

University of Pretoria

Master's and
Doctoral Student
Handbook 2021

Philosophy Department

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TERMINOLOGY PERTAINING TO MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL STUDY

- The research submitted by an Mphil or MA by coursework candidate is called a 'minor dissertation'. The research submitted by an MA by research only (no coursework) candidate is called a 'dissertation'. The research submitted by a PhD candidate is referred to as a 'thesis'.
- The person acting as the supervisor for a candidate enrolled for a minor dissertation, dissertation or a doctoral thesis is called a 'supervisor'. The term 'promoter' is no longer used.
- The non-examining chair is a (senior) staff member in the department, normally the Head, who coordinates the examination procedure for the minor dissertation, dissertation, or thesis. The point is to remove the supervisor from the assessment process.

STRUCTURE OF PROGRAMMES

Structure of the Research Master's Degree

- A Master's programme is on NQF level 9 and has a minimum credit value of 180. The official duration for a Master's programme is one year, but two years is normal.
- The output of a Master's by research only programme is a dissertation on a selected topic. The length of a dissertation is approximately 30 000 – 36 000 words.
- A Master's candidate must prepare and normally should submit an article to an accredited journal for possible publication.

Structure of the Doctoral Degree

- A Doctoral programme is on NQF level 10 and has a minimum credit value of 360. The official duration for a Doctoral programme is two years, but three years is normal.

- The output of a Doctoral programme comprises a thesis on a selected topic. The length of a thesis is approximately 60 000 – 90 000 words, depending on the topic.
- A Doctoral oral examination and/or doctoral seminars may be specified as part of the assessment of a doctoral programme. Currently, an oral examination is normally required to graduate.
- A Doctoral candidate must also prepare and submit an article to an accredited journal for possible publication, in order to be able to graduate. Proof of submission is required at the Doctoral level.

MAJOR PHASES OF MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL STUDIES

The Initiation Phase

- A supervisor must be allocated to a student by the end of the first three (3) months after registration at the latest, and both the student and supervisor must complete the University's memorandum of understanding.
- The supervisor should provide the Department's Research Proposal Template to the student, and also advise on technical requirements pertaining to academic writing and referencing.
- The student should formally register for the degree to qualify for research supervision. Registration fees in 2021 were approximately R7500 for South Africans. A bursary may or may not be available from the Faculty, Department, or supervisor. (See the Funding section below.)

The Proposal Phase

- Master's students have six (6) and Doctoral students nine (9) months from the beginning of the first year to complete their project proposals to the standards required by the Faculty and University policy. Students are encouraged to complete the proposal much sooner than this, to allow for extra time for revisions and, if the proposal is accepted early, during which to write.
- Research proposals need to be formally approved by the Department in terms of their quality. Normally students present their proposal at the start or end of a Departmental meeting of permanent staff along with an external reader, having shared a draft of the proposal at least a week ahead of the presentation. Students speak to central aspects of the proposal for about 10 minutes, after which the reader and staff engage with questions or suggestions. Supposing the basics of the proposal are approved, students then revise in the light of comments received.
- Research proposals are next submitted to the Faculty for approval in terms of their quality and research ethics—even if the study is purely text-based. This process should be initiated by the supervisor in consultation with the M and D Coordinator. Supervisors are formally appointed after the approval of the ethics application.

The Study Phase

- Supervisors are expected to provide feedback within approximately two (2) weeks, and students are expected to complete the revisions within about three to four (3-4) weeks.
- Although there is no formal requirement about how often to correspond or meet with a supervisor, it would be unusual if there were no contact at all for more than a month.
- Students are expected to present their research to the Department at least once a year.
- Supervisors will report periodically on the progress of each student at Departmental meetings and, once formally appointed, will record milestones on the UP online system.
- Students should participate in the intellectual life of the Department, eg, by attending colloquia and asking questions, organizing reading groups, requesting enrichment seminars, helping with undergraduate or Honours student projects, and being part of the departmental tutoring staff.
- Students should keep in mind that, when hiring, academic departments look for qualifications pertaining not merely to research, but also teaching and administration. Ensure your academic training is well rounded during your studies—speak to your supervisor for advice.

The Assessment Phase

- Three months before the student plans to submit, the student completes the 'Notice to Submit' form; this form and many others are included in the Humanities Postgraduate Guide, available [here](#). This is also the last opportunity to revise the title of the dissertation/thesis—which should happen before the 'Notice to Submit' form is completed.
- Work must be submitted for examination by 31 August to qualify for the Autumn graduation ceremony in April the following year. Late submissions will be certified/signed by the student and might cause graduation to be moved to the following ceremony. In addition, a re-registration for the next academic year may be required.
- When the dissertation or thesis is complete, the supervisor signs a form to release the study for assessment purposes. Student normally may not submit their dissertation/thesis without the supervisor's consent.
- The candidate submits the required number of copies for assessment and in the format required.
- The dissertation or thesis must include an integrity statement from the student declaring that this is original work and that ideas/words imported from others are properly acknowledged/referenced. The dissertation or thesis must also include an ethics declaration.

