

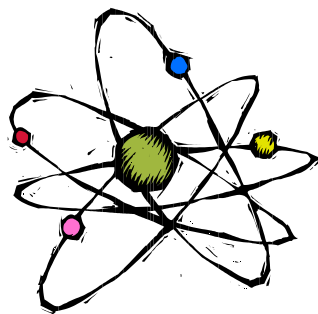


UNIVERSITY OF THE  
WITWATERSRAND,  
JOHANNESBURG

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND  
JOHANNESBURG**

**FACULTY OF SCIENCE**

**POSTGRADUATE  
INFORMATION  
BOOKLET**



**FACULTY OF SCIENCE**  
**POSTGRADUATE INFORMATION BOOKLET**

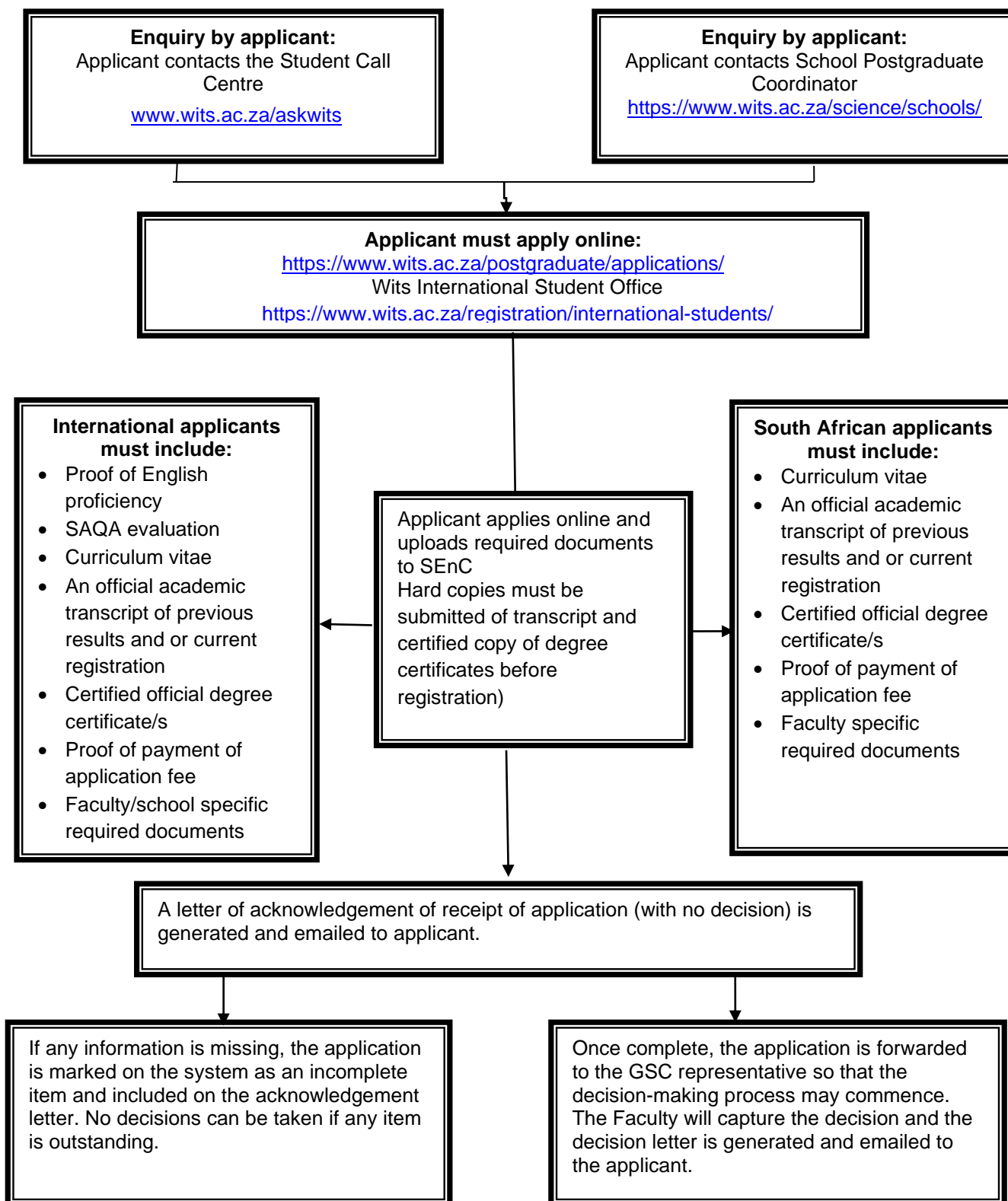
**“Excellence in Diversity”**

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## APPLICATION PROCESS FOR POSTGRADUATE CANDIDATES

1. The applicant must apply online <https://www.wits.ac.za/applications/portal/index>
2. Completed applications are forwarded electronically to the relevant School for consideration.
3. The School Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) representative/designate evaluates the application if the school wishes to accept the applicant; a supervisor for an MSc by research and for a PhD needs to be assigned. If the application is rejected a reason must be provided.
4. The provisional outcome of the application is captured on SIMS by the GSC representative/designate.
5. The application is forwarded electronically to the Faculty Office and the final decision is captured on SIMS.
6. The system generates a letter to inform the applicant of the outcome of the application.

# STUDENT ENROLMENT CENTRE APPLICATION PROCESS FOR POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMS



## REGISTRATION OF POSTGRADUATE CANDIDATES

### South African Candidates

A candidate must pay an upfront registration fee or apply for a fee waiver through student Self-Service portal.

### International Candidates

An applicant can obtain a fee estimate from the *Fees Estimator* on her/his Self-Service portal.

Proof of payment of tuition fees and medical aid must be provided to the Wits International Student Office (WISO).

A candidate must have a valid study permit and must obtain clearance from the WISO.

Candidates register online. When difficulty is experienced, please contact the Faculty Office [science.pg@wits.ac.za](mailto:science.pg@wits.ac.za)

### First Time Registrations:

**BSc Hons, MSc (CW/RR), MSc (Dissertation), PhD**

A candidate must accept firm offer online through the self-service facility on the Wits website.

A candidate must register online. MSc Coursework and Research Report candidates are advised to contact the relevant course coordinator before selecting courses.

### Returning Registrations:

**BSc Hons, MSc (CW/RR), MSc (Dissertation), PhD**

A candidate must register online. MSc Coursework and Research Report and BSc Hons candidates are advised to contact the relevant course coordinator before selecting courses. MSc (CW/RR), MSc (Dissertation), PhD candidates with a FTC outcome will not be able to register online.

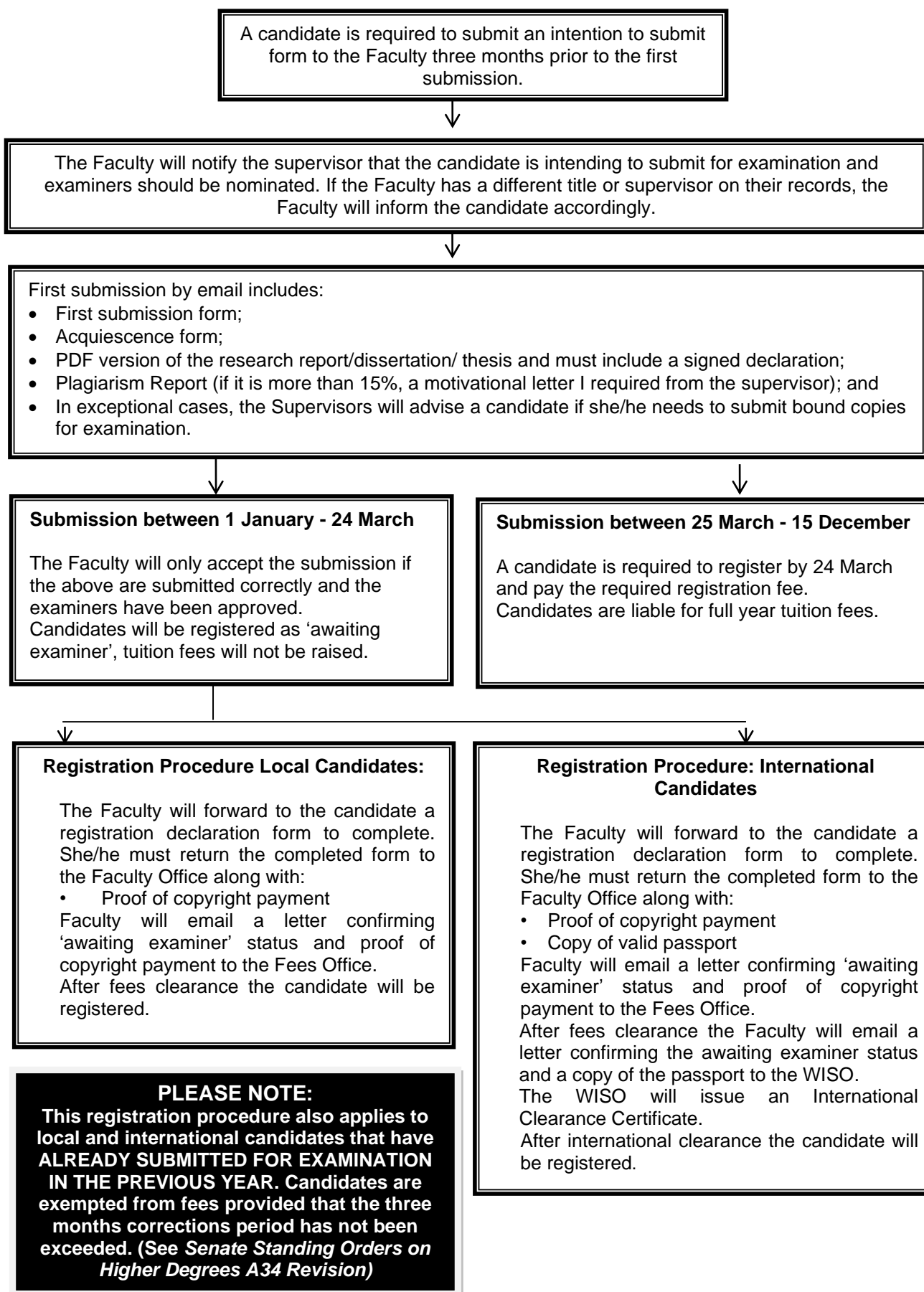
A candidate is issued with a card at the TCS office once registration has been completed.

