

Guidelines for “Cumulative Dissertations” at the Department of Global Business and Trade

The purpose of this document is to specify rules and guidelines concerning cumulative dissertations at the Department of Global Business and Trade.

Doctoral dissertations can either be composed of a collection of papers/ essays (so called “cumulative dissertation”) or be monographs. The appropriate format should be decided by the doctoral candidate and his/her supervisor to best suit the research topic as well as the candidate’s career plans. PhD graduates may return to academic environments in which monographs are more highly valued than a collection of essays (e.g., Russia and Poland). Rules need to be flexible enough to accommodate such differences in academic traditions and career plans.

The intent of the following guidelines and recommendations is to specify minimum requirements for “cumulative dissertations”. Institute-specific guidelines may exist, which stipulate additional requirements.

1. A cumulative dissertation consists of at least three well-developed papers within the same topic area, supplemented by an introduction that positions the papers within the existing literature, motivates the theoretical and empirical analysis, and provides an overarching framework linking together the various papers.
2. A “well-developed” paper is one that has been published in a peer-reviewed journal; is under review at a peer-reviewed journal; has been reviewed and accepted for presentation at a major academic conference; or, at the minimum, has been presented at internal seminars and there is agreement among the members of the doctoral committee that the paper is sufficiently well developed to be accepted.
3. Papers can be co-authored; however, the doctoral candidate must be first author on at least three of the papers comprising the cumulative dissertation to make sure the magnitude of the candidate’s contribution is sufficiently large.
4. It is acceptable that two or more papers draw on the same data set or utilize a similar analytical framework. However, each paper must make an independent scientific contribution. The contribution may be conceptual or empirical. The dissertation committee will evaluate whether the three papers provide adequate independent scientific contributions.

The ultimate decision on whether the theoretical and/or empirical contribution of the papers comprising the cumulative dissertation is large enough to earn the candidate a PhD degree is with the members of the doctoral committee.