



Higher Degrees Administration: Structures and Processes

Document number	
Custodian/Responsible executive	Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Responsible for Postgraduate Studies
Responsible division	Postgraduate School
Status	Amended approved by Senate on 23 March 2009 Amended approved by Senate on 17 November 2010 Amended approved by Senate on 17 November 2016
Approved by	Senate
Date of approval	17 November 2016
Amendments	1st set of amendments approved by Senate 23 March 2009 2nd set of amendments approved by Senate 17 November 2010 3rd set of Amendments presented to Senate on 17 November 2016
Dates of amendments	23 March 2009; 17 November 2010; 17 November 2016
Review date	November 2018 (2 year review cycle)

Related documents

UJ documents (e.g. Policies, Regulations, Guidelines, Contracts)	Other (e.g. Legislation, DoE and HEQC directives and guidelines)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Degrees Policy • Faculty Regulations • Academic Regulations • Academic Programme Policy • Code of Academic and Research Ethics. • Guidelines Authorship: Research Output • UJ Guidelines on theses or dissertations in article or essay format • Policy on Intellectual Property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEQC Institutional Audit Criteria • HEQC Guidelines for Best Practice in Research Management • Higher Education Qualifications Framework

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor Student Agreement • Policy: Student Plagiarism • Policy: Recognition of Prior Learning • Policy: Access and Selection • Occupational Safety Policy 	
Stakeholders affected by this document (units and divisions who should be familiar with it):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty Administrators • Central Academic Administration • Academic Departments • Higher Degree Students
Website address of this document:	Intranet

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FOREWORD

This document contains the structures and processes relevant for the regulation and administration of higher degrees in the University of Johannesburg (“the University”). This document together with the University’s Higher Degree Policy provide a framework for the administration, governance and quality management of higher degree studies and programmes at the University. Individual faculties may enact additional rules to address requirements specific to them, subject to approval by Senate.

For the purposes of this document, the term *higher degrees* refers to studies, research, or programmes at the master’s and/or doctoral level, equivalent to level 9 and 10 of the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF).

Copies of this document are available from the University’s website.

This document must be read in conjunction with the Higher Degrees Policy, Research scope of Master’s, Honours and 480 Credits Bachelor’s Degrees, and the University’s Academic Regulations, specifically those sections of the Regulations dealing with master’s and doctoral degrees.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION / DESCRIPTION
Senate Higher Degrees Committee (SHDC)	The SHDC , which is a subcommittee of Senate, considers in detail recommendations from the faculties on higher degree-related matters and advises Senate accordingly.
Faculty Higher Degrees Committee (FHDC)	The Faculty Higher Degrees Committee is a subcommittee of the Board of Faculty that has the delegated responsibility for the management of aspects relating to higher degrees at faculty level.
Faculty Higher Degrees Assessment Committee (FHDAC)	Ad hoc or permanent subcommittee of the FHDC that considers matters related to the assessment of minor dissertations, dissertations and theses and make recommendations to the FHDC and Board of Faculty in this regard.
Executive Dean's Office	The Dean's Office (including the HFA, faculty officer/administrator and his/her staff) is responsible for the administrative structure supporting operations and functions associated with higher degree studies.
Head of Faculty Administration (HFA)	The HFA is finally responsible for the administrative and support functions at faculty level.
Recommendation	Implies no final decision-making authority, but is a necessary step for approval (at a higher level). Recommendation requires substantive consideration informed by insight into a full set of documentation.
Approval	Implies full and final decision-making authority (necessary and sufficient), and requires substantive consideration informed by insight into a full set of documentation.
Ratification	Implies full and final decision-making authority (necessary and sufficient). Differs from "approval" in that it is usually exercised on the basis of insight into only a summary of the relevant documentation while retaining the right to consider all relevant documentation (and the duty to do so where necessary). Because it is in practice more cursory than "approval", ratification typically requires <i>at least one</i> earlier recommendation made on the basis of a substantive consideration informed by insight into a full set of documentation.
For noting	Except in extraordinary circumstances, no decision-making authority associated with this step, but may refer matters back for further consideration.

PART A: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1 A summary of committees and structures and their administrative responsibilities

- 1.1 The **University Senate**, which formally approves, ratifies and/or notes any decision referred to it by the Senate Higher Degrees Committee (SHDC). For reasons of practicality, Senate may also devolve some of these responsibilities to Senex, or to the Vice-Chancellor or his/her nominee. In addition, Senate may refer any matters relating to higher degree research or degree programmes to the SHDC for consideration.
- 1.2 The **SHDC**, which is a subcommittee of Senate, considers in detail recommendations from the faculties on higher degree-related matters and advises Senate accordingly.
- 1.3 The **Faculty Board** is the principal custodian of academic quality in regard to higher degree programmes in the faculty, and is expected to formally establish appropriate structures or mandate existing ones to assist the faculty in exercising this responsibility.
- 1.4 The Faculty Higher Degrees Committee (FHDC) is a subcommittee of the Board of Faculty that has the delegated responsibility for the management of all aspects relating to higher degrees at faculty level. Decisions taken by the FHDC are submitted to the Faculty Board for ratification and to the SHDC for noting or approval, as is applicable.
- 1.5 A separate **Faculty Higher Degree Assessment Committee (FHDAC)** may be established as a subcommittee of the FHDC and entrusted with the responsibility of considering assessors' reports and making recommendations to the FHDC and Faculty Board. The composition of the FHDACs is left to the discretion of the faculties, although faculties are encouraged to have at least three members with the right to co-opt other members as and when necessary.
- 1.6 The **supervisor** ensures professional and ethical academic supervision of the higher degree research study and students registered under her/his name. He/she is also responsible for University academic administrative and managerial matters attendant on the project and students registered under her/his supervision. The general rule should apply that a supervisor may not supervise a student studying towards a qualification higher than her/his own. In general, the University does not limit the number of higher degree students any one staff member may supervise, but it expects faculties to manage throughput purposefully with due regard to student progress and academic employee workload, and to place a premium on quality management considerations in this regard.
- 1.7 Faculties put strategies in place to mitigate the risk of failure of higher degree students. This includes rigorous student selection, ensuring the implementation of the *supervisor-student agreement*, monitoring student progress and mentoring and supporting inexperienced supervisors. Faculties may also consider using a peer review system before submission of dissertations and theses for assessment.

