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PhD Guidelines for candidates and staff

*Centre for Health Professions Education
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
Stellenbosch University*

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1. Applications

1.1 Criteria for PhD candidates

All criteria as per the FMHS criteria for doctoral students need to be complied with (General Information on Doctoral Study, FMHS, 2014), as well as:-

- 1.1.1 A research topic which has as its primary focus an issue relating to Health Professions Education;
- 1.1.2 Although we welcome candidates from across South Africa and beyond our borders, candidates ideally need to be able to periodically spend time in the Centre for Health Professions Education (CHPE) to meet with their supervisors or co-supervisors, to possibly attend courses and participate in academic activities;
- 1.1.3 Proven experience of having conducted research in a health professions education context

1.2 Doctoral Registration Process

- 1.2.1 The FMHS and CHPE websites provide details of the criteria for PhD candidates; the application process, and contact details of the postgraduate administrator in the Centre;
- 1.2.2 The postgraduate administrator will respond to all initial enquiries and provide guidance to potential candidates regarding documentation and processes;
- 1.2.3 As a first step, prospective candidates are encouraged to submit a short 3-5 page document that provides an overview of their envisaged research topic and, if possible, preliminary research plan, together with their CV. In some instances candidates may be requested to provide evidence of prior work conducted ie. publications or Master's thesis/reports
- 1.2.4 A suitable supervisor and co-supervisor, one of whom is based in the CHPE or Faculty, need to be identified. If the candidate is not based at SU (students at other institutions in or outside of South Africa), and has not been able to identify a SU supervisor, he/she needs to have a suitable co-supervisor who is based in his/her workplace or academic institution. If the candidate meets all other criteria and is accepted as per process below, the CHPE can then assist in identifying a SU supervisor.
- 1.2.5 At this point, if the intended topic is approved in principle by the Postgraduate Programme Committee in the CHPE, the student will be encouraged to formally register



with the Faculty and to commence working on the preparation of a research protocol with support from the supervisor and co supervisor.

- 1.2.6 The candidate will be required to finalise a protocol within 6 to 8 months of registration, and secure financial and other resources as needed;
- 1.2.7 The full protocol will then be submitted by the supervisor to the chair of the Postgraduate Programme Committee of the CHPE, who will approach members of the committee to review the protocol and provide comment which will serve at the next Programme Committee meeting for approval. The Programme Committee reserves the right to invite either the candidate or the supervisor, or both, to attend the Programme Committee meeting with a view to providing clarification and/or offering guidance for enhancement with regards to the submission.
- 1.2.8 The full proposal, once approved, will be submitted via the Faculty's postgraduate office for consideration by a Faculty appointed PhD evaluation committee;
- 1.2.9 Once the protocol is approved by the Faculty's Committee of Postgraduate Education, the candidate can proceed to full registration as a doctoral candidate in the Centre for Health Professions Education;
- 1.2.10 Any candidate whose protocol has not been approved within 12 months of initial registration will not be allowed to register.

2. Supervisors (refer to 1.1.5, page 3, General information on doctoral study, FMHS, 2014)

- 2.1 All senior members of the Centre or FMHS who have PhDs, or an equivalent qualification or background, can be approached to supervise or co-supervise PhD candidates;
- 2.2 Less experienced supervisors will be partnered with more experienced supervisors in the Centre (including extraordinary staff), the Faculty or with other external co-supervisors to gain experience in supervision. As indicated earlier, external co-supervision can be considered;
- 2.3 All staff must attend postgraduate supervision courses provided at the FMHS or main campus.

3. Study plan

- 3.1 Registered candidates will be required to develop an individual study plan which is approved by the supervisor;
- 3.2 The study plan should ideally to include:
 - 3.2.1 clear milestones and deliverables for the research;
 - 3.2.2 planned professional development of the candidate depending on identified needs ie grant writing, proposal writing, etc.
 - 3.2.3 where possible, participation in and contribution to academic activities in the Centre e.g. teaching (undergraduate or postgraduate courses), journal clubs and seminars (attendance and presentations);
 - 3.2.4 planned attendance of and presentations at Faculty, national and international conferences.
- 3.3 Annual progress reports to be submitted to the CHPE Postgraduate Program Committee.

FLOW DIAGRAM INDICATING SYNOPSIS OF PhD APPLICATION PROCESS WITHIN CHPE

