School of	**Education and Childhood**

Protocol for the format and presentation of an alternative style of doctoral thesis including published material

Note to Readers: This document sets out the University's guidelines for the format and presentation of a thesis including publications. Where arrangements for the presentation of a thesis, specific to the School, are described in more detail these are shown in shaded boxes. The aim is to maintain the appropriate University standards and expectations whilst allowing for some degree of flexibility between Schools to account for variations in discipline/fields of research.

Leeds Trinity University encourages all students to publish their work and disseminate their results, either before or after submission of a thesis.

This protocol allows for an alternative style of doctoral thesis to be submitted which includes published material alongside a written commentary. Under this protocol, published material can be included in the thesis without the need for the work to be rewritten and integrated into individual chapters of the thesis. PGRs are accepted for study under the normal arrangements and the existing supervisory, training, monitoring and transfer processes will all apply. This alternative style of doctoral thesis is subject to the same examination process as a traditional, chapter style thesis and assessed against the same criteria/learning outcomes including the volume and quality of original research.

It is recognised that this alternative style of doctoral thesis is not appropriate in all disciplines and that, in some subject areas, the traditional, chapter style of thesis will remain the expected format for the thesis. For this reason not all Schools offer this alternative format of submission. In Schools where an alternative style of doctoral thesis is not offered, any published material may be used to form a chapter of a thesis but must be rewritten and integrated within the thesis as a whole - please see the separate guidelines for the use of solely or jointly authored publications for advice:

This protocol should be read alongside the following documents

- The requirements for the format and presentation of theses for research degrees
- Advice on eThesis preparation and copyright and publication

Application for a doctoral thesis including published material

1) An alternative style of thesis can only be submitted where (i) the School in which the PGR is registered offers this format of submission and has an approved protocol in place; and (ii) the supervisory team supports this format of submission and is satisfied it is appropriate and meets the protocol in place for that School.

2) Any PGR wishing to submit an alternative style of doctoral thesis which includes published material must discuss this with their Supervisory team at an early point in the candidature so that appropriate support and advice can be given. The final decision on the format of submission and whether an alternative style of thesis will be presented is required at examination entry.

3) In the relevant section of the examination entry workflow, coordinated through the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office (RKEO), the Supervisor(s) must provide support for the submission of a doctoral thesis including published material and indicate that this is appropriate and that the publication status of the papers already meets the minimum requirements set out by the School. The Supervisory team must also ensure that the nominated examiners are happy to examine this style of thesis submission.

Publication-based thesis format can be an alternative for those students who seek to report their research as journal articles. It is not intended to be a default format for all students: for many students the standard chapter format thesis will remain the choice. The choice of the thesis format is an academic one, and should be discussed in the Supervisory team and decided on sufficiently early (for example at transfer and at each annual progress review) during the studies so that the reporting of the research can be fully aligned with the chosen thesis format. Formal approval by the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies (DPGRS), or Deputy, is required for the alternative format route. It is advised to keep the DPGRS informed of discussions. Once the exam entry form has been submitted to the RKEO (no later than 3 months before the maximum time limit for thesis submission), the DPGRS or Deputy will independently assess the application for an alternative format thesis to ensure that the criteria have already been met at that point. If the requirements for alternative format submission have not been met, depending on discipline then the PGR will normally be required to submit their thesis following the traditional route. There will be no extensions based on waiting for a journal decision or waiting to meet the alternative format criteria.

4) Where work which has formed part of any jointly authored publications is included in this alternative style thesis, the Examiners will need to be able to identify the work directly attributable to the PGR to determine whether there is a substantially original contribution to the subject concerned and whether the PGR's own contribution is at the appropriate level to merit the award of the degree.

5) To assist the Examiners with this, an outline of the nature and extent of the PGR's own contribution and the contribution of co-authors and other collaborators to the publications must be provided in the examination entry workflow. Another co-author to the papers must attest to the information provided (normally the Supervisor).

6) The above information regarding the publications used and the contributions of the other authors should also be included on page 2 of the thesis (intellectual property and publications page) along with a rationale for submitting the thesis in an alternative format

and a brief summary of how the thesis has been constructed.

Published material to be included in the alternative style of doctoral thesis

7) Publications may only be included where the student is the sole, lead[1], first or primary author on a publication and their contribution is significant. The work must be derived from original research undertaken whilst registered for doctoral study at this University.

