

GENERAL INFORMATION ON DOCTORAL STUDIES

VERSION 3: MAY 2019

A. GENERAL

- A. The procedures on the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) Doctoral Office's website link directly to the three sets of formal provisions governing doctorates:
 - i. those provided under "Postgraduate Qualifications" in Part 1 (General) of the University Calendar; and
 - ii. those provided in the Faculty's own Calendar (Part 12 of the University Calendar).

- B. 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 problem. Candidates shall not have submitted the said research previously to any university for the purpose of obtaining a degree.

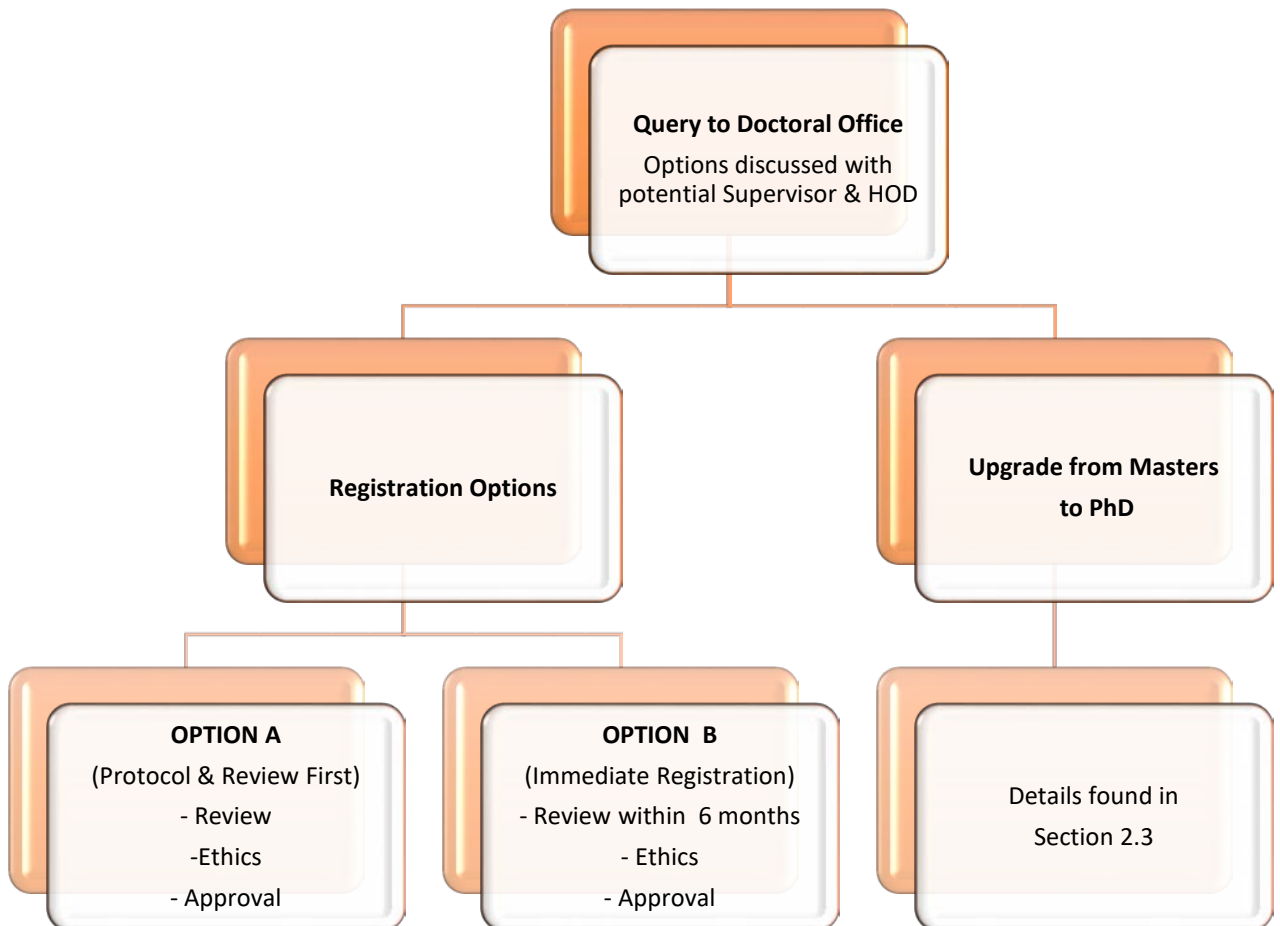
- C. The doctorate is assessed on the basis of either:
 - 3.1 A conventional dissertation: An introduction, followed by a number of chapters, followed by a discussion of the research results that indicates the scientific contribution of the study. OR
 - 3.2 A publication format dissertation (REFER TO SECTION C).

