

## Information for doctoral students thinking of submitting an alternative format thesis

If you are registered on an MPhil, PhD, EdD, DHealth or DBA programme at the University, you have the option to submit a thesis that includes publications. Thesis submissions of this type are permitted in UK and international Higher Education Institutions under a variety of names. You may have heard of an integrated submission, an article based thesis, or a thesis with publications.

For guidance on how to write a thesis of this type see QA7 appendix 6: Specifications for Higher Degree Theses and Portfolios <http://www.bath.ac.uk/quality/documents/QA7-Appendix-6.pdf> .

If you still have questions after reading the guidance, your supervisory team will be able to help.

### What are the benefits?

You might find that writing a thesis that incorporates publications:

- reduces time spent rewriting material from thesis chapters into publications (or vice versa)
- enhances your writing-for-publication skills
- increases your competitiveness upon entering the academic job market.

### Is it open to all students?

Only to those registered on the MPhil, PhD, EdD, DHealth and DBA programmes. For a definitive list of the format(s) of work permitted for each programme see Regulation 16 <http://www.bath.ac.uk/regulations/Regulation16.pdf>

## Deciding which format to use

### Do I have to write an alternative format thesis?

No, this is an option. You can submit a 'traditional' chapters-based thesis. It is your responsibility to decide which format you wish to submit your thesis in, and when to submit your thesis.

Talk to your supervisors about the way you would like to write up your research findings. Drafting up an outline publication strategy early in the planning stages of your research studentship is a good way to get started. If you need to speak to somebody outside of your supervisory team, you should approach your Director of Studies.

Once you have decided, please record this in your 6-monthly progress reports. Doing this **does not commit you** to one writing style, but will provide the University with a way to monitor uptake of this new option and learn more about when writing style discussions and decisions occur.

### I want to write my research findings up into an alternative format submission. Do I need approval?

No. Your supervisory team can provide advice and will carry out a critical reading of the draft thesis, but you do not need their, departmental or faculty approval of your choice of writing style.

### I am planning to eventually submit a thesis that includes publications, so should the content of my Confirmation/Transfer report reflect this?

Your supervisor can advise you on what is required for your confirmation report. The content of your Confirmation/Transfer report does not commit you to a particular format for your thesis.

## Academic papers

### **Can I use a mix of published/publishable papers and traditional chapters?**

Yes, the alternative format thesis may include both published/ publishable academic papers (and book chapters) linked together with commentary text, and accompanied by traditional results chapters.

### **Can I just submit a collection of papers without having to write a thesis?**

No. The alternative format submission is simply a different way of presenting your research data in a thesis (coherent argument). You will still be assessed on the existing criteria (you should be familiar with Regulation 16 as a whole, and the five assessment criteria that your thesis needs to meet in particular).

An alternative format thesis should encompass the same scope and amount of research work as would be presented in a traditional chapters-based thesis. Presenting a thesis consisting of academic papers with little or no contextualising or commentary text will very likely result in failure. The production of an alternative format thesis will still require you to write new text to link each of your papers together and produce a coherent overall thesis/argument.

### **I have included a published paper in my thesis. Given that it has already been peer reviewed, does this mean that the examiners will not question me about its content, or will refrain from requesting revisions to this part of my thesis?**

No. You may be examined on any of the material included in the thesis. The examiners are entitled to specify revisions to any part of the thesis text presented for examination, including those parts already submitted or published. Under these circumstances, the necessary revisions will be incorporated into the commentary text for the publication. Although one of the criteria against which your thesis will be judged is that it must contain material worthy of peer-reviewed publication, inclusion of published material into a thesis does not guarantee assessment success, as the thesis must also meet the remaining award criteria (listed in Regulation 16).

### **I have further data that I would like to include in my thesis which were not included in my published paper(s), can I include them?**

Yes. Academic papers are often subject to a strict word limit which does not apply to a thesis. They are also usually focussed on communicating the successful outcomes of a period of investigative research. The commentary text is the place to include any preliminary or background data that supports your academic paper, or to discuss methodologies tried and tested, experimental failures and negative results that shaped and developed your research thinking (thesis) along the way. Alternatively, any of your research findings not written into an academic paper may be written into an additional conventional chapter.

