

RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

Engineering Professional Communication 771/871

Course developed by:

Office for Research Integrity and Ethics within the
Division for Research Development

Welcome to Professional Communication

771 / 871 [2026]

- This compulsory module is housed on SunLearn and will be **available** from **10 February 2026**.
- The **due date** for completion is **30 June 2026**.
- You need to work through the module content online. Take the time to go through the content carefully.
- The content of this module is linked to the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) course, developed by the Office for Research Integrity and Ethics.
- Modules 1 and 7 are **compulsory**.
- Module 4 (Research with Humans) is compulsory if you intend on applying for ethical clearance as part of your research.
- Once completed, the Division for Research Development will issue you with a **digital badge for each module completed** via email. The badges need to be uploaded onto the Prof Comm 771/871 placeholders entitled “Upload your digital badges”.
 - Please note: **badges must be uploaded on the Professional Communication module** to confirm successful completion. Thereafter, a ‘duly completed’ status will be recorded on your academic record toward the end of 2026.
- We wish you all the best with your research!

Professional Communication 771 / 871 [2026]

Background to the conception of the Professional Communication module

Since Section 9.2 of the revised Plagiarism Policy of Stellenbosch University indicates that "...all post-graduate supervisors, are responsible for establishing mechanisms to create an awareness of plagiarism..." (2016), the Engineering Faculty's Management Committee put this faculty-wide training in place for their postgraduate students to fulfil their responsibilities. The two non-accredited postgraduate modules, Professional Communication 59447-771 and 59447-871, are therefore supplementary modules.

The RCR module aims to ensure that SU postgraduate students....

- understand the central ideas that inform ethical research,
- have a good general grasp of the context and issues facing researches today,
- have explored the specific ethical considerations for conducting research with animals and humans, and
- know how to go about applying for research ethics clearance at SU.

Getting started....

- Log into Professional Communication module via SUNLearn:
 - Diploma students -771: <https://stemlearn.sun.ac.za/course/view.php?id=2749>
 - Master's and Doctoral students -871: <https://stemlearn.sun.ac.za/course/view.php?id=2750>
- Click on the Responsible Conduct of Research link and self-enroll in the course.
- Complete **mandatory modules 1 and 7**.
- Each module includes a self-assessment -
 - You will have 3 attempts to complete the self-assessment for module 1 and achieve the required **pass grade of at least 8/10**.
 - You will be able to repeat the self-assessment for module 7 as often as you required to achieve a **pass grade of at least 10/12**.
- **NB: Module 4 must be completed** if you plan to submit an **application for ethical clearance** as part of your research. **A pass grade of at least 8/10 is required for completion.**
- A **digital badge** will be issued via email communication upon **successful completion of each module**. This communication must be uploaded in the designated placeholders within the Prof Comm course menu, followed by the completion of the associated departmental declaration form.

Module 1 - Introduction to Research Integrity

This module covers -

- Discover the difference between research integrity and research ethics, which structures govern ethical research at Stellenbosch University.
- Eight benchmarks of ethical research.

