

Guidelines on Co-authorship and Cumulative Dissertations

Preliminary Remarks

Section 10 paragraph 1 of the new doctoral degree regulations now refers to an “academic treatise (dissertation),” which is understood to mean not only monographs on a single subject and/or by an individual author, but also a cumulative body of work. The explicit reference to cumulative dissertations in the old regulations has become obsolete, as cumulative dissertations have since become commonplace in economics and business research. Furthermore, this differentiation has proved itself impracticable, as parts of “monographs” are often published beforehand as co-authored academic articles, and it is also typical to write an introduction to the academic articles in a cumulative dissertation as well as attach a combined bibliography. There is, therefore, no longer a clear distinction between a cumulative dissertation and a monograph.

Co-authorship of a Dissertation

Co-authored bodies of work are taking on a greater significance in the field of business and economics. This is why collaboration with other researchers is now permitted for dissertations. However, this requires transparency regarding the contributing co-authors. The share of the work undertaken by the doctoral candidate must be sufficiently large and definable.

It is up to the examiners to evaluate whether these requirements have been met for a dissertation. Even if it can be problematic to formulate purely quantitative standards concerning the quality, scope, and originality of a body of work, or the impartiality of a reviewer, the Doctoral Board has reached a consensus on the following guidelines, which also apply to co-authored monographs.

- a) The doctoral candidate must be the sole author of at least one of the articles in the dissertation.
- b) The sum of submitted articles – each weighted based on the number of authors for each article – must amount to two at a minimum [see Footnote 1]. A doctoral candidate therefore must submit at least three articles that count toward the dissertation in order to reach this number.
- c) None of the co-authored articles submitted may be the object of more than one other doctoral examination.
- d) If more than half of the articles submitted were written together with members of the doctoral commission, then a third-party examiner will be required.

e) It must be ensured when putting together the doctoral commission that not all members come from only one department or institute.

Footnote 1: For example: One article was written by solely one author (weighting of 1), one article had one other co-author (weighting of 1/2), and two articles had two other co-authors respectively (each with a weighting of 1/3). This adds up to: $1 + 1/2 + 1/3 + 1/3 = 2.17 > 2$. The requirement is thus met.