PART B: REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES AS THEY APPLY TO THE STUDY CYCLE OF A HIGHER DEGREE STUDENT

2 THE ADMISSION PHASE

- 2.1 Candidates may be admitted to a master's or doctoral programme as stipulated in section 7 of the *Higher Degrees Policy*.
- 2.2 Additional admission requirements for higher degrees may be determined by Faculty Boards and submitted to Senate for approval.
- 2.3 Where an applicant for a master's or doctoral degree does not hold the prerequisite formal qualifications, the *Policy: Recognition of Prior Learning* is initiated by the HoD concerned to award to an applicant academic status equivalent to that of an honours degree in the case of a master's and a master's degree in the case of a doctorate, as determined by the particular Faculty Board, approved by Senate and contained in the faculty rules and regulations concerned.
- 2.4 Even if an applicant meets the minimum entry requirements as stated above, a HoD may refuse to admit an applicant if in her/his assessment the applicant is unlikely to succeed in the chosen research project, or if the department lacks adequate supervisory capacity and an appropriate supervisor cannot be identified within the university.
- 2.5 Applications for admission by international students are dealt with according to the regulations stipulated in the *UJ Academic Regulations*.
- 2.6 Master's and doctoral candidates have to re-register annually until they have completed their studies, subject to the maximum periods of enrolment.
- 2.7 Renewal of registration for a master's or doctoral programme is also subject to satisfactory progress by the student.

3 THE CONTACT AND APPROVAL PHASE

- 3.1 A student normally contacts the department or a potential supervisor and seeks advice on admission, a potential research idea and the assignment of a supervisor to his/her study.
 - 3.1.1 To be appointed as supervisor for a master's minor/full dissertation a staff member must have at least a master's degree in the specific or cognate discipline and must have acted as sole supervisor before or must have gained experience as co-supervisor with a colleague with a doctoral qualification.
 - 3.1.2 To be appointed as supervisor for a doctoral thesis, the staff member concerned must have a doctoral degree in the specific or cognate discipline.
 - 3.1.3 If the supervisor is not a UJ staff member, a co-supervisor who is a UJ staff member has to be appointed.
- 3.2 The prospective student is advised on registration procedures and the assignment of a supervisor (and co-supervisor(s) where appropriate). Guidelines are provided by the supervisor on the preparation of a research proposal and technical requirements pertaining to academic writing and referencing.
- 3.3 The student formally registers for the degree programme to qualify for research supervision. Thereafter, master's students have six and doctoral students

nine months to complete their research proposals to the standards required by the relevant Faculty and University policy. During this time they have access to the University resources that they require to formulate their research proposals. Students may not undertake any data collection or any activities related to data collection prior to ethical clearance and the acceptance of the proposal by the relevant structure within the Faculty.

- 3.4 The study title, supervisors and assessors for course work minor/full dissertations and theses are approved by the FHDC (or FHDAC) and noted by the SHDC.
- 3.5 Research proposals are formally approved by faculties in terms of their quality and research ethics requirements. Research proposals are scrutinised at departmental level before they are considered and approved by the relevant FHDC. Research proposals may also be approved at departmental level. However, it is advisable that proposals approved within the academic departments are certified as such by the HoD. Faculties may require a doctoral student to defend his/her proposal, and where feasible the same requirement may be applied to research master's proposals and coursework master's proposals.
- 3.6 If a research proposal is not approved by the FHDC or delegated authority, the student may re-work the proposal, but may only submit it for approval one more time. If the research proposal on this re-submission is not approved, the student's registration is terminated, unless permission to continue is granted by the HoD and Executive Dean concerned.
- 3.7 Changes to the study title, the supervisors and assessors of minor/full dissertations and theses re approved by the FHDC (or FHDAC) and noted by the SHDC.

4 FULL-TIME VERSUS PART-TIME REGISTRATION, RESIDENCY AND INTERRUPTION OF STUDIES

- 4.1 Irrespective of full or part-time enrolment, the minimum formal registration period for a master's degree is 12 months (one academic year) and for a doctoral degree 24 months. In each case these periods run from the start of the semester of first registration for the degree to the day on which the student submits the final version of the minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis to the faculty for assessment.
- 4.2 Table 1 stipulates the minimum and maximum periods of enrolment for full- time and part-time master's and doctoral study.

Table 1: Duration of masters and doctoral studies

		Master's study	Doctoral study
Full-time study	Minimum time	12 months	24 months
	Maximum time	24 months	48 months
Part-time study	Minimum time	12 months	24 months
	Maximum time	36 months	60 months

- 4.3 Extensions to the periods stipulated above require a recommendation by the supervisor and HoD and approval by the FHDC and Executive Dean. Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will in general be limited to 12 months for a master's study and 24 months for a doctoral study.
- 4.4 Where professional bodies stipulate periods of enrolment for degrees that differ from those outlined here, faculties may adjust formal enrolment periods accordingly; such adjustments shall be approved by Senate.
- 4.5 If medical or other acceptable reasons exist for putting a study in abeyance faculties (through their FHDCs) may grant such a request for a stipulated period of time, provided that the request by the student is supported by a medical certificate to this effect, as issued by a registered physician, or other applicable documentary proof to substantiate the request.