A candidate must check their Wits e-mail for registration details.

**Please note: All communication from the University is sent to the Wits email address.**

For assistance on setting up this facility contact the helpdesk on 011 717 1717 or [itstudenthelp@wits.ac.za](mailto:itstudenthelp@wits.ac.za)

# REGISTRATION GUIDELINES FOR FIRST SUBMISSION FOR EXAMINATION



# GUIDELINES FOR CONVERSIONS

## CONVERSION FROM MSc (DISSERTATION) TO PHD

A candidate must be registered for the MSc (Dissertation) when she/he applies for the conversion.

**A candidate is required to submit the following to the Faculty prior to consideration for a conversion.**

- A postgraduate amendment form applying for the conversion;
- Letter of motivation from the candidate's supervisor supported by the GSC representative or Head of School;
- A Research Proposal for the PhD; and
- Confirmation of an online application for the PhD.

**Conversion of Candidature from MSc to PhD in terms of RULE G 12.2.a**  
*(please refer to number 4 of the Faculty Standing Orders for further information)*

**If approved:**

The candidate, supervisor and GSC representative will be notified via email of the approval.  
The candidate will complete a registration declaration form to be registered for the PhD.  
The Faculty Officer will convert the candidate's registration and it will be noted by the GSC.

**If not approved or requires revision:**

The candidate, supervisor and GSC will be notified via email, and be noted by the GSC.

## AMENDMENT TO REGISTRATION

**A postgraduate candidate must complete a postgraduate amendment form for the following:**

- Change in title of thesis/dissertation/research report;
- Change in supervisor;
- Conversion from MSc to PhD;
- Conversion from full-time to part-time or part-time to full-time;
- Extension on submission of research proposal or first submission of thesis/dissertation/research report;
- Extension of final submission;
- Request for abeyance; and
- Adding or dropping of courses.

Forms can be downloaded from <https://www.wits.ac.za/science/postgraduate/forms/>

**The candidate completes the form and obtains approval and signatures from the supervisor and School GSC representative:**

- Forms should be submitted electronically to the Faculty Office;
- The Faculty Office ensures the forms are correctly completed by the candidate;
- Informs the candidate of potential problems; the Faculty Officer obtains approval from the GSC Chairperson for all amendments except the adding and dropping of courses;
- Once an outcome has been reached the Faculty Officer updates the candidate's record on SIMS; and
- Letters are generated from SIMS depending on the nature of the amendment. If a candidate adds or drops courses, converts from one degree to another or changes from full-time to part-time an e-mail is sent to the candidate's Wits e-mail address.



## RESEARCH PROPOSAL

A full-time candidate is required to submit a research proposal four months (MSc dissertation) or six months (PhD) after registration and a part-time candidate is required to submit a research proposal eight months (MSc dissertation) or twelve months (PhD) after registration.

MSc (coursework and research report) programs require different specifications for the research proposal and a candidate should contact the school course coordinator.

As soon as a candidate registers, the supervisor should contact the GSC representative from the school to find out the school's procedure to access and approve a research proposal prior to submission to the Faculty.

Guidelines on the preparation of a research proposal can be downloaded from [http://www.wits.ac.za/academic/science/postgraduate/13853/research\\_proposal.html](http://www.wits.ac.za/academic/science/postgraduate/13853/research_proposal.html)

Once approval for submission has been obtained from the school, the school's postgraduate representative is required to submit via email to the Faculty Office, the research proposal together with the completed research proposal form and a signed statement of principles for postgraduate supervision.

Forms can be downloaded from <https://www.wits.ac.za/science/postgraduate/forms/>

**(Candidates may also submit research proposals electronically through Self-Service.)**

The research proposal is sent to the GSC Chairperson for final approval. Based on the outcome a letter is generated to the candidate. The candidate's record on SIMS is updated. The Faculty Office enters details of the research proposal onto the next GSC agenda for noting.

# GUIDELINES ON THE PREPARATION OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

This is a guideline document to assist a candidate on the required content of Research Proposals. Research Proposals should include the following components:

- i. **Introduction**  
The introduction provides the reader with sufficient information on the field of study to allow for an appreciation of the proposed research i.e. it places the project in context with what is known. This section can also form the basis for the introduction of the dissertation/thesis.
- ii. **Aim**  
A clear statement of the general aims of the project plus a set of objectives that are potentially achievable.
- iii. **Hypotheses and Questions**  
A hypothesis is a tentative theory about the natural world that can be tested by further investigation, whilst the questions allow for more specific/focussed attention to particular aspects of the project. It is essential that the hypotheses and/or questions are clearly and unambiguously stated. Since it is these statements that are going to guide the research through the practical portion of the project and will also assume central roles in the written dissertation/thesis it is important to consider their wording and composition very carefully. Many candidates find this a difficult task.
- iv. **Methodology**  
This section varies with each discipline. In essence the section provides a detailed description of what material is to be used, what experimentation is to be conducted, what data are to be collected and how the data are to be analysed. It is worth spending time on this section as it will give you a clear indication of what work you will be conducting and assists you in planning the project. Consideration must also be given to the following: whether the material is readily available; whether permission is required to gain access to the material; whether ethics clearance is required. Solutions to potential problems must also be considered.
- v. **Work plan**  
This plan details what work is to be done and when. It is essential that when this plan is prepared, you are realistic about what can be achieved in any given time. You will find that you often underestimate how long it will take to achieve a particular task, check your timings with your supervisor or other senior postgraduates in your field.  
As is common in industry and the broader workplace, many supervisors also ask for a budget to be prepared for the project. The sources of funding must also be indicated.  
A proposal document is considered by the School's Postgraduate Committee or readers. Adjustments and corrections to the document may be recommended by the committee or by the readers. Once the project proposal has been accepted by the committee, the document is signed by the candidate, supervisor(s) and postgraduate co-ordinator/ Head of School. The signed document is submitted to the Faculty Office for consideration by the Graduate Studies Committee and represents a formal acknowledgement by the candidate to undertake the research under the guidance of the supervisor(s).  
The proposal document must be submitted to the Faculty Office within a specified period of the original registration, or the School may cancel the registration of the candidate. (Full-time masters' candidates must submit within four months, part-time masters candidates must submit within eight months. Full-time doctoral candidates must submit within six months and part-time doctoral candidates must submit within twelve months.) If a candidate cannot meet the deadline, an application for an extension must be submitted.

## PROGRESS REPORTS

Annual Progress Reports are issued by the Faculty for each registered candidate in July of each calendar year. These progress reports must be completed by the candidate and supervisor and returned before the end of August to the Faculty by the GSC representative of each school. Upon receipt the Faculty will process and act on the recommendations of the supervisor.

## NOMINATION OF EXAMINERS PROCEDURE

**This process is strictly confidential. The student should not be informed of the identity of their examiners.**

Examiners are nominated at least three months prior to a candidate handing in her/his thesis/dissertation/research report for examination. The supervisor completes the Nomination of Examiners form, which is signed off by the GSC representative of the school. The supervisor may not be an examiner. Two examiners are needed for an MSc, one internal examiner and one external examiner and three examiners are needed for a PhD, one internal examiner and two external examiners of one must be an international examiner. Internal and external examiners should not be nominated if they have been supervised, worked with, or published with the supervisor within the last five years and they must not have supervised that person in the last ten years. A short motivation should be given as to why the examiners are appropriate. The typed completed Nomination of Examiners form, together with all the examiners' CVs must be sent electronically to the Faculty Office. These CVs must contain details of their qualification/s, evidence of disciplinary knowledge, experience of postgraduate supervision and a list of publications.

