

PROCEDURES FOR MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL DEGREES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL

- 1.1 These procedures are based on the Policy for Master's and Doctoral Degrees and the Processes for M and D Research Degrees and relate to the research proposal and dissertation or thesis components of master's and doctoral degrees. They should be read in conjunction with the following other Unisa policies:

Admission Policy

Assessment Policy

Research and Innovation Policy

Tuition Policy

The requirements for ethical conduct and clearance are set out in paragraph 3 of the Policy for Master's and Doctoral Degrees. The Policy on Research Ethics and Policy on Conducting Research involving Unisa Employees, Students or Data must also be adhered to. Intellectual property rights are regulated by the Intellectual Property Policy. Candidates must also comply with the guidelines of the specific college in which they intend to register or are currently registered for their master's or doctoral degree.

- 1.2 The procedures for postgraduate studies are divided into different phases:

- **Master's and doctoral information prior to registration**
- **Application and admission**
- **Registration**
- **Research proposal (coursework qualifications)**
- **Mini-dissertation, dissertation or thesis (supervision and assessment)**
- **Archiving**
- **Graduation and reporting**

These phases will be dealt with in the same order in the chapters below.

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- 1.3 The Executive Deans of colleges or delegated persons with the appointed Heads of the Offices of Graduate Studies and Research are responsible for the implementation of the *Policy and Procedures for Master's and Doctoral Degrees*.
- 1.4 All information and study material in respect of master's and doctoral degrees are available online. General information is verified annually by the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section and is posted on the Unisa website prior to the opening date for applications and registrations; departmental websites regarding matters regulated by Unisa policies and procedures must first be approved by Senate. All enquiries related to master's and doctoral applications and registrations must be directed to the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section via email to mandd@unisa.ac.za (GSBL students must contact the SBL directly on sbl@unisa.ac.za), as contact is online only. No application and registration self-help stations are available at campuses or regional offices for master's and doctoral students.

DEFINITIONS

Candidate	refers to a student who has been formally accepted (registered) into a master's or doctoral programme at Unisa
CGS	refers to the College of Graduate Studies
CGS PGAD	refers to the Postgraduate Administration Department, which is in the College of Graduate Studies
CGS SIRGS	refers to the School of Interdisciplinary Research and Graduate Studies, which is in the College of Graduates Studies
CGS STRGS	refers to the School of Trans-Disciplinary Research and Graduate Studies, which is in the College of Graduate Studies
Creative output portfolio	refers to evidence of a body of work that potentially can receive 1 or 2 units for research output, as defined by the DHET in the Government Gazette: Policy on the Evaluation of Creative Outputs and Innovations produced by Public Higher Education Institutions (2017). The creative output portfolio should include an application letter directed to the curator/manager of the venue (which should be a recognised museum/gallery/performance venue). It should also include a clear annotation of 500-700 words describing the overview, problems and key questions addressed and the primary aim of the creative work. It should explain the creative methodology, conceptual and scholarly framework

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in which the work resides and propose the contribution to new knowledge. The portfolio must include a declaration of originality, include links to verifiable evidence of the creative output, which includes one or more of the following forms, and may not exceed 100 MB: an e-catalogue/relevant internet Uniform Resource Locator (URL)/published work in the case of literary arts/PDF of musical scores and the venue(s) or platforms on which the output was exhibited/performed

Deferment	refers to the suspension of a student's registration on application by the student for an acceptable reason
Delegated person	refers to the person, or committee, to whom, or which, a specific function has been delegated
Dissertation	refers to the written research project required in a master's degree by dissertation only as described in the <i>Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (2013) (HEQSF)</i>
Graduate attributes	refer to the three specific areas to which doctoral programmes contribute, i.e. knowledge production, development of researchers, and societal contributions to meet immediate problems. These attributes are assessed through means such as examiners' reports, analysis of these reports, pass rates, analysis of the extent to which extensive corrections/resubmissions of theses are required, institutional research into the kinds of learning and other challenges faced by students and the extent to which these are addressed, tracer studies and analysis of employer/workplace comments on graduate quality
Intercollege Postgraduate Studies Committee (ICPGSC)	refers to the sub-committee of the Senate Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Degrees and Commercialisation Committee and is authorised by the Executive Management to approve all policies and procedures related to master's and doctoral studies
International examiner	refers to a scholar with an excellent master's and doctoral supervision record who is employed at a reputable university outside the borders of South Africa. Scholars who emigrated from South Africa and are currently employed at a reputable international university are included as long as

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	they have supervised master's or doctoral candidates to completion
International scholar	refers to a researcher/recognised intellectual who is internationally recognised by his/her peers as a leader in the field based on the quality and impact of his/her research publications. This person is a researcher who holds the highest level of postgraduate qualification or its recognised equivalent, with a solid publication record, creative innovations, contributions, or equivalence, invited to present at conferences and is active in collaborative research projects
Mini-dissertation	refers to the dissertation required in part fulfilment of the requirements of a master's by coursework and mini-dissertation as described in the HEQSF
NEC	refers to non-examining chairperson
Originality detection system	refers to a system that is used to check document content against a database for similarities to ensure that content is original and correctly cited, supporting academic integrity and guarding against real/inadvertent plagiarism
Prospective student	refers to a person who has not yet been formally accepted as a master's or doctoral student at Unisa
SAQA	refers to the South African Qualifications Authority
Thesis	refers to the written research product required to be submitted for examination in fulfilment of the requirements for the completion of a doctoral degree as described in the HEQSF
Unisa	refers to the University of South Africa



CHAPTER 2

PHASE 1: MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL INFORMATION PRIOR TO REGISTRATION

- 2.1 Details of formal admission requirements for individual qualifications are available on the Unisa website www.unisa.ac.za/qualificationsmd/. All pre-registration requirements must be met before a prospective student will be allowed to register. Colleges may have specific language admission requirements.
- 2.2 Prospective students who have not previously studied for a formal qualification at Unisa must first apply for a student number and thereafter apply for admission during the prescribed application dates (except where permission from Senate has been granted to deviate from these dates) for master's and doctoral qualifications. The application fee for a student number is non-refundable.
- 2.3 The application process and selection criteria set by colleges, schools or departments and approved by Senate are made available on departmental websites prior to the commencement date for application for master's and doctoral studies. Such information includes specific focus areas or research projects identified by departments and/or colleges and the number of new master's and doctoral students that can be accommodated in a particular academic year and is aligned with section 37(3) and (4)(b) of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997.
- 2.4 Starting from the 2021 cohort, doctoral candidates must deliver an oral defence (*viva voce*) of their theses as a compulsory part of the examination process. The oral examination (*viva voce*) will be conducted online through a video link. Face-to-face oral examinations can be arranged under exceptional circumstances and must be approved by the Executive Dean or delegated person of the college concerned. The same examiners are appointed to assess the thesis and adjudicate its oral defence. The standard operating procedures for the *viva voce* is available to academic staff on the link: [DOCTORAL ORAL EXAMINATION STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES.pdf \(unisa.ac.za\)](#)
- 2.5 Under certain circumstance, master's candidates may be called upon to deliver an oral defence (*viva voce*) of their dissertations.
- 2.6 The HEQSF allows a master's student's candidature (master's by full research) to be upgraded to a doctoral programme, provided the candidate has the necessary competence and the 50/50 rule is adhered to. Since the minimum requirement for admission to a doctoral programme is an appropriate master's degree, the quality of the candidate's work on which the upgrade is considered must be at the level of a completed master's degree. The upgrading request must be recommended by the supervisor to the Executive Dean or delegated person, supported by the College Executive Committee and approved by Senate,

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and must take place during the thesis or dissertation phase prior to submission for examination. The upgrade will be captured on the academic record as “Upgraded to doctoral qualification”.

- 2.7 From 2022, first-time doctoral candidates are required to submit two manuscripts for publication to a peer-reviewed accredited journal as part of the thesis phase. Alternatively, a creative output portfolio must be submitted to an approved forum (such as a professional gallery or museum). Colleges should notify prospective students of this requirement prior to registration. Supervisors must confirm the submission of the manuscripts on the prescribed form (V35). The submitted manuscripts or creative portfolios should be based on the research undertaken during master’s and doctoral studies and should be deemed acceptable to the supervisor. Results will not be released until proof of acknowledgement by the journal editor or institution curator is submitted by the supervisor.
- 2.8 In the case of a thesis, two manuscripts or creative portfolios should be submitted for publication, unless otherwise approved by Senate.

Candidates should play a role or major role (in formulating the ideas and the results) in writing the manuscripts or creative portfolios, for publication. When co-authored with a supervisor, the candidate should be the first author.



