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From dissertation to monograph: Practical advice

*A dissertation is not yet a monograph and
that transformation process requires a thoughtful approach*

When submitting a book proposal based on a PhD thesis, it is best to have already distanced yourself somewhat from the original manuscript and know exactly what revisions you have in mind in order to turn your dissertation into a book. Very few dissertations are conceived for immediate publication as monographs with little or no revision; as a rule, a dissertation is not yet a monograph and that transformation process requires a thoughtful approach and thus often a substantial amount of time and effort.

Introduction: Delete or limit an introductory literature survey. Whereas a PhD requires such an overview to document your accumulated expertise, you may expect readers of your monograph to be equipped with the necessary specialist background. Do situate your book within the literature in your field, demonstrate the extent to which your research is innovative and original, and clarify its consistent organisation according to a sound theoretical perspective. Avoid redundancy, and minimise repetition by providing the main background information in the introduction, so it is not necessary to repeat any of it at the beginning of each section.

Structure: Steer clear of an overly detailed table of contents. Limit the number of (numbered) title levels to two, so that the overall sequence may stand out clearly, and the book as a whole reads smoothly (and without too much interruption).

Notes: Limit the number of notes. All genuinely relevant information that contributes to your argument should be incorporated into the main text, so keep only those notes that add indispensable details. Please also take into account that the notes are normally grouped at the back of the book, chapter by chapter, in a separate Notes section, and thus do not constitute part of the main text. This allows for a smooth reading. Moreover, in the notes, short references to the extensive bibliography of works cited and consulted suffice.

Bibliography: Limit your bibliography to the really relevant works, and avoid a bibliography that is further subdivided by publication type; one alphabetical list covering different publication types makes it easier for the reader to identify works consulted.

Conciseness: Make sure your argument is to the point and that your monograph presents a flowing narrative. Take a step back from your dissertation and only retain what is of absolute importance.

Smooth readability: Ensure clear language and easy-to-read sentences. In other words, avoid long-winded sentences, passive constructions or an excess of jargon.



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More detailed practical advice can be found in, e.g.,

- William Germano, *From Dissertation to Book* (2nd edition), University of Chicago Press 2013
- Beth Luey, *Revising Your Dissertation: Advice from Leading Editors* (annotated edition), University of California Press 2004