



The Faculty of Humanities' Guidelines for an Article-Based Doctoral Dissertation 2022

Traditionally, doctoral dissertations in the field of Humanities have been monographs, but it is also possible to write a dissertation composed of several articles around one distinct topic and a summary section. An article-based dissertation of this kind must be equal to a monograph both in workload and in academic value. To ensure this, the author of the dissertation must discuss the format of the thesis with his or her supervisor in the early stages of the project. When the dissertation is established to be article-based right from the beginning, the research process itself becomes more manageable. For example, it is possible to synchronize the progression of the research to the articles' publication plan.

Structure and Scope

An article-based doctoral dissertation consists a minimum of four articles (depending on the length of the papers) and a summary section. A minimum of three of the articles must be published or accepted for publishing so that the publisher no longer requires any changes to be made (in which case the fourth article must be submitted but the acceptance may be pending).

When the dissertation is presented for pre-examination, it must be accompanied by a list of the works in which the articles have been published or accepted for publication. Furthermore, when co-authored publications are included, the postgraduate must submit a written statement explaining the nature of his or her independent contribution to these publications. This information must be included in the summary section of the dissertation in a clear and distinct manner.

The Articles

The articles that constitute the dissertation must be published in peer-reviewed publications. These include national and international academic journals and edited volumes.

The set of articles should be planned with care. Each article must contain new information and contribute to the study as a whole. As published articles may not be altered after the publication to ease the compilation and summarizing of the thesis, minor repetition is allowed.

An article-based doctoral dissertation may contain one peer-reviewed review article at most. The article cannot merely be a literature review or a summary: it must produce addressable new research-based information, such as a methodological contribution or a meta-analysis of previous research. The suitability of a review article as a part of the doctoral dissertation is to be discussed with the supervisor. In the discussion, the supervisor determines whether the review article fulfils the requirements for the inclusion of the article in the dissertation.

When planning the publication schedule for the articles, it is advisable to be as specific as possible and to learn the publication processes and schedules of the publishers of interest. It should be taken into consideration, that the writing processes of the individual articles, including the referee feedback and finalization, are bound to overlap. Also, the acceptance for publication and the issuing of the publications will affect the overall research project and the completion of the dissertation. The supervisors' input in seeking and choosing the suitable publishers is essential.



As a publishing agreement is being drawn up with a publisher, the doctoral candidate should ensure that they still have the right to republish the article as part of the doctoral thesis. If the publisher sets a time period within which republishing is forbidden (embargo), it should not contradict the planned schedule of the dissertation defence.

The articles bound for the dissertation do not expire. In case that the publication process is prolonged and the author or the supervisor feels that a part of the article is outdated, it is advisable to address this concern in the summary section of the thesis, which includes an evaluation of the results.

The articles may be written in different languages. The choice of languages will affect the selection of the pre-examiners and the opponent, which should be taken into consideration when choosing the languages and publishers for the articles.

Co-authored articles

An article-based doctoral dissertation may be partly or entirely composed of co-authored publications. In this case, it is essential to clearly document and define the postgraduate's individual input.

The contributions of the postgraduate may be stated both in the article itself as well as in the summary section of the dissertation. In any case, the postgraduate's personal research input must be clearly and adequately presented in the summary. In case a co-authored article is included in the dissertation, but the article has not yet been accepted for publication, the postgraduate must obtain the co-authors' permission to use the paper in his or her thesis.

Prior to the pre-examination, the postgraduate must present the whole of the dissertation to his or her supervisors, including a statement of his or her contribution to the co-authored articles. This way the supervisors may estimate, whether the postgraduate's input to the study matches the standards of a doctoral dissertation.

The account of the postgraduate's contribution to the study is also essential to the pre-examination. The pre-examiners (and later on, the opponent) must be able to evaluate the extent and academic merits of the postgraduate's input.

The same co-authored article may be included in several article-based dissertations, as long as the above-mentioned report regarding each author's contribution is attached.

The summary section

The article-based doctoral dissertation forms a coherent whole, and its goals, theoretical frame of reference, methods and results are presented in the summary section of the thesis. The summary is the centre of the dissertation, and its significance to the evaluation of the entire thesis is essential.

In addition to giving an analytical introduction and presenting the research goals, the summary must round up the whole of the study. The summary section must contain an integrated and critical evaluation of the results and the rendering, not just a mere summary of the articles. Therefore, the summary section of the dissertation should be carefully planned. As the article-based dissertation is meant to be a coherent volume, it is advisable to emphasize the connections between the articles. The summary section is not a digest version of the articles, rather it is an opportunity to revisit the choices, and evaluate the outcomes of the articles. It is noteworthy, that unlike in a monograph (which includes separate chapters for the introduction and the conclusions), in the case of an



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article-based dissertation, the summary section must include both an analytical, scientific introduction to the study as well as its results, discussions and conclusions.

The recommended length for the summary section is 40–80 pages, excluding the appendices. The general regulations regarding doctoral degrees and dissertation are included in the Government Decree on University Degrees, 1039/2013, sections 21 and 22.

<http://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2004/en20040794?search%5Btype%5D=pika&search%5Bpika%5D=University%20Degrees>