Producing a thesis of published and unpublished papers

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Check out great resources from Thinkwell

to help you do your PhD

https://www.ithinkwell.com.au/

They do workshops at Griffith each year
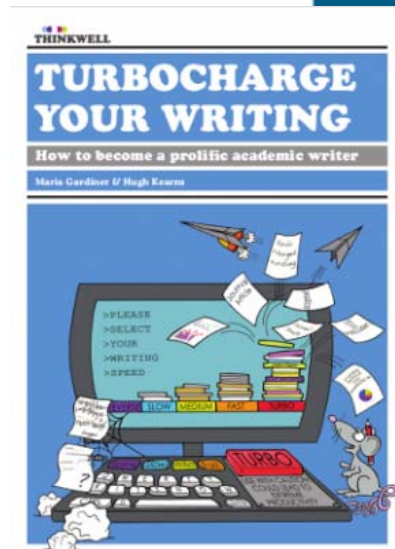
What do the look like?

Can be:

- Introduction, pdf of published papers with linking pages, discussion

- Introduction, methods, pdf of papers with linking pages, discussion

- Introduction, word version of papers as submitted or about to be submitted with linking pages, discussion

- Introduction, SQLR, word version of other papers as submitted or pdf of papers with linking pages, discussion

- Formatted so it looks like traditional thesis and include extra content in chapters (e.g. parts of this chapter have been published as…)

Can have reference lists end of each chapter/paper

Papers/chapters may be in different styles referencing etc to match journals

May format all as word in consistent style with single reference list.

For example of thesis from Griffith in Science

https://www.griffith.edu.au/griffith-sciences/school-environment-science/research/phd-thesis-styles

There are links to key papers and lots of examples of thesis there using this format, recommendations about how to structure the thesis and links to policies and key papers

To see examples of PhD thesis produced using this format at Griffith University, here are links for:

» 1. Chemistry: Dr Will Bennett, Dr Mohammad Al-Mamun, Dr Sheng Li
» 2. Social Science: Dr Sebastian Rossi, Dr Elnaz Torabi
» 3. Ecology: Dr Mark Runkowski, Dr Rochelle Steven, Dr Michael Ansong, Dr Christina Kindermann
» 4. Marine Biology: Dr Andrew Olds, Dr Paul Maxell, Dr Sarah Engelhard

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At what point in candidature should you think about undertaking this thesis format?

Well the earlier in your candidature the better so you get:

- More experience at writing in this form

- More time for the review process to occur

- More feedback from reviewers before the thesis is submitted

- More of your chapters consist of published/accepted or submitted papers

- Especially good style if your part time and working (7 years is a long time)
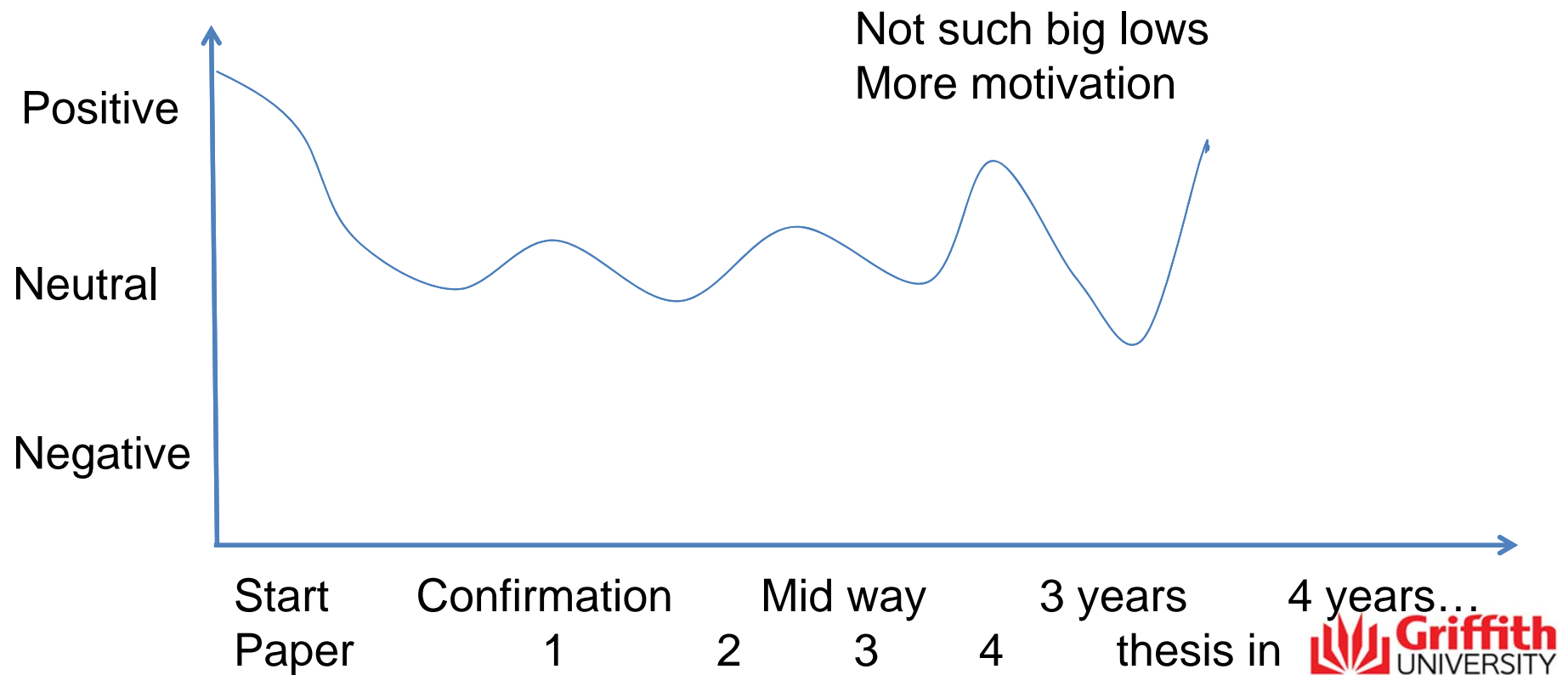
A few reasons you might avoid this format

