

**CENTRE FOR AFRICA STUDIES
POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR POSTGRADUATE ADMISSIONS,
TEACHING AND RESEARCH**

ADMISSION TO RESEARCH MASTER'S (DISSERTATION)

1. What do we expect of applicants doing an M.A. by research?

The student must meet the level descriptors of NQF Level 9, namely:

Scope of knowledge:

- Specialist knowledge to enable engagement with and critique of current research or practices;
- an advanced scholarship or research in a particular field, discipline or practice.

Knowledge literacy:

- an ability to evaluate current processes of knowledge production and to choose an appropriate process of enquiry for the area of study or practice.

Method and Procedure:

- a command of and ability to design, select and apply appropriate and creative methods, techniques, processes or technologies to complex practical and theoretical problems.

Problem solving:

- an ability to use a wide range of specialised skills in identifying, conceptualising, designing and implementing methods of enquiry to address complex and challenging problems within a field, discipline or practice;
- an understanding of the consequences of any solutions or insights generated within a specialised context.

Ethics and professional practice:

- an ability to make autonomous ethical decisions which affect knowledge production, or complex organisational or professional issues, an ability to critically contribute to the development of ethical standards in a specific context.

Accessing, processing and managing information:

- an ability to design and implement a strategy for the processing and management of information, in order to conduct a comprehensive review of leading and current research in an area of specialisation to produce significant insights.

Producing and communicating information:

- an ability to use the resources of academic, professional/occupational discourses to communicate and defend substantial ideas that are the products of research or development in an area of specialisation²;
- a range of advanced and specialised skills and discourses appropriate to a field/discipline/practice, to communicate to a range of audiences with different levels of knowledge/expertise.

Context and systems:

- an ability to make interventions at an appropriate level within a system, based on an understanding of hierarchical relations within the system, and the ability to address the intended and unintended consequences of interventions.

Management of learning:

- an ability to develop own learning strategies which sustain independent learning and academic or professional development, and can interact effectively within the learning or professional group as a means of enhancing learning.

Accountability:

- an ability to operate independently and take full responsibility for own work, and where appropriate accountability for leading and initiating processes and implementing systems, ensuring good resource management and governance practices.

2. Admission requirements

- The candidate must possess an acceptable methodological qualification (if not, the student will be required to register simultaneously for the methodology module ACS 701).
- The Programme Directorate may allow students in possession of an Honours degree or equivalent qualification in a discipline related to Africa Studies.
- The student must have prior knowledge of an area of Africa Studies at Honours level (specifically in the area of specialisation – at least two relevant modules). If not, students will be required to do additional modules for non-degree purposes.
- The candidate will be required to complete the course, ACS702 (Africa Studies: Theoretical and Conceptual Underpinnings) for non-degree purposes in preparation for the conceptualisation of the research project.
- If the Honours degree was obtained more than four (4) years prior to the application for admission, an oral examination on a prescribed reading list is required.
- The Honours degree **must** include a research component, otherwise the student must simultaneously register for ACS691 or apply for the coursework Master's degree.
- Minimum of 65% for Honours mini-dissertation serves as a guideline for admission (a copy of the latter must be provided).
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) requirements may apply, where relevant.
- Admission is subject to approval by the Programme Directorate.

3. Procedures for application

Applications should be sent to the programme officer (Ms Kamo Dipico, dipicokk@ufs.ac.za).

The following documentation must be completed:

- University application form
- Form DV3 (registration form) (if the student was registered at the UFS the previous year)
- Centre application form

- Deposit slip of application fees (in the case of new students)
- 2 ID/passport Photo's
- ID document/passport (certified)
- CV
- Certified copies of certificates
- Academic record (certified)
- Motivation for applying for Africa Studies (300 words)
- Copy of Honours mini-dissertation (if relevant)
- Research pre-proposal of 10 – 15 pages (see attached pre-proposal guidelines)

4. Phases of admission

The application presupposes two phases, the first a more informal exploratory one and the second, a more formal process.

- Student consults informally with members of the Centre to determine (a) availability and expertise of staff members and (b) to convince the Programme Directorate of student's suitability.
- All students enquiring to do Master's by dissertation, will be provided with documentation regarding the postgraduate requirements, procedures for application, as well as rights and responsibilities of supervisors and supervisees.
- The candidate formally applies and provides all the necessary documentation.
- A student may be required, if deemed necessary, to be called for a panel interview based on the research pre-proposal prior to acceptance into the programme.
- Student registers after notification of successful admission.
- A supervisor is formally appointed by the Centre.
- Contract and plagiarism declaration are signed by both parties (supervisor & supervisee).
- Supervisor provides guidelines and assessment criteria (according to the prescriptions of the Centre) for the writing of research proposals.
- Supervision commences.
- Student presents the formal proposal via PowerPoint.
- Programme Directorate (research proposal committee) approves or refers the proposal back according to standardised criteria.
- Regular follow up and written feedback are maintained (e.g. progress reports from supervisor).
- Student feedback on the quality of supervision is periodically elicited via questionnaires and/or focus group discussions.
- Within six months of first registration, a shortened version of the proposal is prepared for approval by the Faculty Title Registration Committee / Faculty Board and (internal and external) examiners are appointed.
- Should a student fail to submit a satisfactory research proposal within the first year of registration, the programme directorate may relinquish any further responsibility towards the student and withdraw approval for further registration.

5. Student support and academic development

Although Master's study requires autonomy of learning and writing, the Centre and Faculty do offer some support, by referring students (where necessary) to various methodological, writing and language development facilities on campus such as UDRAW (Unit for the Development of Rhetorical Academic Writing).

6. Assessment

Internal and external examination in accordance with Faculty and University regulations and procedures. Courses which may be required as part of the admissions requirements are for non-degree purposes and are not evaluated as part of the final degree.