e-Thesis Archiving: A Report and Training Resources

The OBF Project recognised that the archving and preservation of eThesis was as areas of significant concern, with the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) identifying eThesis as an endangered object in need of further study.

This has led to two major pieces or work - conducted in conjunction with the DPC - a report on eThesis archiving practices and an Open Education Resources Pack to help train and better inform university repository managers.

A report of a related discussion about e-Thesis Preservation held at iPRES2026 is also available here.

- eThesis Archiving Report
- Preserving e-Thesis Resources Pack

eThesis Archiving Report

Based on conversations with library staff from 5 UK institutions, a survey of Doctoral students, a survey of university library and academic registry staff, and online semi-structured group interviews with doctoral college and library repository staff across 5 institutions).
Findings include: a general skills gap regarding digital preservation of e-theses amongst repository and library staff, for staff and students, a perceived lack of written policies to help them to understand the key concerns relating to digital preservation of e-theses, debates about who should be responsible for the preservation of e-theses.
The report includes detailed policy recommendations, including that doctoral training regarding data management and digitally preserving e-Theses should be mandated to be made available to both doctoral researchers and PhD supervisors. To that end the associated training pack developed by the DRC will provide a helpful resource.

The full report can be downloaded here:
Cole, G., Fry, J., Maynard, S., & Turpin, H. (2026). A Study of the digital preservation of e-Theses within UK universities. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19921160

Preserving e-Thesis Resources Pack

The **Preserving e-Theses Resources Pack**, developed by the Digital Preservation Coalition in partnership with the Open Book Futures project, provides practical, flexible guidance to help universities support the long-term accessibility and use of doctoral theses.

As theses become increasingly digital—and often include data, multimedia, code, and web-based content—ensuring they remain accessible and understandable over time presents new challenges. While universities are generally responsible for preserving theses, the way they are prepared and submitted can significantly affect access, use, and reuse in the future. These resources are intended to help staff involved in the PhD submission process understand the need for digital preservation of e-theses and to support students in this area.

The Resource pack can be freely accessed directly from the DPC website:
https://www.dpconline.org/digipres/prof-development/preserving-e-theses-resource