

7. Doctoral Degrees

7.1 PhD

Specific Admission Requirements

Students who wish to register for the PhD programme must:

- be in possession of the MTh degree (thesis option) of this University with a minimum final mark of 60%, on condition that:
 - if you have enrolled for the MTh programme before 1985, you must take a preliminary examination consisting of four papers (written or oral) on the major subject group, one paper (written or oral) on each of the two supplementary subjects, and an oral examination before the Faculty of Theology; and
 - to pass the preliminary examination, you must achieve a final mark of at least 50% in each of the papers in the main subject group and achieve a final mark of at least 50% in each of the two supplementary subjects; or
- be in possession of the MTh degree (structured option) of this University with a minimum final mark of 60% and have obtained a minimum final mark of 70% in the research assignment, and have completed any relevant supplementary work that may be required, on condition that:
 - if you have enrolled for the MTh programme before 1985, you must take a preliminary examination consisting of four papers (written or oral) on the major subject group, one paper (written or oral) on each of the two supplementary subjects, and an oral examination before the Faculty of Theology; and
 - to pass the preliminary examination, you must achieve a final mark of at least 50% in each of the papers in the main subject group and achieve a final mark of at least 50% in each of the two supplementary subjects; or
- be in possession of a MDiv degree of this University with a minimum final mark of 70% and have obtained a minimum final mark of 70% in the research assignment, which usually explores a cognate discipline or area of study, and have completed any relevant supplementary work that may be required as determined by the discipline group; or
- be in possession of a MPhil (Religion and Culture) degree of this University with a minimum final mark of 60%, and have completed any relevant supplementary work in consultation with the discipline group concerned; or
- have achieved a level of competence in your particular field of study in some other way that Senate considers to be adequate for this purpose.

- In addition to the above requirements regarding minimum final marks, students from another university should be in the possession of a full research master's degree or a master's degree with a significant research component.

Supplementary Requirements

In conjunction with the supervisor, the Faculty of Theology can determine any additional requirements that may be necessary for a specific field of study. The following additional requirements for admission to PhD studies have been set by the disciplines Old Testament and New Testament respectively:

- For Old Testament: Biblical Hebrew III, or an equivalent qualification;
- For New Testament: Greek III, or an equivalent qualification;
 - Exceptions may be made with regard to the Biblical Hebrew III or Greek III requirements in cases where the Ancient Languages are not important to the theme of the dissertation;
- Requirements with regard to language skills for international students with English as a second language. See supplementary language requirements under "MTh admission requirements".

Submission of your Research Proposal

- When considering the applications, the disciplinary groups will contact you to get an indication of the specific subdiscipline you want to specialise in.
- On admission you will be allocated a supervisor, according to availability, in order to assist you in preparing a research proposal.
- You can register as student only after the Faculty's Research Committee has approved your research proposal. This process takes a number of months.

Closing Date for Applications

- Admissions of new applications for PhD programmes are considered twice a year, namely in May and October. Therefore, if you have not obtained your preceding qualification at this university, the closing dates for applications are:
 - 1 May; or
 - more preferably 30 October.
- Students will be notified of the results after the selection meetings, after which a research proposal must be prepared in consultation with a promoter. After approval of the proposal by the faculty board and confirmation of admission by Senate, registration for the PhD is possible.
- If you have obtained your preceding qualification at SU, you can apply throughout the year.
- Submit your application to the Registrar and state your area of specialisation.
- Direct queries about the application procedure to the Faculty administrator at shirle@sun.ac.za.

Duration of Programme

- You must be enrolled for the PhD programme for at least two years before you can report for the final examination; and
- A supervisor may, after consultation with the environment concerned, require a minimum period of six months' residence for PhD students from outside Southern Africa.

Programme Description

- As candidate for the PhD degree you must submit, for Senate's approval, a dissertation which:
 - deals with a subject in your main field of study;
 - may only be submitted two years after the MTh degree has been obtained; or
 - after you have achieved a level of competence in the specific field of study in some other way that Senate considers to be adequate for the purpose.
- After registration for the PhD, you will receive a policy document from the relevant discipline group containing clear guidelines on the responsibilities of candidates and their supervisors, regular discussions, progress reports, examination procedures, assessment criteria for dissertations and other regulations of the discipline group.
- You must deliver a report on your research at least once during a postgraduate seminar.
- Discipline groups report annually to the Faculty on the progress of doctoral candidates.
- You must take note of all fees and possible additional levies as specified in Part 3 (Student Fees) of the Yearbook, or you must consult the Student Fees Division.

Assessment and Examination

Completion and submission of your Dissertation

- When you present yourself for examination, you must submit an electronic pdf version of the dissertation through Turnitin and at the administrative officer of the disciplinary group concerned, either **before** 1 September (for the December graduation ceremony) or **before** 1 December (for the March graduation ceremony).
- You will be required to orally defend your dissertation to a panel that includes the examiners and academic representatives from the discipline groups and that will determine the outcome of the defence.

Consult Part 1 (General Rules) of the Yearbook for the general regulations for doctoral programmes with regard to examinations and examiners for doctoral dissertations.

- Where applicable and feasible, and taking into account the requirements set by the University, you are encouraged, before reporting for the examination, to submit a manuscript or manuscripts on the results of your research for publication in recognised academic journals.
- For technical guidelines on the appearance, duplication and binding of dissertations, consult Part 1 (General Rules) of the Yearbook.

Disclaimer:

The content above comes from the 2024 Theology Yearbook. Make sure to consult the full **Theology Yearbook** to see this extract in context and to check if there have been any changes. Take special note of additional information in the yearbook under section **1. Summary and explanation of postgraduate programmes**