# Digital Deposition of Theses – Advice to Candidates

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**Introduction**

The University requires all successful research degree theses to be deposited electronically by candidates upon successful examination for the University's official records, and so that a public record can be made available of bibliographic details relating to theses.

This can be done using a Moodle module which will be set-up for candidates by their Academic School. This procedure means candidates are no longer required to submit hard-bound print copies to the Library, however candidates may submit a print copy in addition to the electronic version should they wish.

Candidates will be given three options regarding electronic sharing of their work when they submit their electronic thesis. It is important to consider and explore these options at the point of submission to examination so that you are ready when the point of submission of your awarded thesis (after you are added to the Pass List) is reached.

Candidates are given a choice of whether to make a full-text electronic copy of the thesis available for others to read via the University’s research showcase, the Kent Academic Repository (KAR). This is known as ‘Open Access’. Candidates can also choose to restrict access to their work on a temporary or long-term basis.

Candidates who have been funded by a Research Council should check to see if their funder requires a particular choice as councils such as the AHRC now require full text deposit. Candidates who have been funded by commercial or other private funders should ensure that they comply with the funders requirements regarding access. In many cases this would have been agreed at the onset of the project and/or at the submission of the thesis where an embargo period for review eg. for protecting intellectual property (IP) rights has been agreed.

**What is Open Access?**

Open Access is the term applied to research outputs that have been made freely available for the wider research community to read. The intention is that, by removing the barriers to accessing research, findings (often obtained through publicly funded research) are released more quickly and widely in order to inform or enable further research, or secondary analysis (e.g. via techniques like text or data mining), and improve the impact of researcher and their work.

There are two main forms of open access publishing:

- “Green” open access – self deposit of manuscripts that may go on to be formally published. This method includes the deposit of electronic theses into the University repository
- “Gold” open access – this model is based on a publisher using other transactions or fees to publish Open Access whilst still making a profit and/or covering the cost of processing through the author fees (article processing charges), whilst the material itself, is freely available upon publication

More information about Open Access can be found here
<http://www.kent.ac.uk/library/research/open-access/index.html>

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1. http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Student-Funding-Guide.pdf

Information Services, 27 February 2014
The University also has a policy on “Open Access” and support for open research here

Why should I consider making my thesis Open Access?
Increasingly, it is common practise to publish doctoral level theses under Open Access terms. Many
Universities (such as UCL, Warwick, Imperial, Oxford, Exeter, etc.), encourage or require open access
to theses created at their institution.

Depositing your thesis electronically will result in it being added to the Kent Academic Repository,
and lead to it being harvested and indexed in services like Ethos or Google Scholar where it can be
accessed and read by a worldwide audience.

Impact
There is a demonstrable correlation in most disciplines between open access publication and
increased measures of impact for the final, published research <http://opcit.eprints.org/oacitation-
biblio.html>. This is due to the wider dissemination of material and removal of a paywall for access,
meaning that research findings reach a larger audience, can be incorporated into new research, and
will therefore collect citations, page views, downloads or altmetric (social media mentions)
measures accordingly.

Career progression
The research environment is increasingly moving towards a focus on open access publication. This
can be seen in exercises like the HEFCE proposal for the post-2014 Research Exercise Framework
(REF), where certain formats (journal and conference papers) will only be submissible for review if
they are available under open access terms.

Reference to open access publication profiles for benchmarking at individual, department or
institutional level is becoming common practise within many Universities.

Funder compliance and OA track record for future funding
Most funding agencies (including all RCUK agencies, and key funders such as the Wellcome Trust, or
charitable organisations), now insist that grant funded research must be made open access.

What are the pros and cons of publishing my thesis Open Access?
Most of the implications in depositing an open access version of your thesis, centre around aspects
of copyright, commercial, legal or ethical limitations on what can be made publicly available, the
extent to which you view your thesis as a piece of intellectual capital, and if so, how you wish to
exploit that (whether by utilising the benefits of open access to build a career as a researcher in an
increasingly open access orientated world, or by seeking a formal publishing contract that may lead
to further opportunities).

Copyright
Please note that there were some changes to UK copyright law as of 1 June 2014 and at the time of
writing there are further changes pending relating to quotation which are due to take effect from 1
October 2014. Please refer to xxx to ensure you have the most recent guidance and contact
copyright@kent.ac.uk if you have a specific question about copyright.
Individual copyright:
Publishing your thesis online as an open access document does not mean that you waive your rights to it. You still retain copyright, and you may also wish to assert your right to be identified as the author (your moral rights). You can determine the extent to which you will allow re-use of the material, via the application of an open licence such as those provided by Creative Commons [http://creativecommons.org/]. It is also possible to license rights to publish your work with a specific publisher which can be done on an exclusive or non-exclusive basis. This can still be done even if you have already applied a Creative Commons licence to your thesis although this will need to be discussed with the publisher.

