

## **Intellectual Property Issues Related to the Dissertation**

The dissertation is the written statement of the research conducted in satisfaction of degree requirements, which forms the basis of the final examination and (in its final form) is intended for dissemination to the scientific community and the public. The content of the dissertation must be sufficient to allow the RAC, in its function as the examining body, to judge the appropriateness of the work and its description as a satisfactory fulfillment of the requirements for the degree. It would not, therefore, be appropriate for a thesis/dissertation project to be research conducted under aegis of proprietary agreement which precludes the timely release of such information. This would limit the information content of the thesis/dissertation to a degree compromising the ability of the RAC to render judgment and potentially restrict the career development of the student. This does not imply that research involving proprietary information and/or content for which intellectual property protection is desirable is excluded from consideration as thesis/dissertation projects.

In most cases, there is an expectation that sensitive information be held in confidence for a defined period (usually twelve months or less) to allow for the implementation of intellectual property protection, which would be compromised by the release of information into the public domain. A procedure to accommodate such circumstances is described below.

However, the details of any particular circumstance will vary and are difficult to anticipate. Ultimately, the RAC holds the authority and responsibility for assessing the content of the thesis/dissertation in satisfying the requirements for the degree and serving as the basis for judging the qualification of the student. It is thus imperative that the RAC be consulted by the RA as soon as such issues arise.

### **Inclusion of Proprietary Information in the Dissertation**

Should circumstances arise wherein the dissertation document includes information deemed proprietary, restriction of the use and dissemination of such information may be arranged by the advance written consent of the involved parties. This would normally include the student, the RA, members of the RAC, including individuals who are privy to such information by virtue of their participation in the conduct of the Final Examination and the PD. Such written consent should include constraints on the dissemination or use of information as appropriate and may take the form of a Confidentiality Agreement, recognizing that signatories to such an agreement undertake any legal obligations entailed.

To protect the proprietary nature of the information, the completed and approved dissertation document will not be released for archival storage in the institutional library system pending written approval by the RA and Student, nor will the document be submitted for public dissemination. The completed dissertation, including all signature pages and forms required for archiving the document (including the submission of copies for binding) will be held in the Office of Research School of Dentistry pending receipt of the written release. The RA and Student remain responsible for the submission of the document to the University Library System. Except in extraordinary circumstances, the delay in submission of the document for release into the public domain should not exceed 12 months from the date of the successful completion of the Final Examination.