

RECOMMENDATION OF THE GRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE TO ESTABLISH A POLICY AND TIME LIMIT FOR TEMPORARY WITHHOLDING OF THESES AND DISSERTATIONS FROM PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

This document supercedes GFC Document 1080.

I Current Policy and Procedure

A limited withholding period for a thesis or dissertation is allowed to permit review and comment by a research sponsor and/or the acquisition of intellectual property protection, keeping in the forefront the duty of a university to disseminate knowledge promptly and openly.

A request to delay public disclosure of a thesis or dissertation is made by the student author at the time the signed, final thesis or dissertation is submitted to the Graduate School. The Graduate School reviews and approves or disapproves the request.

The initial non-disclosure is granted for a period not to exceed ninety (90) days . . . The Graduate School will consider requests for extension of the initial 90 day delay period for extenuating circumstances; but in no event shall the total delay on publication exceed three hundred sixty days (360) days.

II. Proposed Policy and Procedure

A limited withholding period for a thesis or dissertation is allowed for review and comment by a research sponsor or a peer-reviewed journal, and/or for the acquisition of intellectual property protection, keeping in the forefront the duty of a university to disseminate knowledge promptly and openly.

In collaboration with the student's Major Professor, the student establishes an initial time period for the delay of publication of six months, one year, or two-years from the date the thesis or dissertation is submitted electronically. The student completes and submits an embargo form to the Graduate School following the successful defense of the thesis/dissertation, but prior to the electronic submission of the final thesis or dissertation as required for graduation. The Graduate School will review submitted forms and approve or disapprove requests for publication delays and inform the student and their major professor of the decision.

Subsequent extensions, not to exceed a total of two years from the time of electronic submission, will be considered for extenuating circumstances. Requests for subsequent extensions must be received by the Graduate School no later than one month before the expiration of each delay period.

In the event of disagreement between the student and Major Professor as to the necessity of or length of the delay, the student should first work with their Major Professor to reach a resolution. If a good faith effort has been made and has been unsuccessful, the student should contact their department chair and ask that the matter be reviewed by the department's appeals committee. Only if the departmental appeals process fails, should the student appeal to the Graduate School to resolve any conflicts.

The Graduate School will inform students of the existence of the policy at suitable orientation and professional development events.

III. Reason for Changes

All theses and dissertations are now submitted electronically through ProQuest. Changes in policy and procedure are necessary to align with actual practice. The proposed options for embargo periods were developed in consultation with ProQuest on practices at other universities. Procedures were developed in consultation with staff in Graduate Student Services who are responsible for implementation.