

**Guidelines for Doctoral Studies in the  
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences**

Version 4: OCTOBER 2021

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## A. GENERAL

1. The procedures on the website of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) Doctoral Office link directly to the formal provisions governing doctorates:
  - 1.1 those provided under “Postgraduate Qualifications” in Part 1 (General) of the University Calendar; and
  - 1.2 those provided in the Faculty's own Calendar (Part 12 of the University Calendar).
2. A doctorate 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 by candidates into one central and cohesive topic or theme. Candidates shall not have submitted the said research previously to any university for the purpose of obtaining a degree.
3. These stipulations are based on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF), but are still subject to possible interim changes, including the deletion of qualifications.
4. In the case of senior doctoral degrees, refer to the separate Senior Doctoral Degree Guidelines.
5. The degree of Doctor of Philosophy is conferred upon a student in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, if –
  - 5.1 a period of no fewer than four years has elapsed since the conferment by the University of the degree of Bachelor of Medicine and of Bachelor of Surgery, or since the conferment of another qualification deemed by Senate to be of an adequate standard; or a period of not fewer than two years has elapsed since the conferment by the University of the degree of Master of Science, or since the conferment of another degree or qualification deemed by Senate to be of an adequate standard; or
  - 5.2 a period of no fewer than two years has elapsed since the conferment of an appropriate degree of Bachelor of Science Honours in Medical Sciences directly subsequent to obtaining at some university the degree of Bachelor of Medicine and of Bachelor of Surgery.
6. The doctorate is assessed on the basis of (REFER TO SECTION C):
  - 6.1 a conventional dissertation;
  - 6.2 a publication-format dissertation; or
  - 6.3 a hybrid-format dissertation.
7. The focus and quality of the research and reporting remain the most important aspect in all formats.
8. Irrespective of the doctoral-study format, all candidates should be equipped with the following:
  - 8.1 appropriate professional development;
  - 8.2 sufficient general and applied knowledge;
  - 8.3 the expertise to recognise problem areas and identify research topics;
  - 8.4 familiarity with specific research literature;

- 8.5 the ability to develop research protocols;
  - 8.6 technical-laboratory and/or clinical skills and/or public health skills, as appropriate to the subject of the study; and
  - 8.7 sufficient communication skills (both oral and written).
9. The maximum duration is five years. The supervisor may submit an acceptable motivation for the extension of the period to the Committee for Postgraduate Research (CPR) of the Faculty, at least six months prior to the expiry of the five years.
10. Registration/re-registration dates:

First semester	1 January to 31 March
Second semester	1 June to 31 July

11. The **SUNStudent postgraduate (PG) applications and admission process guide** has to be consulted regarding the application process and uploading of documents.

## B. PhD APPLICATION AND REGISTRATION PROCESSES

### Application queries to:

- FMHS Department OR
  - Client Services OR
  - Doctoral Office
- regarding application processes, registration and fees.

### Online application

- Upload certified degree certificates and transcripts
- Certified passport (if applicable)
- CV

### Postgraduate Office (for international applicants and applicants with foreign qualifications)

- Verification of documents
- Evaluation of comparability of foreign qualifications with SA standards
- Issuing visa letters for international applicants for registration purposes

### Department

- Department does selection and allocation to appropriate supervisor
- Supervisor discusses with student how they will **apply** under Option A (review first) or Option B (immediate registration and review six (6) months later)
- Doctoral students have a maximum of five (5) years to complete the degree
- A student should be registered for a minimum of two (2) consecutive years before being permitted to graduate

### FMHS Doctoral Office guidance for application

- OPTION A APPLICATION
- OPTION B APPLICATION
- APPLICATION for UPGRADE from Master's to PhD
  
- Supervisor informs Doctoral Office that student will **APPLY** via Option A or Option B, or whether this is an upgrade
- Doctoral Office provides the relevant documents to be completed and returned

### Centre for Student Administration

Student is registered at the appropriate time, depending on the application OPTION selected

## OPTION A ADMISSION

- Supervisor of applicant to inform the Doctoral Office that OPTION A has been selected
- Contact the Doctoral Office for guidance and documents (as below)

## Review first, then REGISTRATION

- Departments/divisions/centres/institutes select and organise the Review Committee
- Review Committee chair is to provide final reports and FORM A3 checklist to Doctoral Office
- Applicant or supervisor to provide remaining application and registration documents

## Final review report and documents to be submitted to Doctoral Office (as below)

- Applicant must request to be registered
- Doctoral Office will arrange registration

### Option A: Registration after the review

Once the review process is complete, please email the following documents to the Doctoral Office:

1. Completed **FORM A1** (If not submitted previously)
2. The **FORM A3 Checklist** has to be completed and signed by the supervisor and HoD BEFORE the review, and by the convenor of the Review Committee AFTER the proposal has been finalised
3. Written confirmation from the supervisor(s) and co-supervisor(s) that they approve the protocol and are willing to serve in that capacity
4. Final **synopsis** of the protocol (2 pages)
5. Final **protocol**
6. **Curriculum vitae** of applicant and external supervisor(s)
7. A **Turnitin report** of the final protocol  
<http://libguides.sun.ac.za/content.php?pid=344501&sid=2818225>
8. The signed **plagiarism declaration**
9. Completed and signed **memorandum of understanding** (all parties are to initial each page and sign in full where required)
10. The completed and signed **non-disclosure agreement** (complete the right-hand side of the page as The Party)

