



**Stellenbosch**  
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Education  
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Opvoedkunde

# Guidelines for Postgraduate Studies 2026



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## LIST OF ADDENDA

The official and most recent versions of the addenda referred to in this document can be obtained from your supervisor/promoter.

Addendum A	Guidelines for Master's or Doctoral Research Proposals
Addendum B	Memorandum of Understanding & Internal AI Declaration
Addendum C	Feedback Expectation Tool (FET)
Addendum D	Declaration of the use of Artificial Intelligence tools
Addendum E	Final Thesis Submission form

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Welcome

It is a privilege for the Faculty of Education to welcome you as a postgraduate student. We trust that this guideline document will inform you about essential aspects of your master's or doctoral study that will help you to complete it successfully.

This guideline supplements the Stellenbosch University Yearbooks [General Calendar, Part 1](#) and [Faculty of Education Calendar, Part 6](#).

## 1.2 Research

As a well-established research-intensive institution on the African continent, Stellenbosch University is making a significant contribution towards broadening the global knowledge base. Our vision is to be globally recognised as excellent, inclusive and innovative, where we advance knowledge in service of society.

Our researchers not only focus on the production of knowledge in their respective fields but also to make a real difference in society by delivering 'research for impact'. The latter remains one of our institution's main priorities, as captured in our Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024. Doing research for impact implies optimising the scientific, scholarly, economic, social, technological, political and cultural influence of SU's research.

Research is a transformative activity with the power to change the world. Stellenbosch University's academics, postdoctoral research fellows and postgraduate students, through their future-oriented and innovative ideas and work, are breaking ground to build healthy, strong and sustainable communities. We continue to push the boundaries of knowledge and possibility - which is of importance for the benefit of society, for the benefit of our country, and the globe in which we live and for which we should be responsible. Only then can we help to transform our society and make it sustainable for everyone to live in.

**Prof Sibusiso Moyo (Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies), 2024**

When a student enrolls in a specific degree programme at the University, an agreement is formed in which the University, among other things, guarantees the student that it has the necessary access to expert staff and facilities to supervise and complete the study at the required level. Concomitantly, the student agrees to fulfil his or her share of the academic obligations. In master's and doctorate courses, the relationship between lecturer and student is less constrained by the regular routine of contact sessions and testing than in undergraduate and honours programs. As a result, there is a larger risk that the agreement between the University and the student would provide unique issues for both sides.

The aim of this guideline document is to provide a general, consolidated document about postgraduate programmes at master's and doctoral level, including policies, procedures and conventions that are relevant to postgraduate students.

The broad structure of the guideline document focuses on three facets of postgraduate programmes:

- 1 Policies and procedures regarding application for admission and enrolment in the proposed study
- 2 Guidelines regarding the course of the study
- 3 Guidelines regarding the completion of the study

## 1.3 Graduate Attributes

'Graduate attributes are the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include but go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future.' (Bowden, Hart, King, Trigwell & Watts, 2000)

As a creator of sustainable hope in Africa, Stellenbosch University aspires to create the kinds of conditions that will enable each student to acquire the profile of a graduate as outlined below.

## Engaged Citizen

Our graduates understand the values underpinning critical citizenship in the South African constitution and are committed to and provide socially just leadership with the development of democracy and equity in society in whatever roles they perform professionally and personally.

## Dynamic Professional

Our graduates are pro-active change agents, able to collaboratively define and understand complexity in a variety of changing contexts within multiple plausible futures. They make responsible choices and find the best and most ethical answers to challenges in collaborative and entrepreneurial ways.

## Enquiring Learner

Our graduates are curious independent thinkers, open to learning and able to form and defend their own ideas, approaches, and values. They creatively use a variety of knowledge systems and interdisciplinary approaches that is enunciated with academic integrity in an articulate manner. They understand that education is a life-long process which requires individual discipline, responsibility, and courage.



## Caring Individual

Our graduates are aware that everyone has a responsibility for the wellbeing and flourishing of sentient and non-sentient beings and act in their professional and personal lives by taking care of themselves, other human beings, and the natural world around them.

## Digital Knower

Our graduates are digitally knowledgeable and agile individuals who function competently, critically, and ethically in the context of digital change and challenges in the world.

Text source: SU Profile of a Graduate (2023)

At the level of individual programmes, graduate attributes are further defined context-specifically in order to not only reflect the University's graduate attributes, but the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) outcomes and disciplinary and industry related specifications as well.

Furthermore, the South African Council on Higher Education (CHE) has identified in the [Doctoral Degrees Qualification Standard \(2018\)](#) two categories of graduate attributes that must be achieved and evidenced in order for the doctoral qualification to be awarded, i.e., *knowledge* attributes and *skills* attributes.

## Doctoral Graduate Attributes

### 1 Broad Knowledge

The graduate has acquired well-reformed relevant knowledge in the selected field or discipline. Through an original contribution achieved through independent study, the graduate integrates new with existing knowledge, thereby advancing the frontiers of knowledge. In addition to being well-informed about and well-versed in the literature in a chosen field, the graduate is able to make a contribution to the relevant existing debates in the field.

### 2 Specialised Knowledge

The graduate demonstrates expert, specialist, and in-depth current knowledge of a specific area of research, which will be evident in the thesis or equivalent.

### 3 Insight into Related Fields

The graduate demonstrates awareness of how the specific area of research relates, or is related, to other fields of study and practice which will be evident in the doctoral work.

### 4 Ethical Awareness

The graduate demonstrates awareness of, and compliance with, the principles of ethics in research and, where relevant, professional protocols, which will be evident in the in-depth discussion in the thesis or equivalent.

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### 9 Critical Thinking for Problem Solving

The graduate demonstrates ability to conduct research-related critical and analytical thinking, which shows an intellectual competence for problem-solving in diverse contexts, both familiar and unfamiliar.

5

### 5 Original Contribution

The graduate shows evidence of original and innovative thinking in research and, where applicable, creative practice and/or performance, which makes a special and novel contribution to the field of study.

6

### 6 Appropriate Methodologies

The graduate demonstrates knowledge of, and the ability to create and introduce, where appropriate, and to evaluate, select and apply relevant research designs, approaches, methodologies, instruments, and procedures, appropriate for the doctoral work undertaken.

7

### 7 Reflection and Autonomy

The graduate demonstrates ability to conceptualise and reflect critically, work independently, and arrive at defensible conclusions and solutions, based on appropriately substantiated and defensible premises and analysis.

8

### 8 Communication and Digital Literacy Skills

The graduate demonstrates an advanced level of communicative competence through capacity for rigorous academic writing, including relevant digital literacy skills, and ability to relate individual research with reference to, and critical analysis of, related research by others in the relevant knowledge domain(s). The graduate is able to communicate, defend and disseminate their research findings effectively to expert and non-expert audiences.

## 2. POLICY AND PROCEDURES REGARDING APPLICATION, ADMISSION & REGISTRATION

### 2.1 Application procedures

Admission to postgraduate study can only occur when you have applied online to be considered for postgraduate study. Information concerning applications, admission and enrolment is available in English and Afrikaans on the University website at [Postgraduate Studies](#). Please familiarise yourself with the closing dates for applications.

Each faculty determines its own admission requirements, with consideration given to the general admission requirements of the University. Departments can, in turn, determine their own admission requirements within this framework.

Procedures are sometimes drawn out because not all the required documentation has been submitted with the application. Therefore, ensure that you upload all the required documentation with your application, and be on the lookout for email updates from the Central Applications Office regarding the status of your application.



A student must thoroughly familiarise him-/herself with the conditions for registration as a master or doctoral student as set out in the [General Calendar, Part 1](#) and the [Faculty of Education Calendar, Part 6](#).

### 2.2 International applications

The decision about the admission of international students rests with the various departments. The [SU International Office](#) assists in the applications processes by making recommendations to help academics understand how such qualifications are aligned with South African qualifications.

### 2.3 Selection and admission requirements

Selection takes place in accordance with the requirements as set out in the [General Calendar, Part 1](#) and [Faculty of Education Calendar, Part 6](#). The number of students may, however, be limited should departments not have sufficient capacity or suitable expertise for supervision.

- a) In the case of moving from one field of study to another, for example from a BA (hons) to an MEd, you must consider the fact that master's studies (thesis approach) suppose a deepening or widening of knowledge with regard to previous studies. Additional study may be expected of applicants before the study can commence. Alternatively, modules at honours level may be required during the study. In the case of doctoral study, as far as possible, the aim is to award doctoral degrees in the subject/field in which previous postgraduate degrees have been earned.
- b) Recommendations for the admission of master's and doctoral students are made by departments if the supervisor and department are convinced:

- ✓ Of the student's ability to undertake and successfully complete the planned study, with reference to the nature and quality of their previous studies, their attitude towards research and their available time (especially in the case of part-time studies by working persons).
- ✓ Of the availability of the necessary supervision capacity and expertise, equipment, laboratory, and library facilities for the proposed study.
- ✓ Of the viability or feasibility of the proposed study.

### 2.4 Procedures for the consideration of applications for admission

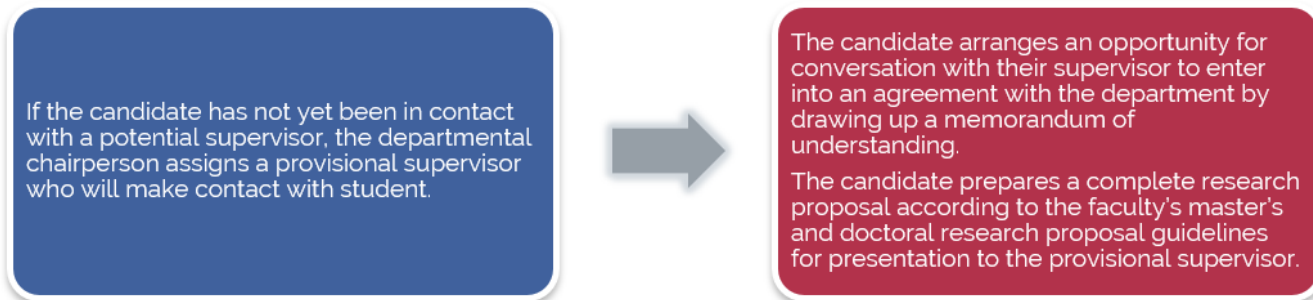
#### 2.4.1 Application and provisional admission to master's and doctoral studies *without a title*

Both current SU students and external applicants must complete an *official online application*.  
The Central Applications Office verifies that the correct documents have been uploaded.  
The SU Postgraduate Office evaluates the comparability of foreign qualifications with SA standards.



The departmental chairperson and/or selection committee considers the application according to the departmental expertise and/or capacity to supervise the research focus area.

While the chairperson may informally communicate the outcome of the application to the student, official notification of the outcome is communicated to the student by the faculty secretary via the online application portal.