- D. The focus and quality of the research and reporting therefore remain the most important aspect in both formats.

- E. Irrespective of the doctoral-study format, all candidates should be equipped with the following:
 - 5.1 Appropriate professional development;
 - 5.2 Sufficient general and applied knowledge;
 - 5.3 The expertise to recognise problem areas and identify research topics;
 - 5.4 Familiarity with specific research literature;
 - 5.5 The ability to develop research protocols;
 - 5.6 Technical-laboratory and/or clinical skills and/or public health skills, as appropriate to the subject of the study; and
 - 5.7 Sufficient communication skills (both oral and written).

B. APPLICATION PROCESS

1. An applicant for doctoral studies may register in either the first or second semester of any given year:
 - 1.1 **First semester registration opens in January and closes on 31 March** each year; and
 - 1.2 **Second semester registration opens on June and closes on 31 August** each year.
 - 1.3 **No registration will take place after 31 August** of any given year.



2.1 **OPTION A: Registration after the Review Process**

The Review system has been revised and is conducted in the Department/ Division/ Centre. Clarify with the departmental secretary regarding the processes followed in that environment. Further details can be obtained from bcoombs@sun.ac.za or www.sun.ac.za/FMHSdoctoraloffice.

Once this process is complete, please email all the documents **AND** submit hard copies of the following to the Doctoral Office:

1. Completed **FORM A1** (If not submitted previously)
2. Prescribed **cover letter** from the relevant Head of Department/Division/Centre supporting the application
3. The **CPR Checklist (FORM A3)** has to be completed and signed by the Supervisor and HoD **BEFORE** the Review and the Convenor of the Review **AFTER** the proposal has been finalized.
4. Written **confirmation** from the supervisor(s) and co-supervisor(s) that they approve the protocol and are willing to serve in that capacity
5. **Final Synopsis** of the protocol (2 pages)
6. **Final protocol**
7. **Curriculum vitae** of applicant and external co-supervisor(s)
8. A **Turnitin Report** of the final protocol
<http://libguides.sun.ac.za/content.php?pid=344501&sid=2818225>
9. The signed **Plagiarism Declaration**
10. Completed and signed **Memorandum of Understanding**
11. A completed and signed **Stellenbosch University Postgraduate Application** form
(Please note that this is NOT FORM A1)
12. Proof of payment of R100-00 application fee (**not applicable to international students who are required to pay the annual fees before they may be registered**)
13. **Recently certified academic credentials**, records and certificates
14. Certified copy of the **passport for international students**
15. The completed and signed **Non-Disclosure Agreement** (complete and sign the right side and leave the left blank)

2.2 OPTION B: Immediate registration – Review to follow within 6 months

Applicants who require a visa letter or proof of registration for funding purposes benefit most from this option. All International applicants must ensure that they comply with the University regulations and make the applications at least a week before the registration closing dates.

The review is to be conducted within 6 months of registration. Details of the review process can be obtained from: bcoombs@sun.ac.za or www.sun.ac.za/FMHSdoctoraloffice

Please email the documents **AND** submit hard copies of the following to the Doctoral Office:

- a. Completed **FORM A1**
- b. Approval from the relevant Head of Department/Division/Centre supporting the application
- c. Curriculum vitae of applicant and external supervisor(s)
- d. A completed and signed Stellenbosch University Postgraduate Application form (Please note that this is NOT FORM A1)
- e. Proof of payment of R100-00 application fee (not applicable to international students who are required to pay annual fees before they may be registered)
- f. Recently certified academic credentials, records and certificates
- g. Certified copy of the passport for international students
- h. MoU and
- i. The completed and signed Non-Disclosure Agreement

2.3 UPGRADE/Conversion Process From Masters To Phd

Please note that you will need to email AND deliver print copies of the following documents to the Doctoral Office.

