



College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences

New

Guidelines for examination requirements and examination procedures for Masters and Doctoral Degrees in CAES

FOR SUPERVISORS

2019

Compiled by

Prof E Kempen

College Office for Research and Postgraduate Studies

TO ALL SUPERVISORS AND CO-SUPERVISORS

Dear Supervisors

The following examination guideline has been compiled to assist supervisors who have not supervised students in CAES or who are not sure about the CAES requirements for examination of Masters and Doctoral students. It is not only a procedural guide but gives some important tips about what to look for in a students work and where to advise the student to improve.

It also explains the examination process and the role of the different people involved in the examination process. The document explains their role as well as the timelines involved in this process.

Departmental procedures for the recommendation of examiners are addressed and how the process works should the result be non-unanimous.

It is advisable to consult this document as many new procedures for examination have been implemented in Unisa and in the College.

These guidelines are there to help a supervisor prepare a student for examination purposes and to produce a document that represents both the students research undertaking and the supervisors reputation.

PREPARE FOR EXAMINATION

- **Requirements of Conventional chapters**

As supervisor you will have to approve a student's chapter for inclusion in a dissertation or thesis. Although the College does not restrict supervisors in terms of how a chapter should be formulated, the College does expect that any chapter in a dissertation or thesis is professionally compiled, the quality of the information submitted in the chapter is of a high standard, well referenced with latest scholarly articles and information used and reads logically and clearly without any editorial errors, just to name a few of the important things to consider.

Should you not have any reference guides for the compilation of a dissertation or thesis, please consider Section 4, 5 and 6 in the Procedures for Masters and Doctoral students in CAES 2019, that gives some valuable guidelines for the student to use.



Please note your attention is warranted in terms of student submissions for examination purposes as PhD thesis in CAES **may not be submitted in article format as yet**. Please do not encourage this option until further notice.

- **Structure of a Chapter**

The role of the supervisor in how a student structures a chapter of a dissertation and thesis cannot be emphasised enough. Many of our students need guidance on how to put the chapter together not only in terms of the information to be presented in the chapter but how to present the chapter that it looks professional. The totality of the chapter in terms of **presentation** should be the last and final check a supervisor makes when finalizing a chapter with the student.

Within a chapter consider the following and use this as a check list:

- **Chapter heading:** Check the appropriateness of the heading in terms of whether it is capturing the content sufficiently. Don't encourage long and incomprehensible headings that an examiner struggles to unpack. Keep the chapter heading short and to the point. Look at how and where the student positions the heading and if it the same format is consistent throughout the dissertation or thesis. The chapter should be numbered and consecutive throughout the document with a consistent format. A bigger font may be used to indicate the Chapter with the name in smaller capital letters. Some supervisors also require a very brief description of the chapter content below before the first Heading and introduction to the chapter starts. This is not a requirement but a supervisors recommendation should you wish to do so.

Example:

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter will present background information on blue daisies, the propagation of blue daisies and the role of blue daisies in the baking industry.(A supervisors discretion if you want to include, not a requirement)

- **Starting the chapter with an INTRODUCTION**

Check that a student has included an introduction to the chapter. If a student has decided to use the example above as introduction some more information on the content of the chapter can be provided. If a student has not included the example above in the chapter heading then the student needs to approach this section to lead in the previous chapter and explain what can be expected in this chapter. Make sure the information captures the headings used in the chapter and does not address aspects that will not feature in the chapter. Some

arguments may be presented or questions that will be answered in the chapter as well. You will also have your personal requirements of the content of the introduction that you may want the student to address. However, as this is the first paragraph the examiner will engage with, ensure that the sentences are well written and best represents the content of the chapter.

- **Body of the chapter**

As a supervisor the body of the chapter becomes quite challenging as you read for content and presentation. The work of a supervisor becomes critical, especially when students are starting to find their way through the information they are presenting.

