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**NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY**

**GUIDELINES FOR MASTERS' AND DOCTORAL STUDIES IN THE FACULTY OF**

**HEALTH SCIENCES**

**To be read in conjunction with the Nelson Mandela University Policy on Masters and Doctoral Degrees (D116/13) and the Nelson Mandela University General Prospectus**

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Nelson Mandela University and the Faculty of Health Sciences attach a particular value to postgraduate training. Through the contents and presentation of its postgraduate programmes the Faculty seeks to establish a culture of training and research which is characterised by scientific integrity and excellence. This is achieved by the following:

(i) A sound knowledge of the basic principles of a scientific way of thinking and working among postgraduate students;

(ii) sensitivity to the needs of the context within which research is conducted and research results are interpreted, bearing in mind the dignity and the basic rights of the participants;

(iii) promotion of mutual contact and cooperation with lecturers and students of other local and foreign universities and other tertiary institutions.

1.2 Postgraduate programmes presented within the Faculty must maintain the highest academic standards and a high priority is therefore accorded to research guidance. In fields where advanced professional training is involved, the Faculty's objective is to train capable practitioners with good research skills.

1.3 Training and research are accordingly employed as supplementary activities in the creation of:

(i) expertise in particular disciplines;

(ii) an independent and critical mind set;

(iii) qualitative and quantitative research skills; and

(iv) skills in disseminating research findings.

1.4 At registration the postgraduate student enters a tertiary education system consisting of, among others, the following role players:

(i) the supervisor;

(ii) the academic department concerned;

(iii) the Faculty of Health Sciences;

(iv) the University administration;

(v) the research community [represented by the external examiner(s)].

1.5 Registration is a confirmation that the University and the candidate have come to an agreement whereby the University gives the candidate, amongst other things, the assurance that this system possesses the ability, expertise and facilities to successfully guide and complete the studies and research in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree concerned. The student, in his/her turn, undertakes to meet his/her financial and academic obligations. The major role players in the system are the student and supervisor.

1.6 Upon registration a working relationship between the candidate and the supervisor commences and a training and research process comes into operation in which decision-making by the candidate and supervisor plays an important role. The process begins officially with admission to the studies, which is dealt with in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 3. The process is completed with the final evaluation of the treatise, dissertation or thesis which is formally handled by the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee (FPGSC).

(See Section 10 for a summary and description of the Faculty committees responsible for controlling and supervising postgraduate research training; and Section 12 for a diagrammatic summary of the procedures involved in masters' and doctoral studies from admission to the finalisation and approval of a research report.)

2. **OBJECTIVE**

2.1 The purpose of this document is to lay down a general, consolidated policy for the Faculty on postgraduate studies at masters' and doctoral level. The document should serve as a guideline in carrying out the working agreement between candidate and supervisor, and does not replace the existing rules (G5 in the NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY Prospectus) governing masters' and doctoral degrees. In all cases the rules as contained in the NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY Prospectus are applicable, and supervisors/ promoters and candidates must acquaint themselves with them.

2.2 It must also be borne in mind that the Faculty of Health Sciences accommodates a variety of departments and that individual departments have their own particular requirements and possibi­lities. This policy document therefore does not cover the special circumstances of individual departments.

2.3 The expectation is that each department will draw up a procedure for handling postgraduate students within the framework of this policy document, giving it an official character and making it available to prospective students in an adequate way.

2.4 In the final instance the Faculty takes responsibility for the approval of candidates for admission to postgraduate studies, the assessment of their progress and the final approval for the awarding of the degrees concerned. In performing this task the Faculty is assisted by two committees, namely the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee (FPGSC) that determines the awarding of the degrees and informs the Faculty Management Committee (FMC) of the results and when further deliberations and actions become necessary.

3. **POLICY AND PROCEDURES UPON ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION**

Admission to postgraduate studies represents a transaction between the University and the prospective student. Senate allows itself to be advised by the Faculty as regards the registration of postgraduate students, and the Faculty is in turn advised by the Head of the Department concerned. The prospective student must be properly informed about what happens in the admission process. With due allowance for professional considerations, candidates must also be informed about the criteria that influence the success of a particular application.

3.1 **Admission procedures**

Administrative and academic requirements and procedures affect the registration of the candidate. The procedures occur simultaneously. Effective liaison between the Head of the Department, the prospective supervisor, the prospective candidate and the University administration is important in order to facilitate and expedite the administrative and academic handling of admission and registration. Postgraduate candidates must discuss their proposed studies with the Head of the Department/Departmental Postgraduate Programme Coordinator concerned before applying formally for admission.

The following considerations and procedures are relevant to applications for admission:

3.1.1 Apart from the Manager: Faculty Administration, every department should also make a document available to prospective postgraduate candidates with information on specific application procedures and selection requirements.

3.1.2 The prospective candidate completes forms (U.24 and the general application form) applying for admission to the University, and hands them in to the Admissions Department.

3.1.3 The Head of Department/Postgraduate Coordinator should guide the candidate on the choice of a supervisor [see Sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 for the requirements in respect of, and the choice of a supervisor(s) (s)].

3.1.4 In cooperation with the potential supervisor and the Head of Department or Postgraduate Coordinator, the candidate draws up a proposal on a particular research theme. This preliminary research proposal (see Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 for guidelines) is submitted to the department (either the entire department or a departmental panel).

3.1.5 The Head of the Department/Postgraduate Coordinator, in consultation with the department, makes a recommendation:

3.1.5.1 on the admission of the candidate when the Department is convinced of:

(i) **The fact that the candidate complies with the requirements as set out in the General Rules for Masters' and Doctoral Degrees** (whichever are applicable), as well as the specific rules of a particular discipline.

(ii) **The ability of the department to give the candidate guidance**. Here attention is given in the first place to the availability of staff with expertise in the topic concerned. Secondly, consideration is given to the appropriateness of the proposed studies within the context of the departmental research programme. The department has the right to decide that it does not possess the expertise or staff to be able to accommodate a particular candidate. In such cases the candidate may be requested to make adjustments to the proposed field of research in order to fit in with the available expertise or to make use of an external supervisor/co-supervisor (see Section 5.1.1.6).

(iii) **The candidate's ability to complete the study successfully**. In this regard the following factors, amongst others, are taken into account: the nature and quality of studies already done (determined by the department concerned), language proficiency, suitability for training in the specific profession (if applicable), research skills, attitude towards research, availability for the studies and research.

Where there is uncertainty about the candidate's ability to complete the study successfully, admission can be made dependent on the successful completion of bridging or other requirements prescribed by the department. Such requirements are put to the candidate in writing.

Where there is uncertainty about the nature and quality of qualifications, the Head of the Department concerned must clear up the matter with the candidate. The following considerations are relevant here:

(a) Candidates who wish to proceed with their studies on the strength of a foreign qualification must already have applied in the preceding academic year through the Admissions Department or International Office at NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY for the evaluation of the qualification. (This process can take up to six months.)

(b) **Candidates who do not comply with the formal admission requirements** may apply for admission in terms of Section 10A(b)(ii) quoted in the Prospectus (green pages). Where the admission of such candidates is refused on the strength of a dispute, the candidate has the right to request that the FMC reconsider the matter.

(iv) The availability of infrastructure such as computer, laboratory, library and other facilities which may be essential for the successful completion of the proposed studies.

(v) The feasibility of the proposed studies.

3.1.5.2 on whether or not the approval of the Research Ethics Committee (Human or Animal) for the study should be sought.

3.1.6 In the case of candidates who intend following a master's degree coursework programme, it is not a requirement at this stage for them to fill in Section 4 on the application form (U.24).

3.1.7 As soon as the FPGSC has approved admission to the studies, as well as the field of research and the appointment of a supervisor, the candidate may register for the degree concerned.

