

Thesis by Publication Examiners' Guidelines



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These guidelines are intended to answer many of the questions commonly asked by examiners of Higher Degree Research theses by publication at Macquarie University. Presenting a thesis as partly made up of articles prepared for publication has many benefits for a student, both professional and academic, and Macquarie University is keen to support it as an option for Higher Degree Research students. **Broadly speaking theses by publication are subject to exactly the same examination criteria and standards as any other thesis, and examiners are asked to address identical criteria when examining different types of theses.** Macquarie University is aware, however, that certain questions can arise in the examination process which can lead to uncertainty or confusion on the part of examiners.

Eligible Material

A thesis by publication may be made up of papers, including conference presentations, which have been published, accepted, submitted or prepared for publication, for which the research has been undertaken during enrolment.

Presentation

The papers should form a coherent and integrated body of work, which should be focused on a single thesis project or set of related questions or propositions. These papers are part of the thesis, rather than a separate component, or appendix. Although it is not necessary to reformat published works in a thesis, it is not enough simply to bind these publications together. The candidate needs to include a critical introduction to the work, sections that link the papers together, and a concluding section that synthesises the material as a whole. In some cases, a larger expository component can provide the framework for the papers, and the thesis may include chapters not in journal paper format. Examiners must consider the coherence of the thesis as a whole, and the way in which each paper contributes to the overall thesis.

Number and Presentation of Papers

Each discipline will have a different number of publications that are acceptable as the substantive foundation for a thesis by publication. As a general rule a candidate will need to have enough papers to support the important research findings, presented in a logical and coherent way. These papers will normally form thesis chapters and the chronological publication order may be quite different from the way they are sequenced in the thesis. The length of the papers will reflect discipline requirements and journal guidelines.

Contribution by Co-Authors

These papers may be single author or co-authored. Where a paper has multiple authors, the candidate would usually be the principal author. The candidate must specify his/her specific contribution to each paper. The contribution of others to the preparation of the thesis or to individual parts of the thesis should be specified in the thesis in an Author's Statement. Examiners can then assess if the quality and extent of the candidate's contribution warrants the award of the degree based on the normal criteria.

Additional or Supplementary Material

Where journal publication word limits preclude inclusion of primary data and other supplementary material arising from the research, candidates are advised to include this information in the thesis, either as additional section(s) in the relevant chapter, or in an Appendix.

Repetition

Although a thesis by publication may contain some repetition, it is expected that the repetition be minimal.

Style

Candidates are not required to re-format already published articles, which may lead to inconsistencies in style and referencing.

Revision

As part of the examination process, an examiner may ask that any material in the thesis be revised before the degree is awarded. The fact that parts of the thesis have been published or accepted for publication is no obstacle to them being revised by the candidate at the request of an examiner. Such revisions may be made to the manuscript, if not yet in final published form, or by additional text in the relevant chapter of the thesis.

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