



**Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan
University**

for tomorrow

**INSTITUTIONAL REGULATORY CODE (IRC)
(Policies, Procedures, Rules etc.)**

To be completed by initiator of policy/policy owner

1. TITLE:	POLICY, PROCEDURES AND RULES FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES
2. APPROVING AUTHORITY: (Committee or Management Official)	Council
3. FIELD OF APPLICATION: (All persons to whom policy applies)	Postgraduate Students and All Academic Staff
4. COMPLIANCE OFFICER(S): (Persons responsible for ensuring policy implementation)	All Deans, Promoters/Supervisors of postgraduate students and relevant admin support staff
5. STATUS OF POLICY/PROCEDURE etc. (New/Revised):	New
6. REVIEW DATE: (Date for review of policy. Policy owner responsible for initiating review.)	1 June 2008
7. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION (State the stakeholder group/s consulted during policy formulation/revision)	Senate
8. DESIGNATION OF POLICY OWNER: (Person responsible for maintaining policy)	Director: Centre for Planning and Institutional Development
9. NAME OF POLICY OWNER:	Prof M Oosthuizen

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SUBJECT (Broad policy field):	Research, Innovation & Engagement
SUBJECT NUMBER:	400
CATEGORY (Policy sub-field):	Postgraduate Degrees
CATEGORY NUMBER:	403
IRC NUMBER:	403.01
POLICY DOCUMENT NUMBER:	D/823/05
DATE OF APPROVAL:	10 November 2005
RESOLUTION REFERENCE: (Minute/directive date, or other....)	C05.49.5.5.3.4
POLICY IMPLEMENTATION DATE: (Date on which policy becomes effective)	1 January 2006



**Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan
University**

f o r t o m o r r o w

**POLICY, PROCEDURES AND RULES
FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES**

**Developed by the Centre for Planning
And Institutional Development**

Approved by Senate on 10 November 2005

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ACRONYMS

APQC - Academic Planning and Quality Committee

CTLM - Centre for Teaching, Learning and Media

DVC - Deputy Vice-chancellor

ECS - Executive Committee of Senate

FMC - Faculty Management Committee

HEADS - Higher Education Access and Development Services

HESA - Higher Education South Africa

HEQC - Higher Education Quality Committee

HEQF - Higher Education Qualification's Framework

IAFA - Institutional Academic Focus Area

ICT - Information and Communication Technologies

ITS – Integrated Tertiary Software

RPL - Recognition of Prior Learning

RTI - Research, Technology and Innovation

SAQA - South African Qualifications Authority

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – POLICY, PROCEDURES AND RULES FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES

The **purpose** of the Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees is to expand upon the institutional arrangements for the quality assurance of academic activities within the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). It is therefore envisaged that each faculty will incorporate the policy into its overall framework for the quality assurance of its academic programmes, with due regard to its specific policies, procedures and structures.

The **scope** of the policy includes all postgraduate research degrees at the master's and doctoral levels. The term "research degrees" refers specifically to all doctoral degrees, in the form of a thesis, as well as to masters' degrees that consist entirely of a research component in the form of a dissertation. A doctoral thesis is a high-level research project, which should constitute an original contribution to knowledge. A master's dissertation is an advanced research project of defined scope and limited length. The research work that is undertaken for dissertations and theses will normally be submitted in written form. However, where justified by the faculty, in certain disciplines the requirements for the research degree may be partially or fully met by means of a set of original artworks, artefacts, conceptualisations, compositions, installation(s), performances, and or professional exhibitions. The academic and formal requirements with which doctoral and masters' candidates are expected to conform are discussed in the policy document.

The policy has been conceptualised within the parameters of the applicable general and specific rules and requirements relating to postgraduate research degrees that are stipulated in the NMMU Prospectus. Furthermore, the policy makes reference to, adheres to and elaborates on several other institutional and national policies and guidelines that are listed alphabetically as part of the regulatory framework outlined in the policy.

In terms of certain **general principles**, the NMMU acknowledges that postgraduate research implies a partnership and agreement between the candidate, supervisor/promoter, academic department, and where applicable, a sponsor, each having their own respective responsibilities. The *Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees* therefore aims to establish a framework and criteria with which all faculties are required to conform in order to ensure that their internal arrangements for the management of their postgraduate research candidates are comprehensive, addressing all aspects from admission to final examination. As part of this framework, the policy provides an overview of the responsibilities of the RTI Co-ordinators, Deans and academic managers with respect to postgraduate research. In addition, the code of conduct applicable to promoters/supervisors and research candidates is stipulated to ensure that the respective role players are aware of their duties, roles and responsibilities. All intellectual property resulting from work done for higher degrees, including all publications, is governed by the *NMMU Intellectual Property Policy*. The *NMMU Patents Policy* specifies the rules and procedures relating to the filing of patents.

The *Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees* furthermore describes the roles of various **institutional and faculty-level structures and designated officials** with respect to the management and coordination of Masters' and Doctoral degrees. In this respect, policy refers to the role of three institutional committees, namely the Executive Committee of Senate (ECS), the Research, Technology and Innovation (RTI) Committee and the Academic Planning and Quality Committee (APQC).

At faculty level, the policy outlines the roles of the Faculty Management Committee (FMC), and the Faculty Research, Technology and Innovation (RTI) Committee. It is noted in the policy that the respective faculty committees may also establish further sub-committees and working groups to facilitate their operations. In terms of designated officials, the policy delineates the responsibilities of the faculty RTI Coordinator as well as the Faculty Officer to ensure that these officials are aware of the scope of their activities and duties with respect to facilitating and managing postgraduate research in their particular faculty.

In respect of **admission, induction and registration for postgraduate research degrees**, the *Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees* operates within the ambits of the *NMMU Admissions Policy*. It is emphasised that the NMMU strives to promote access and equal opportunities for study at all qualification levels *inter alia* by making provision for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) against clearly specified criteria. However, it is pointed out that candidates should note that conformance with the formal requirements for admission to postgraduate research degrees (as indicated in the *NMMU Prospectus*) does not guarantee admission, and consideration will be given to resources in terms of staff capacity, access to information sources, equipment and infrastructure. Academic units will also assess the extent to which the proposed study falls within the fields of expertise of its staff members as well as its research focus areas.

The general procedures that apply to admission and registration for postgraduate research studies are contained in the *NMMU Prospectus* and *Admissions Policy*. To apply for admission to pursue a postgraduate research degree, prospective candidates are required to submit a completed application form to the head of the relevant academic unit (academic manager). The Faculty Officer in consultation with the academic manager ensures that the candidate adheres to the relevant institutional and faculty-specific and programme-specific admissions criteria. If the candidate complies with these admissions criteria, various processes will be undertaken to assign the candidate an appropriate supervisor/promoter. The supervisor/promoter makes a recommendation on the suitability of the candidate for admission to the relevant degree and, once the academic manager has approved the application, the candidate may register for the qualification. First-time candidates for postgraduate research degrees are permitted to register throughout the year, although re-registration for continuing candidates has to take place before the end of February of any given year. The policy makes provision for specific procedures in respect of admission and registration, including the validation of international qualifications, financial matters pertaining to the registration for postgraduate research degrees, the appointment of suitably qualified supervisors/promoters, induction processes, and the approval of research proposals for the purposes of the continuation of registration. Furthermore, the policy outlines the minimum and maximum periods of study for masters' and doctoral degrees and indicates the specific circumstances under which candidates who are registered for a master's degree may be allowed to convert their registration to doctoral study. In exceptional cases, postgraduate research candidates may apply for a period of suspension of registration and the conditions and procedures applicable to such cases are also stipulated in the policy.

The **conduct of research supervision** is a crucial aspect in ensuring the success of postgraduate research candidates at the NMMU. The *Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees* therefore devotes specific attention to the interaction between the supervisor/promoter and the postgraduate research candidate. Of particular note, is that supervisors/promoters are required to enter into a specific supervisory agreement with candidates whereby the responsibilities and rights of both

parties in terms of the supervision process are specified. Supervisors/promoters are responsible to their academic managers for the management of the research candidates assigned to them and for fulfilling their responsibilities as outlined in detail in the policy. In turn, postgraduate research candidates are also required to abide by the code of conduct applicable to them, as indicated in the policy.

To facilitate an enabling and supportive framework for postgraduate research, the policy also makes provision for the training of supervisors/promoters in research supervision, as well as the training of candidates in research skills appropriate to their individual needs and objectives. Furthermore, postgraduate research candidates and their supervisors/promoters should be aware of the support services that are available from institutional resources as outlined in Appendix H of the policy.

The *Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees* emphasises that supervisors/promoters should ensure that their postgraduate research candidates are fully informed about the procedures that apply to the **assessment** of their dissertations/theses. This implies that every supervisor/promoter should be fully informed and acquainted with the key outcomes expected of research degrees, and ensure that their candidates are informed accordingly. In terms of assessment criteria, the policy indicates that the assessment of master's and doctoral candidates will be based on the relevant aspects of (a) the study; (b) the written component and/or (c) other research work, such as a composition, computer application or artefact, submitted for evaluation as required by the Faculty concerned. However, candidates are encouraged to consult their faculty-specific guides for postgraduate studies for more information on the assessment criteria.

The policy further outlines the procedures for appointing internal and external examiners with specific reference to the roles and responsibilities of supervisors/promoters, academic managers, faculty-specific committees and faculty officers in this respect. The procedure and format for the submission of dissertations and theses for the purposes of examination are specified and the role of examiners in respect of compiling and submitting examiners' reports is described. It should be noted that in certain faculties a *viva voce* examination may be part of the assessment procedures for masters' and doctoral degrees and the procedures for the conduct of such an examination are set out in the policy.

The process for awarding masters' and doctoral degrees is also outlined in the policy, including an exposition of how to deal with discrepancies between the examiners' reports. The policy furthermore indicates the role of the supervisor/promoter in supplying the candidate with the relevant excerpts from the examiner's feedback relating to the desired corrections/alterations to be made to the dissertation or thesis and in ensuring that such corrections are made to ensure that the work is adequately prepared for re-submission, if required. Provision is made in the policy for candidates to appeal the outcome of the examination and the applicable procedure is outlined. In addition, the policy stipulates the requirements in respect of submitting the final copies of the dissertation or thesis prior to graduation and makes reference to the need to encourage the publication of research outputs generated through postgraduate degrees where this is possible and appropriate.

The University's procedure and that of its faculties for resolving postgraduate research candidates' complaints during the course of their studies should be effective, fair, transparent and consistently applied, thus protecting the rights of all concerned. The *Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees* stresses that each faculty must ensure that their **complaints and appeals procedures** are well-publicised, and that their staff are aware of these procedures and the circumstances in

which they may be used. General guidelines regarding the resolution of disputes between supervisors/promoters and candidates are outlined in the policy.

Finally, the *Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees* indicates the commitment of the NMMU to regular **monitoring and reviewing** of the standard of the postgraduate research degrees awarded in its name and the quality of the education provided to enable postgraduate research candidates to attain those standards. Such monitoring and review will take into account *inter alia* the time taken to submit dissertations/theses; pass and failure rates; feedback received from postgraduate research candidates, employers, sponsors and any other external funders; and so forth.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the policy

The policy forms part of the institutional arrangements for the quality assurance¹ of academic activities within the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). With effect from 1 January 2006 the requirements contained in this policy will replace all existing institutional policies, rules and procedures relating to postgraduate research degrees, and will be applicable to both new and existing postgraduate students. Each faculty should therefore incorporate the policy into its overall framework for the quality assurance of its academic programmes, with due regard to its specific policies, procedures and structures.

1.2 Scope of the policy

The policy applies to all postgraduate research degrees at the master's and doctoral levels, including previous University and Technikon type research degrees. The term "research degrees" refers specifically to all doctoral degrees as well as to master's degrees that consist entirely of a research component. While the provisions of this policy are also largely applicable to coursework master's programmes with a research component, candidates for such degrees are referred to the *Policy and Procedures for Postgraduate Coursework Degrees*.

In accordance with the definitions in the *NMMU Prospectus*, research masters' degrees may be completed by means of a dissertation and doctoral degrees by means of a thesis. Each type of degree can be defined as follows:

- **Dissertation:**

The research work submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining a master's degree. A master's dissertation is an advanced research project of defined scope and limited length. A dissertation is not required to be an original contribution to a particular field of knowledge, though it may be. The academic and formal requirements with which dissertations are expected to conform are

¹ See glossary at the end of the document.

discussed in Sections 6.2-6.3 and Section 6.5 of this document respectively. A dissertation is awarded a mark and the degree may be awarded with distinction.

- **Thesis:**

The research work submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining a doctoral degree. A doctoral thesis is a high-level research project, which must constitute an original contribution to knowledge. The extent to which candidates reveal an extensive as well as intensive knowledge of their subject, and an advanced level of competence in addressing problems that are directly or indirectly relevant to the particular topic, are important considerations in judging the quality of doctoral theses. The general academic and formal requirements with which theses are expected to conform are discussed in Sections 6.2-6.3 and Section 6.5 of this document respectively. Marks are not awarded for doctorates.

