Publication-based ("cumulative") Dissertation
Frequently asked questions

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?
Obviously the word cumulative doesn't have any meaning if there is just one paper. 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.
At least three publications must be available.
- At least two of these publications must be research papers with the doctoral candidate as first author.
Further publications can be considered:
  - a review article, if the doctoral candidate is the first author,
  - research papers with the PhD student as co-author, if the contributions are substantial.
- The publications must have appeared in internationally recognized journals with an established peer-
  review system or at least have been accepted for publication.
- Shared first authorships are considered as first authorships if the individual contributions could also stand
  alone. It is assumed that, as a rule, no more than two authors share this status. In the introduction to the
dissertation (see below), the individual contribution should be made particularly clear.
- The individual contributions of all authors to the publications should be presented.
- The supervisor of the dissertation and all co-authors must agree to the use of the publications in a
cumulative dissertation.

3) What else needs to be in the thesis besides the papers?
- In addition to the publications, the dissertation contains an approximately 50-page paper introducing the
  topic and reflecting on the publications in a larger context.
- In the case of shared first authorships, emphasis should be placed on making one's own share clear.
- It should be noted that copyright issues should be clarified by the doctoral candidate with the publishers.
- If you write the dissertation in English, a five-page German summary of your results must be included
  (mentioned above).
- A short 2-page German summary of the thesis is required for the circulation procedure.
- Your CV

4) Where do I get approval for submitting a cumulative dissertation?
With the pdf you will also need to send the declaration which expresses your wish to submit a publication-
based dissertation. This letter must be signed by your thesis supervisor.
Please use the application form (link) and send your application to the Dean of the Department of
Biochemistry, Chemistry and Pharmacy. He will review it with respect to the above-mentioned criteria and let
you know if there need to be any adjustments.
The following documents must be attached:
  - List of publications
  - Presentation of your own contributions as well as those of the co-authors
  - Consent of the supervisor
  - Consent of the co-authors