Undergraduate and Master's Thesis Deposit to Academic Commons

What is Academic Commons?

Academic Commons provides open, persistent access to the scholarship produced by researchers at Columbia University, Barnard College, Jewish Theological Seminary, Teachers College, and Union Theological Seminary. Academic Commons is a program of the Columbia University Libraries and is available at https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/.

No matter where they live or go to school, visitors to Academic Commons can download the full text of the available research and scholarship without encountering firewalls or fees. Columbia community members can upload their work to Academic Commons to ensure that it is accessible for years to come in the digital collections of Columbia University Libraries.

Academic Commons is one of a growing network of open repositories managed by academic and research institutions and by government and private funders of research. These repositories are part of a larger effort to increase transparency, openness, and equity in research and scholarship practices.

Theses and Dissertations in Academic Commons

Academic Commons holds a growing collection of theses and dissertations written at Columbia. It has been the designated university repository for Ph.D., D.M.A. and J.S.D. dissertations since 2011 and for Ed.D. dissertations since 2018. The repository also holds some older dissertations and collects Master's and undergraduate theses from programs including Historic Preservation, Urban Planning, Sociomedical Sciences, Theater, Economics, and the Institute for the Study of Human Rights.

- Theses in Academic Commons are openly accessible online and are stored in the Columbia Libraries digital preservation system.
- Academic Commons assigns each thesis a Digital Object Identifier (a DOI), which is a persistent link to the repository record. This link is prominently displayed in the record and facilitates citation.
- The repository record for a thesis includes the title, author, abstract, date, originating department or program, thesis advisor, and subjects.
- Theses in Academic Commons are indexed by a variety of online services including Google Scholar.
- Master's and undergraduate programs can work with repository staff to facilitate student thesis deposit. Policies and workflows vary.
- Programs can elect to allow students to place a temporary embargo on their thesis. See below for more details.

Examples

- View doctoral theses in Academic Commons here.
- View Historic Preservation Master's theses in Academic Commons here.

How to Deposit

- Degree programs decide if they want to collect theses or direct students to upload their theses themselves.
- Students can upload theses with the Academic Commons upload form.
- If your program chooses to collect student theses for bulk delivery to Academic Commons, repository staff will coordinate with you on deposit workflows.

Copyright and Licensing Options

- Students own the copyright to their work.
- When they deposit their theses in Academic Commons, they sign a participation agreement that gives Columbia a license to distribute their theses in the repository.
- Most students sign this agreement when they use the Academic Commons upload form.
- Some departments collect thesis files along with participation agreement signatures and deliver them to the repository.
- Students can choose to put a notice about copyright and licensing in the repository record.
  - One choice is to include the notice "In Copyright."
  - Students can also choose a Creative Commons license for their thesis. Creative Commons licenses are a standard way authors can provide copyright permissions to their work.

Copyright Resources

- Information about Creative Commons licenses
- Academic Commons copyright policy
- Columbia Copyright Advisory Services Copyright Quick Guide

Thesis Embargos

A degree program may opt to give students the option of placing an embargo on their thesis. An embargo is a limited period of time (usually one or two years) during which a thesis file is not publicly accessible. During the embargo period, descriptive information about the work is publicly accessible in Academic Commons, but the PDF or other thesis file(s) are not available.

Degree programs have the final word on what, if any, embargoes are available to students. If a student wants to extend an embargo or request removal of their thesis file from the repository, repository staff will refer them to program administrators for approval.

Other Student Works

Programs are welcome to speak with repository staff about policies for other types of works that students may upload to Academic Commons, such as peer-reviewed articles or papers written for a class.

Contacts

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Academic Commons is managed by:
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