



Guidelines for candidates, supervisors and examiners on the 'PhD by Publication' format

Background

The format of PhD by publication is now available in most Irish Universities and has been an option across a number of European countries for many years. DCU's *Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees by Research and Thesis* provide for submission in the format of published work with accompanying chapters. Candidates considering submitting in this format should consult the regulations in addition to this document.

There are potential advantages to choosing to submit in this format. They include the wider dissemination of research results, fostering a habit of publishing among doctoral candidates and access to external feedback during the doctoral project (through the review process). This must be balanced against the advantages of a monograph which more readily supports the development of a sustained argument, with inclusion of a synthesis of the relevant literature and an integrated discussion of the methodology. It is worth bearing in mind that the PhD by publication format does not suit all research projects, or discipline areas, and students must consider the potential duration of peer review and publication processes when choosing to submit in this particular format.

The Standard of a PhD

It is important to understand that, irrespective of what format is chosen for the submission of research leading to a PhD award, the standard by which the work is evaluated remains the same. Examiners will consider the coherence of the work, the appropriateness of methodologies used, the rigour of analysis, the quality of presentation, the significance of the contribution to new knowledge, the candidate's contribution to the various aspects of each publication and the quality of the candidate's defence of the thesis at *viva voce*.

While the collection of publications constitutes the main body of the thesis, and is thus immensely important, candidates must be aware that the examiners' judgement of the entirety of the thesis is the sole determinant of the outcome. Even with a collection of publications in high quality journals, the thesis overall may be deemed to fall short of the required standard. The chapters which accompany the published papers play an important role in ensuring that examiners are convinced that the work presented as a whole meets the standard of PhD, especially with regard to articulating the coherence of the work and the role the candidate played in collaborative work.

Decision to submit using the ‘by publication’ format

The decision to opt for this format should be made jointly by the candidate and the supervisor(s). It is important that supervisors provide guidance with regard to the potential duration of the peer review and publication processes. Doctoral candidates may not have a good understanding of this and be unduly delayed in submitting for the award by deciding to submit in this format.

If possible, candidates should indicate at a relatively early stage that they intend to submit in this format. For most students this means at transfer/confirmation stage; in the case of students directly registering as PhD candidates, towards the end of year 2 for a full time candidate (or equivalent for part-time candidates). The transfer/confirmation stage provides an opportunity for the student to report specifically on the current status of publications, outline future plans for publications he/she feels are needed and to provide a summary of what the overview will contain. At the transfer/confirmation process it may also be appropriate for the candidate to consider presenting any report/presentation as part of this process in the “by publication” format. This may include a suitably sized summary, perhaps with manuscripts rather than published/accepted papers, since the transfer/confirmation process is expected to happen in a timeframe such that the publication process may not have reached the accepted/published stage.

Publications

Publications which can be included are limited to those which are based on work undertaken during the student’s period of registration. Excluded publications are those which essentially report the same data or findings to separate readerships, and conference papers which are not the final dissemination of the work concerned. While some overlap is expected, repetition between papers should be minimal, and each paper must be distinct and contribute uniquely to the overall thesis. The rationale for selecting the papers and the inter-relationship between papers should be clear.

The number of publications included as part of the thesis submission will vary by discipline, however, a minimum of three papers is required. Other papers with smaller or more specific contributions can be included where this makes sense in terms of overall coherence. While the regulations stipulate that novel contribution should be apparent in at least three of the papers in which the candidate is main or key contributor, there is no ‘formula for success’ in terms of the number of publications included. The criteria candidates and their supervisors should use in judging whether the number of papers is sufficient are the same as the criteria applied to all PhD submissions, and relate to the substance of the contribution to new knowledge made by the candidate.

Publications are defined as having been “accepted for publication” on the basis that written confirmation from an editor has been received of acceptance of the paper in its final form. Only peer-reviewed published book chapters or papers (or papers accepted for publication) in reputable journals or other peer-reviewed reputable publications for the discipline(s) in question can be included. It is the candidate’s responsibility to provide evidence of the standing and peer reviewed status of a publication. However, care should be taken that the depth of examination of work during peer review may vary depending on journal title, audience, conference standing etc. A paper having been peer reviewed does not diminish the examiners’ rights to judge the overall contribution as falling short of what is required to merit the award of

PhD.

Declaration of Authorship

In the case of papers involving multiple authors, each named author must be declared by means of the Declaration of Authorship form. This form states and validates the nature and extent of the candidate's contribution to individual papers and should preface each co-authored 'paper' chapter. The extent of the candidate's contribution to the work must be clear and significant and the expectation is that the candidate will be the paper's lead author and key contributor. However, it is accepted that disciplinary differences will apply in this regard.

