

Thesis by Published Papers Guidelines

1. Introduction

Presenting a thesis in the format of published papers is an option for some higher degree research candidates.

For the purpose of these guidelines, papers are defined as journal articles, book chapters, conference papers and other forms of written scholarly works which are subject to a process of peer review similar to that of refereed journals. Creative works are not included in this definition.

Offering this option, QUT is encouraging higher degree research candidates to publish papers during their candidature.

Papers submitted as a Thesis by Published Papers must be closely related in terms of subject matter and form a cohesive research narrative that articulates a significant and original contribution to knowledge. This would require provision of additional chapters or introductory and concluding sections to link or synthesise the work presented in the paper/s.

A collation of unrelated papers would not be suitable and such papers not contributing to the main thrust of the thesis would at best be suitable for inclusion in an appendix.

Some important points to consider

- Discuss the option of thesis by published papers with your supervisory team early. The idea of thesis presentation by published papers is not suited to all disciplines/topics/candidates. Examiners from some disciplines may favour one (large) conventional continuous thesis (ie. Thesis by monograph).
- The decision to undertake a thesis by published papers is most valuable to candidates for whom the production of published papers complements longer term career/employment goals.
- The decision to present a thesis by published papers should ideally be made early in the candidature - for all HDR candidates within the first three months of enrolment (ie. For PhD candidates at the Stage 2 milestone).
- The dissemination plan or other similar resource is encouraged to facilitate determination of authorship on papers early and formally.
- Publications of the candidate published or accepted prior to commencement of candidature cannot be included in the thesis.

2. Course information

Doctoral courses

QUT permits the presentation of theses for doctoral degrees (PhD and some Professional Doctorates) in the format of a **minimum of three** published and/or submitted papers, where at least one paper must be published, in press or accepted for publication by the time of thesis lodgement for examination; and where the quality of such papers and the candidate's contribution as author on those publications, has been assessed by the faculty as appropriate to doctoral-level research. Refer to [QUT's Code of Conduct for Research](#) for detailed information regarding authorship and how to determine and record authorship.

The PhD Course Regulations states:

Published Papers

- 8.10 A PhD may be awarded on the basis of the submission of published papers, normally indicated in the Stage 2 submission. Guidelines have been approved by the Research Degrees Committee which governs the number, format and presentation requirements of PhD theses by Published Papers.

Professional Doctorate candidates should consult with their faculty to enquire if this is an option available to them.

Masters by Research

The faculties who accept a Masters by Research thesis to be submitted in the format of published papers are detailed in Table 1 (Section 9). Also listed in Table 1 are any faculty variations to these overarching guidelines.

QUT faculties who permit the presentation of a Masters by Research thesis by published papers require a **minimum of one** published paper that is in press or accepted for publication by the time of the thesis lodgement for examination. The quality of such paper and the candidate's contribution as author on that and any subsequent papers has been assessed by the faculty as appropriate to Masters by Research level. Refer to [QUT's Code of Conduct for Research](#) for detailed information regarding authorship and how to determine and record authorship.

3. Format

The thesis may be comprised of published papers, manuscripts accepted for publication, manuscripts submitted for publication or under review.

The minimum number of papers and/or manuscripts is stated above. However, in some disciplines a larger number of papers are required to meet the expectations of scope and quality commensurate with HDR-level research. At least one paper must be published, in press or accepted for publication by the time of thesis lodgement for examination. The Faculty Research Committee is the source of appropriate advice to candidates with respect to disciplinary norms in these matters.

For PhD candidates, where the papers have multiple authorship, the candidate must be principal author on at least two of the three papers and have written permission of the co-authors regarding inclusion of the publication in their thesis. Masters by Research candidates must be principal author on the one paper published or in press and have the written permission of the co-authors regarding the inclusion of the publication in their thesis. Principal author does not include dual first authorship.

In developing publications for inclusion, the candidate and supervisory team should consider the importance of the overall body of work that these works will represent and the contribution the combined body of work makes to the discipline.

4. Content

While acknowledging faculty/discipline variations, the requirements related to content are detailed below.

