



College of Science & Engineering

College of Science and Engineering Interpretation of the University Code of Practice on Alternative Format Theses

Choosing submission of a Thesis in an Alternative Format:

These guidelines are the implementation in the College of Science and Engineering of the regulations for an alternative format thesis containing one or more journal articles as permitted by the University of Glasgow's PGR Code of Practice. They should be read in conjunction with the over-arching requirements for all theses laid down in the PGR Code of Practice (<https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/ourresearchenvironment/prs/pgrcodeofpractice/>).

A thesis in an alternative format may only be requested by the PGR student. There is no requirement to publish research in journals for the award of a PhD degree from the University of Glasgow and this should never be stated as a requirement by a supervisor. Submission in an alternative format must never be required by a supervisor, nor should the practice of a supervisor lead to pressure on a PGR student to submit in this format.

The PGR student and their supervisor must read the University Code of Practice, together with documentation from the College Graduate School and their School on how the code should be interpreted. They must explicitly confirm in writing that they have read and understand these documents and agree to adhere to them.

Under the University of Glasgow's PGR Code of Practice, papers (articles) may be included in the submitted thesis as published by a journal or as submitted to a journal. Papers included in the submitted thesis as published by a journal must either be published or have been accepted for publication and the accepted manuscript deposited in the University of Glasgow repository (Enlighten). The submitted thesis may also include papers submitted to a journal and not yet approved for publication, provided the version submitted to the journal is deposited in a public pre-print repository so that this is permanently available from that repository. The pre-print repository must be approved by the School and College Graduate School. Note that the version of a paper that appears in the final approved version of a thesis may differ from that in the published literature or pre-print repository, because corrections may be required by the examination committee.

Confirming Authorship

A thesis must be the PhD candidates own work. This can present problems with multi-author papers. The student must:

- state their contribution to each paper to be included in the alternative format. Their contribution must be more than 50% for each paper.
- explicitly confirm in writing that their contribution is more than 50% to every individual section of each paper to be presented as part of their thesis. This includes their contribution to the writing of the results and discussion sections. In some groups, the PGR student provides the data and figures and the supervisor writes the text. This would not fulfil the authorship criteria for a PhD thesis. The PGR student must have, for example, provided a reasonable quality first full draft of the results and discussions sections.

- explicitly confirm that the research they contributed to the papers was carried out while they have been registered as a PhD student at the University of Glasgow or has been accepted as part of a PhD where they have transferred from another institution.

The supervisor (and corresponding author if different) must explicitly confirm each of the following points in writing:

- the PGR student's assessment of their contribution to the papers is correct and exceeds more than 50% for all papers that would be presented.
- the PGR student's contribution to every individual section of the paper is more than 50% (including to the writing, the results and discussion - e.g. the student may have provided a first full draft of these sections of reasonable quality).
- the supervisor (and corresponding author if different) understands and agrees that if a contribution by the student is judged to be more than 50%, then no other student at the UofG can use the paper in an alternative format PhD.
- the supervisor is willing to supervise the writing up in an alternative format

Guidelines on the structure and content of theses with an alternative format

Requirements for the introductory chapter

As with all theses, an alternative format thesis must have an introduction that sets out the aims of the body of work as a whole in the context of the relevant literature. It is recognised that some of this introduction will be repeated in the introductions of the chapters that are the texts of papers. It is noted that introductions in papers are constrained by the requirements of publishers and referees. On the other hand, the introduction of a thesis includes fuller discussion and more comprehensive overviews of the relevant literature and the fundamental concepts underlying the work.

Requirements for a summary chapter

The last chapter of the thesis should summarise the findings of the thesis as a whole and propose future work where relevant.

Requirements for Chapters comprised of papers

- Each paper should be a separate chapter with the chapter title corresponding to the paper title.
- There should be a statement below the title citing where the work is published and including all authors.
- The text of the chapter should be identical to the text of the paper, except Figure, Scheme etc numbers should follow the sequence of the thesis as a whole.
- The text should be formatted as is standard for theses and should be the same as the introductory chapter.
- There are often size constraints on Figures in papers. The Figures in the theses should be optimal for reading, which may mean that they are enlarged and at higher resolution. Otherwise, their appearance should be identical to their published form.
- Where there is a supplementary figure referred to in the text, the figure should be placed close to the text that refers to it. The reader should not be required to look elsewhere in the thesis to follow the discussion.
- As in all theses, the contributions of others must be acknowledged. Acknowledgment at the beginning of the Chapter is not sufficient. Where, for example, data have been acquired or interpreted by others, this must be explicitly stated and the individuals named at the relevant place in the thesis, e.g. in the legend of a figure and the text that discusses it. Failure to do this would be considered plagiarism.

Requirements for full information and readability

- There should be sufficient detail in the thesis to provide the necessary evidence for the claims made and for the work to be reproduced. Methods, data and analyses that would

normally be presented in theses of that discipline must be presented in a thesis submitted in an alternative format.

- The incorporation of a paper as part of the thesis should not adversely affect the readability of the thesis (see comments above on siting of supplementary figures).
- For the above reasons, preliminary communications or papers with extensive supplementary information may not be suitable for alternative format theses.
- Examiners can require changes to the arrangement of material in any thesis where the structure impedes understanding of the work presented.

FAQs

Is a thesis in alternative format assessed differently?

No. All theses, regardless of format are assessed by the examination committee using the same criteria. The outcome recommended by the examination committee is based on the thesis presented and the oral examination undertaken. It is separate from the process of publishing in journals.

Does previous peer review guide an examination committee's decision?

No. The examination committee makes its decision based only on their assessment of the thesis presented and the oral examination undertaken.

Is there a specific number of papers required for a thesis in alternative format?

No. The same criteria apply to all PhD degrees awarded by the University of Glasgow, and these do not require publications. Hence, there is no specific number of publications set for a thesis in alternative format. The examination committee must be satisfied that the award of a degree should be recommended based on their assessment of the thesis and the oral examination. Supervisors can provide guidance about the standard expected.

Can examiners require corrections to content and format in an alternative format thesis?

Yes. The examination committee can require corrections to any part of any thesis, regardless of format.

Is it good to publish in journals?

Yes. Publishing in journals disseminates your work and can help your career. Reaching the standards required for publication in good peer-reviewed journals helps you reach the standard required for a good thesis. However, while publishing in a good peer-reviewed journal may be an indicator of the quality of the work, this is no guarantee of success in an examination context.

If I have publications, do I need to submit in an alternative format?

No. The usual book format is appropriate for all theses and used by the vast majority.

Can I present other work in a thesis that includes chapters formatted as submitted or published articles?

If one or more chapters are to be formatted as submitted or published articles, then the procedure for confirming authorship etc using the pro-forma must be followed. Other work can be included as separate chapters in the usual book format (not formatted as papers). Students should ensure that examiners are able to follow the structure and content of the thesis despite the existence of chapters that may be formatted according to a submitted or published version. Consequently, it may be appropriate to use the book format for the whole thesis where submitted or published articles make up only a small part of the thesis.