MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

Presentation of PGR Dissertations Policy

If you are reading a printed version of this document, you should check https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=7441 to ensure you have the most up to date version.

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 This policy details the University of Manchester requirements for the preparation and submission of postgraduate research dissertations at the University of Manchester.

2. Scope and definitions

2.1 This policy is applicable to full and part-time Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) on the Master of Science by Research (MSc) programme.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 It is the responsibility of PGRs as defined in 2.1 to adhere to this policy when preparing and submitting their dissertation.

4. General Submission Information

4.1 All candidates are required to submit electronic versions of their dissertation (examination, resubmission and final version) via their eThesis tasks page in eProg as a single Portable Document Format (PDF) file and plain-text metadata record.

4.2 Candidates may submit their dissertation in journal format by incorporating sections that are suitable for submission for publication, or have been accepted for publication, or already published in a peer-reviewed journal or in another media suitable for dissemination that is appropriate to the discipline covered by the dissertation (see section 13).

4.3 Candidates must consult their programme director/supervisor for guidance on the length of the dissertation.

4.4 The bibliography or list of works cited, any appendices or acknowledgements, declaration and copyright statements are excluded from the word count.

4.5 Where quotations/data in other languages is included in the dissertation along with the English translation, only the English translation should be included in the dissertation word count.

4.6 Candidates must ensure that material that is authored by a third-party and used in their dissertation is free of any copyright restrictions and/or they have obtained a licence or permission to use these materials. Candidates should ensure that any such licence/permission extends to the use of the materials by The University for administrative purposes, including examination and preservation of their work. Furthermore, if the candidate intends to make their electronic dissertation available to others for download they should ensure the licence for use of these third-party materials extends to this use. Alternatively, candidates may make available to others a redacted version of their dissertation which excludes the third-party material.

4.10 Where internet citations are used in a dissertation, candidates should include the website detail and the date they accessed the site next to each individual reference. Candidates should discuss the most appropriate referencing style with their supervisor/s.

4.11 It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the dissertation is checked for typographical errors. Any person involved with professionally proofreading a dissertation should solely be checking for grammatical/spelling errors, and should not comment on the content of the dissertation. Further guidance on proofreading can be found in the University statement on proofreading.

5. Research Data Submitted with a Dissertation

5.1 Research Data should be managed in adherence with the principles and requirements given in the Research Data Management Policy.

5.2 Research data to be included as part of a candidate's final electronic submission can be deposited in the University's supported institutional data repository, Figshare.

5.3 Please also refer to the Guidance for Submitting and Sharing Research Data.

6. English Language Requirements

6.1 All dissertations must be written in UK English unless discipline standards dictate the use of US English. Quotations, however, may be given in the language in which they were written.

6.2 In exceptional circumstances, a candidate may apply to the University for permission to submit a dissertation predominantly written in a language other than English.

- The request must be fully justified on academic grounds and the language being used must be directly linked to the research project.
- The request must be submitted by the end of month six of the candidate's registration and accompanied by a supporting statement from the supervisor/s.
- The main supervisor and at least one member of staff independent of the supervisory team must attend a meeting to discuss the application to submit a dissertation in a language other than English.
- The doctoral academy may reject the application if the PGR cannot provide a compelling reason for submitting in a language other than English.

- If approved the abstract of a dissertation written in another language must also be presented in English and an extended English language summary of the dissertation (5,000-10,000 words) including the table of contents, an introduction, brief outline of each chapter and conclusion should also be provided.

7. Formatting

7.1 For the main text, double or 1.5 spacing in a font type and size which ensures readability must be used (for example 12 point in a font such as Arial, Verdana, Tahoma, Trebuchet, Calibri, Times, Times New Roman, Palatino or Garamond); single spacing may be used for quotations, footnotes, references and preliminary pages.

7.2 The style of bibliographic citations and references may be chosen by the candidate but must be consistent throughout the dissertation; general guidance should be provided by the candidate's supervisor/s.

7.3 Examiners / candidates may wish to print and bind copies of the dissertation so it is recommended that the margin at the binding edge of any page be no less than 40mm; other margins no less than 15mm.

7.4 Page numbering must consist of one single sequence of Arabic numerals (i.e. 1, 2, 3 …) throughout the dissertation, starting with the title page as page number 1.

7.5 Page numbers must be displayed on all pages EXCEPT the title page/s. The pagination sequence will include not only the text of the dissertation but also the preliminary pages, diagrams, tables, figures, illustrations, appendices, references etc.

