

G5 GENERAL RULES FOR MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL DEGREES

(Unless stipulated otherwise hereinafter, or unless the context indicates otherwise, the general rules for all qualifications shall also apply to master's and doctoral degrees.)

G5.1 Admission

5.1.1 Holders of a recognised Honours or four year professional bachelor's degree of a University (in the case of master's studies) and the holders of a recognised master's degree of the University (in the case of doctoral studies) or the holders of other qualifications approved by Senate, may be accepted as students for the relevant degree.

5.1.2 Students who have passed the examinations on the grounds of which they will be awarded the relevant degree by a University or on the grounds on which the required status may later be granted to them, or who have in any other manner (e.g. RPL) attained a level of competence which in Senate's opinion is adequate for the purpose of postgraduate studies or research at the required level, may be accepted as students for the relevant degree.

5.1.3 Apart from the general admission requirements, a student may be required to fulfil further requirements, e.g. supplementary work or an oral/written examination as prescribed by Senate.

5.1.4 Applicants wishing to pursue either a master's by dissertation or doctoral studies are required, as part of the application process, to provide a broad outline of a proposed area of research. Applicants wishing to pursue a coursework master's will receive guidance from the assigned postgraduate programme co-ordinator with regard to the choice of a research topic to fulfil the requirements for the treatise component of their chosen degree programme.

5.1.5 An application for registration as a student for a postgraduate qualification may, after selection by the Head of Department or Director of School, in consultation with the relevant Postgraduate Studies Coordinator, and ratification by the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee, be processed by the Postgraduate Admissions Office.

5.1.6 Where applicable, a student must submit a research proposal for approval by the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee within the prescribed minimum period as stipulated in the *Policy on Master's and Doctoral Degrees*. Once such approval has been obtained, an official research project is registered by the Faculty Administration Office.

5.1.7 Unless the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee decides otherwise, no student will be allowed to continue with his/her studies if a research project has not been registered within the prescribed minimum period as stipulated in the *Policy on Master's and Doctoral Degrees*.

G5.2 Duration

5.2.1 The minimum period of study for a postgraduate research qualification is as follows:

Master's degree: One (1) year

Doctoral degree: Two (2) years

5.2.2 Unless Senate approves a different rule for a specific programme, the maximum period of study for the following postgraduate qualifications is as follows:

Full-time Studies

Master's by coursework and treatise: Three (3) years

Master's by dissertation: Three (3) years

Master in Business Administration full time: 4 years

Doctoral studies: Four (4) years

Part-time Studies

Master in Business Administration part time: 6 years

Master in Business Administration block release: 6 years

Master's by coursework and treatise: Four (4) years

Master's by dissertation: Four (4) years

Doctoral studies: Six (6) years

- 5.2.3**
- (a) A student's application for extension of the maximum period of study, as referred to in par. 5.2.2, must –
 - (i) complete the prescribed form and provide comprehensive reasons for the student's failure to complete the programme within the prescribed period; and
 - (ii) stipulate his/her proposed date of completion of the programme.
 - (b) An application for extension of the maximum period of study is subject to the approval of –
 - (i) the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee for any period up to twelve (12) months;
 - (ii) the University's Postgraduate Studies Committee, on recommendation of the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee, for any period exceeding twelve (12) months.
 - (c) Appeals against the decisions of the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee and the University's Postgraduate Studies Committee in the above regard are considered by the University's Postgraduate Studies Committee and the Executive Committee of Senate, respectively, whose decisions are final.
 - (d) Applications for extensions of study period should be submitted to the Faculty Administration Office by the end of November for the following academic year.
- 5.2.4** On recommendation of the supervisor, the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee may refuse permission for the continued registration of a student on the grounds of unsatisfactory academic progress. The university may refuse a student re-admission, if such a student fails to make satisfactory academic progress in terms of agreed upon outcomes with his/her research supervisor.
- 5.2.5** If in any year a new student for a research degree registers after the last working day of April, their period of registration for that academic year shall not be taken into account for the purpose of rule G5.2.1 and will pay fees on a pro rata basis.

