



**OFFICE OF THE DEAN
FACULTY OF LAW**

**Faculty Regulations regarding mini-dissertations
in the Faculty of Law**

**Also consult UP General Regulations and Rules G.30-G.63 and the Faculty of Law
Regulations and Syllabi booklet**

A. GENERAL

A mini-dissertation is required for fulfilment of the Master of Laws degree by Coursework in the Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria. The Master of Laws degree by Coursework is awarded once a student has successfully completed courses in research methodology, three 30-credit modules on particular topics related to the degree, the submission of a research proposal and a mini-dissertation. The mini-dissertation in the Faculty of Law must be dealt with according to the following information:

B. GUIDELINES FOR APPOINTMENT OF SUPERVISORS

1. A student may approach the programme coordinator of the presenter of a particular module that forms part of the particular programme to act as his/her supervisor. The prospective supervisor must finalize his/her possible involvement with his/her head of the department.
2. The relevant head of the department must recommend the supervisor and title for a mini-dissertation of the student and these must be approved by the post-graduate committee.
3. The supervisor must assist the student in completing the Research Proposal. The Research Proposal should be finalized before the end of the first semester of the second year of registration for the LLM Coursework. On completion of the Research Proposal the "Declaration of acceptance of the research proposal" form must be signed and submitted to Student Administration (*also refer to Postgraduate Administrative Processes on the Faculty website*).
4. The administrative officer must inform the Secretary of the Postgraduate Committee in writing of the name of the supervisor and the title and both must serve at the next Postgraduate Committee meeting as notification and approval respectively.
5. The supervisor will be the internal examiner as well and must submit a report with a mark to the administrative officer on completion of the examination copy of the mini-dissertation but before the mini-dissertation is sent to the external examiner.
6. The external examiner's report will be send to the administrative officer. The administrative officer will send both the reports from the supervisor and the external examiner to the HOD.
7. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that changes to the mini-dissertation, as recommended by the external examiner via the HOD, are done to the satisfaction of the HOD.
8. The HOD must send a consolidated report (of the supervisor and the external examiner) to student administration, indicating the final mark (as an average of the abovementioned two marks).

C. REGISTRATION OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION AND COMPLETION OF THE MoU

1. The student will only be allowed to register for the module MND 800/802/803 (mini-dissertation) after the supervisor has been notified by the Postgraduate Committee and the supervisor has informed the administrative office of the successful completion of the research proposal (*also refer to Postgraduate Administrative Processes on the Faculty website*). The Research Proposal should be completed at least by the end of the first semester of the student's second year of registration for the LLM Coursework programme.

D. TITLES OF MINI-DISSERATIONS

1. The student should, in co-operation with the supervisor, identify his/her own title for the mini-dissertation.
2. The supervisor however, may also provide student/s with the title of a mini-dissertation.
3. A group of students, registered for the same programme, may do research on the same theme, but each student's work must be his/her own original research, with his/her own title.
4. The title of the mini-dissertation must be approved of by the Postgraduate Committee.

E. GUIDELINES FOR APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

1. The student in co-operation with the supervisor must inform Student Administration, at least three months before submitting the examination copies for the mini-dissertation, in writing of such intention (end of June for the April graduation ceremony and end of January for the September graduation ceremony) (*also refer to Postgraduate Administrative Processes on the Faculty website*).
2. The Supervisor, in agreement with the HOD, must provide the secretary of the Postgraduate Committee, via the administrative officer of the names and details of at least 1 possible external examiner for each and every student (*also refer to Postgraduate Administrative Processes on the Faculty website*).
3. The examiner can either be a national or international expert on the field covered by the research done for the mini-dissertation.
4. The Postgraduate Committee will approve of one of the proposed external examiners.
5. Student Administration will send an appointment letter to the approved external examiner.
6. Examiners may evaluate more than one student's mini-dissertation.
7. Claims forms from external examiners must be sent to the Department of Finance via Student Administration.

F. SUBMISSION OF THE EXAMINATION COPIES OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION

1. Students must submit the examination copy of the mini-dissertation to Student Administration as a ring bound copy as well as electronically in Word format before end of September for the April graduation ceremony and end of April for the September graduation ceremony.
2. The examination copies of the mini-dissertation will be sent to the external examiner either electronically or per registered post or hand delivered.
3. The examination copies of the mini-dissertation sent to the external examiner must be accompanied by a claim form, guidelines for the marking of the mini-dissertation and an example of a report form (*also refer to Postgraduate Administrative Processes on the Faculty website*).

4. The administrative officer will ensure that the title of the research, as it appears on the ring bound examination copy of the mini-dissertation is correct on the student's record.

G. GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION

1. It is not a requirement that the mini-dissertation must make a new or original contribution to scientific knowledge. The following guidelines must be taken into consideration when evaluating a mini-dissertation:
 - Whether the candidate has provided proof of his/her ability to identify a research problem and complete a mini-dissertation on the research topic.
 - Whether a thorough study of relevant literature has been conducted, and presented in a balanced and thoughtful manner.
 - Whether results are presented clearly, appropriately, objectively and responsibly; that the interpretations are sound and that the scientific value thereof has been evaluated.
 - Whether the general presentation, style, layout and language usage is acceptable.
2. The supervisor/internal examiner as well as the external examiner must submit an independent, confidential, written report on the mini-dissertation to the administrative officer.
3. The administrative officer must submit these reports to the HOD. The HOD has to discuss the report from the external examiner with the supervisor.
4. Examiners should not discuss any aspects of the mini-dissertation with anyone until after all reports have been received by the administrative officer.
5. Examiners must indicate any deficiencies in the mini-dissertation and what alterations, if any, needs to be implemented by the candidate in order for him/her to pass/pass with distinction.
6. The minimum pass mark is 50% and a grade of at least 75% is necessary to award a distinction.
7. Both examiners must award a mark, irrespective of the content of the report.
8. The external examiner may require changes to the mini-dissertation which must be communicated to the HOD via the administrative officer and NOT via the supervisor.

H. REPORTS ON THE MINI-DISSERTATION

1. The supervisor must submit a report with a mark to student administration on completion of the examination copy of the mini-dissertation but before the mini-dissertation is sent to the external examiner.
2. The external examiner must submit a report with a mark to student administration after evaluation of the mini-dissertation.
3. Student Administration will send both reports to the HOD to be discussed with the supervisor.
4. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that the changes, as suggested by the external examiner are made, before the HOD submits a consolidated report to student administration.
5. The HOD must send a consolidated report (of the supervisor and the external examiner) to student administration, indicating the final mark (as an average of the abovementioned two marks) before 15 February for the April ceremony and 15 July for the September ceremony.

I. SUBMISSION OF THE FINAL COPIES OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION

1. In order to comply with degree requirements the student must submit to student administration before 15 February for the April ceremony and 15 July for the September ceremony the following:
 - A fully completed and signed (by both the student and the supervisor) submission form (available from student administration)
 - A CD with a Word and a PdF saved version of the mini-dissertation (*also refer to Postgraduate Administrative Processes on the Faculty website*).
2. Student administration will send an electronic copy of the mini-dissertation to the library.