

School of Applied Human Sciences
Discipline of Psychology
University of KwaZulu-Natal Pietermaritzburg

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH THESIS/PROJECT PROCESS

Introduction

The aim of the Masters thesis, and the Honours Research project process is for students to gain experience of research by focussing on a chosen area of specialist study, reviewing the available knowledge in the field, devising methods to describe and investigate issues of social and psychological interest, and evaluating their research by the criteria used in the field. These research processes are scholarly undertakings, and students should choose topics for study that facilitate the achievement of academic excellence.

Each student will need to approach a potential supervisor with whom to work during the course of the year.

Students are strongly encouraged to choose research topics in the fields of interest and research activities of staff members so that they can enter into a close and collaborative relationship with a mentor. A brief description of staff research interests will be made available to students early in the year. These can also be viewed on the Discipline of Psychology website.

1. MASTERS

Students are required to present a dissertation, or mini-thesis as an integral part of the Masters course. This involves conducting a piece of research on a select area of interest, and presenting it in accordance with UKZN regulations for Masters theses. It is highly recommended that the thesis be fully completed before the internship starts. Regulations of the HPCSA stipulate that all requirements for qualification as a psychologist must be completed in three years. To facilitate working within a very tight set of deadlines, students are advised to participate in a research project of a staff member.

Topics and supervisor requests are to be finalised by 10.00 on 1 **February**. Students should submit this information to the Post Graduate administrator (Sbonelo Duma).

This dissertation counts 50% of the total marks for the Masters degree for CCE students (70 pages, 20 000 words), and 60% for the Masters in Research Psychology degree (90 pages, 28 000 words).

The written proposal and ethics form must be submitted on **11 March** to be reviewed by the Discipline of Psychology and then the School Higher Degrees Committee. Research proposals and ethics approval must be obtained from the School Higher Degrees Committee and the Research Ethics Committee before collecting research data. Students may be required to present their proposals for approval to a panel.

Students will be required to present regular reports on theses on pre-arranged dates (see schedule below).

2. HONOURS

In the Honours level, students are able to choose either a Literature Review and Proposal (LRP) for 16 credit points, or a full Research Project (RP) for 32 credit points. If students choose the former (LRP), they will be required to take an additional 16 CP course.

Topics and supervisor allocations are to be finalised by 10.00 am on **1 February**. Students should submit this information to the Post Graduate administrator (Sbonelo Duma) by this date.

OPTION 1: The Literature Review and Proposal (LRP) (PSYC 702 16CP)

The LRP comprises 16 credit points. Students should therefore ensure that they devote a corresponding amount of time and energy to their project work, that is, approximately 150-175 hours or about 5 hours a week for the seven and a half months between March and the middle of October. Please see the deadlines at the end of this information sheet.

Honours students can expect to receive a maximum of 10 hours of individual supervision for the LRP including the supervisor's time to review drafts. This LRP form of the project begins by writing a research proposal (*see *Writing the proposal* below). The deadline for submitting the proposal for assessment is **11 March 2013**, however a revised form of the proposal must be submitted later in the year, after work on the literature review.

Your project proposal will be assessed and will count towards your course mark for the Research Design course.

A draft form of the Literature Review is to be submitted on **12 April 2013**. A full draft of both the proposal and the Lit Review is due to the supervisor on **19 August 2013**. The final Literature Review and a revised form of the proposal are to be submitted on the **11 October 2013**. Extensions will not be granted except under extraordinary conditions. Extensions may delay graduation and incur fees for continuing registration. Details of the deadlines are attached.

The final literature review should be approximately 10 pages in length, 1.5 spacing and 12 point font, excluding the revised proposal. The work must comply in all respects with the style requirements of the American Psychological Association Publication manual 5th ed. (APA, 2001) - see also the revised Style Guide of the Discipline of Psychology – available on our website. Excessively long reports will be penalised. You will be penalised if you do not adhere to this formatting requirement. Two examiners, including the supervisor, will mark each LRP and the marks will be moderated by the External Examiner. Marked reports will be returned to students once the examination process has been completed.

General project meetings/seminars will be held throughout the year to assist students manage the LRP (details listed below).

OPTION 2: The Research Project (RP) (PSYC7RPHY PY (32CP)

The RP project comprises a quarter of the Honours requirements (32 of 128 credit points). Students should therefore ensure that they devote a corresponding amount of time and energy to their project work; that is, approximately 300-350 hours or about 10 hours a week for the seven and a half months between March and the middle of October. Honours students can expect to receive a maximum of 20 hours of individual supervision for RP per year, including the

supervisor's time to review drafts. Your project begins by writing a research proposal (*see *Writing the proposal* below). The deadline for submitting the proposal for assessment is **11 March 2013**. Your project proposal will be assessed and will count towards your course mark for the Research Design course.

