



MPhil in Family Medicine 2025



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1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in the M Phil in Family Medicine at Stellenbosch University. The purpose of this brochure is to provide you with sufficient information to determine if you wish to enrol in the M Phil in Family Medicine degree program.

2. BROAD AIM

The M Phil degree programme is designed as a non-clinical Masters qualification. It is targeted at health professionals with an interest in advancing the discipline of Family Medicine, particularly its research foundation in Sub-Saharan Africa. The programme is tailored for health professionals looking to engage in supervisory, teaching, academic coordination and research roles in Family Medicine and Primary Care. Eligible applicants include registered health professionals with an NQF level 8 qualification, such as Health and Rehabilitation Practitioners, Medical Doctors, Social Workers, and Professional Nurses. Clinical Associates with an additional post-graduate diploma or substantial recognisable prior learning are also eligible. It is important to note that this programme is **not** intended for individuals seeking clinical training as a family physician.

3. OBJECTIVES

- The programme aims to ensure that students attain a comprehensive understanding of theoretical principles and practical skills in Family Medicine. This includes the ability to assimilate and analyse new information effectively, develop practical solutions to complex problems and challenges and apply their knowledge in real-world settings.
- To prepare such students to contribute to the strengthening of Family Medicine as a discipline.



- The programme aims to equip students with the skills required to identify key research opportunities, design well-structured research studies and successfully complete these studies.
- To prepare students with the necessary teaching skills to contribute to the effective learning of topics relevant to both the practice of Family Medicine and the development of the academic discipline.
- To prepare students who aspire to move to a higher level of academic research work for Doctoral Studies and to promote an approach based on academic integrity and professional ethics.
- The programme aims to contribute to the academic community by developing individuals with the competence and critical intellectual abilities necessary for advancing the field of Family Medicine. This includes cultivating a skilled scientific workforce of the highest calibre.
- To prepare students who can apply their skills to the task of answering the relevant research questions to address the critical needs of primary care patients.

4. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

For admission to the M Phil (Family Medicine) degree programme, a candidate must have:

A bachelor's degree in a health profession (NQF level 8) or an equivalent qualification approved by the Senate is required for admission to the programme. Recognition of prior learning and experience is also taken into consideration. Eligible applicants include registered health professionals such as Health and Rehabilitation Practitioners, Medical Doctors, Social Workers, and Professional Nurses.

Clinical Associates with an additional post-graduate diploma are also eligible for admission.

Registration as a health professional with the Health Professions Council of South Africa or the equivalent in your country of practice.

Working in a context suitable for the practice of Family Medicine or Primary Care.

Include a brief description of the proposed research topic.

Applicants must be competent in the use of English at an academic level.

International candidates who have obtained their qualifications from tertiary institutions where English is not the language of instruction are required to provide



proof of English Language proficiency. This evidence must accompany the application and must not be older than 24 months from the date of application to the University.

English Language Requirements									
	CEF Level	Cambridge ESOL	IELTS Band	TOEFL iBT	TOEFL CBT	TOEFL (Paper-based)	BULATS	PTE General	PTE Academic
Minimum English Language Requirements	C1	CAE	6.5 (Minimum of 6 on all bands)	79	213	550	75 - 89	Level 4	76 - 84

5. DISTRIBUTED EDUCATION

The M Phil (Family Medicine) programme primarily relies on distance supervision of the student. There will be one obligatory contact week per academic year when it is required that the student visits the Tygerberg campus. Attendance is MANDATORY for all students. The contact week is essential for orientation and introductory sessions.

- This is supplemented by:
Regular online chat room or discussion forum interaction is encouraged to facilitate advanced reflection and group work.
- There will also be theoretical training through the following activities:
Web-based electronic training materials.
Independent self-study of standard textbooks and references.
Independent self-study of specially prepared materials.

Students will have regular access to the academic staff teaching in their module. They will also have full access to the library and the expertise within the entire Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.



Each student will be allocated a study mentor or supervisor, who will assist them with their research and serve as a contact person for specific guidance in case of academic difficulties.

The mentor or supervisor could facilitate contact between the student and academic staff involved in a specific module, as well as with other academic resources within the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.

On average, you will need to set aside **6 - 10 hours per week** during the modules for studying and working online. A team of people will be available to provide you with administrative, technical and academic support. They will be available via internet, email and telephone.

TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COURSE THE FOLLOWING TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS ARE RECOMMENDED:

Internet access with ADSL or a 3G dongle is required, along with computer hardware meeting the following minimum specifications: INTEL or AMD processor, 2.0 GHz, 1GB RAM (memory) and an 80 GB hard drive.

6. Course Content and Duration

The M Phil programme is a 2-year programme. Two web-based modules of 12 weeks' duration are offered in the first year and students must complete four such modules during the programme. One longer module relates to the completion of the research thesis. The academic modules are distance learning, apart from an obligatory contact session in January of the first year of studies, which will be held at the University (Tygerberg Campus). Failing to attend the contact sessions may result in not being allowed to register for the M Phil programme.

