



Policy for

Article-based thesis submission

(October 2009)

Preamble

The *Royal Decree 1393/2007*, of 29 October, ruling the official higher education in Spain, establishes in its Chapter V, Article 21, paragraph 1 that

“La tesis doctoral consistirá en un trabajo original de investigación elaborado por el candidato en cualquier disciplina.”

As evident, it does not suggest any kind of structure to the memory of the thesis, beyond establishing that the doctoral work must be original research, and leaves in the hands of the universities any further regulation.

Nor the Rovira i Virgili University has established detailed requirements regarding the reports to be deposited to proceed with the defence of the thesis, except for purely administrative aspects of the management process (see "Regulations of the doctoral studies" of the URV, adopted by the Committee of Postgraduate and Doctorate of 30 September 2008), and the formal aspects for the publication of the report, contained in the "Book of style for theses of the URV" in force since 1 January 2009, where there is a specific mention to article-based theses, simply by setting:

“Les tesis per articles han de presentar una introducció general i unes conclusions globals (amb les citacions bibliogràfiques pròpies d'aquests apartats), així com un índex general de la tesi.”

It is open therefore the opportunity to submit a report as a compendium of published works, format with a long tradition in some Nordic countries, especially in experimental areas where the dissemination is typically made through articles in scientific journals, even customary. In addition, publications are taken increasingly as a factor when rating research careers, which has prompted the publication of research results. Consequently, it is expected that this format of presentation, little used until now, to become common in the near future.

Given that establishing mechanisms to ensure the quality of doctoral theses generated in a doctoral programme is left in hands of the body responsible for the doctoral studies (see "Regulations of the doctoral studies" of the URV), the Doctoral Committee in our case, it is necessary to set criteria for the submission of what is nowadays known as "article-based thesis", which could serve as guide for both doctoral students who select this option, and for Doctoral Committee when assessing it.

Policy

1. The thesis can take the form of a monograph -traditional thesis- or a collection of reviewed articles. This regulation refers only to the second case.
2. The work must have been published or accepted after the beginning of doctoral studies, taking as reference date the first matriculation in the doctoral programme. In addition, the work must mandatorily include the affiliation of the doctoral student in one of the departments participating in the doctoral programme or institute or research center with established agreements. Publications under revision are not accepted in the criteria of this procedure, but obviously excluded material may be used in the report to strengthen the introductory chapter and the conclusions.
3. The dissertation will be composed of at least two articles published or accepted in ISI indexed journals of which the doctoral student must appear as first author on at least



one. The doctoral student will provide, either forming part of the report or separately, copies of the refereed publications. Article is understood as full paper, not being acceptable other publication forms as short communications or others, which do not constitute because of content, structure or size, full description of an investigation.

4. The doctoral student must present evidences of the quality of the publications allocating impact factors (IF) for the latest update of the Science Citation Index, the position occupied by the journal in the most favourable category, the Aggregate Impact Factor (AIF) in the category, as well as a list of citations, if any. To this purpose, a standard form (Appendix I) is available, which can be found on the website of the doctoral programme or can be requested to the Secretariat of Graduate Studies.

5. For both articles provided fulfilling the conditions stated in Section 2 of this regulation, the IF must be higher than the AIF of the category. These articles cannot be presented in more than one thesis. In addition, the non-doctor co-authors must decline, by means of written notice, to use them in the defence of another thesis.

6. For all the material provided as contribution, whether paper, book chapter, book or proceedings of international conference- the doctoral student must present written authorization of the other authors –doctors- allowing the use of such publication in the defence.

7. The supervisor of the thesis must indicate in its report the adequacy of the thesis submission as a compendium of articles, in addition to the usual data about significant contributions made by the thesis, the opening of new research lines and the importance and applicability of the results. Likewise, it must certify the authorship of the articles and assess the relevance of the doctoral student contribution in the article.

8. Meanwhile, the doctoral student must include in the thesis report, one or more chapters establishing the connection between the publications included, listing global results and conclusions and assessing their overall contribution. Mandatorily, the student must draw and discuss common conclusions for the overall work in order to justify that they are the result of a common objective.

9. It is not mandatory to furnish reports from experts non-associated to the doctoral program, since the submitted publications, presumably, have followed a review process prior to acceptance for publication. Only in case of the thesis is processed to obtain the *Doctor Europeus* mention, the School of Postgraduate and Doctorate of the URV will request external evaluations according to the established procedure.

10. Requirements for supervision, registration, preparation, nomination of evaluation boards, and defence of the thesis, for this type of submission, are not modified.

11. The Doctoral Committee, in any case, will examine the documentation provided by the doctoral student and the accomplishment of conditions, and if necessary will make a decision about the convenience (or not) of submitting the doctoral thesis under this format.

12. Any other aspect not covered in these regulations will be governed by rules of the URV or by specific agreements of the Doctoral Committee.

The Doctoral Committee of the
Doctoral Programme in Chemical, Environmental and Process Engineering

Proposal discussed and approved at the meeting hold in Tarragona, the 8th of October of 2009.