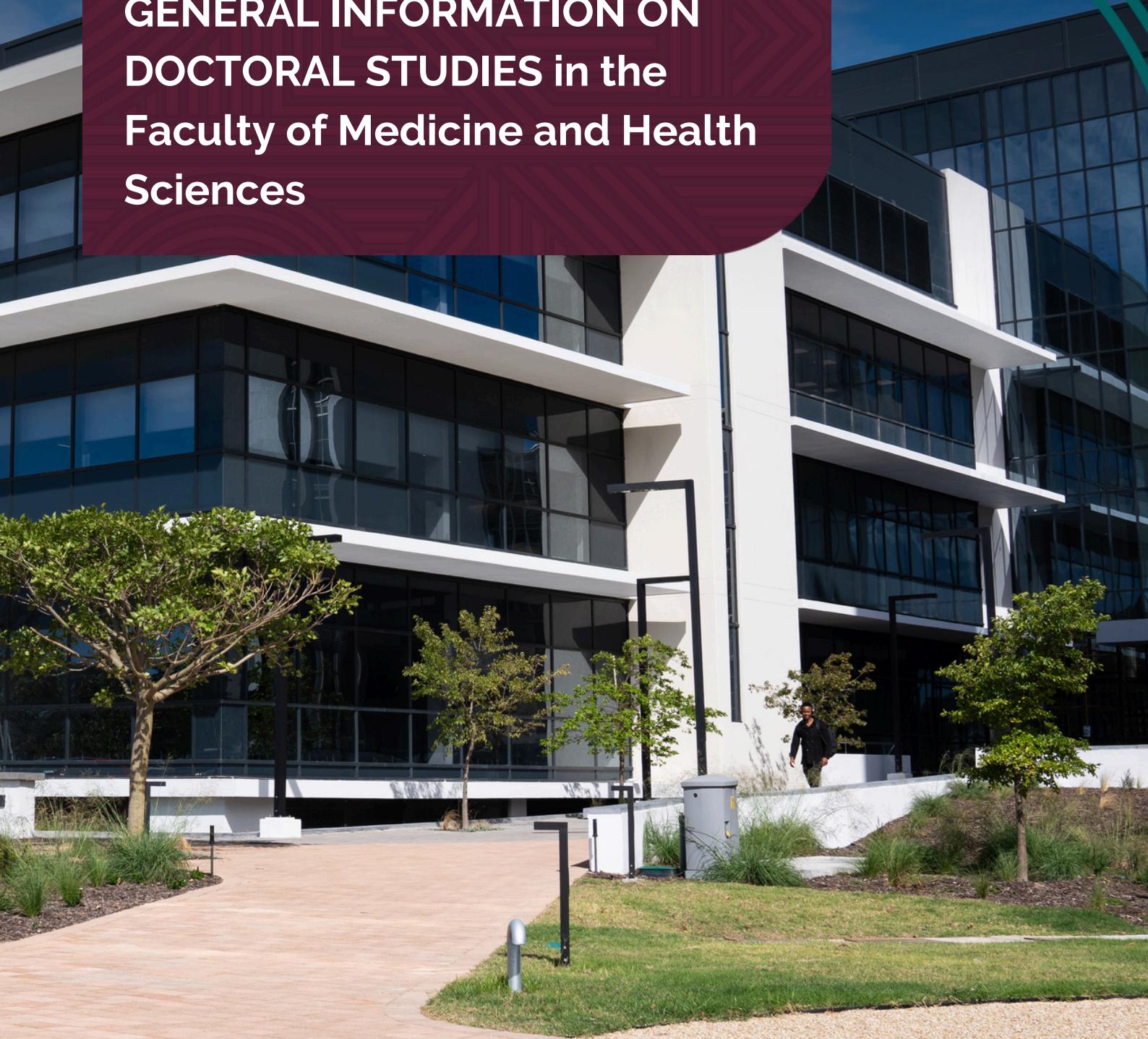




Stellenbosch
UNIVERSITY
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Medicine and Health Sciences
EyeNzululwazi ngezoNyango neMpilo
Geneeskunde en Gesondheidswetenskappe

GENERAL INFORMATION ON DOCTORAL STUDIES in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences



**GENERAL INFORMATION ON
DOCTORAL STUDIES
in the
Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
Stellenbosch University**

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Please ensure that you are using the latest version of this document, as published [at this link](#).



A. INTRODUCTION TO DOCTORAL STUDIES

1. The degree of Doctor of Philosophy is governed by the stipulations of the [Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework](#) (HEQSF), which remain subject to interim changes, including the possible discontinuation of qualifications.
2. The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) Doctoral Office (referred to as the Tygerberg Doctoral Office) serves as a central contact point for enquiries about the doctoral programme, degrees on offer and all aspects of the doctoral research process, from selection to submission. The Tygerberg Doctoral Office website at www.su.ac.za/en/faculties/medicine/doctoral-office links directly to the formal provisions governing doctorates:
 - 2.1 those provided under "Postgraduate Qualifications" in Part 1 (General) of the [Stellenbosch University \(SU\) Yearbook](#); and
 - 2.2 those provided in the [Faculty Yearbook](#) (Part 12 of the SU Yearbook).
3. A prospective candidate can apply for the PhD in one of two ways:
 - 3.1 Standard application - The candidate applies online via the SUNStudent platform at <http://student.sun.ac.za/signup/> to be admitted to the programme after having completed a previous qualification.
 - 3.2 Conversion (also called upgrade) from master's by thesis to PhD - The supervisor applies via the Committee for Postgraduate Research (CPR), for final approval by Senate, for a registered SU student's conversion from a 100% research master's degree to a PhD. This option is advisable only if the candidate will be able to submit the dissertation for examination within one to two years from having registered for the PhD. Otherwise, it would be preferable to complete the master's degree first.
4. PhDs are awarded in recognition of high-quality, original research that makes a significant contribution to the field of study. The dissertation must reflect original research on one central, cohesive topic or theme. Candidates are not allowed to submit for this purpose research that they had submitted previously to any university with a view to obtaining a degree.
5. The focus and quality of the research and reporting remain the most important aspects, regardless of the format in which the dissertation is submitted.
6. Doctorates are assessed in one of three formats:
 - 6.1 a conventional dissertation,
 - 6.2 by publication, or
 - 6.3 in hybrid format.The details of these formats are covered in section K of this document.
7. Irrespective of the dissertation format, all candidates must possess the following:
 - 7.1 sufficient general and applied knowledge;
 - 7.2 familiarity with scientific literature specific to the field of research;
 - 7.3 the expertise to recognise problem areas, identify research topics and develop protocols;
 - 7.4 technical-laboratory, clinical and/or public health skills, as appropriate to the study;
 - 7.5 sufficient written and oral communication skills; and
 - 7.6 domain-appropriate professional development.
8. Comprehensive information on the doctoral journey is provided on the [Tygerberg Doctoral Office website](#).
9. In the case of joint degrees between SU and another institution, this document applies alongside the individual agreement governing the registration, until directly before the examination process.
 - 9.1 A joint degree may not commence before a formal agreement has been reached between SU and the other institution. Permission for such an agreement must be sought from the Director: SU Postgraduate Office.
 - 9.2 The web page of the [SU Postgraduate Office](#) has all the details.
 - 9.3 Note that the standard examination processes of the two institutions must be structured according to the specifications of the formal agreement.
 - 9.4 An examination coordination meeting must be arranged by contacting the Director: SU Postgraduate Office and the Head: Tygerberg Doctoral Office well before examiners must be nominated.
10. Regarding senior doctoral degrees, please refer to the separate guidelines regarding such degrees.

B. APPLICATION AND SELECTION

Enquiries from prospective doctoral students

Prospective doctoral students usually contact the FMHS academic environments, the Tygerberg Doctoral Office or Client Services with enquiries. Students are encouraged to reach out to a potential supervisor to establish whether a research idea is viable for supervision within the environment. Once a student has an informal indication that there may be a good fit, it is critical that the application be submitted online at <http://student.sun.ac.za/signup/>. This step must not be delayed until the proposal stage.

Stellenbosch University online application

Applications for selection for the doctoral programme may be submitted at any time during the academic year. Selection timelines differ, as some environments evaluate applications only quarterly or twice a year.

As **step one**, prospective doctoral candidates apply online and upload the following:

- certified degree certificates and transcripts,
- certified identity document or passport,
- statement of research interest (a brief, referenced draft proposal of 2 to 3 pages),
- motivation letter and CV, and
- (in most cases) proof of willing supervisor.

Prospective students may apply for a doctorate at any time. Applicants must check the application portal carefully to ensure that they have uploaded all required documents. Applicants must allow at least six weeks for the application process because of the regulatory requirement that the documents be verified.