3.1.8 After a preliminary research proposal (see Section 3.1.4) by a candidate has been approved in the department concerned, the candidate must submit one electronic and one hard copy to the Manager: Faculty Administration for submission at least 10 working days before the FPGSC meeting. Should the relevant Department have recommended prior approval of the study from the University Human Ethics Committee, such an application must be submitted simultaneously to the FPGSC

3.1.9 The candidate may not conduct a pilot study or start data collection until his/her final research proposal has been approved by the FPGSC and Research Ethics Committee (Human or Animal) (if referred to by the FPGSC). .

3.1.11 If any of the registration details relating to the study should change after the approval of the U.24 form, such change must be submitted to the FPGSC for approval (and to FMC and BoF for noting) on the Form for the Registration Details and Amendments to Details Form for Treatises/Dissertations/Theses (Annexure C).

3.2 **Annual renewal of registration**

3.2.1 A candidate must annually renew his/her registration up until the finalisation of the particular studies.

3.2.2 From the second year of registration to completion, it is the responsibility of the Faculty Administration to ensure that all continuing students are duly registered. The Faculty Administration is required to report unregistered candidates to the relevant Head of Department/Director of School and the Chairperson of the Faculty PGSC.

3.2.3 Any candidate who misses the deadline for registration will be required to follow the process of approval to register, if permitted.

3.2.4 The years during which the registration has lapsed would be considered as part of the formal prescribed maximum study period for the completion of the degree.

3.2.5 The continued registration of a postgraduate candidate is subject to a favourable annual progress report. The postgraduate student is responsible for initiating the report annually by the date published and submitting this for endorsement of the research supervisor.

3.2.6 A candidate whose treatise/dissertation/thesis is not submitted in time for examination with a view to the conferring of the degree at the April Graduation of the year concerned, must renew his/her registration for that particular year.

3.2.7 A candidate whose treatise/dissertation/thesis is referred back after examination for revision, must renew his/her registration for the year concerned.

3.3 **Minimum and maximum period of registration**

## 3.3.1 Minimum and maximum period of study

Candidates may commence their studies once they have been registered. The minimum period of study for each higher degree is set out in the rules for degrees in the *NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY Prospectus*.

* + - 1. The *minimum period of study* for a postgraduate degree is as follows:

- Master’s degree: One (1) year

- Doctoral degree: Two (2) years

3.3.1.2 The *maximum period of study* for higher degrees shall not normally extend beyond the following periods:

- *Full-time studies*

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

- Master’s by dissertation: Three (3) years

- Doctoral studies: Four (4) years

- *Part-time studies*

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

- Master’s by dissertation: Four (4) years

- Doctoral studies: Six (6) years

3.3.2 If a candidate foresees that the maximum period of study is going to be exceeded, a motivated application for the extension of the maximum period must be addressed to the FPGSC during the final year of the maximum period of study.

3.3.3 If a candidate cannot after registration proceed actively with his/her research in a particular year as a result of exceptional circumstances, the candidate may, in the preceding year, apply to the FPGSC to be academically inactive for the academic year concerned. A candidate must renew his/her registration but is exempted from module continuation fees and only pays the annual registration fee. In such a case the year concerned will not be taken as part of the candidate's period of study and the candidate may not call for study guidance during the period concerned.

3.3.4 Students who are registered for master’s and doctoral degrees will generally not be permitted to extend their registration beyond two years after the normal maximum study period, as stipulated above, has elapsed. A student who exceeds the normal maximum years of study and wishes to continue his/her studies must, in the final year of the extension, submit an application (on the prescribed form) together with the recommendation of the FPGSC, for extension of candidature as follows:

- For extension of a period up to one academic year to the FPGSC;

- In the event of an extension for a period exceeding 12 months (one academic year), an application should be submitted to the NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY Postgraduate Studies Committee (NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY PGSC) on the recommendation of the relevant FMC. The NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY PGSC may grant further extensions if there are compelling reasons to do so.

4. **REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE SUBMISSION OF A FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

4.1 **Submission of a final research proposal**

4.1.1 After a candidate has been admitted to postgraduate studies, a final research proposal must be submitted within 6 months of registration of the treatise module for coursework master’s degrees, within 6 months of registration for a master’s degree by research, and within 12 months of registration for a doctoral degree - to the FPGSC for approval.

4.1.2 The FPGSC considers and approves all aspects affecting the quality and feasibility of the research proposal before granting approval. The FPGSC also makes recommendations on the multi-disciplinary expertise that should be utilised in certain research projects. The recommendations and approvals of the Committee are then forwarded to the FMC for noting.

4.1.3 If a candidate fails to submit an acceptable research proposal within the prescribed time, a clear motivation must be furnished to the FPGSC. The FPGSC reserves the right to cancel the registration if proper progress is not made with the preparation of the research proposal.

4.1.4 Should the candidate's final proposal be rejected by the FPGSC, the candidate may apply to submit a revised version of the research proposal within a time period specified by the FPGSC.

4.2 **Role of the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee (FPGSC)**

4.2.1 **Constitution and general functions of the FPGSC**

See Section 10.1.

4.2.2 **Procedure of the FPGSC**

(i) The Chairperson, through the Manager: Faculty Administration, distributes the final research proposals to the various members of the Committee for evaluation.

(ii) The Committee meets regularly and as the need arises to consider the research proposals tabled. Should the Committee consider further discussion of a specific research proposal necessary, the Committee may be extended as described under Section 10.1.

(iii) The Committee shall use the prescribed format for evaluation purposes (see Annexure D).

4.3 **Procedures for the submission of the final research proposal**

All masters' and doctoral candidates are expected to submit a research proposal to the FPGSC within the required timeframes after registration. The following procedure must be followed:

4.3.1 Research proposals are first prepared and developed within the departmental context and must be approved by a Departmental panel. The panel may be constituted by the Head of Department/research coordinator of the department concerned in consultation with the supervisor. The function of such a panel is the evaluation of the preliminary proposal and the recommendation of improvement with a view to the preparation of a final research proposal. Furthermore a recommendation should be made as to whether or not the ethical considerations involved in the study warrant approval of the University Research Ethics Committee (Human or Animal).

4.3.2 The relevant supervisor completes an evaluation form (available from the relevant Departmental Secretary or the Manager: Faculty Administration) which the candidate needs to include in his/her submission to the FPGSC.

4.3.3 The research proposal together with a Rec-H/A form is submitted to the FPGSC for approval within the proposed time period shown below:

- A candidate for the master's degree (research) must make a submission to the FPGSC by the end of the first semester of the first year of study.

- A candidate for the master's degree (coursework) must make a submission to the Committee within the first semester of the final year of study.

- A candidate for a doctoral degree must make a submission to the Committee within 12 months of registration.

4.3.4 If a candidate directs a motivated request to the FPGSC the latter may consider special permission for extending the time limit shown in 4.3.3.

4.4 **Guidelines for the preparation of final research proposals**

4.4.1 The research proposal must be between 10 and 15 typed pages (excluding the cover page, references and appendices); must be typed in a 12 point font size and with 1.5 line spacing; and must be editorially correct. All proposals should include a cover page indicating the following:

(i) Name of the candidate and student number

(ii) Degree for which the proposal concerned is submitted

(iii) Department in which the candidate will undertake the research

(iv) Title of the study

(v) Type of study - whether in complete or partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree concerned

(vi) Promoter/Supervisor as well as co-promoter/co-supervisor (where appropriate)

(vii) Date

4.4.2 The proposal must be set out in the following sections:

* + **Table of Contents**
  + **An abstract of not more than 150 words summarising the aim and objectives as well as the proposed methodology of the study**
  + **The context of the research/background to the study**

In this section the problem and the investigation arising from it are motivated. The theoretical framework in which the problem will be studied, must be indicated briefly.

* **Primary objective(s) of the research**

In this section the specific questions to which the candidate is seeking answers must be formulated with specific reference to aim(s), sub-problems and, where applicable, hypotheses.

* **Research methodology**

This includes research design/method/approach, ethical considerations, sampling, methods of collecting and processing data as well as verifying the findings. Where the methods in the discipline concerned are well known, they need only be mentioned briefly. Where they are unknown or innovative, however, a more comprehensive description must be presented.

