

Dear Student

This document contains important information on the research focus areas within the Department of Finance, Risk Management and Banking. This is the Research Focus Area in Risk Management. The last section of this document supplies you with the administrative information and requirements that you need to follow when completing your research outline for our department.

Department	Finance, Risk Management and Banking
Discipline	Risk Management
Research Focus Area	Risk management
Total capacity for 2026	MPhil: 11 PhD: 4

Supervision Team details:	Academic Profile
Dr E van der Westhuizen ¹(Contact person for this focus area) Office: NSR5-102 Email: bothae2@unisa.ac.za ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3247-9138 Institutional repository link http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/21643/browse?authority=8ba84f32-4699-40b8-8839-1e186b052b6a&type=author Supervision capacity: • MPhil: 2 • PhD: 0	Erika van der Westhuizen is a senior lecturer in risk management. She completed her doctoral research within the energy risk management field. She has supervised various postgraduate research projects. Her broad area of research is in risk management, with a focus on external risk factors which includes research around risk resilience for organisations to be sustainable and prepared for major risk events, ESG/Sustainability risk and energy risk management. Studies can be quantitative or qualitative.
Prof AT Mutezo Office: NSR5-114 Email: muteza@unisa.ac.za ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3002-0040 Institutional repository link http://uir.unisa.ac.za/browse?authority=1853718c-a91d-4230-9404-8f66ec6ddd0e&type=author Supervision capacity: • MPhil: 2 • PhD: 1	Ashley Mutezo is a Professor in risk management. She completed her doctoral research in the SME financing field. She has supervised various postgraduate research projects in risk management and SME financing. Her broad area of research is in risk management with a focus on operational risk management and enterprise risk management. Studies should be quantitative in nature based on primary data collection methods or the analysis of secondary data. She has presented numerous papers at local and international conferences.
Prof Joseph Chisasa Office: NSR 5-121 Email: chisaj@unisa.ac.za	Joseph Chisasa is a Professor of Agricultural Finance. He completed his doctoral degree in 2015 at Unisa. He has published in international journals in the areas of bank credit and agricultural output, demand for credit by smallholder farmers, operational risk management and

¹ Please note that consulting the research focus area leader is no assurance that your application will be approved. If, however, your application is approved, it is also not a guarantee that he/she will be allocated as your supervisor.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8923-1424 Niche areas: • Risk management in agricultural banking portfolios Supervision capacity: • MPhil: 2 • PhD: 2	remittances. Prof. Chisasa has supervised several PhD and master's students in the areas of funding models for agricultural banks, macroeconomic fundamentals and agricultural output, stokvels and financial intermediation. Studies using cross-sectional and time series secondary data will be given preference.
Dr S Maré Office: NSR5-112 Email: mares@unisa.ac.za ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0892-8762 Institutional repository link https://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/21643/browse?authority=85ff34ca-04cc-4dcf-8f2e-aba2312f6187&type=author Supervision capacity: • MPhil: 2 • PhD: 1	Suné Maré is a Lecturer in the Department of Finance, Risk Management and Banking at the University of South Africa (Unisa), where she has been working since 2010. She obtained her PhD degree in Open and Distance e-Learning (ODEL) and her Master's degree with distinction in the field of operational risk appetite at Unisa. Her broad research interests lie in risk management and online learning. She is co-supervising MPhil and PhD students studying in the field of operational and enterprise risk management. Studies should be quantitative in nature based on primary data collection methods or the analysis of secondary data. She has presented numerous papers at local and international conferences.
Dr MM Manala Email : mnalmm@unisa.ac.za ORCID: 0000-0002-0523-969X Supervision capacity: • MPhil: 2	Maureen Manala is a lecturer in risk management. She completed her PhD degree in 2025. Quantitative studies using survey questionnaires, and secondary data are preferred.
Dr Gerhard Grebe Office: NSR 5-87 Email: grebegpm@unisa.ac.za ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1645-4897 Institutional repository link: http://hdl.handle.net/10500/18557 Supervisory capacity: • MPhil:1	Gerhard Grebe is a senior lecturer in the Department of Finance, Risk Management and Banking. He completed his PhD degree in 2023 at the University of South Africa in the field of risk management. Gerhard has published numerous articles in the risk management field, where the principal focus has been on fraud risk and operational risk. His research interest includes topics in finance and operational risk management. He is currently supervising master's students at UNISA. Studies should preferably be quantitative, using the positivist or pragmatic paradigms. Ideally, one should use secondary data from reliable sources such as Bloomberg, iRes or the SENS of the JSE.
Research scope	Risk management forms an important part of all organisations. It is imperative for organisations to management the risk within the organisation effectively. The research scope is on risk management within private organisation based on quantitative analysis techniques. The research scope does not entail econometric modelling.
Reading: Subject Field	This is a selection of articles and/or recent books in this research focus area. Further reading over and above these is essential:

	• Young, J. 2015. Guiding criteria for operational risk reporting in a corporate environment. Corporate Ownership & Control, vol 3, issue 1. • Young, J. 2018. Operational Risk. Pretoria. Van Schaik • You can also visit the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and African Journals Online (AJOL) for journal articles related to the topics
Resources: Scholar community	• Institute of risk management South Africa (IRMSA) - www.irmsa.org.za • Institute of operational risk (IOR) – www.ior-institute.org • Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission - COSO – www.coso.org • Basel Committee on Banking Supervision – www.bis.org • The King report on corporate governance (King IV)
Potential M&D research focus areas or research projects	
Unit of Analysis	Research Focus
External risk factors	This research focus area will cover external risk factors that influence risk management within organisations. Although external risk factors are outside the control of the organisation, these have become important for organisations to consider and manage in order to be prepared in the event that they do occur.
ESG/Sustainability risk	This research focus area will cover the integration between risk management and sustainability/ESG. Sustainability risk and ESG related risks
The future of risk management	This research focus area will cover global or local trends influencing risk management and the implications for practice or the teaching and learning of risk management.
Operational risk management	This research focus area will cover operational risk management maturity, operational risk management assessments, operational risk management and capital allocation, operational risk management frameworks and operational risk management as part of ERM.
Other areas in risk management	Students are welcome to submit research outlines in other areas of risk as well. These will also be evaluated and if a supervisor with expertise in the chosen research area is available the student might be considered.
Possible topics to consider	Investigating the role of risk assessment tools and techniques in identifying and mitigating risks. Examining the role of risk management in addressing the emerging risks and vulnerabilities after an external event.

	A theoretical framework for risk management in the context of disruptive technologies and innovation. Social and environmental factors impact on risk management. Investigating the relationship between risk perception and risk management. Factors driving reputational risk within an organisation. Developing effective ESG risk management practices. The integration between risk management and ESG/Sustainability Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the impact on risk management.
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Administrative information and requirements for your research outline

Model of supervision	Candidates will be allocated to a supervisor but will be required to work independently within the requirements of higher degree studies. • The research proposal for a Master's dissertation should reflect the ability to conduct independent research. • The research proposal for a Doctoral thesis should be an original contribution to the field of study.
Academic standards as per the HEQSF	For PhD candidates: • The candidate is required to undertake research at the most advanced academic levels culminating in the submission, assessment and acceptance of a thesis. • The candidate is required to demonstrate a high level of 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 candidate will be expected to submit two articles to accredited journals, prior to final submission of their respective thesis for examination. For Masters candidates: Masters candidates must be able to: • Reflect critically on theory and its application;

	• Design and critically appraise research; • Make sound judgements using data and information; • communicate conclusions to specialist and non-specialist audiences; • work independently in planning and implementing tasks with a theoretical underpinning. • Candidates will be expected to submit one article to an accredited journal, prior to final submission of their respective dissertation for examination.
Questions to ask before you submit your research outline	For PhD candidates: 1. Has a systematic literature review underpinned by sound theory been done to identify a research gap in the chosen topic? 2. Does the research gap identified constitute significant original contribution to the body of knowledge? 3. If the answer to Question 2 above is yes, what methodological approach can be applied to investigate the research problem? For Masters candidates: 1. Has a systematic literature review underpinned by sound theory been done to identify a research gap in the chosen topic? 2. Does the study contribute to the literature or complement the body of knowledge? 3. What methodological approaches can be applied to investigate the research problem?
Research outline requirements	The student is expected to make suggestions of his or her own regarding the specific subject or field in which they would like to do research. You need to conduct preliminary research to determine what has been previously done on the topic, and whether there is a <u>gap</u> in the research that you can address in your studies. Students are required to submit a detailed research outline with their application. The research outline (no less than 8 and no more than 12 pages) should cover the following: • Cover page (Your name and contact details, your student number and the topics/ title) • Summary of the topic (½ page) • Background to or context of the proposed study (Topic background and context (1½ - 2 pages)) • Short literature review – you need to provide evidence that you have read and reported on the

