

PROCEDURE FOR AGREEING ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS FOR A POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH THESIS

1. Introduction

- 1.1. All research degree theses are expected to be made publicly available as soon as possible following the award of a degree. Making theses publicly available allows the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine to demonstrate the quality of its research and the rigour of its research degree programmes; for research students it helps to raise their profile and maximise the visibility of their work. Making theses publicly available also supports the UK Government's open access principle that publications resulting from publicly-funded research - including research conducted in publicly-funded institutions - should be made freely available for all researchers.
- 1.2. Following the *Viva Voce* examination and the approval of any required modifications to the thesis, students will receive notification from the Early Career Researcher Unit when the examiners' final recommendation has been submitted. At this time, students will be asked to complete the "Access Arrangements for a PGR Thesis" form and submit an electronic version of the final approved version of the thesis to be uploaded to the LSTM Online Archive.
- 1.3. It is recognised that in a very small number of cases it may be necessary to delay making a thesis publicly available. In such cases, this can be done by placing the thesis under a temporary embargo.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This procedure applies to all students registered for postgraduate research (PGR) degrees at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine

3. Considerations in planning research

- 3.1. To fulfil the expectation that all research degree theses are expected to be made publicly available, students and their supervisors are expected to consider the following issues from the outset:
 - 3.1.1. Data protection issues: The collection of personal data needs to meet legislative requirements such as the General Data Protection Regulation and the UK Data Protection Act, 2018).
 - 3.1.2. Other confidential data such as that revealed by a sponsor or in a relationship with a commercial partner: It is important that the student is clear about what will be included in the final submission and obtains the necessary consent. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to check and confirm this.
 - 3.1.3. Research that involves animal work: This must comply with LSTM's ethical and welfare requirements and, if undertaking such work, students will be required to hold an Individual Licence.
 - 3.1.4. Third-part copyright: No permission is required from the original copyright owner for examination purposes, but a thesis cannot be made public unless such permission has been given, so this must be sought at the earliest possible opportunity and well in advance of final submission.
 - 3.1.5. Patent considerations: If the thesis includes details of a potential invention, students and their supervisors must first seek advice under the Intellectual Property Policy so as not to risk invalidating any potential patent.
 - 3.1.6. Funders' expectations: Some funding bodies will expect the thesis to be made open access.

3.1.7. Licence requirements: This might be required by a funder (unless otherwise specified, the use of Creative Commons CC-BY-NC-ND is recommended).

4. Completion of the 'Access Arrangements for a PGR Thesis' form

- 4.1. All students should complete Sections A and B of the "Access Arrangements for a PGR Thesis" form and arrange for the Primary Supervisor to complete Section C.
- 4.2. Students who believe that the conditions in Section 4 apply should discuss the appropriateness of requesting a thesis embargo with the supervisory team and financial sponsors (if applicable). These discussions should take place in time for the possibility that an embargo will be requested to be flagged in the 'Intention to Submit' form (completed at least 3 months prior to thesis submission). Embargo requests will normally only be considered if your Primary Supervisor has indicated that they are supportive. If it is decided to request an embargo, the student should provide information in Section A concerning the grounds for the request.
- 4.3. The completed form (plus any documentary evidence in relation to an embargo request) should be returned to the Early Career Researcher Support team at pgr@lstmed.ac.uk along with the final, approved version of the thesis. The Early Career Researcher Support team will deposit the thesis on the student's behalf.
- 4.4. The formal award of the degree will not be approved by the LSTM Audit Committee until students have completed the form and submitted an electronic copy of the thesis to the Online Archive of the LSTM Library. This requirement still applies to students who have requested an embargo.

5. Requesting an embargo

- 5.1. An automatic embargo period of 3 months from the date the thesis is added to the Online Archive is applied as standard. A student may request that access is restricted for a longer period (up to five years).
- 5.2. Grounds for requesting a longer embargo include:
 - 5.2.1. Making the contents publicly available would prejudice the commercial or intellectual property rights of an individual, academic department or organisation. For example, the thesis describes research that might give rise to a patent or other commercial application or the work contained in the thesis could mark the initial stages in a new line of research for the research group and/or sponsor.
 - 5.2.2. Making the contents publicly available would put at risk the safety or well-being of an individual or individuals identified in the thesis (including the author) or the thesis contains material that was obtained under a promise of confidentiality. However, this is a situation that should be avoided wherever possible. Where the research will involve identifiable human participants, this should be considered at an early stage as part of the research ethics approval process.
- 5.3. A common reason given for requesting an embargo is that the thesis contains materials that are to be published imminently, or which the student is seeking to publish and making the thesis publicly available may invalidate the ability to do so. Before considering pursuing an embargo on these grounds it is important to consider the following:
 - 5.3.1. Institutional deposit does not prejudice a student's rights as an author. The student retains all rights in the thesis and is free to publish the thesis as it stands or as derivative works.
 - 5.3.2. Institutional deposit does not alter the student's status as copyright holder for the thesis, giving protection against anyone who might wish to misappropriate the work.
 - 5.3.3. Only a very small number of publishers class institutional deposit as "publication" and refuse to consider works available in an institutional repository. Where institutional deposit is classed as 'publication' this is normally only if the student is

seeking to publish the thesis as it stands and without changes (something that few reputable publishers would consider doing anyway). It is almost never a barrier to publication of derivative works. Publishers who do class institutional deposit as "publication" normally only have concerns regarding the online availability of the thesis - making the print version available through an institutional library is almost never a barrier to subsequent publication.

