

Information about thesis embargo

What is an embargo? → The print versions of the thesis are not available for borrowing, the full text of the electronic version cannot be accessed

Legal provisions – publication:

Section 86 of the Austrian Universities Act specifies that graduates must publish their academic thesis prior to the conferment of the academic degree by submitting it to the University. **Master's or diploma theses are published as a print copy in the University Library.** For **doctoral theses**, the University provides the Austrian National Library with an additional print copy.

Since October 2008 all academic theses completed at the University of Vienna and submitted for assessment, must also be submitted in electronic form (<https://hopla.univie.ac.at>). The thesis is checked for text similarities (plagiarism check).

Thesis embargo:

Students have the opportunity to **restrict access** to (i.e. place an embargo on) the submitted copies of their academic thesis (for viewing in the library, borrowing) in the students' **serious legal or economic interests for no more than 5 years** after submission. An embargo request has to be filed to the StudiesServiceCenter when **submitting the thesis for assessment at the latest**. The **Studienpräses** is responsible for granting the request.

An embargoed thesis is not shelved in the library and may not be borrowed for the duration of the embargo period. However, it can be found in the University Library's online catalogue (containing a note on the thesis embargo). Following the end of the embargo period, the thesis will be made available in the Library and may be borrowed by users.

What does an embargo not involve? → Putting the digital version online on the thesis server or taking it offline

Releasing the full text version on the thesis server:

Students have the opportunity to make their academic thesis available on the thesis server **as a full text (= putting it online)** or of **not making it publicly accessible (= taking it offline)**. Students **decide on their own** whether they want to release the full text version or not when uploading their thesis to the University's thesis server. By signing the confirmation of the upload, which documents the successful upload of the thesis, students confirm whether they consent or do not consent to the display of the full text of their academic thesis. This confirmation and the print copies of the thesis are submitted to the StudiesServiceCenter. Students can change their **decision about putting the thesis online or taking it offline** at any time by sending an informal e-mail to [e-theses.ub@univie.ac.at](mailto:theses.ub@univie.ac.at). If the student consented to it, the full text will be made available only after the end of the approved embargo period.

In any case (full text online/offline, embargo yes/no), the author's name, the department and the abstract of the thesis are publicly accessible online through the Library's database (**metadata**).

What are reasons for restricting access to a thesis? → Examples of important reasons

Theses by publication (usually doctoral theses)

Reason: If students intend to use articles, which have already been published, as part of their doctoral thesis, the publishers have to give them the legal right to do so. Usually, the publishers grant this right. Some publishers entitle authors to publish their thesis a second time in this manner according to their policies. If there is no agreement with the publisher that the thesis is published open access, the author has to ask the publisher if an embargo is required.

Practical information about requesting an embargo: The embargo request has to contain a note on the thesis by publication. Any confirmations from the publisher and/or notes on an open access publication have to be enclosed.

Embargo period: Theses by publication usually require an embargo period of no more than 2-3 years.

Patentable outcomes

Reason: A patent application procedure usually lasts 1-2 years. Following the submission of the patent application, the twelve-month term of a patent begins to run. Subsequently, the patent office approves or rejects the patent application. For more information about the procedure, please contact the [Research Services office](#).

Practical information about requesting an embargo: Provide a note in the embargo request if you intend to submit, or have already submitted, a patent.

Embargo period: Patentable outcomes usually require an embargo period of no more than 3 years.

Cooperation with external partners (e.g. companies, public institutions, research centres)

Reason: Before signing any cooperation agreement or any employment contract, students must inform the external partner about the embargo rules (especially about the maximum duration of 5 years for the print copy, and the difference between embargo and access to the full text in the World Wide Web).

Practical information about requesting an embargo: Any concluded agreements, if they are already available at this time, should be enclosed when submitting the application for approval of the topic and supervisor. In any case, they must be attached to the embargo request.

Embargo period: Depends on the agreement reached and must be no longer than 5 years.

Embargo despite data anonymisation

Reason: As part of the application for the topic of their academic thesis, students have to communicate any required protection of information sources for a certain period, even if they intend to anonymise data about interview partners (e.g. if the size of the group of participants would allow to draw conclusions about an individual person; in the case of politically exposed persons). It has to be noted that the temporary embargo option is not a means to resolve the lack of anonymisation. Any legal privacy issues still apply afterwards.

Practical information about requesting an embargo: Include information about the reason why the issue is clarified after the end of the embargo period.

Embargo period: Depends on the required period and must be no longer than 5 years.

Creation of databases, collaboration in projects (with industry partners)

Reason: The academic thesis is part of a larger research project (e.g. aimed at the creation of databases or experimental know-how in groups).

Practical information about requesting an embargo: Any concluded agreements, if they are already available at this time, should be enclosed when submitting the application for approval of the topic and supervisor.

Embargo period: The desired embargo period has to be adjusted to the period of any agreements, including plausible reasons. It must not exceed 5 years.

What are no reasons for restricting access to a thesis? → Examples for invalid embargo reasons

Planned publication

Reason: Any intent to publish a thesis is usually no valid reason for placing a positively assessed academic thesis under an embargo in the libraries of the University of Vienna (and the National Library, if need be).

Exemption: In rare cases, authors, nevertheless, enter into a contract with publishers that require an embargo. However, any contracts with publishers should only be signed after consulting the Directorate of Studies. In this case, realistic or fixed embargo periods (of usually no more than 1-2 years) until an intended publication have to be requested. In general, it should suffice to take the digital version of the thesis offline in order to protect commercial exploitation interests.

Unresolved copyright issues

Reason: Using the material of third parties in the final academic thesis is either subject to the freedom to quote (further information about copyright and use of images are available on the website of the [Office of the Studienpräses](#), in German) or requires the approval from the respective rights holders. This includes, for example, figures, texts or tables in already published works, but also photographs of works of art displayed in museums, audio and video recordings, etc. An embargo on usage of the thesis does not resolve any copyright issues.

When are the approvals due? These approvals must be obtained prior to the submission of the thesis for assessment, at the latest.

How to request an embargo? → Administrative procedure

- Any **desired embargo** (1 year to a maximum of 5 years) has to be communicated when **uploading** the academic thesis. However, this communication only documents the intent to request an embargo.
- The **embargo request (application for blockage) (form SL/W3)** itself must be submitted to the StudiesServiceCenter **when submitting** the print copy of the thesis at the latest. Any contracts or agreements must be enclosed as copies.
- The **reason** for placing an embargo has to be **plausible**. The embargo period has to be as brief as possible.
- The **Studienpräses approves or rejects** the request, acting on the recommendation from the Directorate of Studies, and approves the requested embargo **period (of no more than 5 years)**.
- The approved embargo and the embargo period are entered into the data management system of the University of Vienna (i3v) and into the application to check theses for plagiarism (HoPla). There will also be a note in the print copies. The **embargo period starts on the date of assessment** of the academic thesis.
- **Following the end of the approved embargo period, academic theses** must be published as **print copies**. If the author consented to putting the thesis online, the electronic version of the thesis will also be made accessible as full text version after the end of the embargo period.
- An embargo request is **rejected** by the Studienpräses, by way of **official notice**.
- An approved embargo may be **extended**, but cannot exceed the maximum duration of 5 years.