



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology

Fakulteit Ingenieurswese, Bou-omgewing en
Inligtingtegnologie / Lefapha la Boetšenere,
Tikologo ya Kago le Theknolotši ya Tshedimošo

Prospectus

Department of Town and Regional Planning

**Master of Town and Regional Planning by dissertation (MT&RP)
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**

2018

© Copyright reserved

© Outeursreg voorbehou

Master of Town and Regional Planning by dissertation (MT&RP) (Code 12252035) Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) (Code 12262023)

Description

The Master's in Town and Regional Planning by dissertation is a minimum one-year programme in which a student conducts independent research under guidance of a supervisor culminating in the submission of a dissertation and at least one article suitable for publication in a journal accredited by the South African Department of Higher Education and Training. The programme must be completed within one year (full-time) or two consecutive years (part-time) of registration.

The Doctorate in Town and Regional Planning is a minimum one-year programme in which a student conducts independent research under guidance of a supervisor that will also serve as an original contribution to the fundamental or theoretical knowledgebase of planning. The programme culminates in the submission of a thesis and at least one article suitable for publication in a journal accredited by the South African Department of Higher Education and Training. The programme must be completed within two (full-time) or four consecutive years (part-time) of registration.

The Master's by dissertation, and Doctorate in particular, require a significant commitment in terms scholarly effort and personal sacrifice and is intended for graduates who are interested in pursuing a career in research or academia.

The Master's by dissertation and Doctorate do not enable professional registration with the South African Council for Planners (SACPLAN). Prospective students who wish to practice as professional planners in South Africa should consider applying for either the accredited Bachelor's or Master's in Town and Regional Planning by coursework.

Click [\[here\]](#) to download the yearbook for the School for the Built Environment.

Prior learning and minimum requirements

Prospective students should understand research as a systematic and cyclical process in which scientific methods (be it qualitative or quantitative) are rigorously applied to address a specific research aim or question. A sound background in research methodology and proposal writing is therefore assumed. Sound academic writing skills, in particular the ability to write a dissertation/thesis in English that is technically and linguistically of an acceptable standard, are essential.

For the Master's by dissertation the requirements include (1) an honours degree in Planning or an associated field (such as Architecture, Civil Engineering, Construction, Economics, Geography, or Sociology, or any other field deemed acceptable by the Departmental Research Committee), and (2) a minimum of 65% for the research report of the preceding honours degree.

For the Doctorate the requirements include (1) a master's degree in Planning or an associated field (similar to those listed above), and (2) a minimum of 65% for the dissertation of the preceding Master's degree.

Prospective students who did not obtain 65% for their research report or dissertation can still be considered provided they can show that they have since gained sufficient research competence by virtue of a sole-authored and peer-reviewed research publication such as a journal article, conference proceeding, or report that is deemed acceptable by the Departmental Research Committee. Students who have been admitted to the Master's by dissertation or Doctorate may also be required to complete a course in research methodology if their research skills turn out to be insufficient for Master's or Doctoral study.

Research focus areas

The departmental research focus areas in which we are able to supervise students include the following:

- Environment-behaviour studies
- Planning methods and techniques;
- Safe and sustainable housing and urban spaces; and
- Strategic development planning.

Click [\[here\]](#) for more information regarding our research focus areas and [\[here\]](#) for more information regarding the academic profiles and current research projects of staff members.

Identifying a suitable topic

A topic of which the main thrust of the proposed research includes applied or consultancy-type research such as reviews of policies or formulation of guidelines or recommendations, is not suitable for Master's or Doctoral research. The topic has to address a particular aspect of Planning in such a way that it will advance our understanding of Planning on either a fundamental or theoretical level. Prospective students have to read key scholarly journal articles to identify possible gaps in the literature.

