



## GUIDELINES FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL STUDIES 2019

### CONSIDERING POSTGRADUATE STUDIES?

#### 1. EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES

- Different universities offer different programmes that cater for different needs. Explore all possibilities.
- Before committing yourself, discuss your intended studies with a senior member of the Department.
- Since postgraduate studies involve research, identify and explore a research interest in advance.
- We strongly recommend that you consider building on your honours research essay if a Masters applicant or a Masters dissertation if planning to apply for PhD. This is because you know the literature in the theme well enough to identify a gap, an inadequacy or a lacuna in research as the basis of your new research problem.
- Success depends on having the time for and commitment to postgraduate studies. It is about consciously setting aside time daily or at least weekly on PhD-related work.

#### 2. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- *Why postgraduate studies?* Make sure that you pursue postgraduate studies because you want to and have found an area of research you want to explore, [preferably arising from the conclusions of your previous postgraduate research study.
- *Do you have sufficient time for postgraduate studies?* Full-time master's and doctoral programmes are based on a 45-week academic year, i.e. 1 800 hours per year between mid-January and mid-December. Part-time studies require working after hours. This means you have to dedicate specific time each week for Masters or Doctoral research work.
- *What may compromise the successful completion of your studies?* Poor preparation; changing your topic after starting; weak interface with your mentor; weak interaction with other research students; poor commitment to research; not taking opportunities like research retreats & workshops etc.
- *How long will the studies take?* Masters-by-research students must complete their studies within two years and doctoral students in three years. In extremely exceptional circumstances, the department will support an application for a one year extension
- *Are there short cuts?* There are no short cuts. Postgraduate studies are demanding and require in-depth knowledge, extensive reading, theoretical engagement, intellectual independence, critical thinking, insight, independent research and the ability to document your findings – and often repeating this process.
- *Is residency essential?* Course masters require you to attend all contact sessions. Masters-by-research and doctoral students are required to have regular supervision meetings with their mentors. A record of this must be kept.
- *Can I transfer my on-going research study?* The Department will consider an application for a transfer of a study in exceptional cases. In such cases, we will assess the availability of a supervisor, the feasibility of the study, the student performance record at current university, and the proficiency of the research student. The student must discuss with the HoD before applying to their current university and to UP for the transfer of studies.
- *Is relevant experience and professional expertise in the area of research considered during admission?* Such expertise is considered as additional information after the prospective student has satisfied the regular admission requirements.
- *What if I want to do PhD by publications?* The Department accepts plans to conduct PhD via publications subject to the following conditions: the proposal makes this explicit and outlines how this will be achieved; such proposal is assessed and approved by the postgraduate committee; the ability to get three publication units (articles or chapters or papers) published in the duration of study (one of these may be recorded as accepted for publication at the point of examination); and ability to assemble these and add an organising chapter for the submission of the docket for examination.

### GETTING STARTED

#### 3. ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

The Department of Political Sciences offers the following master's and doctoral programmes:

- **PhD (International Relations), PhD (Political Science) and PhD (Politics):** These are **thesis** based research degrees and may require an oral defence of the thesis as part of the examination process. At the end of the examination process, PhD students are required to show proof that a journal article or equivalent publication has been accepted by an accredited publisher. All inquiries on PhD studies must be sent to Siphamandla Zondi at [Siphamandla.zondi@up.ac.za](mailto:Siphamandla.zondi@up.ac.za).
- **MA (International Relations) or MA (Political Science) based on research:** These are **dissertation** based research degrees. To graduate students have to show that they have successfully submitted an article or equivalent publication to an accredited publisher. All inquiries on PhD studies must be sent to Siphamandla Zondi at [Siphamandla.zondi@up.ac.za](mailto:Siphamandla.zondi@up.ac.za).
- **MA (International Relations) or MA (Political Science) based on coursework: (these programmes are currently unavailable).**
- **MA (Diplomatic Studies) and MA (Security Studies):** These structured programmes include a **coursework component** (66,6%) and a **mini-dissertation or research relevant output** (33,3%) The total **research component** (50%) includes the research methodology module. For further details including modules on offer, please inquire with the programme managers (Roland Henwood for M Security Studies at [roland.henwood@up.ac.za](mailto:roland.henwood@up.ac.za) or Anthony Bizos for MA Diplomatic Studies at [Anthony.bizos@up.ac.za](mailto:Anthony.bizos@up.ac.za)

