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## Withholding of Theses Procedure

### Research Policy Group

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#### 1 Purpose

It is expected that theses having a value of 90 points or more will become publicly available once the degree has been awarded. However, permission to withhold access to a thesis for a limited period may be granted in accordance with this procedure.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the relevant section of the [Library Statute](#).

#### 2 Organisational Scope

This is a University-wide procedure. It applies to those theses, which must be deposited in the University Library as a requirement of the degree.

#### 3 Definitions

For purposes of this procedure, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

Dean FGR:	Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Research (FGR) and Chair of the Board of the FGR.
Good reason:	This has the same meaning as “good reason” in the Official Information Act 1982
Faculty of Graduate Research:	The body charged with having general responsibility for and oversight of the University’s postgraduate research degree programmes.
Thesis:	The outcome of independent research, scholarship, and/or creative activity conducted under academic supervision and having a value of 90 points or more.

#### 4 Procedure Content and Guidelines

##### 4.1 Limitations

- (a) Theses should be publicly available unless there is good reason for withholding the thesis.
- (b) Applications to withhold access should be made only in exceptional circumstances and it should not be assumed that an application will be automatically approved.

##### 4.2 Application and approval process

- (a) The Dean FGR is responsible for approving applications to withhold access to a thesis.
- (b) Applications may be made by the candidate or supervisor provided that the candidate is aware of any such application being made.

- (c) Applicants must use the form [Request to withhold access to a thesis](#) and the application must be made as soon as the need to withhold access is identified. A thesis may be withheld for a maximum of two years.
- (d) Public access to a thesis may be withheld if the Dean FGR is satisfied that there is “good reason” for withholding information.
- (e) The applicant will be advised of the Dean’s decision in writing, with copies to the applicant’s supervisor, Head of School, the University Librarian, the Doctoral Examinations Administrator (for PhDs), the home Faculty Manager (for Masters) and the Associate Dean (PGR).
- (f) Where approval to withhold access to a thesis has been given prior to the thesis being submitted for examination, the examiners will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.
- (g) If the matter of withholding access to a thesis arises during the examination process, the Dean FGR will consider a retrospective application.
- (h) The candidate retains the right of access to the thesis and, in exceptional circumstances, the Dean FGR may permit access by others if convinced there are good grounds for doing so.
- (i) Prior to the expiry of the two year withholding period, a new application may be made to the Dean FGR for an extension.
- (j) A decision made by the Dean FGR with respect to the withholding of access to a thesis may be appealed to the Vice-Provost (Research).

#### **4.3 Library deposit**

- (a) Where permission to withhold access has been granted the following will apply:
  - (i) A library record will be made, listing the title and author of the thesis, noting that access is withheld and the date when the thesis will become available.
  - (ii) The print copy will be kept in a secure location in the University Library and the electronic copy will be held in a secure part of the Institutional Repository.
  - (iii) No other archive or library should have a publicly available copy of the thesis during the withholding period.
- (b) When the withholding period expires, the thesis will become publicly available in the University Library.

## **5 Legislative Compliance**

The University is required to manage its policy documentation within a legislative framework. The legislation directing this procedure is the:

[Official Information Act 1982](#)

## **6 References**

[Library Statute](#)

[PhD Procedures](#)

[Previous Version](#)

Appendices

None

## **7 Approval Agency**

Provost

## **8 Approval Dates**

This procedure was originally approved on: 12 December 2003

This version was approved on: 21 July 2016

This version takes effect from: 21 July 2016

This procedure will be reviewed by: 21 July 2016

## **9 Contact Person**

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this procedure:

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