

PhD by Publication¹

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1. DEFINITION

Maynooth University permits PhD theses to be presented in the form of a publication-based thesis. The research described in a publication-based thesis should be presented in the form of a set of manuscripts or other scholarly outputs from the work undertaken during the PhD student's period of registration, typically with each manuscript forming one chapter of the thesis. The typical work included should be in the form of a peer-reviewed journal article, but in certain disciplines it is recognised that other formats (e.g., peer-reviewed conference proceedings, chapters in books, musical compositions) may be a recognised final scholarly output. However, the work should not consist of a series of publications reporting essentially the same data or findings to separate readerships.

2. ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

- permission may be granted on the basis of one publication or scholarly output and a **publication plan** for at least two additional publications involving outline content and targeted journals or channels;
- the precise number and required publication status of qualifying outputs is determined by the supervisor and the departmental research student progress committee (DRSPC) and is based on norms for the discipline;
- review papers, conference proceedings, and previously published work should

¹ This policy was approved by Academic Council in 2016. It was subsequently slightly reformatted in May 2022 and a table of contents was included. However, the content remains unaltered from what was approved.

- normally be excluded from consideration;
- the supervisor and the DRSPC must approve a publication-based submission for examination.

3. APPROVAL TO UNDERTAKE A PHD BY PUBLICATION

PhD students, with the approval of their supervisor, may apply to their departmental research student progress committee (DRSPC) to do a PhD by publications. Generally this should follow successful completion of the first year of a PhD by the standard route. Students may apply up to and including the penultimate year of registration to return to the standard PhD option. This application must be supported by their supervisor and approved by the DRSPC.

4. THESIS PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

4.1 Thesis Formatting and Presentation

All papers in a publication-based thesis should fit around the pre-approved coherent PhD topic and should appear in text document format, although PDF copies of published work or work in proof should be included in an appendix to the thesis submitted for examination. There does not have to be an exact correspondence between the published articles and thesis versions since, for example, additional material may be included in versions of publications included in a thesis, or sections contributed by others which are not necessary for the thesis version may be removed.

Publication-based theses must include, as well as the works themselves, a substantial and original introduction and discussion to tie together the work. The introduction will typically take the form of a review of the relevant literature and an explanation of the scope and objectives of the work described in the thesis; the discussion or conclusion should form a critical synthesis or analysis of the overall contribution of the work to the field concerned. Candidates may also include a summary of the publication history and plan for their work presented, and a commentary on the bibliometric significance of the means of dissemination used.

4.2 Co-Authorship

The student must normally be first author and key contributor to the papers presented in a publication-based thesis, although disciplinary differences in regard to policy on authorship will be respected.

When the PhD by Publication includes publications that have been co-authored, this should be acknowledged and students should complete a declaration of co-authorship form.

In all cases where papers presented in a publication-based thesis have multiple authors, the individual contributions of the student and the co-authors to the paper should be

clearly specified for each article, and examiners will be asked to judge in the viva-voce examination that the overall level of contribution and intellectual ownership of the work by the student is at the requisite level for the award of a PhD. In such cases, students are expected to inform co-authors of the inclusion of such work in their thesis.

5. VIVA VOCE EXAMINATION

The PhD by Publication is examined by viva voce. The examiners are asked to comment on the quality of research contained in the thesis; the contribution the thesis makes to knowledge and scholarship; the written style and overall presentation of the thesis; and the nature of revisions required (if any). An examiner must not have been involved in previously reviewing any of the submitted publications. The range of outcomes of the examination are the same as those of the standard PhD.

All elements submitted within the thesis, including material already published during the student’s PhD studies, are under examination by the examiners, and revisions to the version of the work included in the thesis (i.e., not the published article) may be requested. While presentation of work that is publishable in whole or in part as a work of serious scholarship is a key criterion for the PhD examination, publication of work does not in any way predetermine the outcome of the examination.

Version History

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PhD by Publication Reformatted by Marie Murphy (May 2022)		John Cullen