Under normal circumstances, a dissertation or thesis should have a theme or problem, usually stated in the title, and the success with which the candidate sustains that theme, thereby presenting a unified, cumulative argument, is an important consideration. However, where justified by the faculty due to its relevance to a particular research field, a candidate may produce a series of interrelated publishable articles and/or research essays within a circumscribed disciplinary or interdisciplinary field. These articles/essays collectively may be treated as the equivalent of a single dissertation or thesis. The minimum number of articles/essays acceptable for the master's degree is four, whereas for a doctorate the minimum is six. In the case of the latter, all articles should make a significant and original contribution to the specified field(s) of knowledge concerned. Where articles/essays are presented in fulfilment of the requirements for a master's or doctoral degree, the candidate and supervisor should ensure that appropriate steps are taken to ensure the coherence of the research. Such steps may include the presentation of introductory and concluding chapters, an integrated discussion of the problem to be investigated, a review of the methodological approach or approaches, and so forth. A postgraduate research degree that is undertaken by means of a series of interrelated articles is subject to all the requirements of this policy. Where necessary the policy refers to specific requirements in this regard, for example, in the sections on the submission of research proposals (section 4.4), as well procedures and criteria relating to assessment (section 6.3).

The research work that is undertaken for dissertations and theses will normally be submitted in written form. However, in certain disciplines, which include Architecture,

Design, Engineering, Performing Arts as well as the Visual and Tactile Arts, the requirements for the research degree may also be met, either partially or fully, by means of (inter alia) a set of original artworks, artefacts, conceptualizations, compositions, installation(s), performances and/or professional exhibitions. Here it is understood that where relevant to the discipline, the medium of communication required for a research dissertation or thesis may also include, apart from the text and/or spoken word (viva voce) the language of architecture, form, music, painting, sculpture, etc. In all such cases, the relevant Faculty Management Committee (FMC) will consider the justification for obtaining or partially obtaining the research degree by means of the particular mode of research output, and must specify conditions relating to the completion and submission of the research work. Where necessary the FMC should submit such applications to the ECS for approval.

It should be noted that this policy does not address the arrangements for the approval, monitoring and review of academic programmes that lead to the award of a research degree, as these aspects are dealt with in the Academic Quality Manual.

1.3 Regulatory framework

This policy presupposes all the applicable general and specific rules and requirements relating to postgraduate research degrees that are elaborated in the *NMMU Prospectus*. In addition the policy makes reference to, adheres to and elaborates on several other institutional and national policies and guidelines that are listed alphabetically below.

1.3.1 Related Institutional Policies

This paragraph refers to institutional policies that are in various stages of development as part of the consolidation of the institutional quality management system², and will be updated on a regular basis to reflect the progress made in this regard.

Approved Policies:

- *Admissions Policy*
- *NMMU Document on the Delegation of Decision-Making Authority*
- *Policy for the Management of Research, Technology and Innovation Activities in the NMMU*

² See glossary.

Draft Policies:

- *Academic Quality Manual*
- *Code of Conduct for Researchers at the NMMU*
- *Workload policy*
- *Language Policy*
- *Patents Policy*
- *Plagiarism Policy*
- *Recognition of Prior Learning³ Policy*
- *Safety Health and Environmental Procedures*

Policies to be Developed:

- *Assessment and Moderation Policy*
- *Distance Education Policy*
- *Institutional Articulation Policy*
- *Intellectual Property Policy*
- *Policy and Procedures for Postgraduate Coursework Degrees*
- *Teaching Policy*

1.3.2 Related National Policies and Guidelines

- Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC)⁴ Criteria for Programme Accreditation⁵ (http://www.che.ac.za/publications/heqc_accreditation.php)
- HEQC Institutional Audit Criteria⁶ (http://www.che.ac.za/publications/heqc_audit.php)
- HEQC Improving Teaching & Learning Resource (Section 7: Postgraduate Research and Supervision) (http://www.che.ac.za/publications/heqc_cd.php)
- A Guide to Good Practice in Institutional Research Quality Assurance (Compiled for the HEQC by the Centre for Interdisciplinary studies at the University of Stellenbosch) (<http://www.che.ac.za/documents/d000098/index.php>)
- The draft Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) (<http://education.pwv.gov.za/content/documents/486.pdf>)
- Research Funding Body Requirements.

³ See glossary.

⁴ See glossary.

⁵ See glossary.

⁶ See glossary.

2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

2.1 The policy as a framework for the management of research degrees within faculties

Each faculty at the NMMU is required to create and maintain appropriate structures, policies and procedures for the planning, management and coordination of its master's and doctoral research degrees. The policy does not presume to be prescriptive in this regard and recognizes that each faculty's internal arrangements should be appropriate to its context. However, the policy does establish a framework and criteria with which all faculties are required to conform in order to ensure that their internal arrangements for the management of their postgraduate research candidates are comprehensive, addressing all aspects from admission to final examination. In addition the policy contains various recommendations that are not compulsory but that faculties and academic units may adopt or adapt, depending on their appropriateness for specific circumstances.

2.2 The agreement between the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and its postgraduate research candidates

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University acknowledges that postgraduate research implies a partnership and agreement between the candidate, supervisor/promoter, department, and where applicable, a sponsor, each having their own respective responsibilities. As part of this agreement, the University expects that:

- Research candidates will pursue their studies with diligence, and will honour the code of conduct and responsibilities of research candidates as these are stipulated in this policy (see Section 5.4) and in relevant faculty guidelines.
- Supervisor(s)/promoter(s) will provide their research candidates with appropriate support and guidance, and will honour the code of conduct and all other responsibilities of supervisors/promoters as these are stipulated in this policy (see Section 5.3) and in relevant faculty guidelines.

-
- Deans, in liaison with the RTI co-ordinator (see Section 3.3.1), academic managers⁷ and relevant faculty structures will ensure that research candidates are properly informed about their rights and responsibilities; receive appropriate research training; receive adequate support and guidance including regular and adequate feedback on their progress; and are examined on their submitted work in terms of a valid and reliable process which includes clearly communicated assessment⁸ criteria.

2.3 Intellectual property rights

All intellectual property resulting from work done for higher degrees, including all publications, is governed by the *NMMU Intellectual Property Policy*. The intellectual property rights resulting from a candidate's research shall vest in the University. Apart from research bound by confidentiality agreements, the candidate shall nevertheless be entitled to publish the treatise/dissertation/thesis in the original or amended form within one year of the degree being awarded.

The *NMMU Patents Policy* specifies the rules and procedures relating to the filing of patents.

3 STRUCTURES AND DESIGNATED OFFICIALS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL RESEARCH DEGREES AT INSTITUTIONAL AND FACULTY LEVEL

3.1 Institutional structures

Three subcommittees of Senate, namely the Executive Committee of Senate, the Research, Technology and Innovation Committee and the Academic Planning and Quality Committee are all involved in the management of research degrees at the NMMU.

⁷ See glossary.

⁸ See glossary.

3.1.1 Executive Committee of Senate (ECS)

ECS acts on behalf of Senate in all matters relating to academic programmes, including postgraduate research degrees. In this capacity, ECS fulfils the following functions relating to postgraduate research degrees:

- Consideration of general and specific rules and requirements relating to postgraduate degrees, and recommendation of such rules to Senate for approval.
- Approval of the nature and extent of confidentiality agreements that apply to postgraduate research degrees.
- Consideration of formal complaints from both candidates and supervisors/promoters with respect to the supervision and examination of postgraduate research dissertations/theses.

3.1.2 The NMMU Research, Technology and Innovation (RTI) Committee

As stipulated in the NMMU *Policy for the Management of Research, Technology and Innovation Activities in the NMMU*, the role of the RTI Committee is two-fold: (i) to ensure that NMMU research activities, staff and candidates are developed in order to provide a firm platform for the conduct of research, technology transfer and commercialisation outputs; and (ii) to proactively encourage innovation, stimulate and manage research as well as identify areas where research outputs can be converted into innovations that will generate third stream income. The RTI Committee has five subcommittees, namely:

- A Research Management sub-committee.
- A Technology - Innovation sub-committee.
- A Research Ethics Committee – Human.
- A Research Ethics Committee – Animal.
- Publications sub-committee.

The first sub-committee will be predominantly responsible for research management and development, and the second for promoting enterprise development and the identification of opportunities to convert research outputs into innovations that can generate third stream income. The two Research Ethics Committees will take responsibility for: i) developing and updating a code of ethics for research and for ensuring compliance with the *Code of Conduct for Researchers at the NMMU*; (ii) approving all research proposals from students and staff in cases where their conformance with the institution's code of ethics needs to be validated (or guidelines pertaining to when and how to submit research proposals for approval to the relevant

Ethics Committee please consult with the NMMU Department of Research Management) and maintaining a record of such applications and the outcome thereof; and (iii) monitoring (when applicable and possible) adherence of the approved research projects to the code of ethics.

In accordance with the *Policy for the Management of Research, Technology and Innovation Activities in the NMMU* the RTI committee, in association with its five sub-committees, fulfils the following functions with respect to postgraduate research degrees:

- Determination of institutional policies, procedures and rules relating to postgraduate research degrees for approval by Senate. It should be noted that section 3.1.3 below describes certain functions relating to admission into and the assessment of postgraduate research degrees that are the responsibility of the Academic Planning and Quality Committee (APQC). The APQC will liaise with the institutional RTI committee with respect to these matters.
- Monitoring the implementation of the institutional policy relating to postgraduate research degrees.
- Initiation and monitoring of a capacity development programme and workshops for both staff and students at institutional level.
- Overseeing the management of bursaries for postgraduate students and advising institutional management on the adequacy of financial support to postgraduate research candidates.
- Monitoring the compliance of postgraduate research with ethical considerations, institutional safety, health and environmental procedures and other legal requirements.
- Monitoring the extent to which postgraduate research contributes to the development of Institutional Academic Focus Areas.
- Compilation and management of an integrated RTI database.

In the execution of its responsibilities with respect to postgraduate research degrees, the Institutional RTI committee is advised by the respective Faculty RTI committees.

3.1.3 Academic Planning and Quality Committee (APQC)

The APQC advises and responds to Senate on all matters relating to academic planning as well as the quality and quality assurance of the NMMU's academic

programmes, including postgraduate research degrees. With respect to postgraduate research degrees, the APQC fulfils the following responsibilities:

- Consideration of policies, procedures and criteria relating to admission to postgraduate research degrees, including policies for the recognition of prior learning (RPL).⁹ The APQC recommends such policies and criteria to Senate for approval.
- Consideration of policies and procedures relating to the assessment of postgraduate research degrees, and recommendation of such policies to Senate for approval.
- The development and monitoring of Institutional Academic Focus Areas (IAFAs), and recommendation of IAFAs to Senate for approval. The IAFAs indicate the areas on which the NMMU will concentrate in its academic programmes and research activities, and therefore set out the research areas on which postgraduate research should concentrate.
- The review of learner achievement, as this is reflected in consolidated data on the progress of candidates in postgraduate research programmes, on an annual basis.
- Integration of the review of postgraduate research degrees into the academic review process in which all academic units engage on a regular basis, but at least every 6 years.
- Consideration of internal and external reports relating to the accreditation, monitoring and review of postgraduate research degrees. Such reports will often be part of larger review reports relating to academic units or degree programmes that are conducted for purposes of self-evaluation or external accreditation and evaluation by bodies such as professional or statutory councils or the HEQC.

3.2 Faculty structures

Each faculty should have appropriate structures for dealing with the various aspects of the management and coordination of their postgraduate research degrees. In addition to the various academic units in the faculty, these structures include the Faculty Management Committee (FMC), and the Faculty RTI Committee. The following discussion outlines the role of each of these committees, in conformity to the *Policy for the Management of Research, Technology and Innovation Activities* in the NMMU as

⁹ See glossary.

well as the *NMMU Document on the Delegation of Decision-Making Authority*. The respective faculty committees may establish sub-committees and working groups to facilitate their operations. Thus, a sub-committee for higher degrees may be appointed to fulfil various functions with respect to postgraduate research degrees. Where faculties operate with sub-committee structures, which may result in a different allocation of responsibilities, the provisions of this document should be interpreted accordingly.

3.2.1 Faculty Management Committee (FMC)

The FMC is responsible for the following matters regarding postgraduate research degrees:

- Appeals relating to admission and re-admission to master's and doctoral research degrees, and the approval of deviations from specified admission and re-admission requirements.
- Approving requests for the suspension of registration or the continuation of registration in cases where candidates are unable to complete the degree within the maximum prescribed period (see sections 4.6 and 4.7 of this document).
- The approval of the admission of candidates via RPL.
- The approval of the registration details of candidates.
- The appointment of supervisors/promoters and co-supervisors/co-promoters.
- Approving applications for the conversion of master's degree to doctoral degree studies.
- The appointment of internal and external examiners.

In its consideration of all these matters, the FMC may act upon the advice of the Faculty RTI Committee, or other designated committees.

3.2.2 Faculty Research, Technology and Innovation (RTI) Committee

The Faculty RTI Committee is responsible for monitoring adherence to institutional and faculty policies in respect of all aspects of postgraduate research degrees studies. Its responsibilities include:

- The approval of research proposals.
- Ensuring that adequate arrangements are made for the induction of new postgraduate research candidates and for the provision of training opportunities in research skills.