Normally, the thesis shall include the following in addition to the elements listed in QUT's Requirements for Presentation of Theses:

- list of publications and/or manuscripts;
- acknowledgments of co-authors and verification of permissions through the "Statement of Contribution" form;
- published papers and submitted manuscripts.

Some of the elements of a standard thesis are likely to take a different form when presented in a thesis by published papers. The abstract summarises the main findings presented in each published paper or submitted manuscript and should indicate how the included works are tied to a coherent intellectual framework, and how, when considered together, they demonstrate a significant contribution to knowledge in the discipline.

The introduction should contain succinct statements encompassing:

- description of the research problem investigated;
- overall outcomes of the study;
- evidence of significance of the study to the discipline;
- account of key research and/or methods that have informed the study;
- articulation of the linkages between the research papers and the author's contribution within those works in realising a significant and original contribution to knowledge.

The account of research progress must link together the various papers submitted as part of the thesis. The intention of this section is to provide continuity for the entire thesis so that the reader can move from one chapter to the next, understanding the logic behind the progression of the research program and the candidate's contribution within those papers.

The literature review may replicate literature cited in subsequent chapters but must contain, in a form consistent with discipline norms, a critical review of relevant literature and other works, identification of knowledge gaps, and the relationship of the literature to the program of research.

The conclusion for a thesis by published papers establishes the cumulative effect of the papers, the significance of the findings and the knowledge claim in the thesis.

Published papers submitted in the following categories may be included but each must be presented as an individual chapter in the thesis:

- published papers;
- manuscripts accepted for publication;
- manuscripts submitted and under review by referees; and
- manuscripts under revision following referees' reports.

Only papers which have been published by and/or submitted to journals and publications approved by the Faculty Research Committee are allowable under these guidelines. Guidance on appropriate publication titles that are of a high quality standard appropriate for higher degree research should be discussed with your Principal Supervisor and discipline leaders within your faculty.

In accordance with QUT and national policy on the Code of Conduct for Research, each published paper or submitted manuscript must begin with a clear statement of the contribution made by each author of any co-authored paper. The description must be sufficiently detailed to describe accurately the contribution of each author. See "Statement of Contribution form" available at <https://www.student.qut.edu.au/research/your-degree/thesis-examination>.

5. Presentation

The thesis must be presented in accordance with the requirements of the QUT Council, including any accompanying declarations and in accordance with the *Requirements for Presenting Theses* available from the [QUT website](#). This guideline and MOPP D/5.3 state that an electronic copy of the thesis must be provided to the Research Students Centre when all corrections have been finalised and approved by the relevant faculty nominees. Normally, nominees would be the Principal Supervisor and Head of School but may include others at the faculty's discretion.

6. Examination Process

All theses must be presented for examination. The successful publication of articles will not render the work exempt from examination. Because the publications are examined as part of a larger work, it is possible for reviewers of individual papers to be invited to comment as external examiners.

The introduction and conclusion will be important in ensuring that the individual publication/s that makes up the thesis can be viewed by the examiners as a cohesive whole. If the published paper/s do not have a clear cohesion, then the thesis is likely to be rejected. The introduction, conclusion and bridging sections between publications do not have to be publications in their own right.

Bear in mind that the objective is to encourage publication; a thesis composed largely of submitted manuscripts is likely to be attacked from two sides, the journal referees and the examiners with resultant difficulties in contradictory advice and criticisms.

7. Role of the Supervisory team and Postgraduate Coordinator

The supervisory team is asked to engage in discussion with the candidate to identify their suitability to undertake a Thesis by Published Papers in light of the criteria raised above, including the fit of:

- the candidate's longer term goals and research skills with the writing of publications;
- thesis by published papers with the expectations of potential examiners in the discipline;
- the proposed research project with potential availability of publications of a suitable caliber;
- the overall contribution of the candidate in light of their contribution to individual papers and in line with code of conduct requirements.