### 2.4.1.1 Research proposal: Development and defence

In the case of a *master's study*, the proposal development process can normally take up to a year. However, with *doctoral studies*, there is a stricter timeframe. Because it is possible for the student to register without a title, the title, and by implication the research proposal, must be approved by the Faculty Board *within a year*. Practically, this means that a student can, for example, *register without a title* in 2026, which implies that the research proposal must be approved before the first Faculty Board meeting of 2027. It is, therefore, in your best interest to register early in the year so that you have enough time to develop the proposal and have it approved.

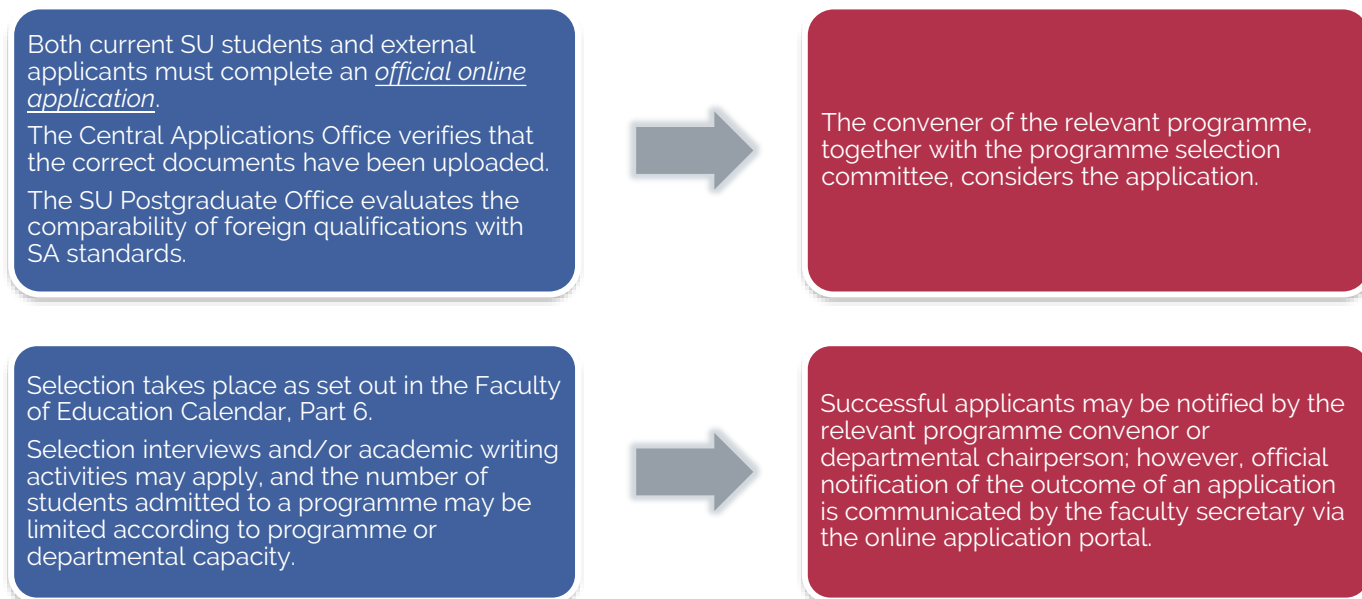


In the case of *doctoral proposals*, following approval by the department M&D committee, the following applies:



Students are expected to regularly meet and discuss their studies with their allocated supervisors throughout this process.

## 2.4.2 Application and admission to structured master's study programmes (coursework and mini thesis)



## 2.5 Availability of facilities and services

The nature of your study will determine what facilities and services you will require. The University provides both online and physical access to the SU Library and other services offered to registered SU students. Access to hardware and software needs to be negotiated with supervisors and departmental chairs as applicable. It is, naturally, necessary to find out whether your study can be done within the Faculty of Education at all.

- a) In the case of laboratory and computer facilities, written confirmation will be provided to you regarding which facilities can be made available on what basis. Costs for which the student is personally responsible (consumable goods, as well as equipment, travel, and accommodation costs) need to be budgeted for and specified in the research proposal.
- b) In the case of library facilities for specialised studies, it may be necessary to contact the [Library and Information Services](#). District cooperation agreements exist among libraries so that it is possible to cater for needs in areas for which strong collections are not locally available. *Ms Hanlie Strydom, Faculty Librarian*, can also be contacted in this regard at 021-808 4424 or [hanlies@sun.ac.za](mailto:hanlies@sun.ac.za).

## 2.6 Financial matters for postgraduate studies

- a) Students can contact the office for [Postgraduate Funding Office](#) at 021-808 4208, or by emailing [postgradfunding@sun.ac.za](mailto:postgradfunding@sun.ac.za).
- b) The financial provision of the student remains his/her own responsibility. The University will attempt, as far as possible, to make available bursaries for students who undertake postgraduate study.
- c) Where institutions (statutory boards, bodies that finance studies or private institutions) make bursaries available to students and prefer to do so through the University's administrative channels, the arrangement is usually that the University only pays out the remainder, after the study and accommodation costs to the University have been paid off to the student. Please ensure that institutions or government bodies that provide you with a bursary that is administered through the University's systems are aware of this arrangement. You must also inform your supervisor should such institutions require frequent progress reports. In such cases, you must provide your supervisor/promoter with the name and contact information of the relevant functionary.

## 2.7 Continued registration of postgraduate programmes

Students must register as students every year for the full duration of their study until the relevant degree is awarded to them. Should such students, before being awarded the relevant degree, fail to register as students before the prescribed date in any year, their registration will lapse, and in the case of master's and doctoral students, so will the topic of their thesis/dissertation. Should such students wish to be readmitted to the relevant degree programme, they will have to apply for admission and register for the programme anew and will have to pay all required fees of the relevant programme once again.

See section **8. Continuation of registration for postgraduate programmes** in the [General Calendar, Part 1](#) for information on the stipulations and financial conditions under which you would be allowed to re-register after a period of non-registration.

A degree cannot be awarded at the March/April graduation to a student who was not registered for the previous year. Such a student can receive a declaration that he/she complies with all the requirements and that the degree will be awarded in March/April of the following year, on condition that the student registers and pays study fees in time for the year in which the degree is awarded.

If there are valid reasons why you cannot register, you may request to be allowed to interrupt your study. This is what we discuss next.

## 2.8 Interruption of study

### 2.8.1 Acceptable reasons for interruption of study

The following acceptable reasons serve as guidelines when a request must be considered to interrupt the study for a master's or doctoral degree:

Work circumstances	Medical reasons
Financial reasons	Very special, well-motivated personal circumstances

All requests must be motivated with relevant supporting documents. Such documents include, among others: letters of appointment, work assignments, medical certificates, financial statements, affidavits, etc.

### 2.8.2 Procedure to apply for an interruption of studies

The following extract from the [General Calendar, Part 1](#) applies:

- 13.2.3 Applications for interruption of studies for postgraduate programmes must be recommended by your supervisor or programme leader and the chairperson of the department concerned and must be submitted by the departmental chairperson to the relevant governance structures of the faculty, including the faculty board.
  - 13.2.3.1 The relevant faculty board must consider the application based on its internal procedures and communicate the outcome in the next Communications Report of the faculty board to Senate.
  - 13.2.3.2 The faculty administrator or their delegate should enter the recommendation regarding an approved application for interruption under Academic Topics/Student Notes on your golden record in SUNStudent. This entry must include the year of and reasons for the interruption.
  - 13.2.3.3 The relevant faculty administrator or their delegate will communicate the outcome of your interruption application in writing by email, after the relevant faculty board has considered your application and after the request was approved by the Executive Committee (Senate).
- 13.2.4 An interruption of studies may be granted for a full academic year (i.e. starting in January and ending in December) and not for parts of an academic year. Leave of absence for shorter periods (i.e. less than a full academic year) must be handled according to the rules for "Absence from academic activities" earlier on in this Yearbook part.
- 13.2.5 An interruption of studies may be granted once at the most for a period of one full academic year (i.e. starting in January and ending in December) for the following programmes:
  - 13.2.5.1 Undergraduate bachelor's degrees, diplomas or certificates
  - 13.2.5.2 Honours degrees and postgraduate diplomas
  - 13.2.5.3 Master's degrees
- 13.2.6 An interruption of studies for the degree of Doctor may be granted either twice at the most, namely for a period of one academic year (i.e. starting in January and ending in December) in each instance, or once only, namely for a period of two academic years.

## 2.9 Sensitive theses and dissertations

This matter is addressed at length in the [General Calendar, Part 1](#).

### 3. THE COURSE OF YOUR DEGREE

#### SIMPLIFIED FLOWCHART OF THE COURSE OF FULL-THESIS STUDIES



#### 3.1 A code of conduct for student and supervisor/promoter

The [General Calendar, Part 1](#) clearly spells out what the responsibilities of the supervisor/promoter and the student are. In the Faculty of Education, we have summarised this code of conduct in the form of a *memorandum of agreement*. Each student and supervisor/promoter *must* sign this document. It is not a contract, but it will help you to know what is expected of you and your supervisor/promoter. See [Addendum B](#) for this document.

Additionally, you and your supervisor may initially have different expectations regarding giving and receiving feedback during your research journey. It may, therefore, be helpful if both student and supervisor completed and discussed the *Feedback Expectation Tool (FET)* (Stracke & Kumar, 2019). See [Addendum C](#) for this document.

#### 3.2 Student email address

Always use your official SUN email address whenever you communicate with staff at the University ([studentnumber@sun.ac.za](mailto:studentnumber@sun.ac.za)). This will assist in the smooth running of the various systems and procedures in place in the University and allow staff to more easily address any questions or concerns you may have. Additionally, it is this email address which gives you access to the libraries, the Research Ethics website, and platforms such as SUNLearn, SUNStudent and MS Teams.

#### 3.3 Where does my research begin?

##### 3.3.1 Research proposals: Purpose and content

When you have been admitted and start to talk about the study to your supervisor/promoter, the first step is to write a research proposal. This process has two purposes:

- a) To give you an overview of the field of study and the problems experienced in the field so that you can ask research questions that are relevant and find methods to answer the questions.
- b) To convince a committee that you are capable of undertaking such a study, a research proposal must contain at least the following:
  - a research topic
  - a description of the research problem and the proposed delimitation of the field of study, with an overview of core and recent national and international literature
  - a description of the nature of the research
  - the objective(s) of the research project
  - the motivation for the research project

- a brief overview of the relevant scholarly literature on the subject
- the proposed research procedure and methodology
- a research programme schedule
- a description of the possible value of the study to the relevant field of study
- a preliminary bibliography/reference list

The length of a research proposal for a full-thesis master's study is usually between 4000 and 6000 words. For a doctoral study, it can be between 6000 and 8000 words. You need to discuss the scope of your proposal with your supervisor/promoter.

