**Frequently asked questions PhD AQA**

**What makes a PhD different from a masters?**

The jump from masters level thinking to doctoral level can be large. At the masters level you just had to demonstrate that you can do a research project, but at the doctoral level you have to contribute new knowledge to your field. Ask yourself: *Am I generating innovation and change in my field by conducting this study?* We strongly recommend that you know what intervention/innovation you want to contribute to your field **before** registering. Please discuss your ideas with your supervisor and write your proposal before registering.

**When can I apply?**

Applications open yearly in April and close end of August. Students are selected once a year for the following year.

**What can I do to improve my chances of being selected?**

We choose students who have secured a supervisor, have written a feasible proposal, and have research topics that fit our staff's fields of specialisation. Please note that you need to have an appropriate topic ready, preferably one you have discussed with your supervisor.

**How can I find a potential supervisor?**

Please visit our faculty website to find potential supervisors. If you want to apply for an MEd in the Science, Maths and Technology education department, please see our research focus areas: <https://www.up.ac.za/science-mathematics-technology-education/article/49577/research-focus-areas>. Suppose there are no supervisors who specialise in your topic at the University of Pretoria. In that case, we recommend you look at other universities as they may have the appropriate person.

**How should I approach a potential supervisor?**

Send an email to potential supervisor(s) who specialise in your topic area. Start by being clear on your topic and ask if they would be willing to consider you as a student for the next intake**.** Ask if they would be willing to meet with you to discuss your study and topic, either in person or online. Have a topic and research questions ready when meeting with a potential supervisor(s).

**Do I need to have a topic ready?**

Yes, it would be best to have an appropriate topic ready before you apply.

**How do I select a topic?**

Finding a topic depends on you and your long-term career goals. We recommend you choose a topic that aligns with your interests and professional goals.

**Budget – What will it cost me to complete a doctoral degree?**

Please note that you have to register every year, and there is an R7500 registration fee. There are also yearly student fees - please check the website for the latest costs: https://www.up.ac.za/student-fees/article/2735935/postgraduate-tuition-fees-per-faculty). Please plan for the registration fee, annual fees, and indirect costs such as language editing, data collection and so forth for 3 - 4 years. We recommend you create a budget before applying and making sure you can afford your studies.

**What funding opportunities exist?**

Please visit <https://www.up.ac.za/faq> and <https://www.up.ac.za/funding> to learn more about UP funded scholarships and other bursaries and loans available. You can also discuss funding opportunities with your supervisor.

**Online versus face-to-face?**

The PhD is academic; there are no classes to attend. There are support sessions which we strongly recommend you attend. Meetings with supervisor(s) can be arranged online. But please note that we find occasional in-person meetings are more beneficial than online meetings, and your supervisor may request a contact meeting.

**Full-time or part-time?**

We do not distinguish between full-time or part-time, technically we consider the degree to be full-time. However, you can work while completing the degree, but please note that you have to find a way to balance work and studies in such a case. You only have 2.5 years from registration to complete the proposal, defence, ethics application and thesis.

**Are there modules or coursework?**

No, you must conduct innovative research and write a thesis. There are no classes or coursework.

**How much time do I have to complete the degree?**

You have 2.5 years from registration to complete the thesis. If you have made significant progress, you can apply for an extension if you reach the end of the third year and you have not submitted your manuscript. The faculty decides whether you will be granted an extension.

**What type of job can I do with a doctorate degree?**

As with most social science degrees, people tend to follow divergent paths. Many of our students remain in the teaching profession. Students who seek employment other than teaching work in various fields such as business, training institutions, higher education and many others. In a volatile job market, the seeker must be very flexible and promote themselves and use their networks to obtain employment.

Please also note that if you want to obtain the qualification for reasons other than professional and personal development, the responsibility lies with you to find out what career opportunities exist. We recommend you do your job research before deciding to register.

**What are the recommended timelines for completing a doctoral study?**

Below are the ideal timelines, but your study may take longer to complete.

Year 1 Write proposal and defend by June

Year 1 Ethical clearance by August

Year 1 Chapters 1, 2 and 3 written

Year 2 Data collection and analysis

Year 2 Revisions of Chapters 1 - 3

Year 2 Chapters 4 and 5 written

Year 3 Revisions of all chapters

Year 3 Language and technical editing

Year 3 Manuscript finalised and submitted by August

Year 3 Article written and submitted to a journal

Year 3 Examiner feedback, refinement and final submission

Year 4 Graduate in April

**If I studied outside of South Africa, will I be accepted at UP?**

If your masters qualification was not obtained in South Africa, then a SAQA certificate at the appropriate NFQ level (9) is required. Please visit the SAQA website to find out the processes you need to follow to obtain the certificate. Our university is not involved in this process, please deal directly with SAQA but make sure you have the certificate ready before applying.