5 ETHICS CLEARANCE

- 5.1 Accountability for all research ethics reside in the UJ Senate.
- 5.2 Ethics matters attendant on higher degree research activities will be dealt with according to the *Code of Academic and Research Ethics*.
- 5.3 Approval by the faculty of any higher degrees proposal implies that the research will be undertaken in compliance with all applicable statutory and ethical guidelines, as defined in the faculty-specific regulations or academic information brochures and the *Code of Academic and Research Ethics*.
- 5.4 A unique ethics clearance number will be assigned to all research projects that have received ethical clearance.

6 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 6.1 The supervisors of a research project are responsible for assessing whether or not a research project has health and safety implications in accordance with *Policy: Occupational Safety*
- 6.2 Supervisors should alert higher degree students to these matters, and should advise students on an on-going basis, particularly where laboratory work or fieldwork (involving perhaps contract fieldworkers or data gatherers) is involved.
- 6.3 If a project has significant health and safety implications, the supervisor should provide more formalised training or orientation to the student(s) to ensure compliance with UJ regulations and the conditions of any relevant insurance cover.

7 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- 7.1 Guiding principles on intellectual property is situated in the *Policy on Intellectual Property*, and *Guidelines Authorship: Research Output*.
- 7.2 The supervisors are responsible for monitoring all higher degree projects for potential inventions or other intellectual property implications, and disclosing such inventions or implications to the Executive Director for Research and Innovation.
- 7.3 Students who develop inventions or other forms of commercially valuable intellectual property are expected to disclose such inventions to their supervisors, in accordance with the *Policy on Intellectual Property*.

8 THE STUDY PHASE

- 8.1 The supervisor enters into a formal Supervisor-Student Agreement with the student. Either the UJ Supervisor-Student Agreement or a faculty version of this Agreement (if it exists) may be used for this purpose. (Faculties may make additions to the standard Agreement but may not omit any part of it.)
- 8.2 The structures that provide support during supervision and that can be utilised by the higher degree student include:
- 8.2.1 The supervisor, who has specific responsibilities towards the higher degree student as specified in the *Supervisor-Student Agreement*;
 - 8.2.2 The home department of the higher degree student, which may offer different kinds of support;
 - 8.2.3 The UJ Postgraduate School which provides a range of support in various aspects of research;
 - 8.2.4 The Postgraduate Writing Fellows located in the writing centres and across campuses, who provide support in academic writing;
 - 8.2.5 Higher degree retreats hosted by academic departments and faculties; and
 - 8.2.6 Statkon, which supports students in their quantitative analysis.
- 8.3 Students may obtain information on higher degree bursaries such as the availability of external and internal bursaries, bursary conditions and closing dates for application for the various bursaries from the Postgraduate School. Students can furthermore consult their supervisors, academic departments and faculties for information on bursaries. Higher degree students are generally expected to apply for external bursaries before they apply for UJ bursaries. Students may apply for UJ supervisor-linked bursaries. Information on the conditions of these bursaries is contained in the University's bursary brochure.
- 8.4 Supervisors keep a written record of their meetings and discussions with postgraduate students and submit a progress report to the faculty every six months from the date of first registration of the student on her/his progress. The progress report must be signed by both the supervisor and student. A copy of these reports is uploaded on the student's file on *Image Now*.

9 CHANGE OF TITLE OF A DISSERTATION OR THESIS

- 9.1 In cases where the scope of a higher degree study changes during the course of the research and the original title for the project is no longer apt, or an assessor proposes a change in the title, the supervisor and student must apply for a change in the project title.
- 9.2 Title changes for master's minor dissertations or dissertations need to be approved by the FHDAC or FHDC, and submitted to SHDC for notification.
- 9.3 Changes in titles for doctoral theses need to be approved by the FHDAC or FHDC, and submitted to SHDC for notification.
- 9.4 A change in title at any stage does not constitute valid grounds for the extension of registration or change to the residency period.
- 9.5 In all cases where the title of the study has changed the HFA must ensure that the NRF is notified of the particular change so that the NEXUS database can be updated.

10 CONVERSION/TRANSFER IN REGISTRATION FROM A MASTER'S TO A DOCTORAL DEGREE

- 10.1 In exceptional cases, where the scope and impact of a project originally registered for a master's programme prove to expand considerably beyond the initial expectation and where the project is expected to make a novel contribution to the body of knowledge in the discipline, the candidate – with the supervisor's and all co-supervisors' concurrence – may apply to have his/her registration converted/ transferred to a doctoral programme.
- 10.2 The decision to request a transfer may originate from discussions between the candidate and the supervisor, or from recommendations made by external assessors of a dissertation.
- 10.3 A transfer may be requested only on condition that at least one year of study has been completed after the first registration for the master's dissertation.
- 10.4 In order to motivate for such a transfer, the candidate and supervisor(s) each draft a substantive research report setting out the background to the study, the results achieved thus far, their status in the context of the existing literature, and put forward an argument for the transfer of registration to a doctoral degree. In addition, the candidate presents this report at a departmental seminar.
- 10.5 The criteria for a master's qualification as set out in faculty-specific guidelines must be fulfilled in both the written reports and the oral presentation.
- 10.6 The argument for upgrade, as presented in the candidate's written report and the oral presentation, and the supervisor's motivation, are considered by the FHDC and two external expert evaluators (appointed by consensus among the supervisor, the HoD, the FHDC chair and the Executive Dean of the faculty). This panel decides the merits of the application and refers the matter to the FHDC and Faculty Board.
- 10.7 The recommendations of the FHDC and Faculty Board are presented to the SHDC for consideration, before final consideration and approval by Senate.
- 10.8 If the above change of registration is approved, a candidate must subsequently have been registered for at least one year for the doctoral degree, in addition to the minimum of one-year registration for a master's degree required, before the doctoral degree may be awarded.
- 10.9 A candidate who changes registration from a master's degree to a doctoral degree will not be entitled to receive a master's degree if the doctoral thesis is failed.

