (see paragraph 52 of 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 on print AND electronic copies

6.2
- commercial grounds
  - o The contract with a sponsor states that the research must remain confidential for a given number of years.
- pending patent application(s)
  - o The University or a sponsor has lodged or intends to lodge imminently 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
  - o This will usually have been considered when the research proposal was being considered by the ethics committee

Restriction to access on electronic thesis only

- o 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.

- o Third party copyright

  Permission to include third party copyright material should be obtained where necessary – see [Library website](#) for further guidance. The electronic copy of the e-theses containing un-cleared third party copyright material, not covered by fair dealing exceptions, should be embargoed until the material is no longer under copyright, unless this can otherwise be removed from the electronic version of the thesis and moved to a separate embargoed appendix.

6.3 Access can be restricted to the print version, the electronic version, or to both versions depending on the reason and this is reflected in the layout of the *[Permission to deposit thesis form](#)*. It is also possible to restrict access to part of a thesis, for example, where you move commercially sensitive or un-cleared copyright material to an appendix.

6.4
The timeframe and reason for any restriction on access to your thesis must be noted 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 (see also paragraph 4 above).

6.5 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) **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.

You will find further information on restricting access on the University Library thesis website.

Research Data

In accordance with the University's Research Data Management Policy, normally you should 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 website and Thesis Data Deposit guide.

7.

7.1 Restrictions on access to research data, where required, should be appropriate to the data. For the avoidance of doubt, section 52 Regulations for Research Degrees concerning embargo length does not apply.

If you have large files (4GB+) contact researchdata@soton.ac.uk to discuss upload and storage options.

Before you leave the University

Before you leave the University, you must make sure that you have returned the following as appropriate:

8.

8.1
- Library books borrowed from the University Library. The library service desk can provide you with details of all books recorded as being on loan to you, and you are also able to check this online.

- Laptop and other IT equipment to iSolutions stores in Building 35

- Locker/office key

- Research material that is part of a wider project is 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.

- An exit questionnaire, as required by your Faculty.

9.

Award and Conferment of Degree

9.1

9.2 The examiners of your thesis may recommend the award of a degree to Senate. Recommendations for awards are normally are ratified by the Chair of the University Senate (the President and Vice-Chancellor) approximately every 4 weeks during term time. Deadlines for approvals of awards can be found on the Awards and Certificates website. You must ensure that you allow sufficient time for your Faculty Graduate School Office to process your award before the approval of award deadline.

9.3 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 up to date within SUSSED. You will also be invited to attend the next Graduation ceremony. Research students whose awards are approved just prior to the Graduation ceremonies in July will normally receive their certificate at the Ceremony; those awarded at other times will have the certificate posted to them.

9.4 Arrangements for Graduation Ceremonies are made by the Graduation Office in the Student Services Centre, Highfield Campus. They will contact you direct with information on dress, gown hire and other arrangements.

Students who have been funded from UKRI sources have an on-going obligation to comply with requests to update their ResearchFish records.

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