



EMBARGO POLICY FOR THESES/DISSERTATIONS

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Southern University and A&M College is committed to the open dissemination of knowledge. As part of this commitment, Southern University requires its graduate students to submit their theses and dissertations to UMI/ProQuest. However, the university recognizes that in some rare situations, release of a dissertation/thesis may need to be delayed. For these situations, Southern University provides the option of embargoing (i.e. delaying release) of a dissertation or thesis for **six months, one year, and two years**. Students requesting delayed release of their work must obtain approval and signatures from the head of their academic department and the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Council must approve requests for embargos that exceed two years.

The following conditions may be deemed reasonable grounds for obtaining a delay:

- The student plans to file a patent based on the research in the thesis/dissertation. Once patent applicants publish their ideas or invention, they have a one-year window. After one year, the applicant's own publication may be considered "prior art" that could prevent the issuance of a patent. Since electronic distribution of your dissertation through ProQuest is publication for this purpose, an embargo will delay the beginning of this one-year time clock against a potential patent application. By selecting a two-year embargo, therefore, you will have a total of three years (2 year embargo plus 1 year window after publication) to submit a patent application.
- The work contains data that the student or other members of his/her research team are using in future publication
- Work in the thesis or dissertation was supported by a grant or contract and is subject to review by the sponsor or grantor prior to publication. You should select at least a six month embargo. If you are unsure whether your research falls into this area, please contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs or the Graduate School.
- Student plans to publish thesis/dissertation and the publisher has indicated that it considers its release "prior publication"

Procedures:

A student who wishes to delay release of his/her work must follow two distinct procedures, one for Southern University and one for UMI/ProQuest.

Southern University Submission Process: First, the student must contact his/her department head. The department head must then sign the embargo form, also indicating the reason for the embargo. The student must then obtain approval and signature of the Dean of Graduate Studies. On approval, the student attaches the embargo form to the Restricted Access form for submission to the graduate school.

ProQuest Submission Process: During the electronic thesis/dissertation submission process through ProQuest, the student must select the embargo option under the publishing restrictions setting. If an embargo has been approved, this step will ensure that public view of the work is temporarily restricted in the ProQuest/UMI Dissertations and Theses database.

Note: If a student does not receive permission for an embargo and/or does not submit the required documentation to the Office of Graduate Studies prior to graduation, the work will be made publicly available through ProQuest/UMI Dissertations and Theses database.

Dissertation defenses are open to the public. In the event that an embargo is deemed necessary for a dissertation, the committee should consider holding an additional question period for the defense that is closed to the public. Any sensitive data can be discussed in the closed session.

PROCESS FOR DELAYING DISSEMINATION OF A THESIS OR DISSERTATION EMBARGO

1. Students must complete and submit to the Office of Graduate Studies Embargo Request Form, available online at the Graduate School website. This form must be completed and signed by the student and his or her advisor at the time of the thesis/dissertation defense.
2. Students **must attach a copy of the journal or publisher's policy** that is the basis of their request for delayed dissemination to their Embargo Request Form.
3. Students submit the Embargo Request form and Restricted Access Form to the Graduate School at the same time that they submit the hard copy of their thesis or dissertation for format checking.