(i) Should a self-designed questionnaire be used an example of the draft questionnaire must be provided as an appendix.

(ii) A completed ethics application form must also be submitted where ethical considerations may warrant approval from the University Research Ethics Committee (Human or Animal).

* **Structure/format**

A preliminary outline of chapters must be provided.

* **Dissemination of research results**

A brief outline of how the results of the research will be disseminated, must be provided.

* **Work and time schedule**
* **Budget**
* **List of references**

All sources referred to in the proposal must be cited.

4.4.3 The proposal must be emailed to the Manager: Faculty Administration, and one hard copy, stapled **not** ring-bound, must be handed in.

5. **GUIDELINES ON THE PROGRESS OF THE STUDY**

5.1 **The role of the supervisor** [[1]](#footnote-1)\*

5.1.1 **Requirements in respect of the supervisor**\*

In the appointment of a supervisor\* the following are considered:

5.1.1.1 A supervisor\* must possess the necessary academic competence and expertise in respect of the research topic.

5.1.1.2 Subject to such exceptions as may be approved by Senate, a supervisor must hold at least a master's degree, and a promoter a doctoral degree as well as having a proven research record.\*

5.1.1.3 A supervisor who is guiding a postgraduate candidate for the first time, should be assisted by a more experienced co-supervisor/co-promoter.

5.1.1.4 A lecturer who does not comply with the minimum requirements may be appointed as co-supervisor/co-promoter.

5.1.1.5 A supervisor/co-supervisor for a particular study project must be approved by the FPGSC .

5.1.1.6 Where the field or method of research so requires, an expert from outside the Department, Faculty or NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY should be appointed as supervisor/co-supervisor.

5.1.1.7 Where an external supervisor is appointed from outside the department concerned, an internal co-supervisor must also be appointed from the staff of the department concerned.

5.1.1.8 If the availability of the supervisor\* is affected by, for example long or research leave, arrangements in this regard must be made with the Head of Department/Postgraduate Coordinator in good time, and, in the case of the Head of Department, with the Dean.

5.1.2 **Choice of supervisor\* and the relationship between a supervisor\* and a candidate**

The Head of Department/Postgraduate Coordinator should guide the candidate in the choice of a suitable supervisor. Where a co-supervisor/co-promoter is chosen, the Head of Department/Postgraduate Coordinator and/or the supervisor should guide the candidate in this regard. Where the FPGSC considers it necessary, the FPGSC may advise the Head of Department/Postgraduate Coordinator and/or supervisor on the appointment of a co-supervisor if this is desirable. Where a possible supervisor\* is recommended, all parties must be given an opportunity to have a say in the choice and the selected person must provide written acceptance of the position. Candidates must therefore have the opportunity to exercise a choice, while the supervisor\* must also have the opportunity to respond to that choice. Subject to the availability and expertise of the lecturer concerned, that choice should as far as possible be respected.

The relationship between the supervisor\* and the candidate lays the foundation for successful guidance. Before the start of guiding the candidate's studies, the supervisor\* must obtain clarity on the nature of their working relationship and division of work, respecting these as far as possible and communicating the information to the candidate. Thereafter the supervisor/co-supervisor (where applicable) and the candidate must reach an agreement on the nature of the guidance to be provided. This agreement must as far as possible be respected. (See Sections 5.1.3, 5.2 and 6.)

5.1.3 **Responsibilities (tasks) of the supervisor**

Although the role of the supervisor[[2]](#footnote-2)\* may vary from candidate to candidate and from project to project, the general tasks/duties below may be identified in regard to effective study guidance. The task of the co-supervisor is to assist, support and advise the supervisor in respect of the different tasks and responsibilities involved in guiding a candidate. If the supervisor and the co-supervisor become involved in a dispute regarding an aspect of the studies concerned and cannot reach agreement, the opinion of the supervisor shall hold good.

5.1.3.1 **Determining the title and delimiting the study**

(i) The supervisor provides guidance and advice with regard to:

(a) the refinement of the title of the treatise/dissertation/thesis and the formulation of the research problem;

(b) the refinement of the research design/method (for example, choice of variables; nature of the design/method; internal and external validity and reliability questions; size of sample; choice of methods and techniques for data collection and analysis).

(ii) In determining the topic of the study the supervisor must ensure that:

(a) the candidate provides evidence of a thorough study of the literature to determine whether the proposed topic has been exhausted;

(b) the candidate has the necessary enthusiasm for the topic chosen;

(c) the nature and scope of the study are in accord with the requirements for the conferring of the degree;

(d) the work and/or preparation preceding the study or accompanying the study are identified and delimited;

(e) the proposed topic falls within the framework of the departmental research programme.

5.1.3.2 **Determination of the feasibility and suitability of method of investigation, as well as the ethical and financial implications of the study**

The supervisor must assist the candidate in determining the feasibility, ethical implications and correctness of the method adopted in the study. With regard to the financial implications of the study see Section 9.

5.1.3.3 **Guidance on carrying out the study and reporting on it**

In order to make effective study guidance possible, the following responsibilities are entrusted to the supervisor:

(i) to guide the planning and coordination of the research process;

(ii) to assist the candidate in preparing the preliminary proposal and the final research proposal which must respectively be submitted to a departmental panel, the FPGSC and, where applicable, the University Research Ethics Committee (If a candidate changes his/her focus of study significantly after approval of his/her research proposal by the FPGSC, a new final research proposal must be submitted.);

(iii) to guide the planning and structuring of the treatise/dissertation/thesis;

(iv) to advise the candidate on a feasible work and time schedule;

(v) to arrange contact opportunities by appointment during official hours and in the course of the academic year. The supervisor is not expected to provide guidance and evaluation after the official working hours or during recesses or his/her periods of leave;

(vi) to identify deficiencies in the candidate's research, language and/or formulation skills and to take steps so that the candidate can address them in good time;

(vii) to refer the candidate to essential literary sources and experts in the field of the proposed research;

(viii) to guide the candidate in respect of reference techniques and the compilation of a list of references.

5.1.3.4 **Evaluation**

It is the supervisor's responsibility to:

(i) evaluate the candidate's work on a continuous basis and to determine to what extent it is authentic, technically correct and original in nature;

(ii) provide feedback on sections of the draft treatise/thesis/dissertation which are handed in, preferably within three weeks of being received or on a date negotiated in advance;

(iii) keep a record of oral feedback;

(iv) keep records of guidance instructions, of feedback on work done and of dates on which manuscripts are received and returned;

(v) evaluate the final manuscript of Master degree treatises and dissertations and submit an examiner's report to the Examinations Officer.

(vi) the final manuscript of doctoral candidates will be assessed solely by duly appointed external examiners

5.1.3.5 **Administration**

It is the supervisor's responsibility to:

(i) ensure at the start of the project that the candidate's registration details are forwarded on form U.24 to the FPGSC. These particulars include:

(a) a preliminary project title;

(b) the name of the supervisor and co-supervisor;

(ii) ensure that the NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY study progress report is filled in every six months and that all other progress reports that may be desired by funding bodies are submitted in good time;

(iii) make timely arrangements for the examination of the research report. These include:

(a) The appointment of the external examiner(s) (see 7.2.2);

(b) the checking of the final title of the research project;

(c) the checking of the correctness of the names of the promoter/supervisor and the co-promoter/co-supervisor.

(iv) ensure that all amendments to the registration details of a student (including changes in the title of the study) is completed on the relevant form (Annexure C) and submitted to the Manager: Faculty Administration.

5.2 **Specific responsibilities (tasks) of the co-supervisor/co-promoter**

5.2.1 The co-supervisor takes the lead with regard to certain aspects of the study as agreed with the supervisor.

5.2.2 In cases where the supervisor is from outside the University, the co-supervisor takes responsibility for the administration (see Sections 5.1.3.4 and 5.1.3.5) involved in the course of the studies.

