

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

D.14

TITLE: POLICY: POSTGRADUATE PROGRAM OFFERING

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I POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 This policy governs all processes leading to the award of higher degrees at the Hugenote Kollege, ensuring that it meet local and international expectations on academic and procedural rigour and integrity.

1.2 The policy also seeks to accommodate expectations that flow from constitutional and other contemporary South African imperatives, such as:

- 1.2.1 The right to fair treatment;
- 1.2.2 An open and transparent flow of information;
- 1.2.3 The need to promote equity;
- 1.2.4 Active development of historically disadvantaged individuals; and
- 1.2.5 Improvement in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

2 PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

2.1 The purpose of this policy, together with the standard operational procedures set out in a related document is to provide a framework for the administration, governance and quality management of higher degree studies and programmes at the Hugenote Kollege. The framework aims to:

- 2.1.1 Establish rational and transparent decision-making processes around the governance and administration of higher degree student matters;
- 2.1.2 Provide for the generation and capture of relevant institutional management information relating to higher degree students and programmes;
- 2.1.3 Ensure the highest levels of quality care with regard to higher degree studies;
- 2.1.4 Clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of higher degree students and supervisors;
- 2.1.5 Ensure fairness and transparency in the treatment of higher degree students and in addressing their concerns; and
- 2.1.6 Ensure adequate capacity development for the support of higher degree students.

3 SCOPE OF THE COLLEGE'S HIGHER DEGREES

This policy outlines generic expectations for all the College's honour's, master's and doctoral degrees. Professional body requirements and disciplinary-specific requirements may further modify these expectations, subject to complying with the relevant approvals process. However, this policy sets benchmarks that are not to be relaxed, though they may be tightened by School-specific regulations.

4 HONOURS DEGREES AND POST GRADUATE DIPLOMAS

The Bachelor of Honours and Post Graduate Diplomas are at NQF level 8 and grants access to a Master's degree upon successful completion (note that access to a Master's degree at Huguenote College requires an average of 60% during the Honours or Post Graduate Diploma studies).

Applicants must have a high level of proficiency in English or Afrikaans (reading and writing), be computer literate and have internet access and email, all of which are necessary for communication and research purposes.

To qualify for admission to the Honours Degree or Post Graduate Diploma, applicants must meet ONE of the following criteria:

1. An accredited Bachelor degree or equivalent qualification in the field of study.
or
2. An accredited Bachelor's degree in a non-cognate field, accompanied by an accredited Certificate (60 credits) or Diploma (120 credits) in the field of study.
3. Applicants must have maintained an average of at least 60 per cent in their undergraduate degree. (This relates to degrees earned at South African universities;

The BTh-Honours programme consists of six structured research modules. The sixth module consists of two sections. In Section A, students are guided in the establishment of a well-motivated and academically sound research proposal. In section B of the module, students are expected to complete a thoroughly researched and well-reasoned research thesis on any topic of their choice in their research field. The research thesis should cover approximately 70 A4 pages in 12 pt Ariel and in 1.5 line spacing.

The duration of the programme is 1-year full time or 2 years if taken part-time.

5 MASTER'S DEGREES

5.1 The College may offer three distinct types of master's programmes:

5.1.1 Research master's degrees, for which the successful completion of a research dissertation is the sole or major academic requirement for graduation; the dissertation (with or without an associated oral component) constitutes 100% of the requirements for the degree.

5.1.2 Coursework master's degrees, for which the minor dissertation (with or without an associated oral component) normally constitutes a minimum of 50% of the requirements for the degree (90 out of a total of 180 credit points). A deviation below 50% requires specific and compelling reasons, with 33.3% being the absolute lower bound. Completion of compulsory formal, taught courses or modules constitutes the remaining part of the requirements of the degree.

5.1.3 Professional master's programmes, for which the research component may be developed and offered in the form of an independent study accounting for at least 25% of the requirements of the degree (45 out of a total of 180 credit points), in line with the applicable standards of the relevant professional body.

