Appendix B - Guidance for journal format PhD thesis within the School of Human and Health Sciences

This guidance is for theses which present a programme of research, conducted during the period of doctoral registration, as a series of papers formatted according to the usual requirements of academic journals or scholarly book chapters. It is not to be confused with *Alternative Format Thesis* in other Schools where the research submission includes a practical component alongside a shorter thesis, for example the [Alternative Thesis Format](https://www.hud.ac.uk/media/assets/document/registry/forms/pgr/GuidelinesforalternativeformatResearchDegreesV1.1FINAL.pdf) within the School of Arts and Humanities. Neither is it to be confused with [PhD by Publication](https://www.hud.ac.uk/policies/registry/awards-pgr/section-f/) which is a shorter programme for candidates who begin their doctoral registration with a portfolio of published research and then write a short doctoral thesis about this pre-existing body of research. The Journal Format thesis must be the result of work done whilst registered and supervised as a PhD candidate.

**What constitutes a journal format thesis and how does this differ from a standard monograph thesis?**

Expectations for the programme of doctoral research follow the [Regulations for Awards (Research Degrees)](https://www.hud.ac.uk/policies/registry/awards-pgr/section-e/), regardless of whether the thesis follows a standard monograph format or a Journal Format. The difference lies only in the structure of the final thesis. A Journal format thesis should encompass the same breadth, depth and originality of research as would be presented in a standard monograph thesis.

A standard monograph thesis includes different sections which: review previous literature, outline the rationale for and aims of the empirical work, explain methodology and methods, report and analyse findings and discuss the significance of these. If there is more than one study incorporated within the thesis, then there may be more than one of each of the above sections.

In comparison with this, a journal format thesis presents the doctoral work as a portfolio of papers suitable for publication in an academic journal or as academic book chapters, encompassing a common or unified theme or topic. Each of these papers could stand alone without reference to other parts of the thesis. Therefore, any one of these papers might include explanation of rationale, aims, methods, findings and conclusions in relation to prior literature, rather than these different aspects of the work being discussed in separate sections of the thesis. The papers may or may not have already been published or submitted for publication. They can be publishable rather than published. They should be supplemented by additional chapters or shorter sections contextualising and linking the papers, so that the final product is a coherent thesis.

**Reasons for choosing journal format rather than a standard monograph format**

Journalformat is becoming increasingly popular across HE institutions because it encourages the development of skills in writing for publication and the development of a portfolio of publications during the period of doctoral registration. The output of the doctoral work is therefore closer to the expectations of a future research career and, as such, it can enhance the future employability of PhD students and improve their confidence as researchers. Particularly for staff PhD candidates, the Journal Format can streamline the demands of doctoral work alongside the demands of making a published contribution to their discipline, as time is not required for rewriting published material into chapter format or vice versa. If work has already been submitted for publication, it will also have benefited from the critique of journal reviewers.

However, PGRs should discuss the value of Journal Format carefully with supervisors from early in their period of registration. Reasons to avoid Journal Format might include part-time candidature within a fast-moving field of research, so that papers published early in the period of registration require considerable supplementation to ensure the final submitted thesis is up to date. Some programmes of research may include conceptual work that would benefit from the lengthier exploration afforded by a standard monograph thesis, prior to succinct presentation within a journal paper. There may be other reasons why it may be difficult to segment some of the work into a series of journal papers or the candidate may prefer to work on a coherent account of the research as a whole before making decisions about which aspects to publish. For more exploratory research, it may be difficult to decide on the focus of publications until the data have been analysed. Some candidates may feel that their academic writing skills are more suited to the requirements of a thesis and may feel less daunted by this due to its familiarity from final year undergraduate or master’s work. It is worth noting, though, that Journal Format may sometimes be avoided unnecessarily because it is less familiar to both candidates and supervisors when in fact there could be advantages to this approach. Therefore, thorough discussion of the advantages and disadvantages is recommended.

**What is expected for a quality journal format thesis that meets the PhD learning outcomes?**

Journal articles or book chapters are often more succinct than the chapters of a standard monograph thesis and their relationship to the overall body of doctoral work is likely to need explaining. Journal papers may also not include the reflexive element that would be expected with some methodologies. Therefore, in order to convey the programme of doctoral research fully, the Journal Format thesis is likely to need an introductory chapter, some short bridging or commentary sections, a fuller account of methods and a short discussion, drawing together the conclusions from the research programme as a whole. It may also be necessary to include additional literature or findings that do not easily fit within the scope of any of the published/publishable papers. Importantly, clear linking of each of the papers/chapters with the overall aim(s) and research questions/objectives is essential; this can be achieved by listing of these and stating which paper(s) address each.

**A thesis consisting only of a series of papers formatted according to the usual requirements of academic journals or scholarly book chapters with little or no contextualising, linking or commentary is not likely to meet doctoral requirements.**

When completed, the portfolio as a whole should provide a comprehensive and understandable account of a coherent programme of doctoral research that meets the learning outcomes for PhD as specified in the [Regulations for Awards (Research Degrees)](https://www.hud.ac.uk/policies/registry/awards-pgr/section-e/).

