



Overview of the research process



Find a supervisor and topic

- Find a supervisor in a field that interests you.
- Brainstorm research ideas or see if your supervisor has a project or data.
- Make sure your supervisor is aware of their [responsibilities](#)

Review the literature

- Do a literature search on [PubMed](#) or [Google Scholar](#).
- Start reading and familiarising yourself with your chosen topic.
- Use [Mendeley](#) to keep track of your literature. View a useful tutorial [here](#).

Develop a research question and study design

- Define a practical, feasible, useful and clear research question.
- Consult with a [biostatistician](#) who will make sure your chosen study design is scientifically sound.

Write a literature review

- It is a comprehensive, critical synthesis and narrative of the most relevant and recent information on a topic.
- View [these guidelines](#) provided by the RRSO.
- The Stellenbosch Libraries website also has [great resources](#).

Write a full protocol

- Download a protocol template [here](#).
- Complete each section by following the instructions in the template.

Obtain departmental study approval

- Usually this involves giving a 10 minute Powerpoint presentation to a panel of reviewers (HOD and consultants).

Obtain study approvals

- Collect all the [documentation](#) you need and submit to HREC [here](#).
- Respond to any comments from HREC using this [template](#).
- Obtain study approval from the Department of Health [here](#).
- Apply for permission to recruit SU staff and students [here](#).

Collect and analyse data

- Learn how to set up a MS Excel [spreadsheet](#) and [codebook](#).
- Ask a [biostatistician](#) to help you with your data analyses.

Write up your findings

- View the FMHS guidelines for structures Master's programmes.
- Download a template in [publication-ready format](#).

Submit for examination

- See an overview of the examination process [here](#).
- **NOTE: Some departments require that candidates have their projects 'signed off' before being allowed to register for Part II exams. Budget 3 months for the examination process.**
- Respond to examiners using this template.

Publish

- Find a suitable and [accredited journal](#), and follow the "instructions to authors" on the journal's website, and submit online.
- Respond to reviewers using [this template](#).