

# **Department of Psychology**

**University of the Free State**



## **Information Brochure & Research Procedural Manual**

**Masters and Doctorate programmes**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This brochure and manual contains all the necessary information about the Master's and Doctoral degree programmes presented at the Department of Psychology, UFS. It also contains quick and easy guidelines required in terms of the research processes and procedures involved for these degrees. More information is also available on the University website ([www.ufs.ac.za](http://www.ufs.ac.za)), or alternatively at:

**Mrs. Elize du Plessis**

Secretary: Research Committee

Department of Psychology

University of the Free State

P.O. Box 339 (40), Bloemfontein, 9300

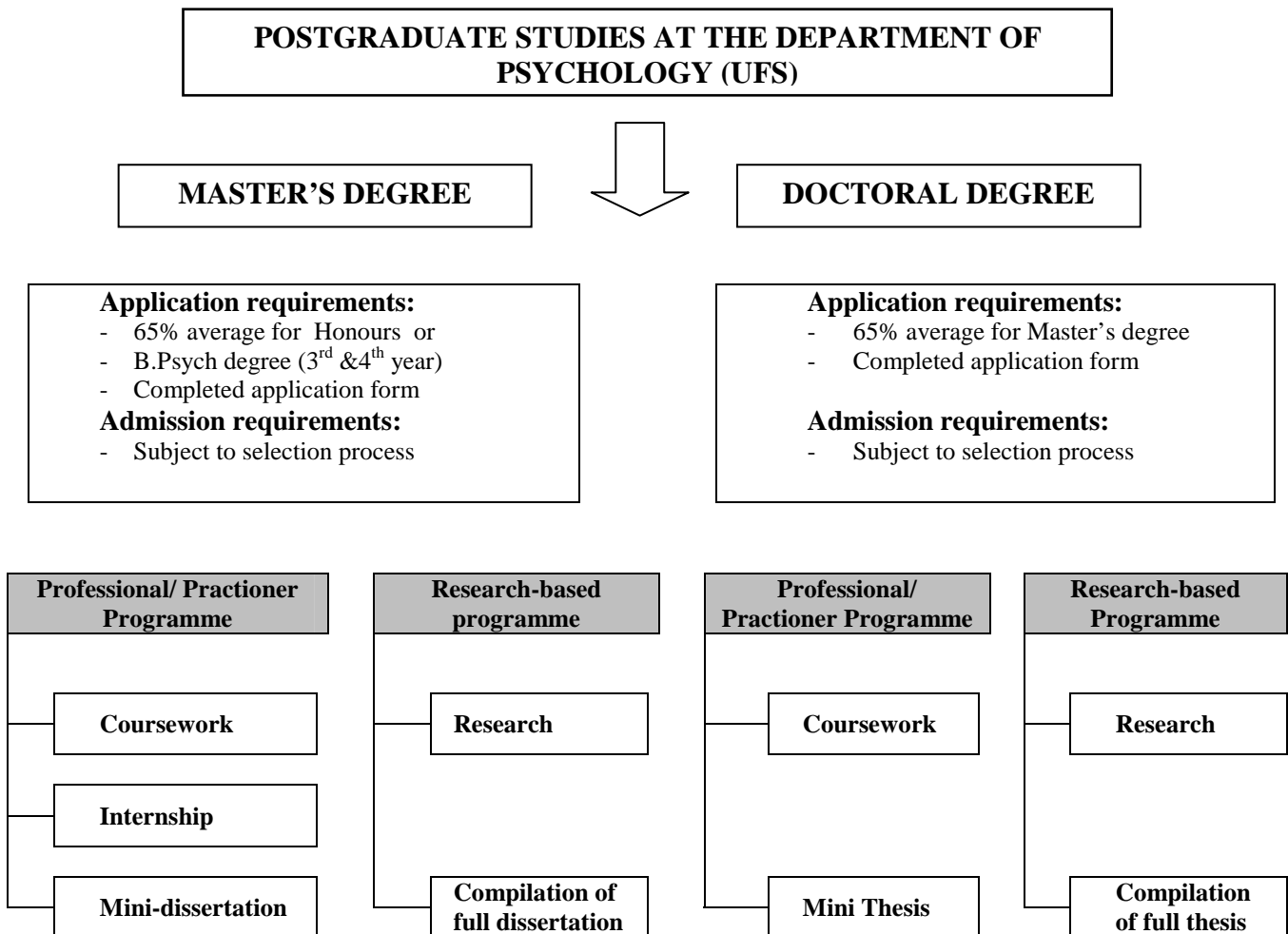
Phone: (051) 401-9420

Fax: (051) 444-6677 or 4013556

Email: [duplesse.hum@ufs.ac.za](mailto:duplesse.hum@ufs.ac.za)