5.3 **Requirements in respect of the candidate**

Although the role of the postgraduate student may vary in accordance with the subject discipline and the nature of the research project, a number of general tasks/duties can be identified in regard to postgraduate studies:

5.3.1 **Continued registration and satisfactory progress**

The candidate must register as a student for the full period of study and progress with his/her studies to the satisfaction of his/her supervisor.

5.3.2 **Maintenance of working relationship with the supervisor/co-supervisor**

In order to maintain a satisfactory working relationship with the supervisor/co-supervisor, the candidate must:

(i) take note of and carry out the policy of the University/Faculty/Department in respect of research/advanced studies;

(ii) consistently and systematically carry out the instructions and recommendations of the supervisor/co-supervisor;

(iii) strictly and on a definite basis keep the appointments agreed upon in the planning of the research programme;

(iv) keep the supervisor abreast of his/her progress and any problems that might arise.

5.3.3 **Planning of the research project**

The candidate is responsible for undertaking, in consultation with the supervisor[[3]](#footnote-3)\*, the following tasks relating to the **planning** of the research project. (The specific tasks and their sequence do not necessarily relate to all research projects.):

(i) Identification of the research problem/theme within the framework of the departmental research programme;

(ii) a literature study regarding the research problem;

(iii) delimiting the field of research and formulating the definition of the problem, hypothesis and aim of the study;

(iv) the choice of an appropriate research method;

(v) determining a research strategy which includes aspects such as: the identification of the target population, the choice of a sampling technique; the design and/or choice of an appropriate measuring instrument; and the choice of method(s) of collecting and analysing data;

(vi) considering the ethical implications of the research. Where it can be expected that participants may experience physical, psychological or social harm or suffering during the course of the study, informed permission must first be obtained from the University Human Ethics Committee for undertaking the study;

(vii) determining the structure and format of the research report;

(viii) determining the way in which the research results will be disseminated;

(ix) determining deadlines;

(x) estimating costs.

5.3.4 **Carrying out the research project**

The candidate is responsible for the following tasks relating to **carrying out** the research project:

1. Writing and submitting the research proposal and the application for ethics approval application.
2. where applicable, obtaining the necessary permission to approach and select participants in the study;

(iii) collecting, systematising and analysing data;

(iv) interpreting research data and drawing conclusions and making recommendations;

(v) where applicable, complying with agreements made at the start of the study with partici­pants/communities/organisations.

5.3.5 **Reporting**

The candidate is responsible for the following tasks with regard to **reporting** on the research study:

1. The writing of a research report (Masters candidates submit a treatise/dissertation). In the case of a Doctoral candidate the final submission will take the form of a thesis and at least one journal article for publication in an accredited journal;

(ii) the linguistic and technical preparation of the report;

(iii) the editorial preparation of the report;

(iv) checking the completeness and technical correctness of references, in the text, as well as the list of references, and eliminating plagiarism [see Section 6.3(ii)]. It is strongly recommended that the candidate should also give attention to the dissemination of the research results among the research and consumer communities (see Section 8).

6. **CODE OF CONDUCT**

6.1 **The supervisor/co-supervisor and the candidate are expected to**:

(i) subject themselves to the guidelines set out in this document;

(ii) establish and maintain a working relationship in which the supervisor plays the role of manager, tutor and mentor, and **the candidate takes the final responsibility for carrying out the research task**. (See Sections 5.1.2 and 5.2.2)

6.2 **The supervisor must**:

(i) in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 5.1.3 above, provide proper feedback in respect of written sections of the report which are handed in. Such feedback must preferably be given within three weeks of receipt or on a previously negotiated date;

(ii) at all times properly inform the candidate about all procedures affecting the course of the research project;

(iii) where appropriate, accord the candidate an equal say in all decisions in respect of the research report.

(iv) verify and comment on (at least twice a year) a progress report as compiled by the candidate and forward it to the relevant Head of Department (see Annexure E) and FPGSC coordinator/administrator;

(v) in the event of a dispute about agreed upon appointments and/or ways of working, submit a report on the nature and cause of the dispute to the Head of Department. If the supervisor is the Head of Department, the report is addressed to the Dean.

6.3 **The candidate**:

(i) must see to it that the supervisor/co-supervisor is not expected to provide guidance and evaluation after the official working hours or during recesses or his/her periods of leave;

(ii) is personally responsible for all literature quoted or referred to, in such a way that he/she cannot be found guilty of plagiarism, and must ensure that literary sources are as far as possible of a primary nature and authentic, are quoted correctly in the text or are referred to correctly in the text, and is also responsible for compiling a complete list of references;

(iii) must submit a written progress report to the supervisor/promoter at the end of each semester. This report (see Annexure E), after having been signed by the supervisor is forwarded to the relevant Head of Department and FPGSC coordinator/administrator;

(iv) must in the event of a dispute about agreed upon appointments and/or ways of working, put his/her standpoint in writing and submit it to both the supervisor and the Head of the Department (if the supervisor is the Head of the Department, the report is sent to the Dean).

7. **GUIDELINES ON FINALISING THE STUDIES**

7.1 **Dates for submission and approval of a treatise/dissertation/thesis**

For the purposes of examination, the candidates submits one securely bound copy for each internal and external examiner as well as an electronic copy of the treatise/dissertation/thesis in PDF format to the Examination Section on the following dates:

(i) The first date for submission is the first Friday in December of every year. The final date for submission is the second Friday of January with a view to the submission of examiners' reports to the meeting of the Faculty PGSC held in February/March of the same year - study guidance having, however, already ceased at the end of the previous academic year;

(ii) treatise/dissertation/thesis may be submitted after the final date in January but will be subject to an additional administration fee. It cannot be guaranteed that such submission would be examined in time for the graduation ceremony in April of that year

**NOTE:** The cut-off date indicated to the examiners by the Examinations Office for the reports will be strictly adhered to. All reports must be submitted to the Examinations Office at least 2 days prior to the scheduled FPGSC meeting.

7.2 **Examination of a treatise/dissertation/thesis**

7.2.1 **General**

For the examination of a treatise/dissertation/thesis, the candidate must comply with the requirements as contained in the General Rules for Masters and Doctoral Degrees (G4.6 – 4.7 in the Prospectus). See Annexures H and I for pro forma statements which have to be handed in by both the candidate and the supervisor before the examination process can begin.

7.2.2 ***Submission***

When the treatise/dissertation/thesis nears completion, the candidate must inform the relevant Manager: Faculty Administration in writing of his/her intention to submit it for examination. Such notice must be given at least **two** **months** before the prospective date of submission.

7.2.3 **Appointment of examiners**

At the start of the studies or as soon as is possible, the supervisor in consultation with the Head of Department recommends the name of one or more subject specialists who can act as external examiner(s) (preferably one is to be international), to the FPGSC for approval (see Annexure C for relevant form). The supervisor must also verify the availability of the examiner(s).

In the case of a Master’s degree treatise/dissertation, one external examiner is appointed. In the case of a doctoral thesis, the Faculty PGSC appoints three (3) external examiners on the recommendation of the HOD \*. Of the three examiners appointed, at least two examiners shall be external to the NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY. Consideration should be given to appoint at least one external examiner from outside of South Africa

Each external examiner receives a letter of appointment in which the policy of the University on examination is set out. The examiner must sign and return an acceptance form (see Annexures F and G for the appointment and acceptance forms).

7.2.3 **The research report**

7.2.3.1 **Masters' degrees**: A treatise is a research report which represents 65% or less of the work for a coursework master's degree and is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a master's degree. A master's dissertation is a research report which represents 66% or more of the work for the master's degree. In the case of both a treatise and a dissertation, original research is not a prerequisite for the award of the degree. The candidate must provide evidence of the ability to conduct research independently, as appears from:

- familiarity with research methods;

- mastery of important trends in scientific debate; and

- mastery of the relevant subject literature.

