

Guidelines for paper-based dissertations

Students may, in consultation with their supervisor and supervisory committee, opt for either a traditional-format or a paper-based dissertation. Traditional and paper-based dissertations contrast mainly in terms of the “body” of the dissertation—that is, the portion between the introduction and conclusion. A traditional dissertation is a monograph consisting of chapters. A paper-based dissertation includes an introduction and conclusion chapter, but the documents in-between are independent papers in journal article format, rather than chapters that are not necessarily independent documents.

1. Overall format

The paper-based dissertation includes introduction and conclusion chapters, as well as a certain number of chapters consisting of papers in journal-article format. Three papers is the most common number, but the actual number of papers included in an individual dissertation can vary at the discretion of the supervisory committee. A student may include one or both General Papers in the paper-based dissertation.

2. Paper format and content

Papers should be independent documents, following the commonly used format for journal articles in the relevant sub-discipline. For example, APA-style papers are comprised of introduction, method, results, discussion and reference sections. Papers must be thematically related such that the contribution to knowledge emerges across the papers as a body of work.

Papers may or may not be published at the time of the Doctoral Examination, but papers must be in publication or journal article format following the norms of the linguistic sub-discipline. Note that length of paper is part of these norms. If the paper is published, students are responsible for obtaining copyright permission to include the paper in the thesis, if this is necessary.

Publication or acceptance for publication of research results before presentation of the dissertation in no way supersedes the evaluation of the publication by the supervisor, the supervisory committee, the External Examiner for the dissertation, or the Final Doctoral Examining Committee. Inclusion of published material in the dissertation does not guarantee that the dissertation will be found acceptable for the degree.

Papers may be co-authored or represent collaborative work; however, the student should be the first author of all the papers and hold primary responsibility for the conceptualization of the study, analyses, interpretation, and writing. Variations on the first-author policy may be permitted in exceptional circumstances if the supervisory committee allows it; this permission must be given in writing, along with the rationale for the variation, to the Associate Chair - Graduate for inclusion in the student's file, and may be subject to review at the Departmental level. A description of the role of the student and the other authors in all co-authored work must be given in the Preface, as required by FGSR regulations.

3. Introduction and conclusion chapters

The introduction chapter to a paper-based dissertation must outline the dissertation and clearly state the background to the research, and should contain a clear statement of the research question(s). The introduction will also include a general literature review of the area(s) relevant to the dissertation as a whole; where appropriate, review of literature specific only to individual papers may be deferred until the chapters containing those papers. Some overlap or redundancy between the literature review in the introduction chapter and the papers is likely to occur.

The conclusion in a paper-based thesis should state clearly the contribution to knowledge represented by the dissertation as a body of research, and should put forward or recap the important conclusions to be drawn from it. The conclusion must, implicitly or explicitly, demonstrate that the papers form a thematically-related body of work which represents an original contribution to the discipline or sub discipline in which the dissertation is written.

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