Guidelines on Submitting a Thesis Incorporating Publications

Deliberately we have not been prescriptive in defining how publications can be included in a thesis, as we recognise this may depend on the discipline and specific issues concerning an individual thesis. We also recognise this can lead to some confusion for students as to what they can/cannot do. The notes below are to guide students through this route, but we urge them to discuss their plans with their supervisory team, and to contact the Examinations Office if they need clarification.

1) What it is, what it is not

This is an alternative but equivalent route of submission, which students should discuss with their supervisors at an early stage of their study. It is not available for the DClinPsy or other Specialist Doctorates.

A thesis incorporating publications is NOT the same as thesis by publication, a format that is common in continental Europe and consists of several publications being bound into a single volume. A thesis incorporating publications is a variant of the traditional UK PhD thesis, and the purpose is to allow candidates to include work they have published without having to rewrite it to the traditional thesis format.

The allowance of TIP by KCL will be included in the guidance to make potential examiners aware of this style of thesis prior to agreeing to examine. The examiners will have no ability to request rewrite in a standard thesis format after the viva. However, examiners will be made aware that inclusion of a peer reviewed published paper does not diminish their examination rights in terms of requesting additional information added to that particular thesis chapter if they feel the publication insufficiently explains the data or if it would benefit from more or different analyses. These changes will be incorporated in ‘supplementary material’ form, rather than complete rewrite of the Chapter in traditional form or changes made to the published paper via the journal.

2) Which candidates is it suitable for?

Our experience is that this pathway is appropriate to candidates whose work will be published in one or more research papers, such as in Science and Health Faculties, but is unlikely to be suitable for theses which are normally published as single volume monographs, such as those in the Faculties of Arts & Humanities, and Social Science & Public Policy.
IF THERE ARE ANY DOUBTS ABOUT WHETHER SUBMITTING BY THIS ROUTE IS APPROPRIATE FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF STUDY OR WHETHER THE STUDENT WILL HAVE ANY PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE IN TIME, THE STUDENT SHOULD SUBMIT A THESIS BY THE TRADITIONAL ROUTE.

3) **When do I indicate a choice for this pathway?**

You must select the Thesis Incorporating Publication option when you submit the RD1 form. You are advised to discuss this option with your supervisor(s)/thesis committee at an earlier stage.

4) **Which publications can be included?**

Students able to produce/submit a thesis incorporating publications to the rigorous standard required to meet the existing criteria and regulations for a Kings’ College London degree, may, with the support of their supervisor, submit a thesis which:

a) includes at least one paper published in a peer reviewed publication or (if the article is accepted but not yet published) which is presented in the final, accepted form with appropriate reference numbers (normally a DOI number) from the relevant publication. The paper should be bound into the thesis as a pdf version of that presented in the publication, without breaking publishers copyright. Some journals only allow the pre-publication version of the manuscript to be used, others a copy of the ‘Author’s Accepted Manuscript’ version i.e. the final draft of the paper, after peer-review but before the publisher’s typesetting has been applied. The student and supervisor are responsible for checking these requirements. The publications should follow the page numbering requirements of the whole thesis, regardless of the numbering of the (pre)publication version. A book chapter (which must have been peer reviewed) may be considered an article and must be appropriately referenced with confirmation of (pending) publication;

b) has a focussed theme of research presented in a full and comprehensive volume of work to a substantive standard at least equivalent to that expected of a King’s College London research degree;

c) must reach a standard equivalent to that presented by the traditional route, and meet all other standard criteria including period of study and word count;
5) I have published work before I started my PhD can I include that in my thesis?

Publications produced before registration cannot be used, but the normal regulations apply to research that was started before registration i.e. that the majority of the work (but not necessarily all) must be done after registration.

6) What if my manuscript has not been accepted when I submit the RD1 form?

On the RD1 form a box is ticked when it concerns a TIP. If the student at the point of filling out the form has no papers accepted for publication but this is highly likely to be the case for at least one in the next 4-6 months prior to submission, they could still tick the box. If the papers are not accepted prior to submission the burden will be upon them to rewrite them as traditional thesis chapters and they will have to add a note of this to the examiners.

7) If my publications are rejected, can I still include them?

No. A thesis incorporating publications must not contain any papers which were not at least accepted for publication at the point of submitting the RD1 form. In the event this occurs, any relevant papers must be withdrawn from the thesis and the data written up as a conventional chapter before the thesis is submitted for examination.

8) Is the publication itself a standalone chapter or should I include additional material?

The following points concern the other components of the chapter in which the publication is embedded:

a) The introduction section of research papers is often brief and does not provide sufficient analysis of relevant literature. In addition to the publication, the relevant chapter, therefore, may need to be prefaced by an appropriate introduction (if not covered by the general introduction). The publication may also need extensions to methods and results sections (including all on-line material) followed by a conclusion section which fully contextualises and integrates the publication into the rest of the thesis, if necessary. Students are encouraged to discuss how best to do this with their supervisors.

b) The introduction section of research papers is often brief and does not provide sufficient analysis of relevant literature, so, in addition to the publication, the relevant chapter should
be prefaced by an appropriate introduction in the context of the general introduction to the thesis and followed by a conclusion which fully contextualises and integrates the publication into the rest of the thesis. Students are encouraged how best to do this with their supervisory team.

c) Methods in publications are often much briefer than would be expected in a thesis, and therefore it may be necessary to provide these in a detailed form.

d) Preliminary data and background data which are related to the publication but were not published should also be included in the relevant chapter. Supplementary data from the publications must be included in the thesis, contiguous with the publication.

e) References from the publication should also be incorporated into the full thesis bibliography.

f) The publications should follow the page numbering requirements of the whole thesis.

g) There must be an explicit account of the contribution of each co-author to the publication, this should preface the publication where it is included.

9) **Can I still follow this route if I am one of several authors on the paper?**

The student will in most cases be the lead author of incorporated papers. It is acknowledged that different disciplines allow for different interpretation of lead authors of articles and thus standards applied to ensure that the student was the lead author of a paper should be those which apply within the relevant discipline. Where two students are co-first authors on a paper based on a larger project, both candidates may include the paper in their thesis. It is possible to include publications in which the student is responsible for e.g. a newly developed method, which is described in the paper for the first time but the student cannot be (co)first author (e.g. in large collaborative projects where it is common for the principal investigator to be the first author). In this case, however, it might be better for the student to re-write the piece of work in traditional chapter format focusing on just the developed method and refer to published paper as required. Students are encouraged to discuss how best to do this with their supervisors. There must be an explicit account of the contribution of each co-author to the publication, this should preface the publication where it is included.
10) How should I present my thesis?

The inclusion of publications in lieu of traditional chapters does not exempt a candidate from meeting the published guidelines and Regulations on writing and presenting a thesis. Please ensure you read the Regulations and guidance available from the Graduate School, Library and Examinations and Awards Office. The thesis should be bound and presented in accordance with the College’s Instructions on binding a thesis.

11) What is the minimum number of articles I can include?

One.

12) What is the maximum number of articles I can include?

This is at your discretion. As explained above a thesis incorporating publication must not however simply be a series of papers bound together.

13) Which Regulations govern a thesis incorporating publications?

Please refer to paragraph R15.4 of the Regulations for Research Degrees.

14) I have questions about copyright.

Please refer to information available from Library Services.

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