7.6 Roman numerals must not be used for page numbering.

7.7 Blank pages must include the text 'Blank page'.

7.8 The main text of the dissertation should normally be left justified to aid accessibility and readability of the dissertation.

7.9 Where headers are used they must be consistently applied throughout the dissertation and should not include the name of the candidate.

7.10 Figures or images used in the dissertation must be of sufficient size and clarity.

8. Required Pages

8.1 The following (a-h) must be included as preliminary pages of the dissertation in the order given:

a. COVID-19 IMPACT STATEMENT

If appropriate (see section 10).

b. TITLE PAGE

A title page giving:

- the full title of the dissertation;

- a statement as follows: 'A dissertation submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Master of [insert degree title] by Research in the Faculty of .....' (please refer to University Regulation X for a list of correct Faculty and School titles and refer to University Regulation XI for the correct long and short form of the degree title).
- the full title of the degree should be stated not the abbreviated form;
- the year of presentation (not including the month);
- the candidate's first name, middle name stated as an initial, and the candidate's family name (the same as the name under which he or she is currently registered at the University) PGRs can also include their name in their native language / script alongside the English translation); and
- the name of the candidate's School and Division/Department.

Please refer to Appendix 1 to see a sample title page.

c. LIST OF CONTENTS

A list of contents, giving all relevant sub-divisions of the dissertation and a page number for each item. The final word count, including footnotes and endnotes, must be inserted at the bottom of the contents page.

d. OTHER LISTS

Lists of tables, figures, diagrams, photographs, abbreviations etc. If a dissertation contains such lists it is required that a separate list of each item, as appropriate, is provided immediately after the contents page(s). Such lists must give the page number of each item on the list.

e. ABSTRACT

A short abstract of the contents of the dissertation. The abstract must not be more than one page.

f. DECLARATION

A declaration stating:

EITHER:

that no portion of the work referred to in the dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning;

OR:

what portion of the work referred to in the dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning. This should include reference to joint authorship of published materials which might have been included in a

dissertation submitted by another student to this university or any other university or other institute of learning.

g. COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

The following four notes on copyright and the ownership of intellectual property rights must be included as written below:

- The author of this dissertation (including any appendices and/or schedules to this dissertation) owns certain copyright or related rights in it (the "Copyright") and they have given the University of Manchester certain rights to use such Copyright, including for administrative purposes.
- Copies of this dissertation, either in full or in extracts and whether in hard or electronic copy, may be made only in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended) and regulations issued under it or, where appropriate, in accordance with licensing agreements which the University has from time to time. This page must form part of any such copies made.
- The ownership of certain Copyright, patents, designs, trademarks and other intellectual property (the "Intellectual Property") and any reproductions of copyright works in the dissertation, for example graphs and tables ("Reproductions"), which may be described in this dissertation, may not be owned by the author and may be owned by third parties. Such Intellectual Property and Reproductions cannot and must not be made available for use without the prior written permission of the owner(s) of the relevant Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions.
- Further information on the conditions under which disclosure, publication and commercialisation of this dissertation, the Copyright and any Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions described in it may take place is available in the University IP Policy, in any relevant Dissertation restriction declarations deposited in the University Library, the University Library's regulations and in the University's policy on the Presentation of Dissertations.

h. LIST OF DISSERTATION REVISIONS (resubmitted dissertations only)

Resubmitted dissertations must include a reference page/s to help the examiners locate any revised paragraphs and pages in accordance with the list of revisions received.

The page/s should be included before the title page and any COVID-19 Impact Statement and must be removed from the final version of the dissertation post re-examination.

9. Other Pages (non-compulsory)

9.1 The preliminary pages may also include the following:

a. A lay abstract may be included in addition to the standard abstract described in section 4.1e. The lay abstract should give a concise description of the research detailed in the dissertation using non-technical language for an audience unfamiliar with the research area. The purpose of the lay abstract is to publicise the University's research activity to other departments of the University and to external organisations such as the media, industry and government.

b. Dedication, acknowledgement, and similar. These must appear after the compulsory pages listed in section 8. Short items may be combined on the same page.

c. It is advisable to include a brief statement for External Examiners, giving the candidate's degree(s) and research experience, even if the latter consists only of the work done for this dissertation. This may be untitled or it may be headed 'Preface' or 'The Author' or similar.

d. An AI Declaration acknowledging the use of an AI tool or system. The declaration should provide an overview of the tools used and the outputs. Please see the example below:

"Generative AI Disclosure: I used [AI tool name] to assist in idea generation, image creation, and for feedback on grammar and content. I implemented some of its recommendations. I used [AI tool name] to explore ideas for visuals (one of which is used and cited on page 2)"

e. A content notification may be included where the PGR believes that a thesis contains language and/or imagery that is potentially offensive and/or triggering. Such content includes, but is not limited to, descriptions of sexual violence, references to self-harm or racially charged language. PGRs should refer to the PGR Thesis Content Notification Guidance for further information. PGRs should also discuss inclusion of a content notification with their supervisor/s prior to submission.

