

NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY

Department of Psychology

In the School of Behavioural Sciences within the

Faculty of Health Sciences
Caring for tomorrow

POSTGRADUATE MASTERS AND DOCTORAL RESEARCH GUIDE



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Welcome and Introduction

An introduction from HOD and coordinator – Prof Magnolia Bahle Ngcobo-Sithole

Welcome to Masters and Doctoral (M & D) studies in the Department of Psychology at Nelson Mandela University. Psychological research provides a scientific basis for understanding and improving both individual and collective human experience. Our department is located within the Faculty of Health Sciences. Situating the psychology department within the Faculty of Health Sciences promotes interdisciplinary collaboration, strengthens the connection between mental and physical health, and offers students and researchers access to more diverse educational and professional opportunities.

Our vision in the Department of Psychology, is to welcome you and provide training that will produce a critically engaged and thinking graduate. In this pursuit, we aim to provide our postgraduate students with a grounding, steeped in the university values of social justice, quality, respect for diversity and environmental stewardship.

We offer a range of research themes and areas with state-of-the-art resources to ensure that you excel in your research endeavors. If your application is successful and you become one of the lucky ones to join us, you will have an opportunity to work closely with accomplished staff members who have a strong record of impactful research. You will gain invaluable insights as you embark on your own research journey. We look forward to welcoming you to the department.

Our faculty, staff, and fellow students are here to encourage your success and foster an environment of collaboration and innovation. Whether you are pursuing research or honing advanced skills in your field, we encourage you to engage deeply with the wealth of resources, opportunities, and experiences that are available. The road ahead may present challenges, but it will also be immensely rewarding as you push the boundaries of knowledge and contribute meaningfully to your discipline.

This is a pivotal time in your academic and professional careers, and we are committed to supporting you every step of the way.

Admission Requirements

Master of Arts in Psychology (Research)

Qualification code: 65102 Offering: Full-time South Campus (A1) OR Part-time South Campus (A2); Aligned NQF Level: 9; SAQA ID: 87169

Total NQF Credits for qualification: 180

BACKGROUND: This qualification has been created for students who want to gain a comprehensive understanding of psychology. It has been approved in terms of the new Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework (HEQSF). The primary purpose of this qualification is to educate and train researchers who can contribute to the development of knowledge at an advanced level in the field of psychology.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS: Unless Senate decides otherwise, candidates shall be admitted to the studies for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology only if they have obtained an Honours or equivalent degree in Psychology, of which the course content and the candidate's level of achievement are considered to be satisfactory by the Department of Psychology.

Note: *This qualification does not lead to professional registration with the HPCSA Professional Board for Psychology.*

Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology (Research)

Qualification code: 66000 Offering: Full-time South Campus (A1) OR Part-time South Campus (A2); Aligned NQF Level: 10; SAQA ID: 115163;

Total NQF Credits for qualification: 360

BACKGROUND: This qualification has been approved in terms of the new Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework (HEQSF). It requires a candidate to undertake research at the most advanced academic levels culminating in the submission, assessment and acceptance of a thesis in a specialised field of psychology. The defining characteristic of this qualification is that the candidate is required to demonstrate high level research capability and to make a significant and original academic contribution to the field of psychology. The work must be of a quality to satisfy peer review and merit publication.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS: Holders of a Masters' degree or other qualification approved by Senate, may be accepted. A Doctoral Degree is the highest qualification type awarded within the HEQSF. This qualification may not be awarded for early exit from a Doctoral Degree.

Note: *This qualification does not lead to professional registration with the HPCSA Professional Board for Psychology.*

Selecting Research Topics Process

1. You should investigate possible research areas. You can do this by looking at the department's research themes, study the literature to find gaps in it, and—most importantly—speak with a possible supervisor who has worked in the field you want to pursue.
2. The research areas that the department offers are listed in the Research Focus Areas Table below, should you want to look into possible study topics.
3. Selecting your research topic should be based on your interest and passion.
4. Email or set an appointment with relevant supervisor(s), and based on their availability, you can discuss your research area and align it with potential supervisor(s).

Application Process

Step 1: Applicants are to first, familiarize themselves with the admission requirements for the M and D qualifications, outlined in the section above. Applicants are to ensure that they hold a relevant postgraduate qualification (honours) and that their marks meet the entrance requirements for the programme. Please see the faculty's postgraduate guide <https://health.mandela.ac.za/Postgraduate-Qualifications/Prospective-Students/Departmental-Resources>

Step 2: Applicants are guided towards the departments M and D supervisors and their research focus areas. These research focus areas speak to the overarching departmental research themes. Applicants are therefore requested to align their research topic to one or more to the areas as outlined in the departmental research focus areas section.

