

*Economic and Management Sciences new
academic development programme*



ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES NEW ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Stellenbosch University (SU) at present conceives of its staff as contributing to teaching, research and community interaction/service in pursuance of the institution's strategic goals. In support of staff's service in each of these areas the University offers various development opportunities, many of which are generic and centrally managed. It is important to note that most development of staff members happens in an *ad hoc* and non-structured/non-programmatic way.

At present faculty staff connect to teaching development opportunities mostly through the offering of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) although the faculty has also recently devised more context and needs specific opportunities within the faculty itself. The development of research abilities is, for most staff members, a function of their own postgraduate studies or their involvement in research projects with other colleagues. Structured and systematic support for the continued development of research skills is very limited for most staff members.

The proposal set out in this document is an attempt to establish a systematic development programme that addresses needs in terms of at least the teaching and research functions. For descriptive purposes the teaching and research functions are treated as separate analytical categories. Conceptually though, we should acknowledge the mutually dependent connection between these different functions. Bernstein (1990; 2000) and Maton (2014) have both at least implied this organic connection in their portrayal of the structure of the disciplinary knowledge. Bernstein's (1990) original conceptualization of, what he called, the 'pedagogic device' conceives of three fields of practice in pedagogic discourse, namely the field of production, the field of recontextualization and the field of reproduction. Briefly, the first represents the area of the production of new knowledge. The second is where knowledge from the field of production is transformed into pedagogic discourse while the third is where pedagogic practice occurs (Maton 2014:47). There is thus a clear conceptual connection between the outcomes of research (the production of new knowledge) and the outcomes of pedagogic activity (the transformation of knowledge into curriculum and the delivery of curriculum).



The first section of this proposal sets out a programme of research development located in the Graduate School of Economic and Management Sciences (GEM). In short, it proposes that new staff members participate in GEM activities in a structured manner in order to achieve two goals. The first is to obtain a PhD qualification in the faculty within four (or five) years of becoming a staff member. The second, which is implied in the first, is to develop research abilities that would allow them to continue to make meaningful research contributions in the faculty as their careers evolve.

The second part of this proposal addresses the need for teaching development in new staff members. It constructs a development trajectory from existing opportunities (many of which staff members will participate in during their first four years in the faculty). In order for this part of the development programme to be successful it is important that the faculty acknowledges the need for such teaching development. In the case of research a well-established mode of judging quality and contribution exists in the form of peer-reviewed presentations and publications. In the case of teaching, however, no well-established equivalent form of evaluation exists (yet). Furthermore, new academics are, to an extent prepared, for the research requirements of academic appointments. However, few are formally prepared for the teaching function they will perform as part of their academic activities. While their postgraduate studies has them operating in the field knowledge production (see Bernsteinian conceptualization above) it does not take them into the fields of recontextualization and reproduction, the two fields important to curriculum and education in the academic's activities.

This proposal thus presents a systematic and coherent programme for the faculty of Economic and Management Sciences that offers support for both the requisite teaching and learning and research development to new staff members.



THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

Background

The Graduate School of Economic and Management Sciences (GEM) was established as a unit within the Dean's office, with 2014 marking as its inaugural year. The doctoral programme that is managed by the Graduate School sets out to achieve the following strategic objectives. Firstly to provide a partially structured programme for doctoral education, that is functional across departments in the faculty. The second objective is to greatly increase the faculty's number of PhD graduates. And the final objective is to broaden access to doctoral education in the Economic and Management Sciences.

In this model, students are carefully screened after submitting applications in line with research themes spread across the Faculty. Successful students are, subsequently, awarded a substantial scholarship for a period of three years. New participants enter the programme in January as part of a cohort, which forms a supportive, scholarly unit for the remainder of their studies. To ensure a maximal likelihood of students completing their doctoral studies, the following supportive measures are put in place. In the first year of study, students take part in a partially structured programme that ensures students have the skills required to undertake doctoral research at the forefront of their individual disciplines. This is achieved by providing students with supplementary support in the form of workshops and courses, targeted to ensure all students are prepared and equipped at a comparable skill level. These workshops are mainly sourced from the existing service providers at Stellenbosch University (such as the Postgraduate and International Office and African Doctoral Academy). In addition, the progression of projects is actively monitored in collaboration with the responsible study leaders throughout the three year study period.