You will be looking at:

- a. logic flow of the information
- b. that information is sorted together and not jumping between sections,
- c. information is not unnecessarily repeated,
- d. sentences make sense,
- e. sentences link to communicate the idea or argument
- f. sentences are not too long and unclear,
- g. well justified sentences with current references
- h. sweeping statements are either justified or eliminated or rephrased
- i. that the information in the section actually speaks to the heading of the section
- j. smaller or sub-sections are brought in to make it easier to follow the argument or information. Examiners get lost in volumes of information that continues for pages without breaking it up into smaller parts
- k. perhaps give examples of how to write a sentence in a different way to make the point
- l. sections follow each other and possibly lead to an introduction to the section to follow already in the end of the previous section
- m. does the information in the chapter present a coherent body of information that makes sense
- n. what is missing and what should be added

Comments in the chapter should be useful for the student to improve on their writing, the way they are presenting the information and what they need to do to make the chapter better. Through your comments the student will be learning

how to write and to present the information which will improve as the student writes other chapters. However, as supervisor you will still have to check each chapter as student sometimes don't always repeat what you pointed out in the first chapter you reviewed.

- **Technical points to consider**

It is unfortunately also the role of the supervisor to point out technical aspects the student struggles with as some students are not quite attentive to spacing, consistency and presentation. Dissertations and thesis are marked on technical consideration or format used in the dissertation or thesis such as referencing, overall presentation of the document, style and language to name a few. As a supervisor you will need to point out such matters to the student very early on so that the document is neater and more presentable.

Consider the following:

- a. **Spacing between headings and paragraphs** should stay consistent irrespective of the distance between these parts the student decides to use. The student should stay consistent throughout the document and chapter.
- b. **Heading size** of the headings should stay consistent for the different levels in the chapter
- c. **Change in font** should stay consistent throughout the different levels in the chapter when applied
- d. Look at the **in text reference style** used by the student and advise if there are inconsistencies. Make the student aware that this is very important in the finalization of the chapter. Do not expect students to know this, but rather make sure that they are aware of the importance of their referencing style.
- e. If they are including figures and tables, look at the **captions** and where they are placed as well as the wording of these captions. The captions should be clear and represent the illustration or table in the best possible way.
- f. Consider the **clarity of photos, inserts or any copied material** used to clarify a part of the information. This is also important in the presentation of the chapter.
- g. Consider the **positioning of the illustrations, diagrams and tables** used in the chapter. You might recommend that these take up a page or be placed directly after a written part.

- h. Make sure the **figures or tables or illustrations are addressed** in the written sections so that the examiner can refer to the included graphics and not look for them or not know that they are part of the written section. Students sometimes forget to include Figure 2 or Table 2 in the written section and refer to it.
 - i. Look at the **frequent use of some special words** a student likes to use such as, however, can, although, according to etc. or just a normal repeat of one word several times in a paragraph or section. Advise the student to use such words less frequently when they overuse word such as however, nevertheless, according to etc, possibly only when very necessary and to find synonyms for the continuous use of a specific word.
- **Conclusion to the chapter**

When you consider the chapter, make sure the student has written a sensible conclusion to round the chapter off. This conclusion should not introduce new facts but summarize the important aspects the chapter dealt with. It can also propose what might be presented in the next chapter to follow. Students, many a time, write a scanty conclusion which does not compliment the important information put together in the chapter. Your guidance here may be very necessary.
 - **Totality of the dissertation or thesis**

It is rarely enough to see individual chapters before examination. A supervisor should consider the totality of the dissertation or thesis to enable an overview of the document that will be submitted for examination.

What to look for:

- a. Do the chapters follow on each other or are they single entities that do not fit into the purpose of the dissertation or thesis as a totality?
- b. Does the dissertation or thesis read as a continuation from the first chapter to the last with each chapter linking to the previous and to the next chapter?
- c. Do the chapters each contribute to the title of the study?
- d. Is the information in each chapter relevant to the study and does the information address the purpose of the study?
- e. Do the objectives of the study address the results or findings in other words have the results or findings explained what was set out in the objectives (what the researcher wanted to achieve)?
- f. Is there consistency in appearance, layout, referencing etc.?