G5.3 Registration and Continuing Registration

- 5.3.1** Coursework Master's degree students must be registered before the start of the relevant lecture programme.
- 5.3.2** Subject to G5.2.5 above, the first registration of students for research Master's and Doctoral degree programmes may be at any time during the academic year.
- 5.3.3** A student must renew his/her registration for the study on an annual basis, for the full period of study, until he/she has complied with all the prescribed requirements for the degree. Such registration must take place within the normal registration period. Late registrations shall be accepted up to the predetermined date published in the Almanac of the University. If a student fails to renew his/her registration as a student, the registration of his/her research project shall lapse subject to Rule 5.3.5
- 5.3.4** If the examination of a student's treatise/dissertation/thesis is not completed in time for the degree to be awarded in a particular year, the student must re-register for the academic year concerned and pay a fee as determined.
- 5.3.5** The Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee can, on the recommendation of the supervisor, approve a student's application for studies to be placed in abeyance for a period of up to one academic year; in which case the student must submit a motivated application regarding the above before the last day of February of the relevant year to the relevant Head of Department or Director of School.

5.3.5.1 If a student does not apply for studies in abeyance by the published deadline or fails to re-register in the following academic year for the relevant postgraduate degree, such a student forfeits the right of abeyance and will have to re-apply for admission.

G5.4 **Module Credits**

Applications for credits in respect of coursework Master's studies will, on the recommendation of the relevant Head of Department, be considered by the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee.

G5.5 **Outcomes of the Research**

5.5.1 A student must in his/her treatise/dissertation/thesis achieve the relevant outcomes articulated in the University's *Policy on Master's and Doctoral Degrees*, a copy of which will be made available to him/her.

5.5.2 The Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee must approve the research title of a treatise/dissertation/thesis in advance.

5.5.3 Students shall conduct their research under the guidance of a supervisor appointed by the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee. In the event of a supervisor being appointed from outside the University, the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee shall also appoint, as co-supervisor, a member of the academic staff of the University, except if this is not practical on account of lack of expertise. In the latter case the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee shall nevertheless appoint an academic staff member of the University to liaise with the supervisor about implementation of the University's administrative and academic policies.

5.5.4 In the event of a supervisor ceasing to be a member of the academic staff, the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee may request such supervisor to remain supervisor in all respects of a registered student of the University and to attend, in an advisory capacity, meetings of any committee, at which the promotion will be discussed, so that the supervisor may be available to answer any queries that may arise.

5.5.5 In compliance with the prescribed learning agreement, the student must liaise with his/her supervisor on a regular basis to report on the progress made with his/her research and to receive guidance from him/her.

5.5.6 Applications to amend research titles must be approved by the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee on recommendation by the supervisor. In the case of a substantial amendment, the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee may require an amended research proposal.

G5.6 **Submission**

5.6.1 When the treatise/dissertation/thesis nears completion, the student must inform the relevant Faculty Administration Office in writing of his/her intention to submit it for examination. Such notice must be given by the deadline as published in the university calendar. This intention to submit is important for the appointment of examiners for the treatise/dissertation/thesis. Failure to submit may lead to a delay in the student's assessment process.

5.6.2 A treatise/dissertation/thesis may only be submitted for examination with the written permission of the supervisor(s) or a statement by the supervisor that the treatise/dissertation/thesis is submitted against the advice of the supervisor.

5.6.3 A treatise/dissertation/thesis must be accompanied by a written declaration on the part of the student to the effect that it is his/her own original work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification. However, material from publications by the student may be embodied in a treatise/dissertation/thesis.

