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Submission and examination process for doctoral dissertations

Postgraduate Examination Office (PEO)

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

January 2019

Submission of doctoral dissertation

- In your final year, *students* need to complete a Notice of Intent and submit it electronically to the PEO
- Examiners are then nominated by the *supervisor(s)*
 - Three examiners in total:
 - 1 x internal examiner from SU;
 - 1 x external examiner from another South African university or research institute; and
 - 1 x external international examiner
 - Examiners must be approved by Higher Degrees and Research Committee; Faculty Board; and Senate
 - The names of examiners are **confidential**
- Once student and supervisor(s) are satisfied that the dissertation is ready for examination, the *student* needs to format the dissertation according to regulations.

Formatting of doctoral dissertation

- The University prescribes a **dissertation template** for all doctoral submissions
 - Details can be found in the General Calendar (Part I) of the University
- Formatting requirements
 - Typesetting
 - Line spacing
 - Font size; and
 - Margins
 - Compulsory information: SU prescribes set wording for the first four pages, including the declaration and copyright etc.

<http://library.sun.ac.za/en-za/Help/Pages/online-thesis-submission.aspx>

Editing of doctoral dissertation

- *Students* are required to pay due diligence to the presentation of their work, including formatting
- All dissertations are required to undergo language editing *before* submission to the PEO
- *Students* should rigorously check their referencing
- SU has a strict no-tolerance policy towards **plagiarism**
 - Ignorance of referencing rules will not constitute an excuse
 - The plagiarism policy can be found on the Division for Research Development page on the SU website

<https://www.sun.ac.za/english/research-innovation/Research-Development/policies-guidelines>

Examination of doctoral dissertation

Candidates need to submit the following documents to the PEO via email in a zipped folder using their name and student number as the folder name:

1. A pdf and Word version of the full and collated work;
2. A copy of the Turnitin summary report page indicating the similarity score;
3. Ethical clearance information:
 1. A copy of the approval from the Departmental Ethics Screening Committee (DESC) or the Research Ethics Committee (REC) if ethical clearance was required OR
 2. A signed copy of the ethical clearance declaration if ethical clearance was **not** required
4. The declaration by the supervisor that they have reviewed the Turnitin report and agree that the work may be submitted in for examination.

Examination of doctoral dissertation

- The submission of the dissertation and supporting documents for examination is handled electronically via email to the PEO
- No dissertation will be sent for examination unless all 4 documents are received by the PEO in the zipped folder format requested.
- The PEO will then send the dissertation to the examiners.
- Examiners are given 6 weeks to examine the dissertation and submit their reports.
- The PEO will contact the doctoral candidate roughly 4 weeks after submission to set a date for the oral examination.
- The date provided for the oral examination can not be changed by the doctoral candidate.

Examination of doctoral dissertation

The oral examination consists of: student, supervisor(s), three examiners and a non-examination Chair

- First, examiners discuss their reports amongst each other
- Second, student is called in and examiners ask questions
- Third, student is excused and examiners deliberate
- Fourth, student is called back in and Chair delivers recommendation

Important: although supervisor(s) are present at all times during the oral examination, they are only observers and do not take part in the discussion or decision.

General criteria of doctoral dissertation

1. Adequate delimitation and conceptualising of the field and subject of research.
2. Adequate command of the relevant research method.
3. Familiarity with the relevant literature.
4. Clear and systematic presentation of the material and logical exposition of the argument.
5. Proper documentation and support of the results of independent research.
6. Acceptable linguistic and stylistic presentation.
7. Contribution made by the dissertation to knowledge in its field (relevance).
8. Suitability of all or parts of dissertation for publication.

Recommendation of doctoral degree

Possible recommendations after oral examination

- i. The degree be awarded to the candidate
- ii. The degree may be conferred upon the candidate, provided that the revision, in accordance with the recommendations of the examiners, is completed to the satisfaction of the supervisor (i.e. the examiners do not receive the dissertation again)
- iii. The degree may be conferred upon the candidate, provided that a material revision is completed to the satisfaction of the examiners, as agreed upon by the examination panel (i.e. the examiners must approve the revisions)
- iv. The degree may not be conferred on the dissertation in its current form; the candidate must revise and resubmit the dissertation
- v. The degree may not be conferred upon the candidate and the work may not be resubmitted for examination

Finalisation of doctoral degree

- Once the recommendation has been made, *students* will have the opportunity to make changes as deemed necessary by the examiners
- Once those changes are completed to the satisfaction of the supervisor(s) or examiners, *students* are required to submit a final copy electronically
 - Must be submitted on the SU Library website, in conjunction with supervisor(s)
- Hard copies of the dissertation can be printed and bound at the expense of the student at SUN Media after the electronic submission is approved
 - It is compulsory to provide supervisor(s) with a bound copy as well as to the examiners if they request one.

STUDENT MAY NOW GRADUATE!

Important dates and deadlines

December 2019 Graduation

- Notice of intent to submit = 13 March 2019
- **Submit dissertation + declaration from supervisor = 1 August 2019**
- Oral examination = 16 - 20 September 2019
- Electronic submission of final version of dissertation = 27 November 2019

March/April 2020 Graduation

- Notice of intent to submit = 20 May 2019
- **Submit dissertation + declaration from supervisor = 9 October 2019**
- Oral examination = 22 November – 6 December 2019
- Electronic submission of final version of dissertation = TBC

POSTGRADUATE EXAMINATION OFFICE

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