CHAPTER 3

PHASE 2: APPLICATION AND ADMISSION

- 3.1 The minimum qualifications for admission to master's and doctoral studies are set out in the *Admissions Policy* and are informed by the *Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework* (2013). Unisa is not, however, obliged to accept any prospective student who meets the minimum requirement as there may be other factors on the basis of which the prospective student cannot be accepted. Factors that will be considered before admitting the prospective student to register include, but are not limited to, the following: the prospective student's academic record, the topic he/she wishes to research, the quality of the research outline submitted as part of the application, the capacity and expertise to supervise the prospective student and possible limitations imposed by enrolment planning. Such factors will be indicated on the college websites. Students who completed a master's or doctoral qualification in a discipline/field may not apply or register for a qualification on the same level, in the same discipline/field.
- 3.2 Applications for admission are made online to the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section at www.unisa.ac.za/md/applications within the prescribed application dates. The prospective students must indicate their preferred focus area. Some colleges allow prospective students to suggest an alternate title or focus area if their interest is not covered in the list provided by the college.
- 3.3 The CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section receives the online applications and verifies compliance with the formal requirements as communicated on the website <http://www.unisa.ac.za/qualificationsMD/>. Students who obtained qualifications outside of the borders of South Africa must submit a SAQA certificate of evaluation as part of their application. The complete application is then referred to the academic department concerned for selection. The academic department considers the application, the prospective student's academic record, his/her academic background, language competence, factors set out in supervisory capacity and other relevant matters and, in accordance with the provisions of sections 37(3) and (4)(b) of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, recommends approval or rejection to the Executive Dean or delegated person. The Chair of Department or delegated person conveys, in writing to the Executive Dean or delegated person, the reasons for the non-acceptance of an application in cases where a prospective student complies with the minimum requirements but is unacceptable to the academic department for academic or other reasons as set out in this paragraph.

The college notifies the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section, via the myUnisa admission system, of the outcome of the application for admission.

- 3.4 When a prospective student's or candidate's application to register is approved, the college notifies the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section, via the myUnisa admission system, of the name of the supervisor and the working title.
- 3.5 The CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section informs the prospective student of the department's decision as well as the reasons on which the decision was based.
- 3.6 An appeal against non-admission on academic grounds may be addressed to the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section, which will refer it to the Executive Dean of the relevant college, or delegated person. If the appeal is rejected, such rejection must be substantiated and submitted to the Intercollege Postgraduate Studies Committee (ICPGSC) for consideration. The ICPGSC considers the matter and informs the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section of the outcome. This section communicates the outcome to the applicant, the Executive Dean or delegated person and the academic department.



CHAPTER 4

PHASE 3: REGISTRATION

- 4.1 A candidate whose application for a master's degree by dissertation, or a doctoral degree, is accepted is advised by the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section to register for the qualification within the prescribed registration dates.
- 4.2 In the case of a master's degree by coursework and mini-dissertation, a candidate whose application for registration is accepted must register for at least one of the coursework modules and/or the research proposal module. Colleges may make recommendations in respect of the order in which candidates should register for the modules in the programme, but candidates must, if they wish to do so, be able to complete the 180-credit qualification within one year as set out in the HEQSF.
- 4.3 A candidate's registration is not finalised before all the admission and registration processes have been completed and minimum/full payment of the fees prescribed for the relevant module(s) has been received.
- 4.4 A letter is issued to the candidate as soon as his/her registration is finalised. In the case of a candidate who has registered for a research proposal module or dissertation or thesis, the letter includes the working title and the name and contact details of the candidate's supervisor. Copies of this letter are forwarded to the designated contact person in the department and/or the supervisor and co-supervisor (if applicable).
- 4.5 The supervisor(s) will guide the candidate for the duration of his/her study period. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that the student is registered for the academic year before commencing with supervision. The supervisor, co-supervisor and the student must make use of the M&D Student dashboard for documenting student progress.
- 4.6 A candidate should establish contact with his/her supervisor as soon as possible either personally (should be arranged beforehand) or by e-mail if a face-to-face meeting is not possible. Upon registration, a personal librarian will contact the candidate. The manager of the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section provides the library, on a monthly basis, with a list of registered students.
- 4.7 Candidates who are registered for a master's or doctoral degree may, if they comply with the prescribed admission requirements for those modules or papers, also register in the same academic year for two undergraduate modules or for one honours or master's paper or the corresponding number of modules on the same level for non-degree purposes (NDP).
- 4.8 An application for concurrent registration must reach the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section at least three weeks before the closing date for registration for the NDP paper/module(s).

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- 4.9 Candidates must reregister annually online and pay the fees for the academic year by the date published on the Unisa website.
- 4.10 Re-registration depends on satisfactory progress by the candidate as determined in the Admission Policy and on approval by the supervisor. Given the high demand for admission to master's and doctoral degrees at Unisa, a candidate who has been admitted to such studies should demonstrate satisfactory progress for the duration of his/her studies towards the postgraduate qualification. The supervisor approves re-registration annually by capturing the candidate's academic activities on myUnisa and indicating that the candidate may re-register. Supervisors must be cognisant of the maximum duration allowed for a qualification (refer par. 4.12). The supervisor also submits a Research Proposal Result form in the case of a coursework master's qualification, in which the supervisor indicates whether the student may re-register and motivates accordingly. This form is submitted according to college requirements.

The academic department monitors the progress of the candidate. Colleges may require a six-monthly or annual progress review. The supervisor should, at least three months prior to re-registration, alert a candidate to the fact that he/she is not making sufficient progress in terms of the *Admission Policy*. Should a candidate still not make satisfactory progress, the supervisor indicates unsatisfactory progress on myUnisa, thus blocking automatic re-registration, and the candidate is sent a warning letter by the supervisor. The Executive Dean of the College of Graduate Studies or delegated person, the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section and the Graduate Office of the college where the candidate is registered are copied in on this letter. The relevant committee may recommend to the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section that the candidate be excluded for a period of two years for academic reasons and that he/she therefore not be allowed to re-register for a qualification at the same level on the National Qualifications Framework in the same college. The CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section must receive a copy of the recommendation, as well as a completed Research Proposal Result form (in the case of a coursework qualification). The student will, accordingly, be informed in writing by the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section.

- 4.11 A candidate may, within thirty days of receipt of written notification of such exclusion, address an appeal against his/her exclusion to the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section. This section refers it to the Executive Dean of the relevant college or delegated person. If the College Executive or Management Committee recommends that the appeal be rejected, such rejection must be substantiated and submitted to the Intercollege Postgraduate Studies Committee for consideration. The committee considers the matter and informs the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section of the outcome. This section communicates the outcome to the student, the Executive Dean or delegated person, and the academic department.
- 4.12 In terms of the *Admission Policy*, a candidate must complete a master's qualification within three years. Under exceptional circumstances and on the recommendation of the Executive

Dean or delegated person, a candidate may be allowed an extra (fourth) year to complete the qualification. For a coursework master's degree, a student must pass at least two modules after two years of study to be able to continue to the next academic year. For a doctoral degree, a candidate must complete the study programme within six years. Under exceptional circumstances, and on recommendation by the Executive Dean or delegated person, a candidate may be allowed an extra (seventh) year to complete the qualification.

- 4.13 A doctoral degree requires a minimum of two years' study. A candidate registered for a doctoral degree must have been registered for at least two academic years before the thesis may be submitted for examination. If a candidate registered for a master's degree and has been upgraded to a doctoral programme (see par. 2.6 above), the period registered for the master's degree is considered when calculating the candidate's period of registration.
- 4.14 Candidates who wish to defer their studies must, before the closing date for re-registration for a particular year, submit a substantiated application to their supervisor. Candidates may not defer their studies in the first year of registration. The application form for deferment is available on the website. Such deferment must be recommended by the supervisor, Chair of Department or delegated person and Executive Dean of the college or delegated person concerned and, if granted, is for a period of one year only, after which a further application must be submitted. Deferment will not be granted more than twice, except in exceptional circumstances as determined by the Registrar or the Executive Dean of the college or delegated person. Periods during which a candidate was permitted to defer his/her studies are excluded when calculating the candidate's period of registration. The deferment of studies will be captured by the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section and will reflect on a student's academic record.
- 4.15 A candidate may not be supervised or receive study guidance or library services during the period for which he/she has deferred his/her studies. The approved title for his/her dissertation or thesis will be reserved during the period of deferment. Supervisors must ensure that they only supervise students who are registered for the current academic year.
- 4.16 If a candidate does not register for a particular year and did not obtain prior permission to defer his/her studies, the approved title of his/her projected dissertation or thesis will not necessarily be reserved for him/her and the year of interruption will count as one of the years allowed to complete the qualification in terms of the Admission Policy. The candidate must re-apply online for admission to the qualification.
- 4.17 The normal rules regarding the cancellation or reduction of study units apply in respect of the coursework modules (for which fees are charged per module or paper) of candidates who are registered for the master's degree by coursework and mini-dissertation subject to any rules applicable to the specific degree.

4.18 Candidates who cancel their registration for a research proposal module, or for a mini-

dissertation, or dissertation or thesis, remain liable for the full fees for the year for which they were registered. In exceptional cases, the Executive Dean or delegated person may recommend cancellation with or without full refund to the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section.

- 4.19 In exceptional cases a waiver of fees may be approved by the Executive Dean of the relevant college, or delegated person.
- 4.20 A transfer from one qualification to another is only allowed in the case where transitional arrangements have been approved at Senate which allow for a student to elect to transfer to the new qualification. The student must complete the form, "Request to transfer to another qualification" and submit it together with a letter of release from the current college to the office of Executive Dean/ Head, Office of graduate studies for consideration. The college will solicit the availability of the supervisor as part of their assessment process.

The request should be submitted before 30 June of the academic year. The CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section will inform the candidate and the supervisor(s) of the change. Once a student has submitted their research component for examination, a graduation date has been issued, or the student has already graduated, a transfer to another qualification will not be allowed.

- 4.21 If a student wants to change from one qualification to another, he/she is required to apply for admission for the qualification during the approved application period.