10. COVID-19 Impact Statements

10.1 Candidates who registered on their programme before September 2022 who wish to make their examiners aware of the impact COVID-19 has had on their research plans and dissertation may include an Impact Statement for consideration during the examination process.

10.2 The COVID-19 Impact Statement should be included in the examination and/or resubmission dissertation immediately before the title page (it should be removed from the final version of the dissertation post-examination).

10.3 The Impact Statement should include the following information:

- Details on how disruption caused by COVID-19 has impacted the research (for example, an inability to collect/analyse data as a result of travel restrictions/restricted access to labs/additional caring and health responsibilities - 500 words maximum);
- A description of how the planned work would have fitted within the dissertation' narrative (e.g. through method development, development of analytical skills or advancement of hypotheses - 500 words maximum);
- A summary of any decisions / actions taken to mitigate for any work or data collection/analyses that were prevented by COVID-19 (500 words maximum).

10.4 PGRs are encouraged to discuss the statement with their supervisory team before submitting the statement alongside the dissertation.

11. Final Submission

11.1 Candidates must not make any amendments to their dissertation until they have been notified officially by the appropriate Faculty Doctoral Academy of the outcome of their examination and been informed of the next steps to be taken.

11.2 Once examination (including any required re-examination) of the dissertation has been completed candidates must submit an electronic copy of their final dissertation only if the Examiners have recommended A(i).

11.3 Candidates recommended A(ii) must only submit their final electronic dissertation after their corrections have been approved by the Internal Examiner.

11.4 Submission of the final electronic dissertation must be identical in content (apart from any corrections required by the Examiners) to the theses previously submitted for examination.

11.5 Candidates will only receive their official degree award letter (and therefore be eligible to graduate and receive their degree certificate) once the appropriate Faculty Doctoral Academy has acknowledged receipt of the electronic copy of the final dissertation.

12. Access Settings / Restrictions

12.1 All examination and final theses are deposited in the University of Manchester's institutional repository .

12.2 Electronic copies of the final dissertation will be retained by the University for use as applicable.

12.3 The author of the dissertation is expected to make the dissertation Open Access within 12 months of submission or earlier and is not expected to place any restriction on access to his or her work.

12.4 Access to the final dissertation is set as part of the candidate declaration during the electronic submission of the first 'examination' version.

12.5 If it is considered that because of some exceptional circumstances, access to the final dissertation should be embargoed or restricted in some way, the student must indicate this at the point of examination submission. All access settings will be subject to the final approval of the main supervisor.

12.6 The University reserves the right to restrict access to a dissertation that was initially made open access without prior permission from the author. This is to accommodate where, for example, copyright infringements are subsequently reported to The University.

12.7 Doctoral Academies must develop contingency plans in the event of technical difficulties for the submission of dissertations in accordance with the University's policy on eAssessment.

13. Journal Format Dissertations

13.1 The Journal Format dissertation allows an MSc by Research candidate to incorporate sections that are in a format suitable for submission for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Apart from the inclusion of such materials, the journal format dissertation must conform to the same standards expected for a standard dissertation and candidates should follow the guidance detailed in this document.

13.2 Materials included in the journal format dissertation may include those which are solely and/or partly authored by the candidate and may be already published, accepted for publication, submitted for publication in externally refereed contexts such as journals and conference proceedings or in a format which is suitable for publication.

13.3 The dissertation should remain an original contribution to the field of research by the PGR, regardless of the form of the dissertation. The candidate should use the introductory section of their dissertation to explain and justify in full the nature and extent of the candidate's own contribution and the contribution of co-authors and other collaborators to the publications presented. A significant proportion of the researched materials should be derived from original research undertaken after the date the candidate initially registered with the University.

13.4 Any candidate wishing to submit their dissertation in journal format should discuss their intention with their supervisor. The candidate should then declare their intention on dissertation format on the Notice of Submission form.

