

Annex: Confidentiality aspects of the Master's dissertation

Confidentiality can be a legally binding part of research contracts or serve to protect the option to submit an invention application with respect to results obtained in the master's dissertation. Taking care that attention is given to the confidentiality procedures below is therefore a good practice. They are only obligatory in case the master's dissertation is related to research with contractual confidentiality agreements. The application of the confidentiality procedures during the elaboration of a master's dissertation does not invalidate the ultimate intention to make the master's dissertation public in the end. This can be achieved by giving priority to patent protection of results that can be valorised and without extending the embargo on public availability any longer than is strictly necessary. As a norm there is no embargo without valid reasons.

#	Action
1	Submitting the topics in Plato [supervisor/counsellor] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not provide any confidential information Indicate whether the master's dissertation is written in cooperation with a company (if in cooperation with a company an automatic embargo of 10 years is set, but this can be revised, see #8).
2	Presentation of the topics to the student(s) [supervisor/counsellor] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not provide confidential information to the student (this can be done from #3). Point the students to the document 'FEA modalities master's dissertations'. For incoming Erasmus students it is not advisable to offer a topic with confidentiality issues (since it is difficult to verify whether the master's dissertation will not be made public in the home university)
3	Start-up meeting master's dissertation [supervisor/counsellor/student] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make the student sign the confidentiality clause or offer him a non-confidential alternative (www.ugent.be/ea >for students> master's dissertation> confidentiality clauses) The supervisor sends the confidentiality statement to the faculty student administration (FSA) (who marks the event in Plato).
4	Counselling committee [supervisor/counsellor] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-UGent collaborators in the counselling committee sign the confidentiality clause (www.ugent.be/ea > for students> master's dissertation> confidentiality clauses). The confidentiality clause is sent to the FSA by the supervisor (who marks this event in Plato). UGent collaborators are informed clearly of the confidential character by the supervisor.
5	Realisation of the master's dissertation [student] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing respect for the confidentiality issue (no oral or written statements, unless only public information is concerned or unless the supervisor has clearly indicated that the information is not confidential). Remember that students can be included in a UGent invention application.
6	Supervision of the master's dissertation [supervisor/counsellor] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure confidentiality, which may have been agreed explicitly in the research contract in which the student of the master's dissertation is also active. Consider an invention application in order to make something public (www.techtransfer.ugent.be > support for academics). You can always consult the business development managers of UGent and the technology transfer advisors
7	Interim defence [supervisor/counsellor/student] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidentiality results in a 'closed' interim defence (all participants are bound by confidentiality, see #3 and #4).
8	Approval of the title and the counselling committee and decision whether the embargo can be made public [supervisor/counsellor]

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The title is not confidential and cannot contain any confidential information. • Depending on the nature of the confidentiality issues (to which extent is confidential information included in the master's dissertation, to which extent contractual stipulations apply, to which extent patent protection has been applied for) the supervisor sets a possible embargo date or adjusts it in Plato. • Non-UGent collaborators in the assessment committee sign the confidentiality clause (www.ugent.be/ea > for students > master's dissertation > confidentiality statements). • The confidentiality declaration is sent to the FSA (which marks this event in Plato).
9	<p>Final document of the master's dissertation [student]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it is decided by the supervisor/counsellor that the master's dissertation should remain confidential (possibly for a limited time) the confidentiality declarations are also included as described in the guidelines 'Format of the master's dissertation'. • On the master's dissertation's cover page generated from Plato the confidentiality declarations are automatically included.
10	<p>Uploading a PDF version of the master's dissertation in Plato [student/supervisor/counsellor]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student uploads the PDF version in Plato. A possible embargo on public disclosure will have been set already (see #8) and the PDF is marked as confidential (see #9).
11	<p>Hard copy for the assessment committee [student/supervisor/counsellor]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper version is marked as confidential (see #9) and is stored as such by the members of the jury/supervisor/counsellor/student.
12	<p>Final defence [supervisor/counsellor]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality leads to a 'closed' defence (all participants are bound by the confidentiality agreement, see #3, #4 and #8).
13	<p>Inclusion of the master's dissertation in the digital library</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the deliberations the master's dissertations are automatically included in the digital UGent library [$\geq 10/20$ open for UGent, $\geq 14/20$ open access; during a period of embargo the master's dissertations are not visible]. • In Plato the PDF is only accessible by UGent members of staff in the counselling and assessment committees and by the FSA.