

### **Recommendations for Cumulative Dissertations**

*Please be aware that only the German version is approved. This is a translation for convenience purposes only.*

The Department of Communication Studies recommends the following criteria as minimum requirements for a cumulative dissertation:

1. The decision on a cumulative dissertation project is to be made in agreement between the supervisor and the doctoral candidate on the basis of the professional and methodological orientation of the work, its origin, as well as the background and career perspective.
2. Number: A cumulative dissertation should include at least three contributions, each contributing new knowledge or new insights to the respective field of research. For publication status, see point 5.
3. Co-Authorship: At least one of these works should have been written by the candidate alone. For the others, co-authors are possible, which can also include the supervisor. If a contribution was written by two doctoral students together, both can include this work in their respective cumulative dissertations. It is expected that the candidate has made a substantial contribution to all manuscripts included. For those works with more than two authors, the contribution must be accompanied by a declaration describing the proportions of the persons involved, especially the doctoral candidate, confirmed by all authors.
4. Academic standard: At least one of the contributions should have been published or accepted for publication in a (online) journal with double blind peer-review procedure that is internationally visible beyond German-speaking countries. If this is not possible, proof of submission and review loops of one or more journals must be provided. In addition to journal articles, other contributions such as book chapters are generally accepted, if they meet the quality standards and if a peer review has taken place. The documentation of conference papers in proceedings does not count, but journal papers or book chapters written on this basis do.
5. Publication status: At the time of submission, at least one contribution should already be published (online). An official acceptance for publication should be available for at least one further contribution. If the third contribution is still verifiable under review, the dissertation reviewers must decisively address the extent to which it is capable of publication.
6. Introduction: The dissertation must have a framing, well-founded introduction section that gives a detailed overview of the field of research in the context of communication and media studies. It also outlines and contextualizes the contributions contained in the dissertation and discusses their relevance to scientific discourse. This text should be about 30-50 pages.

These criteria are for guidance. PhD students should get the agreement in place with their supervisor at the earliest opportunity. The final decision on whether the criteria are met lies with the doctoral committee and first and second dissertation reviewer, who consider the standards of the cumulative dissertation as a whole, in terms of quality and coherence.

*Approved at the meeting of the Curricular Commission on 6th May 2025*

**The Curricular Commission**  
**Sascha Trültzsch-Wijnen (Chair)**