



Should I Do a PhD Thesis by Publication?

I did a traditional thesis. But I have since coached/helped many PhD students do both thesis by publication and traditional. My advice - Do it! For most (Australian) universities this is so much better. But there are some things to note (good and bad):

1. **The good.** The publications don't need to be accepted or even submitted! Your supervisor needs to sign off that they are draft manuscripts. Ready for submission. For many Australian universities, that is the threshold for a thesis by publication.
2. **The bad.** PhDs don't need to produce publishable results. Just new knowledge. So, if your research results in something that is not publishable, then you'll need to reconsider this approach. Unpublishable results could be stuff others published just before you did (so it was new knowledge at the time you started your work). Or they could be what is often termed negative results. Failed experiments. The information is new but not usable (e.g., protein A doesn't change the way protein B works. Cell x doesn't respond to stimulus y).
3. **The good.** Accepted publications have been peer reviewed. So, you are more confident submitting your thesis for assessment. Same with your supervisor. And you could argue it is an easier thesis to assess because most of the work has already been successfully peer reviewed.
4. **The bad.** The supervisor decides the publication threshold. They might disagree with the university policy and want an ACCEPTED publication, not just one that has been submitted for peer review. This also means a longer wait time to thesis submission.
5. **The good.** Publications. Early publications. They are correlate strongly with academic success. Impact factor and journal, both don't mean as much (according to data). So, focusing on publications early in your PhD can set you up for academic success.

Dr Richard Huysmans helped build the first Victorian Allied Health Careers Pathway Blueprint. In addition, Richard has helped more than 200 clinicians, technicians, PhD students, early career researchers and established academics build their careers. He has provided strategic advice on leaving academia, staying in academia, returning to academia, partnering with industry, growing a career by building new centres and institutes, as well as establishing new programs. As a #pracademic, Richard understands the need to have practical solutions to academic problems. He knows how to identify transferable skills and what makes a good resume.

To find out more, call 0412 606 178, [visit his shop](#), email Richard.huysmans@dr-richardhuysmans.com or [subscribe to the newsletter](#). You can find him on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [ResearchGate](#), [Google Scholar](#), [Spotify](#), [YouTube](#), and [Medium](#).