



Requirements for cumulative dissertations¹

Approved by the Faculty Assembly on May 23, 2024

Pursuant to section 8, paragraph 3 c) of the Doctoral Study Regulations of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of March 2, 2017, cumulative dissertations are permissible and must satisfy the following criteria:

A cumulative dissertation consists of four (up to a maximum of six) scientific articles/academic papers and one synopsis.

- (a) Three of these scientific articles/academic papers must be published in internationally renowned peer-reviewed academic journals or equivalent publications that reflect the standards of the discipline.
- (b) The remaining papers can also take the form of essays in a book or anthology (edited volume). Short articles are not permissible.

At the time of submission of the dissertation and registration for the doctoral examination, no more than two articles may have the status “submitted, but not yet accepted for publication.” All other articles, including at least two of those specified in (a), must have been published or demonstrably accepted for publication (confirmation is to be included in the “Application for Doctoral Examination”). Until the duty of publication has been fulfilled (see Publication Regulations of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences), the doctoral title may only be used in the form “Dr. phil. des.”. All articles submitted as part of the cumulative dissertation must be published so that the Publication Regulations are considered fulfilled and the degree certificate can be issued.

Co-authorship with members of the Doctoral Committee is permissible for a maximum of two of the submitted articles/academic papers. A third paper may be written in collaboration with co-authors provided they are not members of the Doctoral Committee. At least one article/academic paper must have single authorship.

For papers written in collaboration with co-authors, a personal contribution is required. A comprehensive description of the contribution made by each author must be provided in the synopsis and confirmed by the primary supervisor in their evaluation report. For articles written in co-authorship with a supervisor on the Doctoral Committee, the doctoral candidate must be the principal author (i.e. the first-listed author). In the absence of a hierarchical relationship between the doctoral candidate and the co-authors, or if the latter belong to a different department, the principal authorship requirement does not apply. The personal contribution requirement remains in force, however.

For articles written in co-authorship with a supervisor from the Doctoral Committee, an additional independent external evaluation report must be obtained. All members of the Doctoral Committee and the external reviewer must evaluate all of the submissions, with a particular focus on the doctoral candidate’s personal contribution. The grade awarded for the dissertation is the average of these evaluations.

¹ Translation – only the German version is legally binding.



A cumulative dissertation must address either (i) a topic or various sub-aspects of a topic. The individual papers are devoted to various sub-issues and form a coherent strand; or (ii) various different topics or thematic areas. The connection between the individual areas of study arises from a particular research question. In both cases, a synopsis of at least 20 pages is required. This synopsis must summarize the results of the individual papers, frame them within a larger context, elaborate on their relevance and implications for further research, and clearly situate them within the discipline.

The dissertation is an independent research project, and must demonstrate the doctoral candidate's ability to conduct independent research work (cf. Publication Regulations, section 8). Overall, the cumulative dissertation must reflect the scientific standards of the discipline. The papers submitted for the cumulative dissertation may not be used for other qualifications or qualification stages.