

Guidelines for Thesis by Publication (Series of Published Papers)

Higher Degree by Research Students

These Guidelines should be considered in conjunction with Rule 10: Degree of Doctor by Research and Rule 11: Degree of Master by Research. These documents are available on the ORD website at http://policies.curtin.edu.au/legislation/internallegislation/statutes_rules.cfm.

1.0 Who should consider preparing a thesis in the style of a series of published papers

- 1.1 Publishing papers during candidacy is highly regarded in some fields of study. Candidates whose future careers would benefit from having several papers published during their candidature should consider this type of thesis.
- 1.2 Candidates whose research area involves several relatively discrete stages, topics or components that could form the basis for a series of papers may consider this type of thesis. Candidates whose research degree is based on creative practice should consider preparing their thesis in the form of creative work(s) and exegesis.
- 1.3 The decision to present a thesis as a series of published papers needs to be made early in candidacy and with advice from the candidate's Thesis Committee.
- 1.4 Once a decision is made to undertake a thesis by published papers, attention to thesis format needs to be considered in conjunction with the relevant sections of the Rules. (See Section 5, "The Rules".)

(Please note that a thesis in the style of a series of published papers is different from the 'hybrid' style of thesis, as outlined in section 10.)

2.0 Benefits of publishing during thesis candidature

- 2.1 Experts in the field who are external to the University will referee the work, thus providing valuable feedback to the student.
 - 2.2 Writing for publication provides a track record which will benefit the candidate if they opt for a career in academia or research.
 - 2.3 Publishing may enhance a candidate's career prospects, particularly if the discipline places a high value on published papers.
 - 2.4 Publishing provides opportunity to co-author papers with other academics, either within the University or with associate supervisors external to the University.
 - 2.5 Preparing papers for publication is likely to lead to additional opportunity to present work at conferences.
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3.0 Issues to consider carefully

- 3.1 Identifying the most appropriate journals to approach for publication is important and should be discussed with the candidate's supervisor and Thesis Committee. Publishing in journals that have a high impact factor will carry more weight with examiners and potential employers.
- 3.2 Candidates who have published previously may find this type of thesis more suitable than the student who has no publishing experience.
- 3.3 Guidance early in candidature, especially from the supervisor, is essential as the diversity of disciplines on a range of issues (such as publishing timeframes) needs to be considered.

- 3.4 Some journals take a long time to finalise the review process and waiting for papers to be accepted can delay thesis submission. Time management and selection of journals/publishers is critical.
 - 3.5 Writing a thesis in a book-length manuscript form enables the learning of a set of valuable skills that are different from those learned when writing a series of papers.
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4.0 Suggested Format of Thesis by Series of Published Papers¹

4.1 Title Page

4.2 Declaration: "To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university."

4.3 Abstract

4.4 Acknowledgements

4.5 List of publications included as part of the thesis

4.5.0 List all of the included published work with the full bibliographic citations in the order they appear in the thesis. If necessary, include a statement that the publication is refereed and provide the evidence in an appendix.

4.5.1 Provide a statement at one end to indicate that permission regarding copyright has been obtained from publishers, where necessary. For example, the statement may say "I warrant that I have obtained, where necessary, permission from the copyright owners to use any third-party copyright material reproduced in the thesis (e.g. questionnaires, artwork, unpublished letters), or to use any of my own published work (e.g. journal articles) in which the copyright is held by another party (e.g. publisher, co-author)." (See Section 8.1.)

4.6 Statement of Contribution of Others

4.6.1 The purpose of this statement is to summarise and clearly identify the nature and extent of the intellectual input by the candidate and any co-authors. The statement must be signed by the student and supervisor. A written statement from each of the co-authors must be provided to the University Graduate Studies Committee via the Thesis Examinations Officer separately at the time of submission of the thesis and should be included as an appendix in the thesis. (See Section 5.14.)

4.7 List of additional publications by the candidate relevant to the thesis but not forming part of it

4.7.1 List additional publications and conference presentations which have relevance to the thesis, but are not included in it. List these alphabetically and chronologically.

4.8 Table of Contents

4.9 Introduction and Overview

4.9.1 An introduction, or explanatory overview, is required to link the published papers together so that a coherent story is told. This may include sections for Literature Review, Research Design and Review/Discussion. Not all of these sections may be necessary. Choose the format that tells the "academic argument" in the most coherent way so that the contents of the thesis are established as a substantial and significant body of work, but without unnecessary repetition.

¹ This format is particularly suited to empirically-based research. The student contemplating a thesis by publication from other disciplines/other methods should consult closely with the Chair of his/her Faculty Graduate Studies Committee, and through her/him, the Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Training to devise and receive approval for a comparable format.

4.10 List of References

4.10.1 List all references cited in the Introduction and Overview.

4.11 Published papers

4.11.1 An original reprint of each paper must be bound directly into the thesis, or photocopied on A4 size paper. Papers should be separated by a sheet of coloured paper on which is stated the full bibliographic citation of the publication.