**Forms can be downloaded from: <https://www.wits.ac.za/science/postgraduate/forms/>**

The Faculty Officer checks if the nomination has been approved by the GSC representative or Head of School and checks the information on the Nomination of Examiners form and examiners' CVs. The Faculty Officer informs the GSC representative and supervisor if there are any problems or missing information.

The Faculty Officer obtains a recommendation from the GSC Chairperson: The Faculty Officer then emails the Nomination of Examiners form and examiners' CVs to the GSC members for approval. The Faculty Officer collates the responses; a two thirds confirmation from the GSC is required for approval. Any comments received are forwarded to the GSC Chairperson.

The Faculty Officer enters the decision from the GSC onto SIMS and informs the GSC representative and supervisor of the outcome via email. The Faculty Officer enters each examiner's information onto SIMS. The Faculty Officer enters the nominated examiners for noting on the next GSC agenda and files all documents on the candidate's electronic file.

**The Faculty Officer contacts each examiner to confirm the appointment.**

# FIRST SUBMISSION PROCEDURE OF THESIS/DISSERTATION/RESEARCH REPORT

When a candidate is ready to submit her/his thesis/dissertation/research report for examination, supervisors should check with the schools' GSC representatives if the candidate/supervisors have fulfilled the school's requirement/s to submit her/his work for examination. For MSc (coursework and research report) candidates, this includes ensuring that all the coursework marks have been submitted to the Faculty.

## **Submission Requirements:**

- i. First submission form;
- ii. Acquiescence form;
- iii. A candidate must submit for examination a PDF version of her/his thesis/dissertation/research report via email – must include signed declaration;
- iv. Plagiarism report; and
- v. A supervisor will advise a candidate if she/he should submit bound copies for examination.

Forms can be downloaded from <https://www.wits.ac.za/science/postgraduate/forms/>

The supervisor is required to submit a supervisor's report to the Faculty within one week of the candidate handing in his/her submission for examination.

Supervisor's report can be downloaded from

[http://www.wits.ac.za/academic/science/postgraduate/13910/supervisor\\_#039;s\\_report.html](http://www.wits.ac.za/academic/science/postgraduate/13910/supervisor_#039;s_report.html)

## **The Faculty Officer:**

- Archives the submission electronically;
- Completes the milestone on SIMS;
- Requests a letter to confirm receipt of the submission to the candidate; and
- E-mails the PDF version of the submission, with a letter indicating the timeline for examination and relevant documents to the examiners. Examiners are given six weeks to examine and to submit the examiner's report to Faculty.

## **SUPERVISOR'S REPORT ON SUBMISSION OF THEIR CANDIDATE'S, RESEARCH REPORT/ DISSERTATION/THESIS**

This report is not an examiner's report. It will be used by the Faculty Graduate Studies committee for the quality assurance of supervision and for insight into the relationship between the supervisor's assessment and that of the examiners.

### **Supervisors should report on the supervision process**

- i. The supervisor should comment on the supervision process (frequency of meetings, any difficulties in the relationship, time frames, number of drafts etc.);
- ii. There should be an assessment of the candidate's ability to work independently at the different stages of the project: selection of the topic, the literature review, data collection and data analysis;
- iii. The supervisor should report on the conferences attended by the candidate and the candidate's publications;
- iv. In the case of joint publications there should be a clear statement of what work was done by each of the authors of each joint publication included in the dissertation or thesis; and
- v. The supervisor should draw to the Graduate Studies Committee's attention to any personal difficulties experienced by the candidate (death in the family, illness etc).

### **Supervisors should briefly assess the quality of the dissertation or thesis. This assessment should include:**

- i. An assessment on the quality of the language and presentation;
- ii. An assessment of the contribution that the research makes to knowledge in the field; and
- iii. An assessment of the standard of the work.

## ADMINISTRATION OF EXAMINERS' REPORTS

Once all examiner reports are received, the Faculty Officer works with the GSC Chairperson to prepare a recommendation to the GSC. The GSC Chairperson's recommendation of the examiners' reports will be circulated for consideration to the GSC committee by the Faculty Officer. An ad hoc committee meeting may be recommended if there is a discrepancy in the examiners' reports. The Faculty Officer removes all identifying information pertaining to each examiner prior to circulation to the GSC for consideration. The Faculty Officer collates the responses after circulation. A two-thirds outcome from the GSC is required before further processing can take place.

The Faculty Officer e-mails the outcome from the GSC and the detailed report received from each examiner to the Supervisor and GSC representative of the relevant School. The Supervisor contacts the candidate to convey the outcome and final submission procedure.

The supervisor works with the candidate to complete all corrections within three months. Once corrections are complete the supervisor, candidate, and Head of School or GSC representative must ensure all corrections have been completed. In this regard the candidate must generate a report detailing how corrections recommended by the examiners have been addressed.

Senate Standing Orders on Higher Degrees state that the examiners should not be contacted until the entire examination process is completed (that is when the candidate submits the approved, corrected and final version to the Faculty). However, supervisors in consultation with the school's GSC representative can contact each examiner for clarification when they believe that this contact will result in a better quality piece of research work being submitted. In the case where examiners have indicated that they wish to re-examine the work, contact should not take place or be kept to a minimum. The GSC Chairperson or Dean should be informed of any correspondence with an examiner.

**PLEASE NOTE  
SENATE STANDING ORDERS ON HIGHER DEGREES  
A34 REVISION**

**A candidate is entitled to appropriate supervision while revising a research report/dissertation/thesis in response to examiners' reports. Revision shall be done within a three month period.**

# INFORMATION FOR THE GUIDANCE OF EXAMINERS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE Coursework and Research Report

## 1. Qualification of Candidates

A candidate for this degree has, as a rule, obtained an Honours or equivalent qualification. The candidate has attended and completed by examination during not less than one academic year, such postgraduate courses as determined by the Senate and has presented a Research Report on an approved topic.

## 2. Requirements for the Award of the Degree

Both the marks awarded for the coursework and that awarded for the Research Report contribute to the final mark for the degree. Courses must be completed at the first attempt. **The Research Report you are asked to examine counts 50% of the total mark.** The Research Report must show acquaintance with the methods of research but need not involve original research. Please note that the work for the Research Report is normally carried out over a period of six to seven months, which includes the write-up. **This MSc Research Report is not equivalent to an MSc dissertation which would take a minimum of one year full-time research and be submitted by candidates as the sole requirement for the award of an MSc degree.**

### 2.1 Acquaintance with the Methods of Research

The candidates are required to show acquaintance with the methods of research in that they;

- i. Understands the nature and purpose of the investigations;
- ii. Are sufficiently acquainted with the relevant literature;
- iii. Have mastered the necessary techniques;
- iv. Have acquired a thorough understanding of the scientific method; and
- v. Are capable of assessing the significance of the findings.

### 2.2 Literary Style and Presentation

The literary style and presentation of the Research Report must be satisfactory.

### 2.3 Pass and Distinction

A pass for the Research Report is 50%. A candidate obtaining 75% or more will be awarded the degree with distinction. (A distinction must be obtained for both the Coursework component and for the Research Report for the degree to be awarded with distinction.)

### 2.4 Plagiarism

The candidate's submission for examination has been checked for plagiarism. If the plagiarism exceeds 15%, the supervisor of the candidate is required to submit a motivation to the faculty with the plagiarism report.

## 3. Examiner's Recommendations

Examiners are requested to indicate their recommendations by completing the Examiner's Report form and compiling a separate written report. Kindly assign a percentage mark to the Research Report. In the section detailing your assessment of the Research Report, please make clear any corrections, revisions or extensions you may require. As a rule the correction of typographical and other minor errors as recommended by the examiner is supervised by the candidate's supervisor and completed to the satisfaction of the Head of the relevant School.

## 4. Confidentiality during the Examination Process

The examination process commences once an examiner accepts her/his nomination to examine. The names of the examiners are confidential during the examination process and may only be revealed to the candidate with the acquiescence of the examiner once the final version of the thesis has been submitted to the Faculty and the process has been completed. An examiner shall not consult another examiner, the supervisor or candidate except by permission of the Dean, usually in response to a request for further information, until the examination process is completed.

## 5. Deadline for Return of Report

An examiner is requested to return the examiner's report within 6 weeks. If you are unable to do so, kindly email [science.msc@wits.ac.za](mailto:science.msc@wits.ac.za)

## 6. Examiners should note that at this University candidates have the right to submit their Research Report without the permission of the supervisor.

Contact Details for Postgraduate Administration, Faculty of Science:

Email: [science.msc@wits.ac.za](mailto:science.msc@wits.ac.za)

Tel: +27(0) 11 7176014

# INFORMATION FOR THE GUIDANCE OF EXAMINERS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF SCIENCE BY Dissertation

## 1. Qualification of Candidates

A candidate for this degree has, as a rule, obtained an Honours or equivalent degree and during no less than one academic year has conducted research under the guidance of a supervisor appointed by the Senate.