The candidate's declaration of authorship of his/her contribution to the work should be verified in all cases by the principal supervisor. In some cases, it may be appropriate for this verification to be given by both the principal supervisor and the lead/corresponding author of the work, where this is not the candidate or the supervisor. Candidates are advised to refer to the DCU Code of Practice on Authorship for further information¹.

This Declaration of Authorship form should be bound with the other submitted materials at the examination submission stage only. This declaration is not required at the final hardbound stage.

Presentation of the Publications within the Thesis

All published work should appear in manuscript/thesis format (rather than as journal-ready files, e.g. the PDF file with full journal formatting), and full citation details for the work, including a URL link to the journal and ISSN number, where available, should be provided². There does not have to be an exact correspondence between the published and thesis versions, though generally it is expected that they will be very similar. Slight variations e.g. due to changes made at galley proof stage, may be present, but generally the final accepted manuscript will be the document included. This way of presenting also facilitates noting of corrections and revisions to the papers after examination. These should take the form of separate detailed Appendix to the final thesis document rather than being made to the text of the PhD itself, since it will contain articles that have already been published. Corrections to the 'non-paper' chapters can be made by revising it in the usual manner for monographs.

In line with university policy, PhD theses submitted in 'by publication' format will be made available on the DCU DORAS electronic repository, subject to the same procedures as monographs. It is important that any issues relating to Intellectual Property and Copyright are resolved prior to submission of the thesis, just as for monograph-format submissions. Confirmation of copyright permission(s) should be included in the appendix to the thesis. Candidates submitting for PhD by publication are required to ensure the prior agreement of the journal editor or publishers to the deposit of the published material in the DCU Institutional Repository DORAS³. An embargo can apply to theses submitted in the PhD by publication format,

¹ https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/policy/169%20-%20code_of_practice_on_authorship_v1.pdf

² The inclusion of final format (normally PDF) copies of the published work in an Appendix to the thesis is problematic due to varying views on copyright issues across different publishers

³ Publishers may be reluctant to allow PDFs of the final versions of papers etc on DORAS. However, they may allow variant/early (e.g. Word) versions. Even the latter depends on publishers, so candidates should seek prior approval from the editor or publisher as appropriate. The following text may be useful, and should be modified to suit the specific context: 'I am contacting you to enquire whether you permit articles published in [insert journal name] to be

as it can for the traditional monograph, should it be necessary to secure the agreement of publishers.

Structure of the PhD by publication thesis

A PhD by publication follows the structure of a conventional PhD (monograph) in that it begins with an 'Introduction' chapter and closes with a 'Conclusions' chapter, with each paper presented as a separate chapter in between. The work may also include, where necessary, an integrative discussion chapter and conventional thesis chapters which present elements of the research project not covered by the papers. The 'non-paper' chapters play a key role in presenting the thesis as a unified body of work and carry a minimum word count of 10,000 words (papers excluded). These chapters should evaluate the contribution the research makes to the advancement of knowledge in the research area and provide a reflective and evaluative commentary which focuses on the broader significance of the published works.

Note the following:


- The critical introduction to the work should set the papers in the context of existing literature, provide an explanation of the scope and objectives of the work and the chosen methodology, and include a detailed overview of the theme(s) common to all papers included in the thesis.
- Each paper/chapter should be prefaced by linking/connecting text which situates the paper within the thesis and maintains the thesis narrative. Published papers should be included in manuscript format and paginated in sequence with the rest of the thesis⁴. Papers do not have to appear in chronological order but should appear in cogent sequence.
- The conclusion should be integrative in nature, drawing on the research project as a whole. It should provide a critical synthesis of the overall contribution of the work to the research area and emphasise the coherence of the publications provided in this regard.
- A full set of references is required.
- The maximum word-count for the thesis in its entirety is 90,000 words (including papers and references, not including appendices).

External Examiners

These guidelines and the relevant extract from the regulations should be provided to potential external examiners at the first stage of (normally informal) contact, so that they can evaluate whether they are comfortable with undertaking the task of examination of a thesis in this format.

uploaded to DORAS, the non-commercial, open access Institutional Repository at Dublin City University, Ireland (<http://doras.dcu.ie>). I would like to submit an article which, if published, would be included in my PhD thesis, and publication in DORAS is required in order to conform to DCU regulations concerning publication of thesis content.'

⁴ PDF proofs of published papers should not be incorporated into the body of the thesis.

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Graduate Studies Office		 DCU
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