Please note the following when submitting your research proposal for review:

- a) Include page one of the *Guidelines for Master's or Doctoral Research Proposals (Addendum A)* as the first page of your research proposal.
- b) Consider the quality of the document you are submitting for review – your proposal should be neatly formatted and free of spelling and language errors.
- c) Be sure to have followed up with your supervisor/promoter about the deadlines for submission; delays in having your proposal reviewed and approved may result in issues related to re-registration in terms of SU regulations.

### 3.3.2 Feedback and revisions

You can expect to receive the research proposal back several times from your supervisor/promoter for revision. Formulating such a proposal within the given word count restriction is an art, and it requires revision and a clear focus.

If your supervisor/promoter is satisfied with the proposal, it is submitted to a departmental review committee for feedback. The committee may require that you present your proposal and discuss it with a review panel so that problematic aspects of the proposed field of study or topic can be discussed with you.

In the case of *master's proposals*, departmental review committees make a recommendation to the Faculty Board on whether a study can proceed and on the appointment of suitable supervisors. In the case of *doctoral proposals*, the department plays a formative role in proposal development. Doctoral candidates are invited to defend their study proposals at the Faculty Standing Committee on Research and Postgraduate Studies (SCRPS), whereafter the student's application for admission to an advanced degree study is accepted or rejected.

Please see sections 1.2 and 1.3 in the *Guidelines for Master's or Doctoral Research Proposals (Addendum A)* for more information on the review and feedback processes at departmental and faculty levels. Proposal development and feedback are useful learning experiences. We encourage you to see this as foundational support for your research journey and the eventual examination of your study. Furthermore, the presentation and defence of doctoral proposals before SCRPS should be seen as a bookend to the compulsory oral examination (*viva voce*) at the end of the examination process.

Should an applicant's research proposal not be accepted, the person can receive a further opportunity to submit an improved proposal. The supervisor/promoter/departmental chair will communicate the reasons for the rejection of the proposal to the candidate. The date on which the second proposal is submitted and approved will determine whether the person will still be able to register as a student in the relevant year. Should the second proposal also be rejected, the person will only be able to submit a new proposal after a certain amount of time prescribed by the department. Sometimes, it may be required that a student must first comply with specific conditions, such as directed literature study, completing a postgraduate module, or obtaining a language qualification.

If a candidate's proposal is not successfully defended (to the relevant department at master's level, and to SCRPS at doctoral level) within the first year of registration, the student will not be allowed to reregister.

### 3.3.3 Proposal approval and title registration

You will be informed by your supervisor(s) when the proposal has been approved and accepted by the Faculty Board. The research topic is registered after approval by the Senate and may not be changed without permission from the Faculty Board and Senate. At this stage, you need to arrange an opportunity for a conversation with the supervisor(s) in order to enter into an agreement with the department in respect of the completion of the study.

### 3.3.4 Next steps


It is the responsibility of the postgraduate student to arrange regular meetings (in-person or online) with his/her supervisor(s). Responsibilities of both the student and the supervisor/promoter to each other and in respect of the study must be discussed as set out in the memorandum of agreement of the Faculty of Education (*Addendum B*).

It is important to discuss the necessity of ethical clearance and gatekeeper/institutional permission with your supervisor/promoter. This process should start as early as possible because the University's Research Ethics Committee needs to consider many applications and only meets on [specified dates](#). Please see section 3.6 below for more information.

### 3.3.5 Thesis and dissertation format options

For a master's or doctoral study, you have two format options: by **monograph** thesis or by **publication**.

The faculty regulations below are in addition to the guidelines in the [General Calendar, Part 1](#) on dissertation formats (*Postgraduate Qualifications* 6.9 Dissertation requirements). Please see [General | 2026 Postgraduate Support Initiative | Microsoft Teams](#) for additional information and resources on thesis by publication.

	Full thesis (monograph)	By publication
Master's study	Typically contains separate chapters that form a coherent whole.	The manuscript must have <b>a minimum of two distinct chapters</b> in the form of peer-reviewed <i>publishable</i> and/or published conference proceedings, journal articles and/or book chapters.
	The length is approximately 40 000 – 60 000 words.	The final manuscript consists of two wrap-around chapters – the first is an orientation to the study, and the last an integrated response to the research purposes/questions/ hypotheses.
Doctoral study	Full thesis (monograph)	By publication
	Typically contains separate chapters that form a coherent whole.	The manuscript should contain <b>at least three</b> <i>publishable</i> articles/book chapters or peer-reviewed conference proceedings with bookend chapters to contextualize the study and provide detailed information about methodology and theoretical framework(s).
	The length is approximately 70 000 – 90 000 words.	Included chapters (except for the wrap-around chapters) are suitable for publication, have been submitted for publication, or have already been published as published conference proceedings, journal articles, and/or book chapters.
		The authorship, nature, and scope of contribution to each article needs to be clearly indicated in accordance with the regulations of the <a href="#">General Calendar, Part 1</a> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The student must be the first author for two of the three chapters</li> <li>b) The student's intellectual contribution must be clearly stated</li> <li>c) The wrap-around chapters must be single authored.</li> </ul>
 Only articles or other research outputs that originated after you registered for the PhD study may be incorporated, or if your master's study is converted to a doctoral study, only articles that originated after you registered for that particular master's degree.		

### 3.3.6 Guidelines (and not requirements) regarding the scope of theses and dissertations

Doctoral dissertation	70 000 – 90 000 words	About 150 – 230 pages
100% master's thesis (180 credits)	40 000 – 60 000 words	About 100 – 110 pages
Master's mini thesis (credit load depends on the specific programme - see Yearbook for details)	20 000 – 30 000 words	About 90 pages

## 3.4 Use of Artificial Intelligence

AI applications can be beneficial learning aides and time-saving tools, when used appropriately. Please see the [Draft interim SU guidelines on allowable AI use](#) and [Ethical use of Artificial Intelligence in Research and Teaching-Learning-Assessment](#) for information on referencing, citation, and declaring AI use.

At the onset of your study, and throughout the process of your study, a memorandum of understanding (Addendum B.) guides your research activities and engagement with your supervisor(s). Importantly, this document includes a consideration and confirmation of how you employ AI in and throughout your study.

In addition, the Faculty of Education has, in alignment with institutional requirements, also drawn up a template for the declaration of the use of Artificial Intelligence tools in the preparation and completion of a research assignment, master's thesis or doctoral dissertation (Addendum D). This template must be included as an addendum to a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation when it is submitted for examination.

### 3.5 POPIA Compliance Framework for Research

The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) has published a [POPIA Compliance Framework for Research](#) - a set of voluntary, practical guidelines developed to help researchers, research institutions, and ethics committees interpret and apply the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) in the context of research activities. Please visit the website to download the framework and view the responses to frequently asked questions.

### 3.6 Ethical clearance

All students who do any form of empirical research that involves people, and/or their personal information must, aside from the approval of their research proposal by the research committees of the Faculty of Education, also get ethical clearance from the University's Research Ethics Committee (REC) regarding the empirical portion of their research. Ethical clearance must be obtained for all research that students do under the University's name. This also applies to research undertaken internationally or at other institutions.

#### 3.6.1 How do I apply?

The procedures and forms to obtain ethical clearance are available on the University's website. Visit [Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioural and Education Research](#) for access to the online application procedure for ethical clearance with regard to the humanities. Please familiarize yourself with the information and resources available at the tabs below on the REC website.



The dates on which the committee meets are also indicated on the landing page, so that you can plan when to upload the application. These dates mainly apply to submission of research involving minors, or where the study is assessed as medium or high risk. Students should consult with their department's Ethics Screening Committee (DESC) regarding their internal dates for submission and review.

#### 3.5.2 What should I include in the application?

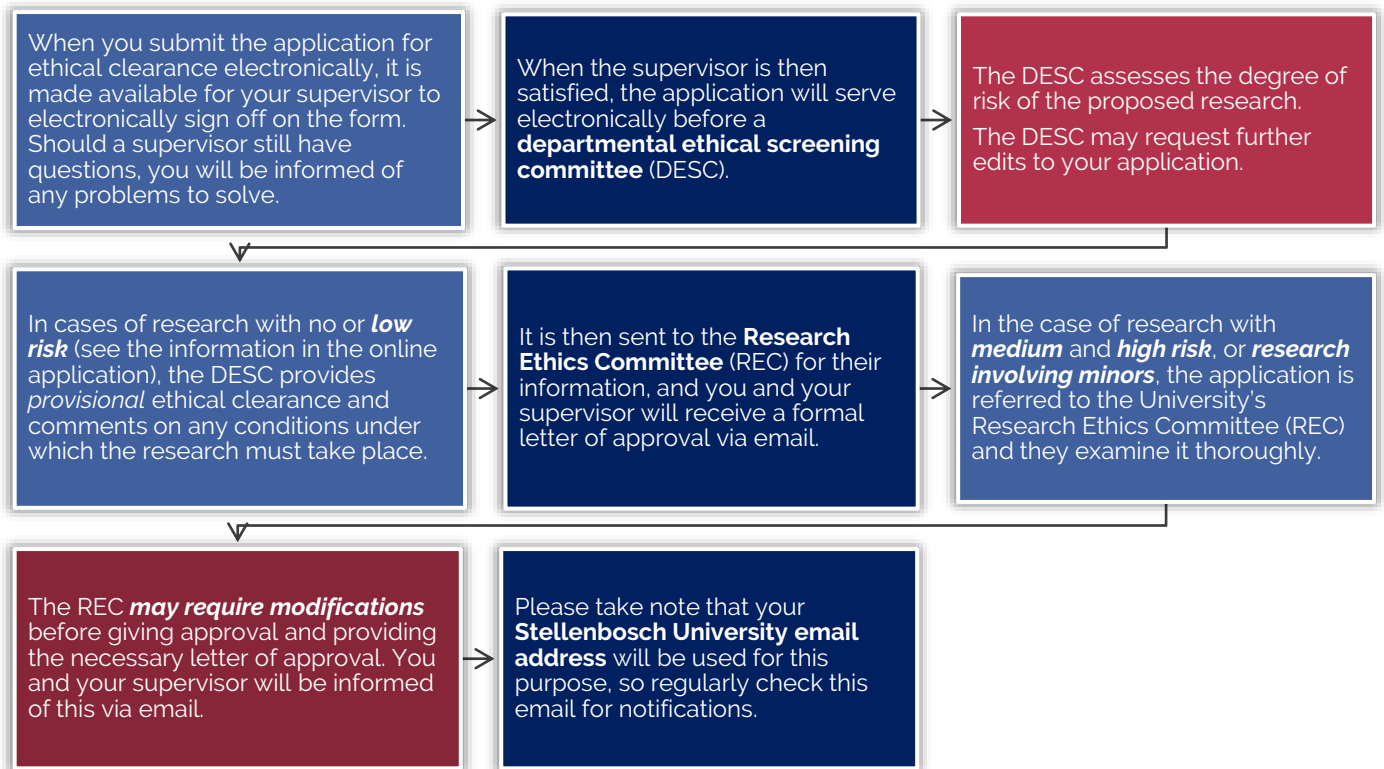
All applications for ethical clearance must be accompanied by at least the following documents:

- a) an approved research proposal
- b) permission from the principal of a school or institution where you want to conduct the research
- c) in the case of schools, permission from the provincial authorities
- d) the instruments that you will use to do the research (questionnaires, interview schedules, etc.)
- e) an informed consent form that you will use when you distribute your questionnaires or conduct interviews or work with children
- f) completed privacy impact assessment (visit the Division for Information Policy's webpage at [Governance of Personal Information](#))

If you work with underage children, you will have to give an informed *assent* form to the children (please see the web address above for more details) and an informed consent form to the parents/guardians of the children. It is extremely important that, if you want to use a whole class for your research, every single parent/guardian gives consent for their child to take part. Please see the *section 3.2.2* of the [National Health Research Ethics Council guidelines](#) (NDoH 2024) for the legal requirements around research involving children.

