



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

Town and Regional Planning 2023

Postgraduate Studies

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

Description

The Masters' degree 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 (1) a dissertation and (2) at least one article suitable for publication in a journal accredited by the South African Department of Higher Education and Training. The degree must be completed within one year (full-time) or two consecutive years (part-time) of registration.

The Doctorate degree 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 (1) a thesis and (2) 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 degree must be completed within two (full-time) or four consecutive years (part-time) of registration.

The Masters' 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 work environments demanding rigorous research for evidence-based policy making and review, or academia.

Neither the Masters' by Dissertation, nor the Doctorate, 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 Bachelors' degree in Town and Regional Planning or the Masters' degree 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 Masters' degree by Dissertation, the requirements include (1) an Honours' 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 Head of Department, and (2) a minimum mark of 65% for the research report of the preceding Honours' degree or professional four-year degree in Planning.

For the Doctorate, the requirements include (1) a Masters' degree in Planning or an associated field (similar to those listed above), and (2) a minimum of 65% for the dissertation of the preceding Masters' degree by Research and 70% for the mini-dissertation in the preceding Masters' degree by Coursework.

Prospective Masters' degree students who obtained between 60-65% 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 graduation in their previous degree 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 Head of Department. However, the application would first need to be thoroughly assessed and considered by the Head of Department, after consultation with the Departmental 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 Masters' by Dissertation or a PhD without having made contact with the Department, or having received written notice of approval from the Departmental Research Committee to commence.

Students who have been admitted to the Masters' by Dissertation or Doctorate may also be required to complete a course in research methodology prescribed by the Head of Department, after consultation with the Departmental Research Committee, should their research skills turn out to be insufficient for Masters' or Doctoral studies.

Research Focus Area

The research of the Department of Town and Regional Planning at UP focusses on spatial transformation in the Global South with a critical focus on cross-cutting themes such as decoloniality, resilience, and trans-disciplinarity, including:

- Transdisciplinary methods and evidence-based policy and planning;
- Role of planners, plans, planning legislation, governing, and partnerships in, for example, rural and regional development, mining towns, and informal housing;
- Rural-, regional-, and urban- design, for example, Water Sensitive Urban Design and inclusive urban design for African cities; and
- Resilient and regenerative regions, settlements, and public spaces.

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 Masters' or Doctoral research. The topic has to address a particular aspect of Planning in such a way that it will advance the literature base/body of 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 base/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 Head of Department, Prof Karina Landman, and/or the Departmental Research Committee Coordinator, Prof Mark Oranje, in writing to propose a topic in the form of a proposition. This written proposition must take the form of a draft proposal of the proposed study 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 (see more details on the next page). This proposition will be discussed by the Departmental Research Committee that meets six times a year.

Should the Departmental Research Committee not be satisfied with the proposition and/or the student not meet the admission requirements, it will inform the student in writing that he/she/they cannot proceed with registration.

Should the Departmental Research Committee be convinced that (1) the proposition has merit, and (2) the student fulfil the admission requirements, the Departmental Research Committee will identify a supervisor for the proposed study, and communicate the name of this supervisor to the student in writing. The student will then be given the opportunity to develop a detailed research proposal under the guidance of the allocated supervisor and should register for non-degree purposes to do so.

Once the supervisor is satisfied with the research proposal, it is submitted for approval to the Departmental Research Committee. Should the Departmental Research Committee approve the proposal, the student may submit an application for registration for the respective degree programme, be it the Masters' degree by Dissertation or the PhD, to the Faculty for Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT).

Should the Departmental Research Committee not approve the proposal, the student is informed in writing (1) of this decision, and (2) that he/she/they cannot proceed with registration.

Registration for Masters' degree by Dissertation and Doctoral studies 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 Masters' degree 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, or 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 Masters' degree by Dissertation; and
- 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;

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 Areas 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 as and where required by the Departmental Research Committee.

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

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