Department of Applied Psychology’s Guidelines for Doctoral Dissertations Using the Journal Article Format

The Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development permits various formats for dissertations. Specifically, students have the option of completing a “Traditional Format” dissertation that focuses on presenting the rationale, methods, results, and interpretations of a single empirical study. Students also have the option of completing a “Journal Article Format” dissertation.

Journal Article Format dissertations constitute a series of studies emanating from a program of inquiry that are organized around a coherent theme or topic of study – and that belong to the same program of research. Given that integration across studies is a critical feature, Journal Article Format dissertations must include separate introduction and discussion/implications sections that demonstrate the programmatic and thematic bridges across the individual studies (e.g., a 5 page expanded abstract or executive summary).

The main strength of the Journal Article Format is that it increases the odds that the dissertation (or portions of the dissertation) will be published soon after defense/completion. Simultaneously, it provides the doctoral student with guided opportunities for mastering this format and for communicating his/her inquiry. These Journal Article Format dissertations typically include multiple empirical papers presented according to a standard peer-review manuscript structure (e.g., introduction, method, data analysis plan, results, discussion).

Given the increasing trend in the field toward Journal Article Format dissertations, and the importance of publishing peer-reviewed manuscripts soon after defense for junior scholars, students may opt to propose the Journal Article Format according to the following guidelines:

1) The dissertation must contain a **minimum of two empirical articles**, each of which must be suitable for submission to refereed journals for publication. A third article, though not required, could describe a relevant theoretical framework (e.g., propose a theoretical model pertinent to the students’ empirical papers). Similarly, a third paper, though not required, could present empirical results that are clearly linked to, or stem from, the other empirical papers in the dissertation.

2) At either the proposal or the defense stage, one of the two primary empirical articles may be published, but **one of the primary empirical articles must be unpublished and un-submitted** to any journals or alternative publication outlets.

3) The doctoral student must be the primary author of any article(s) published prior to or submitted for publication prior to the defense. In keeping with the academic integrity and policies of the university, the article(s) will be based on students’ conceptualization of the study topic and his/her lead role in writing all manuscripts.
Please refer to the American Psychological Association’s Guidelines for Responsible Authorship¹.

4) Previously published manuscripts may have co-authors, but the role of the co-authors must be described and discussed by all members of the dissertation committee prior to inclusion in the dissertation.

5) If a manuscript is submitted upon defense, and if the second author is chair of the dissertation committee, that individual must maintain the role of dissertation chair (and not the role of co-author) until after defense. If reviewers’ comments are made on a submitted manuscript(s), any suggested changes resulting from the suggestions must be discussed with the dissertation committee before the doctoral student addresses them.

6) After the defense, the chair may assume a more active, co-author role (as second or third author); however, the student should always be the primary author of any manuscripts resulting from his/her own dissertation. While having co-authors (who are not members of the student’s dissertation committee) is permitted after the defense, their role must be clearly specified to the dissertation committee.

7) The doctoral student is responsible for requesting copyright permission(s) from the publishing journal(s) to include a published article(s) in his/her dissertation. Please note that students have either the option of publishing their dissertation through ProQuest or using an Institutional Dissertation Repository. The ProQuest option allows for dissertations to be accessible via common search engines (e.g., PsycInfo) while the Institutional Repository allows the dissertation to be archived within the NYU library system.

   a. Students choosing the ProQuest option would need to request copyright permission [not doing so is breaking U.S. copyright laws.]. We encourage students to consult the NYU Libraries Guide to obtaining copyright permission http://guides.nyu.edu/c.php?g=276785&p=1845972).

   b. Students using the Institutional Dissertation Repository would not need to take action to obtain copyright permission.

8) A dissertation chair should not approve a doctoral student’s manuscript that includes “self-plagiarism,” (i.e., a student should be advised to reference any written work that appears in a previously published manuscript), “piecemeal publication”, or any other violations of publication ethics².

This document was last approved as amended at the Applied Psychology Department Faculty Meeting held on May 3, 2016.

This document was modified at the Chair’s Advisory Meeting held on April 19, 2016.

¹ http://www.apa.org/science/leadership/students/authorship-paper.aspx

² https://www.apa.org/pubs/authors/openletter.pdf

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