If you will only analyse documents that are freely available (on the internet, for example), you do not have to apply for ethical clearance. However, as soon as you want to use documents that you can only access because you are a staff member or somebody's confidant, you must also apply for ethical clearance and the relevant participants in your study must provide their informed consent that you can use the documents.

### 3.6.2 The application cycle



In all cases, the approval of the REC must be kept safely, because it must be attached as an addendum to the final thesis when it is submitted for examination.

For enquiries regarding the REC application process, you can contact the REC helpdesk on [applyethics@sun.ac.za](mailto:applyethics@sun.ac.za). For technical guidance, please contact Ms Jennifer de Beer on [jad@sun.ac.za](mailto:jad@sun.ac.za).

### 3.7 Referencing

Consistency is key! Please see the [Library Guide](#) and [Education Library Guide](#) for tips and resources related to referencing. Most faculties use the *Stellenbosch Harvard Referencing Style* which is also available on ENDNOTE.

Furthermore, the Faculty of Education requires that each source cited in a list of references must have an active DOI or web link so that it can be more easily checked during supervision, in language editing, and during examination.

### 3.8 Plagiarism and Turnitin

Plagiarism is the adoption and use of the ideas, material, or other intellectual property of other persons as though it is your own work. Intellectual property includes, among others:

**Literary works**, which include articles, books, theses, dissertations, newspapers, magazines, notes, course material, fellow students' assignments, email messages, data, computer code, internet sources, spoken text, which includes speeches, cassette recordings, lectures, interviews, etc.

**Artistic works**, which include sculptural and graphical art, photos, etc.

**Multimedia products**, which include websites, video productions, films, CDs, design projects, etc.

**Musical works**, which include compositions, lyrics, DVDs, music or soundbites on the internet, etc.

In terms of SU's management of offences with regard to plagiarism, offences are divided into three broad categories:

**Category 1:** Minor offences that may be considered as ignorance, carelessness, or inaccuracy in dealings with and acknowledgement of sources, but that are nonetheless plagiarism.

**Category 2:** Less blatant cases, where sources/work/materials are dealt with injudiciously, that are, naturally, still plagiarism. Category 1 and 2 offences are normally managed by the department in the case of students. Repeated

category 2 offences may, in the case of students, be referred to the Central Disciplinary Committee (CDC), and will, in the case of staff, be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Code for Staff (refer to less serious offences).

**Category 3:** Blatant cases, in other words where the work/material of another person is adopted and used in a deliberate and conscious manner. In the case of students, these cases are normally referred to the CDC, and in the case of staff, they are dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Code for Staff (refer to serious offences).

SU's [policy approach](#) is based on developing or sensitising students to plagiarism, with consideration of the [SU Teaching and Learning Policy](#) (see [General Calendar, Part 1](#) and the library's [plagiarism libguide](#).)

Every postgraduate student can make use of similarity detection software such as [Turnitin](#) to ensure that no text that is not properly cited has slipped through. When the thesis document is finalised for submission, it must be put through Turnitin (*please use the sandbox function for this purpose*), and the report must be made available to the supervisor/promoter. Since there are usually a large number of quotations in a dissertation, the software program will, therefore, find a high percentage of similarities with existing *articles and books*. However, the issue of using a similarity index as a proxy for plagiarism (in whatever form) is a somewhat problematic issue (see [The Misuses Of Turnitin And Other Text-Matching Software](#)).

### 3.9 What happens if I want to change my study?

Your research topic is registered after the Senate of the University has also approved it and, thereafter, it may not be adjusted without permission from the Faculty Board and/or Senate.

If, for any reason, you are no longer able to or no longer wish to continue with the study provided in your research proposal, it is possible to adjust the proposal or even start a new study. Adjustments or new proposals are managed like all new proposals and must go through the relevant committees. If the title of a doctoral study needs to be adjusted, it is presented to the Faculty Board through the promoter with motivation via the relevant postgraduate committee and the faculty secretary. The Faculty Board must recommend it before the Executive Committee (Senate) and Senate approve it.

The adjustment of a master's project's title and/or topic is concluded by the relevant department.

### 3.10 Conversion of enrolment from master's degree to a doctorate

In rare cases it is possible to convert a master's to a doctoral study. Please study [1.2 Conversion from master's to doctorate](#) in the [General Calendar, Part 1](#) for a more detailed description of the circumstances where such a conversion request may apply.

### 3.11 Academic grievances

Please visit the Postgraduate Office website for more information on [grievance procedures for postgraduate students](#).

#### Definitions

An **academic grievance** is any matter related to alleged unreasonable treatment in the presentation of programmes (among others, vagueness about student expectations), the learning environment and educational media, the evaluation of modules, supervision for theses, or any form of discrimination or dishonesty in academic context.

A grievance about the use of students' **research** is any grievance in connection with the publication or co-publication of students' research or theses, or the use of students' research by the University, supervisors or lecturers.

**Administrative grievances** are grievances in connection with eventualities such as the choice of modules, programmes, thesis supervision, registration, student fees, etc.

### 3.12 Management of grievances

Students must make use of the following channels and procedures to air their grievances. Please note that the [relevant route form](#) **must** be completed and frequently updated. The request will be referred back if this procedure has not been followed.

#### 3.12.1 Academic grievances

Discuss it with the relevant lecturer/supervisor, or (if the member prefers it this way or the problem is still not solved) complete a form for academic grievances and submit it to the relevant lecturer/supervisor. The aggrieved student may also request a class representative to represent him/her in the matter. The aggrieved student must follow the following procedure, either personally or through his/her class representative:

- a) Discuss the grievance form with the lecturer/supervisor to reach an agreement about the required steps to manage the grievance and solve the problem. A copy of the grievance form is subsequently handed in to the departmental chair, or the Vice-Dean (Research) if the departmental chair is involved in the grievance. If the problem is not solved,
- b) consult the departmental chair, and if the problem is still not solved,
- c) consult the Dean or Vice-Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies). If the problem is still not solved, the student can, as last resort,
- d) consult the Vice-Rector (Academic) in the case of grievances related to thesis work, research, or publication, or
- e) the Vice-Rector (Academic) in the case of grievances related to course modules.

In the case of group grievances, the procedure in terms of academic grievances should be followed:

- a) The Vice-Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies) or Vice-Rector (Academic) (for grievances related to thesis work, research, or publication), or Vice-Dean (Teaching) or Vice-Rector (Academic) (for grievances related to course modules), can investigate the grievance in any appropriate manner, for example by appointing a committee or assigning a suitable person to investigate specific academic grievances. Such a committee or person must manage the grievance independently and confidentially.
- b) Grievances must be managed as speedily as possible and the person who submitted the grievance must receive feedback.



Aggrieved students may, under exceptional circumstances, skip a step in the abovementioned order of events and move on to the next step, provided that this decision is explained. This explanation must appear in the section "Description of complaint/problem" on the form for academic grievance procedures.

### 3.12.2 Administrative grievances

Approach the faculty secretary of the Faculty of Education (with regard to module choice, registration and programmes) or the University's Student Fees Division (with regard to student fees), and if the problem is not solved, contact the Registrar.

## 4. COMPLETION AND SUBMISSION OF THE THESIS OR DISSERTATION BEFORE AND AFTER THE EXAMINATION PROCESS

### 4.1 Document layout for theses and dissertations

The [General Calendar, Part 1](#) contains lengthy information and strict requirements on the format of the dissertation/thesis in terms of the first few pages (for example, the declaration that the work is your own, summaries in English and Afrikaans, etc.). If articles are included in your thesis/dissertation, please refer to *6.9 Dissertation requirements* in the [General Calendar, Part 1](#) to ensure that you adhere to the declaration requirements regarding the nature and scope of your and any co-author(s)' contribution to the publications.

Important guidelines for the submission of theses/dissertations are also available on the library website at [Thesis/dissertation submission](#).

The Faculty of Education has had thesis/dissertation templates drawn up according to institutional guidelines. These templates can be downloaded from the *Postgraduate Support Initiative* team on MS Teams.

Document layout for theses and dissertations	
Title page	
Declaration ( <i>Do not add your signature to the bottom of the declaration.</i> )	
Abstract in the language of the thesis/dissertation (max. 500 words) Additional abstract (optional): In second language (max. 500 words)	
Acknowledgements (sponsors, family, etc.)	
Table of contents	
List of figures	
List of tables	
Content (e.g. Chapter 1, Chapter 2, etc.)	
List of references (See <a href="#">Referencing techniques</a> )	
Addenda including confirmation of language editing (e.g. Addendum A, Addendum B, etc.)	

Appearance	
<b>Font type</b>	Cambria or Calibri
<b>Font size</b>	10, 11 or 12 font size
<b>Font colour</b>	Black
<b>Line spacing</b>	Double, Single or 1.5
<b>Margins</b>	Blank border of not less than 2 cm in width around the whole of the typewritten portion.
<b>Paper size</b>	A4

### 4.2 Language editing of theses and dissertations

The office of the Vice-Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies) has funding available in support of the language editing of master's theses (R5 000) and doctoral dissertations (R10 000). A list of editors already loaded as vendors on the SUNFin system is available on the *Postgraduate Support Initiative* team on MS Teams.

If the invoice you receive is for more than the amounts stipulated above, the editor should issue two invoices:

- One invoice for the office of the Vice-Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies) for no more than the relevant stipulated amount (supervisors will inform students on the amount available, as it is subject to annual changes). This invoice should be sent to the administrator at the Office of the Vice-Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies) and your supervisor copied in on the email.
- The balance of the original invoice will be for the postgraduate student's account.

#### Please note:

- ❖ According to institutional financial regulations, invoices submitted for reimbursement cannot be more than 3 months old.
- ❖ The Vice-Dean's office cannot accommodate the payment of multiple invoices for editorial work done in stages. One invoice, not exceeding the relevant amount stipulated above, should be submitted to Mrs Swartz once all editorial work on the thesis has been finalised.

The Office of the Vice-Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies) also has funding available to assist with the cost of the translation of abstracts into second and third languages, including indigenous and non-indigenous home languages. Students should contact the [SU Language Centre](#) timeously should they require translation assistance.