- g. Is the information in the document presented in its best possible way?
- h. Is there logic to the way in which the dissertation or thesis is presented and would it make sense to the examiner as well?
- i. Does the student explain procedures and processes to ensure that everything that was done is clear and presented in the best way?
- j. Has the student included the latest references or are very old references used where new information exists?
- k. Has the reference list been compiled in the correct format?
- l. Do the in text references match the references in the reference list?

- **The methodology chapter**

This chapter needs special attention as a supervisor who is familiar with the research procedures used by the student should read carefully what the student has written.

What to look for:

- a. Has the student presented a chapter that shows how the research was conducted?
- b. Is every process or procedure that was followed presented clearly and accurately so that there isn't any doubt when the examiner looks at the section, on how it was done or why something was done?
- c. Can you find parts in the methodology where an examiner might want more information which the student has not indicated?
- d. Is there a logic flow to the chapter or does it appear confusing?
- e. Can you read the chapter and understand what was done, when, where and why?
- f. If anyone else wants to repeat this study would they be able to follow the way the student gathered the data by reading this chapter?
- g. How well are the decisions motivated and substantiated for the different processes and procedures in this chapter?
- h. Have well credible researchers and sources been referenced to support the methodology
- i. Is Ethics addressed in the chapter

- **Results or findings chapter**

This may be one or two chapters depending of the nature of the study. Usually it is one chapter for a Masters dissertation. Here it is expected of the supervisor to read for several points which may concern an examiner:

You will look for:

- a. Are the results or findings presented in a clear, logic and flowing way that does justice to the analysis
- b. Are you convinced that the student understands the analysis and presents the results and findings accurately
- c. Are the necessary aspects of the analysis addressed
- d. Has the correct analysis been conducted and described
- e. Has the student presented the analysis correctly and in the best way to explain the data
- f. Are the statistical analysis explained where necessary
- g. Is justification given for certain analysis
- h. Are the tables with the data presented technically correct
- i. Is justification and discussion given where needed
- j. Are credible sources used for referencing?
- k. Is the chapter neatly presented and detailed enough?
- l. Does the chapter have an introduction and conclusion or a form of orientation
- m. Are the challenging or contentious results presented with some justification as to why this might have happened
- n. Is it a scientific chapter with credibility and justification or is it presented in a doubtful and unjustified way?
- o. What do you think will an examiner think when they work through this chapter?

- **Referencing**

Students make many referencing mistakes in the dissertations and thesis which examiners picking up. Not only does this give a poor impression of the professional care of the document but it reflects as a rushed document that was not prepared taking every technical point into consideration which is referencing as well. Examiners provide lists of references not in the reference list or not in the text but in the reference list, misspelt references, incorrect dates and

various other mistakes with references. Although the College does not have one specific referencing format, as supervisor you should advise the student which referencing style to use. Some departments have a TUT301 in which referencing might also be addressed. Please consult your department in terms of the style of referencing to be used by the student. **To improve the quality of the dissertations and thesis, specific attention should be given to the quality of the references and reference list of the final examination copy.**

When you consider a chapter you should look at:

- a. Consistency in the in text references used in the chapters
- b. The same referencing style used throughout the dissertation or thesis
- c. Reference list is correct and aligns with in text references
- d. Reference list is complete and no references left out
- e. Correct dates in text and in the reference list
- f. Correct authors in text and in the reference list



To help the student you may require a reference list after each chapter that you look at before the final copy to help the student to catch the mistakes before compiling a full reference list for the document.

- **Language editing**

Examiners are careful readers who find many misspelt words, incorrect sentence construction, words left out of sentences, long sentences that lose their meaning, incorrect word use and many other mistakes. These all count as technical mistakes in a dissertation or thesis. As supervisor you may pick up some of the language errors in the document as you correct it, but some might slip you as well. To ensure that a student's work is presented in the best possible way you may recommend that an editor is used. However, to do this, the student would need to plan ahead of submission and make time available for the final editing of the dissertation or thesis. Editors are not always available at short notice and need to be booked ahead of time. It is advisable to make use of this service as it does improve the quality of the dissertation or thesis.

