



eThesis Policy

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Executive Summary

This policy outlines the way in which the metadata and full text of a Leeds Beckett University postgraduate research student's thesis will be made publicly available on an open access basis.

Organisation	Leeds Beckett University
Author(s)	Head of Technologies for Learning (Library) and Head of Library Academic Support
Developed in consultation with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library Academic Support and Technologies for Learning teams, including Copyright Clearance Officer and Research Services (Library) • Library Leadership Team • Research and Enterprise Service, including Head of Graduate School and Research Student Manager • Head of Legal • Head of Information Governance • Records and Information Governance Manager
Owner	The Library
Target audience	Student / Alumnus
Sensitivity	Public
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External references	UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) Open Research principles and guidance Electronic Theses Online Service (EThOS)
Links to other internal policies / procedures	Leeds Beckett Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy Leeds Beckett Copyright guidance Leeds Beckett eThesis guidance
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Policy Document

1. Introduction/Background

This policy outlines the way in which the metadata and full text of a postgraduate research student's thesis will be made publicly available on an open access basis. Further guidance is available on our [support pages](#).

2. Purpose and Scope

The University Academic Regulations and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy state the requirement for postgraduate research students to submit an electronic copy of their thesis to the University's open access repository. A formal policy and process supports compliance with third party Copyright and Data Protection laws.

The advantages of depositing an electronic thesis (eThesis) in the publicly available University Repository include raising the visibility and reusability of the research and creating a permanent digital archive of the thesis. This aligns with the principles of the University's Open Research Policy. An eThesis is more available, searchable and visible worldwide, including via the British Library's publicly available Electronic Theses Online Service (EThOS) which harvests eTheses from University Repositories.

This policy is limited to Leeds Beckett University postgraduate research theses.

3. Responsibilities and/or Duties

- Library Leadership will regularly review the currency of the policy and amend as necessary, subject to University committee approval.
- Students depositing a thesis are required to read this policy and the accompanying guidance before depositing their thesis.
- Students depositing a thesis are required to confirm that they have read and understood University IPR and copyright policies.
- Students are required to submit an electronic version of their thesis as per University [guidance](#).
- Students are not required to provide a printed, bound copy of the thesis for the purpose of this deposit, as outlined in the University's Academic Regulations.
- The Library will, upon receipt of a student's thesis, perform readiness checks before making it available and discoverable as soon as possible.

4. Definitions

- **Copyright:** Legal protection to original works once recorded or fixed in some form. In law it is one of a bundle of Intellectual Property Rights and the copyright owner has exclusive rights for the use and distribution of the protected work.
- **Completion:** The final end point of the research degree. It follows the Viva Voce(s) and any subsequent amendments, with no further changes required by the examiners. Following this point, the student is considered 'completed' by the University and can use the title of 'Dr.'
- **Creative / Practice-based outputs:** A collective term for arts-based research outputs that may include, but are not limited to, the following output types: artefact, creative writing, live performance, installation, exhibition, composition, design, digital or visual media.
- **Deposit Agreement:** The set of terms and conditions which a student is required to read and agree to when uploading an eThesis into the University Repository. These address issues around copyright and IPR relating to the distribution and ongoing preservation of their work.
- **Electronic Theses Online Service (EThOS):** The UK's publicly available national database of doctoral theses.
- **eThesis:** An electronic version of a thesis.
- **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR):** The rights protecting the products, results and rewards of the exercise of human intellectual and commercial endeavour, including, but not limited to copyright, database rights, design rights, patents, trademarks, duties of confidentiality.
- **Metadata:** Data about the data; in this case, the data which describes the eThesis. This includes information such as, but not limited to, author, title, keywords, format.
- **Open Access (OA):** OA research outputs are made available online, in a digital format, at no charge to the reader and with limited restrictions on re-use.
- **Postgraduate Research Degree:** A course of study at either research master's or doctoral level, which results in a higher award, such as MRes, MPhil or PhD.
- **Submission:** The point at which the thesis is submitted to the Research and Enterprise office for the first time, before the Viva Voce occurs.
- **University Repository:** The publicly available online collection of Leeds Beckett research outputs.

5. Policy Statements

5.1 Who does this policy apply to?

Candidates currently registered for all postgraduate research degrees are required to make their written thesis electronically available. In addition, creative / practice-based outputs, or appropriate records of those outputs, must be made available.

