

Doctoral Dissertation – Manuscript Style

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The doctoral dissertation can be completed in one of two formats: traditional or manuscript style (i.e., journal articles as chapters). The traditional dissertation is typically about 5 chapters, including the Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results, and Conclusion. Depending on the student's area of focus, this format may be best suited for his/her research. However, doctoral students can opt to proceed instead with a manuscript style dissertation. If students are interested in this format, they should first consult with and receive approval from their dissertation chair and committee. The following guidelines are in place for those that choose to proceed with a manuscript style.

Structure

The document must include an abstract that is relevant to the dissertation as a whole; it is not sufficient to only include the abstracts from the included articles. In addition, there needs to be a unifying introductory chapter and literature review. The introductory chapter should inform the reader of the structure of the document, explain why the research is being conducted, and describe the relationship between the articles. The literature review should define the objectives of the research and cover the theoretical and empirical literature that informs each of the three articles. The next three chapters should be the three journal articles (detailed guidelines about these chapters can be found below). Finally, a concluding chapter is required that ties together the major results and identifies the contribution of the articles to theory, policy, and practice. In this way, the dissertation is presented as a unified product rather than simply a collection of related but separate manuscripts.

As a recap, the following must be included in the final document:

- Abstract
- Chapter 1 – unifying introduction
- Chapter 2 – unifying literature review
- Chapter 3 – journal article 1
- Chapter 4 – journal article 2
- Chapter 5 – journal article 3
- Chapter 6 – unifying conclusion

See the [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide from the Graduate School](#) for additional formatting requirements.

Journal Article Chapters

The following guidelines must be followed for the journal article chapters:

- ❖ The articles must be of publishable quality. The dissertation committee decides if the articles meet this standard.

- ❖ The articles can be sole authored and/or coauthored. For coauthored articles, the doctoral student must be the first author. As first author, the student leads the project in the following ways: (1) articulating the concept or idea, (2) developing a research proposal to pursue the idea, (3) conducting the research and analysis, (4) writing the majority of the manuscript, and (5) interpreting the results. The dissertation committee determines if the student meets the criteria for first authorship. Other students cannot be coauthors. The coauthors need to be identified at the proposal defense and approved by the dissertation committee. Any changes to the coauthors also need to be approved by the dissertation committee. Students must include an Appendix in their final dissertation that details the contributions of all coauthors for each of the articles.
- ❖ At the time of the proposal defense, the dissertation committee reviews the articles proposed. The student can propose a maximum of one article already under review, published, or accepted for publication to be included in the dissertation. The other two proposed articles cannot yet be under review, accepted for publication, or published. The article under review, accepted for publication, or published must have been completed while the student was enrolled in the doctoral program and needs to be connected to the overarching theme of the dissertation. The dissertation committee ultimately decides if this article can be included. Please see the [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide](#) regarding copyright release requirements.
- ❖ At the time of the dissertation defense, any or all of the articles can be under review, accepted for publication, or published. Please see the [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guide](#) for how this should be designated on the chapter cover pages, as well as the copyright release requirements.

Please note that these are department-level requirements, and they are somewhat more restrictive than those established by the Graduate School. The formatting guidelines established by the Graduate School still apply.

Deadlines and Defense

The [deadlines](#) for the manuscript style are the same as the traditional dissertation format. Also, proposal and dissertation defense guidelines and structure are the same as the traditional format.