

Deferred access to a research degree dissertation: summary of procedure

At any point before submission of the final dissertation, a research student may request deferred access to their dissertation (see Sections 9.2.5 and 9.6.2 of the [Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes](#)). This document provides a summary of the procedure on how to request a deferral, how to make a deposit, and how to make further requests for extensions to the deferral period.

The initial request for a deferral

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.

Where there are contractual, security or safety obligations, the main supervisor may decide to make the request directly.



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.

Where the main supervisor is completing all or part of this section (if there are contractual, security or safety obligations), the supervisor should discuss this with the student.

Where a partial deferral is requested, the student and supervisor (and a sponsor, if relevant) should discuss how the process to redact text will be managed.



3. The main supervisor reviews the deferral form and completes the supervisor section of the form, which includes making a recommendation on the request.



4. The Faculty PGR Director reviews the deferral form makes a recommendation on the request.



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 completed correctly. The details are added to the deferral register, with a decision-pending flag.

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 Faculty PGR Director will be conclusive. AQPO confirms the deferral decision by letter, which will be sent via email to the student, main supervisor, Faculty PGR Director, Library Services and any sponsor (where the sponsor contact details have been provided).

AQPO updates the deferral register with the decision.

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 Faculty PGR 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.



B.2 AQPO makes an overall recommendation (incorporating the recommendation from the Faculty PGR Director and the recommendation from RED if a contract is in place) to the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR).



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

The Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) approves a letter drafted by AQPO based on the decision made. The letter is sent via email to the student, main supervisor, Faculty PGR Director, Library Services and any sponsor (where the sponsor contact details have been provided).

AQPO updates the deferral register with the decision.

Deposit of the dissertation

Following their award, students are required to deposit an electronic copy of the final dissertation through Pure (see <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/staff/researchers/etheses/>). The deposit process should be followed in all cases whether a deferral is in place or not. Where the deferral has been agreed, the dissertation will be held in Pure but not made public until the deferral period has ended.

If a partial deferral has been approved, both the redacted and the full version must be submitted at the same time. The redacted version must contain an integrated cover sheet with a statement on the agreed redactions. See Annex 4 of the Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/pgrcode/annex4/>) for more information.

If it has been agreed by that the dissertation will be held on a University server for the deferral period, a mediated process will be used for the deposit. The metadata will be public, but the dissertation itself will be held within the University. Further details will be provided by Library Services (lib-research-support@bristol.ac.uk).

Please note that a deferral relates to the content of the dissertation; the metadata (name, title and abstract) will be made available even where a deferral has been granted

End of the deferral period

At the end of the deferral period, the dissertation will be made publicly available through Pure (see <https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/>).

Extensions

- The student, main supervisor or, if relevant, a sponsor may request an extension to the deferral period on the appropriate form, which is available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/exams/research-degree/deferred-access/>.
- The completed deferral form must be sent electronically to the Academic Quality and Policy Office (AQPO) using pgr-exams@bristol.ac.uk. AQPO checks that the form has been completed correctly. The details are added to the deferral register, with a decision-pending flag.
- AQPO makes a recommendation (based on a consideration of the reason for the extension and on original decision, including any advice provided by the RED contracts team) to the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR).
- The Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) decides whether to grant the extension request based on the AQPO recommendation and the evidence.
- The Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) approves a letter drafted by AQPO on the decision made. The letter is sent via email to the student, main supervisor, Faculty PGR Director, Library Services and any sponsor (where the sponsor contact details have been provided).
- AQPO updates the deferral register with the decision.
- It is permissible to make further extension requests.

Export control

Where it has been flagged that dissertation contains information that is subject to UK export control (see <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/legal/export-control/>), Library Services will undertake an internal check with the local export control contact and/or with the University's Export Control Director before the dissertation is made public.