

College of Social Sciences Alternative Format Thesis

General guidelines

These guidelines are the implementation in the College of Social Sciences 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. Alternative Format PhD Thesis may include materials which are solely and/or partly authored by the student and may be already published, not yet published but of publishable standard, accepted for publication, or submitted for publication in externally refereed contexts such as journals, monographs and conference proceedings.

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.

- Alternative Format PhD Thesis is an addition to and not a replacement of traditional monograph thesis.
- Alternative Format PhD Thesis allows a postgraduate researcher to incorporate sections that are in a format suitable for submission for publication. However, students must format the thesis in such way to 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 published version.
- Alternative Format PhD Thesis may include materials which are solely and/or partly authored by the student and may be already published, not yet published but of publishable standard, accepted for publication, or submitted for publication in externally refereed contexts such as journals, monographs and conference proceedings.

- Students should be mindful that while publishing in peer reviewed journal may be an indicator of the quality of the work as regards specific journals, this is no guarantee of success in an examination context.
- Assessment of the standard of the thesis will remain with the examiners. Alternative Format PhD Thesis must conform to the same standards of quality as expected for a standard thesis.

Originality and Contribution

- The format of the thesis has no bearing on the requirements for originality, criticality and the student's own contribution to knowledge.
- The thesis should remain an original contribution to the field of research by the student, regardless of its format.
- The researched materials should be derived from original research undertaken *after* the date the student initially registered with this University.
- Students are expected to have made the *primary contribution* to any work presented within a thesis. Normally, only ONE paper can be co-authored.

Thesis Content

- All PhD theses must form a coherent body of interrelated work that shows ability for critical analysis.
- Alternative Format PhD Thesis must constitute a body of publication tending towards a coherent and continuous thesis, rather than a series of disconnected publications.
- The Alternative Format PhD Thesis should include papers, which should reflect the quantity, quality and originality of research and analysis expected of a candidate submitting a standard thesis.
- The alternative format thesis should include substantive introductory and concluding chapters, and address specifically:
 - an introductory section that, as a minimum, sets out the aims of the body of work as a whole in the context of the relevant literature (see below) and provides detailed outlines of the theoretical and empirical motivations for the project, comprehensive analyses of the context, and an outline of, and justification for, the methodological approach taken. It is recognised that some of this introduction will be repeated in the introductions of the chapters that are the texts of papers. However, the introduction of a thesis includes fuller discussion and more comprehensive overviews of the relevant literature and the fundamental concepts underlying the work
 - a review of previous research including sections summarizing and critically synthesizing previous research in the field of investigation;
 - detailed and critical analysis of the work and methods used;

- a conclusion drawing together the various outcomes of the work into a coherent synthesis. The Conclusion should provide a substantive overview of the project that reflects on the commonalities across the papers, key theoretical, empirical and methodological contributions, potential limitations, and suggestions of further research.
 - across these sections, it should provide a justification for considering the body of work presented as a coherent whole and for the contribution of particular pieces of work to this whole;
- In a standard-format thesis, linking/bridging between chapters is important. The alternate thesis model may make this more challenging. Therefore, it is a permissible option to include in the thesis a 1-2 page section as a preface to each chapter with the intention of maintaining the narrative and readability of the thesis
 - If methods are common across the papers, students may opt to include a detailed Methods chapter or appendix.
 - The format of the thesis has no bearing on thesis word counts: As the current minimum length for a PhD thesis in Glasgow is 70,000 words, for now this alternative format will need to be approved in a case-by-case basis by the Dean. See below

Implementation and approval process

- The consideration and decision on whether to request to submit a thesis by alternative format should be made at the earliest opportunity during the research degree when it becomes clear that both the student and supervisor wish to consider this option. It is recognised that the appropriate timepoint at which a decision to proceed to preparation and submission of thesis by alternative format may vary depending on the specific project. However, it is important that the decision is made in a timely manner to ensure that the requirements below can be met and documented and that the request can be submitted to the Graduate School for review and approval in advance of thesis preparation and submission.
- The approval procedure is that students must explicitly confirm in writing that they have read and understand these documents and agree to adhere to them. Students may ask for approval for this style of thesis at any time during their studies. However, final confirmation of the format for submission will be required when the student submits their Intention to Submit notification; we strongly encourage that this is done as early as possible (i.e., 6 months prior to intended submission).
- Outline permission to write a thesis by alternative format will be granted by a School's PGR Convenor, who in turn will seek final approval on behalf of the Graduate School. Like any other PGR thesis, an alternative format thesis can be embargoed following completion of the examination process and submission of the final approved thesis to the library.
- Decisions on whether the results of a student's work are published are at the discretion of the student and supervisors.

Confirming Authorship

A thesis must be the candidate's own work. However, this can present problems with multi-author papers, hence the student must:

- Be first author on any paper included in the thesis.
- Include, separate to the thesis, and for any co-authored work, a declaration document confirming in writing their contribution according to relevant categories of the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) system, which will include amongst other things their contribution to the writing of the results and discussion sections. A declaration document should be filled out for each published paper and submitted as one overall document in addition to and separate from the thesis.

The PGR student must have made a primary contribution in most categories, including to writing the text, for example by providing a reasonable quality first full draft of the Results and Discussion sections.

In addition, the declaration document for each paper (signed off by the primary supervisor) should:

- explicitly confirming that the research they contributed to in the papers was carried out while they have been registered as a PGR student at the University of Glasgow or were registered as a PGR student at another institution (in cases where they have transferred to Glasgow during the course of their PGR studies).

Copyright

- Alternative Format PhD Thesis which includes 3rd party copyright material (e.g. published journal article) can be submitted for examination and defended in the usual way. This applies whether or not the student has been successful in obtaining permission from the copyright holder.
- If the thesis includes 3rd party copyright material, students should seek permission from the copyright holder (normally publisher) and indicate permission in the thesis.
- If it is not possible to obtain permission or permission is not granted, the full electronic version of the thesis cannot be uploaded onto Enlighten. The student can then deposit an abbreviated version of the thesis where copyrighted material has been removed or restrict access to the entire thesis. For more detail see <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/copyright.html>

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.