11 DISPUTE RESOLUTION DURING THE STUDY PERIOD

- 11.1 In the event that a dispute arises between two or more of the parties involved in a particular postgraduate study, namely the student and one or more supervisors, and they are unable to resolve the dispute they should approach the HoD to step in. If the HoD is unable to resolve the dispute the Executive Dean of the faculty will take steps to resolve the dispute.
- 11.2 In the event of a dispute not being resolved, the case is referred by the Executive Dean to the SHDC for final consideration and steps to resolve the

matter.

12 APPOINTMENT OF ASSESSORS

- 12.1 As the student's studies near completion (and the assessors have not yet been appointed), the supervisor notifies the HFA (or the faculty officer responsible for higher degree studies) of the student's intention to submit at least four (4) months in advance in order to appoint the non-assessing chair where applicable and obtain approval for the proposed assessors so that they can be appointed timeously, which is a prerequisite for the assessment process to commence.
- 12.2 The supervisor and HoD agree on at least two assessors for a master's study and at least three for a doctoral study to be proposed to the FHDC (or FHDAC). These assessors' (together with updated CVs) are submitted to the FHDC/FHDAC for approval and to the SHDC for noting.
- 12.2.1 For a minor dissertation at least two assessors, both holding at least a master's degree in the particular discipline or cognate discipline, must be appointed, at least one of whom must be external to the University. No external or internal assessor should have had prior involvement with the study (which might compromise his/her objectivity when assessing the minor dissertation).
- 12.2.2 For a research dissertation at least two assessors must be appointed, one of whom must have a doctoral qualification while the other may have as highest academic qualification a master's degree. These assessors must be external to the University, and must not have had prior involvement with the study which might compromise their objectivity when assessing the dissertation. In exceptional circumstances only, a Faculty may motivate to the SHDC that consideration be given to the appointment of an assessor from within the University, but this person may not be the supervisor or co-supervisor of the dissertation.
- 12.2.3 For a doctoral thesis at least three assessors should be appointed. All assessors must hold a doctoral degree and be external to the University. They must also not have had prior involvement with the project which might compromise their objectivity when assessing the thesis. Efforts should be made to identify at least one assessor from outside South Africa.
- 12.2.4 All assessors must have an appropriate academic profile, experience and stature.
- 12.3 Departments are required to write a motivation for the appointment of a doctoral assessor without a doctoral qualification. This motivation and the assessor's CV will be presented at the FHDC (or FHDAC) for approval.
- 12.4 Departments are required to write a motivation for the appointment of an assessor not attached to a higher education institution. This motivation must be submitted together with the assessor's full CV to the FHDC or (FHDAC) for

- approval.
- 12.5 Supervisors and co-supervisors may not be appointed as assessors.
 - 12.6 Any person who may reasonably be expected to lack sufficient objectivity in the assessment of a minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis is excluded from acting as an assessor; this includes, for example, relatives or dependants of degree candidates, persons over whom any of the supervisors could exert undue influence, even by default, any person who has been involved in the study or who assisted the student in any way, etc.
 - 12.7 No full-time permanent employee of UJ may act as an external assessor for UJ postgraduate students.
 - 12.8 Distinguished Visiting Professors, Visiting Professors and Research Associates may be appointed as external assessors for UJ postgraduate students, provided that they are not disqualified from acting as assessors in terms of paragraph 12.6 and the other considerations specified in the policy.

13 SUBMISSION OF MINOR DISSERTATION, DISSERTATION OR THESIS TO THE FACULTY FOR ASSESSMENT

- 13.1 Faculties decide and communicate to students as to where the assessment copies are handed in and where the assessment reports are received before dissemination to the supervisor(s).
- 13.2 Faculties should take the necessary steps to check that plagiarism does not occur in higher degrees. One measure, as indicated in 13.12, is that a student has to submit a report generated by commercial software programmes (such as Turnitin) along with the documentation submitted to the faculty for assessment purposes. The student remains responsible to ensure that plagiarism does not occur. The *Policy: Student Plagiarism* applies.
- 13.3 No minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis may be submitted for final assessment without the express permission of the supervisor. Where the supervisor decides to withhold permission, due processes must be followed.
- 13.4 No supervisor shall unreasonably withhold permission for the submission of the minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis for assessment.
- 13.5 Where a dispute arises between the supervisor(s) and student about the submission of the minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis for assessment, the student has the right to approach the HoD and Executive Dean with a written submission motivating why the minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis is considered ready to be assessed. The Executive Dean will make a decision in consultation with the HoD and FHDC. The decision of the Executive Dean is reported to the SHDC.
- 13.6 Rules and regulations pertaining to the presentation, format, and layout of minor dissertations, dissertations and theses that are to be submitted for assessment are stipulated in the Faculty Rules and Regulations.
- 13.7 The submission of the minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis should be in accordance with the final submission dates per semester as contained in the University's Year Programme to ensure timely completion of the assessment process. Late submission could imply the renewal of a registration and/or not graduating on time. However, even if a minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis is submitted timeously, the University can offer no guarantee that all external assessors will complete their assessment in time for the next graduation ceremony.

