

Guidelines: Application and Assessment Process for MA in Political Science

Dear prospective MA applicant,

Thank you for your interest in pursuing an MA in our Department. This document sets out the procedure which you should follow should you wish to apply for admission to our MA programme. Please note the following key points:

1. MA programme

- 1.1 The department offers a research Master's degree (by thesis only) in Political Science, which ***includes*** topics/fields of interest in International Relations, Comparative Politics, Political Behaviour, Public Policy, Conflict Studies, Global Political Economy, and Regional Studies.
- 1.2 The Department **does not** offer any coursework Master's programmes, which means there is no residency requirement. Most meetings between the student and supervisor(s) can also be held online. The Department will, however, host some training and/or discussion sessions for MA students during the year. These sessions are not mandatory but cannot be attended online.

2. Application process and deadline date

- 2.1 Create a profile by going to <https://student.sun.ac.za/signup/>
- 2.2 If you are a **current registered** SU student, select 'Current student' and complete the online application. In order to complete the online application, you will need to email Mrs Pauliane Davidse (pauliane@sun.ac.za) a 1-2 page statement of research interest (while the provision of your transcripts and a piece of written work will be waived).
- 2.3 If you are **not a current student** (including students who were previously registered at SU), select 'New Application' and complete the online application. In order to complete the online application, you will need to upload: (1) your transcripts, (2) an example of previous written work, and (3) a 1-2 page statement of research interest. Please use the 'upload documents' tab.
- 2.4 The deadline for applications is 30 September annually for admission in the next academic year.

Previous written work	Statement of research interest
Examples of previously written work include a term paper or an essay, a chapter from your Hons research assignment or any other academic work of which you are the sole author.	Indicate, in as much detail as possible, the issue or the problem that you are interested in investigating. Ideally, this should include a preliminary research question, such as 'Why did populism emerge in the last 10 years?' or 'Does social media enhance or undermine democracy in X?' as well as a brief literature review and overview of the proposed research methodology.

3. How will my application be processed?

- 3.1 Once you have completed the online application and uploaded the required documentation, the MA application documents are considered and reviewed by the entire Department at a special meeting held in **November/December**. No incomplete applications will be considered.
- 3.2 MA applications are considered on the basis of three conditions. Firstly, whether the applicant complies with all the academic requirements for admission to the programme. Details are available in the Faculty Calendar here: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/faculty/Pages/Calendar.aspx> Secondly, whether an academic member of staff has the necessary research expertise to provide high-level expertise for the project outlined in the statement of research interest. As a relatively small Department, we are not able to provide expertise across all subfields or every conceivable topic or geographic region in Political Science and International Relations. Third, whether an academic member of staff has capacity to take on another MA candidate based on their existing supervision load and availability.
- 3.3 Applicants with an outstanding academic record as well as a solid statement of research interest may, in some cases, not be admitted if the Department does not have the necessary expertise in the applicant's field of interest or there is not an available academic member of staff to provide the required supervision.
- 3.4 After the Departmental MA selection meeting to evaluate applications, applicants will receive an initial email from the Department, **usually in December**, to confirm whether they have been accepted for the MA or not.
- 3.5 If an applicant has been accepted *in principle*, a preliminary/potential supervisor will be allocated. The applicant will be expected to contact the allocated supervisor to confirm if they intend to enroll in the MA programme by the date stated in the email. Please note that a formal and final letter to confirm acceptance will be issued by the Division of Registrar in due course and that the initial email of acceptance from the Department does not constitute final and formal acceptance. Students will receive two separate offer letters from the Division of the Registrar. First, they will receive a provisional offer letter. Thereafter a final study offer letter will be sent. Students must accept **both** these letters online to complete acceptance.
- 3.6 Once applicants have received these two formal letter of acceptance from the Division of the Registrar and accepted the offer, they need to formally register for the MA degree no later than 30 March annually.

Academic inquiries:

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