- According to institutional regulations, the first abstract should be in the language of the thesis; the second abstract, should it be included, should be in either English, Afrikaans or isiXhosa as appropriate.
- Additional abstracts in a third language are at the discretion of the student and supervisor.
- The Language Centre invoice for the translation of a thesis or dissertation abstract should be sent to the administrator at the Office of the Vice-Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies) and your supervisor copied in on the email.

### 4.3 Deadlines for submission for examination

To complete the examination in time for a specific graduation, it is important to plan carefully and keep to the prescribed submission dates as closely as possible. These dates are revised every year; please see the information on postgraduate processes and timelines available for download from the *Postgraduate Support Initiative* team on MS Teams and discuss these timelines with your supervisor(s) to check their availability to attend your thesis work.

The following steps for the finalisation of your study must be taken into consideration:

<b>Timeline for graduation in March/April</b> <i>(based on a willing supervisor/promoter and unproblematic thesis or dissertation)</i>	
<b>Middle June:</b>	First full concept document to the supervisor.
<b>First week of July:</b>	Receive feedback from supervisor, revise (2-3 weeks).
<b>Final week of July:</b>	Back to supervisor for final oversight and permission to have language edited.
<b>Beginning of August:</b>	Document to language editor (usually two weeks for 150 – 250 pages).
<b>Last week of August:</b>	Work through language editor's suggestions; ensure that all problems are addressed.
<b>First week of September:</b>	Finalise the document and submit it to your supervisor.
<b>1 October 2026</b>	Final day for the Postgraduate Office to send <b>master's theses</b> and <b>PhD dissertations</b> to examiners in anticipation of graduation in April 2027.

As from 2026, Stellenbosch University will hold graduation ceremonies in **March/April only**.

**i** Master's theses and doctoral dissertations can be submitted for examination at any time (*although submissions later in the year may have implications for registration and graduation in the subsequent year*), provided that examiners have been:

- a) appointed by the departmental M&D Committee, in the case of master's studies, or the Standing Committee Research and Postgraduate Studies (SCRPS), in the case of doctoral studies, and
- b) recommended by Faculty Board.

## 4.4 Examination

### 4.4.1 Before submission

Theses and dissertations can only be submitted for examination by your supervisor once they feel satisfied that your thesis/dissertation is ready for examination.

Once your supervisor has confirmed that your study is ready for examination, you will need to complete the first page of the Final Thesis Submission form (Addendum E) and submit this to your supervisor along with your study and Turnitin report. Your supervisor will then submit your thesis/dissertation to the Postgraduate Office on your behalf along with your Turnitin report and the submission form which has been co-signed by the relevant departmental chairperson.

### 4.4.2 After submission

Once the Postgraduate Office has sent your thesis away for examination, examiners have *at least* 6 weeks to read your thesis and submit their report (in the case of master's studies) or initial recommendation (in the case of doctoral studies).

It is, however, important to keep in mind that the closer to the end of an academic year one submits a study for examination, the longer the examination process can potentially take. In some cases, there may be delays due to examiners' work or personal circumstances, and we generally expect delays to examiner feedback due to their own year-end processes or if the examination timeline extends over the holiday period.



Candidates are expected **not** to contact examiners about any aspect of the thesis/dissertation after final submission and before the announcement of the result. Students and/or supervisors who make themselves guilty of such misconduct may be prosecuted through disciplinary means.

## 4.5 Oral examination: PhD candidates (*and master's candidates in specific cases*)

### 4.5.1 Why an oral examination?

At Stellenbosch University an oral examination takes place after the examination of the doctoral dissertation. It is sometimes called an oral defence or a *viva* (from the Latin *viva voce*, which means 'in a live voice'). The examination is meant to showcase the candidate's mastery of their subject, including the main argument, the procedures, and the findings of the study. In South Africa, the oral also aims to consolidate the examiners' assessment of the thesis so as to ensure that there is consensus about the outcome of the initial examination process.

### 4.5.2 Who arranges and attends the oral examination?

The oral examination can continue when at least two of the examiners recommended an outcome 1 or 2. The examination is arranged and overseen by a non-examining chair and is administered by at least two of the three examiners. Should an external examiner not be able to participate, his or her comments and questions must be sent to the non-examining chair of the examination committee prior to the oral exam so that they can be posed during the oral.

While your supervisor(s) is (are) allowed to attend the oral, they may not participate in any way.

### 4.5.3 What are the outcome options?

The examiners must reach a consensus decision on one of following outcomes<sup>1</sup>:

- 1) The candidate should be awarded the degree subject to addressing the minor corrections/comments and typographical errors raised by the examiner(s), to the satisfaction of the supervisor.
- 2) The candidate should be awarded the degree subject to substantive changes being made to the dissertation to the satisfaction of the supervisor.
- 3) The candidate should be invited to address the major concerns of the examiner(s) and to revise and resubmit the thesis for re-examination.
- 4) The degree should not be awarded to the candidate.

### 4.5.4 Resubmission after obtaining a symbol 3

The following extract from the [Faculty of Education Calendar, Part 6](#) applies:

If, after an oral examination and based on consensus, the PhD examination panel awards you a 3, you may resubmit your dissertation for examination.

- a) If you then get a 2 (i.e. more than editorial amendments) or a 1 (editorial amendments) at your second submission, you may improve the dissertation as specified by the examination panel. Your promotor will then sign off on these improvements so that the degree may be conferred.

The implication of this is that you get a maximum of three opportunities to submit your PhD dissertation if, at your second submission, you get a symbol smaller than a 3.

- b) If for the second time the examination panel awards a symbol 3 based on a consensus decision, the symbol will automatically change to a symbol 4. This means the PhD is not awarded. A non-examining chair may, on the grounds of special considerations or circumstances, request that the decision not to award the degree be referred to the relevant committee of the Faculty of Education for consideration and a ruling.

The implication of this is that you get only two opportunities to submit a PhD dissertation for examination if you get a symbol 3 for a second time.

### 4.5.4 Master's candidates

Please note that an oral is generally *not* required for a master's degree, except in contentious cases, for example when there are significant discrepancies in the marks allocated by the examiners. In such cases, similar requirements and procedures are followed as for the PhD.

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<sup>1</sup> Joint degrees are subject to amended criteria as negotiated between the institutions concerned.

## 4.6 Electronic submission of theses/dissertations ahead of graduation

### 4.6.1 Policy on electronic submission of theses/dissertations

Stellenbosch University's policy regarding electronic submission of theses and dissertations:
The electronic submission of theses and dissertations is compulsory.
Submit the final copy (after examination and corrections) by <b>the last week of February</b> for the <b>April 2027</b> graduation ceremonies.
No printed copies are required (except for candidates' personal use or if a supervisor requests it).
Limited access (give motivation to faculty secretary for presentation to Senate).
Intellectual information (including copyright) – copyright belongs to Stellenbosch University.
Plagiarism (Turnitin-Viper-Plag Tracker).

Each master's thesis and doctoral dissertation is required to be submitted electronically using [SUNStudent Academia](#), once it has been examined and before graduation. Theses and dissertations should be created according to the general rules as set out in the [General Calendar, Part 1](#).

### 4.6.2 Format for electronic submission

A candidate whose thesis/dissertation passes examination, prepares the document for furnishing in PDF format:

- making all the revisions considered necessary and as specified during the examination process to the satisfaction of the supervisor(s) and/or examiners (as is specified as an outcome of the examination process); and
- ensuring that the document has the correct layout, formatting and other compulsory requirements as set out in 4.1 above.
- save the document by using the following file naming convention:
  - surname\_studentnumber\_2021.docx* (e.g. *dutoit\_12345678\_2021.docx*)

Only then can the supervisor(s) certify the text as final. A text that meets the requirements and is certified as such is known as the "*master copy for submission*". The thesis/dissertation is uploaded by the supervisor/promoter or administrative staff to [SUNStudent Academia](#).

### 4.6.3 Process for electronic submission

The process, in brief, is as follows on the [Library and Information Service website](#):

- The final thesis or dissertation must be submitted in PDF format.
- Log onto [SUNStudent Academia](#).
- Click on **Examinations**, then click **Thesis Management**.
- The supervisor/promoter or administrative staff *nominates* the candidate.
- Please make use of **Remarks** to indicate the *month and year of graduation*.
- The thesis/dissertation is *uploaded* by the supervisor/promoter or administrative staff.
- The supervisor/promoter or administrative staff *approves* the submission.
- The thesis/dissertation will be publicly accessible on [SUNScholar](#) following graduation.

**Queries:** Paulette Talliard Tel.: 021 808 9046 /9139 or email [scholar@sun.ac.za](mailto:scholar@sun.ac.za).

## 4.7 Ownership of research



Any research results, as well as any other information collected during a student's study at the Faculty of Education of the University of Stellenbosch, remains the property of the University. Should the results or a portion of the thesis or dissertation be published in an accredited education journal, it must be done in cooperation with the relevant supervisor(s) and the name of the relevant department and faculty must be mentioned.

- The University strongly encourages students who are busy with research to make contributions in the form of papers or poster presentations at conferences in the relevant field.
- The University encourages lecturers who work closely with their research students to, as co-authors with their students, excerpt articles for journals of international quality from their theses or dissertations and publish such under the address of the University.
- Wherever at all applicable and possible, the University encourages departments to strive to have one or more publications from a master's thesis published in an accredited journal.

- d) The University requests supervisors to encourage their PhD candidates, where possible and applicable and with consideration given to the University's requirements in this regard, to submit one or more articles about their research results for publication in accredited journals before entering them for examination, or thereafter.
- e) Leave to publish research results from theses/dissertations must be obtained from the relevant dean/vice-dean or his/her delegate, on recommendation of the departmental chair and the supervisor/promoter.
- f) Students must be reminded to explicitly report their attachment to the University of Stellenbosch in these publications, otherwise the University forfeits any subsidy from these publications.

#### 4.8 Publication of master's research essays and theses

The current policy relating to the ownership of any intellectual property (e.g. copyright), which is created within the normal course and scope of your studies at the University shall apply likewise to you as a student for the degree of Master.

As a candidate for a master's degree, you shall complete a research assignment or a thesis, and if the research assignment or thesis is not otherwise published within three years after you qualified for the degree, the University shall have the right to publish such research assignment or thesis (or part thereof) without financial reward to you, the candidate. For a classified research assignment or thesis, the start of the above-said period of three years is calculated from the date of declassification.

Leave to publish must be obtained from the relevant dean or his/her delegate, based on the recommendation of the departmental chair and the supervisor. The above rules apply within the context of the University's policy to encourage its master's candidates to publish and/or otherwise announce their research results before or after submission of their assignments or theses. Departmental chairs must request authors and co-authors to publish journal articles under the address of the relevant Faculty and University as far as possible.

Please refer to section **5.10 Publication of master's research assignments and master's theses** in [General Calendar, Part 1](#) for further guidelines regarding the publication of a master's assignment or thesis.

