

# THESIS FORMATS

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For further information regarding thesis formatting, including details of the required declarations, see the [Graduate Research Thesis Examination Guidelines](#). Refer to the [Thesis Examination Format Guidelines](#) for examples of different thesis formats.

### **Does a thesis have to include publications?**

No. The format of your thesis and whether it includes publications depends on your discipline and thesis content and structure. Appendix A provides a number of examples of thesis formats that do and do not contain publications.

### **Do all papers have to be published?**

No. As shown in the example thesis formats in Appendix A, the thesis can contain a mixture of published papers and also traditional thesis chapter. But whatever the format ***the thesis must be an integrated and coherent body of work.***

### **Does the candidate have to be first author of all papers?**

A candidate must have made a substantial contribution to any papers that are included in a thesis submitted for examination. The nature and scope of that contribution must be documented in the co-authorship statements submitted with the thesis.

It is expected that the candidate will be the first author of publications included in a thesis submitted for examination, although there may be appropriate exceptions to this expectation. In all cases the substantial contribution of the candidate for each publication must be detailed in the co-authorship form.

It is ***imperative*** that a candidate's thesis demonstrate to the examiners that the thesis embodies ***his/her*** research and that accordingly the candidate should be awarded the relevant qualification. If the candidate's contribution to the research is not substantive then it is difficult for examiners to work out his/her contribution and hence whether he/she is deserving of the degree for which the thesis has been submitted. It is possible that the research embodied in a thesis meets the standards required for the relevant qualification but no single author merits that award.

### **Where do you place the co-author contribution statements for each paper?**

A separate statement must be included for each co-authored paper included in the thesis. These statements can be included after the contents page, in an Appendix or the relevant statement included individually at the start of the relevant chapter.

Where non-published co-authored papers are included in a thesis (e.g., manuscripts under review or in preparation; see Example 3 in Appendix A) a co-authorship statement must also be included.

### **The candidate published work which is relevant to his/her thesis prior to enrolment in the qualification. Can this published work be included in the thesis?**

Papers published up to three years prior to enrolment may be included provided they were published in scholarly media and do not represent more than 50% of the total papers.

### **The candidate produced several publications during candidature. Can these just be bound together and submitted for examination?**

No; the thesis must be an integrated and coherent body of work. The submitted thesis must include, as a minimum a general introduction and discussion chapters in addition to the publications – see Example 7 in Appendix A. As appropriate each paper may also need a brief introduction putting it into the context of the overall thesis.

### **Can part of a publication but not the entire publication be included in the thesis?**

Yes, but it must be cited correctly. The preface to the thesis should acknowledge the source of

the information and the candidate's contribution to the publication from which the information is drawn. The entire publication may be included as an appendix so that examiners can see where the information came from in its wider context.

**Can text written for a publication be included in the thesis even if the publication is not appropriate to include in its entirety in my thesis. How is this text included without self-plagiarizing?**

The text must be cited correctly – just as if quoting text from a publication from other authors. The preface to the thesis should also include a statement in that the text on page/s xx is from [name of publication], its publication status and the candidate's contribution to that publication. The entire publication may be included as an appendix so that examiners can see where the information came from in its wider context.

**If the thesis includes publications as thesis chapters, is additional material allowed?**

Yes. For example, it may be necessary to include methods chapters to augment the publications included in the thesis, noting the typical space restrictions for journal articles. Data omitted from the publication may be included as addenda to the publications.

**What happens if more relevant literature comes to light after publication?**

Some writers just put the new literature into the introductory literature review, and let the original article stand. Others add an addendum to the literature review chapter with an update on recent work on the topic. For example:

*'As 3 years have elapsed since the publication of the original review, Part B provides greater detail and additional recent information that was unavailable when part A was published... While the arrangement of this section is purposely similar to part A, there is very little overlap of content in the two chapters; thus part B completes the literature review'.*

**What if a publication has not been accepted or published by the journal by the time the candidate is ready to submit the thesis for examination?**

If a manuscript is under review at the time of thesis submission, it can be included as a thesis chapter (see example 3, Appendix A), including as appropriate a co-authorship statement. The preface to the thesis should indicate that the manuscript in Chapter X is currently under review and provide details of the journal to which it has been submitted.

Thesis submission should **not** be delayed to await publication acceptance: some journals have long peer-review timelines.

**Are there any copyright issues to consider?**

If a thesis contains material that has been published elsewhere by the candidate (e.g. journal articles) [written permission](#) from the publisher is required in order to include the material in the thesis, even though it is the candidate's own work!

The information sheet on [Copyright in your Digital Thesis](#) contains further advice. University of Newcastle Library staff can also provide advice on seeking permissions.  
<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/library/research/copyright/>

**How can a candidate self-reference?**

Here are some examples of how writers reference their own work:

- *In more recent work [Smith et al., 1993; Jones & Smith, 2001], our group has described ...*
- *In a recent comprehensive systematic review, we found that none of these factors has been investigated prospectively ... (Jones & Smith, 2001)*
- *Previously, we reported...(Smith et al., 1993); our aim in this study was to investigate*

**How many reference lists are needed and what is the appropriate format for references?**

A complete reference list of all material cited in the thesis must be included. Where PDFs of

published work are included in the thesis the reference lists can be included (but those references must also be included in the overall thesis reference list too). For submitted or non-published papers individual reference lists should not be included as multiple reference lists within a single thesis reduces coherence and readability for the examiners. Referencing in the thesis should be compatible with conventions in the candidate's discipline.

### **How long should a literature review be?**

This depends on whether the literature review is included in the introductory chapter or is included as a separate (second) chapter. In the first option, the chapter tends to be longer because it needs to include more. If there is a separate literature review chapter, the Introduction can be much shorter.

### **A literature survey is included in each of the papers. Is an additional literature survey required?**

Yes. All theses, whether they contain publications or not, must have a literature review that clearly details the research question and a general discussion that integrates the published work.

### **What should the General Discussion Section look like?**

The thesis must contain an **overarching** discussion of the main features of the thesis including the principal significance of the findings, problems encountered and future directions of the work. The discussion **should not include a detailed reworking of the discussions from individual papers within the thesis.**