- Monitoring the progress of postgraduate research candidates and the quality of supervision provided to them.
- Monitoring the adequacy of the support – including academic development¹⁰, financial aid and information and physical resources – that is available to postgraduate research candidates.
- Monitoring the compliance of postgraduate research with legal and ethical requirements and *Safety, Health and Environmental Procedures* as these are stipulated in institutional and faculty policies.
- Monitoring the extent to which postgraduate research contributes to the development of Institutional Academic Focus Areas (IAFA's).
- Ensuring the integrity of the assessment of postgraduate research.
- The approval of examiners' reports and the award of postgraduate research degrees.

The Faculty RTI Committee may also make recommendations on:

- The appointment of supervisors/promoters and co-supervisors/co-promoters for master's and doctoral candidates.
- The appointment of internal and external examiners for postgraduate research dissertations/theses.

3.3 Designated Faculty Officials

3.3.1 Faculty RTI Co-ordinator

The NMMU *Policy for the Management of Research, Technology and Innovation Activities* makes provision for the appointment of a senior academic to co-ordinate RTI activities in each faculty. Guidelines for possible responsibilities of the Faculty RTI Co-ordinator include the coordination of postgraduate research studies. The rationale for this strategy is that the RTI Co-ordinator will assist the relevant faculty committees in the execution of their responsibilities for postgraduate research degrees, and also provide support and advice to academic units, academic staff and postgraduate candidates.

¹⁰ See glossary.

While this policy will refer to a Faculty RTI Co-ordinator, its provisions are not dependant on the designation of a specific person to fulfil such a role. What is required is that each faculty should allocate responsibilities for RTI coordination to appropriate staff members. In this regard, it is recommended that the Faculty RTI Co-ordinator should fulfil the following responsibilities in liaison with the relevant academic managers:

- Advising the FMC or relevant faculty committee on the allocation of supervisory duties, in particular to ensure that the faculty applies a consistent policy that is in line with institutional guidelines in this respect. The Co-ordinator may also advise on specific cases, such as interdisciplinary degrees that are undertaken on an intra- or inter-faculty basis, or cases where a supervisor/promoter or co-supervisor/co-promoter must be appointed from outside the University.
- Liaising with academic units with respect to the arrangement and coordination of induction and training programmes for staff and postgraduate candidates. In some cases the Faculty RTI Co-ordinator may take responsibility for such arrangements, while in other cases academic units may take responsibility.
- Advising the Faculty RTI Committee on the promotion of interdisciplinary research, and providing a link between the coordination of faculty RTI activities and postgraduate research work.
- Advising the Faculty RTI Committee on the quality of postgraduate research and supervision, as well as the quality of support for postgraduate research studies.
- Liaising with relevant academic support services on the needs of postgraduate research candidates for generic assistance, and referring candidates for such assistance where necessary.
- Ensuring that confidentiality agreements are signed by internal or external supervisors (Appendix M), candidates (Appendix M) and external examiners (Appendix M), where research findings have to be protected by non-disclosure agreements.
- Ensuring that the faculty guide for postgraduate studies is regularly updated and revised.
- Providing an advisory service to both postgraduate candidates and supervisors/promoters, including cases where complaints could not be resolved satisfactorily by the relevant academic manager as outlined in the Complaints and Appeals Procedure in Section 7 of this document. This advisory service includes:

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- Assisting postgraduate candidates who are experiencing difficulties with their agreed schedule of work and/or their relationship(s) with their individual supervisors/promoters (see section 5.1);
 - Advising supervisors/promoters who are experiencing problems in their relationship with individual candidates, including concerns over the standard of candidates' work (see section 5.1);
 - Providing recommendations to the FMC on actions that should be taken to address problems in specific cases.
 - Consulting with academic managers on any possible changes in the allocation of supervisory duties, either temporarily or permanently.
 - Preparing an annual review of the progress of the faculty's postgraduate candidates for the consideration of the Faculty Board, based on:
 - Annual progress reports on candidates' work that are received from academic units, and
 - Statistical data relating to candidates' progress. Such data typically includes headcount enrolments, number of completions, the number of years that candidates have been registered, and years taken to complete the degree.
 - Regularly reporting to the faculty management on matters of concern arising from feedback obtained from candidates.

3.3.2 The Faculty Officer

For the purposes of this document, reference will be made to the "Faculty Officer" to refer to the person(s) with responsibility for the full range of the faculty office's administrative functions relating to postgraduate research studies. The Faculty Officer's responsibilities with respect to postgraduate research degrees should include:

- The registration of postgraduate research candidates:
 - Registering new postgraduate research candidates and issuing student cards once the relevant academic manager has approved the candidate (see Section 4.1.3);
 - Annually re-registering postgraduate research candidates if they adhere to the rules as set out in the *NMMU Prospectus* and this policy;
 - Deregistering candidates who do not comply with the rules as set out in Section 4.7 and informing candidates in writing of this process.
- Distributing the *NMMU Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees*, the faculty guide for postgraduate studies and other relevant documentation to postgraduate candidates upon registration.

- Assisting the Faculty RTI Co-ordinator in organising the faculty induction programme for postgraduate research students, where applicable.
- Acting as secretary to the Faculty RTI Committee, and other relevant faculty committees and sub-committees involved with matters related to postgraduate research.
- Informing candidates in writing of the resolutions of relevant faculty committees, for example, the acceptance of proposals (see Section 4.4), the decisions taken on special requests such as the extension of the study period (see Section 4.7) or the temporary suspension of registration (see Section 4.7), and so forth.
- Regularly updating the faculty research database on the ITS system, including registering each postgraduate research dissertation/thesis after the proposal has been accepted by the Faculty RTI Committee (see Section 4.4). This entails assigning a number to each study, for easy reference, and capturing information such as the title of proposed studies, the name of the candidate, the name(s) of the supervisors/promoters and sources of funding, where relevant. The Faculty Officer will also update these details as necessary - for example where the title of the proposed study changes.
- Data submission for NEXUS.
- Obtaining the curriculum vitae's of academics nominated to act as external examiners to serve at the FMC meeting.
- Collating examination reports from internal and external examiners received from the Examinations Officer and distributing the reports to relevant members of the Faculty RTI Committee.
- Organising the time and venue for the Faculty RTI Committee meeting where the awarding of masters and doctoral degrees will be determined.
- Informing all relevant parties in writing of the proposed date, time and venue of *viva voce*¹¹ sessions.
- Organising an appropriate venue for the *viva voce* sessions.

¹¹ See glossary.

4 ADMISSION, INDUCTION AND REGISTRATION FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES

4.1 Admission and Registration

4.1.1 Admission policy and enrolment planning

Candidates for postgraduate research degrees are referred to the *NMMU Admissions Policy*. In accordance with this policy, the University strives to promote access and equal opportunities for study at all qualification levels. However, candidates should note that conformance with the formal requirements for admission to postgraduate research degrees does not guarantee admission. Each faculty and academic unit undertakes an annual enrolment planning process in order to ensure that their student intake will allow them to provide a quality learning experience to potential students at all qualification levels. In planning their student intake, academic units will pay particular attention to their available resources in terms of staff capacity, access to information sources, equipment and infrastructure. Furthermore, in considering applications for admission, academic units will assess the extent to which the proposed study falls within the fields of expertise of its staff members as well as its research focus areas. In accordance with its *Teaching Policy*, the NMMU expects that research supervisors/promoters should integrate candidates' research into the research plans of the department, school or faculty in order to build research capacity and contribute to the identified focus areas of the University in relation to research.

4.1.2 Admission criteria

The *NMMU Prospectus* stipulates the institutional requirements for admission to master's and doctoral degrees, as well as requirements that are determined by faculties for admission to specific programmes (see sections G 300 and 400 of the Prospectus). The Centre for Higher Education Access and Development Services (HEADS) (see Appendix H for contact details) can provide assistance to faculties in the development of faculty specific admissions criteria for postgraduate research candidates. It is recommended that faculties should provide clear guidelines on the admissions criteria for their specific postgraduate research programmes in the faculty guide to postgraduate studies.

Holders of qualifications that are awarded by international universities should note that they may be required to submit their qualifications for validation by the Centre for the Evaluation of Foreign Educational Qualifications at the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)¹² – see Section 4.1.4 below. The NMMU Office for International Education (See Appendix H for contact details) can assist faculties in the validation of international qualifications.

In line with the *Admission Policy*, the University's admission criteria aim to promote equality of opportunity for all students, inter alia by making provision for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) against clearly specified criteria. RPL means that Senate has the discretion to allow students who do not meet the normal admission requirements for a particular degree to be admitted, provided that they demonstrate their competence to undertake the particular study programme in a suitable manner. The admission of postgraduate research candidates is guided by one or more of the following criteria, taking account of institutional RPL guidelines as stipulated in the *NMMU Recognition of Prior Learning Policy*:

- Relevant existing academic qualification/s.
- Previous research experience.
- Previous professional experience in an area relevant to the proposed field of study.
- Existing language proficiency in terms of oral and written communication skills (faculties and their constituent academic units must decide on an appropriate method for assessing the oral and written communication skills of applicants by, for example, the submission of written work, personal interviews, etc.). It should be noted that in accordance with the *NMMU Language Policy* faculty boards may decide to allow a dissertation/thesis to be written in Xhosa or Afrikaans, with due regard to the language needs in the particular area of study and practical considerations (such as the language ability of supervisors/promoters, external examiners and infrastructure).

In the case of candidates who apply for admission via RPL the following procedure applies:

- The candidate should submit a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates their competence to undertake the proposed study programme. It should be noted that RPL can only be granted against explicit learning outcomes of programmes. For

¹² See glossary.

example, to admit candidates to a master's programme on the grounds of RPL, sufficient evidence needs to be provided that the candidate has attained the learning outcomes of the qualification (as registered with SAQA) that articulates with the master's programme (i.e. usually the honours programme in the relevant discipline).

- The application is considered by the relevant academic unit, and recommended by the academic manager to the FMC.
- If the application is approved by the FMC, the applicant is allowed to register for the degree.

4.1.3 Admission and registration procedures

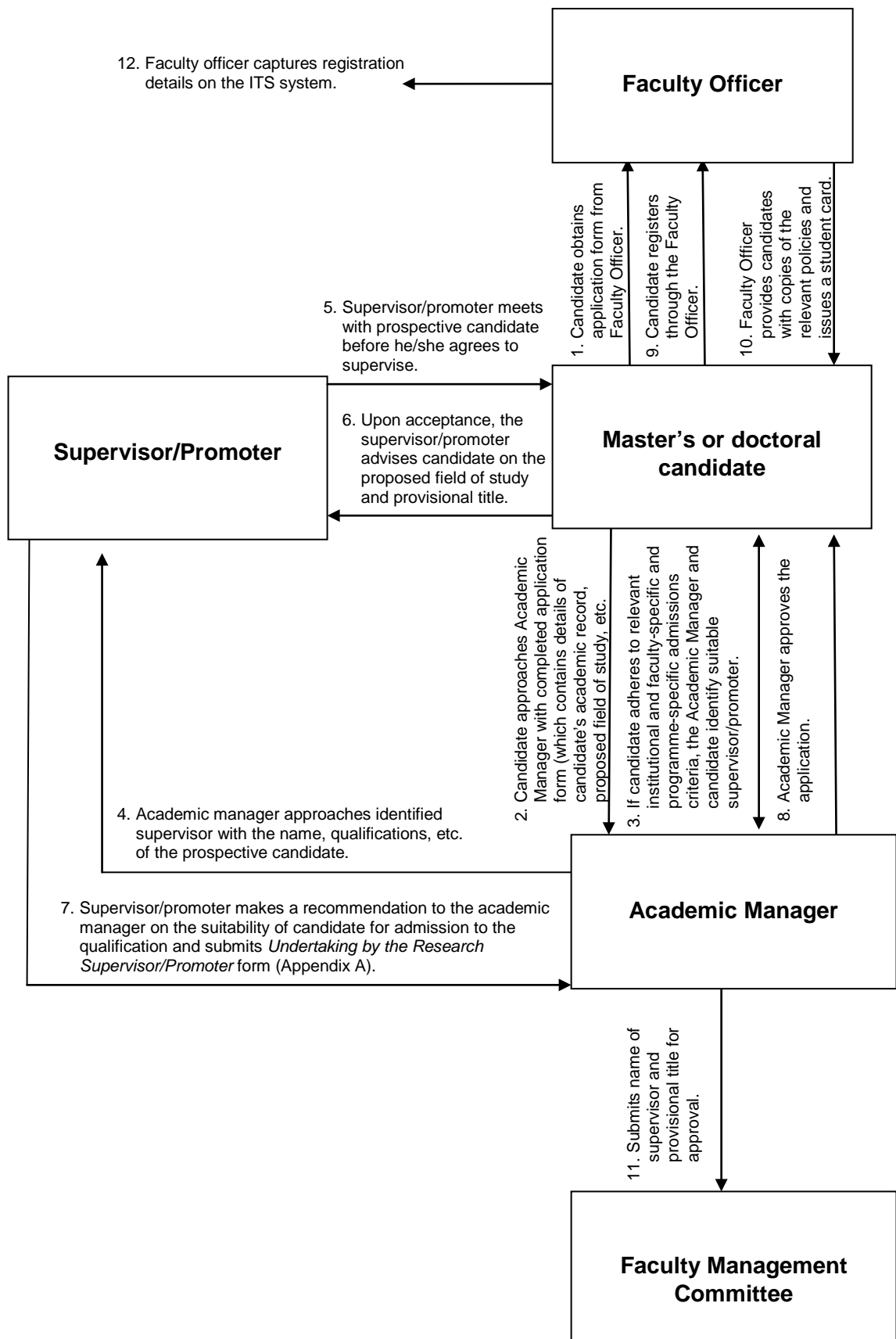
The general procedures that apply to admission and registration for postgraduate research studies are contained in the *NMMU Prospectus* and *Admissions Policy*. In their initial year of study, candidates for postgraduate research degrees are allowed to register throughout the year. It should be noted that the year of registration will only be recognised as a full academic year, in terms of the minimum and maximum periods of study (see Section 4.6), if registration takes place on or before the last working day of April of any given year. Re-registration, however, has to take place before the end of February of any given year.

