

The School of Public Management and Administration

The School of Public Management and Administration (SPMA) at the University of Pretoria offers rigorous and enriching PhD programmes designed to cultivate future leaders in public administration, management sciences, and public policy. These programmes are distinguished by their commitment to academic excellence, interdisciplinary collaboration, and practical relevance in addressing complex societal challenges.

Programme Structure:

The PhD specialising in Public Administration, as well as the PhD specialising in Public Policy, are structured to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of theoretical frameworks, research methodologies, and practical applications in their respective fields.

- The PhD specialising in Public Administration programme spans a minimum of two years and a maximum of three years. The first year comprises structured seminars held over 16 compulsory 2-day sessions, providing a strong foundation in key concepts and methodologies.
- The PhD specialising in Public Policy programme offers focused seminars and weekly face-to-face sessions in the first year, followed by the completion of a thesis in the second and third years, aligned with the research focus areas of the SPMA.

Which options can students apply for to get into the PhD programme? PhD

specialising in Public Administration (programme code 07267113) PhD specialising in Public Policy (programme code 07267114)

Is there a midyear intake of postgraduate students into the PhD programmes?

No, there is no midyear intake for the programmes. The school takes in students for the PhD cohort at the beginning of each academic year (applications for 2026 close at the end of September 2025).

What are the prerequisites for admission to the SPMA's PhD degrees?

Interested candidates must consult the Doctorate Regulations of the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, for the PhD admission requirements.

<https://www.up.ac.za/yearbooks/2025/EMS-faculty/rules/Faculty%20Regulations>

Additionally, candidates must possess a suitable Master's degree with an academic record reflecting an average of 65%.

How do candidates apply for admission?

The application process consists of 2 parts:

Part 1: Faculty application procedure

The period for online applications is from 01 April to 30 September for the following academic year. No late applications will be allowed. The **application process** is as follows:

Complete the application documents online before the closing date of 30 September.

- 1.1 The application should consist of the following:
- 1.2 Online application via the following link: <https://www.up.ac.za/online-application>
- 1.3 Relevant application fees must be paid at the university cashier or via electronic funds transfer (EFT).
- 1.4 Certified copies of official academic transcripts.
- 1.5 Certified copies of all qualifications obtained.
- 1.6 Full Curriculum Vitae.

Part 2: SPMA application procedure

The following documents must be submitted by 30 September to the Postgraduate Coordinator of the School of Public Management and Administration, Mrs. Odile Steyn, at odile.steyn@up.ac.za or 012 420 4198. These documents are used to shortlist applicants:

- 2.1 Departmental application form link [Click here](#)
- 2.2 Curriculum Vitae
- 2.3 Academic transcripts
- 2.4 Copies of all qualifications obtained
- 2.5 Writing sample
- 2.6 Identity document

If I apply to the PhD programme and meet the requirements, will I automatically be admitted?

Admission is not automatic, as all applications are evaluated by the PhD admissions committee based on factors such as supervisory capacity, research focus area, and academic record. Successful candidates are notified of their admission status after thorough consideration.

When will I know whether I have been admitted?

- Student Administration is responsible for the handling of postgraduate study applications, which takes about seven (7) working days from the date of application.
- Acknowledgement letters are sent to applicants via your email address shortly after your application has been received.
- The applications are then sent to the SPMA for consideration.
- After the SPMA Selection Committee has received and processed the applications, the Faculty Administration will communicate the outcome of your application to you.
- Shortlisting of candidates will take place during October. The successfully shortlisted candidates will then be informed by the School of Public Management and Administration Postgraduate Coordinator/Administrator. See below for procedures that will be followed if you are shortlisted for the programme.
- Depending on supervisory capacity a maximum total of 12 students will be enrolled for both programmes. We will not enroll more than 12 students in both programmes combined.

What procedure will take place if I am shortlisted?

- Depending on the circumstances, you might be required to complete a psychometric test- this instrument tests verbal, numerical and abstract reasoning.
- You will be required to complete a set writing task which will assess your writing ability. This will be done on campus or online on a date to be communicated.
- The final stage of the selection will be an interview with the SPMA selection panel, which will be either in person or via digital technology.
- All applicable dates will be communicated via the SPMA website. These dates can be found at: <https://www.up.ac.za/school-of-public-management-and-administration/article/42650/postgraduate>

I obtained my qualifications in a country outside of South Africa. Will this affect my application for the PhD programme?

You are welcome to apply for the programme; however, you need to have your qualifications validated by SAQA – without SAQA validation <http://www.saqa.org.za/>, your application will not be considered. It should be noted that SAQA communicates to the Higher Education Institution where the applicant obtained the qualification. It is recommended that the applicant follows up within a reasonable period with the home institution and SAQA regarding the progress. Unfortunately, neither the University nor the SPMA can follow up on behalf of the applicant, as SAQA is an independent body.

How are the fees structured?

Application fee: Consult Student Affairs at 012 420 3111 or visit the website at <https://www.up.ac.za/student-fees/article/2735935/postgraduate-tuition-fees-per-faculty>

What is the policy for termination of registration?

Should a candidate fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress in any of the years of study, the supervisor may, in consultation with Faculty Administration, provide the candidate with a warning letter indicating the seriousness of the matter. Should the candidate fail to rectify their progress and/or improve their performance, the student will have their registration terminated by the Dean on the recommendation of the Postgraduate Committee (General Regulation G45 <https://www.up.ac.za/yearbooks/2025/EMS-faculty/rules/Faculty%20Regulations>

Who are the important role-players? PhD

programme leader

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