CHAPTER 5

GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. TITLES

- 5.1 Candidates who apply for admission to a doctoral degree or a master's degree by dissertation must submit a working title with their admission applications. Candidates who apply for a master's degree by coursework and mini-dissertation may be required to submit a working title for the mini-dissertation with the application for admission.
- 5.2 The working title is captured by the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section when the application is being finalised. The working title remains on the student system until such time as the student submits for examination.
- 5.3 In the case of a coursework qualification, the working title is captured by the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section when the application is being finalised. The working title remains on the student system until such time as the research proposal module result (in the case of a coursework qualification) is approved. The supervisor should, on approval of the research proposal, provide the approved title and supervisor/co-supervisor on the Research Proposal Result form to have the title amended if required. The amended title is submitted by the college to the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section for capturing.
- 5.4 Titles should not be changed throughout the duration of the mini-dissertation, dissertation or thesis phase. When a candidate is nearing completion of the dissertation or thesis, the supervisor and candidate should assess the working title and, if necessary, apply to the relevant College Committee for a title under which the dissertation or thesis will be submitted for examination. Colleges must address the quality of titles, including possible submission of proposed titles to language editors before submission to College Board or the College Executive for recommendation to the Intercollege Postgraduate Studies Committee for approval. The supervisor and candidate must consider the January and November submission dates (see par. 7.15) to ensure that the titles are approved before final submission for examination. Titles should be in sentence case and should as far as possible not contain any abbreviations.
- 5.5 Titles are maintained by the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section. The manager of this section will provide the Head: Research and Graduate Studies of each college with a list of approved titles on request for recommendation to the College Board or the College Executive for recommendation to the Intercollege Postgraduate Studies Committee for approval.

- 5.6 Examiners may recommend changes to the registered title of a candidate's dissertation or thesis. In this instance the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section is requested to amend the title when the final results are submitted to them by the academic college and before the results are released to the candidate. The supervisor should ensure that the candidate submits the post-assessment electronic copy under the amended title.

B. SUPERVISOR AND CO-SUPERVISOR

General

- 5.7 As stipulated in the *Assessment Procedures Manual*, supervisors of candidates doing master's dissertations must hold at least an equivalent (master's) qualification, but preferably a doctorate and must have a research record that is deemed acceptable by the college for the appointment. Supervisors who hold a master's degree should preferably be appointed as co-supervisor. Supervisors and co-supervisors of doctoral candidates must themselves hold a doctorate and have a research record that is deemed acceptable by the college for the appointment. In exceptional circumstances, the Executive Dean or delegated person may request the Intercollege Postgraduate Studies Committee to approve the appointment of a supervisor with specific expertise but who does not have the stipulated academic qualification or research record.

All novice master's and doctoral supervisors must attend compulsory supervisor training offered by CGS and submit proof of completion thereof to the Chair of Department or delegated person before they may be appointed as supervisors.

- 5.8 Immediately after registration has been finalised, the candidate and his/her supervisor sign a supervision agreement setting out their respective roles regarding the proposed research. Colleges, schools, or departments may draw up their own agreements. The supervisor must upload the signed agreement on the M&D Students Dashboard within 60 days from the date of registration. It is the responsibility of the Chair of Department, or delegated person to ensure that the agreement is uploaded.
- 5.9 To increase supervision capacity, supervisors external to Unisa may be appointed. Their remuneration and conditions of employment are determined from time to time by the relevant Unisa structures. External (co-)supervisors are appointed as independent task-based contractors by the academic department hosting the particular qualification. This department recommends the appointment of an external (co-)supervisor to the Executive Dean or delegated person substantiated by a curriculum vitae that should include any supervisory experience. The remuneration of external supervisors is funded from Unisa's Academic Human Resource Allocation Model (ACHRAM) (departmental discretionary funds).
- 5.10 The following criteria are considered when appointing external supervisors: academic qualification, expertise in the field and supervisory experience at the level of the qualification they will be required to supervise.

- 5.11 A co-supervisor or panel of supervisors may be appointed. Co-supervisors or panel members should be experts in an aspect of the field of the proposed dissertation or thesis. They may provide academic support and expertise in cooperation with the supervisor.
- 5.12 A novice supervisor must co-supervise with experienced supervisors.
- 5.13 Supervisors and co-supervisors are strongly encouraged to attend at least one supervisor internal training initiative annually.
- 5.14 A supervisor or candidate may address a duly motivated request to the Executive Dean or delegated person for the appointment of a co-supervisor, or for the replacement of the supervisor by another supervisor.

The role of the supervisor

- 5.15 The supervisor must be mindful of the relevant policies and associated documents governing postgraduate supervision at Unisa as well as the stipulations of the compulsory supervision agreement entered into between the supervisor (and co-supervisor where applicable) and the candidate.
- 5.16 The supervisor should initiate a discussion with the candidate on a research plan, requirements in respect of ethical clearance for the research, appropriate deadlines and timetables and other relevant matters concerning the research to complete the research successfully.
- 5.17 The supervisor must provide timely feedback on work submitted by the candidate and indicate such feedback on myUnisa (see par. 5.26 below).
- 5.18 The supervisor must provide appropriate guidance by alerting the candidate to helpful scholarly sources as well as provide guidance regarding the structure and content of the dissertation or thesis. However, it remains the candidate's responsibility to conduct independent research. It should be pointed out to the candidate that it is his/her duty, and not that of the supervisor, to trace sources.
- 5.19 The supervisor should draw the candidate's attention to linguistic errors, inadequately substantiated or poorly formulated statements and incorrect referencing, but it is the candidate's duty to improve them.
- 5.20 The supervisor must treat the candidate with courtesy and fairness and should suggest appropriate developmental goals and assistance towards those goals by directing the candidate to workshops or lectures designed for this purpose, including training in the use of databases and research software such as AtlasTi, Mendeley, RefWorks, SPSS and SAS for which Unisa has site licences.
- 5.21 The supervisor should not rewrite parts of the candidate's work but must merely point out

deficiencies to the candidate. The candidate should also be provided with feedback on his/her technical presentation and methodology.

- 5.22 Before the dissertation or thesis is presented for examination, it must be submitted in its final form to the supervisor. The supervisor should ensure that it meets the requirements set out in paragraph 7.2 and should advise the candidate on the need for language editing. The candidate is responsible for the arrangement of and payment for editing services. Various external and Unisa funding options may be available and will be published on the Unisa website.
- 5.23 A dissertation or thesis may not be submitted for examination without the supervisor's consent. The rule may be waived only with the consent of Senate (see par. 7.23).
- 5.24 If formal doctoral examinations are to be conducted or where a formal study programme is prescribed, the supervisor (with the assistance of colleagues if there are subsidiary subjects) must see to the compilation of a reading list for the candidate. The supervisor must help the candidate to prepare for this oral defence (see also par. 2.4).
- 5.25 The supervisor must advise the candidate on the academic standard of the dissertation or thesis. If the thesis entails statistical processing, an expert should be consulted at the outset when the research instruments, e.g. questionnaires, are being developed.
- 5.26 The supervisor must capture information on the progress of master's and doctoral candidates on myUnisa. All activities must be captured by the census date of any given year, which date will be communicated to colleges by the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section. The supervisor must further provide information on the candidate's progress as requested by College Management (see also par. 4.10).
- 5.27 The supervisor should inform the candidate of his/her non-availability to provide guidance in the case of, for example, conference attendance.
- 5.28 A supervisor remains responsible for the supervision of master's and doctoral candidates during his/her research development leave and during any other periods of approved research leave, such as fellowships and academic qualification improvement initiatives.

Supervisors must test the integrity of research conducted by interpreting the results after the candidate has submitted the research to an appropriate originality detection system endorsed by Unisa. A copy of the complete (all-inclusive) originality report must be kept by the supervisor as it may be requested by the NEC or Executive Dean or delegated person. The results must be accurately recorded and interpreted. Supervisors should be trained to use the relevant system. Unisa provides training in respect of the software which it officially supports.

Originality detection systems are primarily intended to be educative, to inform and assist researchers, and not be punitive. Research should therefore be submitted to such a system on receipt (e.g. of a chapter) and not only shortly before submission for examination. This allows the supervisor the opportunity to advise the candidate if unacceptable results are

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obtained during the initial phases of the research, including the research proposal phase, and to provide the candidate with the opportunity to improve the submission. The candidate must again submit a copy of the final dissertation or thesis to an appropriate originality detection system endorsed by Unisa before submission for examination.

If the infringement of academic integrity is of such a serious nature or is detected during advanced stages of the research and the supervisor is convinced that the matter may warrant disciplinary action, it must be referred to the Unisa Research Ethics Review Committee (URERC) Academic Integrity Sub-committee, or any other designated structure, for investigation.

Co-supervision

- 5.29 If a co-supervisor has been appointed, he/she is expected to play an active role in the candidate's supervision. The co-supervisor should be mindful of the stipulations of any Memorandum of Understanding entered into between the supervisor and co-supervisor and the candidate.
- 5.30 The supervisor and co-supervisor must liaise regularly about the candidate's work.
- 5.31 The supervisor and co-supervisor should agree on their respective roles and responsibilities and the mode of communication with the candidate. This arrangement should be communicated to the candidate at the commencement of the research and be set out in the supervision agreement. In the case of a panel of supervisors, the respective roles of the panel members should be very carefully delineated.
- 5.32 It is advisable that the supervisor take responsibility for all communication with the candidate, including feedback and commentary provided by the co-supervisor. The supervisor remains the main contact person between the candidate and co-supervisor and takes final responsibility for the communication, feedback and administrative issues related to the student. The supervisor should also do regular checks to determine if all information regarding the co-supervision, title of the dissertation or thesis and any other relevant information is captured on the system. Supervisors and co-supervisors should agree on their respective roles.

