

## Fachbereich 14



### Frequently Asked Questions about Publication-based (“cumulative”) Dissertations in English

#### 1) May I write and defend my thesis in English?

The answer is “yes” BUT please remember that you need to write

- a FIVE page summary of your results in German in your thesis. It should come after your English summary, and
- a TWO page summary in German that is not part of your thesis but will be circulated with your thesis to all professors in FB 14 and to the deans of other faculties.

#### 2) How many papers do I need for a cumulative thesis?

There is no hard and fast rule about the number of papers. Obviously the word cumulative doesn't have any meaning if there is just one paper. Generally speaking, 3-5 papers will be sufficient, although the Dissertation Committee will look at both quantity and quality of the publications in making a decision about whether a cumulative thesis will be acceptable.

#### 3) Do all the papers need to be published?

It wouldn't make a lot of sense to have unpublished manuscripts bundled in a cumulative dissertation. On the other hand, even if papers are written along the way, it is likely that one or two may not yet be published in print form at the time the doctoral student is ready to submit the thesis. It is preferred that all papers be presented at least in the “early view” internet version, but exceptions can be made for one or perhaps two papers.

#### 4) What else needs to be in the thesis besides the papers?

- a) An introduction to the work, including background theory where appropriate and a description of previous relevant work as well as the hypotheses tested in the work. This section will typically be 20-30 pages in the printed form.
- b) Next there will be a section in which you summarize the results and show how the various papers fit together. In this section the impact and future direction of the work should also be discussed. This part should be 20-30 pages long in the print version. Together, the introduction and summary sections need to be AT LEAST 50 pages long and should provide a stand-alone description of the thesis work.
- c) The 5-page summary in German (mentioned above).
- d) A statement of your personal contribution to each of the papers (this only needs to be one to two pages long).
- e) Your CV

#### 5) Where do I get approval for submitting a cumulative dissertation?

You can send it as a pdf to the Acting Head of the Dissertation Committee (at the moment Prof. Dr. Dressman) by email. She will review it with respect to the above-mentioned criteria and let you know if there need to be any adjustments. With the pdf you will also need to send a letter of application to Prof. Dressman (with a copy to Mrs. Schemenau) which expresses your wish to submit a publication-based dissertation and which contains a list of the papers (title, authors and publication information). This letter **must** be signed by your thesis supervisor.