UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

POLICY GUIDELINES FOR ARTICLE-BASED THESIS AT UCC

Introduction

The mission of the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), University of Cape Coast (UCC), is to create a facilitating environment for teaching, learning and training of graduate students to equip them with initiative and leadership in key sectors of national and international endeavors. Against this background, the School of Graduate Studies continues to look for possible avenues of ensuring that graduate students produce quality thesis and at the same time graduate on time.

Traditionally, the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Cape Coast has been graduating research master's and doctoral students with thesis based on monograph format alone. The new policy direction now is to add an article–based format as an alternative to the monograph in the preparation of thesis by postgraduate students in UCC. This policy has already been approved by the School of Graduate Studies and highlighted in the SGS policy for presentation of thesis/dissertation/project approved by the Academic Board. The School however, needs guidelines for its implementation.

Article-based thesis at UCC will represent a compendium of several shorter scientific or academic papers, coherently presented as a research report by a research student in partial fulfillment for the award of a research masters or doctoral degree. This is different from the existing monograph format, which is a unified text, structured in various chapters with an introduction and conclusion, with the graduate candidate as the sole author. The two formats will be available for students to choose. It is important to note that thesis by publication may not necessarily suit all candidates, all disciplines, or all supervisors. Its appropriateness depends on the topic or norms in the field, and it is up to the students in consultation with their supervisors, to choose the type of format to use. Once article-based format is chosen, students will have to follow certain strict guidelines provided below.

Guidelines for Article-Based Thesis
A. Number of articles and status

1. A doctoral thesis should have a minimum of three articles, which should be published or accepted for publication. Any other(s) should have been submitted for publication. The articles in the thesis (typically between 3 and 6) must completely address the research problem.
2. A master's thesis should have at least one article. The article should be published or accepted for publication. Any other(s) should have been submitted for publication. The article(s) (typically between 1 and 4) in the thesis must completely address the research problem.

B. Research proposal

1. The articles should be based on the same research questions/objectives/hypotheses submitted in the original thesis proposal.
2. Adoption of article-based format by students should start from the proposal stage, so that the research committee members are able to identify the articles that will come out from the study, which will completely address the research problem.

3. A proposal for article-based thesis should include: copies of any completed articles whether published or not; an outline of any articles in progress; a list of proposed journals; and a timeline for completion of the work.

C. Journals/Copyright

1. Journals to which articles are submitted must be the responsibility of the Departments, subject to approval by the Board of Graduate Studies. This is important to ensure that articles included in the thesis are of high quality and from credible sources.
2. The student must obtain copyright permission from journal publishers to be added as appendix in the thesis.

D. Authorship

1. Where multiple-authors are involved, the student must be the primary author of the articles.
2. In co-authored articles, students must indicate clearly the contributions of the co-author(s) to the article. The role of co-author(s) must be presented and approved by the Graduate Committee in the Department. Any change of co-authorship must be approved by the Committee.
3. If an article is rejected by a Journal during the thesis process, the student may submit it to another Journal approved by the Department. Any changes must be approved by the Department Graduate Committee. Co-authorship will not be changed for a revised and resubmitted paper.
4. If an article is rejected by a Journal after the successful completion and defence of the thesis, co-authorship decisions that were initially made will no longer be in effect. Submission to a new Journal is at the discretion of the student.
5. Multiple-authored articles cannot be used in more than one thesis. For students who have worked collaboratively on projects, it may be preferable for such students to use the traditional format thesis, to demonstrate individual contributions.

E. Format/Writing style

Normally, manuscripts for publication in journals do not require the detail specifications for thesis. Thus, in adopting this format, the thesis must be organized along the following lines to meet the requirements of the SGS.

1. The thesis must have the **preliminaries or front matter** as specified in the SGS manual on guidelines for preparing and presenting project work, dissertation, and thesis. For article-based thesis the **Abstract,** that synthesizes all the articles, should be followed by **List of Publications by Candidate,** whether published, in press (accepted for publication), or submitted (under review).

2. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION
   This introductory chapter should function as the cord that weaves the various articles together, their collective meaning and combined contribution to the field. It should include:
   a. Background to the Study.
   b. Statement of the Problem.
   c. Research Questions/Objectives/Hypothesis/Assumptions (as applicable).
   d. Significance of the Study.
   e. Delimitations and Limitations.
   f. Definition of Terms.

g. General Methodology (including the Study Area)
h. Linkage of Articles/Scientific Papers
i. Organisation of the Study

3. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of important literature/Theoretical foundation(s)

4. CHAPTER THREE: TITLE FOR ARTICLE 1
Each article should be presented as a chapter. The first page of the chapter must have: the chapter title; the name of the authors as ordered by the journal; the name of the journal that has published or accepted the article for publication; the year, volume and issue of publication, if available.

The first sub-section of the Chapter is the "*Statement of Contributions of Joint Authorship*" if the article is co-authored (see Sample A).

All the 'article chapters' must be connected to show a logical progression from one chapter to the next, so that the completed thesis functions as an integrated whole.

5. CHAPTER 'X': SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
The concluding chapter should summarize the thesis - main findings with some discussion and limitations, major conclusions and recommendations.

6. The thesis must have a **back matter or end matter** to include CONSOLIDATED REFERENCES and APPENDICES as specified by the SGS.

The final copy of the thesis should be formatted and bound as per the guidelines for presenting thesis by the SGS. *This will require that all previously published materials (articles) must be reformatted in line with the thesis requirements of the SGS.*

Note: The writing format as provided is a general guideline for all Schools/Faculties. However, any School/Faculty that needs a unique writing format within the approved policy framework should submit a proposal for consideration by the SGS Board.