The registration process of candidates for research degrees by dissertation or thesis is generally as follows (Figure 1 below provides an outline of the various stages involved in the admission and registration process, including the appointment of the supervisor/promoter):

- Prospective candidates are required to submit a completed application form, obtained from their Faculty Officer (see Appendix H for contact details), to the head of the relevant academic unit (academic manager). The application form contains information regarding the candidate's academic and other qualifications, relevant competencies and experience, as well as the proposed field of study/preliminary research topic. A prospective student, who did not obtain his/her previous qualification from the University, must attach an original academic record from the relevant higher institution to his/her application form.
- The Faculty Officer consults with the relevant academic manager to ensure that the candidate adheres to the relevant institutional and faculty-specific and programme-specific admissions criteria (see Section 4.1.2).

- The academic manager in consultation with the prospective candidate follows the process outlined in Section 4.2 in identifying a suitable supervisor/promoter and, where applicable, co-supervisor/co-promoter.
- The academic manager approaches the identified supervisor/promoter with the name, qualifications and other relevant details of the candidate. The identified supervisor/promoter has the opportunity to meet with the prospective candidate before he/she agrees to act as supervisor/promoter. The supervisor/promoter may decline to act as supervisor/promoter of the proposed study on the basis of any valid reason which would make them unable or disqualify them from acting in this capacity. Such reasons include their existing workload, their competence to supervise a study in the proposed field of study, or a conflict of interest such as their personal relationship with the candidate. Where the academic manager deems the reason to be ungrounded, he/she may refer the matter to the FMC, or other relevant faculty committee (see Section 3.2) for resolution.
- Upon rejection, the academic manager identifies and approaches alternative suitable supervisors/promoters. If no suitable internal supervisor or promoter can be identified, the academic manager should consult with the FMC on the possibility of appointing an external supervisor/promoter. The appointment of an external supervisor/promoter should take account of considerations such as the strategic importance of the proposed study for the academic unit, the possibility of providing capacity development for academic staff in the field of study and the potential of the candidate.
- Upon acceptance, the supervisor advises the candidate on the proposed field of study and the formulation of a provisional title for the proposed dissertation/thesis. Thereafter, the supervisor makes a recommendation to the academic manager on the suitability of the candidate's application for admission to the qualification. This recommendation takes into account, inter alia, the extent to which the proposed field of study or preliminary research topic falls within the academic unit's research focus areas.
- Once the academic manager has approved the application, the prospective candidate may register for the qualification through the Faculty Officer.

Figure 1: Admission and registration



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- Where applicable the supervisor reaches agreement with the academic manager and the candidate on the appointment of a proposed co-supervisor/co-promoter. The supervisor/promoter then completes the relevant *Undertaking by the Research Supervisor/Promoter* form (Appendix A) and submits it via the academic manager to the FMC for:
 - Approval of the appointment of the supervisor/promoter and where applicable the co-supervisor/co-promoter; and
 - Approval of the provisional title of the research dissertation/thesis.
 - It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that he/she meets the requirements for continuing registration (see Section 4.4) and that he/she re-registers annually.

4.1.4 Validation of international qualifications

Holders of international qualifications may be required to submit their qualifications for validation, depending on the nature of the qualification and the institution at which the qualification was obtained. The Office for International Education (See Appendix H for contact details) at the NMMU will advise international candidates on an appropriate validation authority and its procedures. The Office for International Education also provides the application forms for the evaluation of foreign qualifications by SAQA, and can submit the application on behalf of the candidate, subject to the candidate making the necessary payment directly to SAQA.

4.1.5 Financial matters

Postgraduate research candidates pay an annual registration and tuition fee. Candidates are required to pay a set deposit on tuition fees upon registration, while the balance is normally due by no later than the last working day of April of any given year. First-time candidates, who register after April of the relevant year, are required to pay the full annual registration and tuition fee upon registration. Candidates are required to pay the annual fees (registration and tuition continuation fees) for each year of study until the completion of their degree even if they make no call on a supervisor/promoter's time in any particular year or if they do not make use of NMMU laboratory facilities in any particular year.

Registration and tuition fees change annually, and the University reserves the right to change tuition fees without prior notice. Information on fees is provided to new

candidates as part of the application information, while all postgraduate research candidates may obtain information on current fees from the relevant Faculty Office, and/or the Student Accounts Division (see Appendix H for contact details).

4.2 Appointment of supervisors/promoters

The FMC, in consultation with academic managers and the RTI Co-ordinator in the faculty, should ensure that supervisors/promoters are appointed who have the necessary time, expertise and experience to provide postgraduate research candidates with effective guidance. In executing its responsibility, the FMC must adhere to the following requirements and use the guidelines as appropriate.

The following points serve as institutional requirements with respect to the appointment of supervisors/promoters:

- Supervisors/promoters or co-supervisors/co-promoters must have the appropriate qualifications and/or expertise and/or experience. They must have sufficient knowledge and experience in the field of study to make a positive and valuable contribution to the candidate's research endeavour, including recent publications in recognised journals as well as attendance of recent international and national conferences or similar forums where scholarly debate on the field takes place. In the following points, the specification of the minimum qualification requirements for the supervisor/promoter and co-supervisor/co-promoter of a doctorate or a master's degree includes the substantiated equivalent of such qualifications.
 - Promoters for doctoral degrees must have a doctorate.
 - Supervisors for a research master's degree must hold at least a master's degree, though it is preferable that they should hold a doctoral degree. Under no circumstances may a person who has not completed a master's degree with a research component in the form of a treatise or dissertation be allowed to supervise a research master's degree. It is however, preferable, that such a supervisor has completed a research based master's degree.
 - The normal requirement for the co-promoter of a doctoral degree is a doctorate, while co-supervisors for a research master's degree usually should hold a master's degree with a research component. However, in certain cases, which include professional research degrees such as (inter alia) Architecture, Computer and Information Science, Design, Engineering, Performing Arts as well as the Visual and Tactile Arts, a co-supervisor/co-promoter may be

appointed on the basis of their acknowledged professional expertise. In all such cases the co-promoter for a doctoral thesis must still hold a master's degree. The FMC must consider each individual case in deciding upon the formal qualifications that are required from co-supervisors in such cases.

- In the case of both dissertations and theses, academics who have no previous experience of supervising a research degree may either be appointed as co-supervisors/co-promoters (where the supervisor/promoter has the requisite qualifications, expertise and experience) or as supervisor/promoter who is mentored by an academic leader who has proven experience as a supervisor/promoter.
- The roles of the supervisor/promoter and co-supervisor/co-promoter should be clearly defined at the outset of the degree programme.
- The supervisor/promoter is usually a permanent employee of the University or an employee appointed on fixed-term contract for at least the duration of the study.
 - Contract staff members whose contract expires before the anticipated completion of the study should only be appointed as supervisors/promoters if they are able to give an undertaking that they will be available to supervise the candidate until the completion of the study within a reasonable agreed-upon time-frame;
 - It is not advisable for faculties to make use of short-term contract staff members to address serious problems in the supervisory capacity of their permanent staff. The FMC may, however, appoint a short-term contract staff member if it is satisfied that he/she will be able to fulfil all the required supervisory responsibilities and see the candidate through to the completion of the research during the duration of their contract.
- Staff members from outside the academic unit and/or faculty in which the candidate is registered, may be appointed as supervisors/promoters or co-supervisors/co-promoters. Such cases include:
 - Inter-disciplinary studies where a supervisor/promoter or co-supervisor/co-promoter is appointed from a different academic unit, faculty, research or administrative unit;
 - The appointment of a suitably qualified staff member from a research or administrative unit to act as the supervisor/promoter or co-supervisor/co-promoter;

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- Such supervisors/ promoters or co-supervisors/co-promoters will abide by the rules and procedures of the relevant academic unit in which the candidate is registered with respect to postgraduate research degrees.
 - The FMC may grant permission for an expert from outside the institution to be appointed as supervisor/promoter or co-supervisor/co-promoter where internal capacity and expertise is lacking. Faculties should provide the Examinations Officer with the faculty-specific contractual agreement for the appointment of the external supervisor/promoter or co-supervisor/co-promoter as well as a confidentiality agreement where necessary (see Appendix M).
 - Where an external promoter is appointed, an internal co-promoter must be appointed for all doctoral degrees. In the case of master's dissertations, where no internal co-supervisor is deemed necessary or where no internal co-supervisor is available due to capacity constraints or lack of expertise, an internal liaison person must be appointed to perform the necessary coordinating and administrative duties. This person should preferably be the academic manager of the relevant unit;
 - External supervisors/promoters or co-supervisors/co-promoters will abide by the rules and procedures of the relevant academic unit with respect to postgraduate research degrees.
 - Post-doctoral students may be appointed to supervise or promote research degrees. While such appointments would usually be as supervisor/co-supervisor for a research master's degree, post-doctoral students may also be appointed as promoters/co-promoters of doctoral degrees. In approving such appointments, the FMC should take into account the requirements for the appointment of supervisors/promoters as set out in this section.
 - Depending on the nature of the research, both internal and external supervisors/promoters and co-supervisors/co-promoters may be required to sign confidentiality agreements (see Appendix M) relating to the non- disclosure to any third party of confidential information that is submitted in writing as part of the dissertation/thesis, disclosed orally as part of the *viva voce examination* (where necessary) for the dissertation/thesis, or discussed during consultation sessions.
 - Research candidates must have the opportunity to exercise choice in identifying a prospective supervisor/promoter in consultation with the relevant academic manager. While this choice should be respected as far as possible, the prospective supervisor/promoter should also have the opportunity to respond to

this choice, as stipulated in Section 4.1.3 above, and to advance valid reasons if he/she is unable to act in this capacity.

- The FMC should be timeously informed if a staff member who is a supervisor/promoter or co-supervisor/co-promoter is no longer able to perform their duties, for reasons such as retirement or resignation. In cases where staff members retire or resign, it is preferable that they should be contracted to seeing their research candidates through to the completion of their studies within a reasonable, agreed-upon time frame. However, there may be cases in which alternative arrangements must be made. In such cases the FMC, in liaison with the relevant academic manager and the Faculty RTI Co-ordinator, should make suitable alternative arrangements in consultation with the candidate. The agreed alternative arrangements must be put in place without delay. The relevant Faculty Officer should be notified of the change in supervisor/promoter or co-supervisor/co-promoter by the Faculty RTI Co-ordinator.

The following points are made as guidelines for the appointment of supervisors/promoters and co-supervisors/co-promoters:

- Internal or external co-supervisors/co-promoters may be appointed for dissertations and theses. In addition to the stipulations on the appointment of co-supervisors and co-promoters in the preceding points, it is recommended that internal or external co-supervisors/co-promoters be appointed in the following cases:
 - Cases where an inexperienced supervisor is appointed as co-supervisor/co-promoter because he/she needs further training and development under the auspices of a supervisor/promoter;
 - Cases where the supervisor/promoter may still require the guidance of a more experienced co-supervisor/co-promoter;
 - Cases where the interdisciplinary nature of a research topic necessitates the appointment of more than one supervisor/promoter from the fields concerned.
- Supervisors/promoters should have a realistic supervisory load. While the FMC should give consideration to the specific circumstances of each case, the following guidelines should be observed:
 - Academics who have not supervised before should not act as supervisor/promoter and/or co-supervisor/co-promoter for more than three research candidates simultaneously;

- Experienced supervisors/promoters should not be the supervisor/promoter for more than six research candidates who are engaged in a dissertation or thesis at any one time. Supervisors/promoters may take on additional responsibilities as co-supervisors/co-promoters for dissertations and theses, and also as supervisors for treatises in master's degrees. The relevant faculty committee should apply this guideline flexibly, taking account of the staff member's full workload, as well as information from progress reports relating to their current research candidates.