A draft form of the Literature Review is to be submitted on **12 April 2013**. The final project must be submitted by the **11 October 2013**.

The research project should be 40 pages in length (14 000 words in total), 1.5 spacing and 12 point font. You will be penalised if you do not adhere to this formatting requirement. Extensions will not be granted except under extraordinary conditions. Extensions may delay graduation and incur fees for continuing registration.

Details of the RP deadlines are attached. Two examiners, including the supervisor, will mark each RP and the marks will be moderated by the External Examiner. Marked reports will be returned to students once the examination process has been completed.

General project meetings/seminars will be held throughout the year to assist students manage the RP (details listed below).

GENERAL ISSUES FOR LPR AND RP

In addition to the proposal procedure, LRP and RP students are required to submit their research ideas for ethical review through the School Higher Degrees Committee and the Research Ethics Committee. For RP students, the project needs to be formally approved before data collection can proceed. A form for this procedure can be found on <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/Human-Social-Science-Ethics.aspx> If you put your cursor over the point Application Form: Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics 2012

Your full research proposal must be used to complete this ethics review form, which should then be submitted to your supervisor according to the schedule of deadlines available when the course starts.

HONOURS AND MASTERS: Writing the proposal

The first step in conducting the research process is to write a research proposal. A seminar will be held at the start of the term to discuss the structure of the proposal. You will then work on the proposal under the guidance of your supervisor. You are expected to read the following texts when compiling your research proposal and ethics form:

Van der Riet, M. & Durrheim, K. (2006). Putting design into practice: Writing and evaluating research proposals. In M. Terre Blanche, K. Durrheim & D. Painter (Eds.) (2006) *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (2nd ed.) (pp. 80-111). Cape Town: UCT Press

Wassenaar, D. (2006) Ethical issues in social science research. In M. Terre Blanche, K. Durrheim & D. Painter (Eds.) (2006) *Research in practice: Applied methods for the social sciences* (2nd ed.) (pp. 60-77). Cape Town: UCT Press

Both Honours and Masters students: your proposal must be submitted using the Proposal form which will be emailed to you.

In addition to completing the research proposal form, all students (Honours LRP and RP; and Masters) will be required to complete an Ethics form. However, only the Honours RP, and Masters thesis option will be required to submit their research proposal for **ethical review** by the School Higher Degree Committee. Your project needs to be formally approved before data collection can proceed. To prepare you for this, within the Honours Research Design course, you will participate in a workshop on *Ethical issues in research* on 5 March (HONOURS) and 6 March (Masters). For this seminar you need to:

a) complete module 1 (introduction to research) and module 4.1 (informed consent) on the TRREE website (<http://elearning.trree.org/index.php>). (login and registration required).

BRING THE CERTIFICATE SHOWING THAT YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE COURSE WITH YOU TO THE SEMINAR.

b) complete the UKZN Humanities and Social Science ethics form, which is available on <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/Human-Social-Science-Ethics.aspx>. If you put your cursor over the point Application Form: Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics 2012

c) At the seminar be ready to discuss your own project and issues in completing the UKZN ethics form.

Any concerns or problems with the Ethics form can be taken to the second *Ethical issues in research* seminar. Your ethics form must then be submitted **with** your final proposal on 11 March 2013

Writing the thesis/project

General project meetings/seminars will be held throughout the year to assist students to manage their research projects (details listed below). It is strongly advised that students adhere to the following schedule if they are to meet the deadlines.

Please make use of the Psychology *Style Guide* for guidance on appropriate formats for writing the project and using APA for referencing (this is available on the website: <http://psychology.ukzn.ac.za>). Staff assessing your proposal, literature review and your project have these 'rules' in mind when they read your writing. **Deviations from APA format, and proposal or project/thesis/proposal lengths will be heavily penalised by examiners.**

Please note that the university has very strict plagiarism policies. You are required to register with Turnitin https://turnitin.com/login_page.asp and check all your assignments and essays and your **research project** before sending for supervision or marking.