## OPTION B ADMISSION

- Request for **immediate registration** - application must be accompanied by motivation\* by supervisor
- Available **ONLY** to applicants who need to be **REGISTERED** because they are:
  1. international applicants who require visas OR
  2. South African applicants who need to satisfy successfully achieved; bursary/scholarship requirements

## Registration first, then **REVIEW**

- Doctoral Office will provide guidance and list of documents (as below)
- Review of proposals must be held **WITHIN SIX MONTHS OF REGISTRATION**
- **Applicants will be required to re-apply via OPTION A should they not complete the review within the allocated time. They will be liable for the first year's fees again**

### **OPTION B: Documents for immediate registration**

International applicants who require visa letters or South African applicants who need proof of registration to satisfy successfully achieved bursary/scholarship requirements.

Please email the following documents to the Doctoral Office:

1. Completed **FORM A1**
2. Approval from the relevant head of department/division/centre supporting the application
3. **Curriculum vitae** of applicant and external supervisor(s)
4. **Memorandum of understanding** (all parties are to initial each page and sign in full where required)
5. The completed and signed **non-disclosure agreement** (complete the right-hand side of the page as The Party)

**NB:** The Review must be conducted within SIX (6) months from date of registration. Details of the review process can be obtained from the Doctoral Office.

# UPGRADE/CONVERSION FROM MASTER'S TO PhD

- Supervisor is required to inform the Doctoral Office of application
- Doctoral Office will provide guidance on the review and Review Committee approval process and the required documents (as below)

## Review Process

- Departments/divisions/centres/institutes select and organise the Review Committee
- Review Committee chair is to provide final reports and FORM A3 checklist to Doctoral Office for further handling

## Centre for Student Administration

- Applicant will be informed by Faculty Officer when the application to upgrade from a Master's degree to a PhD has been approved - only then will the student be registered for the PhD

NB: Applicant will be informed by the Faculty Officer when the application has been approved - only then will the registration be changed to PhD.

The applicant will need to email the following PDF-format documents to the Doctoral Office in a single email:

1. **FORM A4**
2. Letter from the **HOD supporting the application**
3. Letter from the **supervisor(s) supporting the application**
4. **FORM A3 Checklist** - completed and signed by the supervisor and HoD BEFORE the review, and by the Convenor of the Review AFTER the proposal has been finalised.
5. The **MSc Ethical Clearance** Certificate
6. Proposal
7. Synopsis
8. Updated CVs of applicant and the proposed external **supervisor(s)**
9. A Plagiarism Declaration
10. A Turnitin report (see <http://libguides.sun.ac.za/content.php?pid=344501&sid=2818225>)
11. Copy of any **published article(s) (OPTIONAL)**

The supervisor's letter should include:

- exceptional progress made by the student;
- how the proposed study exceeds the scope of a master's study;
- account of new/original insights proposed for the doctoral study; and
- how it justifies further investigation.

**The applicant will apply for amendment to the existing ethics application AFTER receiving the PhD acceptance letter from the University.**



## REVIEW PROCESS

The Review Committee will review ALL OPTION A/OPTION B and UPGRADE protocols.

HOD, postgrad coordinator, supervisor

- Selecting and organising the Review Committee
- Deciding who will chair the meeting. It was recommended that the supervisor will make suggestions regarding who should be the Review Committee chair, but that the final decision should rest with the HoD
- Student's CV, external supervisor(s) CV, synopsis and proposal are sent to the Review Committee chair ahead of time
- If there are existing ethics approval certificates, these should also be submitted to the reviewers
- Form A3 checklist to be completed by HOD and supervisor **BEFORE** the review

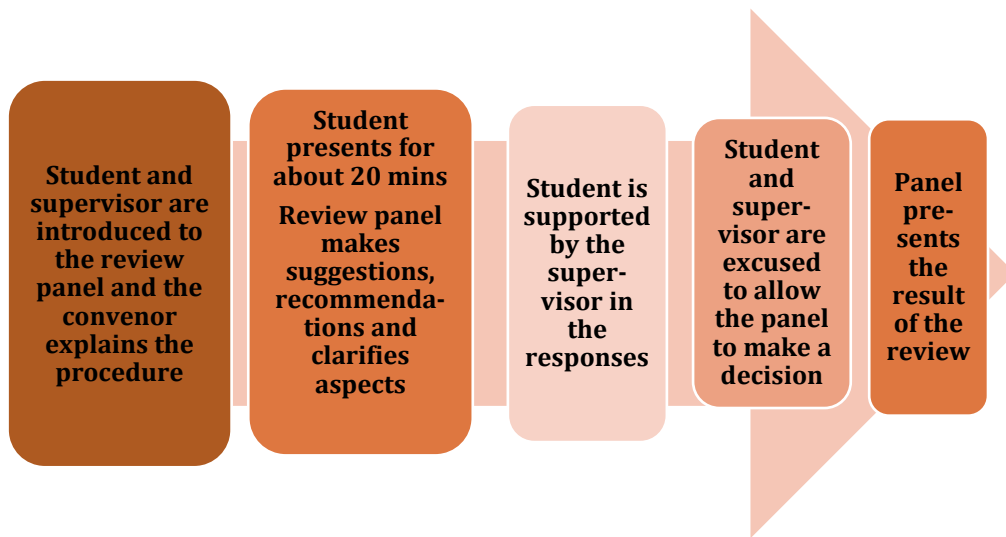
The Review Panel must consist of:

- Chair (preferably from the department)
- HREC representative: List of members available on website: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/faculty/healthsciences/rdsd/Pages/Ethics/HREC1.aspx>
- CPR representative - Contact Doctoral Office
- Other domain experts

After the review:

- Student makes recommended changes before submitting final version to the chair
- Chair verifies that the recommended revisions were made correctly
- Chair ensures that the reports from members are incorporated in the final report
- Chair completes FORM A3 to be submitted with the final report to the Doctoral Office
- Student submits his/her documents to the Doctoral Office, including a letter from supervisor confirming that all the recommended revisions have been made correctly

## REVIEW MEETING



### IMPORTANT

- **Note:** Should any individual have an association as close family or household member, or any other close relationship, with the candidate and/or with the supervisor/co-supervisor, the member concerned should be excluded from the review process.
- Directly after the review process, the candidate submits to the manager of the Doctoral Office the protocol, synopsis, Turnitin report, completed A3 check list, review panel reports and supervisor letter confirming that all the requirements of the Review Committee have been met.
- The final reports for each application, including final ethics approval, are included in the agenda for the next meeting of the Committee for Postgraduate Research for recommendation for acceptance to PhD studies.

### C. EXAMINATION

- The candidate submits the dissertation release form signed by all supervisors, the final supervisor-approved dissertation in PDF format, and the Turnitin report in a single email to [medphd@sun.ac.za](mailto:medphd@sun.ac.za).
- For graduation in **December**, the last date for submission of the dissertation is before **1 August**.
- For graduation in **March** of the following year, the last possible submission date is **15 October**.
- Following the oral examination, the supervisor submits to the manager of the Doctoral Office a supervisor report, the final corrected thesis without signatures or sensitive personal information, and a list of corrections made.

## 1. Examiners

- 1.1 **At least three examiners** (unattached to the study) shall be appointed to examine each dissertation. The panel of examiners shall consist of at least two external examiners. Examiners are considered as external if they do not have a permanent or temporary appointment at Stellenbosch University. In all cases, a minimum of two years must have passed since a person's retirement, accelerated retirement or leaving of SU's service before said person may be appointed as external examiner. Past PhD students must have left the University for a period of more than two years before they may be appointed as examiners.
- 1.2 The supervisor at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences shall submit the names of the examiners, the CVs and nomination forms to the relevant Departmental Postgraduate Programme Committee. The report and documents are submitted to the Committee for Postgraduate Research and the Faculty Board for consideration.
- 1.3 The Faculty Board shall make a recommendation to Senate regarding approval of the examiners. The Faculty Administrator shall communicate this recommendation, including the name of the supervisor as well as of the co-supervisors (where applicable) to the Executive Committee (Senate) and Senate by means of the Communications Report.
- 1.4 The reports, CVs and nomination forms are submitted to the manager of the Doctoral Office, who will then submit official letters of nomination to each examiner on behalf of the Faculty.
- 1.5 All communications with examiners are through the Doctoral Office.
- 1.6 No doctoral candidate is permitted – under any circumstances – to be informed of the identities of the examiners or to communicate with the examiners about the dissertation – until the oral examination.
- 1.7 The HoD and an administrator from the relevant department/division/centre/institute will assist the supervisor to arrange the oral examination with the examination panel. At least two (2) of the three (3) examiners are required to be present at the oral examination.
- 1.8 A senior, unattached (not involved in the study or the primary investigation), non-examining chairperson should preferably be appointed. This non-examining chairperson does not have to be reported in the Communications Report.
- 1.9 The supervisor and co-supervisor(s), where applicable, are not members of the abovementioned examination panel that has decision-making powers, and do not submit examiners' reports, but do have observer status at the oral examination.
- 1.10 Each of the examiners (both external and internal) shall submit a written, signed report on the dissertation and the standard report form.

## **2. Examination process**

- 2.1 The student submits to the manager of the Doctoral Office, copying the supervisor, the following documents: the signed and completed dissertation release form, the final version of the dissertation as approved by the supervisor, and the Turnitin report. The plagiarism declaration may be included in the dissertation.
- 2.2 The written and signed reports of the examiners are received directly by the manager of the Doctoral Office and not by the supervisor.
- 2.3 After all the reports have been received from the examiners, they are sent to the supervisors with clear directions.
- 2.4 The examination process is completed after an oral examination and the completion of the corrections required by the examination panel.
- 2.5 The Faculty may place a limitation on the number of times a doctoral dissertation may be examined. The Chair of the CPR also may, upon request from the HoD of the relevant department/division/centre/institute, place a limitation on the number of times a dissertation may be examined – with motivation. The Chair of the CPR makes the final decision.
- 2.6 A final supervisor report must be submitted to the manager of the Doctoral Office once the oral examination has been held. The report should provide insight into the development of the process that culminated in the dissertation, and address the following:
  - the context in which the study was undertaken;
  - the methodology within which the study was undertaken and according to which the dissertation ultimately should be evaluated;
  - the extent to which the candidate worked independently;
  - problems that the candidate experienced with collecting data; and
  - any other aspect that may have some bearing on the final evaluation of the dissertation.
- 2.7 The supervisor is required to include the date and the details of the attendees of this oral examination in the submitted final supervisor report.
- 2.8 All communication with examiners who cannot be present at the oral examination must be attached to that report, explaining the reasons for their absence and expressing their endorsement of the result.
- 2.9 The HoD ought to have the final approval and sign off the final supervisor report.
- 2.10 On the successful completion of the examination process, the Faculty requires that all final supervisor reports are presented to the Committee for Postgraduate Research for acceptance, and subsequently to the Faculty Board for recommendation of the results. The final approval of results will rest with the University Senate.
- 2.11 If the conferment of the doctorate is recommended unanimously by the examination panel, the Faculty Board's recommendation is included in the Recommendation Report to the