4.3 Induction

4.3.1 Faculty guide for postgraduate studies

All new research candidates should be provided with University and faculty-specific requirements and guidelines/codes of practice relating to postgraduate research. Although this policy recognises that each faculty's internal framework for managing research candidates differs, certain facets of postgraduate supervision¹³ must be clearly specified in an official faculty guide for postgraduate studies (in booklet form) that is provided to all research candidates. This guide should be endorsed by faculty management. In many respects the faculty guide may simply refer candidates to the institutional *Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees*, but it should provide clarity on at least the following:

- The postgraduate research agreement into which the faculty enters with the candidate.
- A flow-chart which outlines the processes relating to postgraduate study including admission and registration, the submission of proposals, the conduct of research and the submission of the final dissertation or thesis. Where appropriate, information should be supplied on the final dates by when certain actions, such as the submission of the dissertation or thesis, should be performed.
- The policies and procedures of the faculty and its constituent academic units for admission to and registration for postgraduate research degrees, including:
 - The fact that there may be limitations on student places in certain postgraduate programmes, and, as far as possible, information on specific programmes to which limitations apply (the determination of limitations on student places takes place within the context of the University's admission

¹³ See glossary.

- policy and the annual enrolment planning process as referred to in section 4.1.1 of this document);
- The criteria and processes that apply to the selection of candidates for postgraduate research degrees;
 - The research focus areas and specialisations of the faculty and specific departments to guide prospective candidates in deciding on an appropriate research topic;
 - The level of language proficiency, as well as other relevant knowledge, skills and experience that are prerequisites for admission to the research degree;
 - Procedures and criteria for the submission and acceptance of research proposals within prescribed time frames (see Section 4.4 of this policy);
 - The responsibilities and contact details of the Faculty RTI Co-ordinator.
 - Research training requirements of postgraduate candidates, and the faculty's arrangements for the provision thereof.
 - The policy on the allocation of supervisory duties, and criteria and procedures for the appointment of supervisors/promoters.
 - The code of conduct and responsibilities of supervisors/promoters.
 - The code of conduct and responsibilities of postgraduate research candidates.
 - The faculty's arrangements for the formal monitoring of the progress of postgraduate research candidates, including the manner in which feedback is provided to candidates on their progress.
 - Procedures and time-frames for the submission and examination of dissertations and theses.
 - The assessment criteria that are used in the examination of dissertations and theses.
 - The faculty complaints and appeals procedures.

4.3.2 Induction process

Each faculty must ensure that its new postgraduate research candidates take part in an effective induction process that assists them in understanding the academic structures, available resources and procedures involved in conducting their research. The faculty may use various methods to structure the induction process, including a formal programme of activities that is organised on a faculty-wide basis, or within specific academic units such as schools or departments. The induction and training of postgraduate candidates should be seen as an ongoing process, a significant part of

which takes place in the relationship between the supervisor/promoter and candidate.

Matters that should be addressed as part of the induction process include:

- The respective responsibilities of candidates and supervisors/promoters.
- The procedures relating to the monitoring of candidates' progress and the rights of candidates.
- Possible sources of internal and external funding (see Appendix H for the research support offered by the Department of Research Management).
- Support services and facilities that are available to postgraduate research candidates (see Appendix H).
- An introduction of postgraduate research candidates to their supervisors/promoters and the Faculty RTI Co-ordinator.
- The total fees involved, including any hidden costs (for example: photocopying; the costs of practical work; the costs of accessing important documents (interlibrary loans) or other material at specific locations; the services of a statistician; transport, etc.).
- The institution's, faculty's and/or department/school's health, safety and environmental procedures.
- The institution's, faculty's and/or department/school's code for research ethics.

4.4 Approval of research proposals and continuation of registration

Postgraduate research candidates who are enrolled for a master's degree are required to submit a research proposal within 6 months of registration in the case of full-time candidates, and 12 months in the case of part-time candidates, while doctoral candidates are required to submit a proposal within 12 months of registration. Once the relevant faculty committee has approved the research proposal, the Faculty Officer will register the dissertation/thesis (i.e. capture the relevant information on the ITS system) with the candidate's name, the name of the supervisors/promoters, the title of the study and sources of funding where applicable. Apart from exceptional circumstances, postgraduate research candidates will not be allowed to continue with their studies if their study has not been registered with the Faculty Officer as an official research project within the prescribed time periods. It is the responsibility of the relevant academic manager to follow up on the timely submission of research proposals.

Postgraduate research candidates should develop their research proposals in collaboration with their supervisors/promoters, and submit them for approval to the

academic unit (school/department) in which they are studying. Upon approval by the academic unit, candidates should work through their supervisors/promoters to submit their proposals to the Faculty RTI Committee, which is responsible for the final approval of the research proposal. It is mandatory that each proposal submitted for research master's and doctoral degrees be scrutinised at a faculty level to provide information on research being conducted in the faculty, to allow for interdisciplinary input concerning the research, and to ensure that academic standards, ethical requirements, and safety, health and environmental procedures (contact Department for Environment, Health, Safety and Cleaning Management for more information, see Appendix H for contact details) are being met. It is recommended that at least one of the supervisors/promoters or a representative from the academic unit in which the research is being undertaken attends the meeting of the Faculty RTI Committee, even if they are not a usual member of that committee, whenever a proposal of one of their candidates is being evaluated.

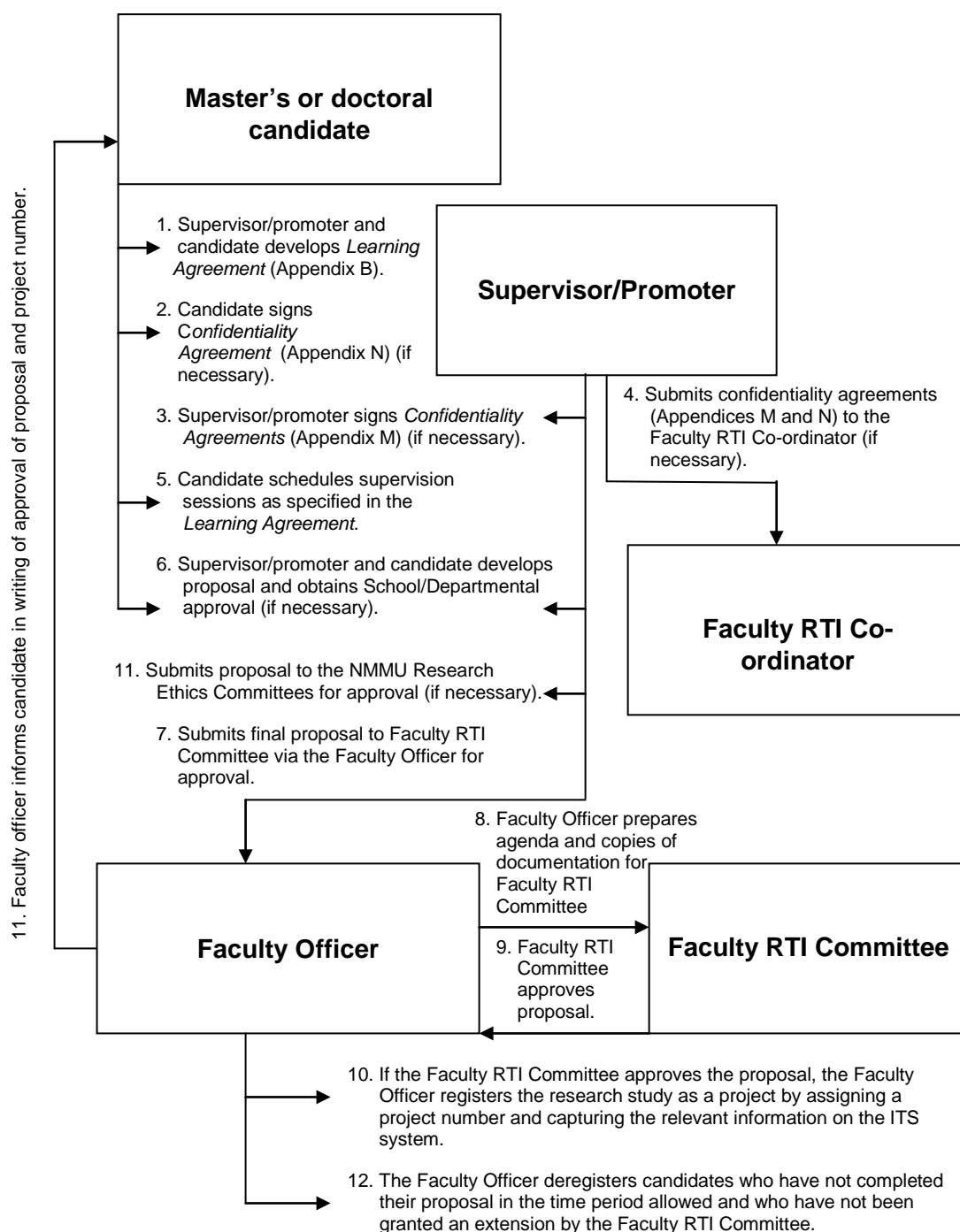
In addition, as part of their development as researchers, it is recommended that candidates be given a chance to present their proposals to a panel, either within the context of the academic unit or the relevant faculty committee, and to answer relevant questions (for example, regarding the research topic, methodology, budget, etc.).

In the evaluation of research proposals, the Faculty RTI Committee will take the following criteria into account: the conceptualisation and objectives of the research; the feasibility of the research; the suitability of the methodology and analysis; and the scientific integrity of the research. The format of the research proposal will depend to a great extent on the discipline in which the study is being undertaken and the research approach that will be employed, i.e. qualitative, quantitative or triangulation, but all research proposals should include at least the following elements:

- The title of the dissertation/thesis.
- A review of literature and/or other resources that constitute the knowledge-base in the specific area of study (except for research studies that employ the grounded theory methodology).
- A statement of the research problem and the aims of the study. Where appropriate, reference may be made to the research hypothesis.
- A description of the research methodology and the procedures that will be used to conduct the research.

- Ethical, health, safety and environmental and other legal considerations and requirements.
- A brief outline of the proposed study. Where the candidate intends to conduct the research in the form of a series of interrelated articles (see Section 1.2) the outline should provide an indication of the aspects that the candidate intends to address in each article.
- A statement concerning the feasibility of the research in terms of infrastructural and financial resources, time constraints and the accessibility of information.

Figure 2: Establishing the supervisory relationship and approval of research proposal



In cases where research proposals have not been approved, the candidate must be advised in writing of the reasons therefore. After the necessary adaptations/corrections have been made in consultation with the supervisor/promoter, the research proposal should be re-submitted to the relevant faculty committee for approval.

Once the Faculty RTI Committee has granted approval for the proposed study, all research proposals involving humans and/or animals should also be submitted to the relevant NMMU Research Ethics Committee for consent in the following cases:

- Where humans are involved and there is the potential to harm the dignity of the individuals and/or their basic human rights; and
- Where the rights of animals and/or integrity of the natural environment is impacted upon.
- For further guidelines pertaining to when and how to obtain approval for research projects in terms of the institution's code of ethics please consult with the NMMU Department of Research Management (see Appendix H for contact details).

4.5 Conversion of master's degree studies to doctoral degree studies

In exceptional cases candidates who are registered for a master's degree may be allowed to convert their registration to doctoral study. Conversion to doctoral studies may take place after at least one year of study at a master's level, and under the following circumstances:

- Where the scope and merit of the work exceeds the requirements for research at a master's level.
- Where during the course of research at a master's level, an original discovery (see *NMMU Patent Policy*) was made that justifies further research at a doctoral level.

It is recommended that the supervisors initiate the conversion of a master's degree to a doctoral degree by submitting a proposal to the FMC supporting the reasons for the request. The FMC committee then debates the merits of the proposal. This process should preferably include:

- Evaluating a proposal for the prospective doctoral study (the proposal should at least contain the elements outlined in Section 4.4) or a scrutiny of the candidate's work to date if the master's study has already progressed sufficiently.

- Submitting the proposal, and the candidate's work where appropriate, to an external evaluator to assess the merits of the proposed conversion. The external evaluator should be appointed specifically for this task and may not be the same person that was appointed (if the appointment had already been made) to act as external examiner for the master's study unless this person will not be acting as an external examiner for the doctoral thesis. The appointment of the external evaluator should follow the process outlined in Section 6.4.

Candidates who are allowed to convert their studies to doctoral status should be registered for a period of at least three years for the combined period of study at master's and doctoral level, of which at least two years should be for the doctoral degree.

4.6 Minimum and maximum periods of study

The minimum and maximum periods for which full-time and part-time candidates may be registered for master's and doctoral degrees are stipulated in the *NMMU Prospectus*. Candidates for master's degrees by dissertation should be registered for at least a period of one academic year, while the maximum time allowed is four years. Doctoral candidates shall not be admitted to the degree of doctor before they have been registered candidates of the University for at least two consecutive academic years. The maximum time for doctoral degrees is six years.

Where candidates are not able to complete their studies within the maximum period, they should apply for a continuation of registration via the academic manager of the academic unit in which they are registered. The written application, detailing the circumstances of the specific case, should be endorsed by the supervisor/promoter, and be considered at the next meeting of the FMC. Each application should be considered on its own merit and the candidate should be informed in writing of the decision through the Faculty Officer.

