



Stellenbosch

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CST

Centre for  
Sustainability Transitions

## Guideline for prospective PhD students

Thank you for your interest in undertaking a PhD in Sustainable Development with the CST, at Stellenbosch University. This document serves as a brief guideline to the process of applying for a PhD. Any further questions can be directed to the [PhD programme team](#).

There will be one intake of new PhD students into the CST per year, with registration by the end of March, but the process should be started the year prior to the intended year of registration (see detailed steps on process below). Registration at other times of year are discouraged but can be motivated for. This is in part to encourage a cohort of students to start their PhD journeys together.

### Steps to apply

**Before registration in March there are several steps to prepare for in the year prior.**

**Step 1:** Reach out to a potential supervisor for your topic by looking at the list of researchers at the CST on the website.

You will need the following documents when contacting your prospective supervisor:

1. Your most recent CV
2. A motivational letter for why you want to do your PhD and your personal connection to the topic
3. A 2-3 page concept note outlining your initial ideas
4. Sample of writing (e.g. chapter of Masters, or published paper)
5. Plan for funding: are you self-funded, interested in applying for a specific funding call, NRF funding? Note this relates to both your student fees and your living expenses.

If you find a potential supervisor who had capacity and is willing to work with you, the next step can begin.

**Step 2:** Your application is sent to the CST PhD committee for review

The committee sits together quarterly to review the applications. The last meeting is set for mid-October. Your potential supervisor will present your application to the committee, therefore it is vital that you have spent enough time liaising with your potential supervisor for them to arrange this meeting with the broader committee.

**Step 3:** Once you have received positive feedback from the PhD committee regarding your application, you must formally apply for a PhD at Stellenbosch University and meet the official requirements for admission. The university process looks like this:

1. Apply on the SU system, with the same documents you sent to your potential supervisor ([see here](#) on how to apply)
2. The University Registrar's division will communicate the outcome of your application
3. If the outcome is positive, you can then negotiate the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with your supervisor. This document is an agreement on how you and your supervisor(s) will/want to work together
4. Officially Register for your degree

### **Important dates**

- If you plan to apply for NRF bursaries, you should contact your potential supervisor before the **15th of July of the year before planned registration.**
- If you are self-funded, or have non NRF bursary, you need to contact a potential supervisor any time before the **30th of September of the year before planned registration.**
- Apply officially to the central university system **before 30 November** of the year before intended registration year
- Sign memorandum of agreement with your supervisor by **28 February** of your first year
- Officially register for your degree by **31 March of your first year.**

### **Admission requirements**

The admission requirements of the Faculty where you are to be registered will apply (see [the EMS Faculty's PhD admission requirements](#)).

### **Duration of programme**

- This is a full-time three-year programme. Additional time will require approval from CST and faculty.
- As far as practically possible, you will be located together with fellow students at the Centre for Sustainability Transitions (CST) research commons so as to ensure maximum transdisciplinary synergy among students and supervisors.

### **Assessment and examination**

The usual examination procedures of the University and the faculty in which you are registered apply (see information in this [EMS document](#)).

## **Contacts**

### **PhD co-ordination team**

For inquiries relating to the CST application process

Amanda October [aaoctober@sun.ac.za](mailto:aaoctober@sun.ac.za)

### **Postgraduate office**

For inquiries related to the official Stellenbosch system, student fees/support

<https://www.sun.ac.za/english/pgstudies>

<https://www.sun.ac.za/english/pgstudies/Pages/EMS/Faculty-of-Economic-and-Management-Sciences.aspx>