## 2. Requirements for the Award of the Degree

A person who is admitted as a candidate for the degree must present a dissertation on a subject approved by the Senate. The degree is usually awarded solely on the dissertation, which must show acquaintance with the methods of research but need not involve original or publishable research.

### 2.1 Acquaintance with the Methods of Research

The candidates are required to show acquaintance with the methods of research in that they:

- i. Understand the nature and purpose of the investigations;
- ii. Are sufficiently acquainted with the relevant literature;
- iii. Have mastered the necessary techniques;
- iv. Have acquired a thorough understanding of appropriate scientific methods; and
- v. Are capable of assessing the significance of the findings.

### 2.2 Literary Style and Presentation

The literary style and presentation of the dissertation must be satisfactory.

### 2.3 Consultation/Assistance

Candidate shall have the right to consult anyone whom they may choose concerning aspects of the dissertation. Such assistance received by candidates shall not invalidate the declaration that the dissertation constitutes their own work. However candidates shall in the dissertation acknowledge by name those to whom they are indebted for substantial assistance.

### 2.4 Plagiarism

The candidates submission for examination has been checked for plagiarism. If the plagiarism exceeds 15%, the supervisor of the candidate is required to submit a motivation to the faculty with the plagiarism report.

## 3. Examiner's Recommendations

Examiners are requested to indicate their recommendations by completing the Examiner's Report Form and compiling a written report. In the section detailing your assessment of the dissertation, please make clear any corrections, revisions or extensions you may require. As a rule the correction of typographical and other minor errors as recommended by the examiner is supervised by the candidate's supervisor and completed to the satisfaction of the Head of the relevant School.

### a. Format of Examiner's Report:

- i. Give a brief description of the dissertation;
- ii. Give an analysis of the work performed; and
- iii. An appraisal of the dissertation.

### b. Award with Distinction

Where the dissertation is of outstanding merit the degree may be awarded with distinction. Originality would normally be relevant to such a judgment but is not the sole requirement for the award with distinction. Examiners are requested to motivate for the award of a distinction in their detailed report and in the space provided on the report form.

### c. Implementation of Recommendation or Alterations

An examiner who recommends that the dissertation be referred back to the candidate for major alterations must indicate clearly what is to be done by the candidate. If the examiner feels that the candidate should be asked to defend the dissertation before an ad hoc Committee the examiner should indicate on what aspects the discussion should concentrate. Provision of a list of specific questions would assist the Committee.

As a rule the correction of typographical and other minor errors as recommended by the examiners is supervised by the supervisor and completed to the satisfaction of the Head of the relevant School.

## 4. Confidentiality During the Examination Process

The examination process commences once an examiner accepts her/his nomination to examine. The names of the examiners should be confidential during the examination process and may only be revealed to the candidate with the acquiescence of the examiner once the final version of the thesis has been submitted to the Faculty and the process has been completed. An examiner shall not consult another examiner, the supervisor or candidate except by permission of the Dean, usually in response to a request for further information, until the examination process is completed.

## 5. Deadline for Return of Report

An examiner is requested to return the examiner's report within 6 weeks. If you are unable to do so, kindly email [science.msc@wits.ac.za](mailto:science.msc@wits.ac.za)

## 6. Examiners should note that at this University candidates have the right to submit their dissertation without permission of the supervisor.

Contact Details for Postgraduate Administration, Faculty of Science:

Email: [science.msc@wits.ac.za](mailto:science.msc@wits.ac.za)

Tel: +27(0) 11 7176014

(Updated in 2021 and approved by the Science Faculty Board by circulation on 15 November 2021)



# INFORMATION FOR THE GUIDANCE OF EXAMINERS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

## 1. Qualification of Candidates

The normal minimum requirements for this degree are that a candidate shall hold a Masters' degree or equivalent qualification. The candidate should have conducted research on a subject approved by the Senate, under the guidance of a supervisor appointed by the Senate, either in the University or an institution deemed to be part of the University for this purpose, for at least two academic years.

## 2. Requirements for the Award of the Degree

At the close of the period of research the candidate has to present a Thesis which must constitute a substantial novel contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the subject chosen and which must be satisfactory as regards literary presentation and in a form suitable for lodging in the University Library. The substance of the Thesis is normally required to be of a standard suitable for publication.

### 2.1 Previously Published Work

When presenting the Thesis, a candidate may include published results or publications, provided that this work was undertaken during the course of the candidature. In the case of joint publications also included, the candidate's share in such work must be indicated.

### 2.2 Consultation/ Assistance

Candidate shall have the right to consult whom they may choose on aspects of the thesis. Such assistance received by candidates shall not invalidate the declaration that the thesis constitutes their own work. However, candidates shall, in the thesis, acknowledge by name those to whom they are indebted for substantial assistance.

### 2.3 Plagiarism

The candidate's submission for examination has been checked for plagiarism. If the plagiarism exceeds 15%, the supervisor of the candidate is required to submit a motivation to the faculty with the plagiarism report.

## 3. Examiner's Recommendations

Examiners are requested to indicate their recommendations by completing the Examiner's Report form and compiling a written report. In the section detailing your assessment of the Thesis, please make clear any corrections, revisions or extensions you may require. As a rule the correction of typographical and other minor errors as recommended by the examiner is supervised by the candidate's supervisor and completed to the satisfaction of the Head of the relevant School.

### 3.1 Format of Examiner's Report

- i. Give a brief description of the Thesis;
- ii. Give an analysis of the work performed; and
- iii. An appraisal of the Thesis.

No provision is made for the award of the degree of PhD with distinction.

### 3.2 Implementation of Recommendations or Alterations

An examiner who recommends that the Thesis be referred back to the candidate for major alterations must indicate clearly what is to be done by the candidate. If the examiner feels that the candidate should be asked to defend the thesis before an ad hoc committee the examiner should indicate on what aspects the discussion should concentrate. Provision of a list of specific questions would assist the Committee. As a rule the correction of typographical and other minor errors as recommended by the examiners is given by the supervisor and completed to the satisfaction of the Head of the relevant School.

## 4. Confidentiality during the Examination Process

The examination process commences once an examiner accepts her/his nomination to examine. The names of the examiners should be confidential during the examination process and may only be revealed to the candidate with the acquiescence of the examiner once the final version of the thesis has been submitted to the Faculty and the process has been completed. An examiner shall not consult another examiner, the supervisor or candidate except by permission of the Dean, usually in response to a request for further information, until the examination process is completed.

## 5. Deadline for Return of Report

An examiner is requested to return the examiner's report within 6 weeks. If you are unable to do so, please e-mail [science.phd@wits.ac.za](mailto:science.phd@wits.ac.za)

## 6. Examiners should note that at this University candidates have the right to submit their Thesis without the permission of the supervisor.

**Contact Details for Postgraduate Administration, Faculty of Science:**

**Email:** [science.phd@wits.ac.za](mailto:science.phd@wits.ac.za)

**Tel:** +27(0) 11 7176014

# FINAL SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

## Please Note

Senate Standing Orders on Higher Degrees:

### **A.23 Registration after submission of thesis, dissertation, research report**

A Candidate who has submitted her/his thesis, dissertation, research report is required to remain registered until she/he has met all the requirements for the degree. If the Faculty Graduate Studies Committee or Board of the Faculty decides that substantial revisions to the thesis are required, then the candidate will be liable for a re-examination fee, as per A.33.3.3 of these Standing Orders. Subject to the approval of the Chairperson of the Faculty Graduate Studies Committee, a candidate may be permitted to register for a further higher degree while awaiting the outcome of the examination for another higher degree.

### **A34 Revision**

A Candidate is entitled to appropriate supervision while revising the thesis, dissertation, and research report in response to examiners' reports. Revision shall be done within a three-month period. Faculties will not require a candidate to pay additional fees if revision is completed within three months. Beyond that, a candidate will be required to pay all fees. Failure to submit at the end of the period allowed for revision may result in termination of candidature. If examiners have requested to re-examine the work, an additional fee is levied.

### **A candidate submits to the Faculty via email:**

- i. PDF version of the thesis (to include signed declaration with current date);
- ii. The Abstract page of the research report to be saved as a separate PDF document;
- iii. Final submission - ETD form;
- iv. Proof of payment of ETD
- v. A detailed list of how the corrections were addressed
- vi. Letter from the Head of School/Designate. (Confirmation that a PhD candidate has met the publication requirement from the relevant School needs to be stated);
- vii. Fees statement
- viii. 50 word citation from the Supervisor (PhD submissions only)

Form can be downloaded from <https://www.wits.ac.za/science/postgraduate/forms/>

The Faculty Office finalises the qualification on the system. A congratulatory letter and a digital transcript are emailed to the candidate. The candidate's name is added to the next graduation ceremony. The candidate can expect correspondence from the examinations and graduations office four weeks prior to the graduation ceremony. Graduation information is forwarded to the candidate's Wits email address.

