



Stellenbosch

UNIVERSITY
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UNIVERSITEIT

Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences



2025

Physiotherapy PhD Prospectus

World Class Research

Our Research Vision

Our research focus is to contribute towards the understanding of physical function to design, validate and evaluate evidence-based diagnostic, preventative and rehabilitation strategies to optimize function and thereby enhance quality of life and health.

Divisional research focus areas

- Human movement and function
- Innovative rehabilitation
- Digital health
- Health systems strengthening
- Curriculum Development



PhD Physiotherapy

Programme description

The Doctorate in Philosophy (Physiotherapy) requires the submission of a full research dissertation that meets the requirements for doctoral studies as defined by Stellenbosch University guidelines.

The PhD is awarded in recognition of high-quality, original research that makes a significant contribution to the field of study. The dissertation shall reflect original research on one central cohesive topic or theme.

At the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS), when an applicant is selected into the PhD programme, the applicant will first be registered for the preparatory Doctoral year. Full PhD registration is initiated when your research proposal has been approved by the Departmental proposal review committee. During your registration you will have access to various developmental workshops, courses and information and capacity development programs offered by Stellenbosch University.

Duration of programme

The minimum duration of PhD registration is two years, and the maximum duration is five years.

Admission requirements

You can be admitted to the degree PhD in Physiotherapy if you have obtained a Master's degree in a relevant field as deemed sufficient by Senate. Admission is subject to approval by the programme committee.

Application procedure and closing date

Please start your application at:
<http://www.sun.ac.za/english/maties>

Students may apply for a doctorate at any time. Applicants should carefully check the application portal to ensure they have uploaded all required documents.

The following documents must be added to your application: Academic records, curriculum vitae, a 3-page draft proposal, a motivational letter and supervisor confirmation. For information on potential supervisors, please visit the Division of Physiotherapy [website](#).

Launch your career on the world stage



Dr Aneurin Robyn

PhD Physiotherapy
(2023 Springbok
Rugby World Cup
Winning team)

Testimonials

I am incredibly grateful for the unwavering support and guidance provided by my dedicated PhD supervisors. Their expertise, encouragement, and genuine commitment to my academic journey have been instrumental in shaping my research and fostering personal growth. I am fortunate to have had (and still have) mentors who not only excel in their fields but also prioritize the success and well-being of their students. I am grateful to be a Matie, because of the excellent academic leaders, available infrastructure and support systems.”

Rentia Maart (PhD Physiotherapy)

For further enquiries contact:

Postgraduate coordinator
Prof. Dawn Ernstzen

Postgraduate administrator
Ms. Tiffany Swanepoel
postgrad@sun.ac.za

The Tygerberg [Doctoral office](#) website provides detailed information about the PhD degree activities and requirements.

SU
Postgraduate
website



Tygerberg
Doctoral
website



Division
Physiotherapy
website



“Reflecting on my journey, I can confidently say that I am well prepared for the next phase of my career. The unwavering commitment and exceptional mentorship extended by my supervisors have been pivotal to my academic and personal growth. Throughout this transformative experience, I have evolved profoundly in my critical thinking, resilience, and problem-solving, alongside developing excellent research skills. Every curve-ball encountered along the way served as a testament to my determination, leaving me with no regrets as I proudly conclude this chapter, having accomplished what I set out to achieve.”

Maria Yvonne Charumbira (PhD Physiotherapy)