



<b>Policy Number</b>	To be assigned by the Registrar's Office
<b>Name of Policy</b>	<b>Postgraduate Policy on Masters and Doctoral Studies</b>
<b>Description of Policy</b>	Its main purpose is to regulate the administration and awarding of Masters and Doctoral degrees on behalf of Senate.
<b>Policy applies to</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> University-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Specific ( <i>outline location, campus, organisational unit, etc</i> )
	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff only <input type="checkbox"/> Students only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff and students
<b>Policy status</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New policy <input type="checkbox"/> Revision of existing policy

<b>Approval authority</b>	Council and Senate
<b>Governing authority</b>	Senate Higher Degrees Committee
<b>Responsible officer</b>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor/ Research and Innovation and Registrar

<b>Approval date</b>	2 July 2020
<b>Effective date</b>	2 July 2020
<b>Approval date of last revision</b>	N/A
<b>Effective date of last revision</b>	N/A
<b>Date of policy review*</b>	

*\*unless otherwise indicated, this policy will still apply beyond the review date*

<b>Related legislation, policies, procedures, guidelines and local protocols</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997)</li> <li>• The Institutional Operating Plan of the University</li> <li>• The Higher Education Qualification Sub- Framework</li> <li>• General university and Faculty rules pertaining to Masters and Doctoral studies</li> <li>• Admissions Policy</li> <li>• Joint Doctoral degree policy</li> <li>• Policy: Doctoral by publication</li> <li>• Plagiarism Policy</li> <li>• Supervisors guide</li> <li>• Implementation protocols and templates published by Senate Higher degrees Committee</li> </ul>
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UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

## Table of Contents

1.	Preamble	3
2.	Purpose	3
3.	Admission to Postgraduate Studies	3
4.	Senate Higher Degrees Committee	4
5.	Ethics	5
6.	Assessment of results	5
7.	Supervision	5
8.	Memorandums of Understanding	6
9.	Registration	6
10.	Intention to Submit	6
11.	Assessment of Theses	7
12.	Upgrading of Thesis	7
13.	Re-submission of Theses	7
14.	Arbitration	7
15.	Dishonesty	7
16.	Grievances	7
17.	Appeals	8
18.	Submission of Final Copies of Theses	8
19.	Publication of thesis or part thereof	8
20.	Copyright	8
21.	Confidentiality	8
22.	Conferring of Honorary degrees	9
23.	Implementation Protocols	9
24.	Policy Distribution	9



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

## 1. Preamble

The University has a statutory responsibility to encourage the development of intellectual independence in its postgraduate students. It assesses the achievement of this goal through coursework and examinations. The University expects all students to complete coursework, examinations and theses with integrity and honesty. Supervisors and Faculties should ensure that processes as stipulated in the *implementation protocol* is adhered to. This will maintain the reputation and quality of its postgraduate degrees and protects their national and international recognition. For the purposes of this policy, the term higher degrees refers to studies, research, or programmes at the master's and/or doctoral level, equivalent to level 9 and 10 of the Higher Education Qualifications Sub Framework (HEQSF).

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy, together with the university rules and the implementation protocol as annex to this policy is to provide a framework for the administration, governance and quality management of higher degree studies at the University. The framework aims to:

- 2.1 Establish rational and transparent decision-making processes around the governance and administration of higher degree and related student matters;
- 2.2 Ensure the highest levels of quality care with regard to higher degree studies;
- 2.3 Clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of higher degree students and supervisors;
- 2.4 Clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of higher degrees examiners
- 2.5 Ensure fairness and transparency in the treatment of higher degree students and in addressing their concerns; and
- 2.6 Ensure adequate capacity development for the support of higher degree students

## 3. Admission to Postgraduate Studies

The admission requirements to qualify for admission to postgraduate qualifications are contained in the UWC General Rules and Faculty Rules based on the minimum requirements set by the HEQSF.