5.2 The scope of a research master's degree (as governed by HEQSF qualification descriptors) is as follows:

5.2.1 A research master's degree equips the student with specialized knowledge of the field and field-appropriate methodologies;

5.2.2 It utilizes a self-directed research project as the primary pedagogical vehicle for achieving the objectives of the degree;

5.2.3 The student is not generally expected to make an original theoretical or fundamental contribution to the field of knowledge;

5.2.4 The student is required to demonstrate proficiency in research methods and the ability to apply these methods and work independently;

5.2.5 The core output of a research master's degree is a dissertation in the form of a written document in an appropriate format (with or without an associated oral component), reporting on the various aspects of the research project; and which accounts for 100% of the credits for the degree (see 4.1.1);

5.2.6 Coursework may be set for pedagogical purposes but cannot carry credits counting toward the award of the degree; and

5.2.7 In addition to the dissertation, each master's candidate must submit to the supervisor at least one piece of work in a format suitable for submission to a peer reviewed publication, with a view to possible publication.

5.3 The scope of a coursework master's degree (as governed by HEQSF qualification descriptors) is as follows:

5.3.1 A coursework master's degree equips the student with specialized knowledge of the field and field-appropriate methodologies;

5.3.2 It utilises both coursework and a self-directed research project as the pedagogical vehicles for achieving the objectives of the degree;

5.3.3 The student is not generally expected to make an original theoretical or fundamental contribution to the field of knowledge;

5.3.4 The student is required to demonstrate proficiency in research methods and the ability to apply these methods and work independently;

5.3.5 The core output of the research component is a minor dissertation in the form of a written document, in an appropriate format, reporting on the various aspects of the research project; and which normally accounts for 50% of the credits for the degree (see 4.1.2 and the provision for less than 50%); and is correspondingly more limited in scope than a research master's dissertation, while meeting the same standards of academic rigour;

5.3.6 Coursework normally carries up to 50% of the credits for the degree (see 4.1.2) and may be assessed in a form which meets discipline-specific norms and standards, but is in keeping with the College's relevant assessment and moderation policy/policies; and

5.3.7 In addition to the minor dissertation and completion of coursework modules, each master's candidate must have submitted to the supervisor at least one piece of work in a format suitable for submission to a peer reviewed publication, with a view to possible publication.

5.4 The scope of a professional master's degree (as governed by HEQSF regulations) is as follows:

5.4.1 A professional master's degree equips the student with a high level of theoretical ability and intellectual independence and the ability to relate.

6 DOCTORAL DEGREES

6.1 The College may offer three types of doctoral programmes:

6.1.1 Doctorate by thesis which could be in the traditional format or a collection of essays or articles;

6.1.2 Professional doctoral degrees; and

6.1.3 Higher doctoral degree.

6.2 The scope of a doctoral degree by thesis (as governed by HEQSF qualification descriptors) is as follows:

6.2.1 It utilises a self-directed research project in order to achieve the objective of the qualification, requiring the candidate to undertake research at the most advanced academic levels;

6.2.2 The doctoral thesis makes a significant and original contribution to the body of knowledge in the discipline or field.

6.2.3 The output of a doctoral degree takes the form either of a conventional thesis or a thesis by collection of essays or articles, through which the student reports on the various aspects of the research project;

6.2.4 In addition, each doctoral candidate must have submitted to the supervisor at least two pieces of work in a format suitable for submission to a peer reviewed publication, with a view to possible publication.

6.3 The scope of a professional doctoral degree (as governed by HEQSF qualification descriptors) is as follows:

6.3.1 A professional doctoral degree provides for high-level education and training for a career in the professions or industry;

6.3.2 It utilises a combination of coursework and advanced research in order to achieve the objective of the qualification, with the research component consisting of at least 60% of the qualification;

6.3.3 The student is required to demonstrate the ability to integrate theory with practice through the application of theoretical knowledge to highly complex problems in a wide range of professional contexts.

6.4 The higher doctoral degree is a special award to individuals who have demonstrated distinguished scholarship in one or more disciplines of study. The following criteria apply:

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6.4.1 A candidate must have demonstrated extraordinary scholarship, evident in a distinguished record of research in the form of published works and/or other scholarly contributions.