# FACULTY STANDING ORDERS FOR THE DEGREES OF MSc AND PhD

These standing orders are intended to serve as guidelines for Supervisors, Heads of School, Postgraduate Coordinators and the Faculty Office. They should be read in conjunction with the Senate standing orders on higher degrees.

In the Faculty of Science, all Heads of School have appointed Postgraduate Coordinators to be responsible for higher degree matters within the School.

## USE OF TERMS:

**“School”:** Unless indicated otherwise, “School” should be taken to include departments or divisions where these exist within Schools.

**“Faculty Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)”:** This is a Faculty Committee which deals with all matters pertaining to postgraduate studies.

**“Faculty Registrar”:** Where the term “Faculty Registrar” is used this may refer to the work carried out by a member of the Faculty Registrar’s staff, but the accountability will rest with the Faculty Registrar.

**“Thesis”** is the term reserved for an extended piece of writing based on research that makes an original and significant contribution to knowledge that may incorporate creative work or publications integral to the overall argument, and is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy qualification.

**“Dissertation”** is the term reserved for a Master’s qualification by research, which is an extended piece of written work, which may incorporate creative work or publications.

**“Research report”** is the term reserved for the written document which forms the research component of a Master’s qualification by coursework and research report.

**“Senior Doctorate”** A significant body of work that makes a distinguished contribution to the advancement of knowledge in a field is required for the award of a senior doctorate.

**“The Supervisor”** is the person who takes primary responsibility for the supervision of the candidate, and is responsible for more than 50% of the supervision.

**“The Co-Supervisor”** is the person who is responsible for more than 10%, and less than 50% of the supervision of a candidate.

**“Postgraduate Coordinator”** is the person appointed by the Head of School who is responsible for postgraduate matters at School level.

## INTRODUCTION

Higher degrees conferred in the Faculty of Science are PhD, MSc (Dissertation) and MSc (Coursework and Research Report). A candidate registering for an MSc (Coursework and Research Report) is expected to attend and pass an appropriate number of coursework courses counting 90 credits of the 180 credits. The curriculum for coursework shall extend over not less than one academic year of study.

### 1 APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO HIGHER DEGREE CANDIDATURE

Applications are done online <https://www.wits.ac.za/about-wits/>

#### 1.1 Application Process

An applicant must apply online. The application is then forwarded electronically to the Head of the School/Postgraduate Coordinator who will make a recommendation regarding admission. The application will thereafter be captured by the Faculty Office.

A Supervisor or Supervisors will normally be approved by the Head of School/Postgraduate Coordinator at the time of submission of the electronic application. For a Master’s (by dissertation) and PhD qualifications supervisors must give their consent to supervise a candidate.

#### 1.2 Applicants from local Universities

Applicants are required to submit the following documentation together with the electronic application:

- i. Certified photocopy(ies) of original degree certificate(s);
- ii. Official academic record/transcript and certificate of good conduct; and
- iii. Curriculum vitae.

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### 1.3 Foreign candidate applications

Applicants are required to pay an application fee and submit the following documentation together with the electronic application:

- i. Certified photocopy(ies) of original degree certificate (s);
- ii. Official academic record/transcript and certificate of good conduct;
- iii. Curriculum vitae;
- iv. SAQA evaluation; and
- v. Proof of English proficiency.

### 1.4 Recommendations by Heads of School

The Senate's powers in respect of higher degree matters have largely been delegated by the Faculty Board to the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) which, in turn, relies heavily on the recommendations of the Heads of School/Postgraduate Coordinators.

Heads of School are under no obligation to recommend the admission of any person who wishes to pursue research for a higher degree – the fact that an applicant may be qualified for admission in terms of the rules is NOT in itself grounds for admission. Only those applicants found to be satisfactory in all respects should be recommended to the GSC. This includes the appointment of Supervisors for Master's (dissertation) and PhD applicants.

The Head of School/Postgraduate Coordinator and the Supervisor should consider the following points whilst making a decision:

#### a) Qualifications and Capabilities of Applicant:

- i. The applicant should have the necessary academic qualifications, in terms of the rules, for admission to the candidature which he seeks. An applicant for admission as an MSc candidate is usually expected to have at least 65% at Honours level. A candidate with a first class pass at the Honour's level may register directly for a PhD with the approval of the Head of School; and
- ii. The applicant should have the necessary training and background and the intellectual ability to carry out the research project.

#### b) Adequacy of Research, Research Facilities and Supervision:

- i. The proposed research should show clear promise of a sufficient contribution to knowledge to fulfil the requirements of the degree concerned;
- ii. The proposed research should be feasible – i.e. Adequate laboratory and/or library facilities should exist, and the requisite research materials or data should be readily accessible; and
- iii. Effective and appropriate supervision should be available for the minimum period of registration.

## 2 REGISTRATION AND RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION

### 2.1 Initial Registration

A candidate for a Higher Degree in the Faculty of Science is required to register after the application is approved by the Head of School/Postgraduate Coordinator.

### 2.2 Renewal of Registration

A candidate is required to renew her/his registration **annually**. A candidate who has submitted her/his research is required to remain registered until she/he has been **qualified**.

### 2.3 Lapse of Registration

It is the responsibility of the Faculty Registrar to ensure that all candidates are duly registered, and to report unregistered candidates to the Head of School or Postgraduate Co-ordinator. The Head of School or Coordinator shall then investigate, through the Supervisors, the reasons for non-registration. Any candidate not registered by the

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end of March, provided that they are in good standing, will be assumed to have allowed their registration to lapse and will be required to reapply.

## 2.4 Minimum and Maximum Periods of Registration

A FULL-TIME candidate is a candidate who is working full-time on her/his research.

A PART-TIME candidate is normally in other full-time or part-time employment.

A member of the University staff may register as a full-time candidate. This decision should be made in consultation with the Head of School and should be related to the actual time spent carrying out research.

The normal minimum and maximum periods of registration are as follows:

Degree	Minimum (n) HEQSF	Wits (n+1)	Maximum
MSc (Full-time)	1 year	2 years	3 years
MSc (Part-time)	1 year	3 years	4 years
PhD (Full-time)	2 year	3 years	4 years
PhD (Part-time)	2 year	4 years	5 years

A candidate exceeding the maximum period of study will incur a penalty fee. The fees of a candidate exceeding the maximum period of study will escalate by 20% for each additional year.

## 3 EXTENSIONS

Extensions should be the exception rather than the rule. Only **TWO** extensions are permissible for the entire duration of Master's and PhD Degrees. Extensions can be approved by the GSC either during the research proposal preparation stage, or to extend the period of registration. Once a candidate has completed n+1 years of study, he/she must apply for an extension to the Faculty GSC, which will not be granted unless there is a convincing motivation and a realistic timeline for completion of the Degree which is approved by both the supervisor and the Head of School. A hold will be placed on online registration at the end of the n+1 period so that this can be facilitated. After n+2 years a candidate will not be allowed to re-register in the Faculty without the recommendation of the GSC and the permission of the Dean. A candidate will not be allowed to extend their registration beyond n+3. Extensions can be applied for by completing the Faculty Amendment Form.

## 4 CONVERSION OF CANDIDATURE FROM MSc TO PhD IN TERMS OF RULE G 12.2 (a)

**4.1** In the case of an MSc (dissertation) a candidate who has been registered for twelve months or longer, the GSC may be asked by the Supervisor to consider whether the candidate's progress in research warrants conversion of candidature to PhD.

**4.2** If the Supervisor(s) recommends a conversion, the Head of the School/Postgraduate Coordinator concerned must submit a motivation, as well as a PhD proposal which has been approved by the School, to the GSC, for the consideration of the conversion.

*The motivation should be based on answers to the following questions:*

- i. Is the candidate of PhD calibre?
- ii. Is the research project of PhD standard?
- iii. Does the candidate show independent and original thought and strong motivation towards the research?
- iv. Reference should be made to any relevant papers published or presented at conferences by the candidate.

**4.3** If the conversion of a candidature from MSc to PhD is approved, the candidate shall be deemed to have commenced the research for the PhD at the time of her/his admission as a candidate for the degree of MSc, or such later date as the Senate may determine in her/his case. In terms of Rule G 12.2 (a), the Master's Dissertation is neither written nor submitted for examination.

## 5 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE GSC

**5.1 All matters relating to Master's and Doctoral degrees must be approved by the GSC or, in urgent and controversial cases, the Board of the Faculty of Science, or the Senate.**

All higher degree matters, such as applications for admission to candidature, approval of research proposals, nomination and approval of Examiners, approval and changes of Supervisor(s), extension of candidature, cancellation of candidature, requests for abeyance, conversions, changes in registration such as title or line of

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research, or approval of examiners' reports, must be submitted for approval to the GSC. Applications or requests will not normally be considered unless they are recommended in writing by the Head of the School/Postgraduate Coordinator concerned and have the support of the Supervisor/s. The minutes of the GSC meetings form part of the Faculty Board documentation.