- a. Letter from the HOD
- b. Letter from the Supervisor/s
- c. The Evaluation Checklist (request from Doctoral Office)
- d. Synopsis
- e. Proposal
- f. The MSc Ethical Clearance Certificate
- g. Your updated CV
- h. The proposed Supervisor/s CVs
- i. A Plagiarism Declaration
- j. A Turnitin Report <http://libguides.sun.ac.za/content.php?pid=344501&sid=2818225>
- k. Copy of the published article.

The supervisor's letter should include:

- Exceptional progress made by student;
- How the proposed study exceeds scope of Masters' study;
- Account of new/original insights proposed for the doctoral study; and
- How it justifies further investigation.

A Review Panel will evaluate the application after which the candidate will need to apply to HREC for ethics. Further information can be obtained from Ms Bronwyn Coombs: bcoombs@sun.ac.za

IMPORTANT

- 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.
- **Note:** Should any individual have an association as close family or household member, or any other close relationship with the candidate and/or with supervisor/co-supervisor, the member concerned should be excluded from the Review Process.

C FORMAT OF PhD DISSERTATION

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

- Conventional format dissertation
- Publication format dissertation, and
- Hybrid format dissertation

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.

The differences between the three formats are as follows:

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.

Publication format dissertation:

An introduction chapter, followed by a minimum of 4 first-authored peer-reviewed published/accepted for publication articles (a maximum of 2 of which may be published within 5 years prior to registration), 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).

Hybrid format dissertation:

An introduction chapter, followed by a minimum of 2 first-authored peer-reviewed published/accepted for publication articles (one or both of which may be published within 5 years prior to registration),
AND EITHER

- ❖ *a minimum of 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) AND
- ❖ a minimum of 2 chapters outlining the research OR
- ❖ a combination (minimum of 2) of first-authored submission-ready/submitted manuscripts and 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. 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 summarized in the table below:

Publication	Introduction	At least 4 x 1 st authored peer-reviewed published/accepted for publication articles		Discussion	Conclusion
Conventional	Introduction	Chapters		Discussion	Conclusions
Hybrid 1	Introduction	At least 2 x 1 st authored peer-reviewed published/accepted for publication articles	At least 2 x first- authored submission-ready/submitted manuscripts	Discussion	Conclusion
Hybrid 2	Introduction	At least 2 x 1 st authored peer-reviewed published/accepted for publication articles	At least 2 x chapters	Discussion	Conclusion

Hybrid 3	Introduction	At least 2 x 1 st authored peer-reviewed published/accepted for publication articles	Combination (minimum 2) of first- authored submission-ready/submitted manuscripts and chapters	Discussion	Conclusion
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- ❖ If only one manuscript has been published at the time of submission for examination, the conventional format dissertation must be followed and the manuscript 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 your 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 clearly indicate 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 in the front matter 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

Introduction	This is the chapter that introduces the topic and the problem, covers relevant literature in order to justify the topic, and highlights research gaps.
First-authored	A first-authored manuscript is a manuscript where the PhD candidate is the first named author in a list of authors and, as such, the lead author on the manuscript.
Peer-review	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.
Published	This is a manuscript that is available in print or on-line. This includes an <i>advance online publication</i> (a manuscript that is available 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 have a DOI (digital object identifier) assigned yet.
Accepted for publication	This is a manuscript that is accepted by a journal to be published and which 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.
Submission-ready	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.
Submitted manuscript	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.
Discussion	The purpose of the 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 and recommendations for future research
Conclusion and future directions	The conclusion and future directions chapter ties together, integrates, and synthesizes various issues raised in the discussion, while at the same time reflects 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.