### 3.1 Masters and Doctoral degrees

- 3.1.1 Students applying for admission to a master's degree (HEQSF level 9) are normally required to hold a qualification at the HEQSF level 8; an Honours degree, a four-year 480-credit Bachelor's degree, or a postgraduate diploma, in the relevant discipline.
- 3.1.2 Students applying for admission to a doctoral degree (HEQSF level 10) are normally required to hold a qualification at the HEQSF level 9: a master's degree in the relevant discipline. In addition, candidates for admission to master's and doctoral degrees in general need to have obtained in their previous degree an average mark of at least 60% to be considered for admission. Faculties may introduce other specific requirements per programme.

### 3.2 Types of Masters and Doctoral Degrees

- 3.2.1 A master's degree can be awarded based on either full research thesis presented at NQF 180 credits minimum or by coursework. The mini-thesis should at least of 1/3 of the credits and the other 2/3 of the credits can be assigned to the coursework.



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

- 3.2.2 A doctoral degree can be awarded based on either original research presented in a thesis or a doctoral degree based on a collection of publications of high quality on a specific theme or field.
- 3.2.3 All masters and doctoral degrees, irrespective of the kind or format, are managed uniformly with regard to established procedures, requirements and regulations for degrees, unless otherwise stated in the protocols.

### 3.3 Joint Doctoral degrees

The university will consider offering joint doctoral degrees with accredited international universities that share UWC's strategic vision in the promotion of excellence in research and innovation. A joint degree refers to:

- 3.3.1. A programme collaboratively offered by UWC and an accredited, international partner institution.
- 3.3.2. The programme will be awarded at the successful completion of a jointly-offered single study programme.
- 3.3.3 Partner institutions are responsible for the entire programme and not just their own separate parts.
- 3.3.4. Candidates are enrolled at both institutions and receive one award (degree certificate), co-branded by university and the partner institution.
- 3.3.5. The exit institution confers the degree on the candidate

### 3.4 Admission to Equal Status

The University accepts Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as an integral part of education and academic practice in terms of Rule A.2.4 of the Calendar and may admit a candidate to postgraduate studies whom:

- 3.4.1 Passed at other tertiary institution such examinations that in the opinion of Senate are equivalent to the examinations prescribed for admission to a specific post graduate programme at this university, or
- 3.4.2 In any other manner and in accordance with assessment procedures determined by Senate attained a level of competence, which in the opinion of Senate is adequate for the purpose of postgraduate studies or research at this university.

### 3.5 Completed Masters and Doctoral Studies

A thesis, mini-thesis or research report that has previously been submitted for a degree at another university shall be accepted, but material taken by the candidate from his/her existing publications/thesis may be incorporated in the thesis, mini-thesis or research project and must be clearly indicated as such. If called upon, the candidate must submit together with his/her thesis, mini-thesis or research report, a copy of all such work previously submitted by him/her for another degree, whether it was accepted or not.

## 4. Senate Higher Degrees Committee

The Senate Higher Degrees Committee, serves as a standing Committee of Senate and deals with Masters and Doctoral Degree studies. Its main purpose is to regulate the administration and awarding of Masters and Doctoral degrees on behalf of Senate and to execute specific functions as per its Standing Orders and delegation manual. These functions are, but is not limited to:



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

- 4.1 Approves research proposals for Mini and Research Theses for Master and Doctoral students on recommendation of the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee;
- 4.2 Approves supervisors and examiners for theses on recommendation of Faculty Higher Degrees Committee;
- 4.3 Considers recommendations from the Faculty Higher degrees Committee on theses Assessment reports from Assessors and make a final decision on the award of the degree;
- 4.4 The Senate Higher Degrees may alter the recommendations of Faculty before a final award can be made,
- 4.5 Consider applications for readmission after exclusion and leave of Absence;
- 4.6 Consider application via Rule A.2. (RPL), for all Masters and Doctoral programmes upon the recommendation of the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee supported by the Director Quality Assurance and makes a final decision; and
- 4.7 In general carry out the duties and functions of Senate in respect of higher degrees of the University, with due regard to the academic and public stature of such degrees.