Step 3: Applicants are to make appointments with potential supervisors who may be able to guide them with their topic. However, it is very likely that a supervisor may have already existing projects in place and your study could fit into these. The appointments with potential supervisors can be made online or face-to-face. In setting the appointments, please make sure that you have a clear idea of the area you would like to research. Come to the meeting prepared with the following:

1. A preliminary reading/understanding of the literature surrounding the topic you would like to research. You do not need to have an extensive understanding but be able to discuss the topic in relation to what has been researched. Important to note, is the identification of 'gaps' or areas that require attention.
2. Have a working understanding of the methodology you would like to work with, as this will guide the development of the research project.
3. Once you have secured a supervisor, you will need to complete the university's U24 form. It is the postgraduate admissions form. Please click the link here to access the form. All students will require to submit required documents, like identity copies and proof of completion of previous qualifications. Please ensure that all documentation is submitted to ensure efficient processing.
4. With the U24 form, you will be expected to provide preliminary information on your proposed study. This includes a working title, summary of the literature and breakdown of the methodology you are proposing to use. Please note, that this is not the final proposal, and it can change based on the discussions you will have with your supervisor. However, it is a requirement of the application process.

5. Once the university admissions office has processed your application, it will be referred to the Department of Psychology for departmental selection. It will be sent to the coordinator, who will confirm with the supervisor if they have agreed to supervise the student.
6. The departments M&D selection panel will also ensure that all applicants meet the entrance requirements of the programme before finalizing the application.
7. Once approved, the application will be sent forward to the Faculty of Health Sciences Faculty office for processing. The application will serve at the Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee [FPGSC] for noting and approval. Once the application has been approved, admissions will be informed, and the student can register.

Research Focus Areas

Research areas	Supervisors	Contact information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic violence • Grief 	Prof Magnolia Ngcobo-Sithole	Magnolia.ngcobo-sithole@mandela.ac.za
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship psychology • Cyber relationships 	Dr Tania Lambert	Tania.lambert@mandela.ac.za
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychobiography • Standardisation and Development of Psychological Tests • Griffiths Scales of Child Development • Neuro-Psychology • Self-Concept/Esteem/ Social Identity • Developmental Psychology 	Prof Louise Stroud	Louise.stroud@mandela.ac.za
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological assessment (Technology-based assessment, Test development, Ethical assessment) • The psychology of online learning (teaching and assessment practices in psychology; student success and graduate attributes in a technological age) 	Prof Cheryl Foxcroft	Cheryl.Foxcroft@mandela.ac.za
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV and AIDS • Bullying • Trauma 	Dr Johan Cronje	Johan.cronje@mandela.ac.za
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychobiography • Gender and Sexuality • Influences to Development/Personality & Pathology Development • Narcissism and antisocial behavior 	Dr Alida Sandison	Alida.sandison@mandela.ac.za
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Health Psychology • Neuropsychology • Animal Assisted Interventions and Environmental Psychology/ Ecopsychology • Developmental Psychology 	Ms Lisa Currin	Lisa.currin@mandela.ac.za
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Mental Health & Adversity/Assessments/Child Trauma/ Child therapy 	Dr Thabisa Mabusela	Thabisa.Mabusela@mandela.ac.za
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyberpsychology • Psychotic disorders • Cross-cultural psychology 	Dr Ashwin Navsaria	Ashwin.navsaria@mandela.ac.za
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime • Poverty • Gangsterism • Community trauma 	Dr Ulricha de Klerk	Ulricha.DeKlerk@mandela.ac.za

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary and preventative psychology • Health and Welfare 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance Abuse • Psychobiography 	Dr Konesh Navsaria	Konesh.navsaria@mandela.ac.za
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyberpsychology • Psychopathology • Cross-cultural Psychology 	Dr Ashwin Navsaria	Ashwin.navsaria@mandela.ac.za
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyberpsychology • Psychotic disorders • Cross-cultural psychology 	Mr Is-haaq Lekganya	Is-Haaq.Lekganya@mandela.ac.za
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth and student wellness • Mental health; well-being • Group/peer-led psychological intervention 	Dr Angelique Mcconney	Angelique.mcconney@mandela.ac.za
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student life cycles and student success • Career psychology • Reproductive health • Gender studies 	Dr Phumeza Kota-Nyati	Phumeza.kota-nyati@mandela.ac.za
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Psychology (Resilience, Wellness) • Depression and suicidality • Gender based violence 	Dr Gradidge Dalray	Dalray.Gradidge@mandela.ac.za

Funding and Scholarships

For more information on funding and scholarships, please visit the following sites:

- National Research Foundation:
<https://www.nrf.ac.za/>
- National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences:
<https://www.nihss.ac.za/>
- NMU RCD Office:
<https://rd.mandela.ac.za/>

Please note that the funding and scholarship opportunities are also communicated via the Memo of the university. So, be on the lookout for these opportunities.

Academic Supervision

Your supervisor will also guide you with the supervisor contract, which is an essential component of the supervision relationship.

Key elements that contribute to successful academic supervision: aligned research areas, communication, feedback, guidance, respect, commitment, planning etc.

Managing the Research Process

You and your supervisor will hold timely meetings to discuss the research process, from proposal development, submission for ethical clearance, writing the final report to completion of the study.

It is important that you develop realistic timelines, prioritize tasks and communicate and collaborate with your supervisor throughout the process.