## **5.2 Approval of Title**

The title of the thesis/dissertation/research is approved along with the project proposal. If necessary, a candidate can change the title before submitting for examination by completing the postgraduate amendment form.

## **5.3 Abeyance**

This is applicable to all Master's and PhD candidates. In exceptional circumstances a candidate may apply to have her/his candidature put into abeyance, i.e. where their circumstances prevent them from continuing their research. The maximum period of abeyance is two years (non-continuous). Abeyance must be for a pre-specified length of time. If a candidate does not apply for re-instatement before the abeyance period expires, her/his candidature will be cancelled.

## **5.4 Closing date for receipt of applications and other items for consideration by the GSC**

The deadline for receipt by the Faculty Office of applications and other items for consideration by the GSC is 10 working days before the date of each GSC meeting. Any urgent matters may be circulated to members of the GSC.

# **6 SUPERVISION**

## **6.1 Duties of Supervisors**

It is the responsibility of the Head of School or Postgraduate Co-ordinator to ensure that a Supervisor is familiar with the University's and Faculty's Standing Orders on higher degrees. A copy of these duties (and/or relevant code of responsibility/conduct) along with the appropriate Style Guide, the Policy on Plagiarism and the University Grievance Procedure for Postgraduate Candidates and the Statement of Principles must be made available to candidates at registration, and should form the basis of a negotiation between the Supervisor/s and the candidate as to how they will work together.

The Statement of Principles must be discussed with the candidate, and it may be changed by mutual agreement. It must be signed by the Supervisor(s) and the candidate at the time of submission of the research proposal.

### **The duties of the Supervisor shall be:**

- 6.1.1** To report, after consultation with the Head of the School or Postgraduate Co-ordinator concerned, any change in the proposed title for the approval of the Faculty Board, Faculty GSC, panel, or Chairperson of the Faculty GSC.
- 6.1.2** To assist the candidate's research in all possible ways the Supervisor should take care to encourage the candidate to use her/his own initiative, and should not watch over every detail of the work. S/he should rather make suggestions wherever necessary, and encourage the candidate to apply them.
- 6.1.3** Supervision entails both oral advice on the candidate's research, and constructive written comments on drafts of the proposal and on draft chapters. A record of the supervision process must be kept by the Supervisor.
- 6.1.4** To ensure that the candidate knows the conventional techniques of presentation for a research report/dissertation/thesis.
- 6.1.5** To ascertain the cause should the candidate, for any reason, fail to make adequate progress. If the candidate is at fault and does not, after a written warning, make better progress, the Supervisor shall bring the matter to the attention of the Head of School or Postgraduate Co-ordinator. Any further instruction which emanates from this should also be in writing and, if it in turn is not acted on by the candidate, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Faculty GSC which may at that stage instruct cancellation of registration. It is essential that a candidate be given the opportunity to put forward her/his case at all stages of this process before cancellation is decided upon by the Committee. In cases where there is more than one Supervisor, the Supervisors shall consult one another on the progress of the candidate at regular intervals.
- 6.1.6** To report once a year to the Faculty GSC, or its Chairperson, on the progress of the candidate's work. The dates will be decided by each Committee and the basis of the Supervisor's report will be a yearly report from the candidate. A very brief report will suffice if the candidate's progress is satisfactory. The report must be an open one and signed by the Supervisor, the candidate and the Head of School or Postgraduate Co-ordinator. The form should contain provision for comments by the candidate. The Chairperson may draw the Committee's attention to particular cases and the Committee may call for more frequent reports in a particular case. The Faculty Registrar is required to monitor the submission of reports and to ensure that copies of these reports are filed on the candidate's file.
- 6.1.7** To draw the attention of the candidate to the minimum and maximum periods of study for the degree.

- 6.1.8 To nominate Examiners, in consultation with the Head of School, a minimum of three months prior to the submission of the research report/dissertation/thesis. At this point, the title must be confirmed.
- 6.1.9 To inform the candidate of any planned absences.

## **6.2 Supervision of one candidate by another**

- 6.2.1 Normally, a candidate for a higher degree who is appointed to supervise another candidate for a higher degree will be a member of the staff of the University.
- 6.2.2 A member of staff, who is registered for a higher degree, is permitted to supervise another candidate at a lower level, or co-supervise a candidate at an equivalent level, provided that the Supervisor holds a degree at the equivalent level.
- 6.2.3 Two candidates at the same level may not supervise or co-supervise each other.

## **6.3 Responsibilities of the candidate**

- 6.3.1 The Statement of Principles must be discussed with the Supervisor(s), and must be signed by the candidate and the Supervisor(s), and submitted together with the research proposal to the Faculty Office.
- 6.3.2 The candidate should meet as frequently as agreed with the Supervisor, and shall, at these meetings, present a detailed account, in writing, of her/his progress, in a manner as is acceptable to the field of study being pursued.
- 6.3.3 The candidate shall take into account all written and oral advice given by the Supervisor, and provision should be allowed for adequate, mutually respectful discussion around these recommendations.
- 6.3.4 The candidate must ensure that the appropriate literature directly pertinent to her/his chosen topic has been identified and consulted. The candidate has a reasonable expectation that the Supervisor keep abreast with developments in her/his own area of expertise.
- 6.3.5 Once the focus/area of research is approved, the candidate is responsible for ensuring that the research remains focused on the agreed areas or, where substantive changes are necessary, that these are agreed by the candidate and Supervisor, and reported appropriately to the Faculty GSC. It should be noted that there should be appropriate consultation with the Supervisor with respect to changes, especially where these may lead the work outside of the field of expertise of the Supervisor.
- 6.3.6 The candidate must obtain the agreement of the Supervisor for any absences.
- 6.3.7 The candidate must produce a written document for examination that meets the requirements of the degree being pursued.
- 6.3.8 The candidate must make adequate progress to enable the successful completion of the degree within the stipulated time frame.
- 6.3.9 The candidate must bring problems in the supervision relationship to the attention of the Supervisor In the first instance and, if such problems are not resolved, to bring the matter to the attention of the Head of School or Postgraduate Co-ordinator.
- 6.3.10 The candidate must comply with all administrative processes, including making the necessary declarations with respect to the work complying with the policies on ethics, plagiarism and intellectual property.
- 6.3.11 The candidate shall submit a progress report to the Faculty annually. The Faculty Registrar is required to monitor the submission of reports and to ensure that copies of these reports are on the candidate's file.

## **6.4 Absence of a Supervisor**

A Supervisor of a higher degree candidate who is granted leave of absence for more than six months from the University shall make arrangements with the relevant Head of School.

## **6.5 External Supervision**

In terms of the Senate standing orders, supervision by a member of staff of another University, or by a member of staff of a research organisation or industry, must be motivated for and approved by the GSC.

## **6.6 Appointment of Co-Supervisors**

The appointment may take place in the following circumstances:

- 6.1.1 Where a Supervisor proposed for a new candidate is due to retire in a year or less;
- 6.1.2 Where a proposed Supervisor is supervising a higher degree candidate for the first time;
- 6.1.3 Where an external Supervisor is appointed, in which case the principal Supervisor must be from the relevant School at this University;
- 6.1.4 Where a valid case can be made for a particular research topic (e.g. in an interdisciplinary area of research) which includes aspects of two different fields of study; and
- 6.1.5 Co-supervisors of a higher degree candidate are required to consult each other at regular intervals concerning the progress of their candidate.

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## **6.7 Changes in Supervision**

Any change in Supervisory arrangements for a candidate must be approved by the GSC. The Head of the School/Postgraduate Coordinator concerned should submit brief reasons for the change.

## **7 MATTERS RELATING TO CANDIDATURE**

Procedure is to be followed when a higher degree candidate is approaching the maximum permitted period of registration.

The normal maximum periods allowed for completion of higher degrees are set out in item 2.4.

**7.1** A system generated email is sent to a candidate and her/his Supervisor(s) who is approaching the end of the registration asking them to report on progress and state when she/he is likely to submit the thesis/dissertation/research report.

Depending on the candidate's reaction, one of the following results:

- i. A candidate submits her/his thesis/dissertation/research report within the required period.
- ii. A candidate, supported by her/his Supervisors and the Heads of the School/Postgraduate Coordinators, applies for extension of her/his registration for a maximum period of one year. An extension request will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.
- iii. A candidate, supported by her/his Supervisors and Head of the School/Postgraduate Coordinator, request the Faculty to place her/his candidature in abeyance for a maximum period of two years (non-continuous – see 6.3).
- iv. In the case of a candidate not responding, she/he may be informed by email that her/his candidature will be terminated. A candidate has the right to appeal to the Dean of the Faculty.

**7.2** A candidate whose candidature has been extended should be reminded by the Faculty Office that she/he is required to submit before the end of the extension period.