The STEM "PhD-track" is a natural evolution of the current programme to make the its existing structures available to full-time academic staff members of the faculty that are aspiring to undertake their doctoral studies. Since the programme is highly modular it can easily be adapted to such a purpose. The details of the proposed programme follows below.



1. Motivation

In general, the appointment of young academic staff member in the faculty occurs at the pre-doctoral level, when talented individuals with academic potential are selected during their Masters (or even Honours) studies and appointed as junior lecturers. The teaching load of these positions is challenging and limited time is available to pursue academic research. Furthermore, these young academics have not received the benefit of cultivating the discipline and rigor that is imparted to those that have participated in full-time doctoral research programmes. These skills are also not easily acquired in the isolated space that many junior and academics attempt to complete their doctoral dissertations as a part time endeavor.

These skills and experience gaps are associated with three problems for early career academics in this faculty:

1. Slow progress towards their PhDs which holds back career advancement as well as the attainment of many rewards in the university system;
2. A challenge to integrate the various dimensions of a successful academic career
3. For the department, a practical problem to formulate realistic expectations of the research performance in the annual work-agreement of (especially) young academics.

2. Objectives

To address these challenges, the proposed programme will provide structured support through a faculty-specific PhD track for young academics. This will not only enhance the capacity of individuals to undertake doctoral studies, but also increase the percentage of academics with PhD and the research capacity of the faculty.

The primary objectives that is set out for the STEM PhD track is the following:

- To provide a structured framework within which academic staff can pursue their doctoral studies.



- This programme aims to support staff with the specific goal of completing their PhDs in a period of four (or five) years.
- To contribute to a culture of scholarship in the faculty by utilizing a collaborative cohort based model of doctoral education for young academic staff.
- To provide a centralized point from which administrative and infrastructural support can be coordinated for candidates on the PhD track.
- To coordinate and provide opportunities for PhD track candidates to enter the supportive courses that are available through existing university bodies, such as the African Doctoral Academy (ADA); the Postgraduate and international Office (PGIO); and the Division of Research Development (DRD).
- To provide a systematic basis for the research expectations and the evaluation thereof for the annual work-agreement of young academics.

3. Eligibility

The programme specifically aims to enhance the faculty's research and postgraduate teaching capacity by increasing the proportion of full-time academic staff with doctoral degrees. Academic staff members below the age of 40, holding Masters degrees, are, therefore, considered as the primary target group for inclusion into the programme.

All staff appointed in the faculty under the age of 40 without a PhD, but with an appropriate masters degree, will join the programme in January following their appointment.

4. Structure of the programme

4.1. The structure of the PhD

The STEM PhD track provides support for staff members over a four (or five) year period, with the specific aim of completing their doctoral studies to the point of thesis submission within this timeframe. Project proposals and planning are expected to lay out the thesis as three



publishable units from the start¹. These papers contribute the bulk of the written work for the final thesis. The following annual targets are provided over the four (or five) year period as a guideline:

The **preparatory phase** is meant to stretch over the first year of study. If required and deemed appropriate by the candidate and supervisor(s) a second year can be used to optimise the candidates research proposal. The preparatory phase is devoted to is devoted to:

- Completing an approved doctoral proposal (i.e. the proposal should be approved by a Departmental Admission Committee in time to be submitted for the Faculty Board meeting that is scheduled in November of the first year);
- Presenting a detailed project work plan for the study period, that has been approved by the supervisor(s) and will be used as a measure for subsequent progress reports;
- Training in generic and elective modules coordinated by the Graduate School and agreed upon with the candidates supervisor;
- Induction into scholarly discourse through involvement in an advanced weekly seminar series and other relevant scholarly exchanges;
- Acquiring ethical approval where necessary for the execution of the study;

The **first year** of registered study should enable students to:

- Prepare or start the technical work of the dissertation, based on an approved research design and methodology for the study;
- Continue to execute the research or study plan through further reading and/or writing and to complete their technical work according to the project plan that was laid out in the first year;
- Completing at least one full chapter (or paper) of the dissertation, preferably including a review of the literature and the relevant current research on the problem or area of the study.
- A second paper should ideally be drawn up to an advanced concept phase (with the aim of finalizing in the first trimester of the third year if not earlier)

¹ The faculty's graduate school is designed specifically for the paper-approach to PhDs. However, if a student and supervisor wish to embark on a traditional manuscript PhD, this can also be accommodated in the programme.