Executive Committee of Senate (EC(S)), and final approval of the results will rest with Senate.

2.12 If the conferment of the doctorate is not recommended unanimously by the examination panel, the Faculty Board's recommendation must be included in the Recommendation Report to the EC(S) and Senate.

### **3. Format of PhD dissertation**

3.1 Three versions of PhD dissertation submission will be allowed in the FMHS:

3.1.1 a conventional-format dissertation,

3.1.2 a publication-format dissertation, and

3.1.3 a hybrid-format dissertation.

3.2 The focus and quality of the research and of the reporting remain the most important aspects in all formats, and these formats are treated equally.

3.3 The differences between the three formats are set out below.

#### **3.3.1 Conventional dissertation**

An introduction chapter, followed by a number of chapters outlining the research, followed by a discussion chapter of the research results of the whole dissertation – highlighting the scientific contributions of the study, followed by a conclusion and future directions.

#### **3.3.2 Publication-format dissertation**

A publication is an original article, research article or research. It includes full introduction, methods, results, and discussion sections. Research can be primary or secondary research (evidence synthesis). Comprehensive systematic reviews and meta-analyses are included in this category.

#### **3.3.3 PhD submission by publication**

A dissertation by publication should consist of an introduction chapter, followed by a minimum of four (4) first-authored peer-reviewed published/accepted for publication articles (a maximum of one (1) of which may have been published within the three (3) years prior to registration, as per the *Faculty Board Meeting on the 20th of Feb 2020: Page 425: 4.6.4 The CPR recommended that the rule be amended to allow for only one publication that dated back no more than three years before registration, to take effect for all new PhD registrations as from 2020.*), followed by a discussion chapter of the research results of the whole dissertation, highlighting the scientific contributions of the study, followed by a conclusion and future directions. It is also acceptable to have a separate chapter on methodology; however, it should be clarified whether or not this chapter represents a publication on its own (e.g. a protocol paper); refer to Glossary for definition.

### 3.3.4 Hybrid-format dissertation

An introduction chapter, followed by a minimum of two (2) first-authored peer-reviewed published/accepted for publication articles (one of which may have been published within the three (3) years prior to registration), AND

- ❖ *a minimum of two (2) first-authored submission-ready/submitted manuscripts (a submission-ready manuscript is a manuscript that is already in the final format required for submission by the chosen journal) OR*
- ❖ *a minimum of two (2) chapters outlining the research OR*
- ❖ *a combination (minimum of two (2)) first-authored submission-ready/submitted manuscripts and chapters outlining the research.*
- ❖ *In all of the above cases, the chapters should be followed by a discussion chapter of the research results of the whole dissertation, highlighting the scientific contributions of the study, followed by a conclusion and future directions. It is also acceptable to have a separate chapter on methodology; however, it should be clarified whether or not this chapter represents a publication on its own (e.g. a protocol paper).*

The information above is summarised in the table below:

<b>Publication</b>	Introduction	At least 4 x first-authored peer-reviewed published/accepted for publication articles		Discussion	Conclusion
<b>Conventional</b>	Introduction	Chapters		Discussion	Conclusions
<b>Hybrid 1</b>	Introduction	At least 2 x first-authored peer-reviewed published/accepted for publication articles	At least 2 x first-authored submission-ready/submitted manuscripts	Discussion	Conclusion
<b>Hybrid 2</b>	Introduction	At least 2 x first-authored peer-reviewed published/accepted for publication articles	At least 2 x chapters	Discussion	Conclusion
<b>Hybrid 3</b>	Introduction	At least 2 x first-authored peer-reviewed published/accepted for publication articles	Combination (minimum 2) of first-authored submission-ready/submitted manuscripts and chapters	Discussion	Conclusion

- ❖ If only one manuscript has been published at the time of submission for examination, the conventional-format dissertation must be followed and the manuscript must be reformatted into a chapter. The published manuscript may be included in the appendices, but not in the main body of the dissertation.
- ❖ For both *published/accepted articles* and *submission-ready/submitted manuscripts under review*, information on the journal’s URL, impact factor and any other information that will help examiners evaluate the quality of the work *must* be included.
- ❖ Articles with co-first authorship are allowed for submission towards the minimum number of first-author articles (namely four), with the proviso that the final published article must indicate clearly on the title page that the two first authors have contributed equally to the publication. As the term “co-first authorship” means that both authors contributed equally to the relevant publication, the declaration at the beginning of the dissertation should state clearly what each author contributed to the article. The contribution of each first author should therefore be equal and clearly outlined in the declaration, and authors who share the first authorship must clearly demonstrate why co-first authorship was necessary.