#### 4. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

##### 4.1 Formal requirements

- **PhD (International Relations), PhD (Political Science) or PhD (Politics):** A master's degree with specialisation in the Political Sciences and cognate areas of study. An average of 70% is required in this degree. In the case of a coursework master's degree, the research component must comprise at least 50% of the degree, along with a minimum mark of 70% for this component. In addition, an approved research proposal is required.
- **Research MA (International Relations) or MA (Political Science):** An honours degree with specialisation in the Political Sciences and cognate areas of study. An average of 70% is required in this degree. In addition, an approved research proposal is required.
- **Coursework MA (International Relations) or MA (Political Science):** **Currently suspended.**
- **Coursework MA (Diplomatic Studies) or MA (Security Studies):** An honours degree in Political Sciences or directly related fields. An average of 65% is required for admission to this degree.
- **Important notice:** An acceptable level of proficiency in English is required. To ensure entry level compliance, prospective students may also be assessed and/or required to do additional work/modules.

##### 4.2 Additional requirements

- Prospective students with a **foreign** entry-level qualification obtained at a non-South African tertiary institution must have their qualifications evaluated and certified by the **Centre for the Evaluation of Educational Qualifications** (CEEQ) at the **South African Qualifications Authority** (SAQA) (see <http://www.saga.org.za>) **prior** to applying for admission. Applications without the SAQA accreditation are not considered.
- **Language proficiency:** Prospective students with non-English language **foreign** entry-level qualifications **must** complete a language proficiency test **prior** to applying for admission. Other applicants **may** be required to complete the test. The following tests are acceptable: Local applicants – the Test of Academic Literacy for Postgraduate Students (TALPS) of the University of Pretoria. This test is written at the University of Pretoria and a small fee is payable in advance. Direct enquiries to the Unit for Academic Literacy at (+27 12) 420-4834/2334. You can also take an Online Test at <http://www.icelda.sun.ac.za>. Applicants unable to write TALPS at the University of Pretoria or online – either the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test (at <http://www.ielts.org>) or the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (at <http://www.ets.org>).
- The postgraduate programmes are **discipline specific** (or **discipline related** in the case of the MDIPS/MSS). If the entry level degree is not discipline specific or in a **directly** related field of specialisation, the Department decides which field of specialisation and degree programme is appropriate. If an MDIPS/MSS application is based on a related university degree and sufficient relevant work experience, attach a one page CV in support.

- Admission may be subject to a formal **entrance assessment** process including a written exercise and oral presentations to a Departmental postgraduate panel. Applicants that qualify on the basis of documentation will be notified in advance of the entrance assessment requirements.
4. When making an online application, upload a 2-page draft research proposal outlining in brief your proposed study's rationale, the research problem arising from a literature survey, research questions, and methodological approach to the research. It must be evident already that you are conversant with the literature in the area of study. No application will be considered if it is not accompanied by a credible draft proposal. (see the *Appendix A*).
- Admissions for the research degrees are furthermore subject to:
    - the **feasibility** of the intended research;
    - the **academic research competence** of the prospective candidate and
    - the **availability** of a supervisor with the specialised knowledge and capacity to provide supervision.

## 5. INFORMATION

- Prospective students must consult the relevant university and faculty yearbooks, namely the General Regulations of the University of Pretoria and the postgraduate yearbook of the Faculty of Humanities (at <http://www.up.ac.za>). Additional academic information can be obtained from the Programme Manager, listed in the yearbook.
- Information on or assistance with non-academic matters including fees is provided by the Client Service Centre (CSC) (Tel: 012-4203111 or [csc@up.ac.za](mailto:csc@up.ac.za)) and/or by faculty Student Administration (and **not** by this department).
- Foreign students must also contact the university's International Department for assistance.
- If library access is required, contact the Department of Library Services (<http://www.library.up.ac.za>).