Doctoral candidates in particular should highlight what their original contribution would be to the fundamental or theoretical knowledgebase of Planning. If necessary, candidates might have to employ theoretical concepts and frameworks from subject areas associated with Planning such as the social, environmental, and economic and management sciences, and argue their contribution using one or a combination of the following:

- **Deduction:** In a deductive approach, a topic is linked to an existing theory that provides a suitable framework for researching the topic. A sub-component of the theory is typically singled out for purposes of empirically testing specific ideas in the field or in planning practice. This approach is usually associated with quantitative research, although qualitative research can also be applicable.
- **Induction:** In an inductive approach, a topic is not explicitly linked to an existing theory at the outset, though important theoretical concepts are still used to help formulate the research aim or question. In-depth empirical research is conducted in the field or in planning practice, while theoretical insights are then derived from the data and findings. This approach is also called 'grounded theory' (i.e., new theoretical insights are *grounded* in data), and is usually associated with qualitative research.
- **Paradigmatic research:** Another possible way to make an original contribution, is to study a topic anew through the lens of a specific research paradigm, such as pragmatism, social-constructionism (e.g., postmodern research), critical theory (e.g., feminist-, action- and postcolonial research), or systems theory.
- **Meta-research:** Meta-research is research *about* existing research, and includes methodological studies and non-empirical type studies such as conceptual analyses, advanced literature reviews (research syntheses and meta-analyses), typology/model/theory construction, and philosophical/normative arguments.

Application, registration, and registration for non-degree purposes

Prospective students should first contact a prospective supervisor to propose a topic. The supervisor will advise the student about the merit of the proposed topic and their availability for supervision, and may request the student to provide a copy of their preceding research report/dissertation.

Once a supervisor has agreed to supervise a proposed topic, the student can apply for the respective programme. The academic record submitted as part of the application should show the percentage obtained for the preceding research report/dissertation.

Click [\[here\]](#) to apply for the respective programme.

Once an application has been approved by the Faculty and Departmental Research Committee, there are two possible paths towards registration:

- **Path 1 – Prospective students who have a final research proposal that has been approved by the Departmental Research Committee:** These students can register for the respective programme. Registration is valid for one academic year and cannot be carried over to the next year. It is therefore advisable to register as close as possible to the beginning of a year. Registration has to be renewed each consecutive year, otherwise a student's studies is discontinued and the student will have to reapply to be readmitted to the programme. Supervisors submit annual progress reports on each of their Master's and Doctoral students to the Head of the Department and Dean of the Faculty in which they recommend whether a student be allowed to reregister considering the progress of the student.
- **Path 2 – Prospective students who do not have a final research proposal that has been approved by the Departmental Research Committee:** These students must first register for non-degree purposes in order to access the campus and library, develop the research proposal, and receive supervision. Registration for non-degree purposes is valid for one academic year during which the student must finalise the research proposal. It is advisable to register as close as possible to the beginning of an academic year, as registration for non-degree purposes cannot be carried over to the next year. Students will not necessarily be allowed to reregister for non-degree purposes or to continue with a topic if they fail to finalise the proposal within a year. Students whose proposals are approved by the Departmental Research Committee can register for the respective programme as outlined above.

Format of research proposals

Proposals of about 10 pages, referenced in the Harvard style, should include the following sections:

- Background / Contextualisation
- Research aim and objectives / Research question and sub-questions
- Preliminary literature review / Theoretical framework
- Research design and methods
- Relevance of the study for theory and practice (required for Master's proposals)
- Original contribution of the study towards the knowledgebase of Planning (required for Doctoral proposals)
- Outline of the dissertation / thesis
- Timeframe

Fees and funding

Click [\[here\]](#) for more information regarding fees and funding.

International students

International students are also required to identify a suitable topic within one of the departmental research focus areas listed above. Students who are admitted to the programme and who intend to conduct fieldwork outside South Africa that involves people, animals or the environment, are required to obtain ethics clearance from a relevant body in their respective countries in addition to obtaining ethics clearance from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee. Students have to be on the University of Pretoria's main campus to attend certain contact sessions as deemed necessary by the supervisor, and to attend the oral examination and public defence of the dissertation / thesis.

Click [\[here\]](#) for more information regarding international students.

Programme coordinator (MT&RP & PhD)

Dr Jacques du Toit
South Campus, Building 8, Room 1-4
Tel: +27 12 420 5765
Email: jacques.dutoit@up.ac.za

Faculty administrator (MT&RP)

Ms Stefanie Steenberg
Hatfield Campus, Engineering I, Room, 6-5.1
Tel: +27 12 420 5315
Email: stefanie.steenberg@up.ac.za

Faculty administrator (PhD)

Ms Dawn Taljaard
Hatfield Campus, Engineering I, Room, 6-8.1
Tel: +27 12 420 4095
Email: dawn.taljaard@up.ac.za