Dr Mary van der Riet
January 2013

Schedule of Seminars and Deadlines for Thesis/Project process 2013				
		Honours	Masters	Student responsibility
28 Jan (Mon)	12.00 – 16.30	9.00 – 10:30 HONOURS INTRO PM/DRW 11:30 Staff & student intro. Staff describe their Honours courses Honours registration	9.00 – 10.30 MASTERS INTRODUCTION GCL 11.00 Intro to CCE (GCL/TS), Research M (KD/LL/MvdR/MQ); SARETI (DRW) Masters registration	
29 Jan (Tues)	9.00 – 10.00 10.30 – 12.00 12.30 – 15.00	The nature of the research project/thesis (Group splits: Honours MvdR; Masters GCL/TS) Choosing a topic: ALL STAFF present interests Consult staff re topics		
30 Jan (Wed)	8.30 – 9.30 10.00 – 11.20 11.20 – 11.30 11.35 – 12.30 12.30 – 15.00	Taking a research interest to a topic (GCL) ALL Preparing a research proposal (MvdR) ALL Introduction to the research design course (MvdR) (ALL) Reading at a postgraduate level (LL) (Honours) Consult staff re topics		
31 Jan (Thurs)	8.30 – 10.00 10.30 – 11.30 11.35 – 12.30 13.00 – 15.00 12.30 – 15.00	Research ethics (DRW) ALL Student-supervisor relationship, authorship etc (MvdR) ALL Writing at a postgraduate level (VO'N) (Honours) Library orientation (Ms Renee Damonse) Multi-media classroom (Honours) Consult staff re topics		
1 Feb (Fri)	8.30 – 9.30 9.30 – 9.45 10.00 10.00 – 12.00	Methodologies for research (KD) ALL Tutoring opportunities in DoP (VO'N & MQ) (Honours & Research Masters) Requests for supervisors and research topics due Library orientation (Ms Renee Damonse) Multi-media classroom (Honours)		Hand in topics & possible supervisors

5 Feb (Tues)	8.30-10.00	Research design seminar 1	Students work on proposal
12 Feb (Tues)	8.30-10.00	Research design seminar 2	
14 Feb (Thurs)	12.30	First proposal draft to supervisor (all students: Honours LRP/RP and Masters)	
19 Feb (Tues)	8.30-10.00	Research design seminar 3	
26 Feb (Tues)	8.30-10.00	Research design seminar 4	
27 Feb (Wed)		<i>SAHS seminar on HOW TO DEVELOP A RESEARCH PROPOSAL</i>	
Honours 5 March Masters 6 March	8.30 -10.00	Research design seminar 5 ETHICS (Nivedhna Singh) COMPUSLORY 5 March Honours 6 March Masters	
11 Mar (Mon)	10.15	Final proposal and ethics form in (ALL STUDENTs Honours LRP, RP and Masters)	Student works on feedback & prepares final proposal
		Proposal & ethics review by Psychology and School (Proposals reviewed by two staff members, changes suggested and made under supervision of supervisor)	
12 Mar (Tues)	8.30-10.00	Research design seminar 6	
19 Mar	8.30-10.00	Research design seminar 7	
19 Mar		<i>SAHS Workshop on Sources, references, end notes and literature review (Dr Peter Rule)</i>	
From 20 March		Feedback to students on proposals	Student works on corrections for submission to college
26 Mar (Tues)	8.30-10.00	Research design seminar 8	Student works on lit review
		VAC 29 March to 7 April	Student works on lit review
9 April (Tues)		Research design seminar 9	
12 April (Fri)	12.15	First draft of LITERATURE REVIEW due to supervisor (all students: Honours LRP/RP and Masters)	
16 Apr (Tues)	10.30-12.00	Research design seminar 10	
22 April		No seminars PMB grad 22 and 23 April	Student does data collection

		Data collection needs to start at least 3 weeks before June exams (ie at the end of April) otherwise you will not complete in time	Student does data collection
30 April	8.30-10.00	Research design seminar 11 (VS)	
14 May		<i>SAHS Workshop on Qualitative research methodology (Prof Nwoye)</i>	
21 May (Tues)	8.30-10.00	Seminar: Writing & presenting research reports (MvdR) COMPULSORY FOR ALL POST GRADS	
23 May	12.00	Report on DATA COLLECTION DUE to supervisor	Meet with supervisor to plan data analysis process
STUDY BREAK AND EXAMS: 23 May-12 June			
14 June		First draft of METHODOLOGY DUE to supervisor	
19 June		<i>SAHS Workshop on QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</i>	
Supp exams 18 -25 June VACATION 26 June-23 July			Consolidate data analysis Write up: Results & Discussion sections Revise: Lit review & Methodology
Semester 2 29 July		Results and discussion draft to supervisor	prepare Project draft
14 August		<i>SAHS WORKSHOP ON DATA ANALYSIS (REGRESSION, FACTOR) Prof Steven Collings</i>	
19 August		First full project draft to supervisor (Honours RP and Masters) Honours LRP: Draft of Lit Review and revised Proposal	
5 Sept		SAHS: ANNUAL STUDENT CONFERENCE	
28 Sept		<i>SAHS WORKSHOP on DATA ANALYSIS: thematic analysis and grounded theory</i>	
11 Oct		Final thesis/project/LRP due	