Note: Admission is competitive, and selections are capped according to supervision capacity. Therefore, application does not guarantee placement in a PhD programme.

Selection process

- The SU Central Admissions Office verifies that the correct documents were uploaded.
- The SU Postgraduate Office evaluates the comparability of foreign qualifications with SA standards.
- Applications marked as 'reviewed' on SUNStudent are ready for evaluation by the academic environment.

Centre for Academic Administration (Tygerberg campus) and FMHS academic environment

Selection rests with the relevant academic environment and is processed by the Centre for Academic Administration (Tygerberg campus). Each academic environment selects the most suitable applicants for admission to the programme with reference to the merits of the applications received and the supervision capacity available. The full process involves the following actions:

- choosing a staff member to monitor new applications (the SUNStudent administrator) and download the relevant documents for consideration by the environment;
- reviewing the application documents and allocating supervisors for suitable applicants (as long as one internal staff member is appointed as supervisor or co-supervisor, retired staff, postdoctoral candidates or external supervisors may be appointed);
- the academic environment informs the [Centre for Academic Administration, Tygerberg campus](#), regarding each applicant whether they have been selected or not; and
- The Centre for Academic Administration (Tygerberg campus) issuing a final offer, which the applicant must accept formally by uploading the SU contract.

Entry into the doctoral programme

Tygerberg Doctoral Office

Once the student has formally accepted placement and uploaded a contract, the student liaises with the [Tygerberg Doctoral Office](#). The Office clarifies expectations and encourages project management of the research journey from first selection up to submission for examination, providing research and general support.

Centre for Academic Administration (Tygerberg campus)

The Centre for Academic Administration (Tygerberg campus) first registers all candidates – including international students – for the PhD proposal development phase. (The only exceptions are candidates whose conversion from master's to PhD has been approved by Senate, and those who must provide proof of PhD registration for purposes of a bursary already allocated to them.)

C. ROUTES OF ADMISSION

Please note the differences in detail pertaining to each route of admission.

Standard admission (Option 1)

- The prospective student applies online to start PhD studies after having completed a relevant previous degree.
- The following documents are required: ID, all degree certificates, full academic record, up-to-date CV, and statement of research interest (short proposal of 2 to 3 pages, referenced).
- The relevant academic environment's SUNStudent administrator informs the Faculty Officer at the Centre for Academic Administration (Tygerberg campus) whether the applicant has been selected or not.
- Selected applicants must contact the Tygerberg Doctoral Office as soon as possible for guidance on expectations, documents and allocation of a CPR representative.
- The candidate is registered as special (or 'occasional') student for a doctoral preparatory year.
- Applicable to all PhDs: The formal review of a PhD proposal is completed ideally within six months of registration to assist the student with meeting the expectations for year 1 – that the proposal be developed and submitted for review, and that the ethical clearance process be completed. SU requires that these steps be completed within one year from entering the programme, which allows six months for the review process and submission for ethical clearance (by June) and a further three months for the ethical clearance process (by mid September), after which research may commence.
- If these steps are not completed within year 1, the student may register for another year as preparatory student, at an increased fee.
- If these steps remain uncompleted by the end of year 2, and if motivation has been submitted to and approved by the relevant PPC (postgraduate programme committee) and the CPR, the student may register for a third – and last – year, once again at an increased fee.
- As per the Faculty Board decision of October 2022, no more than three years of preparatory studies are allowed.
- After the protocol has been approved, the student is formally registered for PhD studies (subject to Senate approval of the project).

Admission with conditional bursary (Option 2)

- In this document, a conditional bursary refers to a bursary or scholarship that has been confirmed but will be honoured only if proof of PhD registration is provided.
- The prospective student applies online to start PhD studies after having completed a relevant previous degree.
- The following documents are required: ID, all degree certificates, full academic record, up-to-date CV, and statement of research interest (short proposal of 2 to 3 pages, referenced).
- The academic environment's SUNStudent administrator informs the Faculty Officer, Centre for Academic Administration (Tygerberg campus) whether the applicant has been selected or not.
- Selected applicants must contact the Tygerberg Doctoral Office as soon as possible for guidance on expectations, documents and allocation of a CPR representative.
- The selected applicant submits to the Tygerberg Doctoral Office proof that a **bursary has been allocated that will be honoured only if proof of PhD registration is provided**.
- The selected applicant is registered for PhD studies as SU student.
- Applicable to all PhDs: The proposal review is completed ideally within six months of registration. The student must meet the following SU expectations during year 1: the proposal is developed and submitted for review, and the ethical clearance process is completed. SU requires that these steps be completed within one year from entry the programme, which allows six months for the review process and submission of the ethical clearance application (by June) and a further three months for the ethical clearance process (by mid September), after which research may commence.
- **Note:** If a student who has been registered directly for a PhD fail to meet these requirements during year 1, only one further year will be allowed for successfully completing the review and submitting a letter of ethical approval bearing the student's name to tyg-phd@sun.ac.za. Failure to do so will result in registration being discontinued (as per the CPR's decision of January 2024).

Admission via conversion (Option 3)

- Existing master's students may – in deserving cases and with due regard for the student's best interests – convert their registration for a master's degree by thesis into registration for a doctorate, provided that:
 - the prospective PhD student has made, after successful completion of a proposal and ethics review, exceptional progress with their master's research; and the study already exceeds the scope of master's-level research;
 - at least one year and at most three years of master's registration have elapsed before the conversion was requested; and
 - following approval of the application for conversion (also called an 'upgrade'), the student should be ready to submit a doctoral dissertation for examination, preferably within one to two years of registering for the PhD.
 - The supervisor must refer to the SU Yearbook, Part 1 and Part 12, for more information.
- The supervisor submits a full conversion application to the Tygerberg Doctoral Office at tyg-phd@sun.ac.za with a zip folder containing the following documents:
 - **Form A4**, Conversion Application (available from the [Tygerberg Doctoral Office website](#))
 - a letter from the **head of department (HoD) supporting the conversion**
 - a letter from the **supervisor(s) supporting the conversion**
 - **Form A3**, Review Checklist
 - a list of all reviewer comments indicating how each comment was addressed
 - the **MSc ethical clearance** certificate
 - the final proposal with review changes highlighted
 - a Turnitin report on the final proposal, indicating a similarity score of no more than 15%
 - the applicant's updated CV
 - the updated CVs of any proposed **external** supervisor(s), and
 - a signed Plagiarism Declaration.

The supervisor's letter (third on the list above) must include the following:

- indication of exceptional progress made by the student;
- how the proposed study exceeds the scope of a masters' study;
- an account of original insights anticipated – required for a doctoral study; and
- how the above justifies further investigation.

The Faculty Officer informs the candidate once Senate has approved the application for conversion. Until approval has thus been confirmed officially, the student remains registered for a master's degree.

Upon approval by Senate (and no sooner):

- The student is registered for a PhD.
- **An application must be submitted for ethical approval of the study amendment(s).**
- The student proceeds to work towards submitting their dissertation.
- The student must be registered for the doctorate at least one year from having converted. The dissertation may be submitted for examination at any time after conversion.
- Please see Section D below regarding the maximum duration of PhD studies.

D. DURATION OF STUDY

1. The DHET (Department of Higher Education and Training) minimum and normal duration of PhD studies is two years from first registration, while the University expects a doctorate to be completed within three years from first registration. However, the average completion time of a PhD at the SU Faculty of Medicine is four years from registration to graduation.
2. The **maximum** duration of PhD studies is five years from January of the first year of PhD registration. This period includes absences shorter than one year (i.e. maternity leave of less than a year) but excludes approved interruptions. One of the critical responsibilities of the supervisor(s) is to monitor progress, and they must support students from the outset to graduate within the maximum period. Students who fail to do so may be granted one concession year to complete the programme. If a student fails to submit in the concession year, the supervisor(s) must submit a motivation for extending the concession period to the CPR, for recommendation by the Faculty Board to be approved by Senate. Such extension is allowed once only; i.e. the dissertation must be submitted during the following academic year. Consult the FMHS Yearbook in this regard.
3. Once an applicant has been accepted for PhD studies at the FMHS, they must register for one preparatory year before they may register for the PhD. The preparatory year is excluded from the period of study for the doctorate.

This applies to all students, the only exceptions being:

- 3.1 SU students who have converted from a master's degree by means of research, and
- 3.2 selected applicants who have been allocated a bursary for which the sponsor does not accept proof of registration for the preparatory year.

4. The aim of the preparatory year is to allow students to complete their proposal and present it to a review panel (ideally within the first six months), whereafter they submit their proposal to the HREC (Health Research Ethics Committee) for ethical clearance. Thus, they will be ready for full registration by the end of the preparatory year.