## 6. APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

- The closing date for **applications** is end-September. Pending outstanding documentation, the Department may consider applications until the end of the academic year prior to admission (early-December). Late applications are, as a rule, not considered.
- Prospective postgraduate students have to apply for admission. Online applications are made on the UP-website (<http://www.up.ac.za>). Alternatively, contact Student Administration of the Faculty of Humanities or the Client Service Centre (CSC) (**not** this department). Incomplete applications are referred back to applicants. Direct all enquiries regarding submitted applications to faculty student administration (and **not** to this department).
- Prior to application, prospective students may approach the Head of Department (or the Programme Manager) to explore the possibilities of postgraduate studies. In the event, provide supporting documentation.
- The Head (or Acting Head) of Department approves admission in consultation with the Postgraduate Committee of the Department. No other staff member can approve or authorise admission.

## COMMENCEMENT AND COMPLETION OF STUDIES

## 7. REGISTRATION AND RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION

- The academic year commences in January and ends in December. Coursework students register at faculty student administration (**not** at this department) by end-February and research students by end-March. Students register for one year of study and must renew their registration for each subsequent academic year (subject to satisfactory progress). The registration or renewal of registration form is signed by the Head (or Acting Head) of Department.
- Coursework students only register for coursework modules in their first semester (in the case of full-time students). Thereafter, they register for the mini-dissertation and finalise the required research proposal under guidance of the promotor appointed by the Department.
- If the required research output has not been submitted within the examination cycle and/or the result (including that of the defence of the thesis in the case of doctoral students) has not been finalised by mid-January, the student has to renew registration and pay for another academic year.
- If studies are not completed within the specified time and depending on sufficient progress, an extension and further renewal of registration may be granted. In this case the student has to **apply** for extension at Student Administration, which has to be recommended by the Head of Department in conjunction with the supervisor, **before renewal of registration**. The mere intention to make progress and the probability of completion are not sufficient grounds for granting extension.

- Students will only receive supervision on the provision of proof of registration / renewal of registration.
- Registration is continuous and a student may not interrupt his/her studies. Should an interruption occur – also considering that a failure to renew registration annually is regarded as an interruption – the student will upon renewal of registration be liable for the full tuition fees applicable to the degree.
- A student may terminate his/her registration at any time. This is done at Student Administration (and **not** at this department). In the event, notify the supervisor.

## 8. THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND SUPERVISION

- After registration, the Head (or Acting Head) of Department appoints a supervisor for the research component and a Memorandum of Understanding is signed between you and the supervisor.
- The research proposal for MA-research degree must be completed by June of the first year of registration and PhD proposal must be submitted for examination by a postgraduate committee by August of the first year. Research proposals for MA by dissertation are an output of the research methodology module whose due dates will be announced in class.
- Approved proposal have to submitted online via the RIMS process on <https://rims.up.ac.za> for ethical clearance, which must be granted before field research of any kind can begin. No data gathering is allowed without such a written letter of ethical clearance by the faculty's research ethics committee.
- Only on completion of the required coursework modules do the MA Diplomatic Studies / MA Security Studies students register for the mini-dissertation and have their proposals approved by the Departmental postgraduate committee. The field research for these degrees too is subject to the successful application for ethical clearance via the online portal (RIMS).
- The supervisor will inform the student about all matters and requirements relating to the submission of the research proposal, the *Memorandum of Understanding*, the supervision process, and the completion, submission and examination of the research document. If unclear, the student must speak to their supervisor.

## 9. LENGTH OF THE RESEARCH DOCUMENT

Unless otherwise specified in the postgraduate yearbook of the Faculty of Humanities, the recommended length to the research document (main body only) is:

- **Mini-dissertation (coursework master's degree):** 16 000 – 19 000 words (50-60 pages)
- **Dissertation (research master's degree):** 30 000 – 36 000 words (100-120 pages)
- **Thesis:** 60 000 – 90 000 (200-250 pages)

Plan your research in accordance with and stay within these parameters. In the case of non-compliance, the supervisor may return a manuscript for revision and will only accept it once it complies with the norm.

