



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 Boetšenera,
Tikologo ya Kago le Theknolotši ya Tshedimošo

Prospectus

Town and Regional Planning 2020

Postgraduate Studies

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 knowledge base of planning. The programme culminates in the submission of a thesis and at least one, but preferably two articles 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 the Doctorate, in particular, require a significant commitment in terms of scholarly effort and personal sacrifice, and is specifically intended for graduates who are interested in pursuing a career in research or academia.

The Master's by Dissertation and the 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 access the yearbook for the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology.

Prior Learning and Minimum Requirements

Prospective students should understand research as a systematic and cyclical process in which scientific methods are used to creatively, rigorously and systematically study a specific research problem 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 Honour's or equivalent 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 mark of 70% for the research report of the preceding Honour's 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 70% for the dissertation of the preceding Master's degree.

Prospective students who obtained between 60-70% for their research report or dissertation in their preceding degree programme, can still be considered for admission, provided that 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. However, the application would first need to be thoroughly assessed and considered by the research committee prior to (1) a possible supervisor being identified, and (2) a process towards developing a research proposal being initiated. Part of the consideration will include an assessment of whether such a student will be able to engage the material, undertake the necessary research, and report on the findings on the level required of a PhD student. Students may not apply for registration for a Master's by Dissertation or a PhD without having made contact with the department or having received written notice of approval from the research committee to commence.

Students who have been admitted to the Master's by Dissertation or Doctorate may also be required to complete a course in research methodology prescribed by the research committee should their research skills turn out to be insufficient for Master's or Doctoral studies.

Research Focus Area

The research focus area of the Department of Town and Regional Planning at UP centres on what has been branded '**Spatial Revolution 4.0**'. This topic is geared towards reimagining the spatial futures of South Africa and other African countries.

The rationale behind this focus area is as follows: While there has been spatial change over the course of the past 25 years in cities on the continent, this has been ad hoc and focussed in smaller parts of cities and towns. What is urgently required is radical spatial transformation through the insurgence of both small and larger-scale interventions across the urban spectrum. There is a need to employ new ways of thinking about South African/African realities and ways in which spatial planners can respond to and plan for them alongside new emerging technologies. Due to climate change, plurality, scarcity and globalisation, South African/African cities and societies are facing new enormous and daunting urban and rural challenges. Attending to these, requires a critical approach to planning knowledge, values, language, and ethics in planning solutions. At the same time, these require a radical change in the way planning is done, and hence how planners perceive/see, talk and think about and practice spatial planning. Given this necessity, the department believes that the research it initiates, undertakes, supports and/or supervises needs to present a new spatial imagination that will assist in understanding and putting forward knowledge that will assist policy makers, communities and decision-takers in coming up with solutions to these deeply challenging conditions in urban and rural spaces. As such, the department's research focus transcends beyond a single kind of planning, methodology and paradigm, and actively seeks to diversify what passes as planning knowledge and credible planning solutions by incorporating different understandings and interpretations of research methods and knowledge.

Identifying a Suitable Topic

A topic of which the main thrust of the intended research includes applied or consultancy-type research, such as a review of policies or the 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 knowledge of and understanding of Planning on either a philosophical, theoretical or 'planning practice-based/focused' level. It is required of prospective students to find, read, engage and make sense of recent scholarly literature, to identify 'gaps' in the literature (also known as 'the existing body of knowledge') and to frame and locate their own proposed/intended study within the existing literature/body of knowledge.

Doctoral candidates, in particular, must highlight what their original contribution to the philosophical, theoretical or 'planning practice-based/focused' knowledge base of Planning will be. This may require of candidates to employ/'borrow' theoretical concepts and frameworks from other fields/disciplines and/or knowledge traditions.

Application and registration

Prospective students must contact the Departmental Research and Learning Coordinator or the Head of Department in writing to propose a topic. This written proposition must include a one-page concept note of the proposed study area that clearly (1) sets out the problem or research question to be investigated and (2) explains the need for the study based on a gap in the literature/existing knowledge base in the discipline. This proposition will be discussed by the departmental research committee that meets four times a year, i.e. mid-March, May, August and November. Should (1) the proposal have merit and (2) the student fulfil the admission requirements, the research committee will identify a supervisor for the proposed study and communicate the name of this supervisor to the student.

Once a supervisor has agreed to supervise a proposed topic, the student may submit an application for admission to the Faculty for Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT) for admission to the respective programme, be it the Master's by Dissertation or the PhD. When the application has been approved by (1) the EBIT Faculty, and (2) the departmental research committee, the student will be required to develop a full research proposal under the guidance of the supervisor allocated to the student. This may take some time, and involve a number of iterations of the proposal. Once the supervisor is satisfied with the proposal, it must be submitted by the student to the

departmental research committee for final approval. There is a time limit of six months to the finalisation of the proposal, failing which the department will suspend engagement with the student and the process will come to an end.

A student may only formally register with EBIT faculty administration once her/his proposal has been approved by the departmental research committee. Registration has to be renewed each consecutive year, failing which a student's studies will be discontinued and the student will have to reapply in the prescribed manner for readmission to the programme. Supervisors submit annual progress reports on each of their Master's by Dissertation and Doctoral students to the Head of the Department and the Dean of the EBIT Faculty in which they recommend whether a student be allowed to reregister, considering the progress of the student.

Format of Research Proposals

Proposals of between 8 and 12 pages, referenced in the Harvard style, must include the following sections:

- Background and contextualisation of the proposed study;
- Research aim and objectives;
- Research question and sub-questions;
- Preliminary literature review;
- Theoretical framework;
- Research design and methods;
- Relevance of the proposed study for the philosophical, theoretical and/or planning practice-based/focused' knowledge base of Planning, in the case of proposals for the Master's by Dissertation degree;
- Original contribution of the study to the philosophical, theoretical and/or planning practice-based/focused' knowledge base of Planning, in the case of proposals for the PhD degree;
- A high-level outline of the dissertation/thesis; and
- The proposed timeframe for undertaking and completing the study.

Fees and Funding

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

International Students

International students must identify a suitable topic within the departmental research focus area as listed above. International 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 ethical clearance for their study from a relevant body in their respective countries, in addition to obtaining ethical clearance from the EBIT Faculty's Research Ethics Committee. Students have to be on the University of Pretoria's main campus to attend contact sessions as deemed necessary by their supervisors, and to attend the oral examination and public defence of their dissertation/thesis.

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

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