## Data access statement

### **Where can I find out more about how to include a data access statement with each published paper?**

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/research/data/sharing-reuse/data-access-statement.html-old>

## Collaborative Work

### **Can I include the publications from a collaborative project that I have been involved in, even if I am not the first author/am part of a large team of authors?**

Yes. You can include co-authored papers in an alternative thesis submission but a substantial part must be your original work. Therefore you will need to clearly outline what contribution you made to the ideas, research work, and writing of the paper. This is declared on the statement of authorship form, which must accompany each academic paper (or book chapter) included in the thesis.

Please be aware that you will be examined on all of the material included in the thesis, as this may affect your decision to include co-authored papers. Please also note that, where inclusion of a multi co-authored academic paper would be inappropriate or artificial, you should write about your contribution to the research work within a conventional chapter. Your supervisory team will discuss with you whether it is appropriate to include your collaborative publications.

**I worked on a collaborative project alongside another PGR student from my research group, and we'd both like to include the resulting publication in our thesis – is this allowed?**

Yes, as long as each time the paper is used it is accompanied with a statement of authorship. This will help the examiners to determine the contribution the individual student made to the collaborative paper.

## Copyright

**Will writing an alternative format thesis that includes draft versions of academic papers (or book chapters) affect my ability to publish this work later on?**

Custom and practice across the publishing world is not uniform. Whilst some publishers, such as Elsevier, have a policy that specifically states that publishing as part of a PhD is not considered prior publication, and most big publishers are either willing to publish work that has appeared in a thesis or leave the decision in the hands of the editor, there are some exceptions to this rule. Candidates are advised to carefully consider including any pending publications in their thesis, and to inform the journal/book editor that a draft form of the text is included in your thesis, and referencing the e-version of the thesis (which will be publically available via Pure once you pass your examination).

**Do I need to do anything prior to submitting a paper (or book chapter) that I intend to use in my thesis in the near future to a journal (or book editor)?**

You should inform the editor that you intend to include the text as part of your thesis in the future (which will be publically available via the university's Institutional Repository). The editor may permit you to use the paper or chapter, or may ask you to apply restrictions to your thesis to delay it becoming publically available. You can apply to do this using the restriction of access to a thesis form, PGR7. If you are permitted to use the text, you may utilize your 'author's accepted manuscript' also known as the 'Authors' final version' in the thesis.

**How do I include in my thesis material that has already been published?**

Copyright for published material will be held by the publisher, or authors. You are responsible for obtaining the necessary permission from the copyright owners to include the material in your thesis. Publishers will usually have a copyright contact, or a general contact listed on their website. Written consent from the editor or authors granting permission for its use should be inserted before each academic paper (or chapter). If the journal editor permits use of the academic paper in your thesis, you may use the journal formatted version of the academic paper and insert this into the thesis. If they specify that you must use an earlier version of the paper, you should use that instead.

Where possible please ensure that the page numbers tie in with the rest of the thesis document, where this is not possible, you should insert an extra page before the academic paper which shows the citation details and gives the page numbers of the thesis that the academic paper covers.

If you are unable to obtain permission, then the material should be written as a conventional chapter.

Example letter to a publisher:

Dear Sir/Madam, I am a PhD student at the University of Bath, writing my PhD thesis by publication. I am the author of the following article(s) published by you and would like permission to include them in my thesis: [Insert full reference for the work/s]. The

thesis will be held in the university's library and an electronic copy will be publicly available on the university's institutional open-access research repository. All works will be appropriately referenced within the thesis. Can you please let me know if it is possible to reproduce these articles in this way and if there are any conditions associated with their reuse? Kind regards

## Content

### **How many papers should I include?**

There is no limit or maximum number of academic papers (or book chapters) that may be included. Your supervisory team will provide advice about how much material is sufficient for an alternative format thesis, just as they would if you were writing a traditional thesis.

### **Can I include the results of research work done prior to my registration date?**

Possibly. Your thesis (regardless of format) must be the result of work done mainly whilst you are registered at the University (for the Degree currently being sought). Therefore some earlier or preliminary work may be included in the thesis, where appropriate. Talk to your supervisor about this, and remember that your thesis should be a cohesive whole on a common research theme or topic. Where the thesis includes material already submitted for another degree, the extent of that material, and the degree obtained, must be stated.