- **The concluding chapter of the dissertation or thesis**

When students reach this chapter they can only see one thing and that is to finish. Of all the chapters this is a very important chapter that is sometimes overlooked. It should feature many aspects which are not always easy for the student to accomplish. A supervisor would need to give clear guidance during the completion of this chapter to have a meaningful final chapter to the dissertation or thesis.

You should look for the following:

- a. Does the student have an introduction to the chapter that gives the reader some indication of what the chapter will present?
- b. Does the student present the main findings (does not write the finding chapter over in the final chapter) with an interpretation of what the findings mean and how these findings are now addressing the main objectives, or what can be said about the objectives at this stage.
- c. Is new literature being introduced in the final chapter that has not been discussed which should be limited as this chapter should not be a new literature chapter.
- d. Does the student give recommendations that are sensible and relevant taking into consideration the purpose of the study
- e. Does the student give an indication of future studies that build from the current research completed by the student
- f. Does the student indicate where the limitations of the research were
- g. For a PhD, does the student indicate where the contribution of the study is to the body of knowledge that the student's research was imbedded in?
- h. For some disciplines has the student for a PhD develop or proposed a framework of some sort or provided guidelines or some additional contribution that has never been developed before
- i. Has the student addressed where the novelty or their work is in the PhD they have submitted
- j. Does this chapter read as complying with the NQF level 10 descriptor for a PhD and NQF level 9 descriptor for a Masters: **Here they are to check:**

NQF Level Nine

- a. Scope of knowledge, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate specialist knowledge to enable engagement with and critique of current research or practices, as well as advanced scholarship or research in a particular field, discipline or practice.
- b. Knowledge literacy, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to evaluate current processes of knowledge production, and to choose an appropriate process of enquiry for the area of study or practice.
- c. Method and procedure, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate a command of and the ability to design, select and apply appropriate and creative methods, techniques, processes or technologies to complex practical and theoretical problems.

d. Problem solving, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate: the ability to use a wide range of specialised skills in identifying, conceptualising, designing and implementing methods of enquiry to address complex and challenging problems within a field, discipline or practice; and an understanding of the consequences of any solutions or insights generated within a specialised context.

e. Ethics and professional practice, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to make autonomous ethical decisions which affect knowledge production, or complex organisational or professional issues, and the ability to critically contribute to the development of ethical standards in a specific context.

f. Accessing, processing and managing information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to design and implement a strategy for the processing and management of information, in order to conduct a comprehensive review of leading and current research in an area of specialisation to produce significant insights.

g. Producing and communicating information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to use the resources of academic and professional or occupational discourses to communicate and defend substantial ideas that are the products of research or development in an area of specialisation; and use a range of advanced and specialised skills and discourses appropriate to a field, discipline or practice, to communicate with a range of audiences with different levels of knowledge or expertise.

h. Context and systems, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to make interventions at an appropriate level within a system, based on an understanding of hierarchical relations within the system, and the ability to address the intended and unintended consequences of interventions.

i. Management of learning, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to develop his or her own learning strategies, which sustain independent learning and academic or professional development; and can interact effectively within the learning or professional group as a means of enhancing learning.

j. Accountability, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to operate independently and take full responsibility for his or her own work, and, where appropriate, to account for leading and initiating processes and implementing systems, ensuring good resource management and governance practices.

NQF Level Ten

a. Scope of knowledge, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate expertise and critical knowledge in an area at the forefront of a field, discipline or practice; and the ability to conceptualise new research initiatives and create new knowledge or practice.

b. Knowledge literacy, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to contribute to scholarly debates around theories of knowledge and processes of knowledge production in an area of study or practice.

c. Method and procedure, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to develop new methods, techniques, processes, systems or technologies in original, creative and innovative ways appropriate to specialised and complex contexts.

d. Problem solving, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to apply specialist knowledge and theory in critically reflexive, creative and novel ways to address complex practical and theoretical problems.

e. Ethics and professional practice, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to identify, address and manage emerging ethical issues, and to advance processes of ethical decision-making, including monitoring and evaluation of the consequences of these decisions where appropriate.