### POSTGRADUATE SUPPORT

Postgraduate study can be lonely and treacherous journey, but it does not have to be thanks to the Postgraduate Forum, a platform where graduate students meet, discuss, make presentations and get help with their studies. All registered M&D students are expected to sign up in order to receive correspondence on activities and vital information. It is coordinated by Dr Cori Wielenga.

Please attend and present research seminars scheduled from time to time in order to sharpen your analytical skills.

### GENERAL ENQUIRIES

On the Forum and general inquiries, please contact Postgraduate Administrator, Ms Bongiwe Cwayi, at [bongiwe.cwayi@up.ac.za](mailto:bongiwe.cwayi@up.ac.za) Tel. +27 012 4202034

## APPENDIX A: GUIDELINES FOR THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

### 1. NATURE AND SCOPE OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

The **recommended book** on postgraduate research, including the research proposal, is:

- Mouton, J. 2001. *How to succeed in your master's and doctoral studies: A South African guide and resource book*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Students have to show that they have engaged seriously with the appropriate **methodology literature** in putting together the proposal before it can be approved.

### 2. LIBRARY FACILITIES

Registered students have full access to the university's library facilities. Prospective students can obtain permission and pay a fee to use the library facilities. The subject librarian, Ms Alett Nell, is able to give assistance with literature and database searches, constructing your library page, information of research training, and information on referencing aids.

### 3. FORMAT OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The research proposal must be **typed** (12 pitch) at **1½ spacing** on **A4 format paper**. Its recommended **length** (*Title page, Abstract, Bibliography and Ethics Form* excluded) is:

- **Coursework Master's Mini-dissertation: 1 500 – 2 400 words (5-6 pages)**
- **Research Master's Dissertation: 2 400 – 3 600 words (8-10 pages)**
- **Doctoral Thesis: 3 600 – 5 400 words (12-15 pages)**
- **Keep to** the length restrictions and **comply** with all language and technical requirements.

### 4. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The research proposal provides an indication of your ability to undertake postgraduate studies incorporating a feasible research component, including reporting on it. More specifically, it 'frames' the study by delineating its nature, focus and scope. As such, the research proposal indicates:

- **What** the research is about.
- **Why** the research will be done.
- **How** the research will be done.
- The **subject matter and sources** of the research.

### 5. STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

In principle the research proposal **should** cover the following aspects (use these headings in your proposal):

#### ***Title page with personal details***

- Student number (if available)
- Full first names and surname
- Degree programme
- Postal address
- Contact particulars: E-mail address (if available); telephone number(s); and/or fax number(s)
- Date of submission

#### **1. Topic**

- Formulate a **provisional title** for the mini-dissertation, dissertation or thesis.  
*The purpose is to formulate a concise but descriptive **working title**. A main and a subtitle may be used. If necessary, indicate the time-span of the topic. Preferably, do not phrase your title in a question form.*

#### **2. Abstract (excluded from the final version submitted to faculty)**

- Provide a **brief summary** (250-300 words) of the planned research.
- The purpose of this overview is to summarise the research proposal by indicating the rationale, problem, argument/thesis, methodology and structure of the research. It is also included in the application for ethical clearance.

#### **3. Introduction to Research theme/Phenomenon**

- Identify the research theme by **contextualising, stating the purpose** of and **justifying** the study.

- The purpose of this section is to indicate **what** the research is about and **why** it is undertaken. This section contextualises the topic by indicating the origins of / reasons for the research; the background to the research; where the research field fits into the discipline; the **purpose statement** (aim of the study) and the academic and practical relevance of the research. **Note:** In the case of a doctoral **thesis**, also indicate the **originality and contribution** of the research. **Limit the length** of this section to essentials. Students tend to ‘over-elaborate’ by including unnecessary descriptive information.