At SU, the following requirements are to be met during the first year – whether preparatory or after registration for PhD studies – across all faculties:

- 4.1 Successfully complete the proposal review process and apply for ethical clearance within six months of registration. The [Tygerberg Doctoral Office website](#) provides details of the review process.
 - 4.2 Successfully complete the ethical clearance process – including any modifications – within the next three months.
 - 4.3 Where this is unfeasible, candidates may register for a second preparatory year. One further year's extension will be granted only under special conditions and with full motivation from the relevant PPC. **Note:** Each successive year (up to three years maximum) carries additional fees.
 - 4.4 Once the above requirements have been met, the Tygerberg Doctoral Office submits the project to the CPR, after which it serves before the Faculty Board and then before Senate. Upon receipt of Senate approval, the student is registered for the doctorate.
5. **Note:** The overarching intention of the PhD proposal development phase is that the proposal review process be completed and a letter of ethical approval be submitted to the Tygerberg Doctoral Office within one year. This may not, however, be possible in all contexts. Therefore, candidates with legitimate reasons may reregister for the preparatory phase a second time; and a third time, if necessary. As soon as ethical clearance has been obtained, the candidate can proceed to full registration at the next registration opportunity.

Students who have not submitted before the final cut-off date for March/April graduation must register for an additional year of study (in the consecutive calendar year). *Allow one additional month* for application, financial or international student processes. SU dates for PhD (re)registration:

	New entrants	Returning students (year 2 and further)
First semester	1 January to 31 March	1 to 31 January
Second semester	1 June to 31 July	not applicable

6. Candidates may submit for examination at any time as from their second year of PhD registration. A doctorate may be conferred upon an FMHS candidate no earlier than:
 - 6.1 qualification deemed adequate by Senate; or
 - 6.2 two years after conferment of a Master of Science, or a related degree deemed adequate by Senate; or
 - 6.3 two years after conferment of an appropriate Bachelor of Science Honours degree in Medical Sciences directly following conferment of a Bachelor of Medicine and a Bachelor of Surgery degree.

E. ROLE OF HEAD AND ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

1. The head, or a designated senior colleague or committee in the academic environment, checks applications for admission to a doctoral programme, leads the selection process and refers all necessary documents to the Tygerberg Doctoral Office.
2. The head and senior colleagues must familiarise themselves with the provisions and requirements for admission to a doctoral programme to provide role-relevant support to both the supervisor and the PhD candidate in their environment.
3. The head, or a designated senior colleague or committee in the academic environment, must ensure at the time of selection that eligible and suitable supervisors be appointed for all PhD candidates that their academic environment has accepted.
4. The relevant PPC must ensure that suitable examiners be appointed in good time for each PhD candidate in a department.

F. SUPERVISORS AND SUPERVISION

The CPR and Faculty Board approve the appointment of supervisors and co-supervisors. Supervisors and co-supervisors of doctoral candidates must hold a doctorate, unless they possess appropriate seniority and experience approved by the review panel. All supervisors are obliged to attend accredited supervision training. The review panel and the PPC assess the competency of each supervisor according to qualifications, list of publications, participation in teaching, status as expert in the field of study and proven postgraduate study guidance.

1. Supervisors are responsible for familiarising themselves with the FMHS Doctoral Guidelines. This applies equally to emeritus (associate) professors, extraordinary appointments (including honorary professors and research fellows), postdoctoral fellows and external supervisors.
2. If the supervisor is external to SU, the appointment of an internal co-supervisor is mandatory.
3. If the supervisor has been appointed at SU part-time or on contract, continuous support of the candidate must be ensured by appointing a co-supervisor in the academic environment.
4. Postdoctoral fellows may be nominated as internal co-supervisors of doctoral candidates.
5. For further details regarding the appointment of supervisors, consult the FMHS [postgraduate supervision eligibility table](#).
6. Supervisors must nominate potential examiners in good time to the head of their academic environment and then to the relevant PPC, for consideration by the CPR.
7. Directly upon completion of the oral, the supervisor and – where applicable – co-supervisor(s) must submit a report about the process that culminated in the dissertation, including:
 - the central knowledge contribution,
 - the context in which the study was undertaken,
 - the methodological set-up for undertaking the study,
 - the extent to which the candidate had worked independently, and
 - the examination process and oral presentation.

Supervisor's role at graduation ceremonies

- The supervisor delivers a popularised summary of at most 50 words about the study and its significance. No biographical or examination details are to be furnished. The supervisor must submit this text to the relevant Faculty Officer for approval by the Dean.
- The information on the dissertation to be included in the graduation ceremony programme must be academic in content and tone and expressed in no more than 50 words. The supervisor submits this text for approval at the same meeting at which the Faculty Board considers the examiners' recommendations.
- The oral presentation of the summary may deviate in no way whatsoever from the previously approved wording.
- After having presented the summary, the supervisor must remain standing until the hood has been placed around the candidate.

G. CODE OF CONDUCT: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPERVISOR, CO-SUPERVISOR AND PhD CANDIDATE

- 1. The following guidelines are proposed as a code of conduct to ensure that the relationship between supervisor and PhD candidate be conducive to successful postgraduate studies at SU:**
 - 1.1 The candidate (with the necessary input from the supervisor) undertakes to remain up to date on the infrastructure and related rules of the academic environment concerned.
 - 1.2 The candidate must acquaint themselves with the FMHS- and SU-wide infrastructure and academic offerings – the Library and Information Service, short courses, et cetera.
 - 1.3 SU will not admit a candidate for a specific PhD project unless the Faculty has confirmed beforehand in writing that the project can be undertaken. Responsibility for the funding and infrastructure required must be indicated specifically.
 - 1.4 The candidate, with the help of the supervisor, must be acquainted with the guidelines for keeping a record of research as generally acceptable within the discipline concerned.
 - 1.5 The candidate confirms that they have the necessary basic computer skills to complete the project satisfactorily, and that they will undertake any relevant specialist computer training to acquire such skills in good time.
 - 1.6 A work programme must be compiled for the candidate, in collaboration with the supervisor, within a reasonable period after the start of the project (usually not more than 60 days), regardless of the form of registration. The programme must indicate target dates for submission, e.g. of a project protocol, literary survey, specific chapters and progress reports. Times of absence (study leave, university vacations, etc) must be indicated, too.
 - 1.7 The candidate and the supervisor must meet regularly and at predetermined times during the academic year.
 - 1.8 The supervisor provides written annual feedback on the progress of the study to the chair of the relevant PPC and the Tygerberg Doctoral Office.
 - 1.9 The supervisor comments on and returns all submitted work to the candidate within a reasonable period – no more than 60 days for a full dissertation.
 - 1.10 When the project nears completion, the candidate makes the submissions required for graduation in the discipline concerned. (Refer specifically to section 11 on page 23 to allow sufficient time for the technical finishing and examination of the dissertation with reference to the various graduation ceremonies.)
 - 1.11 The candidate undertakes to deliver outputs (such as publications, patents and academic papers) as agreed with the supervisor. The candidate must be aware of the conventions regarding authorship in the discipline concerned.
 - 1.12 Where applicable, the candidate and supervisor must acquaint themselves with the regulations on intellectual property in the environment concerned.
- 2. If a co-supervisor is involved, the following set of guidelines applies to the relationship between co-supervisor and candidate:**
 - 2.1 The co-supervisor should be appointed in time to be involved with development of the research proposal. A co-supervisor may be appointed at a later stage if the current co-supervisor must be replaced because of unforeseen circumstances or if additional aspects relevant to the project emerge in the course of the PhD study.
 - 2.2 The co-supervisor conducts themselves in accordance with the Faculty's code of conduct and complies with the guidelines relating to the research methodology.
 - 2.3 The co-supervisor must be directly involved in the planning and supervision of the research project. The co-supervisor's input is not limited to content and/or methodology; they must also provide feedback on the progress of the research project.
 - 2.4 The co-supervisor must be able to act as stand-in for the supervisor at any time, where necessary and viable.
- 3. Disputes:** If the candidate and supervisor or co-supervisor are unable to resolve disputes or differences of opinion, they must approach the relevant PPC chair. Should that prove unsuccessful, the matter may be escalated to the CPR chair.

4. The supervisor's responsibilities

- 4.1 Be familiar with University and Faculty procedures regarding postgraduate studies.
- 4.2 Be familiar with the most recent rules and regulations regarding ethics.
- 4.3 Be knowledgeable about the field of study and methodology.
- 4.4 Ensure that they have sufficient time to guide the candidate.
- 4.5 Establish a supervisory relationship with the candidate.
- 4.6 Keep their relationship with the candidate honest and open.
- 4.7 Advise about project choice and planning.
- 4.8 Ensure that facilities that may be required for study and research be available.
- 4.9 Discuss intellectual property rights and publications with the candidate.
- 4.10 Provide research training or opportunities to access research training.
- 4.11 Meet with the candidate regularly to monitor progress and to provide structured feedback.
- 4.12 Arrange for study guidance for the candidate during periods when the supervisor is to be absent.
- 4.13 Ensure that examiners be nominated in good time at PPC meetings.
- 4.14 Remind the candidate to submit the intention-to-submit form in good time.
- 4.15 Accept responsibility for the originality, scientific merit, and standard of the research.

