

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

**2014**

**ADMISSION TO DOCTORAL STUDIES**

**1. What do we expect of doctoral applicants?**

The student must meet the level descriptors of NQF Level 10. This implies that high priority is afforded to the ability to do independent research and the student's potential to make a substantial (and original) contribution to the discipline is viewed as imperative. According to the relevant level descriptors, learners must be able to demonstrate the following:

**Scope of knowledge:**

- expertise and critical knowledge in an area at the forefront of the field, discipline or practice;
- the ability to conceptualise new research initiatives, and create new knowledge or practice.

**Knowledge literacy:**

- an ability to contribute to scholarly debates around theories of knowledge and processes of knowledge production in an area of study or practice.

**Method and Procedure:**

- an ability to develop new methods, techniques and processes, systems or technologies in original, creative and innovative ways appropriate to specialized and complex contexts.

**Problem solving:**

- an ability to apply specialist knowledge and theory in critically reflexive, creative and novel ways to address complex practical and theoretical problems.

**Ethics and professional practice:**

- an ability to identify, address and manage emerging ethical issues, and to advance processes of ethical decision-making, including monitoring and evaluation of the consequences of these decisions where appropriate.

**Accessing, processing and managing information:**

- an ability to make independent judgements about managing incomplete or inconsistent information or data in an iterative process of analysis and synthesis, for the development of significant original insights into new complex and abstract ideas, information or issues.

**Producing and communicating information:**

- an ability to produce substantial, independent, in-depth and publishable work which meets international standards, is considered to be new or innovative by peers, and makes a significant contribution to the discipline, field, or practice;
- an ability to develop a communication strategy to disseminate and defend research, strategic and policy initiatives and their implementation to specialist and non-specialist audiences using the full resources of an academic and professional or occupational discourse.

**Context and systems:**

- an understanding of theoretical underpinnings in the management of complex systems to achieve systemic change;
- an ability to independently design, sustain and manage change within a system or systems.

**Management of learning:**

- an ability to demonstrate intellectual independence, research leadership and management of research and research development in a discipline, field or practice.

**Accountability:**

- an ability to operate independently and take full responsibility for his or her work, and where appropriate to lead, oversee and be held ultimately accountable for the overall governance of processes and systems.

**2. Admission procedures**

- Initially students consult informally with the Programme Management to determine (a) availability and expertise on a specific topic, and (b) to convince the Programme Management of student's eligibility.
- All students enquiring to do doctoral studies will be provided with documentation regarding the postgraduate requirements, procedures for application, and format/criteria of research essay (pre-proposal).
- All students interested in pursuing PhD studies may be required to write the TALPS literacy test should it be deemed necessary by the Programme Management.
- A promoter (supervisor for a PhD) is appointed by the Programme Management. Both parties sign a supervisor/supervisee contract and plagiarism declaration.
- During the first year of the PhD registration, the admitted student must (1) complete any courses/seminars (occasional study) identified by the promoter and Programme Management if applicable, as well as (2) produce and orally defend a comprehensive research proposal before a panel of specialists. Should a student fail to do so, the

Programme Management may decide to relinquish any further responsibility towards the student and refuse continued registration and (3) after a successful oral defence the student must prepare an abbreviated version of the research proposal for approval by the Faculty Title Registration Committee/Faculty Board and internal and external supervisors/promoters/examiners are appointed.

- Regular follow up and feedback are maintained (e.g. progress reports by promoters).
- Student feedback on the quality of supervision may be periodically elicited via questionnaires/focus group discussions and/or personal communication.

### **Admission requirements**

- Only students with a proven research background and in possession of a master's degree or equivalent qualification will be considered. **Evidence of the completion of a full dissertation would be a strong recommendation.**
- A minimum mark of 65% for the Master's dissertation or 70% for the extended mini-dissertation (a copy of either must be provided for perusal) will serve as a guideline for admission.
- A score of 4 (less risk / 60-74%) or 5 (little to no risk / 75%) in the TALPS test.
- Admitted students must possess an acceptable methodological qualification (if not, the student will be required to register simultaneously for the methodology module ACS701).
- Admitted students may be required to register for the core theory module in Africa Studies (ACS702) if applicable, which is offered in the first semester (January-June).
- Prior knowledge in a discipline or area related to Africa Studies would be a strong recommendation. The student must have prior knowledge at Master's level specifically in the area of proposed specialisation (at least **three** relevant modules). If not, students may be required to complete appropriate additional modules already part of the curriculum for non-degree purposes.
- In addition to the Africa Studies core module, should a student not be sufficiently equipped in other areas of theory and methodology in his/her indicated areas(s) of specialisation, the promoter may deem it necessary to develop a dedicated seminar series based on a core reading list to help the student build the requisite capacity towards the development of the research proposal. The facilitation of such a process is one of the key responsibilities of the promoter and is not part of the formal curriculum.
- Should a student be deemed to have PhD potential, but insufficient background in fields of specialisation within Africa Studies at Master's level, he or she may be

directed towards the MA by full dissertation (ACS700) or structured MA as prerequisite for PhD application.

- Any courses/seminars which may be required as part of the admissions requirements are for non-degree purposes (occasional study) and are not evaluated as part of the final degree, i.e. they do not count towards the credit load of the PhD degree.
- Admission is subject to approval by the Programme Management (and where necessary the input of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) office).
- The following **documentation** must be provided:
  - Completed university application form
  - Completed DV3 form (registration form) (if the student was registered at the UFS in the previous year)
  - Completed Centre application form
  - Deposit slip of application fees included (in the case of new students)
  - 2 ID/passport Photo's
  - ID document/passport (certified)
  - CV
  - Certified copies of certificates
  - Academic record (certified)
  - Detailed information regarding all course content - requested by student from relevant school or university. Note that this information must be officially produced by the relevant institutions and not be compiled by the applicant him/herself.
  - Motivation letter addressing: (1) how the chosen field of research relates to the previous qualifications and training of the candidate; and (2) the specific abilities and capabilities the candidate has to empower him/herself to do the chosen research.
  - 15 Page research pre-proposal/essay (see guidelines in separate document). Note that the pre-proposal, although a draft document, must sufficiently cover theoretical and methodological aspects of the study. It must also make a strong and coherent argument regarding the theoretical and empirical contribution (relevance) of the study to a specific discipline and the interdisciplinary field of Africa Studies. Applicants must therefore demonstrate original ideas related to their proposed projects.
  - Copy of Master's dissertation or comprehensive mini-dissertation.
  - TWO letters of recommendation from university professors, to be sent directly to the contact address below.
- Applications should be sent to the Programme Officer (Ms Kamo Dipico, ([dipicokk@ufs.ac.za](mailto:dipicokk@ufs.ac.za)) or directly to the Programme Director, Dr Stephanie Cawood ([cawoods@ufs.ac.za](mailto:cawoods@ufs.ac.za))

### **3. Student support and development**

Although doctoral study requires autonomy of research 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. At this level the implementation of mentorships are also considered.

### **4. Assessment**

The thesis is examined internally and externally in accordance with Faculty and University regulations and procedures. The assessment procedure follows two phases, 1) The assessment of the thesis and 2) An oral defence of the thesis before the panel of appointed internal and external examiners. The oral examination takes place after the submission of the thesis. The student is considered to have passed if both phases have been successfully completed.

As mentioned before, courses/seminars which may be required as part of the admission requirements are for non-degree purposes and are not evaluated as part of the final degree.