

Finding a Master's Thesis or Doctoral Dissertation

Karen E. Kalnins

Reference Librarian

Oklahoma City University Law Library

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Introduction

Using a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation can be helpful when researching a topic because the author has already completed extensive original research. While not considered primary legal authority, theses or dissertations can assist you when writing a law review article or research paper.

Once you find a citation or other information about a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation your next step is to locate the actual item.

OCU Law Library Resources

The OCU Law Library has electronic resources available to assist you with your search for theses and dissertations.

Worldcat-If you have specific information about the thesis or dissertation, then you can search and request items via Interlibrary loan from this database. You can access this database [here](#).

Hein's Listing of Legal Theses and Dissertations-Only available at the OCU Law Library, you can search this database for information about theses and dissertations published at law schools.

UMI Dissertations search- From this [portal](#) you can search and purchase dissertations published in the U.S.

Other university sites-Some universities have set up their own searchable theses and dissertation databases. To access these, you must go to the specific university and see if they have an accessible catalog of electronic theses and dissertations.

General Internet search-If you have searched in all possible databases and cannot find the thesis or dissertation you need, try doing a general Internet search using your favorite search engine.

Steps to take when looking for a thesis or dissertation

I. You must find a thesis or dissertation that fits your topic from a bibliography or database. The OCU Law Library has the American Bar Foundation Index to Legal Theses 1961-63 at KF1.A48. The OCU Law Library has Hein's Listing of Legal Theses and Dissertations available electronically in the OCU law library.

You can also search ProQuest Dissertations or Dissertation Abstracts. Although the OCU Law Library does not subscribe to these databases, you may be able to access Dissertation Abstracts at the University of Oklahoma or Oklahoma State University. Please contact the OU and OSU libraries to see if on-campus access is available for non-students.

If you cannot access either dissertation database, you can search in an academic union catalog (a joint library catalog of various academic institutions), Worldcat (the world catalog), or a freely available electronic thesis database such as the one set up by [California Technical University](#) . Lastly, remember to check [Dissertation Express or UMI](#) .

II. After you have located a relevant thesis or dissertation you will need to find the hard copy or full-text electronic version. Finding this may be complex or simple, depending on where the thesis or dissertation was published, if you can request it via interlibrary loan, or if it is available for purchase.

A. To submit an Interlibrary loan request, go to the [OCU databases page](#) and select WorldCat. From here, you can search for and request the thesis or dissertation you need. If you cannot find the title or author in WorldCat, consult a librarian and we will assist you.

B. If it is not available through interlibrary loan, you can suggest that the library purchase it. You can submit your suggestions [here](#).

C. If you want to keep the thesis or dissertation then purchase it, if available. If you cannot order directly from the university, try [Dissertation Express or UMI](#).

Foreign Theses and Dissertations

Finding a foreign thesis or dissertation may prove slightly more challenging than one published in the U.S. First, you need to know in what language or country that thesis or dissertation was published. Once you know this, you can look for a search portal in that language, from that country, or from a specific university in that country. Fortunately, some countries have established searchable databases for students' theses and dissertations.

Below are some foreign country/language thesis and dissertation portals.

Center for Research Libraries-Foreign Doctoral Dissertations

[CRL](#) offers you a searchable [database](#) of uncataloged doctoral dissertations.

Canada

[Theses Canada](#) is a searchable portal for Canadian theses. From this page you can [search](#) all theses published in Canada and choose to borrow or purchase the one you need.

Australia

[Australasian Digital Theses Program](#) provides a list of all the universities in Australia. You can [search](#) the theses and dissertations published in Australia and New Zealand from this site.

France

You can [search](#) this database of French dissertations by selecting the catalogue link. [TEL](#) is a multidisciplinary thesis server or serveur de these multidisciplinaire that you can search for a French language thesis or dissertation.

German

[German dissertations online](#) gives you information about how to order German dissertations. [Deutsche National Bibliothek](#) is the German National Library which has a [searchable catalog](#). [Die Oesterreichische Bibliothekenverbund und Service](#) offers you the ability to [search](#) Austrian theses and dissertations.

Italian

[Tesionline](#) lets you search for Italian language theses and dissertations.

Portuguese

[University of Coimbra](#) gives you the ability to [search](#) for dissertations located in the library's catalog. [DiTeD](#) provides a searchable database of Portuguese dissertations and theses. [IBICT](#) is a searchable database of theses and dissertations published in Brazil. [Saber](#) lets you access Portuguese language theses and dissertations from the University of Sao Paulo.

Spanish

[Biblioteca Virtual](#) offers a searchable collection of Spanish language dissertations. [Tesis Doctorals en Xarxa \(TDX\)](#) gives you the option of searching all participating Spanish universities or a specific university. [Universia](#) is a portal for various Spanish universities. To search library collections, select the Bibliotecas link. [Centro de Informacion Y Documentacion Cientifca](#) gives you the option of searching for theses and dissertations published in Latin America.

Other Pathfinders and Resource Guides

Due to the complex nature of finding foreign theses and dissertations other libraries also have finding aids. Listed below are a few useful samples.

[University of Chicago Library](#)

[UCLA Library Guide](#)

[UNC University Libraries](#)

Sources used included resource guides from the University of Chicago Library and the UCLA Library.

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