- Collaborative projects where several co-authors for papers (may make it difficult for the examiner to be sure of the independence of your work)

- Where primary data is not collected (or results obtained) until late

- Where the research will not produce a logical sequence of papers able to be presented as an integrated whole

- Not yet an accepted format within your discipline

- If your supervisor(s) are not in agreement

- If this thesis format is not likely to be well received by your potential examiners

Immediate benefits of publishing for HDR candidates

- Turns a big thesis into discrete papers/chapters

- Gets you writing early

- Sense of achievement during candidature and improved motivation

- Opportunity to make mistakes on smaller components, earlier in thesis

- Get lots of feedback from a variety of people

- Gives time to improve based on feedback from reviewers

- Benchmark the quality of your work and proves its suitable for publication (one of the examination criteria)

Publishing as you go can dampen the lows

Not such big lows
More motivation

Positive

Neutral

Negative

Start   Confirmation   Mid way   3 years   4 years…
Paper   1   2   3   4   thesis in

Big picture benefits for HDR candidates

- Inclusion of peer reviewed articles in the thesis *often* viewed positively by examiners

- Faster examination

- Publications prepared/accepted by the time of graduation

- Increases research opportunities

- Improves competitiveness for scholarships

- Improves grant success

- Garners awards

- Improves employment prospects

Benefits for the Supervisor(s)

- Return for effort and ensuring the research is disseminated

- Co-authorship (where appropriate)

- Spreading supervision workload over candidature

- Faster candidate completion + papers

Benefits for the University and the Community

- Knowledge creation

- Earlier (and greater) dissemination of research results

- Increases the visibility of our HDR cohort

Challenges of this thesis format

- Delays in publication

- Dealing with feedback (and possible rejection) from reviewers

- Workload considerations

- Misunderstandings about the thesis format

- Not suitable for all people, projects, or examiners
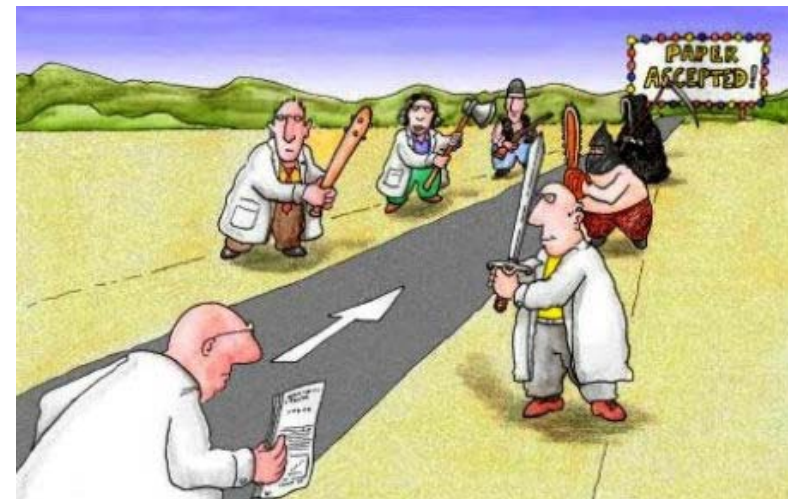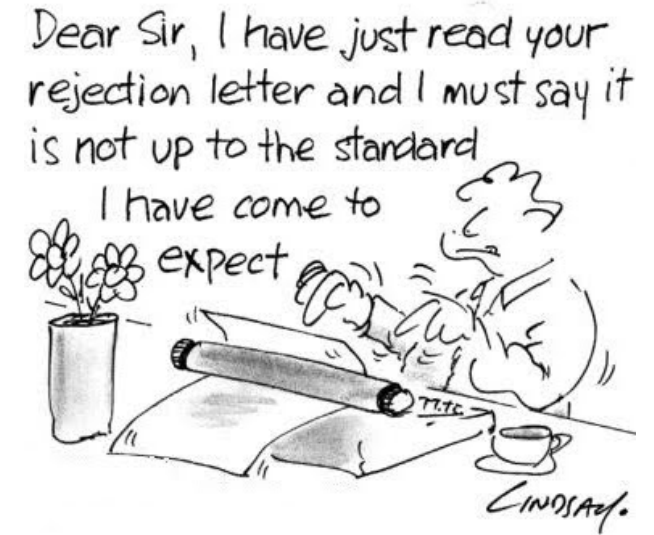
How many papers?

- No hard and fast rules about the number of papers (or the proportion of prepared/in press/published)

- Different disciplines have different expectations ~4 papers in ENV

- Remember the difference between core papers, side papers and post-HDR papers

- Remember that the award of a PhD requires that thesis makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge and understanding in the relevant field of study.

What examiners say about papers in thesis

Survey completed by 62 examiners:

- 48% of examiners found they were easier to assess

- 85% were 'highly influenced by publications in top-ranked journals and international peer-reviewed journals'

- 26% wanted more guidance on how to examine them

- Concerns raised by examiners included:

  - The HDR candidate's intellectual input into co-authored papers
  - Thesis coherence

Keeping track of your progress

Chapters	# pages	Paper?	Designed	Data collection	Analysis	Draft	Supervisor feedback and further drafts	Done/ Submitted
1. Introduction						Confirmation		
2. 1st paper								
3. 2nd paper								
4. 3rd paper								
5. 4th paper								
6. Discussion								

If want to know more?

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