## **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES**

A brief outline as to the categories, application and selection procedures and requirements for each degree is represented in the following flowchart:



- **Master's degrees in Clinical and Counselling psychology:** Students are required to undergo a selection process (based on a shortlisting procedure and an interview), to be considered for possible admission into one of the above programme(s). The research component of the degree involves the completion of an extended treatise or a publishable article. The curriculum codes are: SKL 791 for Clinical psychology's research component, and SLV 791 for Counselling psychology's research component. Both the aforementioned programmes also involve the requirement of the successful completion of an academic or theoretical curriculum, as well as an internship.
- **Research based Master's degree:** The application for this degree requires of you to provide information about your academic record and previous research experiences and referee details of past supervisors. A minimum pass mark of 65% in the honours degree is a prerequisite. Students are only allowed to register for the degree once their research proposal has been approved by the Departmental Research Committee. Students have to successfully complete a dissertation (SIL 700) or at least two related and publishable articles (SIL 705).
- **Ph.D. in Child Psychology:** Prospective candidates need to hold a master's degree in Clinical or Counselling or Educational psychology and must have at least five years of child practice experience. A minimum pass mark of 65% in the specific Master's degree is a prerequisite. Only a limited number of students can be submitted to the course, therefore, a selection procedure will be followed. The first phase of selection is a screening process (paper selection), and the next phase includes interviews and the evaluation of the research skills of the applicant. The degree entails the attendance of lectures, the execution of tasks and assignments, the successful completion of an oral examination and the successful completion of a research thesis of limited extent (SIL 991), or three publishable articles (SIL 993).
- **Research based Ph.D. in Psychology:** Applicants need to apply and provide details about their academic record and previous research experience and referee details of past research supervisors. Students are only allowed to register for the degree once their research proposal has been approved by the Departmental Research Committee. Students need to successfully complete either a thesis (SIL 900) or five publishable articles (SIL 905).
- Please note that students who are applying for a research based Master's or Doctoral degree, and where the student obtained the preceding and required lower-level degree more than 4 years prior to the application for submission, may be required to undergo an oral examination on a prescribed reading list as part of their application.
- A detailed description of the admission requirements and procedures is provided in the section that follows.

#### **a) Professional/practitioner path**

If you intend to apply for one of the two professional/practitioner courses, specific requirements, application procedures and closing dates apply.

#### **With respect to the Master's degree programme in Clinical, Counselling or Educational Psychology:**

- Alongside needing to have either a B.Psych or Honours degree in Psychology with a pass mark or semester mark of 65%, you would also need to be proficient in English and Afrikaans since these are the language mediums used at the UFS in training you.
- You would need to complete a specific application form which is obtainable from the Master's degree Programme Co-ordinator at the Department of Psychology:

**Prof. Roelf van Niekerk**  
 Department of Psychology  
 P.O.Box 339 (40), University of the Free State  
 Bloemfontein, 9300

Email: [yniekerkr.hum@ufs.ac.za](mailto:yniekerkr.hum@ufs.ac.za)  
 Tel: (051) 401-9682  
 Fax: (051) 401-3556 / 444-6677

- These applications have to be submitted by the first day of the second semester (which usually falls in mid July of each year).
- Selection takes place in two phases. The first involves the paper selection phase where prospective students are evaluated on the grounds of the contents of their application form. Students who successfully pass this first phase are invited to attend the second phase which comprises of a week of interviews and research skills assessment whereby the students (usually about 12) to be included in the programme, are selected.
- As mentioned earlier, one of the requirements to successfully complete this programme is that (subsequent to completing an academic and an internship year) a mini-dissertation has to be written.

### Regarding the PhD in Child Psychology:

- This is a theoretically-based degree and does not lead to registration with the HPCSA.
- Prospective students must have a Master's degree in Clinical, Counselling or Educational psychology and have at least five years of child practice experience if they wish to apply for this **in-depth theoretical programme**. A minimum pass mark of at least 65% in the specific Master's degree is also a prerequisite.
- Due to the limited amount of students that can be admitted to the course, a selection procedure is followed which firstly comprises of a screening process (paper selection) based on the prospective candidate's application and referee forms and secondly includes an interview and research skills assessment phase. Applications need to be made by the 30<sup>th</sup> of September of each year and final selections are done in November.
- **Students are selected for this programme every third year.**
- Coursework as well as the completion of a mini-thesis in a field pertaining to Child Practice are the requirements needed to successfully complete the course.
- The co-ordinator of this PhD programme is:  
**Prof. Anet Louw**  
 Department of Psychology  
 P.O. Box 339 (40), University of the Free State,  
 Bloemfontein, 9300  
 E-mail: [louwae.hum@ufs.ac.za](mailto:louwae.hum@ufs.ac.za)  
 Tel: (051) 401-2889  
 Fax: (051) 401-3556 / (051) 444-6677