4.12 Appendices

4.12.1 Appendices may include statements from co-authors, permission letters regarding copyright, evidence supporting refereed status of publications such as conference papers, and acceptance of papers which have not yet appeared in print.

4.13 Bibliography

4.13.1 List all references cited in all papers included in the thesis.

5.0 The Rules

5.1 The provisions of Section 11 (Thesis Submission for Examination), subsection (e), parts (i) – (vi) of *Rule 10: Degree of Doctor by Research* have been reproduced in text boxes and italic type below. These provisions for doctoral degrees are identical to those within *Rule 11: Degree of Master by Research*, with the exception of sub-section (e)(v) which has been extracted and included from both Rule 10 and Rule 11. The information following each text box provides supplementary guidance/explanation.

- e (i) *a full explanatory overview shall be included to link the separate papers and to place them in the context of an established body of knowledge;*
- (ii) *a literature review shall be included;*
- (iii) *If detailed data and descriptions of methods are not otherwise given, they shall be included as appendices;*

5.2 The explanatory overview, or exegesis, will comprise an Introduction, and possibly three other sections with the headings: Literature Review, Research Design and Review/Discussion. An exegesis presents an academic explanation of the submitted work and/or a description of the linkages between the works, thus presenting the thesis as a coherent whole. It will identify a theme that focuses on a particular topic area, placing ideas in the broader context of the field of study, and identify the main contribution of the research to knowledge. In the case of both a doctoral and masters degree, the entire thesis must, in the opinion of the Examiners, be a substantial contribution to the knowledge or understanding of a field of study and demonstrate the capacity of the candidate to conceive, design and carry to completion independent research. The Doctoral candidate should uncover new knowledge either by the discovery of new facts, the formulation of theories or the innovative re-interpretation of known data and established ideas.

5.3 The Introduction must establish a coherent and logical framework for the research. It must state the research problem/question, the specific aims and overall objectives of the research, the design of the research project and explain how the papers are linked. This is important to provide continuity for the reader. The introductory chapter must be entirely the candidate's own work (that is, no joint authorship). It must demonstrate original and independent critique of other research relevant in the field of study and place the candidate's research in the context of current knowledge.

5.4 The Literature Review must contain a clear statement of the significance of the project aims, a critical review of relevant literature, identification of knowledge gaps, and the relationship of the literature to the research program. If the published papers include a comprehensive coverage of the relevant literature, then a short section within the introduction chapter which overviews (and references) key ideas from the literature will suffice. If the published papers together provide a more limited or piece-meal literature review (perhaps because of journal page limits), then a more substantial literature review will be required and may form a separate section of the exegesis.

- 5.5 Research Design: If the published papers contain detailed data and a full description of methods/ approaches used, then an overview of the research design may be provided as part of the Introduction. Sometimes, due to journal space limits, full data/results may not appear in the included papers. If extensive, these data or results may be included as appendices.
- 5.6 The Review/Discussion section must integrate the significant findings of the thesis, identify the limitations of the research and highlight future directions. The review chapter must be entirely the candidate's own work. If there are separate sections for the literature review and research design, this section will also be separate, otherwise it will be the concluding section of the introduction.
- 5.7 The overall aim is to provide the examiner with a full and coherent story of the research program without unnecessary repetition. The body of most theses by publication will contain first the introduction (serving the purpose of the explanatory overview), covering points 5.3 – 5.6, and the published papers.

e (iv) *Only papers published in refereed scholarly media and based on research conducted during the period of enrolment may be included in a thesis submitted in the form of a series of published papers. However, papers which have been accepted for publication in such media but have not yet appeared in refereed scholarly media may also be included as part of the thesis;*

- 5.8 Publications prepared/researched prior to enrolment in the Higher Degree by Research may not be included.
- 5.9 Papers submitted for publication and still under review may not be included (this includes papers under revision following referees' reports) – only those accepted for publication may be included (even if not yet published).
- 5.10 Conference papers published in conference proceedings can only be included where there is evidence of full paper peer reviewing. Proof of this will be required.
- 5.11 Only full papers may be included, the publication of only an abstract is not acceptable.

Extracted from Rule 10: Degree of Doctor by Research

e (v) *The number of papers submitted should be sufficient for the body of work to constitute a substantial and original contribution to knowledge;*

Extracted from Rule 11: Degree of Master by Research

e (v) *The number of papers submitted should be sufficient for the body of work to constitute a substantial and original contribution to knowledge;*

- 5.12 There is no set number of published papers; as a general guide the suggested minimum number is 4 or 5 substantial papers. It is expected that the papers are the result of research that is substantially the candidate's own work, albeit under the supervision of the Thesis Committee. The candidate is expected to be the lead author, however, in different disciplines, students may not be the sole or first author, but may still be acknowledged as having made a substantial contribution to the paper. How many papers are needed will depend on the overall objectives and the contribution the combined body of work makes to the discipline. It may also depend on the length of the papers, and what contribution the candidate has made to co-authored papers. It is also better to have papers published in high impact journals than in low impact journals.