4.7 Suspension or termination of a candidate's registration

Under extraordinary circumstances, postgraduate research candidates may apply for a period of suspension of registration (e.g. a year that would not count as one of the

years allowed for the completion of a master's or doctoral degree). Registration may only be suspended under exceptional circumstances and is not done retrospectively. Such applications should be made via the supervisor/promoter to the academic manager in the form of a letter outlining the reasons for such an application before 28 February of the relevant year. The academic manager will then make a recommendation to the FMC. Each application should be considered on its own merit and the candidate should be informed in writing of the decision through the Faculty Officer. If the period of inactivity extends 12 months, the candidate may have to reapply for admission as stipulated in Section 4.1, depending on the nature and progress of their research.

Candidates may be prohibited from continuing their registration in cases where they have not submitted an acceptable research proposal and have consequently failed to register their study as an official research project within the stipulated time period (see Section 4.4).

A candidate's registration will be terminated if:

- They have exceeded the maximum period allowed for the completion of the qualification for which they are registered (see Section 4.6).
- They have not adhered to the norms of ethical research practises as outlined in the *Code of Conduct for Researchers at the NMMU*, resulting, for example, in harm to participants (see *Code of Conduct for Researchers at the NMMU*).
- They have submitted work that was plagiarised or has previously been submitted to another University (see *NMMU Plagiarism Policy*).
- The dissertation/thesis is not approved and no provision is made for re-submission (also see Sections 6.7.3 and 6.7.4).

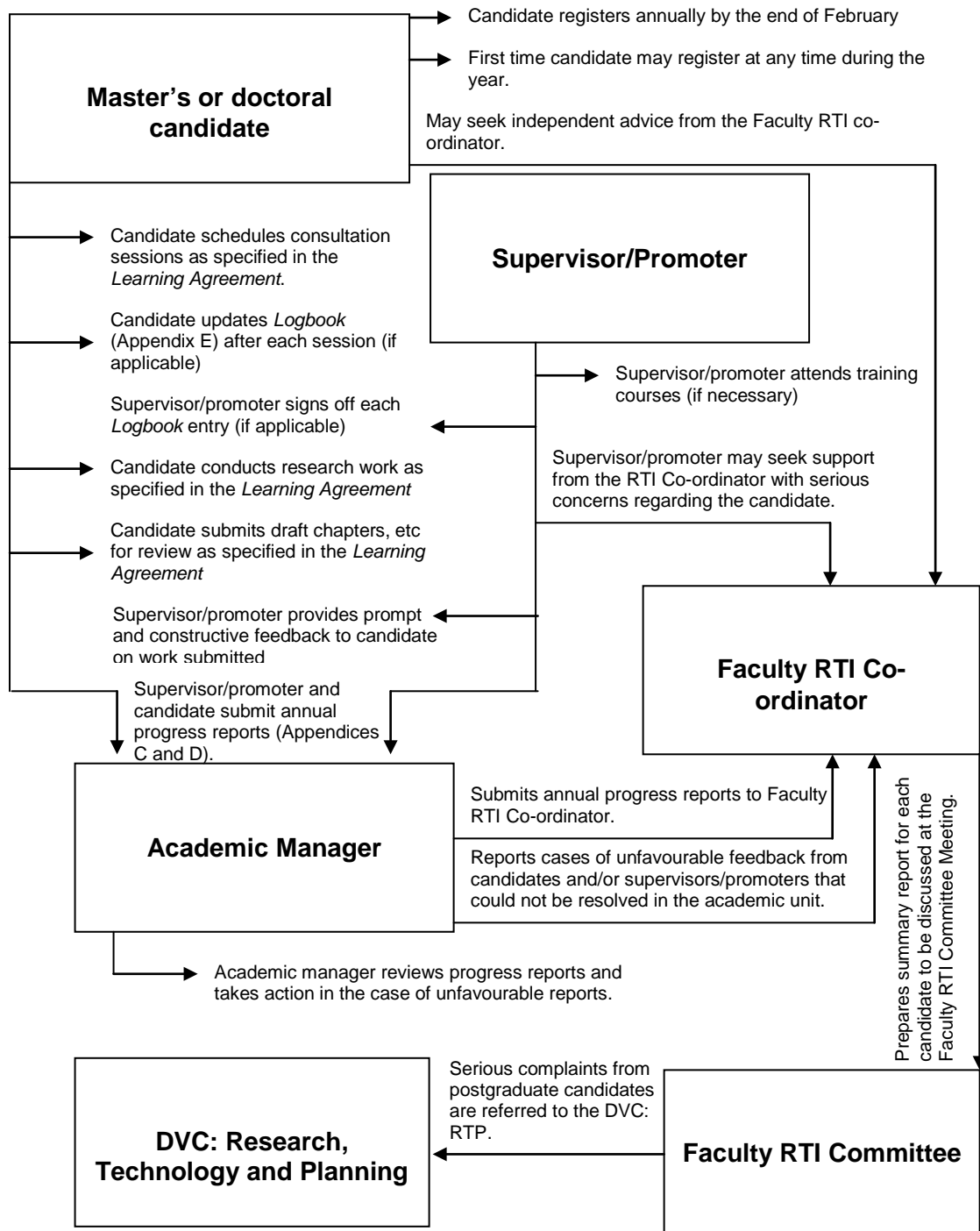
5 CONDUCT OF RESEARCH SUPERVISION

5.1 Framework for the supervision of postgraduate research candidates

It is acknowledged that every supervisor/promoter has their own unique method of supervision. However, the Faculty RTI Committee, or other relevant committee, in liaison with the faculty's RTI Co-ordinator, is responsible for ensuring that the faculty develops a framework for postgraduate supervision that provides postgraduate

research candidates with sufficient support and guidance to enable them to proceed and succeed in their studies. Figure 3 below illustrates the procedures involved in the conduct of the supervisory relationship.

Figure 3: Procedures involved in the conduct of the supervisory relationship



As part of the framework for postgraduate supervision, the relevant faculty committee should pay attention to the following aspects:

- The provision of training opportunities for supervisors/promoters: Training should ensure that supervisors/promoters have the necessary skills and experience to monitor, support and direct research candidates' work.
 - It is strongly advised that academics who have not acted as supervisors/promoters or co-supervisors/co-promoters must receive training on research supervision skills. The Centre for Teaching, Learning and Media (CTLM) offers training on research supervision on a regular basis (see Appendix H for contact details);
 - All supervisors/promoters are encouraged to undertake ongoing training activities (such as workshops) to allow them to remain abreast of recent trends and approaches to postgraduate supervision in their discipline. The Department of Research Management in collaboration with the CTLM provides opportunities for ongoing training on an ad hoc basis (see Appendix H for contact details).
- The provision of training opportunities for postgraduate research candidates (see Section 5.2 below).
- Awareness of support systems: Postgraduate research candidates and their supervisors/promoters should be aware of the support services that are available from institutional resources (see Appendix H). In addition:
 - Research candidates and supervisors/promoters should be aware that they may seek independent advice through the Faculty RTI co-ordinators, should communication links in the relationship between the supervisor/promoter and the candidate break down;
 - Supervisors/promoters should be aware that they are able to obtain support from Faculty RTI co-ordinators where serious concerns with respect to postgraduate research candidates' abilities have been identified;
 - As indicated in Section 3.3.1 above, the RTI co-ordinator must make appropriate recommendations concerning problems relating to research supervision to the FMC.
- The conclusion of a learning agreement between the supervisor/ promoter and the candidate (see Appendix B for a template): As stated in Section 2.2 above, supervisors/promoters are required to enter into a specific supervisory agreement with candidates which specifies the responsibilities and rights of both parties in terms of the supervision process. This agreement should be formally documented and should include the following aspects:

-
- The minimum frequency of formal feedback consultations, as well as the responsibility for initiating such consultations and their format;
 - The nature, extent and circumstances of the commentary on work handed in by the candidate (e.g., verbal feedback, notes on a draft chapter, a letter in which methodological errors and erroneous assumptions are spelt out) and the time taken by the supervisors/promoters to provide such feedback;
 - Where applicable, agreement between the supervisors/promoters, co-supervisors/co-promoter and the candidate on the roles and responsibilities of the various supervisors/promoters to prevent candidates from receiving contradictory advice and possibly prolonging the period of study (see Section 5.3 for specific administrative responsibilities of the supervisor).
 - Mechanisms for monitoring candidates' progress. Each faculty should ensure that candidates' progress is monitored within the context of regular interaction between the supervisor/promoter and the candidate.
 - As a minimum, master's and doctoral candidates and their supervisors/promoters are required to complete an annual progress report detailing progress in the research study. Appendices B and C provide examples of annual progress reports by a supervisor/promoter and a postgraduate research candidate respectively. Progress reports should be completed by the end of September of each academic year and handed in to the relevant academic manager for consideration. If the academic manager is the supervisor/promoter, the Faculty RTI co-ordinator examines the reports. The Faculty RTI Co-ordinator will then liaise with academic managers in order to provide an overview of the progress of the faculty's postgraduate research candidates for consideration by the Faculty Board;
 - In cases of unfavourable feedback concerning the supervisor/promoter or reports of unsatisfactory progress on the part of the candidate, the academic manager should attempt to resolve the matter within the academic unit as outlined in the Complaints and Appeals Procedure (see Section 7). If unsuccessful, the matter is referred to the relevant faculty committee via the RTI co-ordinator;
 - In addition to the annual progress report, the supervisor/promoter and the candidate should ensure that they develop appropriate mechanisms for consulting regularly on the progress of the research work. The manner and frequency with which consultations should occur depends on factors such as the nature of the study, the developmental needs of the candidate and so forth. Candidates are encouraged to keep appropriate records of

consultations. Where the learning agreement makes provision for formal consultations it is recommended that the candidate should keep a record of important decisions and agreements that are made during each consultation, and that the supervisor/promoter should verify such decisions during the next formal consultation. One method by which consultations may be documented is through the use of a logbook, an example of which is provided in Appendix E;

- In cases where ongoing support is provided to postgraduate candidates, for example, on a daily basis or in the form of frequent informal discussions, it is recommended that provision should be made for more structured interactions between the candidate and the supervisor/promoter to report, discuss and agree on academic and personal progress as stipulated in the Learning Agreement between the supervisor/promoter and the candidate. Outcomes of these formal interactions should then be recorded by the candidate.
- Mechanisms for attending to situations where candidates are making unsatisfactory progress in meeting the academic requirements of the research including:
 - Communication with research candidates in order to clarify and address the reasons for unsatisfactory progress;
 - Dealing with situations in which it is unlikely that candidates will be able to complete their dissertations/theses, including procedures for the suspension or termination of a candidate's registration (see Section 4.7).

The following subsections of this policy provide a more detailed discussion of various aspects of the supervisory framework, by discussing research skills training for postgraduate research candidates, institutional support offered to postgraduate candidates and staff, as well as the codes of conduct and respective responsibilities of supervisors/promoters and research candidates.

5.2 Research skills training

All postgraduate research candidates must receive training in research skills appropriate to their individual needs and objectives, so as to enable them to undertake their research effectively and successfully and within the stipulated time frame. Faculties and/or their constituent academic units may offer such training by means of various methods, for instance as part of taught degree programmes at levels of study

that precede the research degree, as part of tailored courses for postgraduate research candidates, or as an integrated aspect of the research degree. Candidates who have not undertaken appropriate training in research skills prior to their registration for the research degree must undertake such training as part of their study programme. The training should address the following aspects:

- A broad understanding of the context in which the research takes place.
- An orientation to significant theoretical frameworks and research methodologies that are relevant to the fields of research in the particular discipline(s).
- Analytical and research skills which, depending on the field of enquiry, may include: Project planning and design; the development of research aims/hypotheses; information retrieval and database management; literature surveys; documentary analysis; survey design; statistical analysis; and data validation.
- The preparation of a research proposal.
- General skills that will assist candidates in the conduct of their research, such as: Interpersonal and team-working skills; time management; project management; the use of software packages; academic writing skills and oral presentation skills.
- Ethical guidelines as determined by the *Code of Conduct for Researchers at the NMMU* and relevant professional bodies, and the consequences of not adhering to these principles. For example, candidates should be aware of the role and policies of the NMMU Research Ethics Committees. For guidelines pertaining to when and how to obtain ethics approval for research projects, candidates should consult with the NMMU Department of Research Management (see Appendix H for contact details).
- Legislation pertaining to the protection of knowledge and information, including: Intellectual property rights; avoidance of plagiarism; and data protection legislation.

5.3 Code of conduct and the responsibilities of the supervisors/promoters

Supervisors/promoters are responsible to their academic managers for the management of the research candidates assigned to them. The responsibilities of the supervisor/promoter are outlined according to the phases of the research below. In cases where a co-supervisor/co-promoter is appointed, it is assumed that the supervisor/promoter fulfils the various responsibilities, unless otherwise agreed between the supervisors/promoters and the candidate. In cases where an external

supervisor/promoter is appointed, the external supervisor/promoter and internal co-supervisor/co-promoter must agree on the respective responsibilities for the various functions in liaison with the candidate.