Assignment or “transfer” of copyright to a publisher:
The alternative to retaining your individual copyright is where you have signed it over to a publisher as part of a contract to publish your thesis. If the publisher owns the copyright, then you need to check the terms of your contract with the publisher (or editor), to see if you have permission to deposit an open access version of the document.

Attitudes of publishers towards open access publishing vary across disciplines, being embedded in some areas (sciences and social science disciplines), and shifting in others (such as the arts and digital humanities).

In the sciences and social sciences, there is a relatively long tradition of open access journal publication. A thesis may even spawn several published journal articles before the candidate undergoes viva. The journal publisher may allow open access publication of the thesis itself, and earlier versions of the article manuscripts subject to certain conditions (see “embargoes”).

In the arts and humanities, there is a tradition, particularly where the publishing of scholarly monographs is concerned, of insisting that copyright is transferred to the publisher, and ensuring that material has not previously been published elsewhere (including open access) before a contract is agreed. However, even this attitude is changing, and a growing movement in the digital humanities is beginning to effect a change in perception.

The changing face of the research publication lifecycle, restraints placed on commercial publication by funding agencies, and University or HEFCE policies that support (“green”) self-deposit, all mean that publishable research without some sort of open access requirement will become increasingly rare.

Third Party copyright

Your thesis may contain material that you do not hold the copyright for. In the UK the laws determining whether inclusion of this material is allowed without seeking the rights holder’s permission changed on 1 June 2014.

Broadly speaking you can publish the thesis containing third party copyright material if you:

a) have obtained the permission of the rights holders’ to include their content, or
b) have removed the third party content in advance. Examples of such content include:
   o Artwork and graphics,

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o diagrams and illustrations,
o tables and graphs,
o music, plays or poems,
o company or market data derived from commercial products,
o patented ideas or trademarked products, etc., or

c) have determined that the use of the copyright material falls within the description of ‘fair dealing’ under UK law.

Fair dealing means it is generally allowable to include excerpts from other published written works (short quotations or summaries) for the purposes of illustration for instruction or criticism or review, if properly attributed (referenced). Reproduction of significant passages of text (whole poems, acts in plays, etc.), or unpublished material are likely to require permission from the copyright owner.

Unfortunately there is no definition of fairness in UK copyright legislation and you will need to determine whether making the third party content included in your thesis available online is fair on a case by case basis. Although the inclusion of copyright material in your thesis for the purpose of assessment is likely to be legally defensible, the more widely the thesis is made available the less likely the usage is to be regarded as ‘fair’. For example, if the material you have incorporated into your thesis has commercial value, or contains commercially sensitive information your usage could be regarded as by the rights holder as undermining their business interests if it is openly accessible on the web. Please contact copyright@kent.ac.uk if you unsure as to whether your proposed usage constitutes fair dealing.

When you upload your electronic thesis to the repository, you will be asked to sign a disclaimer about third party copyright. Please ensure that you have addressed this issue.

If you intend from the outset to publish your thesis at some point (either through deposit of an open access version or through traditional publishing model), it would be best to seek rights holder permission for third party content throughout the preparation process, rather than leave this until the submission phase.

PhD based on published works

If your PhD is based on a collection of published works you may find it difficult to obtain the appropriate permissions. If you are unsure check with the publishers of your work, and if you are unable to clarify then choosing not to share your final theses via Open Access is recommended.

Redaction

If you wish to publish an open access copy of your thesis, and you know that it contains third party content that has not been (or cannot be) copyright cleared, cannot be defended by a fair dealing exception, or includes commercially valuable, sensitive or inflammatory material, you may need to remove (“redact”) this content from the document before it can be deposited.

Seek the advice of your supervisor and the Copyright Licensing Compliance Officer for specialist guidance about redacting content, and what may need to be blanked out.

Any thesis that contains content that cannot be copyright cleared, or cannot be removed (either because the candidate is unable or unwilling) will not be suitable for open access sharing in KAR. You
will be required to upload the full text version of your thesis as a record, although this will be permanently restricted.