7.2.3.2 **Doctoral degrees**: A thesis must, in addition to all the requirements applicable to a master's dissertation, provide evidence of originality and profound scientific knowledge, and it must make a contribution to the subject/discipline.

All doctoral candidates are required to submit at least one manuscript (article) together with the **final** (bound) copies of the thesis*.* The manuscript, based on the research work for the thesis, should be in the format required by an appropriate accredited journal or publisher, as identified jointly by the candidate and the supervisor(s). Where candidates have previously published from their theses, the candidate shall submit proof of publication of an accredited output.

7.2.3.3 Every research report must be accompanied by a written declaration by the candidate that it is his/her own work and that it has not previously been submitted to another university in order to obtain a degree (see Annexure H).

7.2.3.4 Except by permission of Senate, the settlement of disputes rests with the FPGSC and the FMC.

7.2.4 **The examination report**

7.2.4.1 Each examiner fills in the abridged standard examiner's report (see Annexure K) and attaches it to his/her extended report. The contents of the two reports must agree. Both reports are compiled in accordance with the general guidelines of the University (Guide for Examiners: see Annexure J). Examiners are free to word their extended reports as they wish.

7.2.4.2 The examiners' reports must be sent to the Postgraduate Examinations Officer, by hand or by registered post before the deadline.

7.2.4.3 If a report does not reach the Examinations Officer before the deadline, the examiner may be requested by the Examinations Officer to fax the abridged standard report and the expanded report. In urgent cases the Examinations Officer may, with the permission of the Chairperson of the Faculty PGSC, obtain by telephone the necessary information for the completion of the abridged standard report. The full report of the examiner must, however, still be submitted for the information of the Faculty PGSC.

7.2.4.4 The examiners must arrive at their findings and draw up the desired reports independently of each other. The final mark allocated for a master’s degree should be calculated in such a manner that the marks awarded by the external examiner or examiners count at least 50% of the final mark.

In the case of a doctoral thesis, only the recommendations made by the examiners are considered in the decision to award the doctoral degree. However the promoter is required to write a report of his/her own findings on the value of the thesis.

7.2.4.5 In the case of a coursework master's degree the supervisor must indicate the average theoretical and practical mark obtained for the course. A weighted final mark for the degree concerned is then calculated and a recommendation made on whether the degree must be awarded with or without distinction.

7.2.4.6 All reports must be submitted to the FPGSC for approval. The reports of each examiner should be made available for perusal by the members of the meeting in the office of the Dean and Manager: Faculty Administration at least three days before the FPGSC meeting.

7.2.5 **Recommendations**

7.2.5.1 The examination reports (both those of the examiners and the supervisor's reports) must indicate unambiguously whether the treatise/dissertation/thesis:

* is accepted and awarded with distinction;
* is accepted unconditionally;
* is accepted but that minor corrections of a technical nature (e.g. spelling, typing, numbering of pages/ sections, references) be made to the dissertation to the satisfaction of the supervisor;
* is accepted subject to revisions or major technical corrections that should be made to the satisfaction of the supervisor;
* is not accepted, but that the candidate should be invited to do further work and to re-submit the revised dissertation/thesis/treatise for re-examination by the examiners. Candidates should be informed that they will only receive one opportunity to make such a resubmission;
* is not accepted and the candidate fails the examination.

7.2.5.2 If a treatise/dissertation/thesis is referred back for revision or amplification, the relevant parts of the reports may be made available to the candidate without mentioning the names of the examiners. The revised or amplified treatise/dissertation/thesis must preferably be examined by the same examiners.

7.2.5.3 A treatise/dissertation/thesis which is bound in final form and which has been unconditionally accepted or is accepted on condition that less extensive changes are made, may be kept by the examiner. A treatise/dissertation/thesis that is rejected must be returned to the Postgraduate Examinations Officer.

7.2.5.4 Marks are awarded only for a treatise and a dissertation. The pass mark is 50% and the distinction mark is 75%. A candidate passes when the examiners have awarded a percentage mark of at least 50%. A distinction shall be awarded *cum laude* if the candidate has obtained a final mark of at least 75%, the composition and calculation of which shall be determined by the relevant department in the Faculty. No percentage mark is awarded to a doctoral thesis and a doctoral thesis is also not passed with a distinction. Consequently a doctoral thesis is approved where all the examiners so recommend.

7.2.5.5 In master’s degree cases, where there are difficulties with regard to discrepancies between examiners’ reports, the following procedures are followed:

* + - * 1. In the case where all the examiners pass the candidate, but there is a discrepancy of more than 10% between the marks awarded by the external examiner(s) and the internal examiner(s), the Faculty PGSC should consider the merits of the specific case, and may decide between the following options:
* to award the degree, exercising the discretion to weight the final mark towards the mark awarded by the external examiner(s);
* to send the dissertation to another external examiner and/or require the candidate to submit to an oral defence of his/her work. The Faculty PGSC will decide on the award of the final mark in the light of the recommendations of the independent examiner, and/or the results of the oral examination.

7.2.5.5.2 In the case of a master’s degree where there is a discrepancy between the examiners’ reports as to whether the candidate should pass or fail, the Faculty PGSC may pursue one or more of the following strategies in reaching a decision on the awarding of the degree:

* The candidate may be invited to make revisions to the dissertation and re-submit it to the dissenting examiner(s). The Faculty PGSC will then make a final decision based on the existing reports and any recommendations from the examiners who have re-evaluated the dissertation. If either the revisions to the dissertation or the re-evaluation are not finished in time for graduation, the candidate has to re-register for another academic year.
* The dissertation as well as any other relevant information or work relating to the research project, for example, compositions, designs or artefacts, may be sent to another external examiner who acts as an arbiter. The recommendation of the independent examiner as to whether the candidate should pass or fail is final and binding, and should be given a commensurate weight in the determination of the final mark.
* Use may be made of a *viva voce* examination.

7.2.5.6 In doctoral degree cases where there is a divergence of opinion amongst the examiners as to whether the degree should be awarded, the Faculty PGSC may make use of one or more of the following strategies in order to make a final decision:

* The candidate may be invited to make revisions to the thesis and re-submit it to the dissenting examiner(s). The Faculty PGSC will then make a final decision based on the existing reports and any recommendations from the examiners who have re-evaluated the thesis.
* The thesis as well as any other relevant information or work relating to the research project, for example, compositions, designs or artefacts, may be sent to another external examiner who acts as an arbiter. The arbiter may make use of a *viva voce* examination as part of the process of reaching a decision on the awarding of the degree. The decision of the arbiter as to whether the candidate should pass or fail is final and binding.
* In reaching decisions on the awarding of doctoral degrees in certain cases, including cases where there is a divergence of opinion amongst the examiners concerning the awarding of the degree, use may be made of a *viva voce* examination

7.2.5.7 After the decision of the Faculty PGSC, the names and the reports of the examiners may, with their approval, be made known to the candidates.

7.2.6 **Finalisation of the examination process**

Editorial and other less important corrections of a technical nature must be effected to the satisfaction of the supervisor and the Head of the Department. The supervisor must, with the knowledge of the Head of Department, ensure that the candidate concerned makes the necessary changes and submits proof of this to the Examinations Officer. A letter (see Annexure L) to this effect must be handed in at the Examinations Office together with the final copies (see G4-6 in the Prospectus). This must take place three weeks before the Graduation concerned.

After the result of a candidate's treatise/dissertation/thesis has been approved, the Examination Officer must address a letter (see Annexure M) to the external examiner(s) to:

(i) thank them for participating in the examination and the recommendations made;

(ii) notify them of the result;

(iii) inform them that the suggested amendments, if any, have been taken into account to the satisfaction of the supervisor.

7.3 **Proof of compliance with the requirements for a specific degree**

When the Faculty PGSC has approved a particular treatise/dissertation/thesis after assessing the available examiners' reports, proof of compliance with the requirements for the degree concerned may be provided to the successful candidate by the Faculty on behalf of the University. This proof shall be issued only if all the requirements as determined by the examiners and approved by the Faculty PGSC have been complied with.