## GLOSSARY

<b>Introduction</b>	This is the chapter that introduces the topic and the problem, covers the relevant literature in order to justify the topic, and highlights research gaps.
<b>First-authored</b>	A first-authored manuscript is a manuscript for which the PhD candidate is the first named author in a list of authors and, as such, the lead author of the manuscript.
<b>Peer review</b>	This refers to a process whereby a manuscript submitted to a journal is vetted for quality and importance by reviewers, who are scholars or researchers in the subject area in question, according to the editorial standards of that journal before it is accepted for publication. This is intended to be a rigorous process that ensures that a manuscript that is published in a journal is a sound piece of research/scholarship.
<b>Published</b>	This is a manuscript that is available in print or online. This includes an <i>advance online publication</i> (a manuscript that is available online before it becomes available in a specific issue of the print or online journal). An <i>advance online publication</i> may or may not have been edited at the time that it goes online, and may or may not yet have a DOI (digital object identifier) assigned.

<p><b>What is not counted as a research article for the four (4) required publications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The protocol of a study, whether a published protocol of a trial or a protocol of a systematic review, is a building block. Thus, in the case where a candidate has published the protocol of the systematic review, and then subsequently gone ahead and done this systematic review and published the results thereof, the full review publication is the publication that counts as one of the publications. The protocol is supporting documentation. An example from Cochrane is that the published Cochrane Review replaces the protocol on the Cochrane Library.</li> <li>➤ An editorial or letter is also supporting information.</li> <li>➤ Published literature review or opinion piece.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Published protocol paper</b></p>	<p>A published protocol paper (or manuscript) refers to a published protocol of the study in question in a peer-reviewed journal. This may also include a published paper of a protocol for a systematic review. (However, a published protocol of a systematic review and a published paper of that same systematic review will not be counted as two separate articles, but as one.)</p>
<p><b>Accepted publication for</b></p>	<p>This is a manuscript that is accepted by a journal to be published and that typically includes author-incorporated changes suggested during submission, peer review, and editor-author communications. It is <u>not</u> the version that includes the publisher’s contributions, such as copy-editing and formatting.</p>
<p><b>Submission ready</b></p>	<p>This refers to a manuscript that is in a <i>ready state</i> to submit to a journal. A <i>ready state</i> means that further edits/changes/improvements are not envisioned. This does <u>not</u> refer to a manuscript that is not yet finished or in preparation.</p>
<p><b>Submitted manuscript</b></p>	<p>This refers to a manuscript that has been submitted to a journal and is either awaiting editorial or reviewer assignment or is under peer review.</p>
<p><b>Discussion</b></p>	<p>The purpose of a discussion chapter is to interpret the meaning of the results within the context of what is known about the topic. New insights based on the findings should be explained. The discussion will consist of argumentation, as different perspectives and explanations are considered. This chapter could include limitations as well as recommendations for future research.</p>
<p><b>Conclusion and future directions</b></p>	<p>The conclusion and future directions chapter ties together, integrates and synthesises various issues raised in the discussion, while at the same time reflecting on the aims and objectives. The conclusion should provide answers to the research question(s), identify theoretical and/or clinical and/or policy implications of the work, highlight the limitations and strengths, and recommend areas for future research.</p>



#### **4. Cases of dispute**

The following alternatives to a unanimous conferment of a doctorate exist:

- 4.1 On completion of the examination process, there is no unanimous recommendation that the Doctorate be conferred upon the candidate. One of the following two routes may be followed:
  - 4.1.1 Improvements, as recommended by the examiners, must be made and the amended dissertation must be re-examined by the examiners. The written reports submitted to the Doctoral Office will determine whether the examination panel decides that the candidate may present for an oral examination.
  - 4.1.2 The examination panel may, before improvements/amendments are made, decide upon recommendation of the Chairperson of the Committee for Postgraduate Research to continue with the oral examination, upon completion of which improvements/amendments may be made.
- 4.2 If unanimity on the result of the examination process can still not be reached, a minimum of two external assessors must be appointed.
  - 4.2.1 If the examiners examined different fields of specialty within the research field, one of the external assessors must be a specialist in the research field of the examiner(s) who did not recommend a pass.
  - 4.2.2 The external assessors are approved during a process in which names of external assessors are submitted via the Departmental Postgraduate Committee to the Committee for Postgraduate Research and the Faculty Board. The Faculty Board makes the final recommendation regarding the appointment of the external assessors and conveys this, by means of a report, to the EC(S) and Senate.
  - 4.2.3 The external assessors must work through the extensive report by the Chairperson of the Committee for Postgraduate Research, which includes the candidate's points of view, the anonymous reports of the examiners and the doctoral dissertation, and consider the criticism of the examiners factually.
  - 4.2.4 The reports of the external assessors, which indicate how the dispute must be handled, are made available to the Chairperson of the Committee for Postgraduate Research.
  - 4.2.5 If the external assessors cannot reach unanimity on the conferment of the doctorate, it may be required that the doctoral candidate adapt the dissertation for unanimity to be reached.
  - 4.2.6 If the external assessors still cannot reach unanimity after this process, the Chairperson of the Committee for Postgraduate Research must confer with the external assessors to resolve the differences.