- 5.3.4. Surveys in both the UK and the US consistently show the benefits of institutional deposit for those looking to publish their work – in particular, publishers may look at how frequently the electronic version of the thesis is viewed as evidence of the work's likely commercial appeal.
- 5.4. Students receiving financial sponsorship should check that they are complying with the terms of their sponsorship. Some funders, including Research Councils, make it a condition of funding that the thesis is made available publicly as soon as possible following the award of the degree.
- 5.5. Students should provide documentary evidence where possible to support their request for an embargo. Supporting evidence must be provided for embargo requests of longer than twelve months. Examples of documentary evidence are as follows:
 - 5.5.1. A letter from a financial sponsor confirming that the thesis contains research of commercial sensitivity.
 - 5.5.2. A copy of a confidentiality agreement showing that research participants have taken part under the condition that access to the thesis would be restricted.
 - 5.5.3. A letter from a prospective publisher showing that they would consider publishing works deriving from the thesis, only if access to the thesis is restricted.
- 5.6. The Early Career Researcher Support team will advise students of the outcome of embargo requests by email to their @lstm.ac.uk email accounts.

6. Embargo arrangements

- 6.1. The embargo period will normally be short, and in most cases will be no longer than one year from the date that the final version of the thesis is submitted. The maximum embargo period that will be approved is normally five years. Permanent embargoes will be allowed only in very exceptional cases (e.g. where availability of the thesis could place the mental or physical wellbeing of individuals at risk).
- 6.2. Requests for an extension of the original embargo period can be made via the Early Career Researchers Support team. Requests must be made no less than 8 weeks before the end of the embargo and must be supported by appropriate documentary evidence.
- 6.3. Once the approved embargo period has passed, the thesis will be made available publicly via the Online Archive of the LSTM library.

7. Data Protection

- 7.1. As a public authority, LSTM is subject to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Regardless of any embargo, the thesis may still be requested under GDPR. LSTM may refuse such requests only where the information sought falls under one of the specified exemptions to the Regulations.
- 7.2. Requests to remove a thesis from the Online Archive should be referred to XXX for consideration under the LSTM Rapid Take Down policy.

8. Further Information and Guidance

- 8.1. [LSTM Data Protection Policy](#)

- 8.2. Data protection [<https://lstmed.sharepoint.com/Departments/Information-Services/Pages/Data-Protection.aspx>]
- 8.3. LSTM Copyright Policy
- 8.4. [Freedom of Information Policy](#)
- 8.5. General information on copyright is available from:
<https://lstmed.sharepoint.com/Departments/Information-Services/Pages/Copyright-and-Licensing.aspx>
- 8.6. [Animal work licensing](#)
- 8.7. [Creative Commons Licences](#)
- 8.8. LSTM Rapid take down Policy (in preparation)



Access to Thesis Form

Section A - Thesis Details and Embargo Request	
Name:	Student Number:
Department:	
Title of thesis:	
Degree sought:	
Supervisors:	
Provide details of any Financial Sponsorship received during your studies:	
Are you requesting an embargo of your thesis?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If you are not requesting an embargo, please skip to SECTION B
Requested Embargo End Date:	
Reason for requesting embargo:	<input type="checkbox"/> Release of my thesis would prejudice the commercial or intellectual property rights of an individual, organisation, or academic department
	<input type="checkbox"/> Release of my thesis would put at risk the safety or well-being of an individual or individuals (including the author)
	<input type="checkbox"/> My thesis contains materials which was obtained under a promise of confidentiality
	<input type="checkbox"/> My thesis includes material which is due for publication or which I am actively seeking to publish
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Please provide further details:	
What documentary evidence are you providing?	<input type="checkbox"/> A letter/statement from a financial/research sponsor
	<input type="checkbox"/> A confidentiality agreement
	<input type="checkbox"/> A letter/statement from a publisher
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Please provide further details:	

Section B – Student Declaration**I understand/confirm that:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	I, the author, confirm that the thesis is my own work, and that where materials owned by a third party have been used, copyright clearance has been obtained
<input type="checkbox"/>	I confirm that all copies of the thesis submitted to LSTM are identical in content and format and correspond with the version of the thesis upon which the examiners based their recommendation for award of the degree
<input type="checkbox"/>	If my request for embargo is denied, my thesis will be made accessible via the online archive of the LSTM library
<input type="checkbox"/>	If my request for embargo is agreed, my thesis may be consulted at any time during the embargo period by my supervisors, head of department, or Director of Postgraduate Research
<input type="checkbox"/>	LSTM is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and during an approved embargo period, access to my thesis may still be requested under the ACT and LSTM can only refuse such requests where the thesis qualifies under the Act's specified exemptions
<input type="checkbox"/>	My thesis will be made available via the online archive of the LSTM library at the end of the embargo period
Student's Name: (PRINT)	
Signature:	
Date:	

Section C to be completed by the Primary Supervisor**In my capacity of Primary Supervisor to the above-named student I agree to the named thesis being made available in accordance with the conditions specified above.**

Supervisor Name: (PRINT)	
Signature:	
Date:	

Please return to pgr@lstmed.ac.uk