

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS AND APPLIED MATHEMATICS

Departmental Policy on Responsibilities of Master's and Doctoral students and their Supervisors ¹

Also refer to the University document "Memorandum of Agreement, Academic supervision registered postgraduate students".

1) Period of study:

- a) Subject to other faculty regulations, a full-time student for a doctoral degree must complete his or her studies within four years after first registering for the degree. Under special circumstances, the Dean, on the recommendation of the Head of Department (HOD), may give approval for a limited fixed extension of this period. (See General Regulations of the University of Pretoria G.47 and G.51.) Normal duration of a full time PhD is 3 years and in exceptional circumstances resulting in a deviation from the normal duration must be communicated with the HOD.
- b) The period for which a candidate may be enrolled for Master's study is at least one year and at most four years. (Refer to General Regulations of the University of Pretoria G. 32 and G. 36.) The duration of the full time study for this degree is normally two years, i.e. the course work in the first year and the dissertation in the second year. Exceptional circumstances resulting in a deviation from the normal duration must be communicated with the HOD.

2) Responsibility of supervisor:

- a) The student should only be accepted if it is the supervisor's and/or Departmental Postgraduate and Research (PG&R) committee's carefully evaluated opinion that the student has the potential to complete the degree. There are many ways to measure the potential of a prospective student. The starting point is a careful evaluation of the academic record and previous research report(s). Other strategies include inviting a prospective student to submit a short oral or written presentation on a topic. The PG&R may suggest a supervisor for a suitable candidate but the proposed supervisor is under no obligation to accept such a student.
- b) The supervisor has a responsibility to lead and manage successful completion of studies in the minimum prescribed time. Any exceptions should be discussed with the HOD. Permission for an extension of the registration beyond the minimum period must be obtained from the HOD. The University's General Regulations regarding the renewal of registration per degree should be consulted in this regard.
- c) The supervisor has to be easily accessible (under normal circumstances, a meeting at least once every three weeks).
- d) All work submitted to the supervisor should be returned within a reasonable time (maximum turnover of one month), accompanied by written comments on the manuscript as well as separate general comments.
- e) The supervisor must set out, where applicable, his/her plans for providing supervision in terms of a time chart. The supervisor must indicate any expected absence on leave/sabbaticals (providing alternative arrangements for supervision if away for more than two months in any one year).
- f) The supervisor has to submit a progress report to the HOD once a year.

3) Responsibility of student:

- a) Regular scheduled meetings (normally at least once every three weeks) punctually attended by the candidate. Meetings to be scheduled in advance by the candidate. More frequent meetings may be arranged.

¹ Edited extract of proposal "Task team 3: Quality supervision of MSc and PhD students" approved at the Bosberaad of 30 November 2012.

- b) Candidate to provide an indication of the time to be spent on each phase of the research project (time chart). The project should be completed as soon as possible within the minimum time period as allowed by the University. The University's General Regulations regarding the renewal of registration per degree should be consulted in this regard. The time chart could be drawn up with reference to the following:
- literature review (critical evaluation of existing knowledge)
 - drafting of the research proposal
- The suggested outline for a research proposal is as follows:
- Title/Area
 - Abstract
 - Introduction/Background
 - Research problem
 - Research objective(s)
 - References
- c) The candidate must indicate any matters that may have an impact on the time chart he/she provided (e.g. work pressure).
- d) The postgraduate seminar programme currently requires all PhD students to deliver a talk to the department after one year of registration and MSc students during their 2nd year. In this talk, the candidate is required to find ways of communicating their work to a non-specialist audience in a manner that is not too technical.
- e) After one year of PhD study, the candidate will also submit to the departmental Postgraduate and Research Committee a written account of his/her progress to date. In possible contrast with the postgraduate seminar presentation, this submission should be sufficiently detailed, precise and technical to facilitate a substantive evaluation of progress. In particular, there should be a clear formulation of the problem(s) being worked on, including an account of relevant previous literature. The evaluation of this submission will be undertaken by one or more members of the committee, but their interaction with the submission will be mediated by the candidate's supervisor. Where it is deemed necessary, the candidate may be required to give a verbal presentation to committee members and the supervisor, and to answer questions.
- f) Candidate to ensure that all submitted work is written in an acceptable standard of English. It is not the supervisor's duty to do "rough editing" and (s)he will merely concentrate on contents and structure.
- g) Any revisions suggested by the supervisor to be resubmitted by the candidate within one calendar month (along with the copy of the previous manuscript where comments were made by the supervisor).
- h) Candidate has to demonstrate his/her research competence in order to be awarded a degree.
- i) The PhD candidate should be aware that for submission of the final thesis at least one accepted/published paper in an ISI journal is required.
- j) The candidate should contact the HOD in case problems arise with the supervisor(s).
- k) The candidate should familiarise him/herself with a mathematical typesetting program such as LaTeX as well as proper mathematical writing style and technique.
- 4) Progress reports for PhD students, and for MSc students from the 2nd year onward. (Refer to General Regulations and Information of the University of Pretoria G.57(5)):

The supervisor reports once a year in writing to the HOD on the progress of his/her candidate. The HOD takes immediate action in cases of

- Non-compliance of a supervisor to submit a report
- Research reports indicating unsatisfactory progress by students

- 5) Disagreements between candidate and supervisor:

Clear mediation mechanisms exist and are given in the General Regulations and Information of the University of Pretoria pertaining to the Student Communication Channel, Section B.15. They provide information on how to deal with any grievances, personal problems or disagreements that may arise between the candidate and the supervisor.

6) Termination of registration (Refer to General Regulations and Information of the University of Pretoria G.4):

A dean may, on the recommendation of a particular faculty committee, cancel the registration of a student or the registration for a module during an academic year, if the student fails to comply with the minimum requirements determined by the faculty board with regard to tests, examinations or any other work - on condition that a student may request that the dean reconsider the decision in terms of the set procedures.