8) Work must have been published in peer-reviewed outputs appropriate for the field of research. The publication status (published/accepted) and acceptable externally refereed outputs are not prescribed at a University level and may vary according to discipline. The use of joint-first authored papers is not prescribed at a University level and may vary according to discipline.

An alternative format PhD thesis can include article manuscripts that have been written for submission for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals, recognized to be relevant to the field of the student's research.

Minimum requirements are that:
• One of the included manuscripts should have been accepted for publication but it does not need to have been published at the time of the submission of the thesis;
• manuscript should have been submitted and have entered the peer review process following initial editor screening;
• Other included manuscripts should be developed and formatted to be close to being ready for submission. The manuscripts to be included in an alternative format thesis should report findings based on original theoretical or empirical work, modelling etc. each constituting an original contribution to knowledge, that forms a part of the research conducted during the PGR's postgraduate research studies. The included works should reflect new insights in the field.

This means that, for example, short published contributions such as opinions, comments or commentaries or narrative reviews that do not go beyond summarizing existing literature are not eligible, nor are publications predating the commencement of PGR studies in Leeds or based on work conducted prior to commencement of PGR studies in Leeds. However, literature reviews which generate original research (for example, through meta-analysis, Cochrane reviews or theoretical and conceptual development) are eligible.

Manuscripts to be included into an alternative format thesis are normally co-authored with supervisors with the student being a lead author (i.e., usually the corresponding author). The academic credentials of manuscripts included into an alternative format

[1] The term "lead" refers to the contribution of the student to the work, rather than the order in which the names of the authors appear on the publication

thesis will be deemed in examination and not on the basis of their publication status or outlet.

9) The number of published outputs/papers required for the alternative style of doctoral thesis may vary according to discipline and is not prescribed at a University level, but should reflect the quantity, quality and originality of research and analysis expected of a PGR submitting a traditional, chapter style of thesis.

The number of manuscripts included into an alternative format thesis should be at least 3, the actual number depending on the nature of these outputs, the discipline, the nature of research problem addressed and the structure of the thesis.

The content of manuscripts included in an alternative format thesis should be identical to the manuscripts submitted to or published in journals. While some re-formatting may be required (see Paragraph 10), manuscripts should not otherwise be changed. Advice on incorporating more in-depth discussions of points in the manuscript can be found in Paragraph 11.

An alternative format thesis should NOT mix article manuscript and chapter style content beyond what is specified below in Paragraphs 11 and 12.

Critical discussion to link the published material into a coherent whole

10) The incorporation of published outputs/papers into the thesis will inevitably lead to some duplication and it is acknowledged that each publication will have self-contained components that may overlap with that in other sections of the thesis. Nevertheless, the work must constitute a continuous body of work which is a coherent and continuous thesis, rather than a series of disconnected publications. As such, there must be:

    a. an appropriate introduction: which describes the context of the research, the rationale of the investigation, the strategy employed during the research and demonstrated in the thesis, locates the research to its context and establishes its novelty and contribution; and
    b. an extensive critical discussion and conclusion: to support the published material and link these together into a coherent body of work and indicating directions for future work.

An alternative format thesis should contain an introductory section locating the work to its reviewed peer literature and describing the overall research design and data acquisition / material collection and analysis solutions in order to bind the included manuscripts into a single whole. For example, additions to the methods beyond that reported in the manuscript sections are permitted in this section. The integrating material preceding the included manuscripts should not exceed 15,000 words in length and it should contain its own list of references. The thesis will need to be based on a uniform page layout throughout: this includes formatting the text of the included manuscripts so

that they use the same font size, line spacing, margins, referencing etc. practices as the rest of the thesis.

Each manuscript shall also include its own list of references. If the manuscripts included into an alternative format thesis have already been accepted for publication and have progressed through production in the publication outlet, a pre-proof stage manuscript should be included into the thesis. When publications are or are to be complemented with supplementary material in print or online publication outlets, the material should be presented as appendices of the thesis.

