

CMEL PhD thesis by publication SOP

The requirement for a PhD by publication thesis is four first-authored peer-reviewed published articles followed by a discussion of the research findings and a conclusion chapter.

If one of these 4 articles was published before registration of the PhD, it must be submitted with the protocol to the REC.

A hybrid thesis, however, requires a minimum of two first-authored peer-reviewed published articles and the remaining two manuscripts must be in a publication-ready format approved by both supervisors.

In preparation for the submission of your thesis the following guidelines should be adhered to:

- A standard introductory chapter to your PhD thesis is required by the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences – this will be considered as your first chapter.
- Your introductory chapter could be combined with your literature review – provided the candidate does not want to have a stand-alone chapter as literature review. Use parts of your proposal to draft the first chapter.
- A minimum of two first-authored published articles is required by the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences to submit a hybrid-format thesis. Candidates are allowed to insert their manuscripts as they appear in the journal; however, examiners are always impressed when they see a mini introduction (min 5-10 lines) and conclusion (min 5-10 lines) to each of the chapters with articles/manuscripts.
- This mini introduction must also highlight where the manuscript is submitted, journal impact factor, number of citations if any, number of downloads of article if published and the progress of the manuscript – if not published i.e., under review, in-press, or making corrections, etc. This body of brief information will help the examiners to envision the progress of the manuscript/chapter.
- The mini conclusion should be linked to the overall objective/s and the main discussion chapter of the thesis.
- The other two manuscripts/chapters in submission-ready format should also have a brief introduction and conclusion (5-10 lines at least) per chapter/manuscript, as examiners would like to see continuity.
- All four manuscripts must align with the study aims and objectives, i.e., there must be a golden thread that ties all the chapters together.
- The discussion chapter is not a paper on its own, it is the candidates' debate with the thesis and it must be written as your own experience with the literature and your research topic. There is a risk of repeating all the published manuscripts; however, the mini introduction and conclusion will explain to the examiners why you have repeated these issues in the discussion.

Note that the discussion chapter is pulling together all the publications to showcase the novelty of your research. Develop a concept map to link the articles taking the objectives of your study into account.

- The conclusion chapter should include the strengths and limitations of your study, future recommendations for further studies
- According to the Faculty's requirement, the bibliography must appear at the end of the thesis – this section must include all the references that were used in the main thesis.
- PhD candidates should arrange with their supervisors to place an embargo on their thesis for 6 months. The embargo will allow time for manuscripts that are still in the peer-review process to get published
- Exclude references when checking the Turnitin score
- Interview guides, questionnaires and other documents (eg consent forms, declaration forms of co-authors) can be included as appendices
- The summary of the dissertation must be done in English and Afrikaans – the language centre can assist with the translation into Afrikaans.