**MVLS Interpretation of the University Code of Practice**

**on Alternative Format Theses**

Submission by alternative format is allowed under the University Code of Practice. This applies to PhD, MD, MVM and MSc(research) degrees.

A thesis in an alternative format may only be requested by the PGR student. There is no requirement to publish research in journals for the award of a postgraduate research degree from the University of Glasgow and this should never be stated as a requirement by a supervisor. Submission in an alternative format must never be required by a supervisor, nor should the practice of a supervisor lead to pressure on a PGR student to submit in this format.

The PGR student and their supervisor must read the University Code of Practice, together with documentation from the College Graduate School and their School on how the code should be interpreted. The approval procedure is initiated when students explicitly confirm in writing to their PG Convenor that they have read and understand these documents and agree to adhere to them. As per the Code of Practice, the consideration and decision on whether to request to submit a thesis by alternative format should be made at the earliest opportunity during the research degree when it becomes clear that both the student and supervisor wish to consider this option. However, it is recognised that the appropriate timepoint at which a decision to proceed to preparation and submission of thesis by alternative format is made may vary depending on the discipline and specific project. It is important that the decision is made in a timely manner to ensure that the requirements below can be met and documented and that the request can be submitted to the Graduate School for review and approval in advance of thesis preparation and submission. Students may ask for approval for this style of thesis at any time during their studies; we strongly encourage that this is done as early as possible,(at least 6 months prior to intended submission~~)~~. Outline permission to write a thesis by alternative format will be granted by a School’s PGR Convenor, who in turn will inform HDC for noting only, and hence final approval on behalf of the Graduate School. Final confirmation of the format for submission will be required when the student submits their Intention to Submit notification (in future the TAP system will be amended to include this confirmatory step). Like any other PGR thesis, an alternative format thesis can be embargoed following completion of the examination process and submission of the final approved thesis to the library.

* To apply for approval students are requested to email their PGC directly at any time, copying in their primary supervisor, to note their intention to write a thesis by alternative format, including a statement indicating that they are aware of the guidelines for this approach.
* When the PGC approves (by reply) to the student’s request, they should copy in the Graduate School to ensure notification for HDC.
* As outlined above, alternative format approval must be in place in advance of the intention to submit phase. Author Declaration & Contribution forms should be completed and submitted with the thesis.

To satisfy the requirements for an alternate format thesis, a minimum of 1 chapter (paper) must be fully published, i.e. in an approved form (see below) Should there be no published papers available, a student must write their thesis in the ‘traditional’ standard format. All Papers included in an alternative format thesis must either be published,or have been accepted for publication, or be written in such a manner that they are ready for submission for publication. A combination of published paper chapters and traditional format chapters is acceptable. Published papers for inclusion should be papers containing original data/results, although in some subject areas meta-analysis or systematic reviews are commonplace and highly appropriate, and hence are also acceptable. A paper that is essentially a review of the literature would not meet the criteria of an original published paper. In some research students’ studies clinical case reports are often published. It may be acceptable to include these types of publications in the alternative format thesis alongside more ‘typical’ scientific publications, so long as there is a clear link between these publications.

**Confirming Authorship**

A thesis must be the candidate's own work. However, this can present problems with multi-author papers, hence the student must:

* be first author on any paper included in the thesis.
* include, separate to the thesis, a declaration document (see end of this file) confirming in writing their contribution according to relevant categories of the Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) system, which will include amongst other things their contribution to the writing of the results and discussion sections. A declaration document should be filled out for each published paper and submitted as one overall document in addition to, but separate to, the thesis. In some research groups, the PGR student provides the data and figures and the supervisor writes the text.  This would not fulfil the authorship criteria for a paper in an alternative format thesis. The PGR student must have made a major contribution to writing the text, for example by providing a reasonable quality first full draft of the Results and Discussion sections. The declaration document for each paper must be signed off by the primary supervisor and/or corresponding author (if different).
* explicitly confirm that the research they contributed to in the papers was carried out while they have been registered as a PGR student at the University of Glasgow or were registered as a PGR student at another institution (in cases where they have transferred to Glasgow during the course of their PGR studies).