7. WEB-BASED ACADEMIC MODULES

A brief description of each module:

7.1 RESEARCH CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

This module focuses on the steps required to write a research proposal and the development of advanced knowledge and skills in research design and methodology. It aims to develop competence in research training and development, specifically targeting the mentoring or supervision of other novice researchers in family medicine and primary care.

7.2 PRINCIPLES OF FAMILY MEDICINE



This module exposes students to the core principles of medical generalism, primary care systems and family medicine. There is a particular focus on quality improvement.

7.3 TEACHING AND LEARNING IN FAMILY MEDICINE

This second-year module exposes students to the theory and skills of teaching, aiming to equip them with different teaching strategies applicable within their working environment and the healthcare system. The module covers approaches to and skills for course resource development, course design and assessment.

7.4 RESEARCH THESIS

This module guides the student through the process of researching and writing a research thesis. The student is expected to complete this research during years 1 and 2 and submit it as a thesis at the end of the second year.

7.5 LEADERSHIP AND CLINICAL GOVERNANCE

This second-year module aims to help healthcare workers develop the skills necessary to address clinical governance in the district healthcare system. It also prepares them to take on leadership roles to contribute to change and improvement within the system.

Year	Module 1:	Module 2:	Module 3:
1	Research Capacity Development (Part 1) (15 credits)	Principles of Family Medicine (20 credits)	Research Capacity Development (Part2) (15 credits)
1+2	Research Thesis (90 credits)		



2		Teaching and Learning in Family Medicine (20 credits)	Leadership and Clinical Governance (20 credits)
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8. CONTACT SESSIONS

There will be one OBLIGATORY contact week per academic year. All students **MUST** attend the contact sessions at Tygerberg campus, Stellenbosch University.

9. ASSESSMENT & EXAMINATION

- Formative feedback is provided throughout the online modules.
- All students must be registered and enrolled in their respective modules by the fourth week of the module. Failure to register by this deadline will require deferring the module to the following year.
- A summative assessment is conducted at the conclusion of each module.
- The pass mark for each module will be 50% and the research thesis must be passed with a mark of at least 50%.
- The final degree mark is calculated according to the credit weights of the individual modules.
- To be awarded the M Phil in Family Medicine, students must obtain a final mark of at least 50%.
- To be awarded the M Phil in Family Medicine with distinction, the student must obtain a final mark of at least 75%.
- If you fail a module, you may repeat it. If you fail the module for the second time, you will be denied the right to attempt the module and be excluded from the programme based on poor progress following approval by the Faculty board.
- You must submit a satisfactory thesis demonstrating your ability to conduct an independent scientific investigation, interpret the results and make deductions from the results.
- The thesis is assessed according to the guidelines of Stellenbosch University.
- Students who are unable to complete the MPhil in Family Medicine within the prescribed maximum period of 4 years will **not** be offered any further opportunities.

10. COST

The cost per year will be approximately ±R36,000. There is a financial penalty imposed by the university for students who do not complete their research within the first four years of registration.



Please note that the University reserves the right to make changes to the fees as they appear in this brochure. For up-to-date quotations, please use the link <https://web-apps.sun.ac.za/student-fees-estimate/#/home> at the time of registration.

Students are strongly encouraged to apply for funding to support their training, including travel costs to the contact sessions, textbooks or expenses related to hiring a research assistant.

11. ACCREDITATION

Completion of the programme will enable you to receive the M Phil degree (Family Medicine) from Stellenbosch University. However, it is important to note that this degree does not allow registration as a Family Physician with the Health Professions Council of South Africa.

12. EXEMPTION

Possible exemption on the grounds of comparable academic training or professional experience gained at another recognized institution may be granted by the University.

13. INTERRUPTION OF STUDIES

Students will have to apply formally to the Postgraduate Programme Committee if they decide to interrupt any component of their studies.

14. DISCONTINUATION / CANCELLATION OF STUDIES

If you decide to leave the University without completing your study programme, you must notify the Postgraduate Programme Coordinator and Administrator in writing, stating the reason(s) for discontinuing your studies.

CLOSING DATE: 30 SEPTEMBER

- Applications must be submitted online at www.maties.com OR <http://www0.sun.ac.za/pgstudies> along with all the required supporting documents by the closing date of September 30th.
- A final decision on applications will be communicated to candidates in mid-November. Your application will be considered once you have uploaded all your supporting application documents as well as proof of payment (where applicable). Failure to submit all required documents by the closing date will result in your application not being considered.



Stellenbosch



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BANKING DETAILS

Account name:	Stellenbosch University
Bank:	Standard Bank Limited
Branch:	Stellenbosch
Branch code:	050610
Branch address:	20 Bird Street, Stellenbosch
Account number:	073006955
Swift code:	SBZAJJ
Reference:	Student number / Application number
Email proof of payment to:	nicolec@sun.ac.za

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