Depending on the candidate's response, one of the following results:

- i. The candidate submits her/his thesis/dissertation/research report.
- ii. In exceptional circumstances, if the maximum period of candidature plus the extension period of one year has expired, the candidate, strongly supported by the Supervisor and the Head of the School/Postgraduate Coordinator, requests the GSC to allow one further extension or to place her/his candidature in abeyance.
- iii. The candidature is terminated.

**7.3** A person whose candidature has been placed in abeyance shall inform the Faculty Office when she/he wishes to renew her/his registration.

**7.4** If termination of candidature is recommended by the School, the candidate has the right to appeal and follow due procedure.

## **8. SUBMISSION OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

A candidate is required to prepare a carefully written and argued research proposal in which she/he is advised, amongst other things, to:

- i. Supply a title (this should be brief and precise, and avoid redundancies and unnecessary phrases such as “a study of”, “an investigation to establish whether”);
- ii. States concisely and specifically the aims of the research;
- iii. Gives a review of the relevant literature;
- iv. Lists the specific problems to be investigated and the specific hypothesis to be tested;
- v. State the design of the study and the procedures to be adopted for collecting data;
- vi. Ensures that the proposal complies with the university's safety and ethics clearance procedures where the study involves humans or animals or biohazardous substances or genetically modified organisms;
- vii. Describes the materials, tests or apparatus that will be used;
- viii. Describes the methods that will be used to assess, analyse and process data;
- ix. Sets out a work plan, with dates and budget if necessary; and
- x. Gives a brief outline of the proposed thesis/dissertation/research report to give a clear indication of the way in which the material will be arranged.

A copy of the proposal, approved and signed by the candidate, the Supervisor/s and the Head of the School/Postgraduate Coordinator, must be emailed to the Faculty Office.

A candidate must submit a research proposal within the following periods:

- i. Full-time masters (dissertation) – four months
- ii. Part-time (dissertation) – eight months

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- iii. Full-time doctorate – six months
- iv. Part-time doctorate – twelve months

## **9. ETHICS**

### **9.1 Clearance of research being conducted on human participants or animals or biohazardous substances or genetically modified organisms**

If a research candidate wishes to carry out research of any kind on human or animal subjects or biohazardous substances or genetically modified organisms the University has to scrutinise proposals on ethical and/or biosafety grounds, and various procedures must be complied with, depending on the type of research:

### **9.2 Animal experimentation**

- i. All experiments performed on non-human vertebrates, vertebrate fetuses, vertebrate embryos and cephalopods by staff or candidates are to be scrutinised by the Animal Research Ethics Committee (AREC, a sub-committee of the University Research Committee) prior to the commencement of such studies, irrespective of the origin or ownership of the animals, or source of funding.
- ii. If the Animal Research Ethics Committee approves the experiment, it may prescribe restrictions or conditions under which the activity may be conducted, define substantial changes in the research plans, and/or request reports on the progress of the experiment.
- iii. The Director or Veterinary Director of the Central Animal Service (CAS) is required to submit a written report on any irregularities relating to the use of animals in approved studies, which are brought to her/his notice. Such reports will be investigated by the Animal Research Ethics Committee.
- iv. The regulations apply to all staff members (academic, non-academic and honorary) and to all candidates (undergraduate and postgraduate), irrespective of where the experiment is carried out, and with whom it is conducted.
- v. The Faculty Board, Faculty GSC panel, or Chairperson of the GSC, when scrutinising a research proposal, is required to draw the attention of a candidate to the need for clearance to be sought by the candidate from the Animal Research Ethics Committee, through the office of the Deputy Registrar (Academic and Research), and for a Protocol Number to be obtained by the candidate before commencement of research. Such a number must appear on any publication resulting from the research.
- vi. Very strict controls and procedures must be complied with throughout the period of research. (As prescribed by the National Code, the Veterinary Director of CAS has ultimate responsibility for the clinical care of animals, and can withdraw any animal from an experiment at any time for clinical reasons.)
- vii. The candidate must obtain a clearance certificate/number from the University Research Office before commencing her/his research.

### **9.3 Research on human subjects**

There are two sub-committees of the University Research Committee: a Medical Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), and a Humanities HREC:

- a) The HREC (Medical) has been constituted to monitor the ethics of research to be carried out on human subjects, primarily in the Faculty of Health Sciences whether or not physically invasive techniques are used.

The HREC (Medical) is charged with ensuring that all research in which human subjects are involved (excluding that in (b) below) carried out in the University, by undergraduates, postgraduates, staff or affiliated staff, in the name of the University, using University resources or University property, is ethical and, in particular, safe, soundly based, respects the rights of individuals, and includes informed consent.

The research proposals that require screening include all therapeutic and diagnostic research on patients, as well as research on healthy subjects/participants, whether through physical research, questionnaires or examination of records.

Therapeutic research involving drug trials must first be cleared by the Pharmaceutical and Therapeutic Committee of the relevant hospital.

If the Chairperson of the HREC (Medical) feels that the Committee is not the appropriate one, she or he will refer the proposal to the HREC (Humanities).

The Head of School, Supervisor and/or Chairperson of the Faculty GSC, when scrutinising a research proposal, is required to draw the attention of a candidate to the need for clearance to be sought by the candidate from the HREC (Updated in 2021 and approved by the Science Faculty Board by circulation on 15 November 2021)

(Medical), through the office of the University Research Office, and for a clearance certificate and Protocol Number to be obtained by the candidate before commencement of research. This number must appear on any publication resulting from the research.

The Committee may delegate to the Chairperson the power to act in urgent cases.

- b) The HREC (Humanities) has been constituted to monitor the ethics of research protocols primarily in the Humanities and Social Sciences, including the risks and benefits to the informant or subject or participant.

The HREC (Humanities) is required to provide a set of guidelines for Faculties against which the need to refer proposals to the HREC (Humanities) can be assessed.

It is the Committee's responsibility to look at critical factors such as the extent to which research could be socially or psychologically invasive or damaging. (Research involving physically invasive techniques is scrutinised by the HREC (Medical) as set out in (a) above). The Committee's role is to ensure that all research in which humans are involved, either as informants or subjects, carried out by undergraduates, postgraduates, staff or affiliated staff in the name of the University, respects the rights of individuals.

The Committee's procedures should include the scrutinising of any research proposals referred to it. The Committee must also vet any research instrument (e.g. a questionnaire) planned by the researcher and referred to the Committee to preclude the use of questions likely to violate the rights of participants.

The Faculty Board, Faculty GSC, Supervisor, panel or Chairperson of the Faculty GSC, when scrutinising a research proposal, is required, where necessary, to draw the attention of a candidate to the need for clearance to be sought by the candidate from the HREC (Humanities), through the University Research Office, and for a clearance certificate (which includes a Protocol Number) to be obtained by the candidate before commencement of research. The Supervisor is accountable in the first instance for raising issues of concern with regard to ethics with the candidate.

It is the responsibility of the Supervisor to obtain from the candidate a copy of the clearance certificate/ number from the HREC (Humanities) prior to the commencement of the research.

If the Chairperson of the HREC (Humanities) feels that the proposal referred to that Committee is more relevant to the HREC (Medical), she or he will refer it to that Committee.

The Committee may delegate responsibility for ethics clearance to a properly constituted sub-committee. The Committee may delegate to the Chairperson the power to act in urgent cases.

#### **9.4 Research with biohazardous substances or genetically modified organisms**

Any research using genetically modified organisms or substances must be cleared by the Bio-Safety Review Board prior to its commencement. Where a research project involves the use of biohazardous substances (biohazardous substances are defined at point 3 in the document entitled "General Information", which may be found at the first bullet at the foot of this page: <http://www.wits.ac.za/academic/researchsupport/25279/>). This is also the place to go to learn more generally about the IBC) it will be necessary to apply to the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) for clearance, unless the work is taking place in a laboratory which has already been granted IBC approval, or the project is being carried out in association with a Supervisor who has obtained IBC approval for that specific project, stating in her/his application an intention to involve postgraduate candidates. Research involving GMO's needs to comply with the Department of Agriculture and Forestry regulations. All research must comply with the requirements which are available on the University Research Website.

### **10 SUBMISSION OF THESES/DISSERTATIONS/RESEARCH REPORTS**

**All forms and the Faculty Style Guide are available on the Faculty of Science website**  
<https://www.wits.ac.za/science/postgraduate/forms/>

#### **10.1 Procedure for Submission**

The candidate is required to complete a form informing the Faculty of the intention to submit her/his research. This form needs to be completed three months prior to the submission of the research. The completed

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thesis/dissertation/research report must be submitted electronically to the Faculty Office together with a submission form signed by the candidate and an acquiescence form signed by the Supervisor.

## **10.2 Requirements for Submission of Thesis/Dissertation/Research Report for Examination**

A candidate is required to submit a Submission of Doctor of Philosophy/ Master of Science form, an Acquiescence form and a PDF version of the thesis/ dissertation/ research report as well as a plagiarism report electronically.

The candidate is required to check with the Supervisor and/or the Faculty Office if bound copy/copies to be submitted for examination prior to submission.

