

West Virginia University Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) Access Policy

West Virginia University's land-grant mission includes sharing scholarly works with fellow scholars, students, and the public. Pursuant to this mission, graduate or professional degree candidates who are required to complete a thesis or dissertation must contribute to the advancement of knowledge by publishing their research. Theses and dissertations are typically made publicly available upon degree conferral.

It is expected that graduate and professional students will recognize the value of making their work freely available and will elect immediate release of their thesis or dissertation. In limited circumstances, if deemed necessary by the student and their advisor, students may request to delay the release of their Electronic Thesis or Dissertation (ETD).

WVU permits students to place a campus-only access restriction or, in prescribed circumstances, place a "no access" embargo on their ETDs. A student may not select embargoed status in lieu of obtaining appropriate copyright permissions. An embargo does not mean that no one will have access to the material at all. A record of the work will still exist, and the name, title, and abstract will remain publicly accessible.

Exceptions to Unrestricted Access

- I. **Campus-only access:** The ETD is freely available to the WVU community (current students, faculty, and staff) via login. The ETD can be requested through Interlibrary Loan (ILL) in either electronic or print.
 - A. With written permission from the thesis or dissertation advisor, the campus-only distribution option can be selected for up to two years following the approval date. After this period, the work will be made publicly available unless the student requests an extension.
 - i. Students may request one additional two-year campus-only distribution extension, which will be automatically granted. In limited circumstances, students may request additional extensions in two-year increments. Granting such an extension is at the discretion of the Assistant Provost for Graduate Education Policy or their designee.
 - ii. Requests for campus-only distribution extension must be made through the WVU Libraries no less than 3 months prior to the expiration date to provide adequate time to process the request. Requests made less than 3 months before the campus-only restriction ends may result in your ETD being publicly available. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor their deadlines and request extensions in the appropriate timeframe.

- iii. Typically, no extensions will be granted more than 10 years from original submission.
 - iv. Students may remove the campus-only access restriction at any time by contacting the WVU Libraries.
- B. Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing: Students submitting a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) ETD in Creative Writing are permitted to select permanent campus-only access.
- i. Students may remove the campus-only access restriction at any time by contacting the WVU Libraries.
- II. **No access embargoes:** Secures the entire work from public and campus access. The title, abstract, and associated metadata (date of graduation, degree type, college, department, committee membership) will remain publicly available and discoverable.
- A. Patents and Funder Confidentiality agreements:
- i. Limited to one year from approval but may be extended for an additional year if the conditions specified below are still met.
 - 1. No-access conditions:
 - a. The ETD contains patentable materials with a pending patent application or is under consideration for patent application by the Office of Technology Transfer.
 - b. The ETD contains sensitive information that is protected by a confidentiality agreement with a research sponsor or funding agency which requires a limited embargo before the research can be released.
 - ii. After the no-access period expires, ETDs can be designated for campus-only access for an additional duration, in accordance with the campus-only policy outlined above. The no-access period is considered the first one or two years of the campus-only access timeframe.
 - iii. If a no-access embargo is chosen in accordance with a patent or funder agreement, the copyright owner agrees not to exercise their ownership rights during the embargo period. This includes refraining from using the material in future publications without prior authorization from West Virginia University.

- B. Export Control: Dissertations and thesis subject to export control regulations, such as the International Traffic in Arms Regulations, 22 C. F.R. pts 120-130 or the Export Administration Regulation, 15 C.F.R. pts 730-774.
 - i. No-access embargoes require the authorization of an export control officer.
 - ii. ETDs subject to export control shall be designated permanent non-access.
 - 1. After 2 years, individuals may request access to export-control restricted ETDs. Requests can be initiated through the WVU libraries and will be reviewed by the Export Control Office.
 - 2. Access to an export-controlled ETD must be approved by the Export Control Office. The Export Control Office may impose additional restrictions, such as in-library use.

- III. WVU reserves the right to remove an ETD that:
 - A. Is libelous, an invasion of privacy, infringes upon copyright, or represents a threat to WVU enterprise systems.
 - B. After a finding that the thesis or dissertation is the result of academic fraud or misconduct (e.g. plagiarism).

- IV. WVU reserves the right to place ETDs in a permanent no-access embargo to protect the health and safety of the student or research participants, or to comply with relevant laws (e.g. post-publication classification or changes to export control regulations). If the document cannot be redacted or corrected through an erratum, the no-access embargo as explained above will remain in perpetuity without requests for extensions.

- V. WVU will remove or restrict access to an ETD in response to a valid judicial order.