5. The candidate's responsibilities

- 5.1 Familiarise themselves with SU regulations regarding postgraduate studies, and abide by these.
- 5.2 Commit to the research process as agreed with the supervisor/s and according to the academic requirements and level of the degree they are pursuing.
- 5.3 Develop initiative and independence.
- 5.4 Be proactive and take responsibility for the development and progress of their research.
- 5.5 Make use of opportunities offered by the research environment.
- 5.6 Do a literature survey and keep abreast of all relevant literature.
- 5.7 Establish a professional relationship with the supervisor/s.
- 5.8 Keep their relationship with the supervisor/s honest and open.
- 5.9 Inform the supervisor of non-academic problems that may influence progress.
- 5.10 Provide regular progress reports.
- 5.11 Undertake research with dedication and scientific rigor.
- 5.12 Engage in academic discussions and presentations, and provide feedback about such occasions.
- 5.13 Present and report on research results and respond to feedback appropriately.
- 5.14 Consider feedback constructively and clarify any uncertainty with the supervisor.
- 5.15 Keep complete records of research results, which remain the intellectual property of the University according to the SU policy 'Intellectual Property: Protection and Commercialisation'.
- 5.16 Prepare and write the thesis/dissertation/research assignment themselves.
- 5.17 Prepare and write publications, patents and reports (if applicable) as set out below.
- 5.18 Be aware of and abide by the [SU Policy on Plagiarism](#) as well as the FMHS Plagiarism Guide.
- 5.19 Inform the Tygerberg Doctoral Office at least six months ahead of the intended date of submission of the intention to submit the dissertation for examination.

H. SUMMARY OF PhD SUPERVISORS' STANDARD OF PRACTICE

ITEM	TASK
Application and selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one supervisor should be a permanently appointed FMHS staff member. Supervisors and co-supervisors of doctoral candidates should possess a PhD. It is a formal requirement that all supervisors attend accredited supervision training. The review panel assesses each supervisor's competency according to qualifications, list of publications and papers, participation in teaching, status as expert in the field of study and proven postgraduate study guidance, as applicable.
Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The supervisor contacts the Tygerberg Doctoral Office about six weeks before the review. The supervisor and HoD must complete and sign the Form A3 checklist before the review. The HoD approves the review panel chair and the domain experts. The supervisor sends the student's CV, the CV(s) of external supervisor(s), the proposal, current certificates of ethical approval or publications, and the Form A3 to the review chair in good time. The supervisor must ensure that the student complete all recommended revisions correctly. The supervisor submits five review documents to the Tygerberg Doctoral Office after the review: (a) supervisor's confirmation that all edits required by the panel were effected, (b) the final version of the review checklist, (c) all reviewer comments together with an indication of how each was addressed, (d) the final proposal with review changes highlighted (i.e. not tracked) and (e) a Turnitin similarity report.
Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The supervisor signs off on the student's application for ethical clearance and assists with submission on Infonetica. The supervisor asks the student to submit the letter of ethical approval to the Tygerberg Doctoral Office.
Annual reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A supervisor must submit an annual progress report to the Tygerberg Doctoral Office by the specified deadline in October or early November.
Examination	<p>The supervisor ensures that examiners be nominated in good time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submits names, CVs and nomination forms to the relevant PPC for its initial approval and recommendation to the CPR. Sends the PPC report to tyg-phd@sun.ac.za for submission to the CPR. <p>The submission for examination to medphd@sun.ac.za is to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> dissertation release form signed by all supervisors and the HoD, dissertation in PDF format (with declaration incorporated), and Turnitin report with a similarity score of no more than 15%. <p>On completion of the oral, the supervisor and – where applicable – the co-supervisor(s) compile a final report about the knowledge contribution, oral and examination process. A template is provided for this purpose. Optionally, the report may also discuss aspects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the context in which the study was undertaken; the methodological set-up for undertaking the study, according to which the research is to be evaluated; the extent to which the candidate worked independently; problems that the candidate experienced collecting data; and any other aspect that may have a bearing on the final evaluation. <p>Following the oral, the final dissertation (without signatures), the final supervisor's report, and a separate list of corrections are to be submitted to medphd@sun.ac.za for attention of the Head: Tygerberg Doctoral Office.</p>
SUNScholar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The supervisor nominates the candidate for the upload of the final dissertation to SUNScholar via the SUNStudent platform's 'Thesis Management' capability.
Faculty Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The supervisor submits information on the dissertation using at most 50 words, for recommendation at the same meeting at which the Faculty Board considers the examiners' recommendations. The result is finally approved by Senate.
Graduation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the graduation ceremony, the supervisor delivers a popularised summary of at most 50 words indicating what has been done in the study and what its significance is. No biographical or examination details are furnished. The supervisor submits this text to the Faculty Officer, Centre for Academic Administration (Tygerberg campus) for approval before the relevant Faculty Board meeting. In the oral presentation of the summary, there should be absolutely no deviation from the wording of the summary as previously approved. After presenting the summary, the supervisor remains standing until the hood has been placed around the candidate.

I. REVIEW PROCESS

The [Tygerberg Doctoral Office website](#) provides further details of the **review process** for a PhD proposal, summarised here as follows:

- The Tygerberg Doctoral Office allocates a CPR representative for each student's review panel.
- The academic environment selects and organises the review panel, consisting of a chairperson, a CPR representative, an REC representative, and one or more suitable domain experts.
- The supervisor is not eligible to serve on the review panel.
- Important: Should there be any conflict of interest (i.e. should an individual have an association as close family or household member, or any other close relationship, with the candidate and/or supervisor/co-supervisor), the member concerned is to be excluded from the review process.
- Any of the panel members or any other independent colleague may serve as panel chair except for the CPR representative, who is not eligible to serve as panel chair;
- The panel chair must negotiate a mutually suitable review date directly with the CPR representative and other panel members; the Tygerberg Doctoral Office is not involved in these arrangements.
- The chair distributes the necessary documents (student's CV, CVs of external supervisor(s), proposal, and partially completed Form A3) to the entire review panel, preferably by two weeks before the review.
- The work is reviewed in writing before the presentation takes place. Domain experts submit reviewer reports. The CPR and REC representatives need not complete the reviewer form unless they are suitable domain experts who would like to provide input and are qualified to do so.
- A student presents their proposal to the review panel, who has the opportunity to ask questions. Afterwards, the panel must reach consensus about completing the Form A3 review checklist.
- The student makes any amendments required, whether to resubmit to the panel or to the satisfaction of the supervisor.

IMPORTANT

- Directly after successful completion of the review, the supervisor submits the review documents to the Tygerberg Doctoral Office as described below.
- A formal application for ethical clearance must be submitted **as soon as possible** after the review.
- The final review documents and ethical approval are added to the agenda of the next CPR meeting, to be recommended to Senate for acceptance for PhD studies.