F. Examination and Defence of Article-based Thesis

1. It is the University that sets the standard by which theses are examined. Thus, article-based thesis with published papers does not necessarily mean that it meets examination standards. There shall be internal examination of the thesis with equal rigour as part of the viva voce process where the examining panel will evaluate and determine the overall grade for the thesis and the viva voce.
2. The examiners may request major or minor changes to any part of the thesis regardless of whether it has been published or not.
3. For a master's thesis, the examining panel for the viva voce will comprise:
   a. The Head of Department as Chairperson
   b. An expert from a Cognate Department within the University and

      c. The supervisor(s)
4. For doctoral thesis, the examining panel for the viva voce will comprise:
      a. The Dean of the SGS or the representative as Chairperson
      b. The Head of Department
      c. An expert from a Cognate Department within the University and
      d. The supervisor(s)
5. It is not a guarantee that article-based thesis will automatically be acceptable by a panel of examiners for a degree without passing a defense (viva voce). Where a candidate fails a viva voce the SGS policy on failing a viva voce will apply.

G. Advantages of Article-Based Thesis

The goal for the SGS in introducing articles-based thesis format is to encourage publication of research of high standards in a timely manner by students (with supervisors) to improve students completion rate and UCC institutional image. Specifically, the adoption of article-based thesis format has the following advantages:

1. Cultivation of publication habits in the student
2. Candidate and supervisor (s) receive at an early stage, external feedback from independent reviewers on the research.
3. Candidate becomes aware of how the research is progressing by means of publication. This will serve as motivation to pursue further for early completion.
4. Rapid dissemination of research outcomes to a wider audience compared to thesis by monograph. This invariably will improve the visibility of UCC graduates, supervisors and the University.

RELATED POLICY PROPOSALS

Review of Number Supervisors for Thesis

One key thrust in the strategic plan of the SGS for the past four years has been to increase graduate students enrolment (especially, research students) to 20% of total University enrolment. Unfortunately, the enrolment for postgraduate students of about 7 percent for the period and the percentage is far lower for research students. The indication is that we are not close to achieving our target of 20%, to even think of meeting the National Council of Higher Education (NCTE) norm of 25%.

A major reason for this low enrolment situation that has always come up is the overloading of supervisors with too many students to supervise amidst their other teaching responsibilities. As such, the availability of supervisors has been a major criterion for the selection of students for research programmes. Consequently, only few qualified students are admitted in research programmes by some Departments. To improve the situation for higher enrolment, the SGS proposed to the University Appointment and Promotion Board, the need to link post-retirement appointment of senior academics to postgraduate supervision to free their hands to allow for higher enrolment of research student. The policy was approved by the University but, we are yet to realize the benefits.

To further improve the situation towards achieving the goal of the SGS and the national norm, the SGS through the Academic Board of the University of Cape Coast has revised the

number of supervisors for research students based on current trends in postgraduate administration locally and internationally:

1. A **research master's candidate** will be assigned **one supervisor** of at least, Senior Lecturer rank, who will be solely responsible for the supervision of the thesis. This is a shift from the traditional two-supervisor system (principal and cop-supervisor). To ensure inputs from other senior members which could be an issue, Heads of Department will have to follow the SGS mandatory requirement of orgnising research seminars including proposal defense for research students in the Departments.

    The one supervisor approach for master's thesis, which is not new (locally and internationally), is necessary because of the large number of students that must be efficiently and effectively managed on the basis that:
    a. It will be more effective to hold an individual supervisor responsible and demand accountability than the current practice.
    b. It will eliminate any "principal and o-supervisor" conflicts in supervision that sometimes delay students' completion of thesis.
    c. It will reduce the cost of supervision and its implications for high students' fees.

2. **A PhD candidate** will be assigned a **three-member supervisory team** made up of a principal supervisor, co-supervisor and cognate supervisor. In each case, the principal and cognate supervisors should hold a PhD and be of Professorial or Senior Lecturer rank. The co-supervisor should also be a PhD holder and at least a confirmed Lecturer as per the SGS policy. A supervisory team can be allocated a number of PhD candidates at a time with varying roles (principal/co-supervisor).

    The role of the cognate supervisor is essentially (but not limited to) possible arbitration for effective management of the research process. The principal supervisor will have to ensure there are at least two meetings each semester by the supervisory team with the student to evaluate progress of work. These meetings are besides the regular meetings the student would have with the principal and co-supervisor on technical issues. Departments/Faculties/Schools should develop monitoring/compliance systems (e.g. progress reporting) to ensure effective supervision.

    The cognate supervisor becomes the cognate member on the examining panel for viva voce. As part of his/her role, the cognate supervisor will check that suggestions from the examining panel at the viva voce have been considered by the student before the thesis is submitted through the appropriate channel to the SGS.

    This approach has the potential of creating collaborative multi-disciplinary teams (within and across departments) with inherent monitoring mechanism for effective supervision of PhD students. Again, this is not new, and if we are to respond to local and international demands, UCC must align with positive trends.

Sample A

CHAPTER THREE

THE POTENTIAL OF FARMER FIELD SCHOOL IN COCOA EXTENSION DELIVERY: A GHANAIAN CASE STUDY

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Statement of Contributions of Joint Authorship

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Writing and compilation of manuscript, established methodology, data collection and analysis, preparation of tables and figures

Okorley, E. L.:   **(Principal Supervisor)**

Supervised and assisted with manuscript compilation, editing and co-author of manuscript

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Editing and co-author of manuscript