The role of the candidate

- 5.33 The candidate takes primary responsibility for all aspects and phases of his/her own research from application to graduation. If the candidate makes use of external expertise (e.g. editing, statistical support), the costs incurred are for the candidate's own account.
- 5.34 As soon as the candidate's registration has been finalised, he/she must claim the free myLife email and activate his/her myUnisa account. This account should be maintained as it is the primary (official) channel of communication between Unisa and master's and doctoral

candidates. Candidates must make use of their myLife email address when corresponding with the University.

- 5.35 The candidate must be familiar with and adhere to Unisa's policies and associated documents regarding postgraduate study.
- 5.36 The candidate must ensure that his/her registration is current until graduation. The candidate, supervisor and co-supervisor (if applicable) must ensure that the qualification is completed within the prescribed timeframes for completion of the qualification, that is, within three years for a master's and six years for a doctoral degree (refer to par. 4.12).
- 5.37 The candidate must record and regularly update the research plan and target dates and submit work as agreed with the supervisor (see par. 5.16), on the M&D student dashboard. He/she must, to the extent possible, keep to timetables and target dates and plan and submit work on a regular basis.
- 5.38 The candidate must treat the supervisor with courtesy and fairness and must communicate with the supervisor about any specific needs or circumstances likely to affect the postgraduate study.
- 5.39 The candidate must undertake research with commitment, develop initiative and independence and keep thorough records of all data, research findings, relevant research meetings/discussions and adherence to ethical requirements.
- 5.40 The candidate must keep copies of submitted work and comments by the supervisor and must keep backups of all electronic data and documents.
- 5.41 The candidate must critically engage with all relevant information as pointed out by the supervisor.
- 5.42 The candidate must adhere to the principle of academic integrity and ethical standards in research.
- 5.43 Before the dissertation or thesis is submitted for examination, it must be approved by the supervisor. It remains the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that the correct electronic version is uploaded for examination.
- 5.44 The candidate should discuss his/her intention to submit the dissertation or thesis for examination with the supervisor prior to giving such notice (see par. 7.22 below).
- 5.45 The candidate should investigate and attend relevant Unisa workshops or lectures, facilitated by CGS (PGAD, SIRGS, STRGS), including training in the use of databases and research software such as AtlasTi, Mendeley, RefWorks, SPSS and SAS for which Unisa has site licences. The student must familiarise himself/herself with the appropriate originality detection system endorsed by Unisa. The supervisor must also advise the candidate in this regard.

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- 5.46 Any issues that may arise during the research that cannot be resolved between the candidate and the supervisor should be communicated to the Chair of Department and if these remain unresolved, should be escalated to the Executive Dean or delegated person.

In terms of the Policy on Master's and Doctoral Degrees, all master's and doctoral candidates have the right to appeal against unfair practice in supervision or examination¹. Appeals are monitored and resolved by the Senate Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Degrees and Commercialisation Committee, unless they have been satisfactorily concluded at college level². A candidate who wishes to appeal on these grounds should notify the Executive Dean or delegated person, and if the matter is not satisfactorily resolved at college level, the appeal is referred to the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section. The reasons for the appeal must be set out in the notification.

C. ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- 5.47 According to the HEQSF: *“Master’s degree graduates, in general, must be able to reflect critically on theory and its application. They must be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, design and critically appraise research, make sound judgments using data and information at their disposal and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences, demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks with a theoretical underpinning and continue to advance their knowledge, understanding and skills.*

The research component or components of a general master’s degree should be commensurate with the characteristics of the discipline and field as well as the purpose of the programme

The doctorate provides training for an academic career. It requires a candidate to undertake research at the most advanced academic levels culminating in the submission, assessment and acceptance of a thesis.

The defining characteristic of this qualification is that the candidate is required to demonstrate high-level research capability and to make a significant and original academic contribution at the frontiers of a discipline or field. The work must be of a quality to satisfy peer review and merit publication. The degree may be earned through pure discipline-based or multidisciplinary research or applied research.”

- 5.48 The dissertation or thesis must be written in a language that complies with the Unisa Language Policy, as well as with the accepted standards for presentation of research and knowledge in the discipline(s) of the candidate. It must also comply with the referencing style prescribed for the discipline(s) by the college(s). In the case of a dissertation or thesis undertaken within the domain of multi-, inter- or transdisciplinary research, the candidate must comply with the referencing style agreed on with the supervisor. The layout must

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conform to Unisa dissertation or thesis layout guidelines as published on the Unisa website: <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Master%27s-&-doctoral-degrees/Master%27s-&-doctoral-research-examination-process>. The supervisor has an advisory role in this regard, but it is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the dissertation or thesis meets the required standards.

¹ Par 7.2.1 of the Policy

² Par 7.2.2 of the Policy

The Unisa Language Policy provides that postgraduate research candidates are allowed to write their proposals, theses or dissertations in:

- **the language of the subject in which the proposal, dissertation or thesis is offered, or**
- **any of South Africa's official languages, or**
- **any other language as approved by the relevant College Research and Innovation Postgraduate Committee/College Higher Degrees Committee, provided that there is sufficient supervisory and examination capacity available for the estimated duration of the study.**

The student's choice of language must be negotiated and agreed formally at the start of the study. Supervision in all official languages will be encouraged.

D. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

5.49 Unisa is, in terms of the *Intellectual Property Policy*, the owner of all intellectual property created by candidates during their postgraduate studies.

5.50 Should the possibility arise to file for the protection of any intellectual property rights (excluding copyrights) emanating from the research undertaken by a postgraduate candidate registered at Unisa, the Directorate for Innovation and Technology Transfer must immediately be informed of such a possibility prior to any public announcements or publication of such intellectual property in any form. This must take place irrespective of whether Unisa has a claim to any share in the intellectual property. Filing for patents or any other actions related to the assertion of intellectual property must be undertaken in collaboration with the Directorate for Innovation and Technology Transfer in accordance with the Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act 51 of 2008.

5.51 Although copyright of the final dissertation or thesis is vested with the candidate after

successful completion of the degree, the intellectual property rights related to established research projects joined by candidates for the purpose of postgraduate studies will be determined by the contracts governing these projects and established intellectual property rights to these projects.

- 5.52 A candidate must grant Unisa a non-exclusive copyright licence to reproduce, in any manner or form, and disseminate for archival, teaching and research purposes a dissertation or thesis submitted to Unisa in fulfilment or part fulfilment of a master's or doctoral degree. In exceptional circumstances, a candidate may apply to be exempted from granting this copyright licence. Such an application must be fully substantiated.
- 5.53 The value of publication of parts (e.g. chapters) of the thesis by a candidate, or co-publication by a supervisor in order to receive peer-reviewed feedback on original research is recognised. It is also recognised that there is a strong tradition of publication of research work by postgraduate candidates in order to build and enhance their academic standing in their respective research communities. It is therefore recommended that supervisors (internal and external) and candidates come to a prior agreement on the number and types of publications to emanate from the candidate's dissertation or thesis, and whether supervisors will co-author such publication, within the normal academic traditions of the discipline in which the candidate is enrolled. In such instances of publication, if the publication is to be co-published by the candidate and supervisor(s), the candidate must be the main author, followed by the supervisors' names according to the conventions of the particular discipline. The student and all supervisors, including contracted external supervisors, should indicate their affiliation with Unisa when they publish from the work emanating from the student's dissertation or thesis, both before and after graduation of the student.
- 5.54 Unisa subscribes to an open policy regarding the creation and dissemination of knowledge. However, the University accepts that in some exceptional cases the research work undertaken by a student may involve proprietary or classified information. In such an instance, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the relevant academic department of the situation as soon after registration as possible and to seek formal permission to base a dissertation or thesis on such proprietary or classified information. The permission must be formally granted by the Executive Dean or delegated person. The candidate must also, when submitting the intention to submit the dissertation or thesis for examination, formally notify the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section of the confidential nature of the dissertation or thesis in order to allow the section to make appropriate arrangements.

Although the University will, for governance reasons, include the dissertation or thesis in its normal institutional repositories, an embargo will be placed on the content for an initial period of two years after archiving, renewable on request by the candidate. Renewal of embargo requests should be submitted to the Vice-Principal: Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation or delegated person.

E. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND HONESTY

- 5.55 Unisa is committed to research that is conducted, produced and disseminated in an ethical and responsible manner.
- 5.56 It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the entire content of a dissertation or thesis is his/her own original work. Originality checking software is applied by Unisa as a teaching tool and is to be used for the duration of the study/research period. Although students are responsible for their own work, analysis of the originality report is the supervisor's responsibility. A declaration to this effect must be included in the submission documentation (see par. 7.14).
- 5.57 A candidate may under no circumstances commit plagiarism, and the supervisor or other authorised parties may use any means at their disposal (including originality detection systems) to detect instances of possible infringement of academic integrity.
- 5.58 A candidate may under no circumstances falsify or fabricate data. All records of studies, sources, experiments, data, etc. must be accessible to and verifiable on request by the Executive Dean or delegated person of the respective college.
- 5.59 A candidate may not submit a dissertation or thesis for examination or evaluation at Unisa if it was previously submitted for examination at another institution. A declaration to this effect must be included in the submission documentation (see par. 7.14).



