

Preparation and Structure of a Dissertation

Option 1: Single paper

In a single paper, you comprehensively present your doctoral thesis in German or English in a single complete work.

The usual structure is as follows

1. introduction to the topic, e.g. presentation of the organisms, definition of hypotheses/questions¹
2. material & methods, if necessary structured according to individual work steps/approaches/questions
3. results, possibly structured according to individual work steps/approaches/questions
4. discussion, if necessary with conclusion
5. summary in German and English
6. bibliography
7. appendix

Examples can be found at:

- Molitor, D. 2009: Untersuchungen zur Biologie und Bekämpfung der Schwarzfäule (*Guignardia bidwellii*) an Weinreben, Geisenheimer Berichte Bd. 65, Bibliothek der Hochschule Geisenheim University
- Jung, C, 2012. Strukturen und Erfolgsfaktoren des Weinfachhandels in Deutschland. Geisenheimer-Bericht-Band-69, Bibliothek der Hochschule Geisenheim University

Option 2: Cumulative Dissertation

In the case of a cumulative dissertation, the results of the doctoral thesis are not summarized in a single work, but partial results are already published in the course of the doctorate in scientific journals in the form of independent texts. These essays and papers, which should be related in a meaningful way, are then combined as individual chapters for the dissertation into a collective work and submitted as a dissertation. The accepted or printed papers can be presented in their "original form", i.e. by incorporating a pdf version of the original publication.

The doctoral student's independence must always remain recognizable in this form of dissertation. This also means that the contribution of each author to the respective publication and at the beginning of each individual chapter must usually be identified in the form of a footnote.

¹ Theses represent a simple assertion, hypotheses formulate a connection between at least two factors (assumption of a cause-and-effect relationship, which can be formulated e.g. in if-then or yesto statements).

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A cumulative dissertation is divided into:

1. summary in German and English
2. general introduction: introduction to the topic, presentation of the organisms, definition of the hypotheses/questions/ short presentation of the individual chapters/papers
3. paper 1
4. paper 2.
5. paper 3.
6. conclusion/General Discussion/Perspectives: Summary and discussion of the findings from all three or more papers, derived recommendations/conclusions, if necessary expanding on and discussing the hypotheses formulated in Chapter 1.
7. references, if possible only for chapters 2 and 6
8. appendix

Examples can be found at:

Justine Sylla, 2013: https://pub.epsilon.slu.se/10895/1/sylla_j_131112.pdf (without the original Papers)

Eva Mosner, 2012: <https://d-nb.info/1023128411/34>

Patricia Osidacz Williamson, 2017. The effect of communication and sensory properties on Chinese consumers' initial and repeated red wine choice
http://search.ror.unisa.edu.au/record/UNISA_ALMA11149726810001831/media/digital/open/9916160611401831/12149726800001831/13149726790001831/pdf

Johannes Harter, 2016. The role of microorganisms in the mitigation of nitrous oxide emissions from biochar-amended soil, <https://bibliographie.uni-tuebingen.de/xmlui/handle/10900/72610>

Nikolas Hagemann, 2016. The impact of biochar on microbial nitrogen and carbon transformations in soil and aerobic composting of manure, <http://dx.doi.org/10.15496/publikation-16334>

Option 3: Single papers consisting of several independent chapters (possibly already published)

This form of dissertation combines the characteristics of a monograph with those of a cumulative dissertation. This is a collection of contributions that have already been published, accepted for publication, submitted or planned for submission as part of a monograph. This means that the structure of the dissertation can be similar to that of a cumulative dissertation, i.e. individual thematic chapters with their own introduction, material & methods, etc. In contrast to cumulative dissertations, however, there are no minimum requirements for the number of publications accepted or submitted. This type of dissertation is therefore particularly suitable if, for example, a paper has already been published and other papers are in preparation or submitted, but the acceptance of the papers has not yet been finalised or a revised version of a paper is under review.

The structure and information regarding the doctoral student's contribution to the individual chapters/papers correspond to the cumulative dissertation.

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Examples can be found at:

- Jacqueline Hirsch, 2012: https://opus.uni-hohenheim.de/volltexte/2012/773/pdf/Dissertation_Jacqueline_Hirsch.pdf

Please check publisher copyright regulations for variant 2 und 3!

Simultaneous Publication of Journal Articles in Dissertations

a) Use of previously published journal articles in dissertation publications

As a rule, there should be no problems with large journal publishers, as long as there is a clear reference to the publication in the corresponding journal. Journal formatting may not be used for the dissertation publication. For this purpose, the respective guidelines of the individual publishers must be observed.

Examples

- Elsevier: „The author retains the right to include the journal article, in full or in part, in a thesis or dissertation; ...”
- Wiley Blackwell: „Final Published Version. Wiley-Blackwell hereby licenses back to the Contributor the following rights with respect to the final published version of the Contribution: [...]

Re-use material constitutes less than half of the total material in such publication. In such case, any modifications should be accurately noted.“

- Springer: „The Author retains the right to republish the Contribution in any collection consisting solely of the Author's own works without charge and subject only to notifying Springer in writing prior to such publication of the intent to do so and to ensuring that the publication by Springer is properly credited and that the relevant copyright notice is repeated verbatim.”

b) Use of parts of a dissertation publication for later publication as journal article

There should be no problems, however the respective conditions of copyright transfer should always be considered.

Examples:

- Springer: „Submission of a manuscript implies: that the work described has not been published before (except in the form of an abstract or as part of a published lecture, review, or thesis); ...”
- Elsevier: „Doctoral theses are usually not written in a style suitable for publication in Animal Behaviour. Chapters from theses will therefore normally need to be condensed, reformatted and revised substantially before being submitted as manuscripts. References in journal manuscripts should usually not be cited as exhaustively as they are in doctoral dissertations. Prior to submission, inexperienced authors are especially advised to give a manuscript to friends and colleagues for comment.”

It is important for later publications in journals that all copyrights remain with the author with the publication of the dissertation, otherwise the chances of acceptance of the article in a journal may decrease. This means that the following sentence should be found in the contract conditions: **"All other rights for the use of the work remain with the author".**