- 5.6.4** For purposes of examination, students must submit at least three (3) securely bound copies and one electronic copy in PDF format of the treatise/dissertation/thesis to the Examinations Office on the first Friday of December for the autumn graduation and the first Friday in August for the summer graduation as published in the University Almanac.
- 5.6.5** Copies of the treatise/dissertation/thesis submitted for examination shall become the property of the University and shall not be returned to the student, provided that examiners choose to return their copies.
- 5.6.6** After the treatise/dissertation/thesis has been accepted and the student has made the required amendments, if applicable, he/she must submit the following documents to the Examination Office at least three (3) working weeks before the graduation ceremony:
- (a) one hard bound copy of the final treatise/dissertation/thesis for the library;
 - (b) one hard bound copy of the final treatise/dissertation/thesis for each supervisor;
 - (c) one copy in acceptable electronic format; and
 - (d) if applicable, a written declaration by the supervisor that the proposed amendments to the treatise/dissertation/thesis have been effected.
 - (e) if research is bound by a confidentiality agreement, the words '*research is subject to a confidentiality agreement*', must be inscribed on the cover of the treatise/dissertation/thesis, as well as on the CD.
 - (f) Students who have not effected corrections as directed and/or have not submitted final copies of their treatise/dissertation/thesis as described above, shall be regarded as having not complied with the requirements of the qualification.
- 5.6.7** Students for doctoral degrees are required to submit to their supervisor(s) a manuscript in article format based on the research for their thesis. This manuscript shall –
- (a) be prepared in the format required by an appropriate accredited journal,
 - (b) be submitted to the supervisor within six weeks of the submission of the thesis for examination, but no later than six weeks before the graduation ceremony at which the degree will be awarded, and
 - (c) unless the relevant faculty rules determine otherwise, not be assessed as part of the research work for the degree, but the degree will not be awarded if the manuscript has not been submitted timeously to the supervisor.
- A declaration confirming that this requirement has been met shall be submitted to the Chairperson of the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee by the supervisor to serve at the relevant meeting of the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee that approves the award of the degree.

G5.7 Editorial Preparation

- 5.7.1** The technical editing of the treatise/dissertation/thesis must comply with the requirements as determined by the University.
- 5.7.2** The examination copies of the treatise/dissertation/thesis shall normally be printed or typed with a font size 12 in at least one and a half spacing on one side of A4-format paper.
- 5.7.3** A treatise/dissertation/thesis shall contain an English summary of its contents not exceeding 500 words in the case of a thesis and 300 words in the case of a dissertation. This summary must appear in the front of the treatise/dissertation/thesis following the table of contents and must end with a list of not more than ten key words. Students may include a second summary in a language of their choice, provided that, if the language is not the medium of instruction at the University, the translation must be a sworn translation furnished at the cost of the student.

- 5.7.4** The title of the treatise/dissertation/thesis, as well as the name of the student must appear on the cover and the spine of each copy. However, with the permission of the supervisor, an abridged title can be printed on the spine.
- 5.7.5** The title page of the treatise/dissertation/thesis shall contain the following particulars:
- (a) Full title;
 - (b) Full name of the student;
 - (c) The following formula:
 “Submitted in fulfilment in the case of a dissertation/thesis and partial fulfilment in the case of a master’s degree by coursework and treatise of the requirements for the degree of in the Faculty of at the Nelson Mandela University”;
 - (d) Date of submission;
 - (e) Name of the supervisor and co-supervisor (if applicable).
- 5.7.6** A treatise/dissertation/thesis must be satisfactory with regard to form and literary presentation and shall include a full bibliography or resource list of the material, whether published or otherwise, used in its preparation.

G5.8 Examination Rules for Master’s and Doctoral Degrees

5.8.1 Constitution of the Examination Panel

- 5.8.1.1** The Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee appoints the examiners for the treatise/ dissertation/thesis.
- 5.8.1.2** The supervisor and the co-supervisor (where applicable) act as the internal examiners for the treatise or dissertation.
- 5.8.1.3** In the case of a treatise/dissertation, at least one external examiner must be appointed. In the case of a thesis, at least three examiners must be appointed as contemplated in 6.1.2 of the *Policy on Master’s and Doctoral Degrees* with at least two of the examiners being external to the University. It is strongly recommended that, where possible, at least one international external examiner be appointed for the examination of a thesis.