Students who complete on or after 1 August 2021 are required to deposit their thesis in electronic form in the University Repository. The Repository will make their thesis electronically available on open access.

This policy does not apply to students who completed before 1 August 2021, but they may voluntarily deposit their thesis in electronic form in the University Repository. The Repository will make their thesis electronically available on open access.

5.2 Deposit Agreement

All authors will be required to give permission for the distribution of their work, and the ongoing preservation of their work and/or related metadata. This agreement allows the work of authors to be included in Leeds Beckett University repositories, EThOS, and other services with which the University Repository may establish agreements. It will also permit access to metadata associated with the record. Students should refer to Leeds Beckett University's copyright guidance for more information about the deposit agreement.

5.3 Intellectual Property Rights

The University's Intellectual Property Rights policy provides guidance relating to the IPR aspects of this eThesis policy.

In most cases, the author of a thesis owns any copyright in it and has given Leeds Beckett University the right to use such copyright for any administrative, promotional, educational and/or teaching purposes.

The University's IPR policy provides specific information on ownership of Intellectual Property.

5.4 Copyright

A thesis may contain material for which the copyright is owned by another person (a third-party).

The digitisation of a thesis and making it available online involves publication of the work, therefore authors must consult the University's copyright guidance, ensure they comply with UK legislation, and obtain permission to use the material from rights holders where

appropriate. It is the student's responsibility to obtain permission to use material from the rights holder/s and provide evidence of this. Please note that not all third-party material requires permission.

If a thesis contains material where the copyright is held by a third-party, but the author has been unable to obtain permission to make it available online, a copy will still be deposited in the University Repository on restricted access, or with sections redacted where necessary.

5.5 Embargoes and Access Restrictions

In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary for authors to embargo / restrict access to their thesis for a limited period. As per University [Academic Regulations](#), restrictions may be considered when the thesis is concerned with topics that are politically, commercially or industrially sensitive.

On request, a thesis may be embargoed / restricted if:

- The material is due for publication, or the author is actively seeking to publish this material, or an agreement with a publisher that restricts immediate availability.
- Release of the material would prejudice substantially the commercial interests of any person.
- The material includes information that was obtained under a promise of confidentiality.

Anyone can exercise their rights under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the University will follow due process in compliance with the request.

Unless access embargoes have been applied, Leeds Beckett eTheses will be made available to institutions and individuals via the web including the University's open access repository and the British Library's EThOS service. Metadata will also be shared with other third-party external systems and their associated automated agents, regardless of whether an embargo has been applied or not.

When an embargo period expires, Library Research Services will make the thesis available on open access.

5.6 Notice and Take down policy

If Library Research Services are notified of a potential breach of copyright, or receive a complaint indicating a violation of publishers' rules or other relevant concern, the eThesis involved will be placed under embargo in the Repository as soon as is practical, pending further investigation. This investigation may take some time if it is

necessary for the University to seek legal advice to resolve the complaint. If the complaint is upheld, the affected material will remain permanently unavailable.

Once the work is deposited, metadata will be publicly available to any interested parties including automated agents e.g. EThOS. This metadata will always remain visible, although the author retains the right to update the work. Removal of the work, but not the metadata, can be made after discussion with Library Research Services.

5.7 Disclaimer

The University makes no undertakings as to the accuracy of any metadata record, thesis full text, or their conformity with any relevant laws, and accepts no liability for mistakes, omissions, or legal infringements within any thesis record. Use of any information supplied by the thesis archive is at the user's own risk.

6. References and Associated Documentation (Legislation, Other Policies)

All documentation relating to this policy can be found in the [Links](#) section of the Library website's eThesis pages.

7. Dissemination of Policy

This policy is available on the University's [policies](#) webpage and Library [website](#), alongside guidance materials and links to relevant additional documentation. The policy is referenced in a range of other appropriate University documents and website sources, all linking back to the Library website.

8. Monitoring and Compliance

The Graduate School in conjunction with Library Research Services will monitor compliance with the policy by checking that graduated students have submitted their eThesis to the repository. Records of compliance monitoring will be kept in line with the University's formal Records Retention Schedule.

The University will retain eTheses in the Repository in perpetuity unless takedown is requested.

Depositing parties should bear in mind that breaches of copyright, data protection and / or IPR constitute legal offences. Please refer to the relevant References and Associated Documentation section of this document.