Reusing your own scientific publications in your thesis

**Plagiarism** means passing off the intellectual property of others as your own. In the scientific context, this often means using (copying) text or parts of a text without citing it correctly.

**Self-plagiarism** means recycling your own scientific work (or parts of it), without indicating that it has previously been published, or citing it correctly. For further information about self-plagiarism see: [https://ombudsman-fuer-die-wissenschaft.de/2234/plagiate-weiterfuehrende-literatur/](https://ombudsman-fuer-die-wissenschaft.de/2234/plagiate-weiterfuehrende-literatur/)

The term “self-plagiarism” or “auto-plagiarism” sometimes leads to the assumption that once data are published, they may not be used for other works by the same author. In principle, the same rules apply for re-using your own data and text as for re-using data and text of other authors:

It is essential to cite your own previous publications appropriately. For details on citing correctly see our guidelines: [https://www.charite.de/fileadmin/user_upload/portal_relaunch/forschung/GutWissPraxis/Citing_Correctly.pdf](https://www.charite.de/fileadmin/user_upload/portal_relaunch/forschung/GutWissPraxis/Citing_Correctly.pdf)

Anything else could be interpreted as deliberate deception. The reasons for re-using scientific data should always be transparent.

In their 2019 “Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice” the DFG laid out the principles that need to be observed when authors reuse their own published work:

- “Researchers provide full and correct information about their own [...] work “
- “They limit the repetition of content from publications of which they were (co-)authors to that which is necessary to enable the reader to understand the context. “

It is important to note that the validity of meta-analyses in particular is compromised by duplicate publication of the same data sets.

The following two options illustrate how to ensure you maintain transparency when you intend to publish a data set that also forms part of your dissertation:

1. **Publishing before submitting your thesis**

   When including content or figures from your own paper (either submitted, accepted or published) in your cumulative dissertation or monograph, you will observe the principles of good scientific practice if you cite the publication in the text and/or legends, and explicitly mention the publication in the preface. We recommend you use one of the following wordings:

   “**Parts of the results of this dissertation have been published in** <bibliographical data> / <date>“

   or

   “**Parts of the results of this dissertation have been submitted for publication to** <Journal> / <date>“

   or

   “**Parts of the results of this dissertation have been accepted for publication by** <Journal> / <dates>“

   The publication also has to be included in the reference list. For publications with co-authors, your own contribution should be specified.

   Please check that your contract with the publisher gives you the right to reuse figures and tables for a dissertation.
2. Submitting your thesis before publishing

When using (parts of) results or text from a dissertation for a publication in a scientific journal, it is Good Scientific Practice to indicate to the editor when submitting the paper that there is an overlapping publication in the form of a dissertation. Note that all dissertations at the Charité are published and freely accessible on the internet.

a. If the publication is merely based on data and work carried out for your thesis, the acknowledgements or, alternatively, a footnote or introductory remark should indicate this fact, e.g. using the following wording:

“This paper includes results of the doctoral thesis entitled <title> submitted by N.N. to the faculty of <Name> in <year>”

or

“The following chapter is a revised version of the essay <title and bibliographical data> by N.N.”

b. If the publication directly reuses data sets, figures or text passages/entire chapters, this has to be indicated explicitly, e.g.:

“The following table is based on <bibliographical data>”

or

“The following paragraphs have been previously published in <bibliographical data>”

You can find more detailed information on this topic in the section From dissertation to journal article/book and vice versa of M. Roig’s “Guide to Ethical Writing”, available via the following link: https://ori.hhs.gov/avoiding-plagiarism-self-plagiarism-and-other-questionable-writing-practices-guide-ethical-writing

In addition, the dissertation has to be cited and included in the reference list. For details on how to correctly format references to dissertations published online see our guidelines on citing and referencing correctly: https://www.charite.de/fileadmin/user_upload/portal_relaunch/forschung/GutWissPraxis/Citing_Correctly.pdf.

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