The **second year** of registered study should enable students to:

- Complete their technical or field work.
- Finalize the second concept paper by the end of the first trimester
- Finalize data analyses and interpretation.
- Complete a third research paper by the end of the year

The **third year** of registered study should enable students to:

- Finalize and submit outstanding papers for peer review
- Completion of the final dissertation in collaboration with supervisor(s).
- Present preliminary results in advanced seminars or to defend their theses;
- Submit the completed thesis for examination.

4.2. Monitoring and evaluation

During the first phase of study scholars will not yet be registered as doctoral candidates. During this period, candidates are actively engaged in the preparatory programme that is offered by STEM. Scholars are allowed to register as official PhD students in the programme only after the goals set for the preparatory phase have been achieved.

Although the final examination of doctoral students will be based solely on the dissertation, progress during the course of the programme, including the modules followed, seminars attended, interaction and team-work, written work submitted, research work carried out, presentations given and meetings with the supervisor(s), will be assessed and reported every four months through the completion of the Graduate School progress reports. Participation on the programme will be contingent upon satisfactory progress and assessments conducted every four months throughout the study. Participating academics are required to remain in regular contact (minimum of once a month) with their supervisors throughout their study programmes.

The goals set by STEM and the feedback from the programme will form a systematic input in the annual work-agreement and performance evaluation of new staff.



5. Supporting courses, and individual development

To support doctoral scholars in their studies, supportive modules and workshops are presented during the first year of their studies. These courses are intended to provide the required background information and also a solid foundation from which to pursue research at the doctoral level. The Graduate School offers the following generic courses (listed below) annually. PhD track participants are expected to participate in the training events except when it is agreed upon with the candidate's supervisor that a specific course or workshop would be redundant or unnecessary:

- Workshop on plagiarism
- Introduction to the library facilities – including literature search strategies
- Embarking on a research degree (one day at the PGIO)
- Proposal & thesis writing
- Research Design and methodology - Qualitative/Quantitative research
- Statistical analysis
- Academic publication and the peer review process.
- Project Management
- Research ethics/Ethical clearance
- Presentation skills
- Research commercialization

In addition to the generic courses that are offered by the Graduate School, the opportunity exists to take part in the range of more specialized courses that are offered within the university system (specifically by the African Doctoral Academy and also the Postgraduate and International Office). Scholars on the PhD track will be provided with a skills assessment in their first year that can be used to determine skill shortages that needs to be addressed. These shortages need to be prioritized and strategies should be built into the candidate's four year project plan in order to address the deficits. This assessment and planning is done in collaboration with the candidate's supervisor. The Graduate School can be approached with a final plan in order to source means by which the candidate can be assisted in gaining access to skill building options available in the university environment.



6. Incentive and career planning

The programme provides the opportunity for staff members to complete their doctoral studies in a timely manner while immersed in a supportive and enriching scholarly environment. It is considered that the opportunity to take part in the programme and benefit in the structured support that it offers would provide the primary incentive.

Time planning and work load of candidates should be discussed in collaboration with supervisors and departmental chairs for the period that they are participating in the programme. This will allow realistic planning of the research time required for the doctoral project to fit within departmental arrangements. Departments will be encouraged to use the student's progress and structured feedback from the graduate school's monitoring system in the staff member's performance evaluation. Adequate progress within the graduate school will become the research component of the expected performance for the first four (or five) years of the employment contract.

The final phase of the STEM programme will be built around career planning and the development of a sustainable research programme. The topics covered in this phase will include the development of a research programme, application for grant funding, collaborative research and working towards an NRF rating.