- 13.8 In accordance with faculty-specific requirements, the number of printed, provisionally bound copies of a candidate's minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis that must be submitted to the HFA must at least correspond to the number of supervisors and assessors appointed for the particular study.
- 13.9 An abstract in English of no more than 500 words, describing the problem statement, the most important methods followed and the most important results obtained, must appear in the front of every minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis.
- 13.10 The candidate is responsible for ensuring that the minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis is of the required technical and language quality required by the supervisor(s) before submission.
- 13.11 The printing of the copies of the minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis must be of a high quality, on high-quality paper. The printing must be clearly legible and should be easily reproducible.
- 13.12 The candidate has to submit the following to the faculty office for assessment purposes:
 - 13.12.1 Copies of the (minor) dissertation or thesis as a pdf document. If required by the faculty or department, ring-bound copies equal to the number of assessors and supervisors should also be submitted.
 - 13.12.2 Permission to Submit for Assessment Form signed by the candidate, supervisor(s), HoD (and where applicable the non-assessing chair);
 - 13.12.3 Affidavit confirming that the work is the candidate's own and that all sources used have been duly acknowledged and that the study has not been submitted to another institution as part of the requirements for a formal degree (if the affidavit is not already included as part of the (minor) dissertation or thesis);
 - 13.12.4 An electronic copy of the study in PDF format on CD or DVD;
 - 13.12.5 A Turnitin (or similar) report.

14 DISSEMINATION OF DOCUMENTS TO ASSESSORS AND SUPERVISOR(S)

- 14.1 When the minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis and the other relevant documentation have been submitted to the HFA or faculty office, the assessment documentation is sent to the assessors (and supervisor(s)). Assessors are granted six (6) weeks to assess the higher degree study and to return the completed assessment form, narrative report (and dissertation or thesis if he/she has indicated minor corrections in the manuscript) and the completed *Temporary Appointment and Claim forms* to the faculty office.
- 14.2 When a minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis is sent to the assessor it must be accompanied by a cover letter from the faculty, the assessment guidelines stipulating the requirements for the particular qualification (specifying inter alia the aspects the assessor is expected to report on in the case of a minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis) and a copy of the assessor's report form. The cover letter must contain the following sentence:
"Please note that no inference as to the result expected by the University or supervisor can or should be drawn from the fact that a minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis, is submitted to an assessor for assessment, as submission for assessment may occur with or without the permission of a supervisor."
- 14.3 The HFA or faculty officer responsible for higher degree studies has to ensure that the assessors' reports are received timeously, and, if not, the responsible faculty office staff member must follow up on these reports.
- 14.4 Supervisor(s) submit a supervisor's report to the HFA or faculty officer responsible for higher degree studies which contextualises the supervision process and highlights the achievements and shortcomings and must be submitted to the faculty office before or at the same time that the assessors' reports are submitted. This report serves along with all other documents at the FHDAC/FHDC and SHDC meetings.

15 POSSIBLE OUTCOMES RECOMMENDED BY THE INDIVIDUAL ASSESSORS

- 15.1 There are five possible responses from an assessor of a minor dissertation or dissertation, namely:
- 15.1.1 He/she may approve the dissertation with no corrections to be made, and award a mark above 50%.
- 15.1.2 He/she may provisionally approve the dissertation with minor corrections to be done to the satisfaction of the supervisor and award a mark above 50%.
- 15.1.3 He/she may recommend substantial amendments to the dissertation without awarding a mark in the light of deficiencies identified in her/his narrative report and advise that the revised version be submitted to her/him for reassessment acknowledging the fact that her/his final mark will be capped at 50%.
- 15.1.4 He/she may reject the dissertation, awarding a mark reflecting a fail (less than 50%) in which case no reassessment is recommended or considered.
- 15.1.5 He/she may recommend an excellent dissertation for transfer from a masters to a doctoral registration.

- 15.2 There are four possible responses from an assessor of a thesis, namely:
- 15.2.1 He/she may approve the thesis without any corrections or amendments.
 - 15.2.2 He/she may approve the thesis provisionally but the candidate has to make non-substantive corrections and improvements to the thesis to the satisfaction of the supervisor.
 - 15.2.3 He/she may recommend substantial amendments to the thesis in the light of deficiencies identified in her/his narrative report and propose that the revised version be submitted to her/him for reassessment.
 - 15.2.4 He/she may reject the thesis, in which case no reassessment is recommended or considered.

16 MANAGING AND PROCESSING THE ASSESSMENT RESULTS IN THE FACULTY

- 16.1 The standard process for managing and integrating assessment results is provided for in tables 3 to 5 below. Faculties engage with assessors separately and independently during the assessment process unless they elect the option to seek a joint recommendation from assessors when there are conflicting results, as indicated in tables 4 and 5 below. Faculties may however, choose to incorporate the seeking of a joint recommendation as a standard step into their processes, regardless of whether there may be conflicting assessment results or not.
- 16.2 In seeking a joint recommendation from assessors, either as a standard step in the assessment process or as an option when there are conflicting assessment results, a faculty (through its non-assessing chair (NAC)) circulates the individual assessment reports to all assessors and facilitates a discussion via email, telephone, video call, or in-person meetings. This process may involve an oral defence of the dissertation/thesis by the candidate, provided that all assessors and the NAC are present or copied in all parts of the deliberations. Faculties wishing to incorporate an oral defence should arrive at faculty-specific or discipline-specific guidelines, approved by the relevant Faculty Board and Senate.
- 16.3 Where a joint recommendation **is** arrived at, a Joint Report authored by the NAC and approved by all assessors is submitted to the FHDC, along with all the independent assessors' reports. Significant differences between the individual and joint reports need to be explained in the joint report.
- 16.4 Where a joint recommendation is **not** arrived at, the NAC provides a report indicating the reasons. The NAC may recommend a particular course of action for the FHDC to consider. The FHDC will have regard to the various courses of action set out in 16.12 below and to the standard resolutions indicated in 16.15.
- 16.5 Where a joint recommendation is not arrived at, if one or more assessors provide a well-motivated argument for the revision and resubmission of the work submitted for assessment, the default position is to do such revisions. In all instances of corrections and revisions the supervisor(s) (and where applicable the non-assessing chair) oversees the process and certifies in writing that all corrections requested by the assessors have been addressed before the student resubmits the corrected version of the study to the faculty office.
- 16.6 Where a joint recommendation is not arrived at, if two (or more) of the assessors for a master's dissertation fail the study it constitutes a fail.

