

PROTOCOL FOR THE SHARING OF UNDERGRADUATE (UG) AND POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT (PGT) DISSERTATIONS

September 2019

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Document attribute	Value
Document title	Protocol for the Sharing of Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Dissertations
Document author	Dr Jason Oakley
Position of author	Associate Dean (Students), Faculty of Science and Health
Department of author	Directorate
Responsible person	Dr Harriet Dunbar-Morris
Position of responsible person	Dean of Learning and Teaching
Department of responsible person	Directorate
Approving body	Student Experience Committee
Date of approval	2nd April 2019: Min 54.1
Review date	September 2021
Edition no.	1
ID code	228
Date of effect	April 2019
Either For public access online (internet)? Tick as appropriate	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

External queries relating to the document to be referred in the first instance to the corporate-governance@port.ac.uk.

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The latest version of this document is always to be found at:

<http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-228.pdf>

Summary

What is this document about?

This protocol has been developed with the University Information Disclosure Team, the University Ethics Advisor, the University Library, the Associate Dean (Students) from each Faculty, DCQE, and the Students' Union. It outlines the protocol for the sharing of undergraduate (UG) and post-graduate taught (PGT) dissertations both within Departments/Schools/Subject Groups and via the Library's Dissertation Database. This is to ensure best practice and maintain compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (the data protection legislation).

Who is this for?

This protocol will be of interest to staff and students and will ensure that the sharing of dissertations is done with appropriate permissions.

How does the University check this is followed?

Monitoring of the submission of dissertations will take place by the library team and confirm that the protocol is being followed. Course leaders will be responsible in Departments/Schools/Subject Groups to ensure that the protocol is being applied.

Who can you contact if you have any queries?

External queries relating to the document should contact corporate.governance@port.ac.uk

If you are internal to the University then please contact your Faculty Associate Dean (Students).

Protocol

What does this protocol cover?

This protocol relates only to students' written work that is submitted as part of their degree at the University of Portsmouth. It does not relate to other final year artefacts, portfolios *etc.* although the guidance herein may help in ensuring compliance with informed consent.

This protocol **does not** replace general University requirements for retention of students' work for the purpose of their studies. For information on this, please see the [Corporate Governance web pages](#).

This protocol **does not** relate to postgraduate research student dissertations for which there are separate rules and expectations.

This protocol **does not** relate to the sharing of dissertations with external partners or agencies where data may have been collected.

Background

There is varied practice around the University in the collection, and future use, of UG and PGT dissertations, so this protocol aims to ensure one set of standards is used across the University. It also allows an opportunity to abide by data protection and intellectual property requirements in that it should be:

- Clear at all times how an individual's personal data will be used;
- Clear where the data is owned by sponsoring organisations, the research is covered by a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) or includes unpublished research of a staff member, the limitations of publishing the assessed work.

UG and PGT students are submitting their dissertations primarily as a requirement of their course, and not to be made more widely available outside of learning activity. It is therefore not appropriate for students' work to be shared for purposes outside of University teaching without permission.

It is not appropriate for UG and PGT dissertations to be made publicly available to an external audience because:

- UG and PGT dissertations are conducted for the primary purpose of education and not research;
- They are not peer reviewed;
- They do not, therefore, necessarily represent robust evidence that should be in the public domain.

This does not mean that the findings cannot be considered for publication at a later date, but any subsequent dissemination should be a separate exercise beyond the educational process of writing the dissertation/thesis.

In addition, there will be circumstances when projects have been undertaken with external sponsors, as part of larger funded research projects *etc.* that mean that the project cannot be shared in this way. It is important that the student understands this as the start of such an arrangement. It is, though,

important that students are able to access a range of examples of previous dissertations to aid their learning.

Protocol for sharing examples of dissertations

- Students should be informed as part of the dissertation assessment information that permission is sought to share appropriate dissertations either at Department/School/Subject Group Level or via the University Library. Both of these repositories are available only to staff and students;
- Consent should ideally be located within the dissertation itself;
- All dissertations should now be submitted digitally and normally in PDF format;
- All dissertations have a Declaration section where students state:
 - I hereby declare that this dissertation is substantially my own work.
- This protocol will change this to:
 - I hereby declare that this dissertation is substantially my own work;
 - I do/do not (please delete as appropriate) consent to my dissertation in this attributed format (not anonymous), subject to final approval by the Board of Examiners, being made available electronically in the Library Dissertation Repository and/or Department/School/Subject Group digital repositories. Dissertations will normally be kept for a maximum of ten years;
 - I understand that if I consent, this dissertation will be accessible only to staff and students for reference only;
 - This permission may be revoked at any time by e-mailing data-protection@port.ac.uk.

The inclusion of this statement is an indication of the student's explicit consent or otherwise to the further processing of their personal data. Therefore, if a student does not include consent in their dissertation, their dissertation **cannot** be held for the purposes of this protocol. It must be made clear to all students that they will neither be advantaged or disadvantages in whether they choose to give their consent.

The criteria for inclusion in the University Library repository should be an award of 2:1 and above for UG and 60% or above for PGT. Individual departments may set a higher threshold if they wish.

The criteria for inclusion in Department/School/Subject Group repositories should normally be an award of 2:1 and above for UG and 60% or above for PGT. Individual departments may set a higher threshold if they wish and this should be communicated to the students at the start of their project module. Some Departments/Schools/Subject Groups may wish to share example of work below this threshold and the same rules would apply.

There may be exceptional examples that Departments/Schools/Subject Groups wish to keep for longer than 10 years and explicit permission from the student must be sought.

- Dissertations that are chosen to be shared at Department/School/Subject Group level should be made available in PDF format on an appropriate Module Moodle site (this might be a module, course or school site);
- Dissertations that are chosen to be shared via the Library should follow the process as outlined at <https://library.port.ac.uk/dissert/policy.php>.
- Whilst dissertations may be kept for a maximum of ten years, it is expected that Departments/Schools/Subject Groups will regularly review the dissertations that are made available for appropriateness.
- As identified previously, there will be circumstances when projects have been undertaken

with external sponsors, as part of larger funded research projects etc. that mean that the project cannot be shared in this way. The Department/School/Subject Group is responsible for ensuring that such dissertations are not used in this way.