### **b) Research programme**

If you wish to follow the research programme of either the Master's or Doctoral degrees, you should take the following steps:

#### **STEP 1:**

Spend time deciding about your topic that you wish to research. You may have already had exposure to the area that you would like to investigate, build on previous research you may have done etc. You may also perhaps not know what you hope to research. If this is the case, you could also consult the research menu available on the departmental website which gives information about topics that staff may be involved with and need assistance with. Whichever way, once you have a good indication of what area of research you would like to involve yourself in, you can begin the process.

## STEP 2:

Apply in writing on the application form provided at the Department (and on the departmental website) to the Chair of the Research Committee at the Department of Psychology:

**Prof Paul Fouché**

Department of Psychology  
P.O. Box 339 (40)University of the Free State  
Bloemfontein 9300

Email: [fouchejp.hum@ufs.ac.za](mailto:fouchejp.hum@ufs.ac.za)  
Tel: (051) 401-3800  
Fax: (051) 444-6677 / (051) 401-3556

indicating which potential research area you are interested in. (Please explain your proposed research in a paragraph or two.)

Your application will include information about your academic record and previous research experience and referee details of past research supervisors.

Once you have been notified by the Chair of the Research Committee that you can commence your application procedure for the degree, you can write up and submit your draft proposal.

## STEP 3:

The format and formulation of your draft proposal should follow the same guidelines as the official research proposal (see Chapter 2 of the Manual for Postgraduate Research available on the Departmental Website) and must be submitted to the Chair of the Research Committee during February through to April of each year. All persons hoping to submit their final research proposal for acceptance to the programme need to have completed the process by June of that year.

You will be informed of the date and time of your draft proposal evaluation and will be required to attend this evaluation in person in order to discuss and hear comments/suggestions that need consideration.

Should your first attempt draft proposal not meet the requirements of the Department, you will be allowed to submit a second draft proposal. Only two draft proposals per candidate will be considered. Should your second draft proposal be rejected, you will be advised not to continue with your application.

If your draft proposal is approved by the Research Committee you may then proceed with the formal application procedure.

## STEP 4:

The formal application procedure requires you to write your research proposal as set out in detail in Chapter 2 of the Manual for Postgraduate Research.

## STEP 5:

Your research proposal is the exercise by which your admission to the degree would be determined. In this respect, you need to see the submission of your research proposal as being the selection procedure required for admission to this course. Should your research proposal not be accepted by the Departmental Research Committee, you will not be allowed to register for the Master's or Doctoral degree.

You will only be allowed to register for the Master's or Doctoral degree research programme once your research proposal has been approved by the Departmental Research Committee and you have a letter of acceptance to the programme from the Chair of the Committee.

## **STEP 6:**

Once the Departmental Research Committee approves your research proposal, you can either approach a member of staff to be your supervisor/promoter or you could ask to be assigned to someone.

The Committee will not take responsibility for students registering for the programme if they have not been through this process and do not have written confirmation of their acceptance into the programme by the Chair of the Committee.

### **ASSIGNING A SUPERVISOR / PROMOTER**

Students are assigned to supervisors or promoters based on a combination of the following factors:

- The availability and competence of an expert member of staff working in a specific research focus area within the department.
- The preference for a specific staff member as supervisor / promoter may also be expressed by the student, and is considered against factors such as the supervisor's / promoter's expertise, field of research specialization, and existing work-load.
- Master's and Doctoral students may also request an assistant or co-supervisor / co-promoter to be appointed. The co-supervisor/ co-promoter is often involved in the guidance with regards to specific aspects of your study. Even if a co-supervisor / promoter is appointed, your main supervisor / promoter remains the person responsible for you.

Please note that the final decision taken with regards to the assignment of the supervisor or promoter is made by the Head of the Department in conjunction with the Departmental Research Committee.

### **FEEDBACK AND PROGRESS**

Students are entitled to regular and comprehensive feedback from their supervisors / promoters. This feedback is usually given in a pre-arranged and mutually scheduled research supervision feedback-session, and should involve both verbal feedback as well as written feedback on essential and specific theoretical (conceptual) and methodological (operational) issues in need of change, reformulation and refinement. The maximum period of time that is allowed for supervisors / promoters to provide feedback once they have received written work is two weeks for every new completed chapter or for every fully completed publishable article. Supervisors and promoters have the prerogative to realistically extend on this "feedback period" if the student agrees therewith in writing. Supervisors and promoters who are on sabbatical (i.e., research leave) need to negotiate and contractually schedule with their students a mutually agreed upon and fair "feedback period" and feedback procedure that will be followed by both parties involved during the period of sabbatical.