CHAPTER 6

PHASE 4: RESEARCH PROPOSAL (COURSEWORK QUALIFICATIONS)

- 6.1 The outcome of the compulsory research proposal module (in the case of a coursework qualification) is the submission of an acceptable research proposal within one year (and in exceptional cases, two years) after registering for the module, as stipulated in the *Admission Policy*. The module is non-credit bearing. No mark is awarded for the research proposal.

Candidates should be guided in submitting drafts of the research proposal to their supervisors and be given the opportunity to rework drafts after feedback from the supervisor. Colleges, schools or departments should draw up guidelines for supervisors and candidates that stipulate the submission of draft work and the dates and manner of the final adjudication of the research proposals in each department. Ethical clearance should be considered during the research proposal phase (see chapter 7). The due date for the submission of the final draft of the research proposal is 30 November, unless otherwise agreed with the supervisor and approved by the college.

- 6.2 When the supervisor is satisfied with the research proposal, the proposal will be evaluated in accordance with college guidelines. Colleges should have appropriate assessment criteria and procedures in place to evaluate the research proposal.
- 6.3 If the research proposal is accepted, the completed Research Proposal Result form is submitted to the Executive Dean or delegated person for recommendation to the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section. This form is confidential and may not be disclosed or provided to candidates.
- 6.4 If the research proposal is not accepted, or the candidate has not submitted a research proposal by the due date as prescribed by each college, the completed Research Proposal Result form is submitted by the supervisor or other authorised person to the Executive Dean or delegated person. A substantiated recommendation in respect of re-registration for the research proposal module or exclusion of the candidate must be included.
- 6.5 If the research proposal is not accepted within the time prescribed in the *Admission Policy*, a candidate may not re-register for a research proposal module in the same college for a period of two years. Should he/she re-apply after this period, the application will be dealt with as a new one and will be subject to college admission procedures.
- 6.6 Irrespective of the outcome of the module, the supervisor must see that all activities have been recorded on myUnisa (M&D activities) when the outcome of the research proposal module is recorded. It must also be indicated whether the candidate may re-register for the

research proposal module for the following year. In the case of an external supervisor, it is the responsibility of the Chair of Department or delegated person to ensure that activities are captured.

The Executive Dean or delegated person must forward the result of the research proposal module to the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section. This section captures the result, ensures that activities have been recorded on myUnisa, records the research title, DHET niche area and supervisor(s) and informs the candidate in writing of the result. Candidates must wait for the official release of the result before attempting to register for the mini-dissertation. From 1 July, the candidate is registered for the following year but will still have access to myUnisa and the library. The registration is activated upon payment of the registration fees. Under no circumstances may the result be conveyed to the student by any other party.

- 6.7 For quality assurance purposes, records should be kept by the Executive Dean or delegated person. They should include at least the supervisor agreement, research proposal, assessment rubric and result, and the confirmation of ethical clearance if available at this stage. The department's master's and doctoral administrators upload these documents on the M&D student dashboard.
- 6.8 Candidates' results for the research proposal module will be captured on their academic records as either "Failed" or "Comply with requirements" or "*Did not comply but may re-register for the proposal module*".
- 6.9 A candidate who is dissatisfied with the result of his/her research proposal module may appeal the decision in writing to the Executive Dean of the College or delegated person offering that module within thirty days of receiving the written confirmation of their results. The Executive Dean or delegated person will refer the matter for investigation to the office of the Executive Dean: College of Graduate Studies or delegated person, who will inform the Executive Dean or delegated person of the outcome of the investigation within thirty days of the date of referral. The matter may be referred to an external academic. The Executive Dean or delegated person notifies the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section of the outcome within ten days of its receipt. This section then informs the candidate.



CHAPTER 7

PHASE 5: MINI-DISSERTATION, DISSERTATION OR THESIS

A. RESEARCH PROPOSAL (research master's and doctoral qualifications)

- 7.1 From 2023 the curriculum for a full research master's and doctoral qualification comprises a dissertation or thesis only. The research proposal is incorporated into the dissertation/thesis. The candidate will be expected to work with the supervisor to have a research proposal approved during the first year of study of the dissertation or thesis. An additional period may be allowed with approval from the Executive Dean or delegated person. Should a student fail to complete the research proposal within the prescribed period, he/she will be excluded from studies for a period of two years in the same college. Students and supervisors must take note of the maximum duration allowed for the qualification (refer to par. 4.12 and 4.13)
- 7.2 Candidates should be guided in submitting drafts of the research proposal to their supervisors and be given the opportunity to rework drafts after feedback from the supervisor. Colleges, schools or departments should draw up guidelines for supervisors and candidates that stipulate the submission of draft work and the dates and manner of the final adjudication of the research proposals in each department. Ethical clearance should be considered during the research proposal process (see chapter 7). The due date for the submission of the final draft of the research proposal is 30 November, unless otherwise agreed with the supervisor and approved by the college.

A. ETHICAL CLEARANCE FOR RESEARCH

- 7.3 All research data collection must, in terms of the Unisa Research Ethics Policy, be considered for ethical clearance before it may commence. All research involving human participants, data, animals, or other living or genetically modified organisms must have ethical clearance from an appropriate research ethics committee. If the research involves Unisa employees or students, permission to conduct the research must be obtained from the Senate Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Degrees and Commercialisation Committee in terms of the Policy on Conducting Research Involving Unisa Employees, Students or Data.
- 7.4 The ethical implications of the proposed research must be considered when the student is developing the research proposal. Ethical clearance approval should be obtained during this phase before the candidate commences with the data-gathering process. The candidate will be guided by the college concerned in this regard, in accordance with the procedures and processes set out by the relevant College Research Ethics Committee.

The College of Graduate Studies, in collaboration with the Unisa Research Integrity Office,

will oversee, monitor and improve the process of ethical clearance application and approval for postgraduate studies.

- a) A simple, much more bespoke version of the ethical clearance application process (documentation and turnaround time for approvals) should be ensured by the College of Graduate Studies to enhance quality assurance of the ethical clearance application process and student centredness.
- b) An application form should be developed by the colleges for postgraduate students that will align with the:
 - (i) Unisa Policy on Research Ethics,
 - (ii) Unisa Policy and Procedures for Conducting Research involving Unisa Employees, Students and Data.
- c) No ethical clearance will be granted *ex post facto*.

7.5 Candidates must be able to include an appropriately issued ethical clearance certificate (confirming approval or exemption) when submitting a dissertation or thesis for examination purposes.

B. FORMAL/TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE DISSERTATION OR THESIS

- 7.6 The length of a dissertation and a thesis will vary according to the particular study and/or discipline. The number of pages does not determine the academic quality of the research. As a rough estimate, the mini-dissertation in a master's degree by coursework will be approximately 10 000 – 15 000 words; the dissertation in a master's degree by full research will be about 25 000 – 45 000 words and a doctoral thesis about 40 000 – 100 000 words (excluding the bibliography and other annexures).
- 7.7 Guidelines in respect of the formal requirements for dissertations and theses are posted on the websites of the departments, schools, or colleges. Links to these websites are provided on the Unisa website.
- 7.8 The University will not accept a dissertation or thesis that has previously been submitted for a degree at another university (see par. 5.59). However, a candidate may include material from any of his/her existing publications in the dissertation or thesis, provided that they are clearly indicated as such.
- 7.9 The dissertation or thesis must be in A4 format, using at least one and a half spacing (except footnotes and quotations, which may be in single spacing) and leaving a left margin of at least 2 cm. The recommended font size for text is size 12 and for footnotes size 10.

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

The summaries must be in at least three official South African languages, one of which must be English, and also in the language in which the dissertation or thesis is written, if not an official South African language. The summaries must be included in the front of the post-examination electronic copy of the dissertation or thesis, between the title page and the table of contents. After the examination has been completed and the candidate's dissertation or thesis has been approved, the supervisor may contact Language Services to provide translations of the English summary in the additional official South African languages if the candidate has not already provided such summaries. The student does not incur any costs in this regard and their graduation should not be delayed if the translations are not obtained in good time.

7.11 In order to assist the library with the retrieval of information, candidates must give approximately ten key terms which describe the topic of the dissertation or thesis at the end of the summary of the dissertation or thesis. If the dissertation or thesis is not written in English, the key terms must be given in English at the end of the English summary.

7.12 The final dissertation or thesis must be uploaded to a link that will be provided to the student by the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section **after** approval to submit and the panel of examiners have been appointed.

7.13 The title of the dissertation or thesis and the name of the candidate must appear on the front page of the copy for examination.

7.14 The electronic examination copy must be accompanied by the following:

(a) The following statement by the candidate:

"I declare that (title of thesis) is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis/dissertation to the appropriate originality detection system which is endorsed by Unisa and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution."

(The dissertation or thesis will not be examined unless this statement has been included.)

- (b) A doctoral candidate's curriculum vitae, which should not exceed 350 words
- (c) A formal digital receipt from the originality detection system which is endorsed by Unisa
- (d) Certificate from a professional editor/proof-reader, if applicable

The supervisor should make the formal requirements available to the candidate when he/commences with the research.

C. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

7.15 The assessment process of dissertations or theses comprises three phases:

- **Phase 1: Notice by the candidate of intention to submit the dissertation or thesis for examination and the subsequent nomination and approval of a panel of examiners**
-
- **Phase 2: Upload of the final examination copy and electronic distribution to the examiners and examining**
-
- **Phase 3: Approval and release of the examination result, and post-assessment submission of the electronic copy to the library**

All role players (Chair of Department, administrators involved in the assessment process, the non-examining chairperson, CGS, master's and doctoral examination coordinators, Head: Graduate Studies and Research) in the assessment process need to annually sign a confidentiality agreement using an online form that is recorded in the academic department/college/unit: <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Master%27s-&-doctoral-degrees/Policies,-procedures-&-forms>

PHASE 1: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO SUBMIT FOR EXAMINATION AND APPROVAL OF A PANEL OF EXAMINERS

Notice of intention to submit

7.16 When a candidate's dissertation or thesis is nearing completion, he/she should inform the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section of his/her intention to submit for examination. This notice must be given at least **two months** before the date of submission. The Notice of Intention form (CGS20) is available on the Unisa website: <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Master%27s-&-doctoral-degrees/Policies,-procedures-&-forms>. The CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination section should acknowledge receipt of the form to the student, the supervisor and the academic department within five (5) working days.

7.17 Candidates who submit their thesis, dissertation or mini-dissertation by 15 November may

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qualify for the autumn graduation ceremony of the following year and by 15 June for the spring graduation ceremony of the current year, provided that the results are finalised in time.

- 7.18 A candidate must be registered for the current academic year in order to have his/her dissertation or thesis examined. If the examination copy is uploaded after 15 November, but before the end of February of the following year, the candidate will only graduate at the following spring graduation ceremonies, but need not re-register and pay registration fees for the latter year. Should the submission take place after the end of February, the student must formally re-register online and pay the full fees.

If the candidate submitted before the end of February and the result of the candidate is not available by the end of May, the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination section will provide the CGS: Master's and Doctoral Administration Support section with a list of such students. This section must administratively register these students for the current academic year. The administrative registration is at no cost to the student.

- 7.19 The CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section notifies the supervisor and the Chair of Department or delegated person of the receipt of the Notice of Intention to submit for examination and requests formal permission for the submission of the dissertation or thesis on the prescribed form (V35). After consulting with the co-supervisor (if applicable), the supervisor gives permission for the candidate to submit the dissertation or thesis on the prescribed form.
- 7.20 If the candidate does not submit the dissertation or thesis within three months after having given notice of their intention to submit, the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section informs the Executive Dean accordingly. If the candidate submits the dissertation or thesis more than three months after the Notice of Intention to submit, the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section requests confirmation from the academic department of the continued availability of any previously appointed panel of examiners.
- 7.21 The Notice of Intention to submit the dissertation or thesis for examination must reflect the finalised title as agreed between the candidate and the supervisor (see also par. 5.4). The post-examination electronic copy must be submitted with the approved title as reflected in the Statement of Completion.
- 7.22 A supervisor's permission that a candidate may submit his/her dissertation or thesis for examination only implies that the supervisor considers the dissertation or thesis to be ready for examination, but does not guarantee a successful result.
- 7.23 A candidate wishing to submit his/her dissertation or thesis without the supervisor's permission must have the consent of Senate to do so. This permission is requested by submitting a fully motivated application to the Executive Dean, who refers it to the Intercollege Postgraduate Studies Committee with his/her recommendation. The committee considers the application and makes a recommendation to the Vice-Principal: Research,

Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation. The final outcome is conveyed to the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section. This section communicates the outcome to the candidate, the Executive Dean and the academic department.

Appointment of panel of examiners

- 7.24 Once permission has been granted for a candidate to submit his/her dissertation or thesis for assessment, the Chair of Department or delegated person recommends the panel of examiners. Within each academic department, the Chair of Department or delegated person is tasked with setting up a database of examiners linked to the research focus areas, which needs to be maintained and updated annually. Potential examiners should be approved through the College Higher Degrees Committee in consultation with the Chair of Department in terms of subject and methodology expertise and postgraduate supervision experience. The Chair of Department or delegated person should consult the supervisor and other senior members of the academic department regarding the appointment of examiners from the database. The Chair of Department or delegated person should also consult the non-examining chairperson regarding his/her availability. The Chair of Department or delegated person must require an abbreviated curriculum vitae and/or other evidence, indicating his/her expertise to assess a dissertation or thesis on the particular topic from the examiner. The office of the Executive Dean: College of Graduate Studies must ensure that such records are maintained. The names of the recommended examiners are forwarded to the Executive Dean or delegated person for approval. The candidate and the supervisor must recuse themselves from the examination process until it is totally completed.
- 7.25 Candidates or supervisors may not engage with the examiners, but supervisors must engage with the appointed non-examining chairperson (NEC) and candidates must engage with the supervisor. Candidates may also contact the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section for enquiries during the examination period on resexcoord@unisa.ac.za.
- 7.26 For quality assurance purposes the Chair of Department or delegated person must keep a record of external examiners and the frequency of their appointment. As many external examiners should be considered for appointment as is possible in the discipline, and care should be taken that the same external examiner is not appointed too regularly for the same supervisor.
- 7.27 The Chair of Department or delegated person must consult examiners about their availability to examine the dissertation or thesis before their names are submitted for approval and must confirm their contact details and their email addresses. Examiners need to complete an online Declaration of Interest form in terms of working relationship, personal relationship, legal relationship and/or professional relationship with either the supervisor/co-supervisor or candidate. It is the responsibility of the Chair of Department or delegated person to determine whether there is any conflict of interest. Guidelines will be provided to departments. Such declaration of interest needs to accompany the V35. Link to the declaration: <https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Master%27s-&-doctoral-degrees/Policies,-procedures-&-forms>.

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Criteria for examiners

7.28 Examiners must

- a) not have served as an examiner for a Unisa research degree more than three times in the previous year, unless motivated by the Chair of Department or delegated person
- b) not examine more than one student from each supervisor per year
- c) not have published with any of the supervisors in the preceding three years
- d) not have acted previously as the candidate's supervisor (e.g. master's degree supervision)
- e) not have been a member of staff of the candidate's department within Unisa during the previous two (2) years
- f) be proficient in the language of the dissertation/thesis to be examined
- g) have sufficient knowledge of the field of study to judge the suitability of the methods adopted and to appreciate the context of the work and the significance of the outcome (have acknowledged **expertise** in the candidate's field of study – curriculum vitae)
- h) have **publications** in peer-reviewed credible journals, or have creative outputs in recognised forums and have presented in **conferences** in the relevant field (have made a significant contribution to knowledge in the candidate's field)
- i) have successfully supervised a candidate to completion at the corresponding research degree level
- j) have previous experience of examining (externally or internally) at the corresponding research degree level
- k) be prepared to sign a **confidentiality agreement** as required by Unisa
- l) be available to attend a meeting of the *viva voce* within three months of receipt of the dissertation/thesis from Unisa, to finalise the examination process and to submit a final examination report within one week of the *viva voce*
- m) declare any conflict of interest regarding examination of the candidate (e.g. emotional or family relationship) or the research topic (e.g. commercial interest in a related project where the topic applies)

Provision is, however, made for cases where the examiner does not meet the requirement(s) set out in par 7.28. Such nominations need to be substantiated and approved by the Executive Dean or delegated person.

7.29 The candidate may **not** be informed of the names of the approved examiners.

7.30 The panel of examiners must consist of the following members:

- a) A non-examining chairperson (NEC), usually an experienced permanent senior member of the department, or the Chair of Department in the college or school other than the department that hosts the qualification, or the Director of the school, Deputy

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Executive Dean or the Executive Dean of the college.

AND

- b) Two examiners for a master's degree, at least one of whom is external, and three examiners for a doctoral degree with two being external (to Unisa and from multiple institutions) and one being an international scholar. Examiners must be from multiple institutions. However, provision is made for cases where the expertise of an internal specialist scholar or for not appointing an international scholar can be motivated. Such nominations need to be substantiated and approved by the Executive Dean.
 - c) Examination panels for master's and doctoral candidates where the supervisor is a member of college management, no examiner internal to the college is to be appointed as a cautionary measure against potential conflicting interests.
- 7.31 The supervisor may not be a member of the examining panel (with the exception of a *viva voce*), but must submit a non-evaluative report to the non-examining chairperson after the dissertation has been submitted for examination. This report is not made available to the candidate, nor to the examiners. The supervisor and examiners should not discuss the assessment of the dissertation or thesis prior to finalisation of its result.
- 7.32 External examiners are appointed on the Oracle system by the relevant academic department in accordance with the approved abbreviated process by designated officers in the college where the candidate is registered. External examiners are remunerated by the relevant academic department on submission of their reports (see par. 7.39 – 7.52 for the minimum requirements for examiners' reports) and claim forms to the non-examining chairperson (see also par. 7.53).
- 7.33 Form V35 is used for the supervisor's consent to, or refusal of, submission for examination, the approval of the panel of examiners and the amendment of the title.
- 7.34 The CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section communicates with the candidate regarding permission to submit the dissertation, the link to upload the final electronic examination copy and the relevant deadlines.
- 7.35 The CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section communicates with the examiners and provides guidance to them on the process and report to be submitted.

PHASE 2: SUBMISSION OF EXAMINATION COPY, DISTRIBUTION TO EXAMINERS AND EXAMINING

Submission

- 7.36 Candidates who submit their thesis, dissertation or mini-dissertation by 15 November may qualify for the autumn graduation ceremony of the following year and by 15 June for the spring graduation ceremony of the current year, provided that the results are finalised in time (see par. 7.16).
- 7.37 The candidate uploads an electronic copy of the dissertation or thesis by means of a link emailed to the student by CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section once permission to submit has been obtained. The candidate must, with the examination copy, submit a declaration by the supervisor to the effect that the complete (all-inclusive) originality report obtained by the candidate has been considered by the supervisor and that the latter confirms that the dissertation or thesis meets an acceptable standard of originality. A candidate must also upload, with the examination copy, a certificate from a professional editor/proof-reader, if applicable.

