

## Thesis format

The Doctoral Program allows two thesis formats (monograph or thesis by articles), both of which are subject to the same procedure for approval by the Academic Committee and quality assessment by the panel.

These are general guidelines to writing your PhD thesis rather than normative rules. These formats refer to the structure and contents of the thesis, not to its physical aspect, which is common to all theses submitted at the University.

Each thesis is “unique” and may require slightly different organization according to subject matter, methodology, and discipline. The final format will emerge on the basis of dialogue with the supervisor, and the evaluation of the thesis will be subject to the decisions of a tribunal applying best practices in the field.

## Monographs

The first format is the traditional monograph, with chapters that are built upon each other so as to develop the main arguments of the thesis.

A thesis organized as a monograph should typically have an introductory chapter laying out the main research objective, the central argument, the methodology or methodologies, the sources, and the state of the question. The state of the question should review the academic literature, and articulate the contribution of the thesis to this literature.

The body of the thesis shall consist of a number of chapters based on original research that may be organized thematically or chronologically. Each chapter should build upon the previous one so that the thesis reads as a coherent whole.

A monograph should end with a concluding chapter, where the main research question explored in the thesis is restated and its main results are briefly summarized. The conclusion typically highlights the contribution of the research to the academic literature, but also its methodological or substantive limitations. This often leads to a discussion about possible future lines of research.

The length of a monograph varies. Publishing houses ordinarily publish monographs between 250 pages (about 62,500 words) or than 300 pages (about 75,000 words) including bibliography and footnotes. However, theses often go into greater depth about specific academic points, expound research systematically, and often contain extended annexes. Published monographs tend to be more synthetic addressing a broader academic public. For this reason, theses may be longer than the above length. They may also be shorter depending on the subject matter and methodology.

Monographs are single authored, and are generally written in one language. An exception to the single language are those theses that aspire to the “*mención internacional*.” (See Real Decret 99/2011)

## Thesis by articles

The second format is that of a thesis containing at least three articles. Of the three, one of which must have been published or been accepted for publication in an indexed journal or a peer-reviewed collective volume with a publishing house that is highly valued within the field. The other two must display a clear potential for such publication. With respect to an accepted or published article, the candidate must provide evidence that the article has passed peer review. This can be provided in a footnote that contains a link to the journal or publishing house procedures, or can be included as an annex in the form a certification from the publisher or editor.

The three (or more) articles may be single authored or have multiple authors. In the case of multiple authors, it is recommended that the candidate be the first author of the three main articles. With the permission of the director of the thesis, it may be appropriate that the candidate is the first author of two of the articles. In the case of multiple authors, the candidate must explain the roles of each of the authors with respect to the following criteria: conceptualization; methodology; research; data collection, curation and analysis; funding and project administration; writing (original draft); writing (review and editing); and preparations of charts, graphs, and visual images. This explanation should appear in the beginning of each article.

The three (or more) articles should be stand-alone pieces of research. Although they may not need to build upon each other's results, there should be a coherent thread that links them. Ordinarily, this thread is substantive. In other words, the articles cover one identifiable research subject. In some cases, the articles may be linked by a methodological thread. A mix is also acceptable. For example, the first and second articles could be linked substantively, and the second and third, methodologically. In any case, the Ph.D. supervisor should organize this with the candidate in accordance with best practices in the field understood by all members of the tribunal.

A thesis by articles must additionally include an introduction and conclusion. Smaller chapters may also link the articles. The introduction should briefly state the main research questions explored in the thesis and the thread that links the individual articles. The introduction may also include any contextual information that may contribute to a better understanding of the research carried out.

The conclusion should explain the contribution of the theses as a whole to the relevant academic literature. An effort shall be made not just to repeat the conclusions of each article but to cut across them to identify the overall strengths and limitations of the thesis. This will often lead to a discussion about possible future lines of research.

The introduction and conclusion should have a minimum of 3000 words, but often are much longer. Articles in scientific journals are normally between 6000 and 12,000 words, although articles in collective volumes may be longer. Unlike a monographic thesis that often extends beyond the accepted word limits of a book, a thesis by articles should adhere to the above-stated limits.

A thesis by articles may contain articles written in different languages.