7.4 **Conferring of a particular degree**

Only candidates who have handed in their treatise/dissertation/thesis by the official date specified in the University Prospectus, and whose work has been approved by the Faculty PGSC, shall qualify for the official conferring of the degree concerned at the next Graduation Ceremony of that year. Where treatises/dissertations/theses are handed in after the last official submission date and where masters' and doctors' degrees are consequently approved by the Faculty PGSC later, such degrees shall only be officially conferred upon the candidates concerned at the next Graduation Ceremony.

8. **DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

8.1 The supervisor should conclude an agreement with the candidate about the publication of the research findings. Such an agreement must contain provisions about authorship and co-authorship. It is accepted in principle that the supervisor/co-supervisor enjoys at least the right to co-authorship in cases where the research results are published in a form other than a treatise, dissertation or thesis.

8.2 Should the postgraduate candidate not submit research results for publication within the stipulated period of one year, the supervisor(s) shall be entitled to proceed with publication with due recognition of the candidate’s contribution as a co-author.

9. **FINANCES**

9.1 The University endeavours as far as possible to make bursaries and research grants available to students for postgraduate studies. Supervisors and students should find out about the bursaries and research grants made available for this purpose by the Research Committee, University donors, and outside bodies.

Further information may be obtained from the Nelson Mandela University Research Office.

9.2 Supervisors and promoters are expected to assist students with applications for bursaries and research grants. In the final analysis, however, the provision of study finances remains the responsibility of the candidate.

10. **FACULTY COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE FOR REGULATING POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH TRAINING**

The Faculty has three committees which advise the Faculty on matters affecting postgraduate research training. Certain of these committees also have final decision-making powers. A description is given next of the said committees and their functions in respect of postgraduate training.

10.1 **Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee (FPGSC)**

10.1.1 The FPGSC is elected by the Faculty on the recommendation of the FMC and is constituted as follows:

(i) one representative of each Department in the Faculty;

(ii) the Dean (*ex officio*);

(iii) should it be considered necessary, the relevant Head of Department or his/her representative and the supervisor as well as the co-supervisor/co-promoter may be co-opted onto the Committee;

(iv) the Manager: Faculty Administration with a view to the documentation of decisions and the distribution of the relevant documents.

10.1.2 The FPGSC elects a Chairperson every two years and reserves the right to co-opt other experts.

**Powers of the Chairperson**

In order to expedite the running of the research programmes, the Chairperson of the FPGSC (in consultation with the Head of the Department concerned, members of the FPGSC and/or the Dean/Acting Dean, if considered necessary) may provisionally approve the following matters subject to confirmation at the next meeting of the FPGSC :

(a) the appointment of a co-supervisor/co-promoter;

(b) minor amendments to the title of a treatise/dissertation/thesis;

(c) minor deviations in the layout of the title page if this is queried by the Examinations Officer.

The Chairperson may not approve the deletion of the name of a co-supervisor/co-promoter or the swapping round of the names of the supervisor and co-supervisor/co-promoter.

10.1.3 The specific functions of the FPGSC are as follows:

(i) The approval of fields of study as well as the appointment of supervisors and co-supervisors.

(ii) The approval of titles of treatises/dissertations/theses.

(iii) The appointment of external examiners.

(iv) The identification of candidates who must terminate their studies as a result of unsatis­factory progress.

(v) The critical review of research proposals after considering their quality, viability and feasibility.

(vi) The notification to the FMC of the recommendations made regarding the appointment of an additional co-supervisor/co-promoter in the case of an inter-professional study.

(vii) The consideration of the examiners' reports and submitting recommendations in this regard to the FPGSC.

10.3 **Faculty Management Committee (FMC)**

The FMC consists of the Directors of Schools in the Faculty as well as the Dean should he/she not be one of the Heads of Department. The FMC as management body has the following functions.

(i) The noting of recommendations and approvals of the FPGSC. This allows a broader Faculty forum insight into the research of post-graduate students. The FMC may at its discretion raise queries and questions with regard to these students’ research processes.

(ii) In cases where all examiners’ reports have not been received in time for the FPGSC meeting, the matter may be referred to the FMC for resolution.

(iii) In exceptional cases where the resolution of appeals is problematic, the FMC may become involved.

11. **UNIVERSITY HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE**

PREAMBLE:

All research projects conducted under the auspices of NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY and involving humans or animals as participants must receive ethical approval prior to the commencement of data collection. Ethical approval will not be granted retrospectively. In the event that the research makes use of historical data e.g. psychobiographic studies, the onus rests with the researcher to show that the data will not be acquired in an unethical manner.

Two separate committees (Human and Animal) have an oversight role in all research conducted by NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY employees/students or by persons associated with NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY (Research Associates). Each committee has particular procedures that must be followed and ethical principles that must be adhered to. It is the responsibility of the individual researcher and/or research supervisors or promoters to ensure that the procedures are followed correctly. Failure to submit all required evidence and documentation will result in unnecessary delays in the research.

SECTION I: RESEARCH ETHICS RELATED TO **HUMAN** SUBJECTS

A) ETHICAL ISSUES

1 These will include, among others,

* **Consent** given freely and voluntarily by a person who is legally and factually capable of consenting, that is, over the age of 18 years and having full mental capacity to understand the implications of such consent
  + Consent given by a person who stands *in locum parentis* to the actual subject of the research eg parent, legal guardian
  + In the event of a person considered a minor (by age or disability) who has the necessary understanding, must give their **assent** to their participation despite the parent or guardian’s consent as the research affects his/her body or emotions.
* **Privacy** and **confidentiality** must be observed at all times
* **Veracity** requires that the participants be given all the necessary facts in order to make an informed decision. Participants should never be deliberately misled nor should the researcher deliberately withhold information unless there is strong scientific or medical justification for such an action.
* **Any other ethical issues that are specific to the research project.**

2 Vulnerable communities for whom ethical approval is required include:

* Mentally ill patients
* Individuals with learning disabilities or cognitive disorders
* Minors
* Elderly where there is mental deterioration or an inability to understand
* Dying persons
* Participants who are incapable of giving consent
* Individuals who are in an unequal power relationship with the researcher
* Participants who have been exposed to abuse or bullying
* The recently bereaved
* Students, specifically where they are in academically dependent relationships with the researcher
* Where participation may induce psychological stress, humiliation or anxiety in the participant
* Marginalised individuals include refugees, migrants, gays and ethnic groups.

B) APPLICATION PROCEDURE

* All proposals submitted to the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee (FPGSC) for approval MUST be accompanied by a correctly completed Rec-H application form (one hard copy and an electronic copy), with each page initialed and the document signed by all parties.
* The FPGSC will assess the application and determine how to proceed further. Decision may be either that the approval is granted by FPGSC (with a reference number) OR that the application be forwarded to the RCD for assessment by the Rec-H Committee.
* If the application needs to go the Rec-H committee it will be forwarded by the FPGSC secretariat after all corrections have been completed and approved by the supervisor.
* The Rec-H secretary will notify applicants of resolutions in hard copy (when approved) or electronically (when rejected or referred back for amendments). Copies of correspondence will be sent to PRPs, Manager: Faculty Administration and FPGSC.
* The PRP must report annually on the status/progress of projects for which they received ethics approval.
* Applicants must re-apply for ethics approval if a project continues for more than three (3) years.

C) COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

* All relevant areas must be completed in as much detail as possible as the committee members do not all have insight into the specifics of the field of research. The more detail available, the easier the decision-making in the committee.
* Primary Responsible Person (PRP) = a member of the permanent staff at the university and is usually the supervisor.
* Principal Investigator (PI) = may be the researcher (student) or the same as the PRP.
* Enter the names of all co-workers if the research involves group participation.
* Ensure that all necessary documents are attached.
* Append signatures as indicated on the form – PRP, PI and HOD before submitting the application to the FPGSC.