As co-signatory of the authorship declaration documents the primary supervisor (and corresponding author if different) are confirming in writing that:

* the PGR student's assessment of their contribution to the papers is correct as stated.
* they acknowledge that, as the contribution by the student is deemed significant enough for the paper to be included in the thesis, then no other UofG student can use the paper in an alternative format thesis.
* the supervisor supports the writing up in an alternative format style.

**Guidelines on the structure and content of theses with an alternative format**

**Requirements for the introductory and summary chapters**

As with all theses, an alternative format thesis must have Introductory and Summary Chapters (with references). The introductory chapter should set out the aims of the body of work as a whole in the context of the relevant literature. It is recognised that some of this introduction will be repeated in the introductions of the chapters that are the texts of papers. It is noted that introductions in papers are constrained by the requirements of publishers and referees. On the other hand, the introduction of a thesis includes fuller discussion and more comprehensive overviews of the relevant literature and the fundamental concepts underlying the work. Therefore, for an alternative format thesis, which can include a number of published papers, there is likely to be a greater requirement for a fuller, more detailed introductory section in order to outline how these papers/chapters form a comprehensive body of work. The summary chapter should be akin to a General Discussion/Conclusion chapter in a standard-format thesis, and should summarise and bring together the findings of the thesis as a whole and propose future work where relevant.

**Requirements for Chapters comprised of papers**

* Each paper should be a separate chapter with the chapter title corresponding to the paper title.
* There should be a statement within the declaration document that accompanies each chapter detailing where the work is published and including all authors. For papers not yet submitted for publication there should be a statement indicating the intended journal of publication.
* The text of the chapter should be identical to the text of the paper, except for numbering of Figures, Tables etc, which should follow the sequence of the thesis as a whole as in a standard-format thesis.
* The text should be formatted as is standard for theses and should be the same as the introductory and general discussion chapters.
* There are often size constraints on Figures in papers. The Figures in the theses should be optimal for reading, which may mean that they are enlarged and at higher resolution. Otherwise, their appearance should be identical to their published form.
* Where there is a supplementary figure(s) referred to in the text, the figure should be placed close to the text that refers to it. The reader should not be required to look elsewhere in the thesis to follow the discussion.
* As in all theses, the contributions of others must be acknowledged. Acknowledgment at the beginning of the Chapter is not sufficient. Where, for example, data have been acquired or interpreted by others, this must be explicitly stated and the individuals named at the relevant place in the thesis, e.g. in the legend of a figure and the text that discusses it. Failure to do this would be considered plagiarism.

**Requirements for full information and readability**

* There should be sufficient detail in the thesis to provide the necessary evidence for the claims made and for the work to be reproduced. Methods, data and analyses that would normally be presented in theses of that discipline must be presented in a thesis submitted in an alternative format.
* The incorporation of a paper as part of the thesis should not adversely affect the readability of the thesis for example(see comments above on placing of supplementary figures).
* For the above reasons, preliminary communications or papers with extensive supplementary information may not be suitable for alternative format theses. However, some supplementary data/tables may be appropriate to include as an appendix at the end of the thesis.
* Examiners can require changes to the arrangement of material in any thesis where the structure impedes understanding of the work presented, and this may include material presented as an already published paper. In rare instances, the examiners may require the chapter to be re-written as a traditional format chapter, or indeed the overall thesis to be re-written as a traditional format thesis.
* In a standard-format thesis, linking/bridging between chapters is important. The alternate thesis model may make this more challenging. Therefore, it is a permissible option to include in the thesis a 1-2 page section as a preface to each chapter with the intention of maintaining the narrative and readability of the thesis.

**Author Declaration & Contribution**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Full paper citation, incl. authors and their affiliation  (or link/ref to preprint server for papers not published) |  |

Please state your author contribution below for each category in accordance with the principles of the Contributor Roles Taxonomy system (CRediT). Please refer to the descriptors of each category before completion (<https://credit.niso.org/>)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Conceptualisation** |  |
| **Data Curation** |  |
| **Formal Analysis** |  |
| **Investigation** |  |
| **Methodology** |  |
| **Project Administration** |  |
| **Visualisation** |  |
| **Writing – original draft** |  |
| **Writing – review & editing** |  |
| **Software (optional)** |  |
| **Validation (optional)** |  |

**We declare that the author contribution statements, in accordance with the CRediT system, are an accurate representation for this chapter/paper:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Author signature** |  |
| **Primary supervisor signature**  (or corresponding author if different) |  |