Before the research begins, it is the responsibility of the supervisor/promoter:

- To be aware of and familiar with the institutional *Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees* as well as faculty requirements for postgraduate research degrees and to discuss these with the prospective candidate.
- To develop a learning agreement (see Appendix B for a template) with each candidate, addressing the issues outlined in Section 5.1 of this document as well as any other relevant matters.
- To become acquainted with support services available at the University and to ensure that the candidate is aware of such services (see Appendix H).
- To bring the University policy on plagiarism to candidates' attention.
- To assist candidates in the proper formulation of their research topics.
- To inform candidates of any risks involved in the research, for example, the unavailability of data, etc.
- To inform candidates of what may be expected of them, for example, field trips, etc.
- To sign a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix M) if necessary and to indicate to candidates that they may be required to sign confidentiality agreements (see Appendix N).
- To make candidates aware of relevant bursaries or funding.

During the course of the research, it is the responsibility of the supervisor/promoter:

- To assist candidates with the development of feasible research proposals as specified in Section 4.4 of this policy, and to approve the proposal before the candidate submits it to the relevant academic unit and/or Faculty RTI committee for review.
- To advise the relevant academic manager on the determination of a reasonable workload in cases where postgraduate research candidates are required to perform duties within the academic unit, such as lecturing, administrative tasks, assisting supervisors/promoters with other research projects, and so forth.
- To advise the relevant academic manager of any changes to the proposed field of study or the approved title of the dissertations/theses, for approval by the FMC.

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- To give guidance and effective support to their research candidates so as to bring about the timely submission of the dissertation or thesis for examination within the maximum permissible time. Such guidance and support includes the following:
 - Advising candidates on the planning, organisation, and implementation of the research;
 - Ensuring that candidates are properly informed about the University's policies and procedures as contained in the *Safety, Health and Environmental procedures* and the *Code of conduct for Researchers at the NMMU*, and legislative provisions relating to the protection of knowledge and information, as well as any additional faculty requirements relating to these matters;
 - Advising candidates on the standard of work expected, and of training requirements that they may be expected to undertake;
 - Agreeing with the candidate on the type of guidance that he or she will find most helpful, and refraining from making interventions which can inhibit their right to develop as a researcher;
 - Evaluating the research candidate's work on a regular basis and determining whether it conforms to the exit level outcomes¹⁴ for master's and doctoral research degrees as specified in Section 6.2 of this policy;
 - Returning work with constructive criticism within the agreed-upon time frame (this should preferably be within two weeks and normally not be longer than four weeks);
 - Ensuring that the candidate is given prompt and candid advice about any inadequacy of progress or the standard of the work that is produced. This responsibility includes alerting the candidate to sub-standard linguistic ability, but does not normally extend to the correcting of grammar, spelling and punctuation throughout the dissertation/thesis;
 - Reading the draft dissertation or thesis and advising on its amendment before formal submission for examination;
 - To provide annual progress reports on individual candidates to the relevant academic manager (see Appendix C for a template). Where necessary, the supervisor/promoter should alert the academic manager to any difficulties that are experienced in the supervisory process.
 - To inform their postgraduate research candidates at least six months in advance if they are going to be away for extended periods of time (e.g. research leave or ordinary leave), and making appropriate arrangements for the provision of

¹⁴ See glossary.

supervision – in consultation with the relevant academic manager and, if necessary, the Faculty RTI Co-ordinators. It should be noted that:

- Supervisors/promoters are not formally required to provide supervision during periods of ordinary leave (including the period from mid-December to the start of January). However, provision of research supervision during these times may be negotiated with each individual candidate;
- The Faculty RTI committee should ensure that the granting of research leave does not hinder the progress of postgraduate research students. The specific circumstances of each case will determine whether the Faculty RTI Committee requires that the supervisor/promoter continues to provide supervision as a condition for granting research leave, or whether a suitable alternative arrangement is made. For instance, where a co-supervisor or co-promoter is appointed he/she may provide supervision during the period of research leave. Where the supervisor/promoter will not be available, the candidate should be duly informed of the alternative arrangements that have been made for the provision of supervision.

At the conclusion of the research, it is the responsibility of the supervisor/promoter:

- To nominate, in consultation with the relevant academic manager, suitable person(s) who can act as external examiner(s) (one in the case of a dissertation and two in the case of a thesis).
- To notify the Faculty Officer of the nominees in sufficient time so that the nomination can serve before the FMC at least two months before the proposed date of submission.
- To perform the requisite responsibilities with respect to the formal assessment of the dissertation or thesis, including:
 - Advising the relevant academic manager in sufficient time before the dissertation or thesis is submitted, so as to allow for the final confirmation of the title and the appointment of examiners.
 - Ensuring the suitability and availability of external examiners.
 - Giving written consent to the candidate that the dissertation or thesis can be submitted to the Examinations Office (see Appendix I). Such consent does not necessarily imply that the supervisor(s)/promoter(s) agree(s) that the dissertation/thesis meets the required standards and does not commit the supervisor/promoter to recommend the approval of the dissertation/thesis.

- Examining the dissertation or thesis impartially as an internal examiner, where so appointed, and submitting an evaluation form and assessment report to the Faculty Officer (see Appendix G).
- Presenting the research to the Faculty RTI Committee, with a view to the determination of the final assessment outcome for the degree.
- To provide guidance to doctoral candidates in the preparation of an article based on their research, in accordance with the requirement concerning the submission of an article that is in an acceptable format for publication in an accredited refereed journal as a condition for the awarding of a doctoral degree (see Section 6.10 of this document).
- To advise research candidates who are completing their dissertations on the faculty's requirements (where applicable) for the preparation of an article based on their research, which is in an acceptable format for publication in an accredited refereed journal.
- To inform the examinations office at least six weeks prior to the graduation ceremony of a doctoral candidate's conformance with the requirements for the submission on an article.
- To inform research candidates of relevant recognised journals and their respective requirements for the submission of articles for publication.
- To inform research candidates of relevant conferences where their completed research can be disseminated.

5.4 Code of conduct and the responsibilities of the candidate

Research candidates are responsible for their own work and for the timely submission of their dissertations or theses. Apart from maintaining, at all times, a proper and professional relationship with their supervisors/promoters, the responsibilities of the candidate are outlined according to the phases of the research below.

Before the research begins, it is the responsibility of the candidate:

- To be fully informed about the degree requirements of the University.
- To initiate and participate in the selection and formulation of the research topic with their supervisors/promoters.
- To ensure that the proposed research will not be a duplication of previous research.
- To pay the required admission and registration fees timeously.

- To be fully informed of the University *Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees* and faculty level policies and guidelines.
- To be fully informed of the University policy on plagiarism.
- To sign confidentiality agreements where appropriate for the proposed research (see Appendix N).

During the course of the research, it is the responsibility of the candidate:

- To register timeously every year and to pay the fees in time.
- To submit a research proposal to be approved by the relevant academic unit and Faculty RTI Committee within the time frame as stipulated in Section 4.4 of this policy.
- To take responsibility for the financial costs involved in the research, unless otherwise agreed with their supervisors/promoters.
- To attend research training sessions arranged by the University, faculty or academic unit where applicable.
- To agree with the supervisor/promoter on the type of guidance and feedback that would be most helpful.
- To agree with the supervisor/promoter on an overall timetable for the completion of the work and a schedule of regular meetings at which the detailed progress can be discussed.
- To take the initiative in arranging meetings for supervision according to the agreed schedule, and to keep to the prior arrangements.
- To prepare for supervisory meetings, for example, by leaving written material such as draft or completed proposals or chapters with the supervisor/promoter well in advance of meetings.
- To keep a record of feedback consultations, as well as work that must be completed before the following feedback consultation, in terms of the supervisory agreement.
- To perform the research work (i.e. literature reviews; problem formulation; analysis of data, documents and other sources; interpretation of research data; drawing of conclusions; making recommendations for further study and taking responsibility for the linguistic and technical editing of the dissertation/thesis) according to the agreed timetable.
- To alert the supervisor/promoter to any factors that have disrupted the schedule or otherwise impeded the progress, or any research related problems.

- To maintain a record of feedback consultations with the supervisor/promoter. It is strongly recommended that such a record should be documented, for example by means of a logbook as specified in Appendix E. Where use is made of a logbook, it is the postgraduate research candidate's responsibility to regularly update it and to have each entry signed off by the supervisor/promoter.
- To submit an annual progress report to the relevant academic manager (see Appendix C).
- To accurately acknowledge all sources of information used and assistance received and to comply with the University policy on plagiarism.
- To conform to the University regulations and the advice of the supervisor/promoter concerning ethical issues, the use of special apparatus/material, etc.
- To consult with the Faculty RTI Co-ordinator in the event that the working relationship with the supervisor/promoter is problematic, or if there are any doubts about the quality of the supervision received.
- To reimburse the NMMU in cases where they have received NMMU bursaries, but have not completed their research in the maximum time allowed.
- To abide by the rules of the funding body.

At the conclusion of the research, it is the responsibility of the candidate:

- To ensure that the final submission of the dissertation/thesis is thoroughly proofread and meets the necessary presentation standards before submission to their supervisor/promoter.
- To submit the required number of bound copies of the dissertation or thesis for examination according to stated requirements upon final approval by the supervisor/promoter (see section 6.6 concerning the procedure for the submission of copies for examination).
- To submit a written declaration that the dissertation/thesis is his/her own work and has not previously been submitted to another university. However, material from publications by the candidate may be embodied in a dissertation or thesis.
- To submit the manuscript of an article prepared for publication in an accredited journal within six weeks of submission of the thesis, but no later than the six weeks before the graduation ceremony at which the degree will be awarded, as part of the requirements for the award of doctoral degrees. Unless the faculty specifies otherwise, it is not a requirement that the article should have been accepted by the journal. Master's candidates may also be required to submit an

appropriate research output if so specified by the faculty in which the candidate is registered for the degree.

6 ASSESSMENT

6.1 Communication of assessment processes

Supervisors/promoters should ensure that their postgraduate research candidates are fully informed about the procedures that apply to the assessment of their dissertations/theses, including the following aspects:

- The assessment criteria for the dissertations/theses (see Section 6.3).
- The manner in which feedback on the final assessment is provided as addressed in each faculty's written guide for postgraduate studies.
- Dates for the submission of the final title of dissertations/theses and the final submission of dissertations or theses as outlined in each faculty's guide for postgraduate studies and in the *NMMU Prospectus*.
- Procedures for the appointment of internal and external examiners.
- Formal requirements and procedures for the submission of dissertations and theses.
- The procedures for the examination of research degrees.
- The appeals procedure.

6.2 Exit level outcomes for postgraduate research degrees

Every supervisor/promoter should be fully informed and acquainted with the key outcomes expected of research degrees, and ensure that their candidates are informed accordingly. The following description of exit level outcomes for master's and doctoral graduates is based on the draft level descriptors that Higher Education South Africa (HESA) has developed for the HEQF.

- The exit-level outcomes for a **master's** graduate are:
 - A comprehensive, systematic and integrated knowledge of a discipline/field with specialist knowledge of an area at the forefront of the field/discipline or area of professional practice;

- A coherent and critical understanding of the theory/ies, research methodologies, epistemologies, and methods/techniques relevant to a disciplinary field;
 - The ability to evaluate current research and participate in scholarly debates in an area of specialisation, and to relate theory and practice and vice versa;
 - A mastery of the application of research methodologies, methods/techniques and technologies appropriate to an area of specialisation;
 - The ability to use a range of specialised skills to identify, analyse and deal with complex problems and issues drawing systematically and creatively on the theory/ies, research methodologies, methods/techniques, literature and materials of a discipline/field;
 - Depending on the discipline, the ability to demonstrate advanced information retrieval and processing skills to identify, analyse, synthesise and independently evaluate quantitative and/or qualitative data, using appropriate ICT;
 - The ability to plan, execute and write up research, investigation or development in an area of specialisation under supervision;
 - The ability to effectively present and communicate the results of research to specialist and non-specialist audiences, using the resources of academic/professional discourse. Finally, the resources of academic/professional discourse, and the production of a dissertation or research report/s which meet the standards of scholarly/professional writing/presentation.
- The exit-level outcomes for a **doctoral** graduate are:
 - A comprehensive, systematic and integrated grasp of a discipline/field's body of knowledge with expertise and specialist knowledge in an area at the forefront of the discipline, field or professional practice;
 - A critical understanding of the relevant research methodologies, methods/techniques and technologies in a discipline/field, and the ability to participate in scholarly debates at the forefront of an area of specialisation;
 - The ability to apply knowledge, theory and research methodologies and research methods/techniques creatively to complex practical, theoretical and epistemological problems;
 - The ability to produce substantial, independent, in-depth and publishable work which is judged new and/or innovative by peers and makes a significant contribution to the discipline/field;

- The ability to use a wide range of complex skills in identifying, conceptualising, designing and implementing research that address complex and challenging problems at the forefront of a discipline/field;
- Depending on the discipline, the ability to demonstrate advanced information retrieval and processing skills, using appropriate ICT;
- The ability independently to undertake a study and evaluation of the literature/scientific data and current research in an area of specialisation;
- The ability effectively to present and communicate the results of research and opinion to specialist and non-specialist audiences using the full resources of an academic/professional discourse;
- The production of a thesis which meets international standards of scholarly/professional writing.