#### 4.9 Publication of dissertations

As a registered doctoral candidate, you shall be subject to the University's rules concerning the publication of dissertations or parts thereof. The current policy relating to the ownership of any intellectual property (e.g. copyright) that is created within the normal course and scope of studies at the University shall apply likewise to you as a student for the degree of Doctor.

As a doctoral candidate, you shall be encouraged to publish research results, and/or otherwise make them known, prior or subsequent to the submission of your dissertation. Permission to publish shall be obtained from your supervisor. Departmental chairpersons shall ask authors and co-authors to publish journal articles under the address of the University as far as possible.

The University reserves the right to publish your dissertation (or parts thereof) completed in order to qualify for the doctorate, without financial reward to you, if your dissertation (or parts thereof) is not otherwise published within the three years following the conferment of the degree, provided that, for a classified dissertation, such three-year period shall be calculated from the date of declassification.

Please refer to section **6.14 Publication of dissertations** in [General Calendar, Part 1](#) for further guidelines regarding the publication of dissertations.

#### 4.10 Duplication and binding of theses and dissertations

Facilities for the printing and (ring) binding of theses/dissertations are available on campus (in the [Neelsie](#)). You can also get information from [African Sun Media](#).

It is no longer an institutional requirement to have theses/dissertations bound in hard copy format, as all completed theses/dissertations are uploaded in electronic format onto the [SUNScholar](#) repository. Hard copy duplication and binding are done at the student's own cost.

## 5. RESOURCES FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDY

Completing a master's or PhD study is a lonely road and students may feel that they do not want to contact their supervisors for minor issues. In the Faculty of Education, workshops and seminars are organised to support postgraduate students. It is a good idea to attend a few of these, because you encounter other students who share your journey. If you can establish support networks, your journey will not feel as lonely.

The faculty workshops and postgraduate sessions are recorded and are available on the Postgraduate Support Initiative team on MS Teams.

You can also consult a number of other sources, as listed below.

### 5.1 Web pages and blogs

The University has useful websites for postgraduate students:

[Postgraduate Welcoming and Orientation](#)

[Research Related Resources](#)

The Postgraduate Skills Development Programme provides [workshops](#), such as [Project Management: Principles for Postgraduate Researchers](#), and other resources exclusively for registered Stellenbosch University (SU) postgraduate students.

Research project management tool [plan.it](#)

[Postgraduate Research Toolkit](#)

The following web pages have been suggested by students and staff in our faculty:

- [Enhancing Postgraduate Environments](#)
- [The Thesis Whisperer](#)
- [Doctoral Writing - WordPress](#)
- [PatThomson.net](#)
- [Cecile Badenhorst - WordPress](#)
- [Doctoral Research by Distance - WordPress](#)
- [Doctoral Research by Distance - Facebook](#)

### 5.2 YouTube videos

You are welcome to have a look at the YouTube videos of [Shannon Mason](#), [Cecile Badenhorst](#) and [Nick Hopwood](#).

### 5.3 X, formerly known as Twitter

A search for [#PhDchat](#) may provide helpful tips and resources.

## FACULTY OF EDUCATION

### Guidelines for Master's or Doctoral Research Proposals

Please include the following when submitting your research proposal for review:

- a) a completed copy of this first page.
- b) your research proposal.
- c) any change logs in response to recommendations made during a previous review round.

DID YOU...	✓
Follow the guidelines of the faculty for master's or doctoral studies?	
Discuss the submitted proposal with your supervisor(s)?	
In the case of <i>doctoral studies</i> , have you received formative input from the relevant departmental committee? (please include this feedback in your submission to SCRPS)	
Keep the proposal ( <i>including references</i> ) within the prescribed length of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4000 – 6000 words for master's proposals</li> <li>• 6000 - 8000 words for doctoral proposals</li> </ul>	
Check the proposal thoroughly for any language/technical errors?	

Candidate Title, Initials, Surname

Department	
Provisional supervisor	Provisional co-supervisor

Programme	
<i>Kindly highlight the relevant programme.</i>	
MEd (Curriculum Studies)	MEd (Education Policy Studies)
MEd (Educational Psychology)	MEd (Educational Support)
MPhil (Higher Education Studies)	MPhil (Lifelong Learning)
MPhil (Research)	PhD

Registration Status (PhD only)	
<i>Kindly highlight the appropriate response regarding your <b>current</b> registration status.</i>	
Registration <i>without</i> a title	Proposal submission to register <i>with</i> a title

Signatures			
Candidate		Date	
Supervisor		Date	
Co-supervisor		Date	
Departmental Chair		Date	

## 1. REVIEW OF YOUR PROPOSAL

### 1.1 Please note that the critical readers of your proposal will use the following criteria in order to determine the academic merit of your proposal:

- a) The **background as outlined in the proposal** provides sufficient information to understand the context of the research problem.
- b) The **provisional literature review** demonstrates that the candidate can manage and present information in a scientific way and that s/he has a basic understanding of the nature of existing research related to the research problem. That is:
  - information from different relevant sources (nationally and internationally) is presented in an integrated way.
  - it contains important findings and views of at least two or three core (national and international) authors.
  - provides evidence that the most recent literature on the topic has been consulted.
  - scientific language is used to formulate an argument and relevant, appropriate evidence from the literature is provided to substantiate the argument.
- c) The **research problem** is defined in a way that allows for a viable research project. That is:
  - the scope of the research is appropriate for a master's or doctoral level of study.
  - the candidate will have access to relevant data.
- d) The **research question** is focused and significant in the context of the discipline.
- e) The **methodology** fits the research problem in a way that will enable the candidate to generate data that may realistically contribute to answering the research question(s).
- f) The methodology is described in a way that the reader can assess whether the candidate understands the **research process**. That is:
  - description of the nature and selection of the **target group or documents** (data sources) contains sufficient information to convince the reader that the specific group of people or documents will provide trustworthy and relevant information.
  - the **paradigm, research design and method of data collection** is clear, as well as an indication of the **measuring instrument(s)** that will be used.
  - all decisions related to the research paradigm, design, sampling and data collection method(s) are motivated with reference to relevant research literature.
  - the intended method of data **analysis** is mentioned (it is understood that a full description is usually not possible at this stage of the process).
  - Consideration of **criteria for ensuring the quality of the study** (for example, validity and reliability; or credibility and trustworthiness as applicable to the study), even though it is understood that a full detailed account of how the criteria used will be implemented during the study may not be possible.
- g) After reading everything that was set out under point f, the reader knows **how the candidate** intends to conduct the research.
- h) The **timeframe** for the study is realistic.
- i) The **reference list** indicates sufficient provisional exploration of relevant and recent literature nationally and internationally.
- j) **Ethical clearance** (if required) and **institutional permission** (if required) can reasonably be expected to be granted. (Please note that this is not required at the proposal stage, but it might be necessary to consider the viability of the research from this perspective.)

### 1.2 The outcome of the review will generally take the form of one of the following:

- a) Accept
- b) Accept with revisions to the satisfaction of the supervisor(s).
- c) Resubmit to SCRPS (for doctoral studies) or the relevant departmental M&D committee (for master's studies) for electronic circulation and consideration by reviewers only.
- d) Resubmit to SCRPS (doctoral studies) or the relevant departmental M&D committee (master's studies) for consideration by the whole committee at the next meeting.
- e) Refer back to the department (in the case of doctoral studies).

### 1.3 Feedback

SCRPS (in the case of doctoral studies) or the relevant departmental M&D committee (in the case of master's and doctoral studies) may also choose to provide detailed formative feedback based on proposal presentations and discussions aimed at assisting students in developing defendable research projects. This feedback will be shared with supervisors via the chair of the relevant committee.

## 2. USE THE HEADINGS BELOW TO GUIDE YOU IN PREPARING YOUR RESEARCH PROPOSAL

### **Important:**

Keep to the limit of:

- o 4000 – 6000 words for master's proposals
- o 6000 - 8000 words for doctoral proposals

*Word counts above include references*

Type in Arial size 12 font; 1.5 spacing.

#### **a. Proposed title of the study**

Maximum 16 words

#### **b. Motivation for the proposed research**

*For example:* Why is this study necessary? What is the background or context that has led to the need for this study? In what possible ways will the study make an original and conceptual contribution (particularly in the case of a PhD)? Include references to literature to illustrate points made.

#### **c. Statement of the problem**

*For example:* briefly state the central research problem and provide the hypothesis/es, research aim(s)/objectives, research question, sub-questions, etc. if and where applicable. This section should clearly focus your research.

#### **d. Preliminary literature review and theoretical perspectives**

*For example:* Who are the key authors on the topic, and how is their work influencing the gap(s) that have been identified and the lines of argument followed? Provide evidence of both foundational and recent cutting-edge scholarly work consulted. What is the theoretical point(s) of departure that will be used as a lens to interpret the findings of the study? How does the selected lens link to the research questions and methodology? If the research design warrants that no specific theoretical position is taken (for example, in the case of grounded theory type studies, or when abductive forms of reasoning will be employed), is the reasoning behind these choices explicitly explained?

#### **e. Research methodology**

*For example:* How will the study be done? What will be your research approach, methodology, method(s), and what types of data will you use? Provide sufficient information here for the proposals committee to judge whether your methodology fits your research question. How will data be generated and analysed? Target population and sampling?

#### **f. Provisional chaptering and proposed time schedule**

#### **g. Ethical considerations**

*For example:* What ethical issue (s) does the study involve and how will this be handled? Do you need gatekeeper permission? Consult your department for the necessary documentation. You may also want to consider your own positionality within the study, if necessary.

#### **h. Ensuring the quality of the study**

*For example:* Quality measures concerning issues validity, reliability, credibility, trustworthiness etc. as applicable.

#### **i. Any additional information to make the proposal clearer.**

#### **j. Reference list or bibliography**

The list of references at the end of your proposal should include all the books, journal articles, email messages, web pages, and other information sources that you have consulted and that have been cited in the text.

Please see the [draft interim SU guidelines on allowable AI use](#). Should you have made use of AI systems in the writing of your proposal, kindly include a completed table such as the one at **4.1 AI use declaration** in the interim guidelines.

Please also note that the Faculty of Education requires that each source cited in a list of references must have an active DOI or web link so that it can be more easily checked during supervision and review, in language editing, and during examination.

### 3. CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING WHEN PREPARING FOR YOUR PROPOSAL PRESENTATION

A PowerPoint presentation is recommended to facilitate clear and organized communication. Candidates should ensure that each slide is logical and not overloaded with information. The presentation should be concise, with supervisors providing guidance in structuring the slides, though the content and presentation are ultimately the responsibility of the candidate. This presentation reflects the candidate's scholarly effort and research journey.