## 5. Ethics

The university places a high value and emphasis on ethical conduct in all aspects of postgraduate student research, recognising that ethics and intellectual honesty are important in scholarship and university life. To this end, the university has established Research Ethics Committees which consider all ethical matters related to research at the university. Faculties must ensure that all students are advised of the necessity to adhere to good practice in research and of the need for ethical respect. All Masters and Doctoral students must obtain ethical clearance before commencement of their research.

## 6. Assessment of results

Unless Senate decides otherwise

- 6.1 To pass a master's thesis/mini-thesis, a students must obtain a final mark of at least 50% from each of the assessors.
- 6.2 In order to pass a module for a coursework master's degree a student must obtain a sub-minimum of 50% in the final assessment and a final mark of at least 50% composed as prescribed in the faculty rules.
- 6.3 To pass a master's programme Magna, Summa or Cum laude, a minimum final mark of at least 75% has to be earned. All assessors' marks are considered to calculate the final mark and Senate Higher Degrees has a final determination in this regard.(ratio).
- 6.4 Doctoral degrees are awarded if each of the assessors recommends that the degree be awarded.
- 6.5 Doctoral degrees are neither awarded with distinction nor receive special mark.

## 7. Supervision

- 7.1 Any student who is registered for a Masters of Doctoral degree should be linked to a supervisor. The supervisor is the person recommended by a Faculty and approved by Senate Higher Degrees Committee to oversee the research development of a masters and or doctoral student based on his/her expertise and recognition in a particular field of study.
- 7.2 In certain circumstances another supervisor may be appointed together with the main supervisor to oversee the writing of a thesis where the research is of an interdisciplinary nature, or the supervisor is external to the institution.



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### 7.3 Supervisors for PhD Students:

- 7.3.1 First-time supervisors will be supported through a mentoring process. More experienced supervisors will be appointed as co-supervisors. Faculty Higher Degrees Committees must consider what the contributions of the respective supervisors would be to ensure that the pairing is meaningful and that the best interest of the student is advanced through the composition of the supervisory team. The Senate Higher Degrees Committee will appoint supervisory teams after due consideration of the faculty recommendation.
- 7.3.2 Lecturers who are currently enrolled for their doctoral studies are not allowed to serve as main supervisors.

## 8. Memorandums of Understanding

The student and the supervisor must establish a schedule against which progress will be monitored by the supervisor and the Department Research Committee, and this is captured in a student-supervisor memorandum of understanding. For this purpose a student/s and their supervisors sign a memoranda of understanding which are approved by the Departmental Chairperson and the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee. Supervisors are, in all the supervisory tasks that they perform, accountable to the Department.

## 9. Registration

### 9.1 Successive Registration

For the duration of his/her studies a student must register each year. In order to proceed with his or her studies it would be required of all students in a research master's programme to have a thesis title registered to proceed with the programme. For a structured Masters programme, the research title should be registered within the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of study. In each successive year, registration shall be subject to the progress report of the supervisor. Senate Higher Degrees can, for good reason, decide not to approve progress report of a supervisor.

### 9.2 Maximum study time allowed to complete

- 9.2.1 The maximum period of study for a master's degree is three years and a doctorate is 5 years.
- 9.2.2 Senate may, however, grant extension only in *exceptional* cases on submission of an application by the student and a recommendation of the Supervisor and the Departmental Chairperson concerned.
- 9.2.3 In the event that extension is granted a completion plan must be submitted by the student on how he/she intends to complete the programme.
- 9.2.4 A title of a thesis is also approved for the said period of years, after which the student must apply to Senate for an extension of time and to extend the registration of the title. When extension is granted Council can decide the fees payable by students.

## 10. Intention to Submit

A student who wishes to be awarded his/her degree at the graduation ceremony associated with a given academic year, must notify his/her supervisor in writing that he/she intends to submit his/her thesis for assessment subject to the dates as stipulated in the University Calendar.



