

**General information about the PhD in Psychology in the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities,**

**University of Johannesburg**

Dear Potential Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in our PhD in Psychology degree. Before you apply online you need to find a supervisor. To this end, part of the challenge of thinking about doing a PhD degree in Psychology at the University of Johannesburg is finding a suitable and available supervisor who is an expert in your area of work. My suggestion is to start thinking about a topic that falls within the interests of a potential supervisor, make contact with that person as soon as possible, and get agreement, in writing, to be supervised. Do this, as mentioned, *before you apply*. It is best for you to approach a potential supervisor *the year before* you wish to register.

A list of potential supervisors is available on this webpage. If your intended topic is outside of the research expertise of the academic staff, we will regrettably not be able to supervise you. Moreover, it is possible that all supervisors have a full supervision load and cannot take on more candidates, thus our programme is limited in space. This means that your application may not be approved because there is no space or your topic does not fall within the interests of the potential supervisor.

The potential supervisor *may ask* you for a brief ‘concept paper’. This concept paper is an informal document that briefly outlines your research topic and aims, method and conceptual framework. The main purpose of this concept paper is to give the supervisor an idea as to what you want to research. It is not a formal research proposal as such. You can use the Faculty Proposal Template for this concept paper. A copy of this template can be downloaded from this webpage.

Potential supervisors are not required to accept any candidate, and have the right to decline being your supervisor.

In addition to finding a suitable supervisor, you will need to fulfil certain requirements, such as meet the entrance requirements. These are documented below.

**Entrance requirements**

A candidate must *normally have* *three recognised university degrees in Psychology*. These are:

1. A Bachelor’s degree in Psychology (a three year major in psychology)
2. A Honours degree in Psychology (a fourth year which includes a research project)
3. A Master’s degree in Psychology (Clinical, Counselling or Research)

Please make sure that you are in already possession of a Master’s degree in Psychology at the time of registration. A copy is required to be uploaded when applying online. Foreign students need to have a Certificate of Equivalence for the South African government, or a SAQA certificate. Find out about this from the postgraduate enrolment division.

It is sometimes possible, however, to have qualifications or a Master’s degree in a cognate **Humanities discipline** which could be used as entrance into PhD in Psychology. It is suggested you approach the PhD co-ordinator to discuss this if this is your case. An example of a cognate Humanities discipline is Sociology, or Social Work.

It is advisable that if you have a Master’s degree in Educational Psychology or Organizational Psychology, you approach those Departments and Faculties. We are essentially Clinical, Counselling and Research Psychology in the Psychology Department, and are within the Faculty of Humanities. Candidates with a Master’s degree in Psychology will be given preference for entry into the programme. However, if unsure of your suitability for our Department or qualifications, please contact the PhD coordinator for further discussion.

In addition, for entrance into the PhD in Psychology study programme, in our Department you will normally need to have obtained an ‘above average’ / ‘good mark’ for your Master’s degree as a whole, and also for the *research component* of your Master’s degree (if it was a coursework programme). A ‘good mark’ normally means about 70% or above. However, our base minimum for entrance into the PhD programme is 65%. The *research component* of your Master’s degree should also not be less than 65%. Entrance and acceptance is *competitive* and based on good academic marks, and not just because you have a Master’s degree in Psychology. If in any doubt, or you wish to discuss your academic marks, please contact the PhD coordinator.

Your official academic transcript (on the university letterhead) which you must upload and provide when you apply online for registration, must indicate your research marks for the Master’s degree, and Honours degree, as well as Undergraduate courses in Research Methodology. As mentioned, at the time of registration, you must be in possession of a Master’s degree in Psychology (and thus have graduated the year before registration). This degree parchment will need to be produced at registration.

At the time of applying online, it is advisable to include a covering letter indicating who has agreed to supervise you.

Once you have been accepted into the PhD programme, please note that it is a very competitive programme and your progress will be monitored. Where little or no progress is noted, this will become a concern. In such a case, it is possible that you may not be permitted to continue with your studies into another year.

**Online Registration**

Registration is online and is normally done before **30 October** in the year before studies begin. It is sometimes possible, if there is space, to register as late as end of Jan or mid-Feb. New and returning students need to register each year with the Faculty of Humanities. Please don’t send me any documents unless I request them.

***Once you have found a supervisor, and have the required entrance requirements, there are two options for registration: a) pre-proposal stage, and b) normal registration.***

Registration for pre-proposal stage can be done anytime during the academic year and thus during term time.

The difference between the pre-proposal registration stage and the normal registration stage is that for the pre-proposal stage you have 6 months’ access to the library and a supervisor in order to plan and prepare your proposal. The clock does not start ticking during this time.

**Option A: Pre-proposal registration**

Within these six months, you need to:

1. Together with your supervisor, work on your research proposal.

At the end of 6 months (end of July), **in order to continue with your studies in the same year,** you will need to register at the Faculty of Humanities for the normal registration. Afterwards, begin to fulfil the three requirements (see below). It is possible to wait until the following year to register (normal registration) and fulfil the three requirements.

**Option B: Normal registration process**

During the first year of registration, you need to fulfil three tasks. These are:

1) Complete your research proposal and submit it to your supervisor for internal review,

2) Present the research proposal as an oral presentation to the Department, and

3) Obtain official approval for the research proposal from the Department Higher Degrees Committee (DHDC).

If you find you have not done these three requirements within the first year, you cannot normally be allowed to continue to be registered in the second year.

**The research proposal**

One of the three tasks you need to complete during your first year or registration is to write a research proposal in collaboration with your supervisor. This proposal process normally takes six to nine months to be finalised.

Please use the ‘Research Proposal Template’, found on the website, to structure your proposal. Your supervisor will have a copy as well.

The research proposal must be completed within nine months of your registration, failure to do so will result in a letter from you to the DHDC stating why this has not been achieved, together with a supporting letter from your supervisor. A completed proposal is measured by its approval and acceptance by the DHDC. Before this can be done, the proposal needs to be reviewed by two internal assessors.

**Method and examination**

The method of study for the PhD in Psychology degree is a research-based degree and not a course-work degree. It is possible to do your studies either through a) a traditional thesis, or b) through several article submissions. The final work is examined by three examiners.

**International students**

If you are an international student applying from outside of South Africa for entrance into our PhD degree stream, and your Master’s degree and all other degrees are not from a South African University, you will need to get **SAQA** accreditation **before submitting an application**. This is a lengthy process that takes place outside of the Department of Psychology and outside of the University.

Please access online the UJ webpage for International Students information. [https://www.uj.ac.za/internationalstudents/](https://www.oldweb.uj.ac.za/internationalstudents)

The Department nor I can assist you with this process of accreditation.

Finally, check out the following information:  [https://www.uj.ac.za/faculties/humanities/Pages/Post-Graduate-Information-for-Students-and-Staff.aspx](https://www.oldweb.uj.ac.za/faculties/humanities/Pages/Post-Graduate-Information-for-Students-and-Staff.aspx)

Please note that even if you have all the academic requirements, unless you have found a supervisor, your application will be delayed.

I hope this information is helpful. Once you have read all the information and documents, please feel free to email me directly for any queries.

Good luck