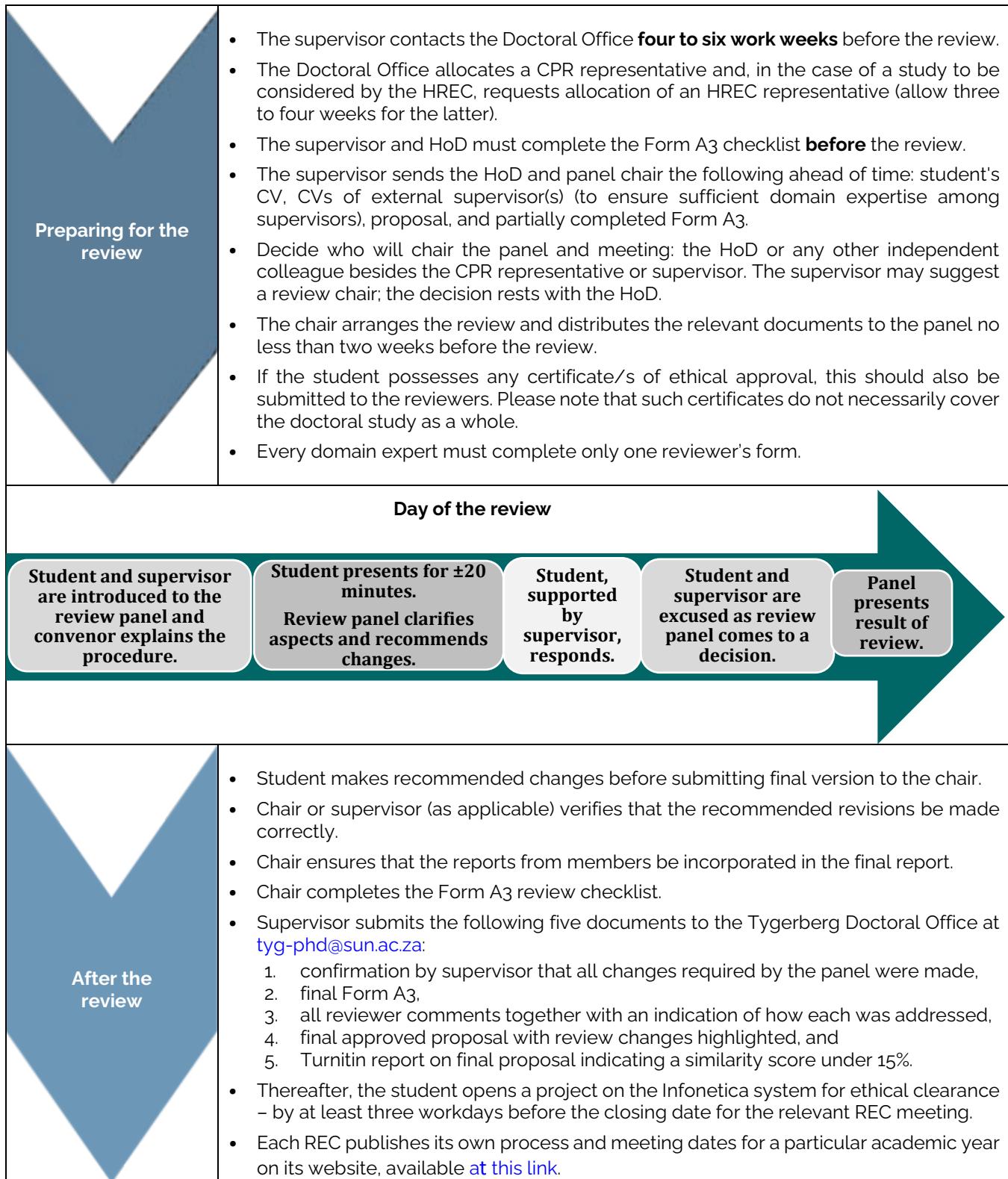
Directly after successful completion of the proposal review process, the supervisor must email the following five PDF documents to the Tygerberg Doctoral Office at tyg-phd@sun.ac.za:

- written confirmation from supervisor that all review panel requirements have been met,
- the final, completed review checklist,
- all reviewers' comments, together with an indication of how and where each comment was addressed,
- the final proposal for submission for ethical clearance, with changes highlighted (i.e. not tracked), and
- the Turnitin report on the final proposal, showing a similarity score of no more than 15%.

If all documents are in order and the candidate has progressed as expected, the Tygerberg Doctoral Office will supply a letter within three workdays to facilitate the application for ethical clearance.

Doctoral candidates should aim to **submit** their doctoral dissertation for examination in a further two years.

Review process



The Tygerberg Doctoral Office website – www.su.ac.za/en/faculties/medicine/doctoral-office/phd-proposal-review – also provides guidance for the review process.

J. ETHICAL CLEARANCE PROCESS

PhD researchers at the FMHS must apply for ethical clearance for their study before the research may commence. The Faculty has a particular responsibility for oversight regarding researchers-in-training, such as PhD candidates. PhD candidates must apply for ethical clearance from the most suitable research ethics committee (REC) at SU. Most PhD projects can be assessed by one, specific REC, but some projects straddle the domain of more than one REC.

SU has five RECs, all of which resort under the [Senate Research Ethics Committee](#):

1. Animal Care and Use (REC: ACU)
2. Biological and Environmental Safety (REC: BES)
3. Health Research Ethics Committee 1 (HREC1)
4. Health Research Ethics Committee 2 (HREC2) and
5. Social, Behavioural and Education Research (REC: SBE).

Most doctoral research projects at the FMHS are considered by one of the two HRECs, the REC: ACU, or the REC: BEE. Each REC has its own rules and procedures. Following successful completion of the proposal review, candidates should allow up to three months for the process of ethical clearance for a doctoral study, from application to outcome. The [Tygerberg Doctoral Office website](#) provides guidance on the application process for ethical clearance.

Once the candidate has received the letter of ethical approval bearing the candidate's name, they must email it to the Tygerberg Doctoral Office (tyg-phd@sun.ac.za) without delay. Ethical clearance for an individual study OR a letter adding a student as investigator to an existing study with ethical approval (where the parent study covers the new PhD study) is acceptable. In case of the latter, the original or most recent ethical clearance for the larger study must also be submitted. *Note: Ethical clearance for a parent study does not automatically cover the whole of a PhD study.*

At this stage, practical research may begin while the project is being submitted to the [CPR](#) on behalf of the academic environment concerned. From there it is presented to the FMHS Faculty Board and Senate for formal approval of the study. This is a quarterly process that takes about three months.

According to national guidelines, an ethics committee may grant ethical approval for only one year. Therefore, ethical approval must be renewed approximately two months before the expiry date – by submitting a progress report. Candidates must obtain annual reapproval until they have closed their project/study by submitting a final report.

Note on confirmation of proposal review:

- In order to accept a doctoral study for ethical review, the HRECs (not the other RECs) require a letter confirming that the proposal review process at the relevant faculty were followed correctly and that the review was completed successfully.
- As regards FMHS students, the Tygerberg Doctoral Office provides such confirmation that the Faculty's [proposal review](#) procedures were followed. Turnaround is fast, provided that the five review documents are received at tyg-phd@sun.ac.za in good order and in a single email at least three workdays before the deadline for ethical review. Candidates do not need to request the confirmation letter – it is issued automatically upon receipt of the full set of review documents (but not before that).
- Doctoral candidates from other faculties may obtain a formal letter from a suitable independent party at their home faculty (such as the HoD, but not the supervisor) to facilitate their application for ethical clearance from the HREC.

Wrapping up: Upon completion of the doctoral study, the main internal supervisor must ensure that a final report be submitted to the relevant REC. If the study title has changed at any stage, including the examination stage, the relevant REC must be informed of this in the final report.

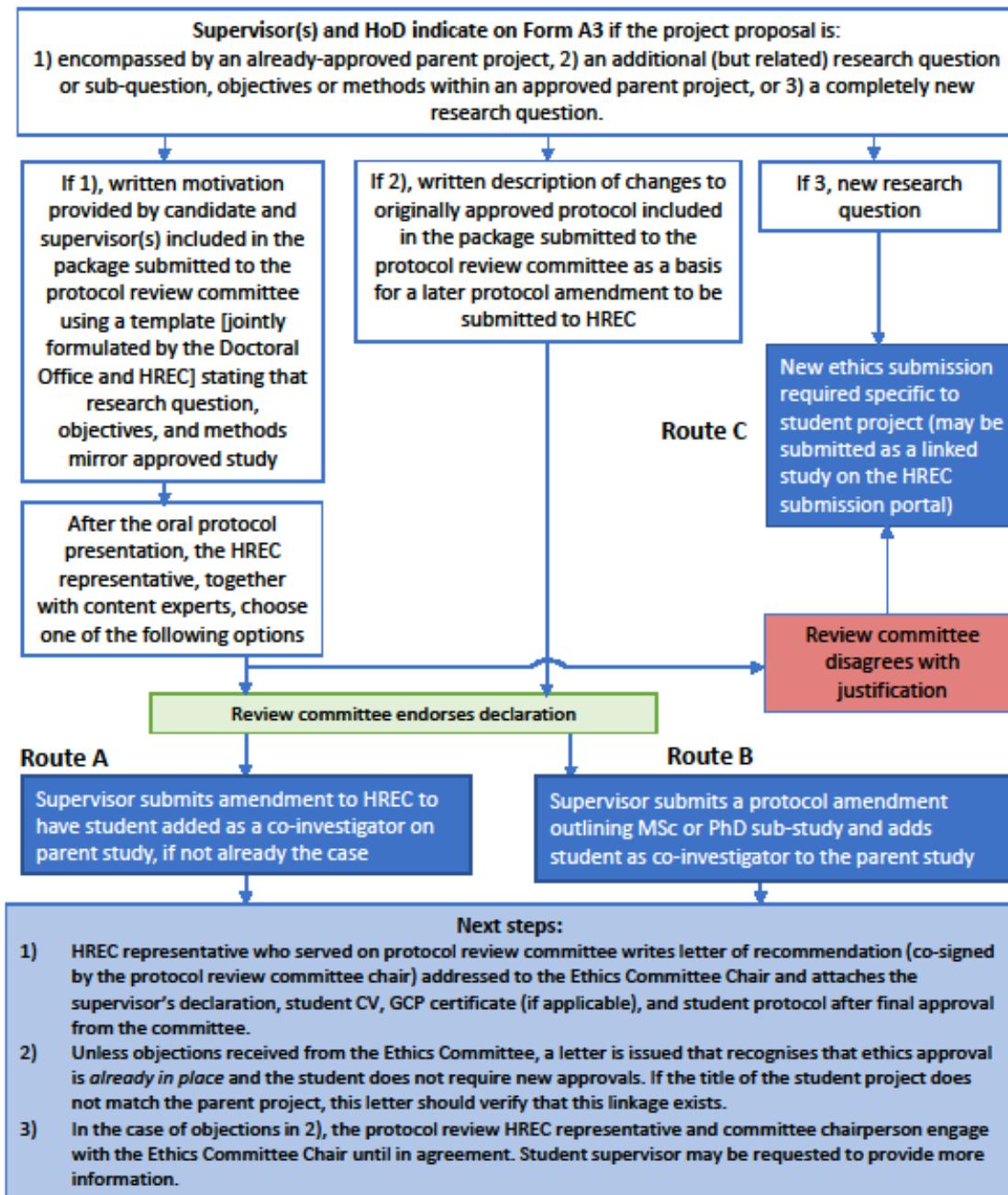
HREC considerations: The figure on this page indicates the considerations for determining whether a candidate should apply for separate HREC approval, as opposed to being added as a co- or sub-investigator on an existing project, as supplied by the HREC.