We recommend the following layout for the presentation, comprising of six slides:

- Slide 1: Title, Name
- Slide 2: Introduction, Background, Problem Statement, Research Questions, Aim, and Objectives of the study.
- Slide 3: Literature review and theoretical/conceptual framework. This slide should address key constructs in the literature, existing gaps, and the intended contribution of the study to the body of knowledge.
- Slide 4: Methodological considerations, including the research paradigm, design, and methods.
- Slide 5: Ethical considerations and trustworthiness (for qualitative studies) or validity and reliability (for quantitative studies).
- Slide 6: Overview of logistical and practical considerations for conducting the study.

If you are doing an [in-person presentation](#), make sure of the venue and time ahead of time and arrive at least 10 minutes beforehand. Wait outside the venue until invited in by the chair of the committee.

If you are doing an [online presentation](#), you will be invited to the meeting using your [student email address](#). Please do a trial run of your presentation (preferably with your supervisor/s) to make sure you know how the MS Teams platform works and how to do a PowerPoint presentation therein. Also ensure that you have a stable internet connection and adequate bandwidth during the time of your presentation.

In the case of *doctoral students presenting at SCRPS*, please ensure that your presentation is sent to **Ms Carren Thom** ([carren@sun.ac.za](mailto:carren@sun.ac.za)) *at least 24 hours prior to the meeting* so it may be uploaded prior to the meeting in order to save time during the meeting.

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

### Between postgraduate thesis student and supervisor(s)

The aim of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) is to give the postgraduate student and supervisor an opportunity to develop a sound and productive working relationship. The MoU should be the result of a discussion in the early stages of the relationship, during which both student and supervisor can clarify expectations and preferences on various topics, including the use of GenAI tools, surface any misunderstandings or misaligned expectations, and cover some topics that will be important at different phases of the working relationship.

A completed and signed student-supervisor MoU is a required document (*approved by Senate 8 March 2019*) for all postgraduate students where there is a supervisor appointed.

This MoU must be completed and submitted to the Head of the Department within one month after the date of registration to be kept on file; an annual '**progress and planned activity**' report must be completed each subsequent year before the student renews his/her registration.

STUDENT INFORMATION	
NAME OF STUDENT	
STUDENT NUMBER	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
DEGREE PROGRAMME	

SUPERVISOR INFORMATION	
NAME OF SUPERVISOR	
TELEPHONE NUMBER	
EMAIL ADDRESS	

CO-SUPERVISOR INFORMATION <i>(if applicable)</i>	
NAME OF SUPERVISOR	
UNIVERSITY	
DEPARTMENT	
TELEPHONE NUMBER	
EMAIL ADDRESS	

The signatures below serve to confirm that all parties agree to the role and responsibilities as set out in this Memorandum of Understanding:

	STUDENT	SUPERVISOR	CO-SUPERVISOR
NAME			
SIGNATURE			
DATE			

### CODE OF CONDUCT GUIDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SUPERVISOR AND STUDENT

Stellenbosch University publishes a *Code of Conduct* in the [General Rules, Yearbook, Part 1](#). The following is extracted from this source and is meant as a reference to guide the relationship between you and your supervisor to help to ensure that the relationship is conducive to successful studies at the University. It consists of a set of undertakings or commitments and responsibilities.

## UNDERTAKINGS BY THE STUDENT, UNIVERSITY, AND SUPERVISOR

- As a candidate, you undertake to stay informed of the infrastructure and the accompanying rules of the department concerned (with the requisite inputs from your supervisor).
- The University undertakes not to select you as a candidate for a specific project without confirming beforehand in writing with the faculty concerned that the project may be undertaken. Specifics regarding the responsibility for the required funds and relevant infrastructure shall be indicated.
- You, as the candidate, shall acquaint yourself with the guidelines for recording research, as is generally accepted within the discipline concerned, with the aid of your supervisor.
- You, as the candidate, shall confirm that you possess, or will acquire, the computer skills to complete the project in a satisfactory manner.
- You shall complete pre-study work, as required by the University, in an agreed period of time.
- You, as the candidate, in consultation with your supervisor, must draw up a work schedule within a reasonable time (as a rule within 60 days). The schedule shall include target dates for, among others, the submission of a research proposal, the completion of a literature survey, the completion of specific chapters and the submission of progress reports. Times of absence (study leave, university holidays, etc.) shall also be included.
- During the academic year, regular meetings on fixed dates shall be scheduled between you and your supervisor.
- Your supervisor shall report annually in writing to the departmental chair/postgraduate coordinator/dean concerned on your progress.
- All submitted work shall be returned to you by your supervisor within a reasonable time, but not exceeding 60 days for a complete thesis/dissertation.
- When the project is near completion, you, as the candidate, shall make the necessary submissions in accordance with the requirements for graduation within the discipline concerned. (Refer specifically to the University almanac, which can be found at [www.su.ac.za/dates](http://www.su.ac.za/dates), to ensure that your thesis/dissertation is finalised and examined in time for the various graduation ceremonies in March or April.)
- You, as the candidate, undertake to produce suitable outputs (such as publications, patents, reports), as arranged with your supervisor. You shall acquaint yourself with the customs in the discipline concerned regarding authorship.
- Where applicable, you and your supervisor shall acquaint yourselves with the requirements regarding intellectual property in the environment concerned.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPERVISOR	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CANDIDATE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To familiarise themselves with procedures and regulations.</li> <li>2. To establish a stimulating research environment.</li> <li>3. To establish a relationship with you (the postgraduate student).</li> <li>4. To give advice about project choice and planning.</li> <li>5. To discuss intellectual property, authorship, ethics and publications.</li> <li>6. To ensure that facilities, where relevant, are available.</li> <li>7. To provide research training.</li> <li>8. To consult with you (the postgraduate student), to monitor progress continually and to provide structured feedback.</li> <li>9. To be aware of your (the postgraduate student's) situation and needs.</li> <li>10. To arrange for study guidance during periods of absence.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To familiarise yourself with the University regulations regarding postgraduate studies and to abide by these regulations.</li> <li>2. To undertake research with dedication.</li> <li>3. To develop initiative and independence.</li> <li>4. To keep complete records of research results.</li> <li>5. To establish a relationship with your supervisor.</li> <li>6. To gain feedback by means of reports and seminars and to act on it.</li> <li>7. To do a literature survey and to keep abreast of new literature.</li> <li>8. To benefit from the research environment.</li> <li>9. To inform your supervisor of non-academic problems.</li> <li>10. To prepare and write your thesis or the dissertation.</li> <li>11. To prepare and write publications, patents, and reports.</li> </ol>

## MANAGING THE PROJECT

How do we want to work together? What are our expectations and assumptions about our roles? Use the questions below to clarify expectations, even if you do not want to answer as specifically as in the examples below.

**a. MEETINGS AND COMMUNICATION**

How often do we want scheduled/formal meetings?

Who is responsible for scheduling meetings and how far in advance?

Who will set the agenda? How will the meetings be documented and by whom?

What will the procedure be for changing the meeting date and/or time?

In addition to scheduled meetings, what are our expectations of ad hoc discussions?

What are our expectations regarding regular email communication?

Other points regarding communication (e.g., after hours, via cell/home telephone)

**b. TIMELINES AND PROGRESS REPORTS**

**Expectations regarding the project plan or timeline**

*See Part 1 of the Yearbook: General Rules, under Postgraduate Qualifications, points 8, 9 and 10.*

**Expectations regarding progress reports**

**Expectations regarding thesis/dissertation submission for examination**

**6. SEE PART 1 OF THE YEARBOOK: GENERAL RULES, UNDER POSTGRADUATE QUALIFICATIONS, POINT 5 FOR MASTER'S, AND POINT 6 FOR DOCTORATES.**

**c. SUBMISSION OF WORK TO SUPERVISOR(S), FEEDBACK, AND REVISION**

**Expectations regarding written submission of chapters/drafts**

**Nature of the feedback**

**Agreed feedback response rate by all parties**

**d. EXPECTED OUTPUTS**

**What are the expected outputs the student must deliver during and after their degree?**

*See Part 1 of the Yearbook: General Rules, under Postgraduate Qualifications, point 5 for master's, and point 6 for doctorates, and point 7.*

**What are the expectations regarding the intellectual property, and/or patents of your research?**

**What are the expectations regarding authorship of publications on your research?**

**What are the expectations regarding ownership of the research data?**

**e. EXPECTATIONS REGARDING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

**What knowledge or skills must the student gain before or during their degree?**

*Give the knowledge and skills areas and agree on priorities regarding these and to what extent the supervisor will be able to assist the student in these areas.*

***For doctoral candidates, look at and discuss the Council for Higher Education's (CHE) stipulated Doctoral Graduate Attributes. Please see the faculty's postgraduate guide for more information.***

#### f. EXPECTATIONS REGARDING FUNDING

**Who will cover the costs related to studies and research?**

*Indicate any scholarships and bursaries obtained with timeframes, and how this might affect studies and research.*

#### g. EXPECTATIONS REGARDING WORK IN YOUR DEPARTMENT/ELSEWHERE

**Academic work**

**Career plans**

#### h. GROUND RULES AND REGULATIONS

**List any rules, policies and regulations the student and supervisor should be aware of.**

*Indicate where the policies and guidelines can be found (or attach them to the MoU).*

#### i. MECHANISMS FOR DEALING WITH DISPUTES

*Please see the Postgraduate Student Guide.*

#### j. MANAGING CO-SUPERVISION (IF APPLICABLE)

Discuss the role of the co-supervisor and expectations about communicating with the co-supervisor. Include the co-supervisor in this part of the MoU.

### INTERNAL STUDENT DECLARATION FOR THE USE OF AI TOOLS

Stellenbosch University (SU) is committed to a research environment where Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are used responsibly and ethically to enhance scholarship while maintaining the integrity and credibility of academic work.

This declaration serves as an internal record and discussion tool between students and their supervisor(s) on the appropriate use of AI tools in the preparation of theses or dissertations. Its purpose is to safeguard academic integrity, promote transparency, and ensure informed supervisory oversight.

It is not a punitive mechanism, but a means to support reflective and responsible engagement with AI in research. In line with SU's principles of integrity, accountability, and transparency, any use of generative AI tools in research submissions must be explicitly declared.

- [Position Statement on Ethical use of Artificial Intelligence in Research and Teaching-Learning Assessment](#)
- [Draft interim SU guidelines on allowable AI use and academic integrity in assessment](#)

### CONFIRMATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

**By signing on page one of this document, I declare that I have discussed the use of AI tools and the responsibilities below with my supervisor(s).**

- AI tools will be used only to support my reasoning and writing, and not as a substitute for my intellectual work. All ideas, arguments, and interpretations in my research will be my own.
- I distinguish between low-stakes uses such as proofreading or formatting and high-stakes uses such as conceptual clarification, methodological reasoning, or data interpretation, and I will be able to indicate the extent of AI involvement in each when submitting my thesis/dissertation for examination.
- I will independently explain, justify, and defend all sections of my thesis/dissertation where AI assistance was used.
- I will verify the factual accuracy, methodological soundness, and referencing integrity of all AI-generated suggestions before incorporating them into my work.
- My use of AI tools will not compromise confidentiality, participant safety, ethical obligations, or academic integrity, and I will remain alert to potential bias or inappropriate outputs.
- My use of AI will align with Stellenbosch University's principles of epistemic integrity and responsible research conduct, and its use will have contributed to my development as a researcher rather than replace my learning.
- I will securely retain and, where ethically permissible, make available my raw research data, field notes, transcripts, coding records, and analytic materials for inspection upon reasonable request by my supervisor(s), or authorised university structures, in order to verify that the data were generated through diligent, bona fide research and handled in accordance with approved ethical protocols.