Most important, align your time frames, with the time frames of the department, faculty and institution in terms of submissions.

1. Postgraduate candidates who are enrolled for a master's degree by research are required to submit a research proposal within 6 months of registration. Doctoral candidates are required to submit a proposal within 12 months of registration.
2. The minimum period of study for a postgraduate degree is stipulated in the M & D guidelines as follows:

The *minimum period*:

- Master's degree: One (1) year
- Doctoral degree: Two (2) years

The *maximum period of study for higher degrees shall not normally extend beyond the following periods*:

Full-time studies

- Master's by coursework and treatise: Three (3) years
- Master's by dissertation: Three (3) years
- Doctoral studies: Four (4) years

Part-time studies

- Master's by coursework and treatise: Four (4) years
- Master's by dissertation: Four (4) years
- Doctoral studies: Six (6) years.

Applying for Ethical Clearance

All M and D studies require ethical clearance. You CANNOT commence with data collection until you have obtained clearance for your study. These following steps will be followed:

1. The student must develop the research proposal in collaboration with the research supervisor. Feedback on submitted drafts will be provided by the supervisor and only the final version will be submitted for departmental review.
2. Once a proposal is ready for departmental review, the student is responsible for submitting the proposal to me at Magnolia.Ngcobo-Sithole@mandela.ac.za Once submitted, the proposal will be sent to the critical reader for review. All proposals will be sent to the critical reader two weeks before the departmental proposal meeting.
3. All M and D students will present their proposal at one of the monthly departmental meetings. The presentation is 15 minutes in length and all staff members attend to provide verbal feedback. Your supervisor will provide you with the dates of these meetings, once you begin your research and you can plan toward presenting.
4. Following the presentation of the proposal and receiving departmental feedback, the proposal will be submitted for the next step in receiving ethical clearance – faculty ethics clearance (FPGSC). Your supervisor will guide you on the submission process. All proposal to be considered by FPGSC are submitted to an online submission system called Meos. Meos is an online submission platform that enables better tracking and management of your research.
5. The proposal will further be sent to RECH for institutional ethical clearance (if deemed necessary), before commencing with data collection. You will complete a RECH form online. Please open link to access RECH guidelines for submission [[https://rd.mandela.ac.za/Research-Ethics/Research-Ethics-Committee-Human-\(REC-H\)](https://rd.mandela.ac.za/Research-Ethics/Research-Ethics-Committee-Human-(REC-H))]

Research Skills Development

1. Departmental research workshops

The department of psychology hosts workshops for our registered students, to induct them into research within the department. These workshops will be communicated with students but take place throughout the year.

Topics covered include, but are not limited to:

1. Understanding the research process and the development of the research proposal and RECH Form
2. Research methods
3. Epistemological frameworks and their role in your research
4. Literature review writing
5. Data collection: practical strategies

2. Faculty research workshops

Students are encouraged to further make use of the research workshops conducted by the faculty research directorate.

3. Attending conferences and seminars

It is encouraged that you build your research network by engaging with the academic community through the attendance of conferences and seminars to showcase your research work. This is done in consultation with your supervisor, once you have sourced relevant conferences and seminars.

Academic Writing and Publication

Academic writing for postgraduate studies requires specific skill sets: the ability to search for literature; to read and understand the findings from previous studies; critique and appraise arguments being made; as well as constructing an argument that is specific to the research you are conducting. To ensure that your writing remains academic and scientific, students are requested to attend faculty workshops. As a postgraduate student, you should consult with your supervisor(s) regarding the publication of your research. The publication of research ensures that academics, researchers, scientists and policy-makers have access to the findings from your study.

Submission of Thesis or Dissertation

The thesis and dissertation are mostly submitted for examination in August every year. Your supervisor will decide when the thesis or dissertation is ready for submission. Please note that while a timeframe for the study will be discussed with your supervisor, delays may occur. However, your supervisor will guide you toward the successful completion of your studies.

Other Services Offered by The Institution

NOTE: The university offers services i.e. Counselling Services, Accommodation, Bursaries, International Office, Library, IT Services etc.

University Services Contacts

Contact Centre	041 504 1111
Postgraduate/Mature Student Enquiries	041 504 2162
Postgraduate Admission Enquiries	041 504 3619
Research & Capacity Development (Funding for M & D studies)	041 504 2538
Student Housing (Postgrad Student Village, Summerstrand)	041 504 3941
Student Counselling	041 504 2411
Office of the International Education	041 504 2161
Disability Services	041 504 3935

Faculty and Department's Contacts

1. Mrs Marilyn Afrikaner
Faculty Manager
Tel: +27 (0)41 504 2121
E-mail: Marilyn.Afrikaaner@mandela.ac.za
2. Mr Siyabulela Mashalaba
Faculty Postgrad Consultant
Tel: +27 (0)41 504 2109
E-mail: Siyabulela.Mashalaba@mandela.ac.za
3. Ms Ebonga Maraule
Psychology Departmental Secretary
Tel: +27 (0)41 504 2354
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