They are asked to support the candidate in:

- selecting suitable publications;
- establishing a reasonable timeline in light of publication timelines and thesis deadlines;
- preparing a dissemination plan and other documentation to ensure co-authorship arrangements are in place and consistent with Thesis by Published Papers requirements and QUT's Code of Conduct for Research;
- having clarity about their proposed contribution to knowledge and how their role as an author of published papers will support them arguing for this contribution in their thesis.

The Postgraduate/Higher Degree Research Coordinator may advise the student and/or supervisory team on the requirements for published papers and support them in finding suitable resources to assist them in preparing a reasonable research plan incorporating these requirements. This should be done prior to approving a candidate to undertake a Thesis by Published Papers within the first three months of full time candidature (through the Stage 2 process for PhD candidates). The progress of publications may need to be monitored and for PhD candidates, perhaps considered further at Confirmation or at other milestones. The Postgraduate Coordinator may also assist in identifying publication titles that are of a high quality standard, appropriate to higher degree research and in determining the level of contribution by the candidate to the individual research papers and the appropriate authorship in line with the Code of Conduct for Research.

8. Useful Website Resources

- QUT Code of Conduct for Research (including sections of Publication and dissemination of research findings and Authorship) - http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/D/D_02_06.jsp
- QUT Copyright Guide - <http://www.library.qut.edu.au/copyrightguide/>
- Manual of Policies and Procedures (MOPP) - <http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/>
- ePrints - <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/>

9. Faculty approved guidelines

QUT faculties have the capacity to vary the university level requirements for Thesis by Published Papers. Variations are usually due to discipline expectations. However, they must be in accordance with the overarching policy (MOPP D/5.3, D/2.6 and the guidelines above) and are registered with the Research Degrees Committee.

Table 1 lists approved faculty guidelines for Masters by Research; and
Table 2 lists approved faculty guidelines for PhD.

Table 1 – Masters by Research

FACULTY	VARIATIONS NOTED	WEBSITE for details of variation requirements
Business	The faculty does not permit Masters by Research students submitting in this format	
Creative Industries	The faculty does not permit Masters by Research students submitting in this format	
Education	The faculty does not permit Masters by Research students submitting in this format	
Health	6 July 2015	https://www.student.qut.edu.au/about/faculties-institutes-and-divisions/faculties/health/health-research-student-zone/course-guidelines-and-milestones/examination-and-final-thesis-submission
Law	The faculty does not permit Masters by Research students submitting in this format	
Science & Engineering	6 June 2016	https://blackboard.qut.edu.au/webapps/blackboard/content/listContentEditable.jsp?content_id=_3978474_1&course_id=89117_1&mode=reset

Table 2 – Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

FACULTY	VARIATIONS NOTED	WEBSITE for details of variation requirements
Business	No variation to these guidelines	
Creative Industries	No variation to these guidelines	
Education	21 May 2014	https://cms.qut.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/451903/faculty-of-education-thesis-by-publication-guidelines.pdf
Health	1 Dec 2014	https://www.student.qut.edu.au/about/faculties-institutes-and-divisions/faculties/health/health-research-student-zone/course-guidelines-and-milestones/examination-and-final-thesis-submission
Law	6 June 2016	https://www.student.qut.edu.au/about/faculties-institutes-and-divisions/faculties/law/law-HDR-student-zone/faculty-of-law-milestones-and-guidelines
Science & Engineering	3 August 2015	https://blackboard.qut.edu.au/webapps/blackboard/content/listContentEditable.jsp?content_id=_3978474_1&course_id=89117_1&mode=reset

Approval & modification history

DATE	AUTHORITY	DETAILS
6 June 2016	QUT Research Degrees Committee	Noted inclusion of Law guidelines
3 Aug 2015	QUT Research Degrees Committee	Noted inclusion of SEF guidelines
6 July 2015	QUT Research Degrees Committee	Inclusion of guidelines for Masters by Research candidates.
1 September 2014	QUT Research Degrees Committee	Amended - Thesis must contain at least one published paper & acknowledgement of the role of the PG Coordinator and supervisory team.
7 July 2014	QUT Research Degrees Committee	Reviewed. Minor amendments; addition of Faculty approved guidelines

Responsible Officer: Secretary, Research Degrees Committee; RSC Candidature/Examinations