- 4.2.7 The reports of the external assessors (unanimity or not) are submitted to the Committee for Postgraduate Research for consideration. The relevant faculty committee makes a recommendation to the Faculty Board. The Faculty Board's recommendation is included in the recommendation report to the EC(S) and Senate.
- 4.2.8 After the final decision on the conferment of the relevant Doctorate has been made, the Chairperson of the Committee for Postgraduate Research informs the examiners and assessors of Senate's decision.
- 4.3 If, after the first examination process, the examination panel recommends unanimously that the doctorate may not be conferred upon the candidate:
- 4.3.1 The unanimous recommendation of the examiners is that the doctorate may not be conferred upon the candidate and that the dissertation may not be resubmitted for examination.
- 4.3.2 The decision is final, and no dispute process will be followed. The non-conferment of the doctorate will be included in the recommendation report of the Faculty Board to the EC(S) and Senate.

## D. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

1. It is the responsibility of the supervisors to clear these deadlines with the candidate in advance of the dates.
2. An electronic copy is to be submitted to the Doctoral Office. If necessary, three (3) print copies may be requested (also refer to the relevant sections of Part 1 of the Calendar).
3. Formatting and printing costs are the candidate's responsibility.
4. **Note:** SU offers facilities for the duplication and binding of dissertations. Particulars can be obtained from SUN MeDIA, Basement, Clinical Building, Tygerberg Campus (Tel. 021 938 9547).
5. Every candidate is also required to furnish SUNScholar with one copy in PDF format electronically. Please note the Senate approval requirement in the Calendar. During this submission process, the supervisor shall be given the option of holding the dissertation back from being released on the open website for a period of no longer than six months to provide an opportunity for publication. Full particulars regarding the PDF format, as well as the process to be followed, are provided on the website at <http://library.sun.ac.za/>.

## E. SUPERVISION AND SUPERVISORS

The appointment and approval of a supervisor and co-supervisor are the responsibility of the Committee for Postgraduate Research (CPR) and the Faculty Board. Supervisors and co-supervisors of doctoral students must have a doctorate. It is a requirement that all inexperienced supervisors attend accredited supervision training courses. The evaluating committee assesses each supervisor's competency according to qualifications, participation in under- and postgraduate teaching, list of publications and papers, national and international status as expert in the field of study, as well as proven postgraduate study guidance.

1. Where the supervisor is external to Stellenbosch University, the appointment of an internal co-supervisor is mandatory. This also applies to emeritus professors/emeritus associate professors, as well as all extraordinary appointments (such as extraordinary staff, honorary professors, extraordinary professors and research fellows).
2. Where the supervisor is appointed on a part-time or contractual basis by Stellenbosch University, provision should be made for continuous support of the candidate by the appointment of a co-supervisor within the division/department/centre/institute.
3. Post-doctoral fellows may co-supervise doctoral students.
4. Please refer to the postgraduate supervisor table for further details regarding the appointment of supervisors (available on request from the Doctoral Office).
5. **Role of the supervisor upon completion of the oral examination of the candidate**

The supervisor, and where applicable the co-supervisor(s), should compile a report that provides insight into the development of the process that culminated in the dissertation.

The following aspects can be addressed in the report:

- The context in which the study was undertaken.
  - The methodological setup in terms of which the study was undertaken and according to which the dissertation ultimately should be evaluated.
  - The extent to which the candidate worked independently.
  - Problems that the candidate experienced with collecting data.
  - Any other aspect that may have some bearing on the final evaluation of the dissertation.
6. **Role of the supervisor at graduation ceremonies**
    - At the graduation ceremony, the supervisor delivers a popularised summary of not more than 50 words indicating what has been done in the study and the significance thereof. No biographical or examination details are furnished. The supervisor must submit this text to the Faculty Administrator, who will submit it to the Dean for approval.
    - The information on the dissertation to be included in the graduation ceremony programme

should be of an academic nature and furnished in a text of not more than 100 words for the purposes of the Faculty Board. The supervisor should submit the 50- and 100-word texts for approval at the same meeting at which the Faculty Board considers the examiners' recommendations.

- In the oral presentation of the summary, there should be absolutely no deviation from the wording of the summary as approved previously.
- After presenting the summary, the supervisor should remain standing until the hood has been placed around the candidate.

## **F. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPERVISOR, CO-SUPERVISOR AND PhD STUDENT**

1. The following guidelines are proposed as a code of conduct to ensure that the relationship between supervisor and PhD student is conducive to successful postgraduate studies at SU:
  - 1.1 The candidate (with the necessary input from the supervisor) undertakes to remain up to date on the infrastructure and related rules of the department concerned.
  - 1.2 SU undertakes not to select a candidate for a specific project unless the faculty gives prior written confirmation that the project can be undertaken. Responsibility for the required funding and applicable infrastructure will be indicated specifically.
  - 1.3 The candidate, with the help of the supervisor, should be acquainted with the guidelines for keeping a record of research, as generally acceptable within the discipline concerned.
  - 1.4 Candidates confirm that they have the necessary computer skills to complete the project satisfactorily.
  - 1.5 The necessary preparatory study, as required by SU, should be completed within an agreed period.
  - 1.6 A work programme should be compiled for the candidate in collaboration with the supervisor, within a reasonable period after the start of the project (usually not exceeding 60 days), indicating target dates for, for example, the submission of a project protocol, the completion of a literature review, the completion of specific chapters and the submission of progress reports. Times of absence (study leave, university vacations, etc.) should also be indicated.
  - 1.7 Appointments between the candidate and the supervisor should take place regularly and at predetermined times during the academic year.

