Process for considering requests to defer access to a research degree dissertation
2018/19

At any point before submission of the final dissertation, a research student may request deferred access to their dissertation (see Section 9.2.5 of the Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes). An overview of the process followed for deferral requests is set out below.

1. The research student decides to make a request to defer access to their dissertation. This may be linked to an obligation with an external organisation (e.g. commercial confidentiality) or may be related to other factors in relation to the dissertation.

2. The research student discusses the deferral request with the supervisor and completes the student section of the request to defer access to a research degree dissertation form.

3. The supervisor reviews the deferral form and completes the relevant section of the form.

4. The Graduate Education Director reviews the deferral form and completes the relevant section of the form.

5. The completed deferral form is sent electronically to the Academic Quality and Policy Office (AQPO) using pgr-exams@bristol.ac.uk. AQPO checks that the form has been fully completed and that all signatures are present. The details are added to the deferral request register.

If the request is for up to twelve months, route A below is followed.
If the request is for more than twelve months, route B below is followed.

Route A for requests of up to twelve months

A.1 If the request is for up to twelve months, the recommendation from Graduate Education Director will be conclusive. AQPO confirms the deferral decision by letter, which will be sent via email to the student, supervisor, Graduate Education Director and, if the deferral has been approved, Library Services.

AQPO updates the deferral request register.

Route B for requests of over twelve months.

B.1 If the request is for over twelve months (including where the request is for longer and the Graduate Education Director recommends a twelve-month deferral), the following process is followed:

If the request relates to a student with an industry or other external sponsor, AQPO forwards a copy of the form to the Research and Enterprise Development (RED) contracts team for RED to provide a recommendation based on any contract in place.

Please note for Research Council-funded students the expectation is that a full text version of the research degree dissertation will be available no longer than twelve months following the award. A slight delay beyond twelve months may be considered at the University’s discretion but the dissertation must be available as soon as possible.
See the Training Grant Guide (paragraph 91):
https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/
B.2 AQPO makes an overall recommendation (incorporating the recommendation from the Graduate Education Director and advice from RED if a contract is in place) to the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies).

B.3 The Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies) decides whether to grant the deferral request based on the AQPO recommendation and the evidence.

The Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Graduate Studies) approves a letter drafted by AQPO based on the decision made. The letter is sent via email to the student, supervisor, Graduate Education Director and, if the deferral has been approved, to Library Services.

AQPO updates the deferral request register.