Distribution

- 7.38 The CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section distributes the electronic copy of the dissertation or thesis to examiners with an accompanying letter explaining the University's policy regarding examination. This division also sends a letter to the non-examining chairperson, the supervisor(s) and the candidate.
- 7.39 Guidelines for examination are provided to all examiners by the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section.
- 7.40 The CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section also provides guidance to the supervisor on the non-evaluative report to be submitted to the NEC.

Examiners

- 7.41 Examiners are allowed six weeks to examine a dissertation or thesis and to deliver a comprehensive report and their recommendation regarding the result to the NEC.
- 7.42 Examiners may compile their reports according to the CGS requirements, but their reports should include comments on the following, considering the requirements of the HEQSF set out in par. 5.47:
- a) Scientific and academic standard of research
 - i) research procedures and techniques
 - ii) methodology
 - iii) demarcation and scope of research
 - iv) theoretical substantiation

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- v) exploration of the literature
 - vi) grasp of the field of research
 - vii) footnotes and bibliography or reference list
- b) Scientific and academic quality of processing and presentation
- i) processing
 - ii) presentation and analysis of data
 - iii) structure and logical development/arrangement of content (internal coherence and classification)
 - iv) critical findings
 - v) recommendations
- c) Language and editing
- d) Technical presentation and layout
- e) Examiners should also indicate whether they regard parts and/or the substance of the dissertation/thesis as publishable

According to the HEQSF, a master's dissertation should demonstrate the candidate's ability to work independently and to reflect critically on theory and its application. The dissertation must demonstrate the candidate's ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, to design and critically appraise research, make sound judgements and communicate their conclusions clearly.

According to the HEQSF, a doctoral thesis must demonstrate high-level research capability and make a significant and original academic contribution at the frontiers of a discipline or field. The work must be of a quality to satisfy peer review and merit publication.

Examiners of mini-dissertations should be provided with clear guidelines which may deviate from the above-mentioned list, depending on discipline-specific requirements. They should be made aware of the limited scope of the mini-dissertation and its relative weighting in relation to the other modules towards the particular degree.

7.43 The oral examination (*viva voce*) should include, with due regard to multilingualism and linguistic and contextual diversity, specific reference to graduate attributes.

7.44 Examiners should clearly indicate on the result form whether the dissertation or thesis is:

- **accepted unamended**
- **accepted only after minor improvements (as specifically requested) have been made to the satisfaction of the supervisor in the post-examination electronic copy. For this recommendation to be made, it should be possible to attend to the required improvements within two months after release of the result. This option will typically be used where minor improvements are required (e.g. editorial improvements, corrections of citations and minor revisions of content). The Executive Dean of the college or his/her delegate may, in consultation with the**

supervisor, recommend a further two months for the finalisation of the required improvements. If the student cannot complete the required improvements within the two months or extended period, the student needs to re-register and pay for the academic year. The M&D Examination section will inform the student accordingly

- **accepted only after major revision (as specifically requested) has been made to the satisfaction of the supervisor in the post-examination electronic copy. For this recommendation to be made, it should be possible to attend to the required improvements within four months after release of the result. This option will typically be used where major improvements are required (e.g. editorial improvements, corrections of citations and major revisions of content). An updated originality report must be submitted with the revised version. The Executive Dean of the college or his/her delegate may, in consultation with the supervisor, recommend a further two months for the finalisation of the required improvements. If the student cannot complete the required improvements within the four months or extended period, the student needs to re-register and pay for the academic year. The M&D Examination section will inform the student accordingly**

- **referred for revision and resubmission for examination. This option should be used if the recommended changes require extensive substantial revision of content and/or structure**
 - **Where a doctoral thesis is examined after it was referred for revision and resubmission for examination, the examiner(s) should only indicate whether the result is a pass or fail.**

 - **Where a master's dissertation is examined after it was referred for revision and resubmission for examination, the examiners should also indicate a percentage.**

- **rejected**

7.45 Doctoral degrees are not awarded with distinction and consequently no percentage mark is awarded to doctoral theses. Percentage marks are awarded only to master's dissertations. The pass mark is 50% and above, and the distinction mark is 75%.

7.46 Examiners of master's dissertations should clearly indicate in their reports whether a distinction should be awarded.

7.47 Examiners must arrive at their findings and compile their reports independently from one another.

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- 7.48 Examiners should complete the result form and submit it with their reports directly to the NEC of the panel of examiners. The recommendation on the completed form must correspond with that in the written report. Nevertheless, the completed form is regarded as the examiner's final recommendation.
- 7.49 If an examiner finds that a dissertation or thesis is unacceptable in its current form, he/she must ensure that the candidate revises it and resubmits it for examination. In that case, the examiner must provide the NEC with an indication of suggested improvements.
- 7.50 When a dissertation or thesis is referred for revision, the examiners' anonymised reports will be made available to the candidate. If possible, the revised dissertation or thesis should be examined by the same panel. In the case of a doctoral thesis, the revised copy is only distributed to the examiner(s) who gave a **failed** or **revise and resubmit result**. The CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section will inform the external examiners (who passed the doctoral thesis) on the process. No dissertation or thesis may be revised and resubmitted for examination more than once without special permission of Senate. Such requests must be made by the College Graduate and Research office to the Vice-Principal: Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation or delegated person for approval. Should a candidate decide not to continue with the studies/revision, he/she must inform the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support accordingly, within six months from the release of the result.
- 7.51 When a dissertation or thesis result is a "fail", the candidate is excluded from studies in the same college for a period of two years. The student may re-apply for admission for the same qualification, but must provide a different focus area or working title.
- 7.52 Examiners may recommend changes to the registered title of a candidate's dissertation or thesis. In this instance the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section is requested to amend the title when the final results are submitted by the college and before the results are released to the candidate. If different titles are suggested by examiners, the NEC, in consultation with the supervisor, recommends the amended title. The candidate will be required to submit the electronic post-assessment copies under the amended title.
- 7.53 External examiners should complete the claim form and submit it to the NEC on submission of their examination report. The NEC must submit the claim forms received from the examiners to the department's administrative person as soon as they are received and not wait until the result is finalised or until he/she has all the claim forms.

The Non-examining Chairperson (NEC)

- 7.54 The CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section provides clear and comprehensive guidelines to the NEC.
- 7.55 The NEC must not have a qualification lower than that being considered for examination,

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and the NEC must either have supervised at least one at the same level to completion or have examined at least one at the same level. Departments should create opportunities to mentor inexperienced NECs. The NEC should have attended workshops on the role of the NEC before being appointed. On acceptance of the appointment, the NEC must confirm that he/she attended the NEC training and accepts the responsibilities of the appointment, and must sign the confidentiality agreement and the declaration of interest.

- 7.56 As soon as he/she receives the letter of appointment, the NEC must ascertain whether the examiners have received the electronic examination copy.
- 7.57 The NEC does not examine the dissertation or thesis.
- 7.58 The NEC must follow up on progress by examiners and endeavour to ensure that results and reports are received by the due dates. The NEC is allowed to extend the due date in consultation with the Executive Dean or delegated person if it does not influence the graduation period. The College Graduate and Research office must inform the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section of such an extension.
- 7.59 The NEC receives all the examiners' reports and the supervisor's non-evaluative report (see par. 7.31) and after having critically considered them, compiles a comprehensive report in which he/she justifies the final recommendation based on all the reports received. Pending finalisation of the recommendation or result, the NEC should not discuss any aspect thereof with the supervisor unless the discussion is to clarify any aspect of the supervisor's report and/or research title with the candidate. Examiners' reports should not be made available to the candidate or supervisor before all reports have been received and the NEC recommendation or report has been finalised. The names and addresses of the original examiners must be deleted from the copies of the reports. If the NEC needs any assistance regarding the finalisation of his/her report, this should be discussed with the office of the Executive Dean: College of Graduate Studies and may be referred to the Executive Dean or delegated person.
- 7.60 A unanimous result is preferable in the context of agreement between the examiners to:
- **a pass (disagreement about an outright pass and minor corrections first to be made still constitutes agreement about a pass)**
 - **a distinction mark in respect of a master's degree**
 - **failure with the concession of revision within one year (in which case the dissertation or thesis must be resubmitted and examined again), and the candidate must re-register online for the next academic year and pay the fees. Candidates have one year only to revise and resubmit for examination. Permission from the Executive Dean or delegated person is required for an extension to the resubmission. Failure to resubmit within the stipulated time will result in academic exclusion. The Executive Dean of the college or**

his/her delegate, in consultation with the supervisor, should recommend that the result of the qualification be amended to an outright fail

- **an outright fail**

7.61 If the result is unanimous, the NEC submits his/her report and final recommendation, the examiners' reports and the supervisor's non-evaluative report to the Executive Dean or delegated person. The Executive Dean or delegated person submits the final result to the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section.

If there is no consensus between the examiners, the NEC must indicate this in his/her report and recommend a result for consideration by the Executive Dean or delegated person (which may be a College Examinations Committee established for this purpose) and the College Executive Committee. This result is recommended, via the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section, to the Vice-Principal: Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation or delegated person for approval. When there is sharp divergence of opinion and no other result is agreed upon, an arbitrator may be appointed by the college or school executive committee. The arbitrator will be sent an electronic copy of the thesis as well as copies of the reports of the original examiners. The arbitrator's decision is final.