TEACHING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

1. Motivation

Quality teaching is an essential activity at SU. Even though the operationalization of 'quality teaching' is contested there is consensus that SU needs to pursue quality teaching in the same way that it pursues quality research. As stated, most of SU's academic staff have, through their postgraduate studies, achieved a minimum level of preparedness to conduct research. Many new staff members though have had little preparation for their teaching responsibilities. The purpose of the teaching-learning development component of this proposal is an attempt to address this need.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this programme are conceptualized in support of SU's ongoing attempts to define the university as a leading higher education institution in Africa with a significant international reputation. Quality teaching is central to the achievement of these objectives. The importance of quality teaching is entrenched in SU's Strategy for Teaching and Learning 2014-2018 as part of the five strategic priorities for the institution, These are the professionalization of the teaching role, the realization of graduate attributes, the establishment of an IT enhanced learning model, support for a diverse student cohort and programme renewal.

In order to achieve these priorities, teaching staff should be empowered by the institution. Such empowerment may not be a sufficient condition for the attainment of these priorities but it certainly necessary. And it is this empowerment that is the objective of this programme.

The purposes of this programme are thus:

- to provide all academics with a structured opportunity to enhance their teaching skills



- to prepare all new staff members for good teaching (the minimum expectation in terms of their teaching responsibility)
- to prepare new staff members for the possibility of pursuing a trajectory of excellent teaching

3. Eligibility

In order to indicate the primary audience of this initiative it is necessary to distinguish between the programme presented in this proposal and the individual events that constitute the programme. The programme itself is aimed primarily at newly appointed academic staff with little or no teaching experience.

This focus on newly appointed staff does not exclude other staff members from participating in the programme. The option would be open to more experienced staff members to participate in the entire programme (in such a case they would have to comply with all the participation criteria set for the programme) or to participate only in selected individual events.

4. Sequence and content of programme

The teaching development programme extends to a maximum of three consecutive years with early conclusion possible after two years (if all participation requirements have been met).

The following are compulsory events in the programme:

- Attendance of the four day PREDAC programme (of which two days are to be presented in the faculty – one at the start of each year and one towards the end of the year).
- Attendance of SunLearn training.
- Attendance of at least four Ibyte sessions over the duration of the programme.
- Attendance of at least one Teaching and Learning research seminar in the faculty (one presented annually).
- Attendance and completion of SU's Blended Learning shortcourse.

The structure of the programme is flexible with only a limited number of events in fixed sequence.



- The attendance of the faculty-based PREDAC events (one at the start of the year and one at the end of the year) should happen in the first full-year of appointment. The ideal would be that staff also attend the centrally run PREDAC event in that same year but because this possibility is contingent on the availability of places, the position is that staff attend this event as soon as possible.
- SunLearn training should be completed within the first six months of appointment. Staff participating in the programme will be informed of the training opportunities.
- Ibyte sessions are spread throughout the year and participating staff should be free to attend the required four sessions of their choice.
- The Teaching and Learning research seminar is presented annually. Participating staff can select attendance of any one of the seminars presented during their enrolment in the programme.
- The Blended Learning short course is presented on three separate occasions per year. Participating staff can select the timing that best suits them. Because this short course requires significant investment, the recommendation is that participating staff members do not enroll for this short course in the same year that they participate in the PREDAC course.

5. Monitoring

Formal participation in the programme should be monitored through the regular performance appraisal instruments. Upon appointment the participant should engage in a negotiation with his/her head of department (HOD) to finalize the goals of the participation for the specific appraisal cycle.

The Dean's office will keep record of all participations in the events that constitute this programme and circulate all participations across the faculty to HODs at the end of the year. HODs can then use this information in the performance appraisal of the participant.

The monitoring is only relevant in the case of participants in this programme. Where staff participate in individual events, their participation is not subject to performance appraisal.



6. Incentives

Participation in the teacher development segment of this programme requires investment in terms of time and energy. In order to engage with the programme in a meaningful way while at the same time maintaining other professional responsibilities (eg teaching, research, community interaction), participating staff should be allowed some freedom in terms of Departmental responsibilities. This should be negotiated with the HOD in such a way that it meets the needs of both the staff member and the Department.