f. Accessing, processing and managing information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to make independent judgements about managing incomplete or inconsistent information or data in an iterative process of analysis and synthesis, for the development of significant original insights into new, complex and abstract ideas, information or issues.

g. Producing and communicating information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to produce substantial, independent, in-depth and publishable work which meets international standards, is considered to be new or innovative by peers, and makes a significant contribution to the discipline, field, or practice; and the ability to develop a communication strategy to disseminate and defend research, strategic and policy initiatives and their implementation to specialist and non-specialist audiences using the full resources of an academic and professional or occupational discourse.

h. Context and systems, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of theoretical underpinnings in the management of complex systems to achieve systemic change; and the ability to independently design, sustain and manage change within a system or systems.

i. Management of learning, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to demonstrate intellectual independence, research leadership and management of research and research development in a discipline, field or practice.

j. Accountability, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to operate independently and take full responsibility for his or her work, and, where appropriate, lead, oversee and be held ultimately accountable for the overall governance of processes and systems.

You may also want to point the student to the Procedures for M&D Students in CAES 2019 section 4 which deals with the **Requirements for a Dissertation or Thesis** for additional and more detailed guidelines on how to draft and write a chapter and compile the dissertation or thesis in totality.

When you have considered some of the chapters and you are sure the student should submit for examination a particular process needs to be followed. The examination process starts with the **Intention to Submit**.

EXAMINATION PROCESS

- **Intention to submit**

When you have considered the first full draft of a student's dissertation or several chapters it is advisable to discuss the possibility of intention to submit with the student.

The process for submission of the dissertation or thesis for examination starts with the intention to submit. All procedures are discussed and flow diagrams are provided to clarify the descriptions. Only students in the Dissertation or Thesis module will be

eligible to follow the intention to submit process. Proposal module students do not conform to this procedure.

1 INTENTION TO SUBMIT

Submission is a term used to indicate the readiness of the student's dissertation or thesis for examination purposes. The submission process starts with the intention to submit. In order to start the process of intention to submit, the student and supervisor should have agreed that the student is ready to submit the dissertation or thesis for examination purposes. It is advisable to have this conversation with a student who has made significant process for possible examination purposes.

The following should be discussed with the student:

- It is not advisable to submit the dissertation or thesis for examination purposes without the approval of the supervisor and co-supervisor.
- If a student wishes to do so for some or other valid reason, the student may seek approval from Senate Research Innovation and Higher Degrees Committee to submit the dissertation or thesis for examination.

A supervisor should consider the following:

- It is not advisable to suggest to the student to give intention to submit when a complete first draft of the dissertation or thesis has not been assessed; or
- When the supervisor does not feel comfortable with the quality of the dissertation or thesis to date, the supervisor may request the student to postpone the intention to submit or
- When the supervisor has not seen the final corrections and complete overview of the dissertation or thesis.

In general a supervisor should be comfortable with the quality of the dissertation or thesis to be submitted for examination purposes and therefore in agreement that the student should submit. The supervisor should also have emphasised the importance of submitting a dissertation or thesis of good technical quality (grammar, referencing, sentence construction, punctuation etc.).

Intention to submit can be given during two (2) periods of the year. The first date is before **15 April** for graduation in September of the same year. The second date is before **30 September** for graduation in April/May of the following year.

Procedures to follow to give notice of Intention to Submit

The student needs to complete the Intention to Submit form and submit to the supervisor for further completion. The supervisor or student submits the completed form to the College office for Research and Postgraduate studies (CORGS) in the

College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences via email to: Ms Emelda Pimentel at pimente1@unisa.ac.za or personally to her office on the Florida campus.

