



## **GUIDELINES ON THESES OR DISSERTATIONS IN ARTICLE OR ESSAY FORMAT**

### **1. PREAMBLE**

A dissertation or thesis by collection of articles or essays consists of a collection of a number of pieces of work which (a) may exhibit some degree of independence or stand-alone viability, while (b) contributing to a central theme, and (c) are presented as a coherent whole in one volume, with introductory, conclusory and connective material as necessary.

The format as a collection of articles or essays alters the mode of presentation but not the academic standard of the submission. This mode of presentation does not affect requirements concerning original contribution, or any other academically significant feature of the dissertation or thesis.

There are specific risks involved with doing a dissertation or thesis as a collection of essays or articles and therefore this option is recommended for top performing academic students and experienced supervisors.

The generic guidelines were developed as guided by the Higher Degree Policy of UJ. In addition these guidelines took into account documents developed by other South African Universities in this regard.

### **2. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES**

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a framework for individual faculties to develop more detailed requirements as may be relevant in a specific discipline.

### **3. SCOPE OF THE GUIDELINES**

The guidelines apply to dissertations by master's students and to theses by doctoral candidates presented as a collection of essays or articles.

## **4. GUIDELINES**

### **4.1 Research proposal**

A research proposal should be developed for this option and should follow the standard procedures as required by the university and by specific faculties.

### **4.2 Registered title**

The registered title for the master's or doctoral research should be based on the central theme of the collection of essays or articles.

### **4.3 Essay or article**

All essays or articles that will form part of the dissertation or thesis must have been written after registration for the master's degree or doctoral degree and under guidance of the supervisor. The topics for the essays or articles, the identification of appropriate journals for publication and the timelines for submission to the identified journals must form part of the research proposal of the student.

### **4.4 Published articles or articles ready for possible publication**

It is not a prerequisite for examination submission that all the essays or articles must have been published or even have been accepted for publication. However, they must be in the proper format for submission to the identified journals and comply in all relevant aspects to be submitted to the identified journals. Individual faculties may set guidelines about the specific journals, or conference proceedings that are acceptable as a place of publication for an article or essay that form part of the dissertation or thesis under this option. Individual faculties may further set minimum requirements for the number of essays or articles that must have been accepted for publication before the candidate may submit the dissertation or thesis for examination.

### **4.5 Number of articles or essays required**

The faculty guidelines may specify the appropriate number of articles or essays depending on the discipline concerned. The number of essays or articles should normally not be less than two for a master's dissertation or less than four for a doctoral thesis.

### **4.6 Contents of submission**

The chapters in this type of dissertation or thesis would be self-contained contributions which are linked thematically.

The essays or articles should thus have a common theme, even if this theme is broader than that in a traditional dissertation or thesis. Each essay or article would typically have its own research question. In some cases, the essays or articles would each explore different issues that are broadly related to the central theme. The essays or articles could also employ different methodologies and could be of

different nature, e.g. one theoretical, one econometric and one using a different type of empirical methodology.

The introduction and conclusion of the submission is important and should present the overarching argument of the submission. The main purpose of the introduction would be to introduce the overall theme of the dissertation or thesis and the research questions to be investigated in the essays or articles, thus also setting out the structure of the dissertation or thesis. It should also contain cross-cutting issues that relate to all the essays or articles.

The conclusion summarises the key findings of the essays or articles, thereby highlighting the contribution to the body of knowledge in the field. It draws the different essays or articles together under their unified theme in order to present a coherent integrated body of work.

When a collection of essays or articles is submitted, the literature survey element of the total submission may not meet the requirements of a dissertation or thesis. In such a case it may be necessary to draft a separate chapter that constitutes a literature review. In the case of a collection of essays, a body of literature that is common to all the essays could be reviewed and located in the overall introduction.

The style of referencing in the individual essays or articles will be determined by the requirements of the identified journal where the essay or article will be submitted for publication. The style of referencing in the introduction and conclusion must follow standard guidelines as set by the individual faculties.

#### **4.7 Co-authorship of individual elements**

Where an article is co-authored, the student's contribution to such an article must in each case be clearly indicated and confirmed in writing, in the form of a declaration, by the individual co-authors. This information must eventually also be made available to the assessors of the dissertation or thesis. Faculty guidelines may specify further requirements regarding co-authorship, including the exclusion of the possibility altogether.

#### **4.8 Copyright and acknowledgement of prior publication**

Acknowledgement of prior publication of any material is to be acknowledged and consent should be obtained from the publisher to submit such material as part-fulfilment for the particular formal qualification. Where essays or articles are submitted for publication prior to examination of the dissertation or thesis, the student and supervisor should obtain consent from the particular journal for the particular article to be submitted as part-fulfilment of the dissertation or thesis.

#### **4.9 Assessment criteria**

The assessment criteria for a dissertation or thesis based on articles or essays are equivalent to a conventional dissertation or thesis.

#### **4.10 Supervisor declaration**

The supervisor of a dissertation or thesis presented as a collection of articles or essays should include a clear declaration regarding the independence of the student's work. Where articles are co-authored the declaration should include a statement as described in 4.8.

### **5 FACULTY SPECIFIC GUIDELINES**

Faculties need to specify faculty-specific deviations from these guidelines that will have to be approved by Senate.

Approved by Senate: 9 September 2015