Note: The information informing this decision is provided by the supervisor and verified by the HoD, HREC representative (if applicable), and review panel on the 'HREC Addendum' to Form A3 review checklist.

Does my MSc or PhD student need a separate HREC approval?
Case-by-case consideration is required for each student project according to the logic below

Core principles:

1. SU's ethical obligations to study participants, staff, and students must not be compromised.
2. Redundant review of the same research question and methods needs to be avoided, especially if the parent study has approval.



K. FORMAT OF PhD DISSERTATIONS

1. The FMHS accepts PhD dissertations in one of three formats:
 - 1.1 a conventional dissertation
 - 1.2 by publication, and
 - 1.3 hybrid.
2. The **focus and quality of the research and of the reporting** remain the most important aspects, irrespective of format. All three formats are treated equally.
3. The three formats are distinguished as follows:
 - 3.1 Conventional dissertation

An introductory chapter, followed by a number of chapters outlining the research, followed by a chapter discussing the research results of the dissertation as a whole and highlighting the scientific contributions of the study, followed by a conclusion and future directions.
 - 3.2 Publication format dissertation

Each publication concerned must be an original article or research article. The dissertation includes full sections containing an introduction, describing methods and results, and setting out a discussion. The research can be primary or secondary (evidence synthesis) in nature. Comprehensive systematic reviews and meta-analyses are included in this category.

A dissertation by publication consists of an introductory chapter; followed by **at least four first-authored peer-reviewed articles that have been published or accepted for publication**, only one of which may have been published in the three years preceding formal registration for the relevant PhD programme (*Faculty Board minutes for 20 February 2020, p. 425: "4.6.4 The CPR recommended that the rule be amended to allow for only one publication that dated back no more than three years before registration, to take effect for all new PhD registrations as from 2020"*); followed by a chapter discussing the research results of the dissertation as a whole, highlighting the scientific contributions of the study; followed by a conclusion and future directions. It is acceptable to have a separate chapter on methodology, provided that the chapter be indicated clearly as a 'published protocol paper' (an independent publication) or not. Refer to "Glossary" (Section 5 below) for definitions.
 - 3.3 Hybrid format dissertation

An introductory chapter, followed by at least **two first-authored, peer-reviewed articles** that have been published or accepted for publication, one of which may have been published in the three years preceding formal registration for the relevant PhD programme, **AND** –

 - at least two first-authored manuscripts that are submission-ready or have been submitted ('submission-ready' refers to a manuscript that is already in the final format required for submission by the chosen journal); OR
 - at least two chapters outlining the research; OR
 - a combination of at least two first-authored manuscripts that are submission-ready or have been submitted, and chapters outlining the research.
 - In all three instances above, the chapters must be followed by a chapter discussing the research results of the dissertation as a whole, highlighting the scientific contributions of the study, and followed by a conclusion and future directions. It is acceptable to have a separate chapter on methodology, provided that the chapter be indicated clearly as a 'published protocol paper' (an independent publication) or not.

The table on the next page summarises the information above.

Note: For the purposes of a PhD dissertation, co- first authorship is allowed, provided that this be indicated clearly in the published article.

Approved formats of a PhD dissertation					
Conventional	Introduction	Chapters		Discussion	Conclusion
Publication	Introduction	At least 4 first-authored peer-reviewed articles that have been published or accepted for publication		Discussion	Conclusion
Hybrid 1	Introduction	At least 2 first-authored peer-reviewed articles that have been published or accepted for publication	At least 2 first-authored manuscripts that are submission-ready or have been submitted	Discussion	Conclusion
Hybrid 2	Introduction	At least 2 first-authored peer-reviewed articles that have been published or accepted for publication	At least 2 chapters	Discussion	Conclusion
Hybrid 3	Introduction	At least 2 first-authored peer-reviewed articles that have been published or accepted for publication	A combination of at least 2 first-authored manuscripts that are submission-ready or have been submitted, and chapters outlining the research	Discussion	Conclusion

- If only one manuscript has been published or accepted for publication at the time of submission for examination, the dissertation must be presented in the conventional format and the manuscript be reformatted into a chapter. The published manuscript may be included in the appendices but not in the main body of the dissertation.
- Regarding both published/accepted-for-publication articles and submission-ready/submitted manuscripts under review, information must include the journal's URL, impact factor and any other details that may help examiners evaluate the quality of the candidate's work.
- Articles of which the candidate is the co- first author are allowed for submission among the four first-author articles, provided that the final published article must state clearly on the title page that the two first authors contributed equally. A declaration at the beginning of the dissertation should state clearly what each author contributed to the article. Where first authorship is shared, it must be shown clearly why co- first authorship was necessary.

4. Layout and technical aspects

All doctoral dissertations should be edited to a high standard of polished presentation before they are submitted for examination. The [Tygerberg Doctoral Office website](#) contains information on the requirements for layout and technical aspects of a doctoral dissertation.

5. GLOSSARY

Accepted for publication	A manuscript that has been accepted by a journal to be published. Typically, such manuscripts include author-incorporated changes suggested during the submission process, peer review, and editor-author communications. This is <i>not</i> the version that includes the publisher's contributions, such as copy-editing and formatting.
Conclusion	This chapter ties together, integrates and synthesises various issues raised in the discussion chapter, and also reflects on aims and objectives. The conclusion should provide answers to the research question(s), identify theoretical and/or clinical and/or policy implications of the work, highlight the limitations and strengths of the research, and recommend future directions for research.
Discussion	This chapter is to interpret the meaning of the results within the context of existing knowledge about the topic. New insights based on the findings should be explained. The discussion sets out arguments in the process of considering different perspectives and explanations. This chapter could include limitations and recommendations for future research.
First-authored	In a first-authored manuscript, the PhD candidate is the first author named in a list of authors and, as such, the lead author on the manuscript.
Introduction	This chapter introduces the topic and the problem, covers relevant literature to show the merit of the topic, and highlights research gaps.
Material that does not qualify as a required publication for purposes of a dissertation	The protocol of a study, whether the published protocol of a trial or the protocol of a systematic review, is a building block. Thus, a candidate who published the protocol of a systematic review, then performed the systematic review and eventually published the results thereof, may present the full review publication as only one of the four publications required. The protocol serves as supporting documentation. Thus, a published Cochrane review replaces a protocol in the Cochrane Library. An editorial letter or opinion piece, too, is supporting information.
Peer review	This is a process whereby a manuscript submitted to a journal is vetted for quality and importance by scholars or researchers in the subject area concerned, according to the editorial standards of the particular journal, before the material is accepted for publication. This rigorous process is to ensure that a manuscript that is published in a journal be a sound piece of research/scholarship.
Published	This refers to a manuscript that is available in print or online. This includes <i>advance online publications</i> (manuscripts that are made available before they are published in a specific issue of the print or online journal). Advance online publications may or may not have been edited by the time that they become available online, and may or may not yet have a DOI (digital object identifier) assigned to them.
Published protocol paper	A published protocol paper (or manuscript) refers to a published protocol of a study that appears in a peer-reviewed journal. This may also include the published protocol for a systematic review. Note: The published protocol of a systematic review and the published paper of that same systematic review do not count as two separate articles for the purposes of a dissertation, but as only one.
Submission-ready	A manuscript that is in a <i>ready state</i> for submission to a journal, meaning that no further edits/changes/improvements are envisioned. Therefore, manuscripts that are unfinished or in preparation do not qualify.
Submitted manuscript	A manuscript that has been submitted to a journal and is either awaiting editorial or reviewer assignment, or is under peer review.

