

Guidance for Recording, Processing and Reviewing PGR Thesis Restrictions (Standard and Extended Restrictions)



First Implementation Date – 1st July 2020

Review Date – July 2023 and approved by UEC on 5th July 2023

Scope

This document provides guidance for Graduate Schools, PGR Students, PGR Supervisors and Academic Units in relation to the recording, processing and reviewing of PGR Thesis Restrictions (Standard and Extended Restrictions) for Doctoral and MPhil theses.

Following Initial/First Registration

1. The Confidentiality Agreement contains a question in the Supervisory Team section on whether the thesis is likely to contain potentially sensitive material and may require an extended restriction. This provides the Graduate School with early indication of extended restriction status. *(The Confidentiality Agreement should be completed along with the Learning Agreement within one month of a student's initial registration.)*

AND/OR

2. Where a Research Group is aware of commercially sensitive projects where an extended restriction is likely to be required on submission of the thesis, the details of these students should be shared with the Graduate School.

ACTION

- The Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examinations) will add an 'extended restriction' tag to the student's Graduate School electronic record, which will indicate that the examination of the thesis is to be performed under agreement of confidentiality and extended restriction is to be the default on submission of thesis and award of degree.

Nomination of Examiners

3. The Supervisor section of the 'Nomination of Examiners' form contains a question about whether the thesis contains potentially sensitive material and whether a restriction, beyond the normal 6-month restriction period, would be required. The Supervisor is also asked to indicate if a Confidentiality Disclosure Agreement (CDA) is required. This provides the Graduate School teams with further information/confirmation on whether extended thesis restriction will be necessary.

ACTION

The Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examination) will:

- Add an 'extended restriction' tag to the electronic student record where this is required, if this has not been previously identified.
- Add Yes/No response to 'Extended Thesis Restriction' column on Nominations log and Hard-bound log.

On Thesis Submission

4. The Research Degree Examination Entry Form contains a thesis restriction question in the Supervisor section.
5. Where an extended restriction has been identified, the Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examinations) will update the Post Submission Tracker on the PGR Code of Practice System with this information.

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Award of Degree

6. When a research student is recommended for award and is ready to submit the final version of their thesis, the Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examination) will check both the electronic student record and the Hard-Bound Log to check whether an extended thesis restriction required (where the Supervisor has indicated that the thesis contains potentially sensitive material on the Confidentiality Agreement and/or Nomination of Examiners form; where the research group has provided confirmation of extended restriction or where a Confidentiality Disclosure Agreement has been requested).
7. All final award emails to successful students will contain a reference to Extended Thesis Restriction, should it be required.
8. A student will only be expected to submit one Library Deposit licence on submission of their thesis, either the Standard or the Extended Thesis Restriction licence.

Processing a Standard Restriction (6 Months)

9. Where no extended restriction has been indicated in any of the steps above, the standard restriction (6 months) will apply and the Graduate School will send the student the 'Standard Library Deposit' licence for completion, when the final version of the thesis is requested. *(This communication to the research student will also provide information on the extended restriction process should it be required, and will be copied to the supervisory team.)*
10. If there are no issues raised in relation to the Standard Restriction, the Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examination) forwards the completed deposit licence and final electronic version of the thesis to the Library using Sharepoint. All files should be named in accordance with the following examples:
Surname_StudentNumber_Standard_Deposit_Licence
Surname_StudentNumber_PassList
Surname, StudentNumber_Submission_ecopy
11. Where a student requests the standard restriction length of 6-months, the Library will automatically add the thesis to the e-repository at the end of the 6-month restriction period.
12. If a student's situation changes within the standard 6-month restriction period, the student or supervisor should contact the Graduate School to indicate that a longer restriction period is required.

