

DATES AND DEADLINES FOR THE EXAMINATION OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS (2026)

The Postgraduate Examinations Office (PEO) manages the examination process for all higher degrees (MA and PhD) within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

In order to be eligible to graduate in March/April 2027, Master's students must submit their thesis for examination on or before a specific deadline date. These fixed dates coincide with the closing dates for the agendas of the Faculty's committee system and with the **deadlines of University Administration**.

IMPORTANT: All deadlines below should be regarded as absolute. Any thesis received after the closing date will be held over for the next graduation cycle, which will require registration for an additional year of study.

DATE	ACTIVITY
3 March	DEADLINE: Last day for uploading electronic version of thesis/dissertation to SUNScholar for March 2026 graduation.
12 May	STUDENT DEADLINE: Last day for submitting the form indicating a student's intention to submit their dissertation for examination in time for March/April 2027 graduation.
31 July	FIRST SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Last day for submitting PhD dissertations to the Postgraduate Examinations Office for examination in order to receive a letter of completion in December 2026.
14 – 25 September	ORAL EXAMINATIONS for Doctoral candidates for December letter of completion. All orals must take place on or before 25 September in order to be approved by the HDRC and ratified by Faculty Board and Senate.
9 October	SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Last day for submitting PhD dissertations to the Postgraduate Examination Office for examination for March/April 2027 graduation. Late submissions will be held over for the following graduation cycle.
23 November – 11 December	ORAL EXAMINATIONS for doctoral candidates. All orals must take place on or before 11 December in order to be approved by the HDRC and ratified by Faculty Board and Senate.
TBC	<i>Last day for uploading electronic version of theses to SUNScholar in order to receive a letter of completion in December.</i>
February 2027	<i>The date for uploading electronic version of theses/dissertations to SUNScholar for the March/April 2027 graduation will only be available when the Calendar for 2027 is finalised.</i>
March/April 2027	Graduation ceremonies

PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION AND EXAMINATION OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS (2026)

Appointment and availability of examiners

When appointing examiners, supervisors should inform examiners that they will only receive an electronic copy of the dissertation, which they are welcome to print. Supervisors should also advise examiners when they can expect to receive the dissertation for examination. Examiners should also be made aware of the **possible dates** for the oral examinations.

Supervisors should please confirm the availability of examiners in cases where examiners were appointed well in advance (not in the same year as submission) or where students have delayed the submission of their work (not in the same year as they submitted their [intention to submit](#) form).

Procedure for submitting a Master's thesis for examination

1. The student must inform the PEO (and their supervisor) of their intention to graduate by completing the prescribed **Intention to Submit form**. This form is available on the **HDRC webpage** and is accessible by students.
2. The supervisor must approach the proposed examiners informally to ascertain whether or not they are available for examining the work. The required **nomination form** must be sent to fasscomm@sun.ac.za by the closing date (24 March for December letter of completion or 15 June 2026 for March/April 2027 graduation) for the agenda of the Higher Degrees and Research Committee meeting. After the nomination has been approved by the Higher Degrees and Research Committee, Faculty Board and Senate, the Postgraduate Examinations Office (PEO) manages the process of official nomination and appointment.
3. When the dissertation is ready for examination, all required documents must be packaged in a folder using the student's name and student number as the folder name, for example: Adam Smith (12345678). It can be shared with the Postgraduate Examinations Office (fasspeo@sun.ac.za) as a zip folder via email, via an institutional OneDrive link, or via file sharing systems such as WeTransfer.
4. The prescribed **declaration by the supervisor** stating whether or not they support the submission of the work must be emailed with the dissertation. No dissertation may be sent out for examination without the supervisor's consent. The declaration is available on the **HDRC webpage**. This will be sent to examiners.
5. An electronic copy of the **ethics exemption declaration** OR the ethical clearance approval must be emailed with the dissertation. Ethical clearance is issued by the **Research Ethics Committee** after a student has successfully submitted an ethical clearance application via the online system. The **ethics exemption declaration** is available on the **HDRC webpage** and is only applicable for studies exempt from ethical clearance.
6. An electronic copy summary page of the Turnitin report, which shows the similarity percentage, must also be submitted. This will be sent to examiners.
7. A signed **Examination Declaration on AI Use** must be submitted. This will also be sent to examiners.
8. The Postgraduate Examinations Office is responsible for:
 - sending the letter of appointment to the external examiners;
 - sending the dissertation to the *internal* and *external* examiners;
 - managing the examination process;
 - receiving the reports of all the examiners;
 - arranging the oral examinations of doctoral candidates;
 - dealing, in accordance with the prescribed procedures, with cases where serious differences have arisen between examiners of doctoral candidates which the examination committee has been unable to resolve; and
 - payment of external examiners.

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9. The Faculty Administrator (Registrar's Division) is responsible for recording the results of doctoral examinations.

Important links and resources

- Faculty policy documents and forms (for higher degree students and supervisors):
<https://arts.sun.ac.za/hdrc>
- Information relating to ethical clearance, meeting dates and online application:
<https://www.su.ac.za/en/research/research-development/integrity-ethics/research-ethics-committee-social-behavioural-and-education-research>
- Information relating to the submission of theses or dissertations on SUNScholar:
<https://www.su.ac.za/en/library/help/thesis-and-dissertation-submission>
- Institutional research-related policy documents, including responsible research conduct and plagiarism:
www.su.ac.za/en/research/research-development/policies-and-guidelines

Contact details of Postgraduate Examination Office

All queries about the examination process and procedures for higher degrees students should be directed to the Postgraduate Examinations Office via email (fasspeo@sun.ac.za).