

Institutional Repository Project

Towards Electronic Theses and Dissertations: Briefing paper

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This document **summarises the discussions and recommendations** of the Institutional Repository Project's Electronic Theses and Dissertations Working Group.

The ETD Working Group has **considered issues towards adopting electronic theses and dissertations (ETD)** at the University of Manchester. Professor Nigel Vincent (Associate Vice-President for Graduate Education) is the Group's chairman; Group membership includes representatives from the four academic faculties, the Research Office, the Teaching and Learning Office, the Library, and the Institutional Repository (IR) Project.

The most **prominent reason for adopting ETDs is their increased visibility and impact**. The electronic dissemination of scholarly work is now commonplace. The information held within theses and dissertations in a non-digital format is notoriously difficult to access and often remains invisible. The adoption of ETDs will enable researchers to more easily access, read and cite these important research outputs. This will sustain and enhance the research reputations of University staff and students.

The following summarises the Group's recommendations,

1. submission of an ETD should be made mandatory for all PhD and Masters students
2. postgraduate students would self-submit their ETD using a secure web-based service; PhD students would submit an ETD of their pre-examination AND final 'corrected' thesis; Masters students would ONLY submit an ETD of the pre-examination dissertation; students will have guidance and support for this
3. students would submit their ETD in addition to a print copy; examiners will have access to both
4. students would submit their ETD in a preferred file format (e.g. PDF); students will have guidance and support for this
5. a mechanism is required to ensure the ETD (pre-examination and final copy) is an accurate and verifiable representation of the print copy (e.g. students would be required to generate the print copy from the submitted electronic copy)
6. final 'corrected' ETDs of PhD theses would be made open access by default; options will exist to embargo PhD ETDs inline with current practice for print copies; ETDs of pre-examination PhD theses and Masters dissertations would be embargoed by default; options will exist to make particular Masters dissertations restricted access (i.e. requiring a user logon) or open access
7. examination boards, internal examiners and graduate education administrators will retain responsibility for ensuring submitted theses and dissertations, print and electronic, comply with appropriate quality standards; these will act as a checkpoint for making ETDs open access
8. ETDs will be exposed to plagiarism detection services (e.g. Turnitin) by default; ETDs that have intellectual property or related issues may be hidden from such services

The Group recommended the IR Project initially works towards supporting ETDs of PhD students who complete in April 2009. Following this, the Project will support ETDs for Masters Students in time for the distribution of programme handbooks (modified accordingly) in September 2009. The Group agreed that supporting electronic copies of programme intermediary materials was NOT realistic at this time. The Group recognised the value of having electronic copies of such materials and recommended the Project undertakes a survey of current practices to facilitate future support for electronic submission. Project works will include further communication; trials with students, examiners, administrators and librarians; integration with existing systems/services (e.g. student portal, library catalogue, Campus Solutions). Works will run in parallel with the Library's participation in the UK's EThOS Project led by the British Library. Timescales are currently provisional and dependent on planning and resource availability.

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