Results, methodology and other sections of the thesis

11) PGRs must bear in mind that journal articles/publications can be very restrictive in terms of length. The alternative style of thesis will be assessed according to the same criteria as a traditional, chapter style thesis including the volume and quality of original research. As such, in addition to the published material the thesis will require the same in-depth discussion, critical analysis, and quantity and quality of work that is required for the award of a doctoral degree under the conventional submission route. It is expected that, where appropriate (and with advice from the team of supervisors), the thesis will include a more in-depth discussion of the methodology, results etc than appeared in the original publication. This may vary according to discipline.

An alternative format thesis should contain a discussion and conclusions section after the included manuscripts to bind them into a single whole. The discussion and conclusions section following the included manuscripts should not exceed 10000 words in length and it should contain its own list of references.

Where the manuscripts are or are to be complemented with supplementary material in print or online publication outlets, the material should be presented as appendices of the thesis. Appendices can also contain other material providing supplementary information related to any preceding part of the thesis.

Any thesis submitted for examination, including those which use published material must include the following (as outlined in the format and presentation guidelines[2]): a title page, intellectual property and publications page[3], acknowledgements page, abstract, contents, list of abbreviations, references/bibliography and any appendices.

Page limits and page numbering

12) A thesis submitted under the alternative style of doctoral thesis route is not expected

2 Included in the Guide to the thesis examination process

3 Which must include information covering the publications used and the contributions of the other authors along with a rationale for submitting the thesis in this format and a brief summary of how the thesis has been constructed.

to exceed the normal page/word limits for the degree concerned.

13) It is accepted that the thesis will include copies of published outputs/papers (e.g. off prints of journal articles, book chapters etc), which already have page numbers. Wherever possible there should be sequential numbering of the thesis as a whole. The publications will therefore bear two numbers; the original from the publication and that which indicates their place in the thesis (but ideally in a different location to the page number from the publication). If this approach is not possible, PGRs must ensure that the thesis is clear and easy to navigate by the examiners and any sections of the thesis which are published have been clearly identified.

Assessment of the work

14) As with the conventional doctoral thesis, examiners should satisfy themselves that the learning outcomes have been met and the thesis as submitted meets the requirements of the doctoral degree as prescribed in the Ordinance and Regulations for Research Degrees

15) The thesis should make an original contribution to the field of research regardless of the format of submission. The alternative style of thesis will be assessed according to the same criteria as a conventional doctoral thesis including the volume and quality of original research and, as such, in addition to the published papers the thesis will require the same in-depth discussion of methodology and results, the same detailed critical analysis, and the same quantity and quality of work required for the award of a doctoral degree under the conventional chapter-style submission route.

16) It is recognised that journal articles/publications can be restrictive in terms of length and the examiners may feel that a more in-depth justification or discussion of e.g. methodology, results, detailed critical analysis is required in the thesis. As such, it is open to the examiners to require revision or expansion to the publication parts of the thesis as part of any editorial and presentational corrections or minor deficiencies. For example, an addendum to a published paper could be added into the thesis itself, if this was deemed necessary by the examiners as part of any corrections. The School/Supervisor would then need to judge whether any issues identified by the examiners warranted contact with the publishers and/or an addendum to a paper in press.

17) PGRs should be clear that, the fact that a thesis contains material that has been published or accepted for publication does not guarantee that the examiners will recommend the award of the degree for which the PGR is being examined.

Submission of the final thesis (after the viva)

18) PGRs are reminded that the final thesis (after successful examination) must be

provided to the University in eThesis format[4].

19) Particular attention should be given to the advice on eThesis preparation, copyright and publication regarding the re-use of published material within an eThesis. PGRs will need to ensure that any publication agreements with the journals concerned include permission to reuse the articles in the thesis (see also note (c) below)[5].

20) After successful examination PGRs must submit to the University for the award of the degree:

a) 1 complete version of the thesis in pdf eThesis format (full text including all publications)
b) 1 edited version of the eThesis with any publications redacted where it has not been possible to obtain permission for re-publication of the work in the eThesis from the journal/publisher. In these cases the eThesis must include some form of place holder to indicate the publication has been removed with a link/reference (preferably DOIs for journal articles and ISBNs for books) to the original publication source.

Version 1.1
Approved at RDSC January 2026
Administrative update – hyperlinks corrected July 2026

[4] Hard bound thesis withdrawn March 2020

[5] See the advice on eThesis preparation, copyright and publication:
http://library.leeds.ac.uk/copyright-for-phds and
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