See also Appendix A

SECTION II: RESEARCH ETHICS RELATED TO **ANIMAL** SUBJECTS (Taken from D/834A/05)

A) ETHICAL ISSUES

A Research Ethics Committee (Animals) (REC-A) has been appointed by the University Senate to monitor the treatment of living animals at the NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY. The functions of the REC-A include:

* assisting animal users with any ethical problem which their teaching or research projects may raise
* ensuring that animal care and use is in keeping with the institutional policies and accepted scientific practice

Formal application must be made to the REC-A (using the appropriate electronic form, available on the Intranet and from the NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY Research Management Department) for all activities that involve live animals.

The procedure has been adopted in order to:

* Prevent objectionable activities
* Encourage humane practices
* Provide for accountability to the public for all animal experiments which are performed in the University.
* Any pain, suffering, stress, distress or other discomfort suffered by an animal must be minimised,
* Any pain, suffering, stress, distress or other discomfort must be justifiable by the benefits or potential benefits that such discomfort may bring.

**Animal interests** obligate scientists and educators to:

* Not allow animals to be used for research and/or to be killed for trivial, irrational, unjustified or inappropriate reasons;
  + Permit animals to live, reproduce and grow under conditions that are comfortable and reasonably natural to their species;
  + Keep animals free from disease, parasitism, injury and pain by prevention, rapid diagnosis and treatment;
  + Allow animals to be able to express normal behaviour through providing as far as possible sufficient space, proper facilities in which to live and in the company of the animal’s own kind, recognising their inherently social nature, and hence the necessity of a social relationship for many species;
  + Protect animals from fear, deprivation, stress, distress and pain by ensuring that their living conditions, handling and treatment will be such that it will either minimise or eliminate the causation of these states upon those animals which are used for research, teaching and testing; and
  + Not unnecessarily repeat animal experiments the outcome of which are already known or are predictable.

An investigator’s freedom and obligation to plan and conduct animal experiments in accordance with accepted scientific practice, animal-based teaching and research must:

* Address an important question relevant to the objectives in advancing knowledge, education, science and human and animal welfare, and
* Be based on a plausible hypothesis and have a reasonable prospect of yielding good results
* Minimise the sum total of stress, discomfort and pain may be accomplished by applying the following three approaches:
* Replacement - of living animals with non-sentient research systems where possible, i.e. researchers should strive to avoid using animals if alternative methods can yield the data they need.
* Reduction - of the numbers of animals to be used to a minimum by the right choice of strategies in the planning and performance of research and by the application of statistical design in order to achieve only sufficient statistical power to allow the objectives of the experiment to be achieved.
* Refinement - of the experimental methodology to be adopted by the implementation and, if necessary, the improvisation of procedures that will have the least distressing or harmful effect on the animals. When this is not avoidable to counter those effects by the use of ataractics (tranquilisers), neuroleptics (dissociative agents), anaesthetics, analgesics and other effective strategies.

**Pain in Animals**

Three recognisable states of suffering may be identified:

* Discomfort (such as may be characterised by such negative signs as poor condition, torpor, diminished appetite).
* Stress (a condition of tension or anxiety predictable or readily explicable from environmental causes).
* Pain (recognisable by more positive signs as struggling, squealing, convulsions, severe palpitation).

With regard to these the following recommendations are made:

* Each animal user shall take effective precautions to prevent or reduce to a minimum any pain, stress or other distress or discomfort in the animal used.
* Every animal which is suffering discomfort which is likely to endure shall be painlessly killed as soon as the experiment is completed.
* In no case shall any animal be subjected to severe pain which endures or is likely to endure.

**The Use of Animals**

Proper care and humane treatment of animals during their use in teaching and research requires scientific and professional judgement. This implies specific knowledge of the needs of the animals, the requirements of research, and adequate facilities to carry out the experimental procedures. The guidelines in this section outline the general procedures and standards of practice that are to be adopted by animal users.

**Legal Requirements**

Animal users should be aware of the laws applicable to the acquisition, holding and usage of animals and abide by these.

**Student Use of Animals**

When animals are used by an undergraduate student for education or for research, such work shall be under the direct supervision of an experienced member of staff of the Department in which the project is undertaken. This person will be considered to be primarily responsible for the welfare of the animals used by the student. In postgraduate projects, the senior supervising member of staff is the primary responsible person (PRP).

**Housing, Handling and Nutrition**

Animal facilities should be clean, orderly and free from vermin. The physical comfort of animals should be a prime consideration of all animals users. Physical comfort applied to housing includes factors such as keeping the animal dry, maintaining animals in a state of relative thermal neutrality, providing sufficient space to assume freedom of movement and to allow for normal postural adjustments, avoiding unnecessary physical restraint, and if animals are not housed singly, maintaining them in compatible groups without overcrowding. Unless the approved protocol dictates otherwise, all animals should have daily access to food and water according to their particular requirements. The food should be clean and free of contaminants and be palatable and nutritionally adequate. It should be fed in amounts that will ensure normal growth in immature animals and maintenance of body weight in adults.

For aquatic animals, due attention should be given to providing temperature and salinity holding regimes approximating the natural environment.

**Animal Health**

Diseased or parasitised animals must be recognised and appropriate steps taken to treat the animals and to control the spread of disease.

**Anaesthesia and Analgesia**

The proper use of anaesthetics, analgesics and tranquillisers is necessary for humane and scientific reasons. The use and choice of the most appropriate drug(s) are matters of judgement for the investigator concerned in conjunction with a competent advisor if necessary. Muscle relaxants or paralysing drugs are not anaesthetics. They must not be used alone for surgical restraint but may be used with drugs known to be effective anaesthetics or analgesics. Anaesthetics must be administered to animals by competent personnel who are familiar with the agents and their effects on the animal used. All major surgical operations must be done under general anaesthesia. Minor surgical procedures may be done under general anaesthesia or local analgesia. Details of the anaesthesia and analgesia to be used in all animal experiments must be entered on the application forms submitted to the REC-A.

**Surgery**

Appropriate facilities and equipment should be available for surgical procedures. Laboratory facilities may be used for non-sterile terminal procedures. Laboratory facilities may be used for “clean” surgery on small rodents, birds, amphibians and reptiles. “Clean” surgery entails the use of heat or chemically sterile instruments and surgical materials; cleansing depilation and disinfection of skin surrounding the operative site and scrubbing and disinfection of the operator’s hands. All non-terminal surgery on mammals should be done aseptically preferably in a facility intended for aseptic surgery. Aseptic surgery should only be performed by individuals qualified by training or experience.

**Post-Operative Care**

Appropriate facilities and equipment and trained personnel should be available for the post-operative care of animals. Post-surgical care should include observation until the animal has recovered from anaesthesia, administration of supportive fluids and drugs, care of operative wounds and regular observation to assure the animal’s physical comfort and optimal recovery.

**Euthanasia**

Euthanasia is the act of inducing death without exciting the animal or causing distress or pain. A method of euthanasia must be adopted to suit the particular animal species and the requirements of the study. The administration of a fatal dose of an anaesthetic agent is generally accepted as the most convenient method of euthanasia. Dogs, cats, guinea pigs, rabbits and primates can be killed quickly and humanely by injecting barbiturate solutions intravenously or intra-peritoneally. Small rodents, rats, mice and hamsters can be killed by cervical dislocation, intra-peritoneal barbiturates or by the use of ether or carbon dioxide in an uncrowded chamber.

**Emergency Care**

Provision should be made for emergency care of animals. Technical staff or security personnel should know how to reach some responsible individual after hours every day including weekends and holidays to ensure that animals will receive attention if any emergency should arise.