D. SUPERVISION AND SUPERVISORS

The appointment and approval of a supervisor and co-supervisor are the responsibility of the Committee for Postgraduate Research (CPR) and Faculty Board. Supervisors and co-supervisors of doctoral students must have a doctorate or must have obtained by another means a standard of competency in the relevant field of study that is sufficient for this purpose. The evaluating committee assesses each person'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 and Associate Professors.
2. Where the supervisor is appointed on a part-time or contractual basis at Stellenbosch University, including extraordinary or honorary positions, provision should be made for continuous support of the candidate by the Division/Department/Centre.
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 set-up in terms of which the study was undertaken and according to which the dissertation should ultimately 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 popularized 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. The supervisor must submit this text to the Dean for approval, after the Faculty Board meeting where the examiners' recommendations are considered.
- 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. The supervisor should submit the text for approval at the same meeting at which the Faculty Board considers the examiners' recommendations. After the Faculty Board meeting, the text should be sent immediately to the Publications Division and to the Language Service.
- In the oral presentation of the summary, there should be absolutely no deviation from the wording of the summary as previously approved.
- After presenting the summary, the supervisor should remain standing until the hood has been placed around the candidate.

E. 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 required funding and applicable infrastructure will be indicated specifically.
- 1.3 The candidate, with the help of the supervisor, should acquaint himself with the guidelines for keeping a record of research as generally acceptable within the discipline concerned.
- 1.4 The candidate confirms that he/she has 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 literary survey, 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 at regular and 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 Post Graduate 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. (There should be specific reference to section 11. on page 23 to ensure that there is sufficient time for the technical finish and examining of the dissertation with a view to the various graduation ceremonies in December and March each year.)
- 1.11 The candidate undertakes, as agreed with the supervisor, to deliver relevant outputs (such as publications, patents and academic papers). The candidate should acquaint himself with the conventions on 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.

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 with the protocol development of the project. A co-supervisor may be appointed at a later stage if the existing co-supervisor needs to be replaced as a result of unforeseen circumstances.
 - 2.2 The co-supervisor must conduct himself/herself in accordance with the code of conduct as compiled by the Faculty and 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 – he/she is expected to provide feedback with regard to the progress of the research project as a whole.
 - 2.4 The co-supervisor should be able to act as a stand in for the supervisor at any time.
 - 2.5 In the event that 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 with regard to 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 facilities necessary for study and research, where relevant, are available.
- 3.7 Provide research training or opportunities to access research training.
- 3.8 Meet with the student, to monitor progress regularly 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 his/her intention to submit form (if applicable) and that the examiners are nominated timeously at 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 are able to have appropriate time to guide the student.
- 3.14 To accept responsibility for the originality, scientific merit and standard of the research.

4. Responsibilities of the candidate

- 4.1 Ensure that he/she is 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 his/her research and be proactive.
- 4.6 Keep complete records of research results (which remains 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)
- 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 Presenting and reporting on research results and respond to feedback appropriately.
- 4.12 Consider feedback constructively and clarify any uncertainty with your supervisor.
- 4.13 Do a literature survey 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 thesis/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 his/her intention to submit his/her thesis/dissertation/research assignment for examination.

F. DEPARTMENT/ DIVISION/ CENTRE 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 him-/herself with all the provisions and requirements for admission to a doctoral programme so as to provide relevant support to both the supervisor and the PhD student in his/her environment.

G. AMENDMENT OF THE DISSERTATION TOPIC

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

H. MAJOR AMENDMENTS TO PROTOCOL

Major amendments to the protocol 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 Panel, Committee for Postgraduate Research and the relevant Ethics Committee.

I. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

For graduation in **December**, a candidate should submit his/her dissertation **by 1 August.**

For graduation in **March** the following year, a candidate should submit his/her dissertation **by 15 October.**

1. It is the responsibility of the supervisors to clear these deadlines with the candidate in advance of the dates.
2. Three hard copies and an electronic copy are to be submitted to the Doctoral Office (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 are obtainable from SUN MeDIA, Basement, Clinical Building, Tygerberg Campus (Tel. 021-938 9547).
5. When a candidate's examination results have been finalised, it is the candidate's responsibility to supply a bound copy (the final product) of the dissertation to each examiner.
6. Every candidate is also required to furnish SUNScholar (<http://scholar.sun.ac.za>) with one copy in PDF format electronically. Please note Senate approval requirement from 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 in order 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/>.