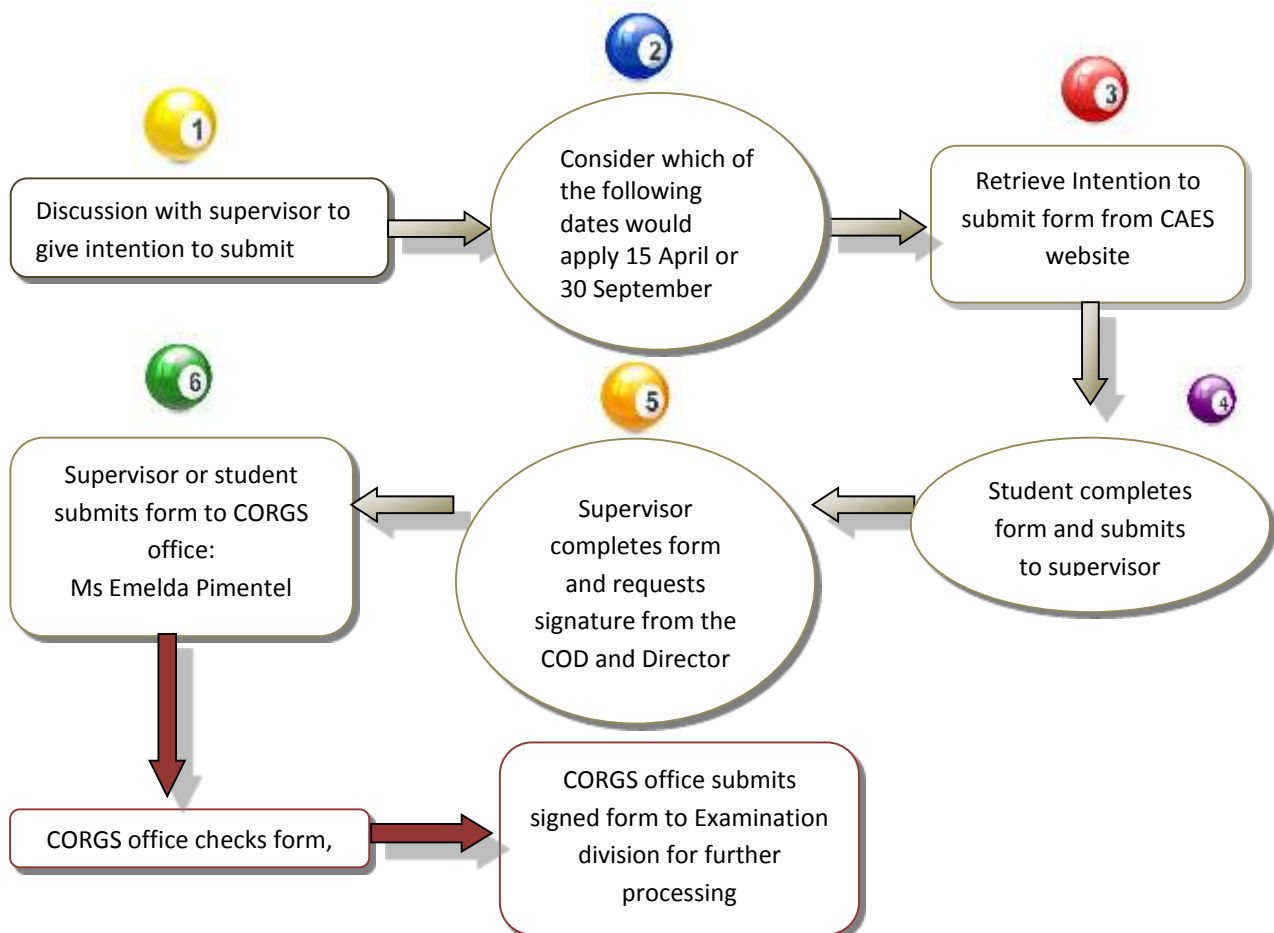
When the notice for intention to submit has been processed by the College office for Research and Graduate studies, it will be forwarded to the Examination division at Unisa for further processing. Thereafter the student will be notified by the Examination division of the due dates for submission and provided with the necessary documentation. If the supervisor does not agree with the intention to submit and reasons for the disagreement have been given on the form, the CORGS office will start the process of elevation to Senate through the college structures.

Form can be accessed from this link:

<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Agriculture-&-Environmental-Sciences/Masters-&-Doctoral-information>

A process flow for Intention to submit is suggested in the Diagram below.