- All mini-dissertations, dissertations, and theses must be submitted to Turn-it-in, a plagiarism detection software, and the report must be included when the submission is given to the supervisor.
- The supervisor neither marks a dissertation/thesis, nor participates in the examination process. Instead, a non-examining chair is appointed to oversee the process, and two (for the M) or usually three (for the D) examiners with some professional and personal distance from the supervisor and student are appointed. A Doctorate must include at least one international examiner.
- The examination process can easily take six (6) weeks and often takes longer. During this time, the student should be writing up an article for submission to an accredited journal in consultation with the supervisor and preparing for the next stage of the student's (academic) career.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS

- Completion of the post-graduate degree is the primary responsibility of a post-graduate student. Any other commitments, whether work related, such as tutorial or teaching duties, and/or academic endeavours, such as conference participation or publications plans, are taken on subject to the condition that the primary responsibility to complete studies is met.
- Students may not undertake another degree while enrolled for a post-graduate degree with UP Philosophy.
- The active participation in writing workshops, seminars, and colloquia is considered part and parcel of a post-graduate student's core duties. Only in exceptional circumstances will permission be granted to be excused from these events.
- No publication – whether in an academic journal or any other printed or electronic medium such as a newspaper – may be done in the name of the Department of Philosophy or the University of Pretoria without the written consent of the Head of Department or that person's delegated substitute. All publications should specify the Department of Philosophy at UP as the main affiliation, if the research for them was produced while a student registered in it.
- Students must discuss all research related endeavours they undertake while registered at the Department of Philosophy with their supervisors. Their public work reflects on the Department, and so it is reasonable for staff to want to vet it.
- Students have a duty to check their email at least twice a week (unless special arrangements have been made). In addition, students must respond to supervisor queries, show up to meetings, and complete work at reasonable times set by the supervisor. Relatedly, students should avoid last minute requests for feedback, letters of recommendation, and the like from supervisors or staff. Be professional.
- Students must inform the supervisor in good time of any academic or administrative difficulties to do with their studies. Students must write a formal letter to the Head of

Department if they need to suspend studies for reasons of health, finance, change of employment, domestic difficulties, etc.

- Students must do extra readings, attend any research methodology discussions, sit in on courses, participate in departmental colloquia, seminars, conferences, etc, if stipulated by the supervisor as something needed for a successful research project.
- Students take responsibility for writing, editing, and proofreading the dissertation or thesis. Supervisors should advise students that their grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, spacing, etc need attention, but supervisors are not to be considered language instructors or copyeditors. If the English is too poor to submit for examination, and if a student is unprepared to make corrections, the supervisor may require the student to hire a copyeditor at the student's expense.

FUNDING

- Fees are listed [here](#), and are approximately R19,000 to R20,500 per year for South Africans. There are additional fees for international students, information about which is [here](#).
- Your supervisor is not responsible for paying for your degree.
- Funding opportunities are listed [here](#) and [here](#). Regarding the UP bursaries, which at best cover your fees, it is not an application process, but a nomination process that is driven by budget availability. Ensure you read the conditions to understand the criteria applied. (Transferring students to UP, ensure that your cumulative GPA score is captured by the Faculty academic administration staff at time of registration.)
- If the departmental budget so allows, the Department of Philosophy endeavours to provide partial financial support towards fees; it could almost never pay for all of a student's fees. First approach your supervisor to see whether s/he can provide support; if not, then approach the Head for assistance from the Department.
- If the budget so allows, the Department of Philosophy also endeavours to support participation in academic conferences relevant to student research. Normally, such support would be contingent on (1) demonstrating sufficient progress towards the timely completion of studies, (2) the supervisor having approved the abstract and paper to be presented, and (3) the student agreeing to submit the conference paper to an accredited journal, with the Department of Philosophy noted as affiliation, within three (3) months of the presentation. Support is normally no more than R10 000 per international conference per candidate, around R4000 for a national conference, and only in very exceptional circumstances (and depending on availability of funding) would the department fund more than one conference presentation per year. The understanding is that candidates who receive funding for conference participation would attend the full conference for which they get funding, and not only their own presentation, as the goal is for postgraduates to get to know the philosophical community in general and persons who work in their area of interests in particular.

- All applications for outside bursaries, such as the NRF scholarships, usually must meet an internal deadline that is a couple weeks earlier than the NRF's. All research proposals in such applications must have been approved by the relevant supervisor, supposing the work would be done at UP.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

- The University subscribes to an 'escalation' policy, meaning that you begin with your supervisor and then work your way up incrementally if there is no satisfaction.
- Any problems should first and foremost be discussed between student and supervisor. A relationship of mutual respect and trust must be maintained between student and supervisor at all times.
- If no resolution is reached, the student or supervisor should next consult the M and D Coordinator in an attempt to address the problem.
- If necessary, the M and D Coordinator would then refer the problem to the Head of Department (unless, of course, the grievance is with the Head).
- If the problem persists, a panel comprised of members of the Department may be compiled to assist with the problem/conflict resolution. Usually only after such an attempt would the issue go to the Deanery.

POLICY DOCUMENTS

- **Major University Policies and Regulations:** <https://www.up.ac.za/article/2754069/up-policies-and-other-important->
- **Faculty of Humanities Postgraduate Guide:** <https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/9/HumPdf%20docs/2018-humanities-postgrad-guide.zp156432.pdf>
- **Plagiarism Policy:** https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/409/ZP_Files/rt366_18-hiv-and-aids-policy.zp166026.pdf
- **Unfair Discrimination Based on Race:** <https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/409/unfair-discrimination-on-the-basis-of-race.zp87166.pdf>
- **General Rules and Regulations:** https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/360/Documents/fact-finder_rules-and-regulations-2018-pdf-11-11.12.2017.zp137172.pdf
- **Disciplinary Code of Conduct:** <https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/409/Webcenter%20Content/disciplinary-code-students-2017.zp119718.pdf>

- **Personal Relationships between Staff and Students:** <https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/409/personal-relationships-between-employees-and-students.zp84967.pdf>
- **Sexual Harassment:** <https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/409/code-of-conduct-on-the-handling-of-sexual-harrasment.zp85249.pdf>
- **Social Media Policy:** <https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/409/social-media-policy.zp84971.pdf>
- **HIV and AIDS Policy:** https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/409/ZP_Files/rt366_18-hiv-and-aids-policy.zp166026.pdf