	latest academic (theoretical and empirical) literature on the topic [use only journal articles and relevant textbooks] (3-5 pages) • The potential contribution of the study which includes a clear research problem or knowledge gap. This can be identified from the preliminary literature review; alternatively, from current practice in the field if of a practical nature (1 page) • State your research objectives and corresponding research questions (½ page) • A discussion of the research approach and methodology to be followed. Must cover the approach and design, population and sample, data collection process, data collection instrument, data analysis techniques. Basically, how will you gather and analyse your data? (2-3 pages) • Identify and justify the source and availability of the data. <i>For primary data</i>: will companies and/or participants be willing to take part in your study – if you draw on participants within companies/communities, you will need to get permission from the company/communal leaders that the person can take part). If you intend to apply <i>secondary data</i>, is the period you are studying fully covered (minimum 30 years is required)? Is the secondary data easily accessible? (½ page) • Expected contribution of the study (½ page) • Scope of your study (delimitations) (½ page) • Possible limitations of the study (½ page) • List of references (it is difficult to say what is sufficient, but about 30 is reasonable. Use the Harvard referencing method. References should not be older than 10 years; except in the case of theories which would thus be much older) The page limit excludes the cover page and list of references. Plagiarism of any form is unacceptable. We are interested in well-articulated expressions that demonstrate a clear research focus and understanding of the research topic. Please ensure that sentences link together, as well as paragraphs. This is the biggest concern we have. We find that students tend to write in standalone sentences and paragraphs – there needs to be a logical flow. Your topic should be relevant to the current challenges faced by African countries, institutions and/ or businesses. If you get accepted to this focus area, you will be able to further discuss your topic with your supervisor, and to develop it into an acceptable research proposal.
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	Direct any clarity-seeking questions about this focus area to any one of the potential supervisors identified as per their respective niche areas via email (refer to academic profiles). Please note that no research outline will be read before the closing date for applications. Technical requirements for research outlines • Arial font size 12 • 1.5 line spacing • Justified lines • Page numbers • Normal margins
Selection Procedure	Refer to the qualification website for selection procedure.
Reading: Research Methodology	This is a selection of academic resources on methodology. Further reading over and above these is recommended: • Anderson, D.R. Sweeney, D.J., Williams, T.A., Camm, J.D. and Cochran, J.J. 2017. Modern Business Statistics. 7th edition. Homewood, ILL: Cengage. • Beekman, L., Dube, C., Potgieter, H. and Underhill, J. 2016. Academic Literacy. Second edition. Cape Town: Juta • Brooks, C. 2012. Introductory Econometrics for Finance. 2nd edition: Cambridge University Press • Creswell, J.W. 2009. Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches. Los Angeles: Sage. • DuPlooy-Cilliers, F., Davis, C. & Bezuidenhout, R.M. 2014. Research matters. Pretoria: Juta. • Ethridge, D. 2004. Research methodology in applied economics: Organizing, planning and conducting economic research. 2nd edition. Oxford: Blackwell. • Gujarati D.N and Porter D.C. 2009. Basic Econometrics, 5th Edition. Boston: McGraw-Hill Irwin, • Gujarati, D.N. 2003. Basic econometrics, Vol. 4th edition. Boston: McGraw Hill. • Hofstee, E. 2006. Constructing a good dissertation: A practical guide to finishing a master's, MBA or PhD on schedule. EPE Publishers • Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. 2016. Practical research: Planning and design. Eleventh edition. Essex: Pearson. • Mouton, J. (2005). How to succeed in your Masters and Doctoral studies: SA Guide and Research. 1st edition: Van Schaik

	• Sage Research Methods online – http://srmo.sagepub.com • Saunders, M. N.K., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. 2015. Research Methods for Business Students. 7th Edition. Pearson International • Van Zyl, L. E. 2014. Research methodology for the economic and management sciences. Cape Town: Pearson • Vital, R. and Jansen, J. 2010. Designing your first research proposal: A manual for researchers in education and the social sciences. Rev edition. Lansdowne: Juta. • Welman, J.C. and Kruger, S.J. 2007. Research methodology. Cape Town: Oxford. • Wooldridge, J.M. 2002. Econometric analysis of cross section and panel data. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
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