- 16.7 In the finalisation of the assessment of a master's study the FHDAC/FHDC is not obliged to award a simple aggregate of the assessors' marks if there is a discrepancy of 15% or more between the marks allocated by individual assessors, or if one assessor recommends a distinction mark and the other allocates a mark lower than a distinction. In this case the FHDAC/FHDC must deal with the conflicting results as identified in table 4.
- 16.8 In the case where minor corrections are required, a candidate is granted a maximum period of three months to do the corrections to the satisfaction of the supervisor.
- 16.9 In the case where substantial changes and resubmission for re-assessment are required, a candidate is granted a maximum of six months to do the corrections and to resubmit the minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis to the assessor(s) who requested a resubmission. The mark of the assessor(s) who proposed a resubmission will be capped at 50% in the case of a (minor) dissertation.
- 16.10 A student who has failed a research master's or a doctoral degree will need to reapply for the particular degree and register a new topic if they wish to reattempt the degree. A failed master's dissertation or doctoral thesis may not be resubmitted for examination.
- 16.11 In the case of a coursework master's: A student who has failed the minor dissertation, but has passed the coursework modules, the FHDC, on recommendation of the supervisor and Head of the Department, may approve that the candidate repeats the minor dissertation module on a newly defined study field, to be submitted and approved as per the processes stipulated for first time submission and approval of study fields. Repeating the minor dissertation is subject to:
- 1) Overall performance in the coursework modules;
 - 2) Completing the minor dissertation in the allowed maximum period for a master's qualification, i.e. 24 months in the case of a full time student and 36 months in the case of a part time student. In exceptional circumstances, another 12 months may be granted to complete the study.
- 16.12 In order to be awarded a master's degree with distinction a student must:
- 16.12.1 Complete a master's qualification within three years
- 16.12.2 Students for a master's qualification by dissertation must achieve a final mark of at least 75% for the dissertation.
- 16.12.3 Students for a master's qualification by coursework must achieve an average final mark for the qualification of at least 75% calculated by weighting the average final marks for all the coursework modules and the final mark for the minor dissertation in accordance with the credit values allocated to all the coursework modules and the minor dissertation respectively (for example, if the credit value of the minor dissertation represents 40% of the total credit value of the qualification, the average final mark for the qualification will be weighted in the proportion of 40 for the minor dissertation and 60 for all the coursework modules).
- 16.12.4 A student must never have failed a module as a first attempt in the relevant programme.
- 16.12.5 A student must have obtained a minimum mark of 65% in every prescribed module at NQF level 9 for Master's Degrees and, in the case of a master's qualification by coursework, in the minor dissertation as well.
- 16.13 Should the assessment result have been problematic, with assessors that made

conflicting recommendations as to the awarding or not of the degree, or as to the merit of the minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis, the FHDAC or FHDC should take steps to resolve the impasse. The resolution of the conflicting recommendations could involve one or more of the following steps:

- 16.13.1 Request additional information from the supervisors and/or assessors;
- 16.13.2 Recommend further engagement with the assessors to reach a joint recommendation;
- 16.13.3 Appoint a knowledgeable external expert to advise the FHDAC/FHDC;
- 16.13.4 Appoint an additional assessor to assess the minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis independently, his/her report hopefully allowing the resolution of the impasse; or
- 16.13.5 Identify an independent arbiter to consider all the documentation pertaining to the assessment of the study (including the individual assessors', supervisor's and any other reports) in order to make a final recommendation to the FHDAC and/or FHDC.
- 16.14 It should be borne in mind that submission to a further external assessor still permits the Faculty and SHDC to make a final decision concerning the end result, whereas submission to an arbiter mobilises all the understandings and conventions surrounding arbitration and obliges the SHDC to accept the recommendation of the arbiter.
- 16.15 The SHDC may make further recommendations to resolve conflicting assessment results, on an ad hoc basis, depending on the merits of the individual case (except in the case of an arbiter's recommendation).
- 16.16 Guidelines for faculty responses in terms of the handling of non-conflicting and conflicting assessment results are provided in the tables 2 to 5 below.
- 16.17 All assessments in the category of 'standard integration of non-conflicting assessment results' are reviewed and finalised by the Faculty. When there are significant discrepancies between the results of the assessors or where one or more assessors recommend revision and reassessment, results cannot be immediately finalised.
- 16.18 An allegation of plagiarism will be dealt with in accordance with the *Policy: Student Plagiarism*.
- 16.19 If two or more of the assessors for a doctoral thesis recommend a fail, the assessment outcome constitutes a fail.
- 16.20 A candidate who has failed a (minor) dissertation or thesis may not again be assessed on the same subject matter.
- 16.21 When a minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis is failed, supervisors must provide details explaining why the study was allowed to be submitted for assessment.
- 16.22 When a dissertation is failed a proposal on a different project should be submitted should the student wish to reregister and the faculty is willing to accept the reregistration.
- 16.23 Under no circumstances may supervisors or students contact assessors before finalisation of the assessment outcome.
- 16.24 The assessment outcome may be revealed to the candidate only once the assessment results have been approved or ratified by the SHDC.
- 16.25 An assessor's name may be revealed to a student only after the assessment process has been finalised, provided that the particular assessor has given

consent that her/his identity may be revealed to the student.