Diagram 1: CAES process flow diagram for the Intention to Submit



After Intention to Submit has been given the student continues to work on the dissertation and will reach the stage where the final copy for examination is complete.

The next step

2 RECOMMENDATION FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINERS

- **Recommendation for examiners**

When a student has given intention to submit the examination prepares a file which is sent back to the College with a V35 form included. This is the form that is used for the appointment of examiners. The file is handed to the department and a specific process is followed in each department for the recommendation of examiners. In some departments you may be approached to provide CVs for examiners, in other departments the COD approaches the examiners. Irrespective of the process a particular department adopts, you will not know who has finally been appointed as your recommendation is considered in relation to such criteria as the frequency with which the examiner has been used, if the examiner has examined M of D students before or supervised students and various other criteria. The final recommendation is completed on the V35 and signed off by the Dean should the Dean approve the recommendation. It may be referred back to the department to reconsider if the recommended candidates are not approved.



Please note that a student should never be told who were recommended as examiners should a supervisor have been requested to make recommendations for examiners. As supervisor you should also not be in contact with the recommended examiners you put forward during the examination of your student. They might not have been appointed or may have been appointed as examiners.

When the appointment of examiners have been returned signed off by the Dean the file will be submitted back to the examination division who will do the final appointment of examiners and communicate with them. This does take some time and may be completed within 1 – 2 months from the completion of the V35.

In the meantime the student continues to complete the dissertation or thesis and when the final copy is ready it is submitted to Turn-it –in.

The next step

3 SUBMIT to TURN-IT-IN

- **The final copy of the dissertation or thesis**

The final copy of the dissertation or thesis to be submitted for examination is required to be submitted through Turn-it-in. The submission has to be made to Ms Marthie van Wyk at vwykmj@unisa.ac.za who will do the submission. The submission to her should be in a word document. Ms Van Wyk will then issue the Similarity report and certificate via email to the student and supervisor. A final supervisor sign off form will also be attached to this email.

The supervisor should now consider the similarity score and determine if the student should address some of the scores identified in the report and determine where can be done to improve the document or if it is in order. Unisa no longer sets a limit and is it now up to the supervisor to consult with the student on the outcome of the report.

The similarity report should not be included in the final dissertation or thesis only the certificate should be included.

The next step

4 SUPERVISOR SIGN OFF

- **Supervisor sign off for examination**

When the Turn-it-in submission has been considered by the supervisor and student the supervisor may now sign off the dissertation or thesis for submission for examination. The final sign off form is submitted with all its evidence to Ms Emelda Pimentel via email or in hard copy at pimente1@unisa.ac.za. The evidence required is:

- a. Proof of 1 accredited article submission for a PhD student
- Or
- b. If a published article, proof of the published article front page
- c. Turn-it-in similarity report should be attached

The Final sign off form can be accessed from this link:
<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Agriculture-&-Environmental-Sciences/Masters-&-Doctoral-information>



If you have delivered a PhD candidate you need to indicate proof of submission of an accredited article according to the College requirements.



Please note that summaries of the abstract of the dissertation or thesis has to be submitted as per the following stipulations in the M&D Procedures for Unisa. This is a requirement that has to be included as follows:

7.8 A summary of not more than 350 words for doctoral theses, or 150 words for Master's dissertations, in the language in which the thesis or dissertation is written, must be bound in the front of each examination copy of the thesis or dissertation, between the title page and the table of contents. If the thesis or dissertation is not in English, each copy must also contain a summary in English, which must be bound in the front of each copy of the thesis or dissertation, between the title page and the table of contents.

Summaries of not more than 350 words for doctoral theses, or 150 words for Master's by research dissertations, in at least three official South African languages, one of which must be English, and also in the language in which the thesis or dissertation is written, if not an official South African language, must be included in the front of the electronic post-examination copy of the thesis or dissertation, between the title page and the table of contents. After the examination has been completed and the candidate's thesis or dissertation has been approved, the supervisor may contact Language Services to provide translations of the English summary in the additional official South African languages. The student does not incur any costs in this regard and his or her graduation should not be delayed if the translations are not obtained timeously.