ACTION

- The Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examination) will immediately inform the Library by email if they are aware of a change in the thesis restriction length, so that the thesis will not be automatically added to the e-repository.
- In such a case, the Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examination) will ask the student (or supervisor) to complete and submit an 'Extended Thesis Restriction' licence to extend the restriction period.
- The Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examination) will contact the Library and request that the Library returns their copy of the thesis to the Graduate School.
- The Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examination) will add the date that the Extended Thesis Restriction is approved to 'Extended Thesis Restriction Log', which will generate a review date 12 months in the future.

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Processing an Extended Restriction

13. Where an extended thesis restriction has been indicated, the Graduate School will send the research student and supervisor the 'Extended Thesis Restriction' licence for completion. *(5 years is the standard length for an extended restriction, but the restriction will be reviewed on an annual basis thereafter.)*
14. Where a thesis requires an extended restriction, a student can add a page (probably page 2) into their final thesis indicating that the thesis is under extended restriction. The 'Guidelines for Format and Submission of Thesis' will contain guidance and Graduate Schools will check for such a page on submission, although only as an additional failsafe. The Graduate School will not assume that its absence indicates a standard restriction is required. This page will remain in the thesis at full publication.
15. The research student will be asked to send an e-copy of their thesis to the Graduate School. *A concession from the Dean of Postgraduate Studies will be required for submission of a soft-bound thesis.*
16. The thesis will be retained in the Graduate School, while it remains under an extended restriction.

ACTION:

- The Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examinations) will add the date that the Extended Thesis Restriction is approved to 'Extended Thesis Restriction Log', which will generate a review date of 5 years in the future.

Reviewing Extended Thesis Restrictions

All current thesis that the Library holds with an extended restriction are to be returned to the Graduate School and will be incorporated into the revised process below. Therefore, the Library will not hold any thesis with an extended restriction. A thesis will now only be shared with the Library once the extended restriction has been removed.

17. Where a research student requests an 'Extended Thesis Restriction' period, the standard extended restriction period will be 5 years, with a 12 month review thereafter.
18. Each month, the Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examinations) will review Extended Thesis Restriction dates to identify those students whose extended thesis restriction period will be coming to an end in the next month.
19. The Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examinations) will contact the student's supervisor to ask for an update on whether the restriction should be extended or whether the thesis can now be shared with the Library and added to the e-repository.
- 20a. Where positive confirmation of the end of the 'Extended Thesis Restriction' is received.

ACTION:

- The Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examinations) will request an e-copy of the thesis, if a soft-bound version of the thesis was provided to produce the Pass List.
- The Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examinations) will provide the relevant Graduate School Manager with the relevant correspondence for review confirming the end of the extended restriction period.
- The Graduate School Manager will review the information and where appropriate will confirm to the Graduate School that an email be sent to the Library, to confirm the end of the 'Extended Thesis Restriction' and to instruct them to add the thesis to the e-repository.
- No thesis or instruction should be sent to the Library until confirmation is received from the Graduate School Manager.

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- Following confirmation from the Graduate School Manager, the Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examinations) will instruct the Library by email that the extended thesis restriction is no longer required. The copy of the thesis held by the Graduate School will also be forwarded to the Library so that it can be added to the repository, along with the Extended Restriction Deposit Licence and Pass List. All files should be named in accordance with the following convention:
 - Surname_StudentNumber_Extended_Deposit_Licence
 - Surname_StudentNumber_PassList
 - Surname, StudentNumber_Submission_ecopy

20b. Where no positive confirmation of the end of the 'Extended Thesis Restriction' is received, or it is confirmed that the restriction should remain.

ACTION:

- **The Graduate School Co-ordinator (Examinations) will update the 'Extended Thesis Restriction Log' so that a new review date is generated. The thesis will continue to be restricted for a further 12-month period. (It will not be necessary for an additional 'Extended Thesis Restriction' licence to be completed. Email confirmation is sufficient.)**

19. Any queries relating to the end dates for Standard Restrictions should be directed to the Library.

20. Any queries relating to end dates for Extended Restrictions should be directed to the Graduate School.

Any queries relating to this guidance should be directed doctoralcollege@ncl.ac.uk