

Extract from 'Guidelines for Preparation, Submission, Examination and Dissemination of Research Degree Theses'

Appendix 2: Production of Alternative Thesis Format

Introduction

The Academic Regulations note that a Supervisor may make arrangements for the examination of theses presented in alternative formats. These guidelines refer to the alternative format described as:

“a collection of papers of publishable/peer reviewed standard, describing a coherent programme of research, accompanied by a critical and theoretical overview of the work presented in the papers” (UCD Academic Regulations).

Please note that this document presents high level guidelines on this thesis format. Examination Candidates, in Schools that use this format, should ensure that they take guidance from their supervisor/Research Studies Panel (RSP) on local norms and practices regarding the number of papers, quality of papers and, where relevant, acknowledgement of shared research with other researchers.

Note: These guidelines apply to the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), the Doctor of Medicine (MD), Research Masters and to Professional Doctorate degrees.

Principles of Alternative Thesis Format (Thesis as a Collection of Papers)

1. Decision on Format

Examination Candidates should take guidance from their Principal Supervisor and RSP in deciding the thesis format. It is recommended that the decision is discussed at early RSP meetings and the final decision is made when the Examination Candidate's research is well advanced.

2. Originality, Authorship & Acknowledgements

In line with the University requirement that doctoral research is 'original research', the Examination Candidate should normally be the sole author, or the lead/primary author of papers to be included in the thesis. In some disciplines sole authorship is the norm. In other disciplines, where research is typically undertaken within a research group overseen by the Supervisor(s) or Principal Investigator(s) the papers will include the supervisor(s) as author(s). Where papers have been jointly authored or multi-authored, the nature and extent of the Examination Candidate's contribution and the contribution of any co-authors must be described in detail using the 'Acknowledgement of Authorship Form'. It is recommended that the Examination Candidate discuss College- and/or discipline-specific authorship guidelines with their Principal Supervisor and RSP.

Please note: Acceptance of a paper in a peer-reviewed journal is not a guarantee of the candidate being successful in the examination, as the thesis examination is a separate process. PhD Examination Candidates are examined by viva voce examination and must be able to explain all data presented in their thesis, irrespective of the primary ownership of that data.

3. Number of Papers

It is recommended that a research master's thesis would normally comprise a minimum of two publishable papers and a doctoral thesis would normally comprise three or more publishable papers. However, it is acknowledged that a 'normal' number may vary across specific disciplines. If it is not possible to identify at least two publishable papers, that can form the basis of a thesis of an appropriate length, then the 'traditional' monograph thesis format would be more appropriate.

The term 'publishable' means that the papers do not necessarily need to have been published. The papers can be drafted for submission to a peer-reviewed journal or submitted to, under review by, undergoing revisions for, accepted by, or published in a peer-reviewed journal.

4. Thesis Structure

- i. As in a traditional monograph, candidates pursuing this alternative format should provide an overview of the thesis as a whole and a separate discussion of the research findings. Therefore, typically the thesis will – as appropriate to the discipline – describe the rationale for the research, include a literature review or theory chapter contextualizing the research, a separate methodology chapter as appropriate, and a concluding or discussion chapter. It is recommended that candidates discuss word or page limits for the introductory and concluding chapters with their supervisor(s) and Research Studies Panel, as norms will vary across disciplines.
- ii. Published papers should not normally be included in the body of the thesis as pdf files, but instead should be adapted so that font and spacing is consistent and uniform throughout the thesis.
- iii. Narrative review papers that provide background material may be included, but only if the candidate is the first author. Review papers generally do not count as original contributions unless they are systematic reviews or contain meta-analysis of data.
- iv. Methods papers may be included as original research where new methods have been developed by the candidate as part of their research degree.
- v. Candidates should be aware of copyright issues and discuss these with their supervisor(s) and RSP members. To avoid copyright issues, it is sometimes appropriate that the penultimate version of a paper accepted for publication – rather than the final version – be adapted for inclusion in the thesis. Candidates should include digital object identifiers (DOIs) to link to forthcoming or published papers, so that these may be easily accessed by the examiners.

UCD is a signatory to the National Principles for Open Access and all research degree theses completed at the university are automatically made public following the award of a degree unless a Thesis Embargo has been put in place. See [Research Thesis Embargoes Policy](#) for further information.

Acknowledgement of Authorship Form

This form must be completed for each paper to be included and placed in front of that paper in the thesis. The purpose of this is to ensure that shared authorship is appropriately explained in a thesis. A word version of this document is available on the [Graduate Studies Document Repository](#).

1. Examination Candidate Details
Examination Candidate Name:
Examination Candidate UCD Student Number:
Research Degree for which thesis is being submitted:
Title of Research thesis:
2. Details of the Paper
Title of Paper:
Current Status of the Paper: <input type="checkbox"/> Drafted <input type="checkbox"/> Submitted. <input type="checkbox"/> Under review <input type="checkbox"/> Under revision <input type="checkbox"/> Accepted for publication <input type="checkbox"/> Published
Name of Journal (if known):
Digital Object Identifier (if published):
AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
Part A: Contribution of Examination Candidate: <i>The overall percentage contribution must be specified, as well as a full description the Examination Candidate's intellectual and practical contribution to the research presented in the paper. Each section of the paper should be listed separately i.e. Introduction, Methods, Figure 1, Table 2 etc.</i>
Percentage Contribution of Examination Candidate to this paper: _ %
Description of Examination Candidate's contribution for each section of paper: (Max 500 words):
Part B: Contribution(s) of Co-Authors to this paper: <i>Outline briefly the contribution of all co-authors to the paper.</i>
Note:
1. <i>The combined contributions should be 100%.</i>
2. <i>The signature of a co-author is not required, if their contribution is < 10% of the paper.</i>

Co-Author 1	
Name of Author No.1	
Contribution of Co- Author No.1	% Contribution:_ <i>Brief outline of contribution: (Max 200 words)</i>
Signature of Co-Author No.1	
Co-Author 2	
Name of Co-Author No. 2	
Contribution of Co-Author No.2	% Contribution:_ <i>Brief outline of contribution: (Max 200 words)</i>
Signature of Co- Author 2	
Co-Author 3	
Name of Co-Author 3	
Contribution of Author 3	% Contribution:_ <i>Brief outline of contribution: (Max 200 words)</i>
Signature of Author 3	
Add more Co-Author details as required.	

Submission Date for Thesis <i>Date thesis is submitted to the University for examination</i>
Signature of Examination Candidate

If you have a query about this document, contact details for the GRB supports for School can be found at <https://www.ucd.ie/graduatestudies/graduateresearchboard>.