The next step

4 SUBMISION FOR EXAMINATION

- **Electronic submission of dissertation or thesis**

Examination copies of the dissertations and thesis are no longer submitted in paper form but electronically. The process is communicated to the student via myLife email. Unfortunately the supervisor is not informed of the submission and should stay in contact with the student in terms of when submission has taken place.

The next step

5 NON-EVALUATIVE REPORT

- **Submission of Non-Evaluative report**

In a couple of weeks the supervisor will receive an email requesting for a non-evaluative report to be submitted to the Non-examining chair for the examination of the candidate. The Non-Evaluative report is a report prepared by the supervisor which explains the research journey of the student. It has to include the following information about the student:

- How long the project took from registration to completion
- The conditions under which the work was carried out (distance between supervisor and student etc)
- Guidance and assistance given to the candidate
- How much help did the supervisor have to give and
- Was the document professionally edited or not

This report is submitted by the supervisor to the Non-Examining chair.

The next step

5 NON-EXAMINING CHAIR (NEC)

- **The role of the Non-examining chair**

The Non-examining chair is appointed by the COD to oversee the examination process. This is the only person a supervisor should contact to find out anything related to the examination process. The NEC will follow up with the examiners to deliver the reports on time and will compile the final examination report. The NEC will also communicate with the supervisor in terms of any corrections to be made to the dissertation or thesis.

The next step

6 EXAMINATION REPORTS

- **Receiving examination reports**

All examination reports are sent to the NEC who will then determine what to do going forward. If a master's degree only two examiners would have been used. These two reports will be considered in terms of a unanimous or non-unanimous outcome. In the case of a unanimous outcome both examiners have either passed or failed the student. If a non-unanimous outcome one examiner does not agree with the other meaning one examiner might have failed the student and one might have passed the student or one might have given a distinction and one might not have done so. In all non-unanimous cases the outcome is referred to College Management. The NEC would have submitted the non-unanimous outcome to CORGS for processing to College Management.

If a decision has to be made between a fail and a pass, an arbitrator may be recommended by CMC. The recommendation is submitted to the Vice Principal Research (VP) who supports or declines the recommendation. If the recommendation of an arbitrator is approved, the department is requested to recommend who the arbitrator should be. This requires another V35 to be completed as the arbitrator is considered to be an examiner who is appointed as such. The process takes some time. The NEC will be informed of the outcome and if an arbitrator should be appointed. When the arbitrator report is received the original reports plus the arbitrator report is considered by College Management. The final recommendation for the outcome of the examination is then made to the VP. Should the recommendation be a resubmit for examination the student will then be informed to register for one year and resubmit for examination. This will start the examination process again. The same examiners are appointed and the same NEC.



The NEC will only share the examiner reports in an instance of resubmit for examination once the student has been informed to resubmit. The supervisor should then contact the NEC for these reports.



In non-unanimous cases the NEC will not share the reports with the supervisor until the process has been finalized by College Management and VP in the case of an arbitrator.

If the examiners agree that the dissertation or thesis can be passed it might be necessary for the student to make changes to the document as stipulated by the examiners. A student should attend to the corrections as quick as possibly to ensure that the process can be finalized and possibly reach graduation. The corrections will be submitted to you by the NEC. As supervisor you are required to discuss the corrections with the student and how to prepare a change log or table in which the comments of the examiners are listed and how they are addressed.

If your student is granted 1.4 which is an outright fail, the student may not reregister with the department in the particular program of College again.

The next step

7 GRADUATION

- **Final outcome of the examination process**

The final outcome is communicated to the student's myLife email through the examination division. It should be understood that the college can only recommend an outcome of the examination. The final result still goes through an auditing process at the Examination division, who only provides the final outcome to the student. Any college recommendation can be overturned. An NEC can therefore never provide any supervisor with the recommendation by College Management as this is not the audited result. If all documents have gone through the audited process a student may graduate between April – June and September to October.

End of examination

Prof E Kempen

Head: College office for Research and Postgraduate studies