## Feedback Expectation Tool (FET)

Feedback is at the heart of any learning and teaching process. Giving and receiving written feedback during a doctoral candidature is a complex task that covers many issues. This *Feedback Expectation Tool (FET)* lists some important issues that the supervisor and candidate may face when giving and receiving feedback. The *FET* helps each to state their beliefs and expectations clearly and transparently. The *FET* aims to encourage discussion. Its objective is to establish a working relationship that is respectful during the research degree.














Each supervisor and candidate should complete the *FET* separately. They should discuss their responses at a supervision meeting. Both can use the *FET* at any time during the candidature, and as often as agreed. Both can add statements to the *FET* if these statements suit the supervisor's practice and the candidate's needs.

**Use the statements below to provide your views about feedback.** The statements are on a spectrum.

Circle the dot point on the far left if you strongly agree with the statement on the left.

Circle the dot point on the far right if you strongly agree with the statement on the right.

Circle one of the other dots along the spectrum if your view is somewhere in between.

1	The supervisor should give feedback on any aspect of the thesis (for instance, content and language).		The supervisor should give feedback only on aspects the candidate asks about.
2	Feedback is an instruction to revise.		Feedback is an invitation to revise.
3	The feedback must tell the candidate what they did well and what they did not do well.		The feedback must give clear direction for the candidate's future work.
4	The supervisor is responsible for handling issues about language.		The candidate is responsible for handling issues about language.
5	Handwritten and electronic feedback is the best way to give and receive feedback.		Oral feedback is the best way to give and receive feedback.
6	The supervisor should give, and the candidate can ask for, feedback about sections and chapters that are not finished.		The supervisor should give, and the candidate should only ask for, feedback on sections or chapters that are finished.
7	The candidate should regularly ask for feedback from the primary supervisor.		The candidate should regularly ask for feedback from all their supervisors.
8	The supervisor and candidate can ask other people (for instance, peers, other academics) to give feedback.		The supervisor and candidate can only ask the supervisory team to give feedback.
9	The candidate should handle conflicting feedback from the supervisory team and decide the right direction to take.		The main supervisor should structure conflicting feedback from the supervisory team in a way so they can give the candidate clear direction.
10	Feedback is effective when it highlights the strengths of the candidate's work.		Feedback is effective when it highlights the weaknesses of the candidate's work.
11	The candidate should expect to get feedback quickly.		The candidate should not expect to get feedback quickly.
12	The supervisor and the candidate should consider emotions when giving and receiving feedback.		The supervisor and candidate should not consider emotions when giving and receiving feedback.
13	The candidate should think about the supervisor's culture when receiving feedback from them.		Supervisors should provide feedback that is culturally appropriate to the candidate.

Copyright © E. Stracke, University of Canberra, & V. Kumar, University of Otago, 2019. Based on the *Role Perception Rating Scale* by Brown, G. & Atkins, M. (1988), *Effective teaching in higher education*, London: Methuen (pp. 146-147).

## DECLARATION OF THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS IN THE PREPARATION OF A RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT, MASTER'S THESIS OR DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

### Institutional Acknowledgement

This declaration aligns with Stellenbosch University's Position Statement on the ethical use of AI in Research and Teaching-Learning-Assessment<sup>2</sup>, the Draft interim SU guidelines on allowable AI use and academic integrity in assessment<sup>3</sup>, and draws on international best practices.

In line with Stellenbosch University's (SU) commitment to academic integrity, transparency, accountability, and responsible research conduct, the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in the preparation of theses, dissertations, or research assignments must be explicitly declared. Failure to disclose such use may constitute academic misconduct, including plagiarism or research misconduct, as defined in SU's relevant policies.

### Student Declaration

I declare that in the course of conducting research and preparing this research assignment/thesis/dissertation (*kindly mark the appropriate statement with an x in the box provided*):

<input type="checkbox"/>	I did not use any generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Quillbot, Grammarly, DALL·E, Copilot, Claude, ResearchRabbit, etc.).
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<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not use any generative AI tools except for minor language assistance, such as language and grammar checking.
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<input type="checkbox"/>	I have used generative AI tools for the following purposes ( <i>kindly mark all that apply</i> ):	
	• Idea Generation (e.g., research problem/design, hypothesis)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Literature Search (e.g., summarising, identifying sources)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Methods and Experiment Design (e.g., setup, model tuning)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Data Analysis (e.g., coding, interpretation)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Theoretical Development (e.g., conceptual analysis)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Code Development (e.g., generating algorithms, scripts)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Visualisation and Presentation (e.g., graphics, formatting)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Copyediting (e.g., grammar, readability)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Writing Assistance (e.g., structuring, paraphrasing)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Citation Formatting (e.g., organising references)	<input type="checkbox"/>

<sup>2</sup> [Position Statement on Ethical use of Artificial Intelligence in Research and Teaching-Learning Assessment](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Draft interim SU guidelines on allowable AI use and academic integrity in assessment](#)

### Description of the use of generative AI tools (if applicable)

If generative AI tools were used in the preparation of this research assignment, thesis or dissertation, kindly state which tools were employed and how they were used.

Generative AI Tool Used	Purpose of Use	Extent and Justification
<i>e.g., ChatGPT</i>	<i>e.g., Copyediting</i>	<i>e.g., Used to improve grammar, tone, clarity, flow, and coherence throughout the thesis to enhance readability.</i>

### Examples of the use of generative AI tools (if applicable)

If generative AI tools were used in the preparation of this research assignment, thesis or dissertation, kindly state which tools were employed and give specific examples of how they were used.

<i>Insert name of AI tool here</i>	User Input (Prompt):
	Response (Output):
	Edited Version (Final thesis/dissertation wording):

### Confirmation and Responsibility

By signing below, I declare that where generative AI tools were used:

- The work submitted is my own, and I take full responsibility for its content.
- I confirm that all AI tools used have been declared. Where applicable, usage details are cited in-text, in the bibliography, and examples included in the tables above.
- I acknowledge that generative AI cannot be listed as an author; its use may only be acknowledged.
- I confirm that any AI tools used were used in consultation with my supervisor.
- Any AI tools used were employed ethically and were not used in ways that breach SU's plagiarism, confidentiality, or research integrity policies. I understand that the misuse of AI tools may be a breach of academic integrity.
- I take full responsibility for verifying the accuracy, originality, and integrity of all AI-assisted content.
- Where AI was used only for grammatical improvement or formatting, no AI-generated content was cited as original contribution.
- I have retained records of my interactions with AI tools (e.g., screenshots, prompts, outputs) and am prepared to submit these if requested.
- I understand that I may be asked to demonstrate my understanding of the content and process, including through oral examination or supplementary documentation.
- My use of AI tools has not compromised the originality of my research nor my ability to systematically acquire and understand a substantial body of knowledge, gain a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry, or conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge.

**Student number:**

**Student signature:**

**Date:**

### **Declaration on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to the examiner of a thesis or dissertation**

This serves to confirm that Stellenbosch University (SU) has a Position Statement on the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in Research and Teaching-Learning-Assessment<sup>4</sup> and guidelines to guide students and examiners on the responsible use of AI.

As part of SU's internal process, it is confirmed that the student made a comprehensive declaration to the supervisor(s) on the use of AI in the preparation of their thesis/dissertation, and that agreement was reached that the student's use of AI complies with disciplinary and institutional standards.

In accordance with Section 2(c) of the Position Statement, SU discourages the use of generative or interpretive AI tools in the review and examination of theses or dissertations. Examiners are, therefore, requested not to employ AI systems to summarise, critique, or generate feedback on a thesis. This restriction does not extend to legitimate analytical or computational tools used within a discipline (for example, machine learning libraries or statistical software).

SU values your critical expertise and contribution to maintaining the quality and credibility of its postgraduate research.

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<sup>4</sup> [Position Statement on Ethical use of Artificial Intelligence in Research and Teaching-Learning Assessment](#)

## FACULTY OF EDUCATION

### Final Thesis Submission

Candidate and project	
Candidate	
SU no.	
Department	
Programme	
Topic	
Supervisor(s) <i>(where applicable)</i>	
Supervisor	
Co-supervisor	

<b>Student declaration</b>		
I declare that (please mark the blocks on the right if the submission adheres to the requirements):		
1	The document meets the University layout and appearance <a href="#">guidelines</a> :	
	Layout	
	Title page	
	Declaration (Do not add your signature to the bottom of the declaration.)	
	Abstract: In the language of the thesis/dissertation (max. 500 words)	
	Additional abstract (optional): In second language (max. 500 words)	
	Acknowledgements (sponsors, family, etc.)	
	Table of contents	
	List of figures	
	List of tables	
	Content (e.g. Chapter 1, Chapter 2, etc.)	
	List of references	
	Addenda (e.g. Addendum A, Addendum B, etc.)	
	Appearance	
	Font type	Cambria or Calibri
	Font size	10, 11 or 12 font size
	Font colour	Black
Line spacing	Double, Single or 1.5	
Margins	Blank border of not less than 2 cm in width around the whole of the typewritten portion.	
Paper size	A4	
2	Where applicable, an ethical clearance certificate is included as an addendum.	
3	Where applicable, confirmation of institutional permission is included as an addendum.	
4	Where applicable, a declaration of statistical consultation is included as an addendum.	
5	A declaration regarding the use of AI has been included as an addendum.	
6	Confirmation that the thesis was language edited in its entirety is included as an addendum.	
7	The document was put through Turnitin <a href="#">sandbox</a> and the report made available to the supervisor(s).	
8	Data are kept securely in accordance with the data management policy of the University.	

<b>Candidate</b>		<b>Date</b>	
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### Supervisor(s) declaration

**I declare that** *(please mark the blocks on the right if the submission adheres to the requirements):*

1	The document meets the layout and appearance guidelines listed above.	
2	Relevant certificates, declarations and letters of confirmation have been included as addenda.	
3	Turnitin was used according to the regulations of the University and the report was discussed by the candidate and supervisor(s).	
4.	The responsible and ethical use of AI according to the guidelines of the University was discussed by the candidate and supervisor(s) and implemented throughout the thesis.	

<b>Supervisor</b>		<b>Date</b>	
<b>Co-supervisor</b>		<b>Date</b>	

<b>Departmental Chair</b>		<b>Date</b>	
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