



Open Access Publishing

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is Open Access?

Open Access is a term used to describe content that a reader can access free of charge. The ultimate goal of open access publishing is to ensure the widest possible distribution of a given publication, such that researchers around the world can easily access important research and analysis.

Why is ProQuest offering an Open Access publishing option?

The movement in academia toward open access publishing has been gaining strength. ProQuest, as a scholarly publisher and steward of graduate research, is supportive of this movement and is providing an Open Access publishing option to all graduate schools.

How much does it cost to publish graduate works on an open access basis?

In addition to the standard fee for Traditional publishing (\$65 for doctoral dissertations, \$55 for master's theses in the U.S.), there will be an additional \$95 fee to support Open Access publishing. The total to publish open access will then be \$160 for doctoral dissertations, \$150 for master's theses in the U.S. The additional fee funds the long term storage and access to each open access graduate work. Please note that these publishing fees are in effect as of the fall of 2008. Publishing fees are subject to change.

When should students publish their graduate works on an open access basis?

It depends on the nature of their research. If they are focused on ensuring the widest possible distribution of their work, or they have benefited from public funding, students would be well served by the Open Access publishing option. It is the best way to ensure world wide access to their graduate research. Conversely, if a dissertation will contain patentable or other sensitive material, they should consider using our Traditional publishing option instead.

Can graduate works with multimedia material be published as open access?

Yes, if the media file types fall into the formats supported. ProQuest supports publishing and storing common file types such as .jpg for images and .wav for audio files. The multimedia materials will be hosted along with the full text PDF on PQDT Open.

Can graduate students choose the Open Access option and embargo access for a limited time?

Yes, graduate students can choose to embargo, or restrict access to, the full text of an open access graduate work for 6 months, 1 year, or 2 years. The embargo begins when the graduate work is submitted to ProQuest (as opposed to when it is published). Should an author feel a need to embargo an open access graduate work for longer than 2 years, ProQuest will work with the author and his/her graduate school to determine the best course of action.

What if a dissertation published as open access contains copyrighted material?

If material covered under another copyright is discovered as part of the publishing process, and the author has not supplied the necessary permission to use it in his/her work, we will not make the graduate work available until the issue is resolved. It is the author's responsibility to supply any necessary copyright clearance at the time of submission.

Will ProQuest sell print or microfilm versions of open access graduate works?

While we will make the electronic version available for free on PQDT and PQDT Open, there are costs associated with creating physical copies, which will be passed on to users. Many readers of dissertations prefer to have a physical copy for a variety of reasons, including the ability to make notes within the manuscript, and the preference for reading a print rather than an electronic version. For this reason we offer the option to obtain physical copies in a variety of formats.

Will authors get royalties for versions that are sold?

No, they will not. When authors choose to publish open access, they waive their rights to royalty payments.

Can authors "retract" their decision to publish open access?

Yes. If an author requests it, we will change the status and remove the graduate work from PQDT Open. In each case, the author will need to pay a republishing fee and sign an agreement acknowledging the change in open access status. ProQuest does not have the ability to remove other digital versions posted elsewhere on the web, including in an institutional repository, and will not be responsible for access changes to those versions.

Can an author who published his dissertation before 2007 opt for open access?

Yes, authors can choose to retrospectively convert their dissertation or thesis to open access. The same additional \$95 fee applies, and the author will need to sign a new publishing agreement with us. Please note that the open access fee is in effect as of the fall of 2008, and publishing fees are subject to change.

Can a library store open access graduate works in an institutional repository?

Yes. By publishing a dissertation as open access through ProQuest, the author gives permission to ProQuest and the university to make his/her work freely available online. In addition, as part of the Open Access publishing option, ProQuest will return a digital copy of the UMI-approved published work, identical to the copy found in the subscription database PQDT and in the permanent Library of Congress collection, for the institution to mount in the repository. Storing a graduate work in your institutional repository is a great complement to making it available in PQDT Open and PQDT. Each provides a unique avenue of access, and increases the “findability” of each individual graduate work.

What if a U.S. library wants to make their backfile of dissertations open access “en masse”? ProQuest has entered into a publishing agreement with each author through which we commit to working to obtain a royalty payment by selling copies of individual graduate works to others in academe. In order for ProQuest to support a project like this, the library must take responsibility for obtaining permission from each author to make each dissertation freely available. Otherwise, we are obligated by our author agreements to sell copies and provide royalties to the author.

Where can I find more information?

Please see the UMI® Open Access Publishing Overview for more information, or contact us at scholarlypublishing@proquest.com with additional questions.