#### 4. **Literature review**

- The literature study provides a **provisional** indication and assessment of mainly the published **literature**, including previous and related **research** on the topic. Within the length restrictions, the following is required: for a mini-dissertation, a limited literature overview; for a dissertation, a detailed study of theoretical contributions and primary sources; for a thesis, a comprehensive, definitive and critical literature study.
- The purpose of this section is to provide an **indication** of literature and research material on the topic, showing that you are sufficiently familiar with the most recent contributions; that you are aware of previous and related research: that you have developed initial ideas about the research; that you understand the conceptual, theoretical and methodological foundations of the research; and that there is a niche (gap) for your research. This helps you to develop an **academic argument** about why the topic matters and why the proposed approach to the study is appropriate and rigorous, and therefore is the basis for your statement on the research problem below. Read up on different types of literature review and justify your choice.

#### 5. **Theoretical or conceptual framework**

- A theoretical framework or a conceptual framework serves as a structure to guide, support and rationalize how you approach the study’s problem statement, study objectives, research questions. It can take the form of a collection of related concepts or theoretical statements or claims that present a systematic view of a subject of study for purposes of explaining or predicting it. It can be based on single or a combination of theories or merely theoretical concepts derived from one or a number of theories. The latter is often called a conceptual framework.
- Present a theoretical framework on the basis of a thorough reading of theory literature in search of what is relevant and useful in your study and justify how this helps to “frame” the study.
- It is important for the student to have a reasoned position on the research problem at hand and this can come from commitment to a justifiable theoretical paradigm of choice

#### 6. **Research problem**

- Formulate a **research problem**, i.e. problematise the topic by formulating it as a problem to be solved.
- Formulate a **research argument**, i.e. an explicit **thesis statement** (argument or proposition) that you are going to defend.
- The purpose of this section is to indicate **what** the research is about and **to what end**. **Firstly**, it involves stating and rationalising a ‘**research puzzle**’ or problem that interests you and that you ‘want to solve’. This inspires a **what?** and/or a **why? question** that in turn can be **historical, exploratory, descriptive, causal, correlation, predictive** and/or **evaluative**.
- **Finally**, conclude by **demarcating** the research problem using criteria such as the key **concepts**, the **object** (or unit of analysis), and the **scope** of the study.
- Clearly state the **thesis** (or **defendable argument**) of your research. Although not all research writing is argumentative, the thesis draws attention to what you want to resolve or prove.
- Alternatively, formulate **propositions** or **hypotheses** as provisional answers to the research questions.
- The formulation and demarcation of the research problem should be clear since it forms the **critical core** of your research proposal.

#### 7. **Research question**

- Formulate a **research question**, i.e. a meaningful question inspired by the research problem. Sub-questions may be used.
- Transform the research problem outlined above into a **research question** the main question that the study will seek to address. This does not entail rephrasing the working title in question form but formulating a more incisive question that embodies the ‘research puzzle behind the topic’. Avoid too many questions since you have to answer all the questions that you pose. Two to four sub-questions are sufficient.

## 8. Research aim and objectives

- Spell out the study **aim**, that which which the study will seek to do. This is further broken down in a list of specific objectives of the study that often give structure of the research from beginning to end. Often objectives come from breaking down the aim into components to be pursued in the study. Each objectives must thought through, so they should be sufficient for the study.

## 9. Research Methodology

- Select and describe an appropriate **research design**.
- Indicate your methodological approach, which may encompass a (**theoretical**) approach
- Justify the selection of data collection **methods** including details on the types of data to be relied upon
- In the case of **primary research**, specify the particulars of sampling, number and type of respondents, research techniques (attach the questionnaires and interview questions as an appendix); as well as the method(s) of data processing and data analysis. *Besides indicating if the study is qualitative or quantitative, the purpose of the **research design** is to indicate what **type of study** will be done (e.g. a critical literature study, a case study, a comparative study, an empirical survey based study, etc.) and what kind of **evidence** (or data) will be used. If not survey research, it is essential to indicate the most important and recent primary and secondary data sources. The data sources must be available in the public domain, accessible and in a language that you understand. Also, indicate whether experts in the field will be interviewed. The purpose of the **approach(es) and method(s) of research** is to indicate your research process and the kind of tools and procedures you will use, namely **how** you will do the research.*
- Outline the study **delimitation**, which is scope of research, indicating what it covers and what it does not cover. This helps the reader and examiners know the parameters of the study and how the research student drew up the “boundaries” of the study.
- Be transparent about the study **limitations**, outlining what the researcher is unable to do which is crucial for the study and how the researcher aims to mitigate for such weaknesses. For instance, inability to interview certain informants or access certain crucial data sources must be declared.