Please note that attached to this information brochure / manual there are two contracts that need to be finalized and undersigned by the student and the supervisor / promoter (See "*Supervision contract*" and a "*Plagiarism contract*" that needs to be undersigned by the student).

**IMPORTANT: A paper trail of all decisions should be kept at all times.**

## **STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS SHORTCOMINGS AND PROBLEMS WITH PROGRESS: ENHANCING THROUGHPUT RATES**

Students whom experience problems with progress related to shortcomings in the relationship between the supervisor/ promoter and themselves, are encouraged to proactively discuss their concerns with their supervisor / promoter. In the case thereof that no reasonable resolution can be attained, the student is invited to discuss the matter further with the Head of Department.

In the case of students not making progress due to skills-related deficiencies such as shortcomings in their formulation and language use, they are encouraged to make an appointment with a professional at URAS/ ERAS to assist them with this matter. The Department of Psychology also has experts in the field of APA (guidelines for authors) editing and styling and they could be consulted by a prearranged appointment. In an attempt to enhance throughput rate, students working in specific research focus areas could receive mini-group supervision from relevant supervisors / promoters to facilitate “interconnected learning” and academic “cross-pollination” amongst students in the same field of research. This activity could serve as an adjacent learning and facilitative activity to the existing individual supervision process.

**APPENDICES**

**A. RESEARCH SUPERVISION CONTRACT**

Contract between ..... (name of supervisor/ promoter) and  
..... (student).

**The student undertakes to:**

1. Compile and submit to the Departmental Research Committee a research proposal according to the requirements set out in Form L 5 (2008) of the Faculty.
2. Schedule and attend regular research supervision sessions with the supervisor / promoter on at least a monthly basis. (These appointments need to be scheduled in a mutually agreed upon fashion between supervisor / promoter and student. In the case of the student living outside of Bloemfontein, regular e-mail or telephonic contact with the supervisor / promoter needs to be maintained).
3. Adhere to the procedure that all work that is submitted to the supervisor / promoter will be of an acceptable standard of English or Afrikaans. It will be language edited and technically styled in an acceptable manner in accordance with the APA guidelines for authors.
4. Take serious cognizance of the consequences of plagiarism and refrain thereof.
5. Submit work, chapter by chapter or article by article, and accompany this submission with a relevant reference list. Where there is a co-supervisor / co-promoter, two copies need to be submitted to the main supervisor / main promoter.
6. Establish and adhere to the dates for the submission of the final manuscript(s). As the study nears its completion the supervisor / promoter needs to be provided with a final draft concept document at least 2 months prior to the final submission date provided by the Registrar of student academia.
7. Provide a declaration that the work or research is the original work of the student.
8. Provide a declaration that the work or manuscript has been language edited by a professional person in the field of editing.
9. Undertake to publish as co-author at least the required amount of articles set as prerequisite for the degree within 6 months post graduation. In the case of the lapse of a period of 6 months post-graduation during which time no articles have been published, the supervisor / promoter has the right to publish the material as first author.

**The supervisor / promoter undertakes to:**

1. Establish and maintain a working relationship with the student in which the supervisor / promoter plays the role of manager, tutor and mentor, and the candidate or student takes the responsibility for carrying out the research task .
2. Provide proper feedback in respect of written sections of the work submitted within a mutually agreed upon time.
3. Inform the candidate about the procedures that may affect the course of the research project.
4. Where appropriate, accord to the candidate an equal say in all decisions in respect of the research report.
5. In the case of a dispute submit a report to the Head of Department on the nature and causes of the dispute.

**Signature of student:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Signature of supervisor / promoter:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **B. PLAGIARISM CONTRACT**

I ..... (full names and surname of student) hereby acknowledge that I am aware of the Department of Psychology's interim description and guidelines in respect of plagiarism. I understand what plagiarism involves, and I herewith declare that all written / documented work and material that I submit to my research supervisor / promoter, the Departmental Research Committee, and eventually to the external examiner, is my own work and that where applicable and required, reference has been made to other authors, and sources of ideas. I accept that if I am found guilty of plagiarism I shall avail myself for any disciplinary hearing and steps to be undertaken by the Department of Psychology. I also hereby understand that I may not hold my supervisor / promoter or the Department of Psychology liable in any manner of way if I have been found guilty of this misconduct.

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....