Table 2: Guidelines for the standard integration of non-conflicting results for master's minor dissertations and dissertations

(Minor) Dissertation Results proposed by assessors	Faculty Response
All the assessors recommend a mark between 50% and 74%, not exceeding a difference of 15%, with or without minor corrections.	Average the marks to determine the final mark.
All the assessors recommend a mark below 50% (i.e. a fail).	The consensus carries and the student fails.
All the assessors recommend a distinction mark of 75% or higher.	Average the marks. Student passes with distinction.
One assessor recommends a distinction mark while the other assessor recommends a mark between 50% and 74%, but does not oppose the awarding of a distinction, the marks do not differ by more than 15%, and the average of the two marks is a distinction mark.	Average the marks. The student passes with distinction.
One assessor recommends a distinction mark while the other assessor recommends a mark between 50% and 74%, the marks do not differ by more than 15%, and the average of the two marks is not a distinction mark.	Average the marks.
The final mark for the (minor) dissertation is 73% or 74% and no assessor objects to a distinction mark.	Adjust the final mark to a distinction mark of 75%.
The final mark for the (minor) dissertation is 73% or 74% and one or more assessors object to a distinction.	The final mark is not adjusted.

Table 3: Guidelines for the standard integration of non-conflicting results for doctoral theses

Thesis Results proposed by assessors	Faculty Response
All the assessors recommend awarding the qualification, with or without minor corrections.	Recommend the awarding of the qualification.
Two or more assessors recommend the failure of the thesis.	Recommend that the majority result carries and the student fails.

Table 4: Guidelines for standard handling of conflicting results for master's minor dissertations and dissertations

(Minor) Dissertation Results proposed by assessors	Faculty Response
All the assessors recommend a mark between 50% and 74%, but the mark allocation differs by 15% or more.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate further discussion between the assessors to arrive at a joint recommendation. • Appoint an expert advisor. Consider the expert advisor's recommendation and recommend an appropriate mark. • Appoint an additional assessor. Average the third assessor's mark with the mark of the original assessor that is closest to that of the third assessor to determine the final mark.

(Minor) Dissertation Results proposed by assessors	Faculty Response
<p>One assessor recommends the failure of the (minor) dissertation, while the other recommends a distinction, pass mark or revision and reassessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate further discussion between the assessors to arrive at a joint recommendation. • Appoint a third assessor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the third assessor recommends a pass, the two pass marks are averaged. • If the third assessor recommends a fail, the (minor) dissertation fails. • If the third assessor recommends a major revision and reassessment, the student revises and resubmits for reassessment. If a pass mark, capped at 50%, is then awarded, the student passes with the average of the two pass marks. • If the third assessor recommends a fail for the resubmitted (minor) dissertation, the student fails. • Appoint an expert advisor. Consider the expert advisor's recommendation and recommend an appropriate mark.
<p>Either or both assessors recommend revision and resubmission for reassessment.</p>	<p>Student revises and resubmits for reassessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If both assessors recommend a pass mark, with the mark for the revision capped at 50%, average the two marks. • If one assessor recommends a fail, appoint a third assessor (as above) or appoint an expert advisor. Consider the expert advisor's recommendation and recommend an appropriate mark. • If both assessors recommend a fail, the student fails.
<p>One assessor recommends a distinction, while the second assessor recommends a pass mark between 50% and 74% and opposes a distinction, but the average mark is a distinction and the mark allocation differs by 15% or less.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint a third assessor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the third assessor recommends a distinction, the average of the two higher marks carries. • If the third assessor does not recommend a distinction, the average of the two lower marks carries.

(Minor) Dissertation Results proposed by assessors	Faculty Response
One assessor recommends a distinction, while the second assessor recommends a pass mark between 50% and 74% and the mark allocation differs by 15% or more.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate further discussion between the assessors to arrive at a joint recommendation • Appoint an expert advisor. Consider the expert advisor's recommendation and recommend an appropriate mark. • Appoint an additional assessor. Average the third assessor's mark with the mark of the original assessor that is closest to that of the third assessor to determine the final mark.

Table 5: Guidelines for the standard handling conflicting results for doctoral theses

Thesis Results proposed by assessors	Faculty Response
One assessor recommends the failure of the thesis, while the other two recommend a pass or revision and reassessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate further discussion between the assessors to arrive at a joint recommendation • Appoint an additional (4th) assessor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the assessor recommends a pass, the thesis passes. • If the assessor recommends a fail, an arbiter is appointed to finalise the result. (The arbiter's decision is binding on all parties.) • Appoint an expert advisor. Consider the expert advisor's recommendation and recommend an appropriate mark.
One or more assessors recommend revision and resubmission for reassessment and no assessor fails the thesis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student revises and resubmits for reassessment. • If the assessor (or assessors) who recommended a resubmission recommends a pass, the student passes.

17 FINALISING OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

17.1 All forms and reports (assessors' assessment forms and narrative reports, supervisors' reports, summary reports, and FHDAC reports) are submitted to the HFA or faculty officer responsible for higher degree studies. The FHDAC or FHDC meets to review the results and assessment reports of all masters' and