**Biological Hazards and Infectious Agents**

Wild caught animals and conventional laboratory animals carry infectious agents which are transmissible to man. Animal users should assess the risk of cross infection between animals and persons who come into contact with the animals. Appropriate steps should be taken to inform all persons associated with possible exposure about the hazard which may exist. Adequate precautions should be taken to ensure human safety. In infectious disease studies and other situations in which infectious agents are likely to be present in animals, effective methods of disposal of carcase material

and animal wastes must be enforced. While the above paragraph emphasizes animal-human cross infection, animal-animal as well as human-animal cross infection must also bear equally strenuous consideration. A booklet called: *Zoonoses - Animal diseases and man* (LW van den Heever, JH du Preez – Butterworths) may be useful in assessing the potential risks of cross infection.

**(See also D/834A/05 for more detail)**

Applications and the principles for completing the application form follow the same process as described for human subjects. See also Appendix A1: - Flow diagram of the ethics application process (valid for both human and animal ethics applications).

**Appendix A1: Flow diagram of application process for Ethical approval**

**APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Download application form from [www.Nelson Mandela University.ac.za/REC-H](http://www.nmmu.ac.za/REC-H) (or REC-A)

Rename application form so that filename includes applicant’s name (e.g. J Smith REC-H/A Application.docx)

Complete form, then save (ensuring the filename identifies applicant and possibly the project) and print

Ensure that all required information is supplied, and that HOD, PRP and PI have signed in the relevant places

Print out all appendices

External applicant/applicant from non-Faculty department: Submit both hard and electronic (e-mail) copies to Faculty PGS Committee Administrator or directly to RCD (REC@Nelson Mandela University.ac.za)

Applicant within Faculty: Submit both hard and electronic (e-mail) copies to Faculty PGS Committee Administrator

**FPGS COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Receive and collate research ethics applications

Include applications in agenda of soonest possible FPGSC meeting

Communicate the outcome of the meeting

If referred to REC-H/A for consideration: send RCD a copy of the application with completed summary section and reference number, plus electronic copy of application for inclusion in the agenda of the soonest possible REC-H/A meeting

If approved (a) send RCD a copy of the application with completed summary section and reference number, and (b) inform applicant of approval reference letter in a formal letter. If rejected send applicant a letter

Keep records (including reference numbers) of all research ethics applications that served at FPGSC meetings

**REC-H/A RESPONSIBILITIES**

Receive and collate applications from FPGSC administrators and external/non-faculty applicants for inclusion in REC-H/A agenda

Consider submitted protocols at REC-H/A meetings

Communication of outcomes of applications to Primary Responsible Persons and FPGS Committee administrators

Filing and record-keeping of all applications

**SUMMARY OF ADMISSION AND FINALISATION PROCEDURES INVOLVED IN MASTERS' AND DOCTORS' DEGREE STUDIES**

The accompanying diagrams briefly depict the admission and finalisation procedures involved in masters' and doctors' degree studies:

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| --- |
| **PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE FOR M/D DEGREE BY DISSERTATION/THESIS ONLY**  Requests ADMISSIONS for information on applying for M or D studies in the Faculty  🢃  Discusses proposed studies with HEAD OF DEPARTMENT AND/OR SUPERVISOR  🢃  Completes application forms for ADMISSION TO THE UNIVERSITY and for  ADMISSION TO POSTGRADUATE STUDIES (U.24) and returns these to ADMISSIONS  🢃  ADMISSIONS forwards the application to the relevant Department which presents the student with a letter of preliminary approval or rejection  🢃  The preliminary approved applications are submitted to the Manager: Faculty Administration who in turn submits it to FPGSC for final approval  🢃  Once approved the Manager: Postgraduate Admissions/Admissions Officer informs the candidate in writing of final approval  🢃  CANDIDATE REGISTERS for the degree concerned  🢃  CANDIDATE submits PRELIMINARY RESEARCH PROPOSAL to departmental panel  🢃  CANDIDATE submits FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL (one hard and one electronic copy and evaluation form signed by HOD) to the Manager: Faculty Administration for submission to the FPGSC (where applicable also submit to University Human Ethics Committee)  🢃  Any CHANGE OF INFORMATION on the already completed application form must be submitted on the REGISTRATION DETAIL AND APPROVAL OF EXAMINERS FORM to the FPGSC for approval and to FMC and BOF for noting.  🢃  The appointment of external examiners (accompanied by their CVs if new) is also submitted on the REGISTRATION DETAIL AND APPROVAL OF EXAMINERS FORM. Once the latter form has been signed by the HOD it is forwarded to the FPGSC via the Manager: Faculty Administration. After approval the Manager: Faculty Administration submits the approved details to the Postgraduate Examinations Officer.  🢃  CANDIDATE COMMENCES OFFICIALLY WITH DATA COLLECTION (where applicable)  only after approval of the final research proposal  🢃  Upon completion of treatise/dissertation/thesis, the CANDIDATE obtains WRITTEN PERMISSION from SUPERVISOR to submit  🢃  CANDIDATE provides the appropriate EXAMINATIONS OFFICER with required copies  🢃  EXAMINATIONS OFFICER sends copies of treatise/dissertation/thesis to examiners and also receives their reports  🢃  Examiners' reports are analysed by the FPGSC and recommendations are made to  the FPGSC on the awarding or otherwise of the degree concerned  🢃  FPGSC decides in the final instance whether or not a particular degree may be awarded to a candidate  🢃  Manager: Faculty Administration submits the approved final mark/awarding of degree to the Examinations Officer  🢃  EXAMINATIONS OFFICER notifies the candidate in writing of the decision of the FPGSC |

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| --- |
| **PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE FOR A COURSEWORK MASTERS' DEGREE PROGRAMME**  🢃  Requests ADMISSIONS for information on applying for M studies in the Faculty  🢃  Consults with relevant DEPARTMENT regarding selection procedure  🢃  Completes application forms for ADMISSION TO THE UNIVERSITY and ADMISSION TO POSTGRADUATE STUDIES (relevant U.24) and returns these to ADMISSIONS  🢃  ADMISSIONS forwards the application to the relevant Department which presents the student with a letter of preliminary approval or rejection  🢃  The preliminary approved applications are submitted to the Manager: Faculty Administration who in turn submits it to FPGSC for final approval  🢃  Once approved the Manager: Faculty Administration informs the candidate in writing of final approval  🢃  REGISTERS for the degree concerned after approval by FPGSC  🢃  Commences coursework programme and submits PRELIMINARY RESEARCH PROPOSAL to departmental panel  🢃  CANDIDATE submits FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL (one hard and one electronic copy and evaluation form signed by HOD) to the Manager: Faculty Administration for submission to the FPGSC (where applicable also submit to University Human Ethics Committee)  🢃  Any CHANGE OF INFORMATION on the already completed application form must be submitted on the REGISTRATION DETAIL AND APPROVAL OF EXAMINERS FORM to the FPGSC for approval and to FMC and BOF for noting.  🢃  The appointment of external examiners (accompanied by their CVs if new) is also submitted on the REGISTRATION DETAIL AND APPROVAL OF EXAMINERS FORM. Once the latter form has been signed by the HOD it is forwarded to the FPGSC via the Manager: Faculty Administration. After approval the Manager: Faculty Administration submits the approved details to the Postgraduate Examinations Officer.  🢃  CANDIDATE COMMENCES OFFICIALLY WITH DATA COLLECTION (where applicable) only after approval of the final research proposal  🢃  Upon completion of treatise, obtains WRITTEN PERMISSION OF SUPERVISOR to submit it  🢃  Provides POSTGRADUATE EXAMINATIONS OFFICER with required copies  🢃  EXAMINATIONS OFFICER sends copies of treatise/dissertation/thesis to examiners and also receives their reports  🢃  Examiners' reports (and coursework marks via the Head of Department) are analysed by the FPGSC and recommendations are made to the FPGSC on the awarding or otherwise of the degree concerned  🢃  The FPGSC decides in the final instance whether or not a particular  degree may be awarded to a candidate  🢃  The EXAMINATIONS OFFICER notifies the candidate of the decision of the FPGSC |

1. \* Also applicable to a co-supervisor [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. \* Also applicable to a co-supervisor [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. \* Also applicable to a co-supervisor [↑](#footnote-ref-3)