- 1.8 Written feedback on the progress of the study should be provided annually by the supervisor to the chair of the relevant Postgraduate Programme Committee on the prescribed form available from the Doctoral Office.
  - 1.9 The supervisor should comment on and return all submitted work to the candidate within a reasonable period, not exceeding 60 days for a full dissertation.
  - 1.10 When the project nears completion, the candidate should make the necessary submissions in accordance with the requirements for graduation within the discipline concerned. Sufficient time should be allowed for the technical finishing and/or editing of the dissertation before submission. Ideally, this submission should occur well prior to the final cut-off dates in the Calendar to secure inclusion in a particular graduation ceremony.
  - 1.11 The candidate undertakes, as agreed with the supervisor, to deliver relevant outputs (such as publications, patents and academic papers). The candidate should be aware of the conventions with respect to authorship relevant to the discipline concerned.
  - 1.12 Where applicable, the candidate and supervisor should acquaint themselves with the regulations on intellectual property within the environment concerned.
  - 1.13 In the event that the supervisor and student are unable to resolve disputes or differences of opinion, they should approach the Chairperson of the Departmental Postgraduate Programme Committee. The matter may be escalated to the Chair of the Committee for Postgraduate Research should there be no resolution even at that stage.
2. In cases where there is also a co-supervisor, the following set of guidelines applies to the relationship between the co-supervisor and the student:
- 2.1 The co-supervisor should be appointed in time to be involved in the development of the protocol for the project. A co-supervisor may be appointed at a later stage if the existing co-supervisor needs to be replaced because of unforeseen circumstances.
  - 2.2 The conduct of the co-supervisor should be in accordance with the code of conduct compiled by the Faculty, and this person should comply with the guidelines relating to the methodology of the research process.
  - 2.3 The co-supervisor should be directly involved in the planning and supervision of the research project. The co-supervisor's input is not limited to content and/or methodology, but feedback should also be provided on the progress of the research project.
  - 2.4 The co-supervisor should be able to act as a stand-in for the supervisor at any time.
  - 2.5 If the co-supervisor and student are unable to resolve disputes or differences of opinion, they should approach the Chairperson of the Departmental Postgraduate Programme Committee.

### **3. Responsibilities of the supervisor**

- 3.1 Be familiar with all faculty and University procedures and regulations regarding postgraduate studies.
- 3.2 Establish a supervisory relationship with the student.
- 3.3 Keep the relationship with the student honest and open.
- 3.4 Give advice about project choice and planning.
- 3.5 Discuss intellectual property and publications.
- 3.6 Ensure that, where relevant, facilities necessary for study and research are available.
- 3.7 Provide research training or opportunities to access research training.
- 3.8 Meet with the student regularly to monitor progress and to provide structured feedback.
- 3.9 Arrange for study guidance for the student during periods when the supervisor is absent.
- 3.10 Ensure that the student submits the intention-to-submit form (if applicable) and that the examiners are nominated timeously in Departmental Postgraduate meetings.
- 3.11 Be familiar with the most recent ethics rules and regulations.
- 3.12 Be knowledgeable in the field of study and methodology.
- 3.13 Ensure that they have appropriate time to guide the student.
- 3.14 Accept responsibility for the originality, scientific merit, and standard of the research.

### **4. Responsibilities of the candidate**

- 4.1 Ensure that they are familiar with the University regulations regarding postgraduate studies and abide by these regulations.
- 4.2 Commit to the research process as agreed with the supervisor(s) and according to the academic requirements and level of the degree pursued.
- 4.3 Undertake research with dedication and scientific rigor.
- 4.4 Develop initiative and independence.
- 4.5 Take responsibility for the development and progress of the research and be proactive.
- 4.6 Keep complete records of the research results (which remain the intellectual property of Stellenbosch University according to the SU IP policy – please see [http://www.innovus.co.za/media/documents/Innovus%20IP\\_policy.pdf](http://www.innovus.co.za/media/documents/Innovus%20IP_policy.pdf)).
- 4.7 Establish a professional relationship with the supervisor.
- 4.8 Keep the relationship with the supervisor(s) honest and open.
- 4.9 Provide regular progress reports.
- 4.10 Engage in academic discussions and presentations and provide feedback thereon.
- 4.11 Present and report on research results and respond to feedback appropriately.