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

## 11. Assessment of Theses

- 11.1 For a master's degree, a maximum of two specialists who have not been involved in the supervision process and of whom at least one must be an external person not attached to the University contractual or otherwise.
- 11.2 For a Doctoral degree a maximum of three subject specialists who have not been involved in the thesis supervision process of whom all must be persons not attached to the University contractual or otherwise. At least two of the assessors should be of international standing.

## 12. Upgrading of Thesis

A Masters student, on grounds of excellent work in his/her Master's research may be upgraded to Doctoral studies under special conditions provided that Senate agrees to the upgrade.

## 13. Re-submission of Theses

In the event of a thesis being rejected, Senate may, on the recommendation of the examiners, permit the candidate to re-submit it for assessment in a revised or extended format. Unless Senate Higher Degrees Committee decide otherwise, a candidate may re-submit the thesis for re-assessment only once.

## 14. Arbitration

A third party can be appointed by the university in case of conflictive views with regards to the outcome of the examination of a thesis on approval of the Senate Higher Degrees Committee.

## 15. Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is not limited to plagiarism, cheating, collusion, but extends to all deceptions relating to academic research work. Academic dishonesty is serious misconduct and will be dealt with in terms of the provisions of the University's Disciplinary Rules for Students (Rule 3.5 of Section 4 in the General Calendar).

## 16. Grievances

Supervisors and Heads of Department are required to take appropriate action in accordance with this policy when the grievances of postgraduate students are drawn to their attention. Grievances must be taken seriously, investigated promptly and carefully, and treated in confidence. Every effort should be made to resolve grievances through frank, informal discussion between the student and the staff member(s) concerned, before invoking formal procedures.



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

## 17. Appeals

The normal appeals procedure as published in the General Calendar is applicable.

## 18. Submission of Final Copies of Theses

After approval of the thesis and before awarding of the degree, Doctoral candidates are required to upload their final and duly amended thesis / mini-thesis, or research report to the UWC Library website through the UWC Electronic Theses and Dissertation (ETD) Submissions Portal at <http://submissions.uwc.ac.za>.

## 19. Publication of thesis or part thereof

The University may, upon application by the author, grant permission for the whole or part of such work to be published, subject to such conditions as the Senate may set from time to time. These may include the following requirements:

- 19.1 Any changes required by the supervisor(s) and examiners must be effected in the script submitted for publication;
- 19.2 An acknowledgement that the work was submitted in fulfilment or partial fulfilment of the requirements for the relevant degree in the University of the Western Cape has to be made in the published work.

## 20. Copyright

Student enrolled for masters or doctoral programme shall/must cede his/her future copyright in any research report or thesis submitted by him/her for the purposes of said degree. Such cession shall be in within a statement set out below and shall be signed by the candidate.

*I..... hereby cede to the University of the Western Cape the entire copyright that may in future subsist in any research report or thesis submitted by me to the University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of ..... in the department of .....*

Any author who wishes to have the ceded copyright restored to him/her, may apply to the University's Registrar in writing, giving full reasons, whereupon the University, on such terms and conditions as it deems fit, may cede such copyright back to the author.

## 21. Confidentiality

If it is required by the author that part or all of the contents of a thesis should remain confidential, such author, through his/her supervisor, may submit an application to the Executive Committee of Senate that an embargo be placed on such thesis. The Executive Committee of Senate can decided from time –to- time under which conditions an embargo will be appropriate.





UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

## 22. Conferring of Honorary degrees

The University may, by resolution of the Council passed on the recommendation of the Senate, and without assessment or examination, confer an honorary degree of master or doctor in any faculty upon any person who has rendered distinguished services in the advancement of any branch of learning, or upon any person who Council may deem worthy of such degree.

## 23. Implementation Protocols

Senate Higher Degrees Committee may develop specific protocols and rules to guide and direct the institution/Faculties on the procedures that need to be implemented in terms of this policy. These protocols can change as circumstances require and should not be in contrast to this policy.



### Policy Distribution to:

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Author/ Comments to</b>	<b>Stakeholder's</b>	<b>Date Distributed</b>
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