L. EXAMINATION

1. Submission

A dissertation may be submitted for examination at any time from January to November **after** the CPR has recommended the examiners (in time for their approval by the Faculty Board and Senate).

The candidate submits (1) the supervisor-approved dissertation in PDF format, (2) the Turnitin report and (3) the dissertation release form, signed by all supervisors and the head of the academic environment in a single email to medphd@sun.ac.za, copying the supervisor and HoD.

- **The prime submission period for third quarter confirmation of results is from February until 6 April.**
- **The prime submission period for March/April graduation is from May until 9 October.**
- As from 2026, SU hosts a single, annual graduation series in March/April. PhD results are approved via a quarterly governance process following which the Registrar's Responsibility Centre supplies candidates with a letter of completion to facilitate their applications for SU Consolidoc awards, postdoctoral fellowships, research funding, promotion or work.

Following the oral exam, the **supervisor** submits to the Head: Tygerberg Doctoral Office (1) the supervisor report, (2) the final corrected thesis (without signatures or sensitive personal information) and (3) a list of corrections made. The supervisor also ensures the dissertation is uploaded to SUNScholar.

Note: Candidates who miss the submission closing dates for March/April graduation become liable for registration **fees** for the following academic year.

2. Examiners

- 2.1 **Three examiners** – people unattached to the study – must be appointed to examine each dissertation. The panel must consist of at least two external examiners and may include one internal examiner. Examiners are considered external if they do not have a permanent, temporary or extraordinary appointment at SU. In the case of former employees, at least two years must have passed since the person's retirement, accelerated retirement or leaving of SU's employ before they may be appointed as external examiner. Former PhD candidates must have left the University more than two years before they may be appointed as examiners.
- 2.2 All examiners must hold a doctorate; if not, the case must be properly and fully substantiated with reference to a sufficient standard of capability in their field of study.
- 2.3 The supervisor at the FMHS must submit nominated examiners' names, CVs and nomination forms to the relevant PPC, who submits the report and documents to the CPR and Faculty Board for recommendation. No dissertation may be distributed for examination unless the examiners have been nominated six months earlier.
- 2.4 The reports, CVs and nomination forms are submitted to the Head: Tygerberg Doctoral Office, who presents official letters of nomination to each examiner on behalf of the FMHS.
- 2.5 The Faculty Officer communicates the nominations to the Executive Committee of Senate (ECIS) and to Senate by means of a communications report.
- 2.6 All communication with examiners is to be facilitated via the Tygerberg Doctoral Office.
- 2.7 Under no circumstances may a doctoral candidate be informed of the identities of the examiners, or allowed to communicate with the examiners about the dissertation, before the oral examination.
- 2.8 Supervisors share examiners' reports with candidates in anonymised form, i.e. comments and requests only.
- 2.9 Each examiner (both external and internal) must submit a written, signed report on the dissertation and a completed standard report form.

3. Examination process

- 3.1 A supervisor may grant permission for a dissertation to be submitted for examination at any time from the start of the second year of PhD registration, though submission in December is not recommended.
- 3.2 Submission dates:
- Please see the recommended submission dates at the top of this page.
 - Visit the [Tygerberg Doctoral Office's website](#) for more information.
- 3.3 Candidates must prepare a Turnitin report on the very final version of the dissertation as approved for submission by the supervisors.
- 3.4 All supervisors must sign the completed dissertation release form once agreement has been reached that the dissertation is ready to be submitted for examination.
- 3.5 Submission is concluded by the supervisor – or the candidate (with the supervisor as copy recipient) – sending a single email to medphd@sun.ac.za with the following three attachments in PDF format:
- the dissertation release form signed by all parties,
 - the final dissertation in PDF format (incorporating the plagiarism declaration), and
 - the Turnitin report indicating a recommended similarity score of no more than 15%.
- 3.6 The examiners send their written and signed reports directly to the Tygerberg Doctoral Office, not to the supervisor/s. On receipt, the Office sends the reports to the main supervisor with clear directions. The supervisor/s may draft a report at this stage.
- 3.7 Once all examiner reports have been received and all corrections approved, a virtual oral presentation is scheduled. The HoD and an administrator from the relevant environment assists the supervisor to arrange this. Preferably, a senior, unattached, non-examining chairperson may be appointed.
- 3.8 All examiners must be given the opportunity to attend the oral. At most one examiner may be excluded, only on strong motivation. The oral may not proceed unless at least two of the three examiners are present.
- 3.9 Supervisors are not members of the examiners' panel with decision-making powers (see 2.1 above) and do not submit examiners' reports. They do, however, have observer status at the oral examination.
- 3.10 The duration of the entire oral session generally is 40 to 60 minutes, which includes the following:
- introductions
 - presentation by the candidate
 - discussion and clarification by examiners
 - candidate and supervisors leave
 - examiners and chair discuss the dissertation and presentation, and
 - candidate and supervisors return for announcement of final result.
- 3.11 As soon as the oral examination has been concluded, the supervisor must submit to the Head: Tygerberg Doctoral Office, in PDF format (1) the final corrected dissertation (without signatures), (2) a list of all corrections made and (3) a final supervisor's report. This finally approved and signed-off report must provide insight into the examination process on a template provided by the Tygerberg Doctoral Office. The supervisor must attach to the report communication with examiners who could not be present at the oral, which must explain the reasons for their absence and express their endorsement of the result (attached to the report). The report may also reflect on the process that culminated in the dissertation with reference to:
- a brief summary of the context in which the study was undertaken, the methodology and the results;
 - the extent to which the candidate worked independently; and
 - a brief summary of the examiners' assessment; and
 - mention of any other aspect that had a direct bearing on the final evaluation of the dissertation .
- 3.12 The examination process is completed after the oral examination, completion of the corrections required by the examination panel and successful submission of the supervisor report at medphd@sun.ac.za.
- 3.13 At the FMHS, dissertations may be re-examined only once. The CPR chair may, upon request from the HoD, grant one additional occasion upon strong motivation. The final decision rests with the CPR chair.
- 3.14 The Faculty requires that, upon successful completion of the examination process, all final supervisor reports be presented to the CPR for approval and thereafter to the Faculty Board for recommendation of the results. Final approval of results rests with Senate.
- 3.15 If the examination panel unanimously recommend conferment of the doctorate, the Faculty Board's recommendation is included in the recommendation report to the EC(S); final approval of results rests with Senate.
- 3.16 If the examination panel do not unanimously recommend conferment of the doctorate, the Faculty Board's recommendation is included in the recommendation report to the EC(S) and Senate.

4. Disputes

The following are alternatives to unanimous recommendation of conferment of a doctorate.

- 4.1 If, on completion of the examination process, the examiners do not recommend unanimously that the doctorate be conferred upon the candidate, the candidate must implement their recommended improvements and the examiners must re-examine the amended dissertation. The written reports submitted to the Tygerberg Doctoral Office determine whether the examination panel decides that the candidate may present for an oral examination.
- 4.2 If the examiners still cannot agree on a result, at least two external assessors must be appointed.
 - 4.2.1 If the examiners examined different fields of specialty within the research field, one of the external assessors must be a specialist in the research field of the examiner(s) who did not recommend a pass.
 - 4.2.2 The external assessors are appointed as follows: Names are submitted via the relevant postgraduate committee to the CPR and the Faculty Board. The Faculty Board makes the final recommendation regarding the external assessors and convey this by means of the communications report to the EC(S) and Senate.
 - 4.2.3 The external assessors must work through the extensive report by the CPR chair – which must include the candidate's points of view, the anonymous examiners' reports and the dissertation – and consider the examiners' criticism factually.
 - 4.2.4 The reports by the external assessors, indicating how the dispute must be handled, are made available to the CPR chair.
 - 4.2.5 If the external assessors cannot reach unanimity about conferring the doctorate, they may require that the candidate adapt the dissertation to that end.
 - 4.2.6 If the external assessors still cannot reach unanimity after this process, the CPR chair must confer with them to resolve their differences.
 - 4.2.7 The reports by the external assessors (whether unanimity was achieved or not) are submitted to the CPR for consideration. The relevant Faculty Committee makes a recommendation to the Faculty Board, whose recommendation is included in the recommendation report to the EC(S) and Senate.
 - 4.2.8 Following Senate's final decision about conferment, the CPR chair informs the examiners and assessors of the outcome.
- 4.3 If, after the first examination process, the examination panel recommend unanimously that the doctorate not be conferred upon the candidate:
 - 4.3.1 The dissertation may not be resubmitted for examination.
 - 4.3.2 The decision is final; no dispute process is available. The non-conferment of the doctorate is included in the Faculty Board's recommendation report to the EC(S) and Senate.

M. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Although a doctoral dissertation may be submitted for examination at any time after examiners have been nominated, students may not graduate with a doctorate before their fourth semester of registration for the PhD.
2. Supervisors must guide candidates to aim for submission ahead of the deadlines related to graduation dates. Nonetheless, meeting the cut-off date for submission is no guarantee of graduating at a particular graduation ceremony, regardless of early submission. No faculty-wide final deadline can be set for supervisor reports, as the examination process must run its full and proper course.
3. The examination process must be completed before submission of a result for graduation purposes can be contemplated. Completion includes having received all examiner reports; interim steps (dealing with examiner requirements, revisions and possible re-examination[s]); thereafter, successful completion of the oral; submission to the Tygerberg Doctoral Office of the final supervisor's report; and, if applicable, a separate bulleted list of corrections made, and the final dissertation. As a last phase, the Tygerberg Doctoral Office prepares the supporting documents for formal recommendation of the result.
4. Finally, every supervisor is required to upload to SUNScholar one copy of the candidate's final dissertation in PDF format, with sensitive personal information such as signatures and telephone numbers removed. It is critically important that an embargo be placed on sections of the dissertation that may still be patented or published. Uploading must be done via the SUNStudent platform's 'Thesis Management' capability and is a requirement for Senate approval as per the SU Yearbook. During this submission process, the supervisor has the option of holding back release of the dissertation on the open website for a maximum period of six months to provide an opportunity for publication. Full particulars regarding the PDF format as well as the process to be followed are provided at <https://www.su.ac.za/en/library>.
5. Once all these requirements have been met fully, the results are recommended to Senate. Upon Senate's approval, the Registrar's Responsibility Centre issues a letter of completion is issued to the candidate.
6. Note: SU offers optional facilities for the duplication and binding of dissertations. Please contact SUN Media for particulars: K-floor (basement), Clinical Building, Tygerberg campus, tel. 021 938 9547.
7. A graduation ceremony is the nationally regulated event at which formal certification occurs. Until the ceremony takes place, the degree has not been earned. Therefore, it is crucial that candidates comply with the institutional requirements and timelines for graduation.
8. Should a letter of completion be required before the graduation ceremony, this can be requested from the Faculty Officer, Centre for Academic Administration (Tygerberg campus) – but only after the result has served at the CPR, which meets quarterly. The Tygerberg Doctoral Office is not permitted to assist with such letters, because the Office resorts under FMHS Research and Internationalisation Development and Support (RIDS) and not under the Registrar's Responsibility Centre.
9. Graduations are arranged centrally, by the Registrar's Responsibility Centre. Staff members who are not employed at the RRC have no advance knowledge of any particulars. The most recent information is available [here](#).

N. OUTPUTS

1. The major deliverable for new doctoral students is a doctoral research proposal approved first by the supervisor/s, then by a properly constituted review panel, and then by the most suitable SU research ethics committee.
2. The primary research output of a PhD programme at the FMHS is a doctoral dissertation - in any approved format - reporting on primary research. Formatting and editing (and the related costs) are the responsibility of the candidate. Candidates are welcome to approach the [SU Language Centre](#) for editing services.
3. Doctoral students are strictly forbidden to submit any plagiarised work, or work generated by someone else or by means of artificial intelligence, as their own original work.
4. SU is the owner of all data collected or generated for the purpose of doctoral research at the University, and may upload such data to SUNScholarData for potential use in future research. Uploading must be done with careful attention to timing and possible embargos to avoid any detrimental impact on the publication or patenting of research outputs. For more information, contact the [SU Library](#).
5. All candidates are expected to publish in [indexed journals](#) from their dissertations, indicating SU as the affiliation of the author/s. Candidates can apply for either of two forms of publication support (more information [here](#)):
 - 5.1 The SU library has agreements with numerous publishers for discounts on or waivers of the usual publication fees.
 - 5.2 The Senate Research Committee for the FMHS, Subcommittee C, has limited funds for supporting open access publications.
6. All research outputs that emanate from doctoral studies must be included in the relevant academic environment's publications report to the DHET for purposes of formal recognition and subsidies. Each main internal (i.e. SU) supervisor is responsible for ensuring that they meet the deadline to this end, which is set in an annual SU call to report outputs. Please direct queries in this regard to Ms Daléne Pieterse on 021 808 3557 or at mver@sun.ac.za.
7. Where intellectual outcomes of doctoral research can be commercialised through the formation of spin-out companies, licensing, patenting or trademark registration, candidates or their supervisors may contact [Innovus](#), the SU division responsible for technology transfer, entrepreneurial support and development, and innovation.

O. CONTACT DETAILS FOR FAQS

█ Orientation and general	
All PhD-related queries	Tygerberg Doctoral Office: tyg-phd@sun.ac.za www.sun.ac.za/en/faculties/medicine/doctoral-office
Prospective PhD student enquiries	Our PhD Applications page, Tygerberg Doctoral Office, or a suitable supervisor in your academic environment
SUNStudent application issues	SU Client Services: 021 808 9111 info@sun.ac.za
SU year programme	www.sun.ac.za/en/dates
SU academic regulations	www.sun.ac.za/en/yearbooks
SU postgraduate studies – general	SU Postgraduate Office
Tygerberg International / visa letters / pre-registration clearance	Ms Shanlynn Timm: tioprereg@sun.ac.za Please cc tyg-phd@sun.ac.za
Postgraduate accommodation options	SU private accommodation page Click on 'Tygerberg Accredited Accommodation'. privateaccommodation@sun.ac.za
Further enquiries about personal details/residences	Ms Annelie Scholtz: amscholtz@sun.ac.za
Registration	Student and Programme Administration Office (SPA): fmhsregistration@sun.ac.za
Microsoft365 and Outlook – free download	First install Microsoft Authenticator from app store. Then: Summary of steps at this link Detailed step-by-step instructions at this link
Password reset	Click here to manage your password.
Printing	Where to print and how to load printing credits
Other ICT enquiries	Option 1: Log a call with the ICT service desk . Option 2: email help@sun.ac.za .
Student fees or accounts	Ms Lesanne Matthee: lm@sun.ac.za
Tygerberg Postgraduate Student Council (TPSC)	tpscchair@sun.ac.za
█ Research resources	
SU Division for Research Development	SU DRD
Research policies and guidelines	Research policies and guidelines
ResearchConnect specialist funding database	https://opportunity.myresearchconnect.com/
FMHS Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics	Biostatistics Unit
SU Central Analytical Facilities	Central Analytical Facilities
Research software downloads	Software hub
Research ICT service	Research ICT service
Research data from SU	SUNScholar data repository
SU Writing Lab Option 1: MSTeams booking system	Face to face – Ms Anne-Mari Lackay: amlackay@sun.ac.za Writing skills workshops – Ms Selene Delpot: selene@sun.ac.za

■ Wraparound support	
Campus Health Service	Sr Rukshana Adams rukshana@sun.ac.za 021 938 9590
Campus mental health support	021 927 7020 / supportus@sun.ac.za
Campus security (emergency)	021 938 9507
Campus emergency response	010 205 3032
FMHS equality champions	TBC
Student Affairs – Tygerberg campus	Support groups centred on mindfulness, selfcare, neurodiversity, mental health, addictive behaviours, LGBTQI+ inclusion, and more: tgy_studentsupport@sun.ac.za
SU disability-related enquiries	disability@sun.ac.za
SU Equality Unit	unfair@sun.ac.za
Food security support Tygerberg Pantry Project Osler day student community Campus social worker	tygerbergpantry@gmail.com supportus@sun.ac.za
■ Wrapping up and looking ahead	
Academic record	Client Services at records@sun.ac.za
Study methods, further studies and career advice	studysuccess@sun.ac.za Please include your phone number, available times in the next two weeks, and availability via MS Teams.
Language Centre – editing and translation	Mr Cobus Snyman fpsnyman@sun.ac.za
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P. ABBREVIATIONS

CPR	Committee for Postgraduate Research in the FMHS
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training, South Africa
EC(S)	Executive Committee of SU Senate
FMHS	SU Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
HoD	Head of Department (or Division, if the supervisor is not Head of Division)
HREC	Health Research Ethics Committee, SU
PPC	Postgraduate Programme Committee (constituted per research degree or postgraduate programme or programme/s in the same subject field or per academic environment housing several programmes)
REC	Research Ethics Committee
REC: ACU	REC: Animal Care and Use, SU
REC: BES	REC: Biological and Environmental Safety, SU
SU	Stellenbosch University