The names and addresses of the original examiners will be deleted from the copies of the reports sent to the arbitrator, who is required to consider them and comment on the recommendations of the original examiners. The arbitrator's report is forwarded to the college or school executive committee for recommendation via the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section to the Vice-Principal: Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation or delegated person for approval.

The final decision must be communicated to the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section and the Executive Dean.

If the outcome of this process is a recommendation of resubmission after extensive revision, the original panel of examiners should be appointed to re-examine the thesis. If any of the original examiners are not available to re-examine the dissertation or thesis, or there is a sound reason for not appointing the same panel of examiners, another examiner or other examiners may be appointed. The Chair of Department or delegated person should provide a motivation in this regard.

7.62 The result of a master's dissertation, be it pass, pass with distinction, or fail, is not necessarily decided based on the average of the marks awarded by the different examiners, but on a judicious appraisal of the examiners' reports. The NEC may substantiate and recommend a mark that deviates from the average to the Executive Dean or delegated person for his/her consideration.

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7.63 The NEC or any other person involved in the examination process may not change or amend the examiners' reports or forms under any circumstances.

If the examiners recommend a pass but require that minor amendments or a pass with major revision be made to the satisfaction of the supervisor, the NEC must establish via the supervisor whether the improvements (if specifically so required by any of the examiners) have been made, or obtain from the supervisor acceptable reasons why the required improvements need not be made. The NEC only submits his/her final report to the Executive Dean or delegated person after the supervisor's statement confirming that the required improvements have been made and that the post-assessment electronic copy of the dissertation or thesis containing such amendments has been received from the supervisor. The supervisor's statement and the post-assessment electronic copy of the dissertation or thesis are submitted with the report by the NEC.

7.64 If the approved result is one of revision and re-submission, the NEC must, on receipt of the official release of the results by the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section, submit the required reports, compile a detailed excerpt from all the examiners' reports concerning points (both technical and substantive) to be revised and forward it to the supervisor, who must forward it to the candidate, and inform the Office of the Executive Dean: College of Graduate Studies or delegated person that this has been done. The revision must be accomplished within a year unless Senate decides otherwise (refer to par 7.60). After being revised, the entire dissertation or thesis is examined by the same panel of examiners. The candidate must again submit a Notice of Intention to submit the dissertation or thesis for examination. If any of the original examiners are not available to re-examine the dissertation or thesis, or there is a sound reason for not appointing the same panel of examiners, another examiner or other examiners may be appointed. The Chair of Department or delegated person should provide a motivation in this regard. No dissertation or thesis may be revised and resubmitted for examination more than once without special permission from Senate.

7.65 Where a majority report in favour of a failure, pass or revision is clearly acceptable to the NEC, he/she may recommend the majority report as the final result (via the Executive Dean or delegated person) to the Vice-Principal: Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation or delegated person.

7.66 In special circumstances and with appropriate substantiation, the NEC may also, via the Executive Dean or delegated person, recommend a minority report in favour of revision or a pass to the Intercollege Postgraduate Studies Committee based on the examiners' reports. The examiners' reports must accompany the NEC's recommendation.

7.67 A distinction for a master's dissertation should be awarded on a unanimous recommendation by the examiners. If one examiner awards a distinction and the other examiner is clearly not

in favour of awarding a distinction, the NEC must submit a report to that effect, including his/her recommendation whether the candidate should pass with distinction, to the Executive Dean or delegated person, which may be a College Examinations Committee established for this purpose) and the College Executive Committee for a recommendation. This result is recommended, via the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section to the Vice-Principal: Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation or delegated person for approval. A distinction awarded for a mini-dissertation does not imply that the degree will be awarded with distinction.

- 7.68 The final result of matters referred to the Intercollege Postgraduate Studies Committee or the Senate Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Degrees Committee should be conveyed to the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section. Results will not be released unless the supervisor has confirmed the submission of the manuscripts on the V35 form. This section, once all the requirements have been met, informs the candidate, the supervisor and the NEC of the final result. Under no circumstances may the result be conveyed to the candidate by any other party.
- 7.69 The examination copy remains the property of Unisa.

PHASE 3: APPROVAL AND RELEASE OF THE EXAMINATION RESULT AND POST-ASSESSMENT SUBMISSION OF COPIES

Approval and release of the examination result

- 7.70 The Executive Dean or delegated person signs off on the examination report and forwards the result to the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section for processing.
- 7.71 The Panel of Examiners' report must be submitted to the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section by the middle of March for the student to graduate during the autumn graduation ceremony and by the middle of August for the spring ceremony.
- 7.72 The CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section checks the reports received and ensures that the proof of submission of the manuscript(s) is included as well as the approved result to ensure compliance with policy and procedure. If the candidate has passed the dissertation or thesis, the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section checks the candidate's curriculum to ensure that the qualification has been completed, calculates (where applicable) the degree average and checks for a possible overall distinction, captures the result and average awarded (where applicable) on the student system and informs the candidate officially of the result. It also issues an official statement of compliance with the requirements for the awarding of the degree, and informs the supervisor, co-supervisor, Chair of Department, Executive Dean or delegated person and

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the library of the result. It further authorises, by means of a permanent examination card, the Graduation Section to proceed with graduation arrangements and the awarding of the degree.

If the final result is that the candidate should revise and resubmit, he/she is informed accordingly, in which case the candidate will be informed to re-register online for the next academic year. The registration will be activated when the prescribed fees are paid. In the case where an administrative registration was done (refer to par. 7.18) for the current academic year, the registration will remain as is and the student will register online and pay for the next academic year.

If the final result is that the dissertation or thesis is rejected (see par. 7.44), the candidate is informed accordingly, and he/she is regarded as having been excluded for academic reasons (see par. 7.51).

7.73 Once the result of a candidate's thesis has been approved, the NEC must:

- a) write to each of the external examiners,
 - (i) thanking them for their participation in the examination and for their recommendations
 - (ii) informing them of the result
 - (iii) informing them that their suggested improvements, if any, have been considered to the satisfaction of the University
- b) make available the examiners' reports, without disclosing their names, to the supervisor, co-supervisor and candidate if requested.

Awarding of a qualification posthumously

7.74 Senate may, on recommendation by the Executive Dean of the college or delegated person, award a master's or doctoral degree posthumously if the student complied with all the requirements of the qualification concerned before passing away. In the case where corrections should be made, the supervisor can make these corrections as long as this does not change the majority of the body of the research.

Post-assessment submission of electronic copy of dissertation or thesis

- 7.75 After approval of the dissertation or thesis and before conferment of the degree, the candidate must submit the final electronic copy of the dissertation (excluding mini-dissertations) or thesis, including the candidate's statement (par. 7.14(a)) and the summaries in additional South African languages (par. 7.10) in electronic PDF to his/her supervisor, who must submit it via email to lib-drc@unisa.ac.za for uploading on the Unisa Institutional Repository. The supervisor must inform the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section that the copy was submitted to the library. By such submission, the supervisor confirms that it is the final electronic copy of the dissertation or thesis (see also par. 8.1).
- 7.76 In the case of a thesis completed in the College of Law, the Executive Dean: College of Law or delegated person will send the final copy of the doctoral thesis to the library of the Supreme Court of Appeal.
- 7.77 The degree will not be awarded unless the candidate complies with these requirements by a date set by the University.
- 7.78 Guidelines are provided on the website for electronic submission of post-examination electronic dissertations and theses on the Unisa Institutional Repository.



CHAPTER 8

PHASE 6: ARCHIVING

- 8.1 The supervisor must submit the final electronic version of an accepted dissertation or thesis including the candidate's statement (par. 7.14(a)) and the abstracts in additional official South African languages (par. 7.10) for purposes of archiving (see also par. 7.75). The PDF copy of the dissertation or thesis is archived in the Unisa Institutional Repository as the final reviewed and approved dissertation or thesis. The dissertation or thesis may be harvested from the Unisa Institutional Repository by Proquest or other research databases. The supervisor must therefore confirm that the version submitted is the final copy and no amendments will, after submission, be allowed to the final copy. Access may be restricted on the recommendation of the NEC based on the examiners' reports. Mini-dissertations are not archived in the Unisa Institutional Repository. Final copies of mini-dissertations are kept on record in the office of the Head: Graduate Studies and Research of the college where the student is registered.



CHAPTER 9

PHASE 7: GRADUATION, REPORTING AND OTHER MATTERS

- 9.1 When the Graduation division receives the examinations card from the CGS: Assessment, Research and Examination Support section, they contact the candidate in respect of the conferment of the degree.
- 9.2 The Department: Institutional Statistics and Analysis is responsible for Higher Education Management Information Systems (HEMIS) capturing and reporting and retrieves information from the relevant Unisa system(s) for this purpose.
- 9.3 Subsidy generated by postgraduate supervision is allocated to the department(s) of the supervisor(s) and contributes to determining staff cost units. Co-supervision by members of different academic departments of Unisa has the effect that the departments will share the subsidy generated by the supervision. The department(s) to which the subsidy should be allocated is/are indicated when activities are recorded on myUnisa. Where the supervisor's portfolio is not funded by the Academic Human Resource Allocation Model, the subsidy will accrue to the department in which the candidate is registered.