- doctoral candidates, as well as the supervisor (and non-assessing chair's) certification that the proposed corrections have been done. All master's results (including coursework master's) are finalised at this level, approved by Faculty Board and submitted to the SHDC for noting.
- 17.2 For doctoral candidates, all the relevant documentation (assessment forms, narrative reports, supervisor reports, summary reports, FHDAC or FHDC reports and certification that corrections have been done) serves at SHDC for approval, after which the Senate receives the results for noting.
- 17.3 After final acceptance of the minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis for graduation purposes, a number of bound copies (corrected according to the decisions of the relevant assessment committee) equal to the number of assessors and supervisor(s) that requests such copies , plus the final version in an approved electronic format (single PDF file), with metadata in the properties file on readable CD or DVD together with supplementary files (images, sound, etc.) that are an integral part of the thesis or dissertation or minor dissertation, but not part of the full text thesis or dissertation or minor dissertation must be submitted by the candidate to the Faculty/HFA before the finalisation of the programme of the applicable graduation ceremony. No candidate's name may be included in the programme for the ceremony unless the Faculty/HFA has verified in writing that these requirements have been met in full.
- 17.4 Together with the electronic copy, the candidate must submit written confirmation stating that the content of the electronic copy is a true version of the finally approved minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis.
- 17.5 Under the guidance of the supervisor, the candidate must provide at least three, but not more than six, internationally standardised keywords in English. Access to the international list of keywords is available in the University Library and Information Centre.
- 17.6 The final bound copies, as determined in 17.3, must be bound in artificial leather with the title of the minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis and the candidate's initials and surname printed on the cover and spine.
- 17.7 In addition to the submission of the final minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis, and except where faculties exempt students from this, students must have submitted to their supervisor evidence of, by the time the FHDAC/FHDC meets to consider the assessors' reports of at least one piece of work in a format suitable for submission to a peer reviewed publication, with a view to possible publication, for masters students and two pieces of work in a format suitable for submission to a peer reviewed publication, with a view to possible publication, for doctoral candidates stemming from the study.
- 17.8 A doctoral candidate must also submit a CV in the required format and a laudation when submitting the finally corrected copies of the thesis to the faculty.
- 17.9 After all results/outcomes have been finalised, the HFA submits the readable CD or DVD together with supplementary files (images, sound, etc.) that are an integral part of the thesis or dissertation or minor dissertation, but not part of the full text thesis or dissertation or minor dissertation, to the Institutional repository, UJDigispace. The electronic copy is uploaded in UJDigispace for web access.
- 17.10 All minor dissertations, dissertations or theses, regardless of format must be accompanied by a completed *UJLIC minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis final submission form* signed by both the candidate and the supervisor. (See the form listed in the Annexures.)

- 17.11 The SHDC may, on the recommendation of the Executive Dean of the faculty concerned or the DVC (responsible for Postgraduate Studies), grant a confidentiality classification of two years to the completed minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis, as stipulated in the University's *Policy on Intellectual Property*, meaning a delay in the public display of the minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis. This should be clearly stated on the *UJLIC submission form*.
- 17.12 A candidate will not be deemed to have completed the requirements for conferment of the degree if the specified number of final corrected copies of the minor dissertation, dissertation or thesis has not been submitted to the relevant HFA prior to the graduation ceremony and closure of the graduation list of the forthcoming graduation ceremony.
- 17.13 Any master's or doctoral degree can be awarded only after the successful completion of every requirement of each component of the qualification as determined by the relevant faculty regulations.
- 17.14 Appropriate feedback must be given to all assessors once the final outcome has been approved.
- 17.15 The documents used to give effect to this policy must be as near as may be in accordance with the forms and documents listed in Appendix I.

Approved on the Senate of 17 November 2016

APPENDIX 1 - Forms and Documents

Forms and documents pertaining to the commencement phase

- HD 1: Research Proposal Template
- HD 2: Supervisor-Higher Degree Student Agreement

Forms and documents pertaining to the study phase

- HD 3: Supervisor–Student Meetings and Progress Report Form
- HD 4: Co-authorship Guidelines
- HD 5: Application for Change of Title Form
- HD 6: Application for Putting Study in Abeyance Form
- HD 7: Application for Change of Supervisor Form
- HD 8: Application for Extension of HD Studies Form

Forms and documents pertaining to the pre-assessment phase

- HD 9: Nomination of Assessors and Non-assessing Chair Form
- HD 10: Faculty Covering Letter for Appointment of Assessor
- HD 11: Acceptance of Appointment as Assessor Form

Forms and documents pertaining to the submission for assessment phase

- HD 12: Permission to Submit (Minor) Dissertation/Thesis for Assessment
- HD 13: Affidavit – M and D Submission for Assessment

Forms and documents pertaining to the dispatching of documents to assessors

- HD 14: Faculty Covering Letter to Assessor for Assessment of HD Study
- HD 15: Guidelines for Assessment:
 - HD 15A: Guidelines for the Assessment of a Minor Dissertation
 - HD 15B: Guidelines for the Assessment of a Dissertation
 - HD 15C: Guidelines for Awarding Marks for a (Minor) Dissertation
 - HD 15D: Guidelines for the Assessment of a Thesis
- HD 16: Assessment Report Forms:
 - HD 16A: Assessment Report Form – Doctoral Thesis
 - HD 16B: Assessment Report Form – Dissertation
 - HD 16C: Assessment Report Form – Minor-dissertation

Forms and documents pertaining to the internal finalisation of assessment results

- HD 17: Non-Assessing Chair’s Report Forms:
 - HD 17A: Non-assessing Chair’s Report Form – Doctoral Thesis
 - HD 17B: Non-assessing Chair’s Report Form – Dissertation
 - HD 17C: Non-assessing Chair’s Report Form – Minor-dissertation
- HD 18: Faculty Summary Assessment Report Forms:
 - HD 18A: Faculty Summary Assessment Report Form – Doctoral Thesis
 - HD 18B: Faculty Summary Assessment Report Form – Dissertation
 - HD 18C: Faculty Summary Assessment Report Form – Minor Dissertation
- HD 19: Faculty Letter to Candidate after SHDC Approval

Forms and documents pertaining to the post-assessment phase

HD 20: Permission to Submit Finally Corrected (Minor) Dissertation/Thesis

HD 21: Certification of Finally Submitted Copies Form

HD 22: UJDigispace Form