If papers aimed at a practitioner journal or practice-orientated text are incorporated, particular attention should be paid, across the thesis as a whole, to meeting PhD learning outcomes related to the creation of new knowledge, advanced scholarship and demonstrating *‘detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research’.* It is not usually appropriate to include chapters from textbooks, as these rarely offer the depth and critical analysis necessary for doctoral level work. However, book chapters from an edited scholarly edition may be appropriate.

The number of journal papers or book chapters included in the thesis will depend on the nature of the research, the typical length of papers within journals from that discipline and the extent of the supplementary commentary within any bridging and discussion chapters. However, it would be unusual to have fewer than two or more than five publishable/published papers. A typical Journal Format thesis might include an introductory chapter, one or two publishable literature review papers, a bridging chapter explaining the rationale for the development of the empirical work from the literature review and including any additional literature considered, two or three publishable empirical papers, and a final chapter expanding on methodological choices and drawing conclusions about the overall body of work. The thesis portfolio as a whole is subject to the maximum word count for PhD of 80,000, as outlined in the [Regulations for Award](https://www.hud.ac.uk/policies/registry/awards-pgr/section-e/)s (Research Degrees). However, due to the requirements for succinct writing within journals, it is expected that Journal Format theses may less often reach the maximum word count. However, to meet the requirements of PhD learning outcomes, Journal Format theses would not usually be less than 50,000-words in total where 4-5 papers are included within this word count. Where fewer papers are incorporated within the thesis, and therefore a larger proportion of the writing is not the succinct style required for journal papers, the word-count would usually be closer to the 80,000-word maximum.

Part-time candidates who have published one of the incorporated papers early in their period of registration should be mindful of the need to present a thesis that is up-to-date at the point of submission. This might mean, for example, that a bridging chapter would need to extend the earlier literature review or that a final discussion chapter would need to acknowledge research published since the published discussion of the empirical findings.

**Can co-authored papers be included?**

The thesis must be based on the candidate’s own research conducted under supervision within the School and during the period of doctoral registration. Therefore, the expectation is that any published papers included will either be co-authored with supervisors (where this is the disciplinary norm for publishing doctoral research) or be sole-authored accounts of supervised research in situations where a supervisor does not wish to act as co-author.

Where previously published papers have been co-authored with supervisors, the PhD candidate would normally be first author and they should be able to defend this paper at viva as an integral part of their independent doctoral work. The expectation is that the supervisor’s contribution to any co-authored paper included in a Journal Format thesis should not exceed the usual supervisor contribution to a standard thesis i.e., assisting with the development of research ideas, guiding with regard to analysis and conclusions, and providing feedback on drafts of work. The PGR should therefore write the first draft of all sections of any co-authored publications included. A list of publications at the beginning of the thesis should clarify this by listing the contribution of authors to all co-authored publications, and this should be indicated where appropriate in the commentary.

Any attempt to pass off other people’s work within co-authored publications as the candidate’s own work will be treated as research misconduct and dealt with according to the research conduct regulations.

**Recording the choice of thesis format**

Candidates are encouraged to record discussion of thesis format in supervision records (e.g., SkillsForge) and refer to this in the Research Support Plan and Progression Reports. This does not commit them to a particular thesis format but helps to ensure that those supporting them and reviewing their work understand the intended outputs. The final decision on thesis format should be declared before examiners are appointed.

**Formatting of the thesis**

Formatting should follow the general [University of Huddersfield requirements](https://www.hud.ac.uk/registry/current-students/pgr/thesis/preparing/). For improved readability and continuous page numbering, copies of publisher formatted versions of papers should not be included. Instead, the final author version should be used.

If papers have already been published, the publication should be listed at the beginning of the thesis and cited as a footnote where the paper begins within the thesis. Where previously published papers have been co-authored, a declaration should be included at the beginning of the thesis, explaining the contribution of each author.

For unpublished papers, it is good practice to indicate which journals the paper would be suited to, in order to support their presentation as credible academic papers.

It is expected that there may be some limited overlap between papers, for example if reference is made to similar literature or similar methods. This is not problematic, so long as the thesis as a whole discusses sufficient novel material to be comparable with a standard thesis.

As well as a reference section at the end of each journal paper (not included in the word count) there should also be a combined reference section at the end of the thesis, including all references cited in the thesis across both journal papers/book chapters and linking chapters.

Due to the variations in structure permitted for a Journal Format thesis, it is strongly advised that the introductory chapter explains the structure of the thesis.

**Agreements with publishers**

Candidates planning to use published work within a thesis portfolio should check that this does not infringe any copyright agreement. Where papers incorporated are still under review by a journal or pending publication, candidates should check whether their thesis will need to be embargoed until the paper is published. If so, they should indicate this at the point of thesis submission.

**Examination of the thesis**

The viva voce examination will take the same form as examination of a standard thesis. Candidates should note that inclusion of peer reviewed published material into a thesis does not guarantee a successful examination outcome, as peer reviewed publications can vary in standards and requirements. Examiners are permitted to request the usual revisions to any part of the submitted thesis, even if the work being revised has previously been published. However, for previously published work it may be more appropriate for revisions to be addressed via the commentary on the published papers within the bridging or discussion chapters.

These guidelines should be made available to examiners of all theses submitted in Journal Format and familiarity with the format should be discussed when examiners are initially invited to examine.