- 4.12 Consider feedback constructively and clarify any uncertainty with the supervisor.
- 4.13 Do a literature review and keep abreast of all relevant literature.
- 4.14 Make use of opportunities offered by the research environment.
- 4.15 Inform the supervisor of non-academic problems that may influence progress.
- 4.16 Take responsibility to prepare and write the dissertation/research assignment themselves.
- 4.17 Prepare and write publications, patents and reports (if applicable – as agreed upon below).
- 4.18 Be aware of and abide by the University's Plagiarism Policy.
- 4.19 Inform the Doctoral Office and/or the Postgraduate Programme Committee at least **six months** ahead of the intended date of graduation of the intention to submit the thesis/dissertation/research assignment for examination.

## G. DEPARTMENT/DIVISION/CENTRE/INSTITUTE HEAD

1. The head checks an application for admission to a doctoral programme and refers all necessary documents to the Doctoral Office.
2. The head should familiarise themselves with all provisions and requirements for admission to a doctoral programme to provide support to both the supervisor and the PhD student in the relevant environment.

## H. AMENDMENT OF THE DISSERTATION TOPIC

1. Upon recommendation by the relevant Postgraduate Programme Committee, a candidate's request for permission to amend the dissertation topic will only be considered by the Committee for Postgraduate Research if it is accompanied by a document containing:
  - 1.1 a full, written substantiation by the supervisor, and
  - 1.2 the supervisor's written recommendation of the request.
2. If the Committee is not satisfied after consideration of the request and the supervisor's substantiation of the request, it may request an improved submission or even an amended protocol.

## I. MAJOR AMENDMENTS TO PROTOCOL

Major amendments to the scope of the study that already have final approval with or without Ethics Approval need to be submitted as addenda to the Doctoral Office for approval by the Review Committee, as well as to the relevant Ethics Committee. The Doctoral Office will ensure that the documents are submitted to the Review Committee Chair. The applicant has to ensure submission to the relevant Ethics Committee.

## J. SOP FOR PhD SUPERVISORS

ITEM	TASK
Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisors and co-supervisors of doctoral students must have doctorate qualifications.</li> <li>• It is a requirement that all inexperienced supervisors attend accredited supervision training courses.</li> <li>• The Proposal Review Committee assesses each supervisor's competency according to qualifications, participation in under- and postgraduate teaching, list of publications and papers, national and international status as expert in the field of study, as well as proven postgraduate study guidance.</li> <li>• Ensure that at least one supervisor is a permanent member of FMHS .</li> </ul>
Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select and organise the Review Committee with the assistance of the HoD.</li> <li>• Decide who will chair the meeting.</li> <li>• Ensure that applicant's CV, external supervisor(s)' CV, synopsis, proposal, existing ethics approval certificates or publications and FORM A3 checklist are completed and signed and sent to the Review Chair ahead of time.</li> <li>• Clarify that Form A3 checklist is to be completed by HOD and supervisor BEFORE the review.</li> <li>• Ensure that all recommended revisions are completed by the applicant correctly.</li> <li>• Submit all remaining application documents to the Doctoral Office once the review process is finalised.</li> </ul>
Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign off on applicant's ethics application.</li> <li>• Ensure that applicant submits ethics approval letter to Doctoral Office.</li> </ul>
Annual reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All supervisors are required to submit annual report forms to the manager of the Doctoral Office by 30 April each year.</li> </ul>
Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominate examiners.</li> <li>• Submit names, CVs and nomination forms to Departmental Postgraduate Programme Committee for initial approval.</li> <li>• Report from that meeting is to be sent to the Faculty Officer and the Doctoral Office manager for submission to the Committee for Postgraduate Research.</li> </ul> <p>Role of the supervisor upon completion of the oral examination of the candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The supervisor and, where applicable, the co-supervisor(s) should compile a report that provides insight into the</li> </ul>



	<p>development of the process that culminated in the dissertation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The following aspects can be addressed in the report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>The context in which the study was undertaken.</i></li> <li>✓ <i>The methodological setup in terms of which the study was undertaken and according to which the dissertation should ultimately be evaluated.</i></li> <li>✓ <i>The extent to which the candidate worked independently</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Problems that the candidate experienced with collecting data.</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Any other aspect that may have some bearing on the final evaluation of the dissertation.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Submit that report to the manager of the Doctoral Office for submission to the Committee for Postgraduate Research.</li> </ul>
Faculty Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The supervisor should submit information of an academic nature and furnished in a text of not more than 100 words – on the dissertation – for recommendation at the same meeting at which the Faculty Board considers the examiners' recommendations. The final result is approved by the University Senate.</li> </ul>
Graduation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the graduation ceremony, the supervisor delivers a popularised summary of not more than 50 words indicating what has been done in the study and what its significance is. No biographical or examination details are furnished.</li> <li>• The supervisor should submit this text to the Faculty Officer for approval, before the Faculty Board meeting at which the examiners' recommendations are considered.</li> <li>• In the oral presentation of the summary, there should be absolutely no deviation from the wording of the summary as approved previously.</li> <li>• After presenting the summary, the supervisor should remain standing until the hood has been placed around the candidate.</li> </ul>
Submission to SUNScholar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The supervisor should nominate a candidate to upload the final thesis.</li> </ul>

## K. ETHICS NOTE

### Does my MSc or PhD student need a separate HREC approval?

*Case-by-case consideration is required for each student project according to the logic below*

#### Core principles:

1. SU's ethical obligations to study participants, staff, and students must not be compromised.
2. Redundant review of the same research question and methods needs to be avoided, especially if the parent study has approval.