13.5 The number of publications included in the journal format dissertation may vary according to the discipline and is not prescribed, but should reflect the quantity, quality and originality of research and analysis expected of a candidate submitting a standard dissertation. There is no upper limit, but three to five papers or equivalent results chapters is typical. Candidates should also speak to their Doctoral Academy about any discipline–specific guidance and consult with their main supervisor for advice.

13.6 The work must constitute a body of publication tending towards a coherent and continuous dissertation, rather than a series of disconnected publications. As such, any publications should be adapted and integrated within the structure of the dissertation. Any sections of the dissertation which are published or in publishable format should be clearly identified.

13.7 It is recommended that separate versions of the paper be included and that the pagination sequence should flow throughout the dissertation rather than inserting pre-prints. Ideally, to ease readability, figures/tables and accompanying legends should be included at the appropriate point in the text of the papers, and not at the end of the text as would be typical for a manuscript submitted for publication.

13.8 Where this is not possible, the dissertation may include copies or offprints of journal articles, book chapters etc., which already have page numbers. The pages of the publications themselves should not be included in the pagination sequence of the submission. Candidates should insert a page before each publication on which is displayed the publication number, publication title, and the page number of the dissertation. For example, if the publications section starts on p75, insert a page before the first publication on which is detailed the name and number of the publication and p75. The first publication will then follow, with its own pagination. Before the second publication insert another page on which is detailed the name and number of the second publication and p76, and so on.

13.9 Any work submitted within the journal format dissertation must be substantially different from any work which may have previously been submitted by the candidate for any degree at this or any other institution.

13.10 It is essential that the journal format dissertation includes detailed and critical analysis of the work and methods used, since sections formatted for publication / dissemination may not already include this level of detail. The structure of the journal format dissertation should include the following:

- All required pages detailed in section 8 of this document
- Rationale for submitting the dissertation in a journal format and an account of how the dissertation format has been constructed.
- Context of the research which should incorporate sections / chapters defining the rationale of the investigation and the strategy employed during the research as demonstrated in the dissertation.
- Review of previous research including sections summarising and synthesising previous research in the field of investigation.
- Methodology detailing the methods employed during the research and a detailed critical analysis of those methods and the information they provided.
- Presentation of results and their analysis in a format suitable for presentation in a peer-reviewed journal and/or in conventional dissertation chapters as in the standard PhD dissertation.
- Summary / conclusion drawing together the various outcomes of the work into a coherent synthesis and indicating directions for future work.
- References and appendices should be included as in the standard PhD dissertation

13.11 The incorporation of publication-style chapters in the dissertation will inevitably lead to some duplication since each publication-style chapter will have self-contained components that will overlap with parts of the other sections of the dissertation. As a result, such a dissertation might well be expected to be longer than

a standard MSc by Research dissertation on the same topic. The maximum length of the journal format dissertation should not normally exceed 60,000 words of main text, including footnotes and endnotes.

13.12 As with the standard dissertation, Examiners should satisfy themselves that the journal format dissertation meets the requirements of the degree as prescribed in the appropriate regulations and policies. The fact that a dissertation contains material that has been published or accepted for publication does not guarantee that the Examiner will recommend the award for which the candidate is being examined.

13.13 Candidates should also refer to the supplementary journal format guidance document.

14. Compliance

14.1 Failure to comply with this policy may result in the Doctoral Academy rejecting the dissertation for examination.

Appendix 1

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

TITLE OF DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of Master of Science by Research
in the Faculty of .....

YEAR OF SUBMISSION
(OR YEAR OF RESUBMISSION)

CANDIDATE'S NAME
(full forename, middle initial, full surname)

CANDIDATE'S SCHOOL ANDDIVISION /DEPARTMENT

Version amendment history		
Version	Date	Reason for change

4.1	May 2025	Updated to allow for resubmission of dissertations with track changes 8.1h

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Presentation of PGR Dissertations Policy
Lead contact email	Alex.Hinchliffe
Date updated:	May 2025
Approving body:	MDCSG
Version:	4.1
Supersedes:	Nov 2023
Previous review dates:	June 2017, July 2020, June 2022, Nov 2023
Next review date:	Nov 2028
Equality impact outcome:	
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations:	Staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/rbe/rdrd/code/
Related policies/procedures/guidance etc	Staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/rbe/rdrd/code/
Policy owner:	Alex Hinchliffe, Research Degrees and Researcher Development Officer
Lead contact:	Alex.Hinchliffe@manchester.ac.uk