## 10. The structure of the research

- Outline the **structure** of the mini-dissertation, dissertation or thesis – chapter-by-chapter. Provide each chapter with an appropriate title and give a brief description of its content. The number of chapters will depend on the level of study and the recommended length of the research document.
- The purpose of this section is to underline the need for the student to show that they have planned the **overall structure** of the research document beforehand. As a planning and organising device, this section provides coherence to your study by indicating its ‘line of reasoning’, execution and documentation. Do not merely number the chapters, but provide each with a proper working title, followed by a brief description of its aim, purpose and content.

## 11. Bibliography

- The bibliography (using one of the common referencing style **consistently**) **only** includes the sources actually referenced or cited in this research proposal. It does not include any additional sources. List **ONLY** the sources used and list them in alphabetical order.

## 12. Study timelines

- The student must provide an indicate timeline, showing anticipated completion of various milestones in the study, beginning with the date for the anticipated approval of the proposal (discussed with the supervisor), ethical clearance, fieldwork or literature study, the submission of drafts of each chapter in some sequence agreed with supervisor, submission of articles for publication, and submission of exam copy.

## 13. Ethical clearance and documentation

- **Ethical** considerations must be explained. This includes declaring elements of the research that will have ethical implications in terms of the university’s research ethics policy (which must be read) and making commitments to observe basic ethical principles in research.
- The research proposal must be accompanied by the full set of required **forms and documentation**. This includes the clearance form; institutional consent if required; and if live participants are used, a letter of introduction, an individual consent form, a respondent or interviewee schedule, and the questionnaire or structured / unstructured interview questions that will be used.

## APPENDIX B: GENERIC ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

**A research proposal should provide a concise but sufficiently detailed plan that outlines the way in which a clearly stated research problem will be addressed.**

Proposals are submitted at least a week ahead of the sitting of the departmental postgraduate committee, which provides a detailed assessment and outcome to the supervisor in the case of MA students and to the student directly in the case of PhD students. PhD students have an opportunity to engage the committee of its comments.

**To be approved, the research proposal should meet the following criteria:**

1. The sound grasp and convincing presentation of the research problem including in the form of a **logical and coherent argument**.
2. Sufficient **survey** and **engagement** with the literature and academic debates on the theme of study.
3. **Feasibility** of proposed research within the duration allowed, which includes size, kind of data required, and complexity of study as well as the demonstrable competence of the research student
4. Evidence of potential **innovation / contribution** to the field of study:
  - a. Originality is not an absolute requirement for a master's dissertation (or mini-dissertation); the latter should not, however, merely regurgitate or collate existing insights. Research at master's level should demonstrate the candidate's ability to work independently.
  - b. Doctoral studies should show evidence of originality and the precise nature of the contribution to the field should be stated explicitly in the research proposal.
5. Sound understanding of the research process and demonstration of advanced research skills.

### TIME-LINE FOR SUBMISSION, EXAMINATION AND GRADUATION

<b>Submission of the complete draft manuscript (to the supervisor)</b>	<b>Submission of the examination copies (to Student Administration)</b>	<b>Finalisation of results (by faculty) – pending changes, corrections, or resubmission</b>	<b>Graduation ceremony</b>
<b>Before or by end of May</b>	<b>Before or by end of August</b>	<b>Before or by mid-January</b>	<b>Autumn (April)</b>
<b>Before or by end of January</b>	<b>Before or by end of April</b>	<b>Before or by mid-July</b>	<b>Spring (September)</b>