(Also refer to the *Information Regarding Authorship and Joint Authorship* available online at <http://research.curtin.edu.au/postgraduate-research/current-research-students/student-policies-and-procedures/>)

e (vi) *Any published paper of which the candidate is a joint author may only be included in the thesis provided the work done by the candidate is clearly identified. The candidate must provide to the University Graduate Studies Committee at the time of submission of the thesis a written statement from each co-author attesting to the candidate's contribution to a joint publication included as part of the thesis.*

- 5.13 The thesis should have a section at the front titled "Statement of Contribution by Others" (see 4.6).

- 5.14 The written statements of the co-authors may take the following form and copies of these statements should be included as appendices at the end of the thesis:

To Whom It May Concern

I, *[Full Name of Candidate]*, contributed *(insert details of the Candidate's contributions to each component of the research reported in the publication)* to the paper/publication entitled *(insert reference details)*.

(Signature of Candidate)

I, as a Co-Author, endorse that this level of contribution by the candidate indicated above is appropriate.

(Full Name of Co-Author 1) *(Signature of Co-Author 1)*

(Full Name of Co-Author 2) *(Signature of Co-Author 2)*

(Full Name of Co-Author 3) *(Signature of Co-Author 3)*

6.0 Style

- 6.1 The publications forming chapters in the thesis should be exact copies of the journal publications. If not already printed on size A4 paper, they will need to be copied to this size. See also the section on "Copyright" below.

(Note: Published papers are not reproduced in the digital version of the thesis that is lodged with the Library as part of the Australasian Digital Thesis project).

7.0 Bibliography

- 7.1 The Bibliography will include, in one place, all of the references cited in the published papers together with any additional references cited in the exegesis. Although this may be repetitive, research indicates that examiners like to peruse a reference list, often prior to reading the thesis, so it is a courtesy to have the references all in one place which can be referred to easily.

8.0 Copyright

- 8.1 The candidate must check with each Publisher whether or not there are any restrictions regarding copyright, format and style before inclusion of the paper in the thesis. When papers are published the copyright is usually assigned to the journal, therefore the candidate must take steps to avoid copyright infringement. Laws may differ from country to country, therefore it is important to check with each publisher. This should be done at the time the paper is accepted for publication. The candidate must also indicate in the thesis that they have obtained permission from the Publisher, as follows:

I warrant that I have obtained, where necessary, permission from the copyright owners to use any third-party copyright material reproduced in the thesis (e.g. questionnaires, artwork, unpublished letters), or to use any of my own published work (e.g. journal articles) in which the copyright is held by another party (e.g. publisher, co-author).

Copies of the permission statements should be included in an appendix to the thesis.

A sample letter requesting permission to reproduce material in a thesis is available online at <http://copyright.curtin.edu.au/research/higher-degree-theses/>

- 8.2 An electronic copy of your final thesis must be deposited in espace (the University's institutional repository). Your thesis likely contains material where you have transferred your copyright to a commercial publisher. This means, for those parts where you do not hold copyright, you will need to seek copyright permission from publishers in writing to include these parts of your thesis copy in espace. If you are unable to obtain permission to lodge those parts where you do not hold copyright, you will need to omit those sections from the copy made available in espace. For guidance in seeking permission, please refer to the Copyright at Curtin website <http://copyright.curtin.edu.au/research/higher-degree-theses/>.

See also 'Guidelines for the Submission of Digital Thesis of Higher Degree by Research Students' at <http://research.curtin.edu.au/postgraduate-research/current-research-students/student-policies-and-procedures/>.

9.0 Quality

- 9.1 It is recommended that the candidate publish in refereed journals of high quality within their discipline/field.
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10.0 The Problem of Delayed Publication

- 10.1 These Guidelines provide advice relevant to a thesis that is presented in the format of a series of published papers (see Section 11 (e) of *Rule 10: Degree of Doctor by Research* and *Rule 11: Degree of Master by Research*) which is an alternative to a typescript, the most common thesis format [see Section 11 (b)-(d)]. Given publishing delays it may be difficult to achieve sufficient publications (i.e. papers are at least 'accepted for publication') during the period of candidature (4 years full-time equivalent for Doctoral and 2 years full-time equivalent for Master by Research). There is however another option that is essentially a 'hybrid' or amalgamation of the two formats.
- 10.2 The 'hybrid' format is predominantly a typescript format, and is submitted as a typescript, containing some chapters which are papers submitted, but not yet accepted for publication, or even one or two which have been accepted for publication but are insufficient by themselves. If considering this 'hybrid' format, the candidate must ensure that the thesis as a whole forms a coherent and cohesive narrative. It is important to avoid repetitive passages and to organise chapters into a logical and cogent sequence. A footnote at the beginning of any chapter that is a paper, either submitted or accepted, should explain its status, and also the contribution of any co-authors. Such chapters may benefit from editing to avoid redundancy and repetition and assist the "flow" of the thesis.