Thesis as a Series of Papers

Graduate Research School Seminar
Research Supervision Professional Development Program
Background

• Changing nature of employment
  – Developing ‘workplace ready’ graduates – able to navigate changes in research direction, publication & collaborations

• Pressure to publish
  – Competition for postdoctoral positions

• No national / international agreement
  – Variation in thesis format rules & examination criteria
  – Variation in definition of Thesis as Series of Papers
Advantages

- Career progression
  - Track record of publication during candidature

- Thesis
  - “Write as you go” approach
  - Mentoring in publication
  - Peer review prior to examination
  - Potentially efficient thesis production
Suitability

Not all projects, students or disciplines are suited to thesis as a series of papers (TASP)

- Project may not divide up neatly into interconnected, publishable units
- Publication commitments – time, effort & compromise
- Examiner(s) may not be familiar with, or supportive of, thesis as a series of papers OR inclusion of published material within a thesis
Common Misconceptions

• Students can write a number of published papers, bind them together and submit the bound papers for examination

• Choosing to format a thesis ‘traditionally’ precludes students from publishing during candidature

• Students that indicate in their research proposal that they plan to submit their thesis as a series of papers are committed to this path

• Students who submit their thesis as a series of papers have a separate set of thesis and examination rules

• Students who submit theses as a series of papers are at higher risk of an adverse outcome
UWA Thesis Rules
http://handbooks.uwa.edu.au/course-rules#id-69908

• Thesis can be presented as a monograph or series of papers
• Thesis can include publications, manuscripts, unpublished work
• Work can be presented as published or reformatted
• Theses a series of papers must have an introduction and discussion
• Work included in thesis must have been substantially completed by the student during candidature
• Examination of the thesis is the examination of the student’s work
UWA Guidelines
http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/students/thesis

» Style and format - Formatting requirements and advice

» Thesis as a series of papers - Formatting a thesis as a series of published papers or manuscripts
Many candidates organise their thesis as a series of papers.

These may be papers that have been published, manuscripts that have been submitted for publication but not yet accepted, manuscripts that could be submitted, or any combination of these.

There are several advantages to organising a thesis in this way:

- It resolves the conflict between preparing the thesis for examination and preparing papers for publication, because they amount to the same thing. You need not feel that when you are spending time on your papers you are running out of time to prepare your thesis.

- It increases the probability that you will publish the work from your thesis. This is not only to your advantage, but also that of your supervisor(s) and the University.

- If you have reviewers’ comments on your papers before submitting your thesis, you can use this feedback to improve your thesis. This is not only good for the quality of your thesis but also for your confidence. By the time you submit the thesis for examination, at least part of it will have been subjected to the scrutiny of experts other than you and your supervisor(s).

- Having part of the work published prior to examination establishes it as worthy of publication, which is one of the criteria for thesis examination. The larger the proportion that is published, the easier it is...
## Examination Criteria

http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/staff/forms#thesisexam

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<th>SCORE</th>
<th>CRITERIA FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY - THESIS</th>
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<td>The thesis as a whole is a substantial and original contribution to knowledge of the subject with which it deals.</td>
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<td>The student shows familiarity with, and understanding of, the relevant literature.</td>
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<td>The thesis provides a sufficiently comprehensive study of the topic.</td>
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<td>The techniques adopted are appropriate to the subject matter and are properly applied.</td>
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<td>The results are suitably set out, and accompanied by adequate exposition.</td>
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<td>The quality of English and general presentation are of a standard for publication.</td>
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Do students commonly include publications in their thesis and what type?*

*2014-5 study of theses submitted for examination in 2012
How many theses are formatted as a Series of Papers?

- Traditional - No Publications
- Traditional - Published in Parallel
- Hybrid
- Thesis as Series Papers - Unpublished or Partially Published
- Thesis as Series Papers - Fully Published
How many publications are included?
Co-authorship
http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/students/thesis/style#main

- Majority of publications in theses are co-authored
- Students are encouraged to include only lead author publications
- Possible for 2 students to include the same co-authored publication in their theses - declarations of contribution should not overlap significantly
- Co-authors need to be aware that publication is incorporated in thesis and approve the student’s declaration of contribution
6. Authorship declaration

Your thesis needs to include a declaration page.

If your thesis includes published work or work prepared for future publication, details of the work and where it appears in the thesis.

For published work with multiple authors, the contribution of the student to give permission for the paper to be included in the thesis. If not, sign a statement on behalf of the co-authors.

A proforma for the front pages of the UWA thesis is provided below. Complete published work, sole author published work or co-authored published works.

A template for those students who use LaTeX is also available [here](http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/students/thesis/style#main).

### Authorship declaration: Co-authored publications

This thesis contains work that has been published and/or prepared for publication.

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<th>Details of the work:</th>
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<td>Co-author signatures and dates:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Student signature: [insert signature]
Date: [insert date]

I, [insert name of coordinating supervisor], certify that the student's statements regarding their contribution to each of the works listed above are correct.

Coordinating supervisor signature: [insert signature]
Date: [insert date]
Common questions

Can I reformat the publications?
Should I have consistent fonts, consecutive numbering of headings, titles, figures?
Can I add extra text to the publication?
Can I delete text from the publication?

Do I need a separate literature review and/or methodology/methods chapters?

• ~83% have a literature review chapter
• ~30% have a separate methods chapter
• ~18% add a preamble or introduction to each paper

Should I use a consistent referencing style?
Should I have a consolidated reference list?

• ~57% have a single consolidated reference list
• ~34% have reference lists at the end of each chapter
• ~9% do both
Workshop

Part of Thesis Writing workshop for students uses high quality theses with publications to explore variations in thesis format.
Common problems

Examination
- Disjointed – inadequate linking of ‘research units’
- Incomplete – inadequate background, rationale, justification of methods, data not shown, discussion
- Repetitive – redundancy in introduction and/or methods

Copyright
- At submission of final version to UWA research repository – permission required to reproduce published papers in public version of thesis
- [Thesis can be embargoed for up to 1 year (and ongoing on a year by year basis) to protect students who wish to publish post completion but publisher views publically available thesis as pre-publication concern].
Examination

- Theses without Publications
- Theses with Publications
Further Information

UWA Handbook: HDR Rules
http://handbooks.uwa.edu.au/course-rules#id-69908

UWA Thesis Examination Forms & Guidelines http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/students/forms#thesisexam

UWA PhD and Masters Examination Criteria
http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/23333/PhD-ERF.pdf

UWA PhD and Masters Information provided to Examiners

GRS Thesis advice
http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/students/thesis

UWA Library Copyright and Higher Degree Theses
http://guides.is.uwa.edu.au/HDRtheses_copyright

UWA Library Open Access Toolkit
http://www.library.uwa.edu.au/research/open-access-toolkit

Graduate Education Officer Contact details
http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/students/resources/officers

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/18146627.2017.1340802