

Graduate Program in Sociology—Article-based Dissertation Guidelines  
11 April 2022

- (1) Students may choose to complete the dissertation requirement by writing an article-based dissertation. The article-based dissertation is an alternative writing format distinguished from the monograph-based dissertation in that the analysis or findings chapters of the traditional dissertation are written as journal articles. The article-based dissertation should be a cohesive body of work that emanates from a single overall research project. The articles included in an article-based dissertation must be based on a student's dissertation research conducted following the approval of the student's dissertation proposal.
- (2) The Program provides multiple opportunities for students to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the monograph vs. article-based dissertation. The PhD seminar includes a session in which dissertation formats are discussed in detail. It also includes hands-on workshops on publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals. Supervisors, supervisory committee members, and students are encouraged to begin communicating about dissertation formats early in students' training. The intended writing format for the dissertation must be clearly indicated in the dissertation proposal. The supervisory committee's approval of the proposal stands as approval of the article-based dissertation format. Students may switch from the format indicated in the proposal with the written approval of the full supervisory committee.
- (3) The article-based dissertation should follow the following format: abstract, introduction, 3 or 4 articles, conclusion, appendices (references are typically included at the end of each chapter but can, instead, be grouped together in a single section that appears before appendices). The abstract should provide a statement of the nature of the overall project that synthesizes the articles. The introduction should outline the common theoretical, conceptual, substantive, methodological or other threads that create continuity across the dissertation's individual articles. Normally, the introduction includes: a statement of the dissertation's overall objectives and the nature of the sociological problem it addresses; the importance of the problem addressed; the theoretical perspectives used in the dissertation; an analysis of the relevant literature (this should be written as an overview, as the individual articles will include their own discussions of the literature); the research questions addressed in the dissertation; the methodologies used in conducting the research; and a statement of what follows in the dissertation. The conclusion should tie the individual articles together into a cohesive whole and show how they make an original contribution to sociological knowledge. The conclusion should also identify weaknesses and limitations, discuss any relevant recommendations, and point to future avenues of inquiry. The introduction and conclusion must be substantial in content, depth and length. They should clarify how the articles and the findings analyzed in the dissertation are interconnected.
- (4) The articles included in the dissertation must be deemed suitable for publication in a reputable peer-reviewed scholarly journal with a solid academic reputation. The supervisory committee is the final arbiter on whether an article is of publishable quality and whether a journal has a solid academic reputation.
- (5) The PhD student must be the sole author of all articles included in an article-based dissertation.
- (6) Students and supervisory committee members should discuss potential journal homes for the articles during the proposal writing process or, at the latest, during the early phases of dissertation

writing. Committee members should help students identify reputable peer-reviewed scholarly journals that increase the likelihood of publication success.

(7) The word count of the articles will vary depending on the requirements of the journals that have been identified as potential homes for the articles. In circumstances when no target journal has been identified, a word count of 8,000 to 10,000 (including references) should be used as a guide.

(8) Students are **not** required to submit their articles to scholarly journals before the defense. Some journals may have copyright requirements that create significant barriers to including the article in the dissertation. Copyright requirements can also introduce delays to the dissertation defence. It is the responsibility of the student to understand the copyright requirements of any journals to which articles are submitted prior to the defense. It is also the responsibility of student to obtain copyright permission from the publishing journal to include the article in their dissertation. In doing so, students must inform the journal editor that the dissertation will be made available online. All copyright permissions must be obtained before the dissertation is finalized and prior to the dissertation defence.

(9) In cases where an article has been accepted for publication prior to defence, all FGS requirements related to the inclusion of previously published material in the dissertation must be followed. Please visit <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/thesis-and-dissertation/doctoral-dissertation/>

(10) A certain amount of repetition is to be expected in an article-based dissertation. For example, some methodological details or literature review components may need to be included in all of the articles. Students and supervisory committees should discuss ways to address repetition in the dissertation e.g. through the use of metatextual commentary and chapter prefaces.

(11) The articles in an article-based dissertation are to be evaluated by the oral examination committee in the same manner as other parts of the thesis, regardless of their publication status. The oral examination committee may require modifications even when an article has received final acceptance from a journal.