5.8.2 Examination Process

- 5.8.2.1** Examiners must conduct their assessment in accordance with the guidelines for examiners.
- 5.8.2.2** The completed reports of all the examiners are submitted to the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee for consideration and to resolve whether the degree should be awarded or not.
- 5.8.2.3** A student may be required to submit to an oral or *viva voce* examination on the treatise/dissertation/ thesis.
- 5.8.2.4** In the event that a treatise/ dissertation/ thesis has not been passed by examiners but a candidate is invited to do further work or thoroughly revise the treatise/ dissertation/ thesis, such resubmission must take place as follows: Masters treatise or dissertation to be completed within three (3) months. Doctoral thesis to be completed within six (6) months. The student is expected to re-register for the applicable academic year. A student is allowed only one opportunity for resubmission.
- 5.8.2.4.1** If a revised treatise/dissertation/thesis is not resubmitted by the deadline as published in the university calendar, the student’s registration will automatically revert to a full year and will have financial implications.
- 5.8.2.5** In the event of a treatise/dissertation/thesis being rejected, the student may submit a duly motivated appeal in writing to the Executive Dean of the relevant Faculty within one month of the release of the result. The Executive Dean shall submit such appeal, together with the examiners’ reports to the University Postgraduate Studies Committee who must decide, within two weeks, whether the appeal must be upheld or not. The Chairperson of the PGSC must notify both the Dean and the student in writing of the outcome. If the appeal is granted by the University Postgraduate Studies Committee, the Executive Dean notifies the Faculty

Postgraduate Studies Committee, who must then appoint an independent external examiner who shall act as an arbiter (as contemplated in 6.11.6 of the *Policy on Master's and Doctoral Degrees*). The decision of the arbiter is final and binding.

5.8.3 Allocation of Final Mark for Research Project

The mark for a Master's treatise/dissertation is calculated as follows:

- (a) The mark(s) of the external examiner(s) count at least 50% towards the final mark. If there is more than one external examiner, the average of the marks allocated by them constitutes the external mark. The same applies to the internal examiner(s).
- (b) Where all the examiners pass the student, but there is a significant discrepancy between the marks allocated by the external and internal examiners, the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee has the discretion to attach a greater weight to the mark(s) of the external examiner(s).

5.8.4 Examination and Re-Examination of Coursework Modules in Master's Degrees

5.8.4.1 On the completion of an examination a student shall be awarded a final mark not exceeding 100% in each module. Provision may be made in the departmental or faculty rules for the student's class mark, if any, to be taken into consideration for the calculation of the final mark.

5.8.4.2 The degree shall be awarded to a student who obtains at least 50% in each prescribed module.

5.8.4.3 The Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee may, on the recommendation of the Head of Department or Director of the School, allow students to present themselves for a re-examination in a module or modules failed, provided that the student has obtained a final mark of at least 45% in the relevant module(s).

5.8.4.4 In exceptional circumstances, and with the permission of the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee, a student who has obtained a final mark of less than 45% for a module, may be granted a re-examination in that module. Such exceptional circumstances include students who are in their final year of study, and who, after either the first or second semester final assessments, need only one module to obtain his/her qualification.

5.8.4.5 A re-examination does not constitute a separate new assessment. The criteria and ratios used in the original calculation of the final mark shall also apply to the re-examination, but the final mark thus obtained may not exceed 50%.

5.8.5 Repeating Coursework Modules in Master's Degrees

Unless Senate approves a different rule for a specific programme, a Master's student shall be permitted to repeat a failed module more than once provided that the maximum period of study is not exceeded.

5.8.6 Awarding the Degree Cum Laude

5.8.6.1 A Master's student obtains the degree *cum laude* if he/she –

- (a) In the case of a coursework degree:
 - Passes all the modules at the first attempt;
 - obtains a weighted average mark of at least 75% for all the modules; and
 - obtains a final mark of at least 75% for the treatise.
- (b) In the case of a research degree, obtains a final mark of at least 75%
- (c) Completes the qualification within the prescribed maximum period of study for the applicable full-time or part-time programme.

5.8.6.2 A Doctoral degree is not conferred *cum laude*.