

TTU Guidelines for Public Availability and Embargo of Theses and Dissertations

Scholarly work is intended to be shared with others in order to advance and enrich one's field of study. At public universities like Texas Tech university, there is an obligation to make scholarly work, including theses and dissertations, generally available for the betterment of society. Theses and dissertations that are made publicly available are copyright protected and establish prior art. It is important to note, however, that public availability of theses and dissertations generally does NOT preclude subsequent publication of the work, in whole or in part (e.g., chapters of the theses/dissertations subsequently submitted as articles in peer-reviewed journals). Moreover, making theses and dissertations publicly available can enhance the visibility of the work, increase the number of citations, and build professional reputation.

TTU requires the public presentation of thesis and dissertation research and making theses and dissertations publicly available immediately after approval by the Graduate School through release into the institutional repository, ThinkTech. There may be situations for which delay of release into the institutional repository may be warranted. Such delay, or embargo, is only appropriate under limited circumstances; these include the following:

- 1) protection of intellectual property interests (e.g., pending invention disclosure/protection of intellectual property via patent),
- 2) protection of a larger body of work resulting from the disquisition (e.g., a monograph), or
- 3) work related to national security interests (classified status or export control of results).

In the limited cases for which embargo is warranted, it should be requested only for a finite period of time. At TTU, embargo periods for theses and dissertations are as follows:

- 1) one (1) year
- 2) three (3) years
- 3) six (6) years

Permanent embargo of student research/scholarly work conducted in fulfillment of a master's or doctoral degree is not allowed. Students engaged in research/scholarly work that is classified, subject to export control restriction, conducted under a non-disclosure agreement, or of a highly-creative nature MUST have a portion of the work, in addition to the abstract, made publicly accessible. Requests for embargo must be made in consultation with and approved by the faculty research advisor. Questions about the embargo of theses and dissertations should be addressed to The Graduate School. The dean of the Graduate School will adjudicate any disputes and that decision will be final.