

Three-Article Dissertation Guidelines, 2022-2023

UNC Charlotte, The Graduate School

Introduction

A departure from the traditional dissertation project, the three-article dissertation entails special preparation and formatting considerations. It also comes with its own set of requirements. Students should decide as early as possible, in concert with their dissertation chair, whether to pursue the three-article format. Students should also consult this guide, in addition to our traditional dissertation guide, for all formatting standards.

The three-article dissertation is not the ideal format for all students and is not suitable for all disciplines. There must be coherence between the articles that make up the dissertation, and the rationale for grouping the three articles together must be clear. Students may find it difficult to manage their time between writing the dissertation and the publishing “revise and resubmit” cycle. The three-article format may entail more work or a greater time investment than the traditional dissertation. Copyright issues must also be addressed, as the dissertation cannot be published in ProQuest if necessary permissions are not obtained, and the student’s graduation could thus be delayed.

Although this Guide endeavors to anticipate questions, exceptions are made at the discretion of the Graduate School. This Guide is not exhaustive, which means that you may be asked to make revisions not described herein. Revision requirements are made at the discretion of the Graduate School. Questions about the three-article dissertation format should be directed to Laura Pagani (lpagani@uncc.edu).

Requirements

- The three-article dissertation must be approved by the student’s advisory committee. (Three is the minimum number of articles. Students may need to include more in order to achieve coherence.)
- The journals to which the articles are being submitted must be approved by the advisory committee. The committee should assist in identifying and choosing refereed journals that will both challenge the student as well as offer a reasonable chance of publication success.
- A maximum of one article published or accepted for publication prior to the proposal defense may be included. This article must represent work undertaken while the student is enrolled in the PhD program and be approved by the committee at the time of the student’s proposal defense. This article must be connected to the theme or themes of the dissertation.
- If a previously published article is approved by the committee, the student will be responsible for securing necessary permissions from the copyright holder and other authors.

- The articles submitted for the defense must be of publishable quality. The student's dissertation committee decides whether the articles meet this standard.
- Students must be first author on all articles. As first authors, students are responsible for the development and articulation of a concept or idea for research, development of a proposal to pursue this idea, development of a research design, conducting research and analysis, writing major portions of a manuscript, designing an intervention or assessment (if relevant), and interpreting results.
- Co-authors must be identified and approved at the student's proposal defense. The article and the role of the co-authors must be presented to and approved by all members of the dissertation committee. Any changes in co- authorship must be approved by the student's committee.
- The dissertation must follow your field's formatting requirements (APA, MLA, etc.), and the same style guide must be used throughout the entirety of the dissertation, even if the journals to which you have submitted or plan to submit utilize different style guides. In the event of a discrepancy between style guides, the Graduate School's formatting standards will take precedence over others, as our standards comply with the requirements provided by ProQuest.
- Deadlines are the same for both three-article and traditional dissertations. Submission and graduation deadlines can be found on the Registrar's webpage.

Copyright Considerations and Requirements

The inclusion of any previously published articles or articles that have been accepted for publication requires permission from the copyright holder as required by US law. The sections not copyrighted by another party may be covered under the publication of the new manuscript. Up to one article may have been published before the proposal defense. However, if so, the student must obtain copyright permission from the publishing journal to include the article in his or her dissertation. Doing so is required by U.S law. When asking for permission to include the article in the dissertation, students should notify the journal editor that the dissertation will be made available on-line. Uploading your dissertation to ProQuest is a requirement of graduation.

Order of Required Manuscript Elements for the Three-Article Dissertation

Prefatory Material

- Copyright Information

Please see the introductory information, above, regarding copyright concerns

- Abstract

The abstract should synthesize the three articles and the work as a whole.

- Acknowledgments and Dedication (optional)

Follow the same layout and format as for a traditional dissertation.

- Table of Contents

Each article included should be identified in the Table of Contents as a separate section by giving the complete title as it appears on each manuscript. You will probably want to list

subheadings that occur within the individual manuscripts, and you should include subheadings from the introductory and summary sections.

- Lists of Tables and List of Figures (if applicable)

List all tables and figures that appear within the entire document. Numbering of tables and figures will be dependent upon the chosen style (APA, MLA, etc.) and formatting guide for the document as a whole.

- List of Abbreviations (if applicable)

List all abbreviations as one complete list in the prefatory section of the dissertation. Do not list them in each individual article.

Main Body

- Introduction

The introduction should explain why the previously published or publishable papers were chosen, including a substantive discussion of the relationship between the various articles and parts of the research that tie together the articles. The introduction should include a clear statement of the student's purpose or singular research hypothesis to be tested. It should provide necessary background information and a broad statement summarizing the findings of the study. The minimum of three articles should form a cohesive body of work that supports a theme or themes that are expressed clearly in this introduction. The need for three articles (as opposed to just two) should be clear and approved by the dissertation committee, and not merely represent minor tweaks of a work that would be more appropriately reported in just one or two articles.

- Chapter/ Article 1

Subsections (e.g., Introduction, Review of Literature, Method, Results, Conclusions)

Article 1 Reference List

Article 1 Appendices (if applicable)

- Chapter/ Article 2

Subsections (e.g., Introduction, Review of Literature, Method, Results, Conclusions)

Article 2 Reference List

Article 2 Appendices (if applicable)

- Chapter/ Article 3

Subsections (e.g., Introduction, Review of Literature, Method, Results, Conclusions)

Article 3 Reference List

Article 3 Appendices (if applicable)

Concluding Material

- Overall Conclusion

State the conclusions for the dissertation as a whole. The conclusion should include a general discussion, applications, and ideas for future research that emerge from the three separate articles as well as from the dissertation as a whole.

- References

All general references from the introduction, overall conclusion, and any supplementary sections should be included here and should conform to the same style and format as the articles.

- Appendices

Include here only any additional appendices that relate to the manuscript as a whole.

A Note on ADA Accessibility

You are also expected to make every effort to ensure that your document is ADA accessible (e.g., compatible with screen readers). Adobe and Word both have accessibility checking features that will flag areas that need improvement.

These guidelines were compiled from information provided by The University of Texas at Austin, Athens University of Economics and Business, Trident University International, North Carolina State University, The University of Alabama, and The University Of Utah College Of Health.