The electronic version (or bound copies) are sent to the Examiners; it is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the electronic/bound copies are complete, readable and identical.

## **10.3 Submission of a Supervisor's report**

A Supervisor's report is submitted with the candidate's submission of the thesis/ dissertation/ research report. The report will only be seen by the GSC for quality assurance purposes and will also form part of documentation if an ad hoc committee meeting is called. The report should be short and should comment on the supervision process as well as briefly assess the quality of the thesis/dissertation/research report. The Supervisor's report will NOT be sent to the Examiners.

## **10.4 Submission of a Thesis/Dissertation/Research Report against the Advice of a Supervisor**

In terms of the Senate standing orders, candidates are entitled to submit their thesis/dissertation/research report for examination against the advice of their Supervisor/s.

The Faculty's policy in such cases is that the Supervisor should submit the Supervisor's report to the Chairperson of the GSC giving the reasons for advising the candidate against the submission of the thesis/ dissertation/ research report. The Head of the School/Postgraduate Coordinator should be asked to nominate Examiners. No internal Examiner is nominated. If necessary, the GSC shall appoint an ad hoc committee to consider the appointment of Examiners.

## **10.5 Submission of a PhD Thesis**

The Faculty requires submission for publication of a paper to a peer-reviewed journal prior to the submission of the PhD thesis for examination. If there is a compelling reason for waiving this requirement, the Supervisor would have to motivate, and the Heads of School will use their discretion in the matter.

The Senate Standing Orders (and Policies) for Higher Degrees defines a PhD thesis as an extended piece of writing based on research that makes an original and significant contribution to knowledge, that may incorporate creative work or publications integral to the overall argument and is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy qualification. This definition is in the current Rules and Syllabus book.

## **10.6 Structure of the Thesis**

The definition of a thesis requires that a PhD thesis that includes publications must be an extended piece of writing that presents a coherent argument or set of arguments. The publications must be integrated into the thesis to maintain its overall coherence.

The content of a PhD thesis should include:

- i. A clear statement of the research hypothesis, question or problem;
- ii. A rationale for the research which clearly shows how the research makes an original contribution to knowledge;
- iii. A framework for how the various chapters of the thesis contribute to the overall integrated argument of the thesis;
- iv. A critical review of the literature that locates the proposed research in relation to relevant published work.
- v. A clear account of the research design where appropriate;
- vi. The necessary ethics clearance where needed;
- vii. Data analysis and interpretation where appropriate;
- viii. Discussion or conclusion that synthesizes the preceding chapters and provides an argument for how together they have made an original contribution to existing knowledge in the field;
- ix. A consolidated reference list of all material referred to in the thesis, using one standard referencing style appropriate to the discipline; and

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- x. Appendices: additional material related to the thesis.

## **10.7 Publishable Manuscripts**

The number of publications that are required in order for a significant contribution to be made to Science should be left to each School to decide in accordance with practices for knowledge production in their different disciplines. This decision should be taken by the candidate together with the Supervisor, the Head of School/Postgraduate Coordinator using the processes for postgraduate administration in that School. It is recommended that all publications that will be included in the thesis should have been accepted for publication in either ISI or DHET accredited journals. Authorship (including co-authorship and order of authors) of publications should be discipline-specific and agreed upon by all parties.

## **10.8 Declaration of Unaided Work**

This should include reference to sections where other contributions (authors and editors) are declared.

In the case of multiple authorships, a detailed account of the contribution of each author in each multi-authored paper must be provided.

## **10.9 Examination**

Publication in peer reviewed journals will contribute to the standing of the thesis but does not replace the assessment of the Examiners. The examiners' assessment of the thesis will continue to be governed by the University's guidelines to Examiners.

# **11. EXAMINATION OF THESES/DISSERTATIONS/RESEARCH REPORTS**

## **11.1 Nomination of Examiners**

Save in exceptional circumstances, the Head of School (in consultation with the Supervisor) shall nominate, for the approval of the Faculty GSC, at least one internal Examiner and at least two external Examiners (of whom at least one should, if feasible, be a person who would normally be working outside South Africa) for a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, and at least one internal Examiner and one external Examiner for a dissertation/research report for a degree of Master of Science. In the event of there being no suitable internal Examiner an additional external Examiner must be nominated.

For the degree of Master of Science by dissertation, Master of Science by a combination of coursework and research report and the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the internal Examiner of a thesis shall normally be a member of staff of the University and may NOT be the Supervisor of the candidate. Where a suitable internal Examiner cannot be identified within the University, an additional external Examiner shall be appointed.

In nominating Examiners, the Head of School (in consultation with the Supervisor) must submit the name, address, present post and CVs of each Examiner, together with a brief statement concerning the suitability for appointment as Examiners (information provided should include: disciplinary area, postgraduate supervision and a list of recent publications). In exceptional circumstances, Examiners may hold a degree of a lower status than the one being examined; however, their role as Examiners must be motivated in advance.

For the purposes of these Standing Orders, an external Examiner is defined as a person who has not in any way been involved in the preparation of the work, and who is preferably not a member of the University staff. If the external Examiner is a member of the University staff, this must be motivated and approved by the Faculty GSC.

The Head of School, Postgraduate Coordinator of the School or Supervisor should approach Examiners informally before nominating them officially for consideration by the Faculty GSC. Possible Examiners should be informed that the expected turn-around time is six weeks from the day they receive the research report, dissertation or thesis. A copy of the research report, dissertation or thesis are forwarded electronically to the examiner. In exceptional circumstances the examiner may request a hard copy of the dissertation.

Internal and external Examiners should not be nominated if they have been supervised, worked with, or published with the Supervisor within the last 5 years and they must not have supervised that person in the last ten years. A short motivation should be given as to why the Examiners are appropriate.

## **11.2 Confidentiality of names of Examiners (both external and internal)**

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The names of the Examiners should be confidential during the examination process but should be revealed to a candidate when she/he is qualified. Examiners should be advised of this at the point at which they are approached to examine the research.

### **11.3 Consultation on the examination process**

Examiners shall not consult one another except by permission of the Dean and Chairperson of the Faculty GSC, usually in response to a request for further information, until the examination process is completed. The Head of School and Chairperson, if they consider that the circumstances are exceptional, may give permission for Examiners to confer with one another in writing, provided copies of the correspondence are made available to the Chairperson of the Faculty GSC.

**Examiners, Supervisors and the candidate may NOT consult during the examination process.**

### **11.4 Examiners' Reports: Availability to Supervisors**

The Examiners shall send their reports to the Faculty Office. The reports are scrutinised by the Chairperson of the GSC who prepares a recommendation. The recommendation, together with the reports, is then circulated to the GSC for consideration and approval. Thereafter, the reports are made available to the appropriate School GSC representative who then passes the material onto the Supervisor. The Supervisor is then responsible for contacting the candidate and implementing the recommendation of the GSC. Examination reports may not be released to the Supervisor or the candidate until the Faculty GSC has finalised the recommendations based on an assessment of all the reports.

### **11.5 Unfavourable Examiners' Reports**

In terms of the Senate Standing orders, an ad hoc committee meeting will be held if a candidate receives any unfavourable Examiners' reports.

### **11.6 Disclosure of names of Examiners to candidates**

In terms of the Senate Standing orders, the names of Examiners are confidential, but should be disclosed to successful candidates if the Examiners consent to this after the examination process.

### **11.7 Awarding a MSc by Coursework and Research Report**

For the award of the degree a candidate must pass both the Coursework and Research Report components with a minimum of 50%.

### **11.8 Master of Science with distinction**

#### **MSc by Dissertation**

The degree of MSc shall be awarded with distinction only when the Examiners are unanimous in their recommendations. A mark of 75 percent and above must be awarded by both examiners. If only the external Examiner has recommended the award of the degree with distinction then the GSC may consult the internal Examiner on this issue.

#### **MSc by Coursework and Research Report**

For the award of the degree a candidate must pass both the coursework and research report components with a minimum of 75%.

## **12. AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING**

If the Examiners are not unanimous in recommending the award of the degree, or if there is a 15% or more discrepancy in the marks awarded by the Examiners of a research report/dissertation, or if a candidate receives an unfavourable Examiner's report, or if the Chairperson of the Faculty GSC considers that the Examiners' reports are inconclusive, an ad hoc Committee shall be appointed to consider the reports in the first instance.

Refer to Senate Standing Orders on Higher Degrees for further details regarding ad hoc committee meetings. Minutes from these meetings are noted at the GSC.

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### **13. TIME FRAMES FOR CORRECTIONS TO BE COMPLETED**

#### **Senate Standing Orders on Higher Degrees**

##### **A34 Revision**

A candidate is entitled to appropriate supervision while revising theses in response to Examiner's reports. Revision should be done within a three-month period. Faculties will not require a candidate to pay additional fees if revision is completed within three months. Beyond that, a candidate will be required to pay all fees. Failure to submit at the end of the period allowed for revision may result in termination of candidature.