

Standards for doctoral dissertations defined as “collections of published and thematically linked scientific articles”

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LEGAL BASIS

Legal regulations concerning the standards for doctoral dissertations are available at: https://kompsych.pan.pl/images/Standardy_doktorskie_-_wersja_do_rozpowszechniania_-_27_czerwca_2019.pdf. Doctoral dissertations as “collections of published and thematically linked scientific articles” [Art. 187, section 3 of the Act of 20 July 2018 – Law on Higher Education and Science].

1. GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS

Question: What are standards? Standards are the requirements that are imposed on:

- doctoral students,
- doctoral supervisors,
- scientific discipline council (in this case – psychology),

and relate to the **scientific value** of a doctoral dissertation. Therefore, a doctoral dissertation **should contribute something new to the existing body of knowledge**.

Article 187, section 2. A doctoral dissertation proposes an **original solution to a scientific problem**, an original solution to the application of research results in the economy or society, or an original work of art (bold font introduced by the authors).

The formulated *Standards* should not raise the objections of psychology discipline councils (which are authorized by university senates to grant doctoral degrees) belonging to scientific category A+, A or B+ (or councils which aspire to these categories – at present, there are no scientific discipline councils in category B+; category B+ councils will be announced after the results of the assessments conducted by the Science Evaluation Committee in 2021 have been published). Universities and organizations dealing professionally with psychological research (psychology as a **scientific discipline**, not a field of study) should have an interest in promoting doctoral research projects that make a valuable contribution to the scientific literature. The results of doctoral research should be shared in the scientific community. This goal can be most effectively achieved by publishing articles in scientific journals indexed in JCR and SCOPUS databases.

A doctoral dissertation should be included in an organization's research plan, and it should be a part of a larger research project, which is why the manuscripts that are submitted for evaluation can have multiple authors. In our opinion, at least one of the submitted articles should be co-authored by the doctoral supervisor.

Doctoral dissertations should also make a reference to an article (articles) where the author presents the theoretical framework for the conducted research. The relevant information can be presented in a single article or in a series of two or three articles.

Strictly theoretical research (e.g. history of psychological thought, methodology) also constitutes scientific research. According to the Law on Higher Education and Science:

Article 187, section 1. A doctoral dissertation demonstrates the candidate's theoretical knowledge in a given discipline or disciplines and his or her ability to conduct scientific research or artistic work independently.

2. DETAILED CRITERIA

Number of publications

- A. A minimum of two **articles published** in JCR-indexed journals. As regards articles with multiple authors, the doctoral candidate should be the lead

author of at least one article, and his/her contribution (confirmed by the co-authors) should be minimum 50%.

or

B. A minimum of **three published articles**, including **one article** published in a JCR-indexed journal and **two articles** published in SCOPUS-indexed journals. The doctoral candidate should be the lead author of the article published in a JCR-indexed journal, and his/her contribution (confirmed by the co-authors) should be minimum 50%.

Online First articles with a DOI number are regarded as published articles. In turn, articles that have been formally approved for publication are not regarded as published.

According to Article 188 of the Law on Higher Education and Science:

Article 188, section 1. A doctoral dissertation that was submitted in writing, including the abstract, and a description of a **doctoral dissertation that was not submitted in writing**, including reviews, shall be published by the granting authority on the website of the Public Information Bulletin (BIP) not later than 30 days before the scheduled date of the doctoral defense examination (bold font introduced by the authors).

Therefore, only a description of a doctoral dissertation **which comprises published scientific articles** is published by the degree granting authority on the BIP website.

Summary of research accomplishments

A scientific discipline council **may** request that a summary of research accomplishments (that does not have to be published) is attached to the collection of published articles that constitute the doctoral dissertation. The summary should present the theoretical framework for the conducted research whose results were presented in scientific articles that constitute the doctoral dissertation, including an overview of the candidate's major scientific achievements and their implications in the context of the presented theoretical framework.

The summary of research accomplishments should be made available (e.g. online) to all members of a scientific discipline council, including the reviewers.

Doctoral supervisor as the co-author

The supervisor can be a co-author, but not the lead author of the articles that are presented in the doctoral dissertation.

Article 190, section 1. A doctoral candidate receives support from a supervisor/supervisors or from a supervisor and an auxiliary supervisor in the process of preparing the doctoral dissertation.

Doctoral candidate's contribution to an article with multiple authors

A doctoral candidate's contribution should be indicated (in percent), described and confirmed by the remaining co-authors in every scientific article presented in the dissertation.

However, it is up to the reviewers to decide whether the candidate's contribution to:

- developing the theoretical framework for a research project,
- conducting the study,
- analyzing data and presenting the results,

merits the inclusion of a given research study in the doctoral dissertation.

Research sharing by doctoral students

An article describing the results of a scientific study, which was written by several authors, can be used by another doctoral student in his/her dissertation.

Conflict of interest

The articles published by a doctoral candidate may not be co-authored by prospective reviewers.

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The presented criteria establish common ground for discussion among members of scientific discipline councils, supervisors and, in particular, reviewers. These criteria do not constitute recommendations for reviewers, and they were formulated to provide doctoral students and supervisors with important information about the types of publications that may be included in a doctoral dissertation.

Formal compliance with these criteria does not constitute the sole requirement for obtaining a doctoral degree. The scientific value of the submitted articles, in particular their novelty, is evaluated by independent reviewers. The scientific discipline council may or may not agree with the reviewers' opinions, and it may or may not recommend the candidate for a doctoral degree.

Exceptions to the recommended criteria are admissible if they improve the scientific value of the doctoral dissertation and do not violate the provisions of the Law on Higher Education and Science.

The full version of the document with annexes is available here: https://kompsych.pan.pl/images/Standardy_doktorskie_-_wersja_do_rozpowszechniania_-_27_czerwca_2019.pdf.