**Sensitivity and legal or ethical considerations**

There may be issues that mean you have to consider whether to restrict access to your thesis, and mean that open access publication is not feasible. These are likely to relate to the sensitivity of the content, theories, data or ideas contained in your document, and relate to areas such as:

**Commercial value**
- Where findings have resulted in a commercially applicable service, product or application
- Where findings have resulted in patentable ideas or products

**Sensitivity**
- Use of confidential government information, data or statistics
- Information likely to pose a security threat
- Information that could lead to the identification (and possible targeting) of individuals or communities
- Libellous content, or material which is likely to bring the University into disrepute, or incur liability

*You should take expert advice from your supervisor and or other sources about these issues, and make an informed decision on depositing your thesis. This could involve removing the content before you deposit an open access version, or restricting open access altogether. Alternatively you may decide to deposit an open access version but apply a more restrictive open licence (such as Creative Commons Non-commercial, No-Derivatives).*

**Exposure and market value:**
Publishing your thesis under open access will make it available to more potential publishers. Evidence of a well-downloaded thesis may even convince a publisher of the commercial viability of publishing it, and the KAR team can tell you how many people download your thesis if you make it open access. However, some publishers are wary of open access and some believe that previous open access publication may harm future publishing prospects.

**Embargoes:**
Many publishers now endorse open access deposit of pre-publication versions of documents that will later go into commercial production. However, they may insist upon an embargo period before the open access version can be released.

Embargoes will usually be timed so that release of the open access document post-dates the publication of the commercial version. Check the required embargo period with your publisher.

The deposit options include a standard three year embargo option. If your publisher asks for a longer embargo you will need to apply for an extension once the first three year period is expired.

**Digital deposit of theses – Candidate Options:**
These three options are available for candidates digitally depositing their PhD or MPhil theses.
Read the explanations carefully, and make sure that you choose the correct option for you. The legal framework that supports submission of material for a formal examination is very different to that surrounding the framework that covers publication and public dissemination of material.

Consider issues such as commercial value, whether your thesis contains third party content which has not been copyright cleared for publication, whether it contains sensitive material (e.g. material likely to be of political significance, or represent a security threat), whether it is ethically and legally safe to publish (e.g. it contains data, or sensitive, or libellous information about identifiable individuals or communities), and the requirements of any funding you have received.

1. **Deposit an electronic copy of your thesis with immediate open access**
   Your work will become discoverable and downloadable over the web immediately after you submit. You may wish to append a Creative Commons licence to your submission in order to assert your rights to be attributed as the author, but, allowing for other researchers, funding agencies, potential publishers or prospective post-doctoral supervisors to access and re-use your work. You must be certain that your document is suitable for immediate open access publishing, otherwise, you may leave yourself and the University liable. You may be able to upload a redacted version of your thesis for Open Access, plus your complete full text version which will be restricted.

2. **Deposit an electronic copy of your thesis with access to the full-text embargoed for a period of three years**
   You may prefer this option if you wish to buy time to seek a publishing contract, or already have one that will allow “green” open access self-deposit within the three year timespan. However, you must check if the three year embargo meets the terms of your funder or publisher’s requirements, and all content in the thesis must still be cleared for publication. In addition, there will be a three year delay before you can begin to experience any potential benefit from making your work freely available to a wider community.

   Candidates may request further extensions (3 years maximum for each request) at a later date by contacting the School Director of Graduate Studies at the time of request. Candidates may also be required by their funder to make their work open access faster than 3 years. In these cases please request a shorter embargo option when depositing to the University.

3. **Deposit an electronic copy of your thesis, but restrict any access to full-text**
   This option will result in no more than a bibliographic record for your thesis being made available. A permanently embargoed full-text copy will be retained by the University, but this will not be released without the permission of the author, following legal expiry of all copyright content, or as a result of legal requirement. Use this option if you do not own the rights to the material (in cases of exclusive publishing contracts or extensive use of uncleared third party content), or if, as the rights holder, you wish to restrict all access to your thesis (for instance, because of the sensitive nature of the content).

   In all instances a bibliographic record will be created, and prospective readers of your work can be put into contact with you. If you embargo or restrict access to your thesis then you can still choose to share copies privately, subject to any copyright or licensing restrictions.
You may also choose to deposit a print copy of your thesis to the University, where it will be made accessible to walk-in users and Inter-Library Loan requestors. You can choose to do this irrespective of which of the 3 electronic deposit options you choose.

**Advice and support**
For more advice and support about selecting the best option for electronic deposit of theses, talk to your supervisor and the Submission Review Panel. Your Liaison Librarian can also offer information relating to KAR and publishing. You may also refer to the [Copyright and Licensing Compliance Officer](#) or for specialist guidance.

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1 PhDs and all research degrees. This does not apply to undergraduate or taught masters courses.