6.5.2 Such research is judged by leading international experts to have made an independent and exceptional contribution to one or more disciplines of study.

7 INTERDISCIPLINARY DEGREES

7.1 An interdisciplinary degree is one whose formal foundation is not found in just one home discipline; instead, it usually spreads across a combination of two or more disciplines. The Academic Committee in cooperation with the relevant Schools determine which School should act as the host or home school for the purpose of registration. In general, supervisors from all relevant departments should participate in guiding the study.

7.2 In the case of interdisciplinary degrees, the Dean of the home School (i.e. the one originally enrolling the student and registering the study), in consultation with the Programme Coordinators concerned and/or supervisors, determines whether the applicant's prior study provides a sufficient foundation for the proposed master's or doctoral study, and may require a supplementary study programme as a condition for admission. Assessment of prior knowledge (which may be an essay or an oral assessment) may be set as a formal prerequisite for admission or continuation. The Dean concerned (as well as other deans if involved) signs the application for admission and indicates any conditions that are specified. The research proposal is approved by all supervisors concerned, and is then processed according to the normal procedures in the appointed School. Specific conditions laid down for the programme must be stated in the research proposal.

8 ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS TO THE COLLEGE'S HIGHER DEGREES

8.1 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 (with a minimum of 96 credits at level 8), or a postgraduate diploma, in the relevant discipline.

8.2 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 their previous degree with an average mark of at least 65%.

8.3 If refused admission, the applicant has the right to request written reasons from the Programme Coordinator and may appeal those to the Dean in writing. If the Dean upholds the refusal, the applicant may appeal to the Rector, whose decision is final.

8.4 The applications of students who do not satisfy the formal entry requirements for a specific higher degree programme may be considered in terms of the Policy: Recognition of Prior Learning to establish the student's suitability for enrolment in the envisaged degree, or any additional requirements that the student may need to fulfil.

8.5 A student who fails a research master's or a doctoral degree will need to reapply for the particular degree and register a new topic if he/she wishes to re-attempt the degree. In the case of a student who fails

the minor dissertation of a coursework master's degree, he/she will be given only one more opportunity to attempt the minor dissertation on a new topic, provided that the qualification can still be completed within the prescribed maximum period, with the possibility of an allowable extension. A failed master's dissertation (full or minor), investigative part of the research masters or doctoral thesis may not be resubmitted for examination.

9 ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

For all academic and most operational purposes, the point of contact of postgraduate students is their supervisors and School.

10 SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

The provision of adequate supervision and support of higher degree research resides with Schools and relevant support divisions. Specific structures and processes are described in the relevant standard operational procedures.

11 ASSESSMENT

Assessment of Higher Degrees is done in accordance with the Policy: Assessment. Specific structures and processes relevant to the assessment of Higher Degrees are described in the relevant standard operational procedures.

12 ETHICS

12.1 The accountability for research ethics resides in the Academic Committee which may delegate responsibility in line with principles of governance.

12.2 All higher degree students (and supervisors) are expected to familiarize themselves with and adhere to the Code and Research Ethics. For this purpose, all master's and doctoral research proposals must receive ethics clearance before a project can commence.

12.3 Deans are accountable for ensuring that all research activities in their Schools have undergone the necessary scrutiny and clearance in regard to considerations of research ethics.

13 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and safety matters attendant on all research activities are subject to the College's Policy on Occupational Safety and are the responsibility of persons and bodies listed in those policies, accountability also being assigned in accordance with the policy.

14 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

All higher degree research projects are subject to the University's Policy on Intellectual Property, and students are required to signal their adherence to this policy as part of the annual registration process.

I5 CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE QUALIFICATION

Certification of compliance with the requirements of the qualification is in accordance with the Policy: Certification of the College, with due regard to the responsibility of the candidate, supervisor, relevant School administration officer and the Dean of the School.

I6 RELATED DOCUMENTS

HEQC Institutional Audit Criteria

HEQC Guidelines for Best Practice in Research Management

Higher Education Qualifications Framework