Module 7 - Data Protection Skills Self-Assessment

This module covers -

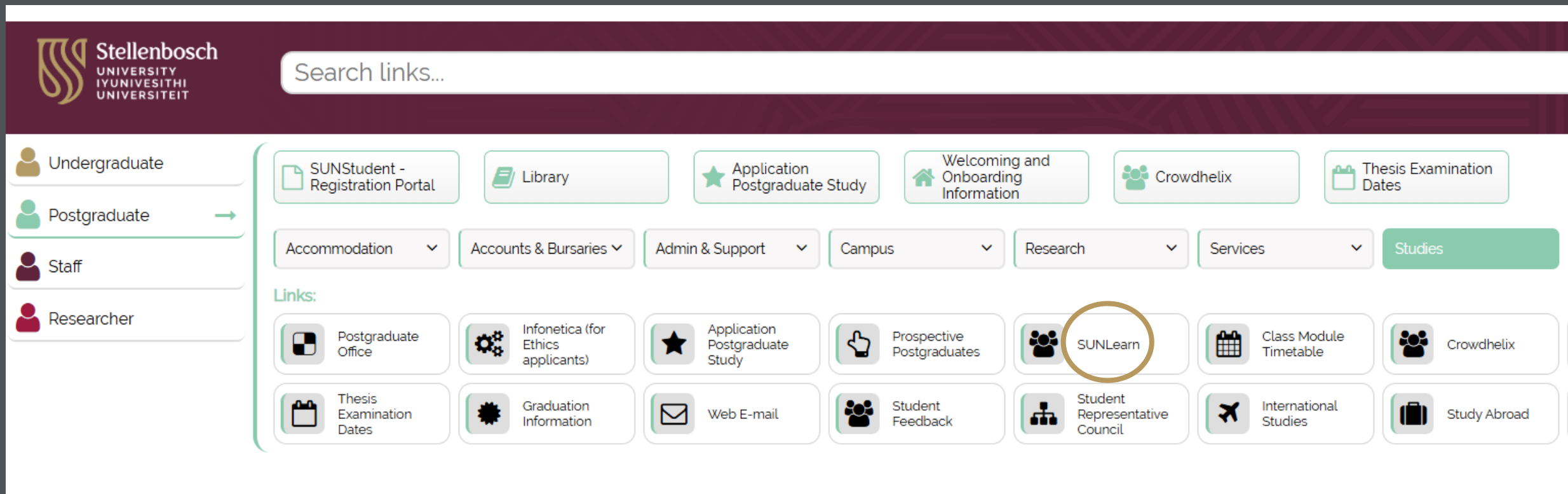
- Discover the difference between research integrity and research ethics, which structures govern ethical research at Stellenbosch University.
- Eight benchmarks of ethical research.

Module 4 - Research with Humans

This module covers -

- Working with human participants in health research and social sciences.
- How eight benchmarks of ethical research must be applied when conducting research with humans.
- How to apply for ethical clearance if your research includes humans.
- This module is only required if you are applying for **ethical clearance**.

Access SUNLearn via: My.SUN OR learn.sun.ac.za



The screenshot shows the My.SUN portal interface. On the left, there is a vertical navigation menu with four options: Undergraduate, Postgraduate (highlighted with a green arrow), Staff, and Researcher. The main content area features a search bar at the top with the placeholder text "Search links...". Below the search bar, there are several quick links in a grid: SUNStudent - Registration Portal, Library, Application Postgraduate Study, Welcoming and Onboarding Information, Crowdhelix, and Thesis Examination Dates. A horizontal row of dropdown menus follows, including Accommodation, Accounts & Bursaries, Admin & Support, Campus, Research, Services, and Studies (which is highlighted in green). Below these, a section titled "Links:" contains a grid of 12 links: Postgraduate Office, Infonetica (for Ethics applicants), Application Postgraduate Study, Prospective Postgraduates, SUNLearn (circled in gold), Class Module Timetable, Crowdhelix, Thesis Examination Dates, Graduation Information, Web E-mail, Student Feedback, Student Representative Council, International Studies, and Study Abroad.

Stellenbosch
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Search links...

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Master's and Doctoral students: Register for 871



Engineering (Admin)

| 2026-59447-871

Professional Communication / Professionele kommunikasie - 871

<https://stemlearn.sun.ac.za/course/view.php?id=2750>

Diploma Students: Register for 771



Engineering (Admin)

| 2026-59447-771

Professional Communication / Professionele kommunikasie - 771

<https://stemlearn.sun.ac.za/course/view.php?id=2749>

Important to note

- Your **digital badges** are **valid** for a period of **3 years**. A refresher course will be required after three years as content will be updated periodically and subject to policy requirements.
- You have completed the module when you have reached the module completion declaration section and have submitted your declaration.
- **Due date for completion** of this module is **30 June 2026**.

MODULE COORDINATOR

Cindi De Doncker

Research and Postgraduate Manager
Faculty of Engineering

+27 21 808 3210 | cnm@sun.ac.za

Contact **Cindi De Doncker** regarding registration-
or access to the Professional Communication
module via SunLearn, and for any queries relating
to the successful completion of the module being
recorded on your student record.