

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Alternative format thesis guidelines

1) Extract from University of Birmingham regulations:

7.4.1 (g) A Registered Student may submit material for assessment which has already been published provided that the following conditions are satisfied.

The material published must:

- (i) be appropriately integrated, either in the body of the work or as an appendix to which reference is made; and
- (ii) be adequately identified and referenced.

7.4.1 (h) If material submitted is the result of collaborative research or work, the submission must clearly identify the Registered Student's contribution.

Full regs at: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/legal/regulations-part7.pdf>

2) The Alternative Format thesis allows a postgraduate researcher to incorporate sections that are in a format suitable for submission for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Apart from the inclusion of such materials, the alternative format thesis must conform to the same standards expected for a standard thesis and candidates should follow the guidance found at:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/studentervices/graduateschool/rsa/thesissubmission.aspx> and specifically 'presenting your thesis'.

3) Materials included in the alternative format thesis may include those 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 and conference proceedings. Papers can be included in a modified form as long as the paper is unpublished).

To be able to clearly demonstrate their contribution, the postgraduate researcher would normally be first author on such papers. In all cases the postgraduate researcher must acknowledge co-authors and their contribution to the paper.

4) The thesis should remain an original contribution to the field of research by the student, regardless of the form of the thesis. The student should use the introductory section of their thesis to explain and justify in full the nature and extent of the candidate's own contribution and the contribution of co-authors and other collaborators to the publications presented. A significant proportion of the researched materials should be derived from original research undertaken after the date the student initially registered with this University. Where data from a published paper is included where the postgraduate researcher is solely/majorly responsible for one section but not the rest of the paper, they must clearly state which part(s) of the paper is theirs.

5) The number of papers included in the alternative format thesis may vary according to discipline and is not prescribed, but should reflect the quantity, quality and originality of research and analysis expected of a candidate submitting a standard thesis. Postgraduate researchers should discuss the structure of their thesis with their supervisor in the first instance.

6) The work must constitute a body of publication tending towards a coherent and continuous thesis, rather than a series of disconnected publications. As such, any publications should be adapted and integrated within the structure of the thesis. Any sections of the thesis which are published or in publishable format should be clearly identified.

7) Since the alternative format thesis includes copies or offprints of journal articles, book chapters etc, which already have page numbers, the pages of the publications themselves will **not** be included in the pagination sequence of the submission. Candidates should insert a sheet of A4 before each publication on which is displayed the publication number, publication title, and the page number of the thesis. For example, if the publications section starts on p75, insert an A4 sheet before the first publication on which is printed the name and number of the publication and p75. The first publication will then follow, with its own pagination.

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Before the second publication insert another A4 sheet on which is printed the name and number of the second publication and p76, and so on. This applies equally to the print and electronic thesis. Additional commentary should be included after each published paper where appropriate.

Where “data not shown” is part of the published paper, the data should be included as supplementary data or as an appendix.

Authors will need to heed the terms of their publishing agreement, particularly if they have transferred copyright ownership to their publisher. Whilst it is rare for publishers to prevent the incorporation of published material in a thesis for assessment purposes, authors should be aware that it may be necessary later to redact publisher-owned material from the access version of the electronic thesis.

8) Any work submitted within the alternative format thesis must be substantially different from any work which may have previously been submitted for any degree at this or any other institution.

9) It is essential that the alternative format thesis includes detailed and critical analysis of the work and methods used, since sections formatted for publication / dissemination may not already include this level of detail. The structure of the alternative format thesis should include the following:

i. All required pages detailed in regulation 7.4.2:

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/legal/regulations-part7.pdf>

ii. Review of previous research including sections summarising and synthesising previous research in the field of investigation

iii. Methodology detailing the methods employed during the research and a detailed critical analysis of those methods and the information they provided

iv. Presentation of results and their analysis in a format suitable for presentation in a peer-reviewed journal and/or in conventional thesis chapters as in the standard PhD thesis

v. Summary / conclusion drawing together the various outcomes of the work into a coherent synthesis and indicating directions for future work

vii. References and appendices should be included as in the standard PhD thesis

10) The incorporation of publication-style chapters in the thesis will inevitably lead to some duplication since each publication-style chapter will have self-contained components that will overlap with parts of the other sections of the thesis. The incorporation of published materials may generate a close match alert when the thesis is checked for plagiarism. Similarly, if an unpublished chapter is submitted to a journal after the degree has been awarded, the author should alert the journal editors that the work is included in their thesis, and reference the e-version of the thesis. Occasionally, publishers request that open release of the thesis full text be deferred until after the paper's publication in the journal. If necessary, authors can request this when they submit their e-thesis to the Library.

11) As with the standard doctoral thesis, examiners should satisfy themselves that the alternative format thesis meets the requirements of the doctoral degree as prescribed in the appropriate regulations and policies. The fact that a thesis contains material that has been published or accepted for publication does not guarantee that the examiner will recommend the award for which the candidate is being examined.

12) The submission of an alternative format thesis is a separate process distinct from the PhD by publication route which is only open to members of staff.

Examples of successful theses submitted in this format can be found in the University's e-Theses Repository:

<http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/3786/>

<http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/4430/>

<http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/4403/>

<http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/4391/>

<http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/4676/>