6.3 Assessment criteria

The assessment of master's and doctoral candidates will be based on the relevant aspects of the work undertaken for the research degree as required by the faculty concerned: (a) the conduct of the study; (b) the written component and/or (c) other research work, such as a composition, computer application or artefact, submitted for evaluation. Candidates are encouraged to consult their faculty guides for postgraduate studies for more information on the assessment criteria for postgraduate research degrees. Where the candidate submits a series of interrelated articles in compliance with the requirements for the degree, the assessment criteria should be used in a sufficiently flexible manner. Thus, while allowance should be made for the constraints that may apply to the presentation of the research work in this form, the candidate should also be required to demonstrate how integration is achieved amongst the articles, and to draw the research findings together into a coherent conclusion.

The following example of assessment criteria is taken from the Social Sciences and Humanities, and it is acknowledged that the assessment criteria will depend on the field and nature of the study:

- a) Research:
 - The delineation of appropriate research objectives/aims/hypotheses.
 - The delimitation of the scope of the study as evident from the research objectives/aims/hypotheses.

- The extent to which the focus of the study remains consistent with the aims and objectives of the research.
- b) The Title:
- The formulation of an unambiguous title that conveys the focus of the study.
- c) Literature Study/Review:
- The relevance, contemporary nature and authority of the scientific sources and theories consulted by the candidate.
 - The comprehensiveness of the literature study.
 - The candidate's ability to critically review and logically present the relevant literature in the field of study.
- d) Research Design and Methodology:
- The extent to which the research design is a logical progression from the research objectives/aims/hypotheses.
 - The relevance of the research design in serving the research process.
 - The candidate's critical evaluation of the research design and method employed.
 - The relevance and scope of the processes that are used to identify and collect the objects of the research (data, documents, artefacts, specimens, compositions etc).
 - The use of appropriate techniques for the analysis of the research objects in order to meet the objectives/aims/hypotheses of the study.
 - The accurate interpretation and discussion of findings, well substantiated by the results of the analysis.
 - The presentation of the results in terms of the research objectives/aims/hypotheses.
- e) Conclusions and Contributions
- Logical conclusions based on the results.
 - The application/implication/contribution of the research findings in practical, scientific and/or research fields.
 - Appropriate recommendations/proposals for future research.
 - The consideration of the limitations and shortcomings of the study.
- f) Technical Presentation:
- The overall linguistic and technical presentation of the dissertation or thesis, for example, the use of tables and/or graphic illustrations.
 - The schematic division into chapters and the table of contents.

- The abstract.
- The consistent application of a particular referencing style.
- The reference list or bibliography.
- The inclusion of appropriate annexures and/or appendices, such as questionnaires, computer programmes, and other research documents.

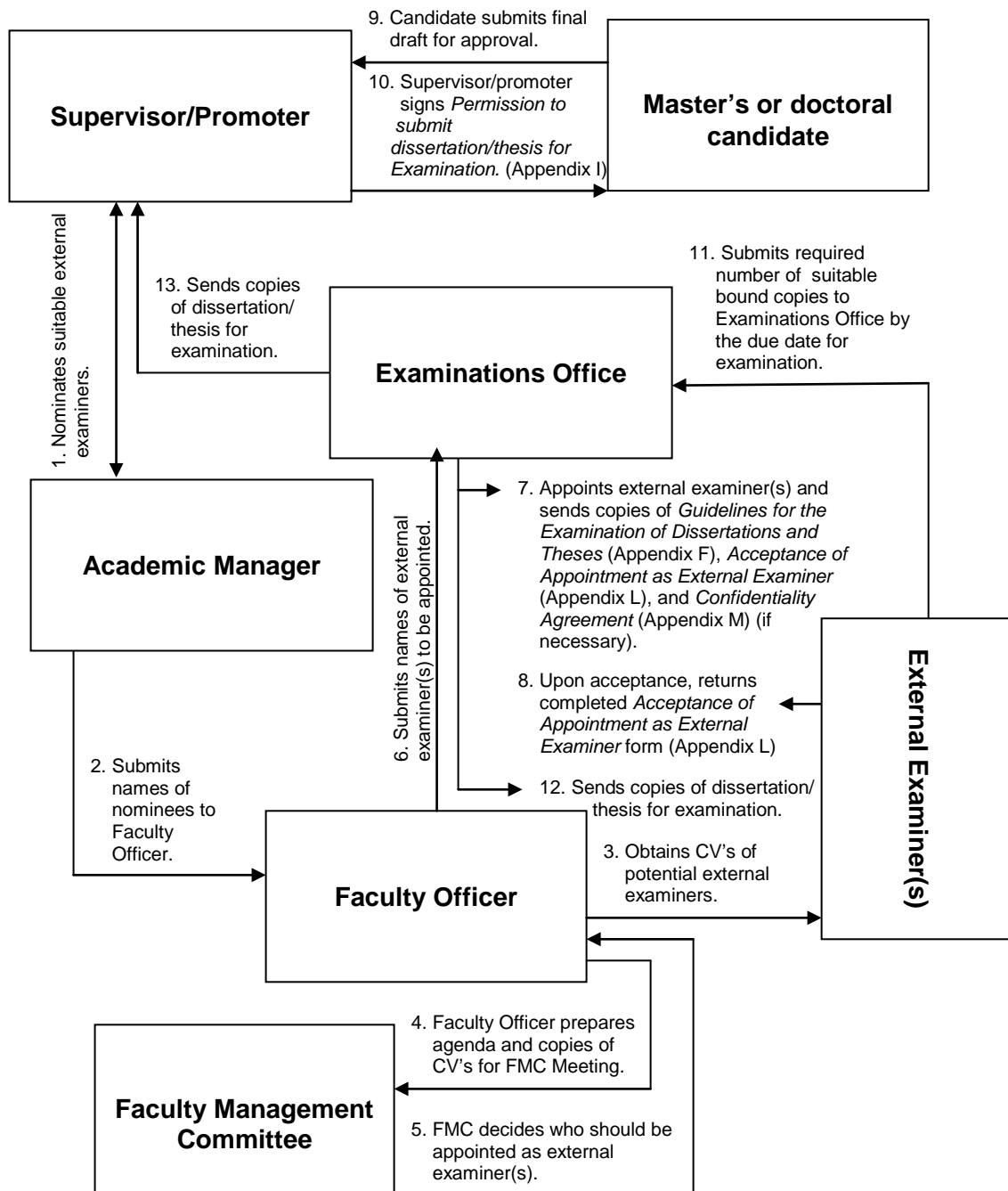
6.4 Appointment and responsibilities of examiners

Figure 4 below, illustrates the processes discussed in Sections 6.4. to 6.6, namely, the appointment of examiners, the requirements and the procedure for the submission of dissertations/theses for examination.

- The supervisor/promoter and co-supervisor/co-promoter (where applicable) act as the internal examiners for dissertations or theses.
- In the case of a dissertation, at least one external examiner must be appointed whereas in the case of a thesis, two external examiners must be appointed. It is strongly recommended that at least one international examiner should be appointed for doctors' degrees depending on the nature of the research topic.
- At least two months before the candidate is ready to submit the dissertations/thesis, the supervisor/promoter should inform the Faculty Officer so that external examiner(s) can be appointed timeously.
- An external examiner means an expert in the field who is not attached to the NMMU in any way, such as by means of a formal contract of appointment, or a consultancy contract. The supervisor/promoter, in consultation with the academic manager, and the co-supervisor/co-promoter where applicable, must recommend the name(s) of one or more subject specialists who can act as external examiner(s).
- The supervisor/promoter forwards the names of the nominees to the Faculty Officer who obtains the curriculum vitae of the nominees, clearly indicating relevant experience and expertise in the related field, to serve at the relevant meeting of the FMC.
- The final decision on the appointment of external examiners is taken by the FMC, based on the following criteria:
 - Competence in the area of the work submitted for examination;
 - Experience in research and record of publications;

- Appropriate research qualification;
- In cases where a nominee has some form of prior or current association with the institution (e.g. a former member of staff or postgraduate student; a person who currently serves on Council or other University Committees) the FMC should consider the merits of the case. Factors such as the time lapse since the former staff member left the institution or the former postgraduate student completed their study, as well as their level of expertise should be taken into account. Emeritus staff should not be appointed as external examiners;
- The same external examiners should not be invited to examine postgraduate research in the same field or discipline on a frequent basis. This will serve to avoid a situation where a specific external examiner builds a relationship with a specific department or an individual supervisor/promoter (who in return acts as an external examiner for candidates from the external examiner's university) and there is insufficient engagement with the views of various external examiners in the assessment of postgraduate research.
- Examiners who are not from academic institutions may be appointed where specific expertise is required, provided that they are in possession of an appropriate academic qualification, namely a master's degree in the case of the examination of a dissertation, or a doctoral degree for the examination of a thesis.
- The Examinations Office is informed in writing by the Faculty Officer of the name(s) of the external examiner(s) to be appointed.
- The Examinations Office officially appoints the external examiner(s). These examiners should receive a copy of the *Guidelines for the Examination of Research Dissertations and Theses* (Appendix F) and *Evaluation Report for Postgraduate Research Degrees* (Appendix G) before consenting to act as examiners. Upon accepting the responsibility, external examiners are required to complete the *Acceptance of Appointment as Examiner for a Dissertation or Thesis to be Submitted for a Master's or Doctoral Degree at the NMMU* form (see Appendix L) and send it back to the Examinations Office. In the case of dissertations/theses of a sensitive nature, the external members of the examination panel will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix M).

Figure 4: Appointment of examiners and submission of dissertation/thesis for examination



- The identity of external examiners may not be disclosed to candidates before the examination of their dissertations/theses, and afterwards only with the permission of the examiners (see Appendix G for the Evaluation Report for Postgraduate Research Degrees).
- The examiners are not allowed to communicate with each other concerning the dissertation/thesis.

- Examiners should be informed that they may be required to re-examine the dissertation or thesis if it has been referred back to the candidate for major revision.

6.5 Format and formal requirements for the submission of dissertations and theses

Although the format of the dissertation/thesis will depend to a great extent on the discipline in which the study is undertaken and the research approach that was employed, all dissertations/theses should adhere to the following formal requirements:

- Unless Senate decides otherwise, examination copies of dissertations/theses shall be printed or typed in at least one and a half spacing on A4-format paper.
- A dissertation/thesis shall contain at least the following:
 - A title page with the following particulars:
 - Full title.
 - Full name of the candidate.
 - The following formula: “submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the _____ degree in the Faculty of _____ at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University”.
 - Date of submission.
 - Name(s) of supervisor/promoter and co- supervisor/co-promoter (if applicable).
 - An English summary of its contents not exceeding 500 words in the case of a thesis and 300 words in the case of a dissertation. This summary must appear in the front of the dissertation/thesis following the table of content and must end with a list of not more than ten key words. Candidates may include a second summary in a language of their choice, provided that, if the language is not one of the official NMMU languages, the translation must be a sworn translation furnished at the cost of the candidate.
 - A declaration that the dissertation/thesis is the work of the candidate. This declaration certifies that the dissertation/thesis has not previously been submitted to another university. As stated in Section 5.4, dissertations/theses shall not be accepted if they have been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of another degree.

In addition, the following guidelines are provided for dissertations and theses, except where faculties indicate otherwise:

- A dissertation does not normally exceed 50 000 words of text (e.g. between 100 and 150 pages, one and a half spacing, A4 paper). While there is no strict limitation on the length of a thesis, between 80 000 to 100 000 words of text should suffice (e.g. about 250 pages, one and a half spacing, A4 paper).
- It is recommended that the structure of dissertations and theses should include the following components, though the requirements of certain types of study may require a different structure:
 - One or more chapters/sections on related literature.
 - One or more chapters/sections on the research design/methodology.
 - One or more chapters/sections delineating the results/conclusions/contributions of the study.
 - A full bibliography or reference list of the material, whether published or otherwise, used in the preparation of the dissertation/thesis.

6.6 Procedure for the submission of dissertations/theses for examination

- Upon completion of the study, the supervisor/promoter gives written consent to the candidate that the dissertation/thesis may be submitted by completing the *Permission to Submit a Dissertation/Thesis for Examination* form (see Appendix I). As stated in Section 5.3 under the responsibilities of supervisors/promoters, such consent does not necessarily imply that the supervisor(s)/promoter(s) agree(s) that the dissertation/thesis meets the required standards and does not commit the supervisor/promoter to recommend the approval of the dissertation/thesis.
- For the purposes of examination, the candidate submits one securely bound copy (i.e. with hard or soft cover) for each internal and external examiner to the Examinations Office (see Appendix H for contact details) together with the completed *Permission to Submit a Dissertation/Thesis for Examination* form (see Appendix I). The final date for submission is the first Friday after the opening of the University in January of every year. As outlined in Section 4.1.4, dissertations/theses submitted at the extended deadline (later in January - see *NMMU Prospectus* for exact date) are subject to an additional administration fee and may not be examined in time for the graduation ceremony in April of that year. In the case of dissertations/theses or parts thereof that could possibly

contain sensitive information which has been made available by (an) organization(s) and which must be treated as confidential/classified, duplication and binding for examination purposes must be done under the strictest supervision.

- Copies handed in for examination shall become the property of the University and shall not necessarily be returned to the candidate, unless the examiners choose to do so.

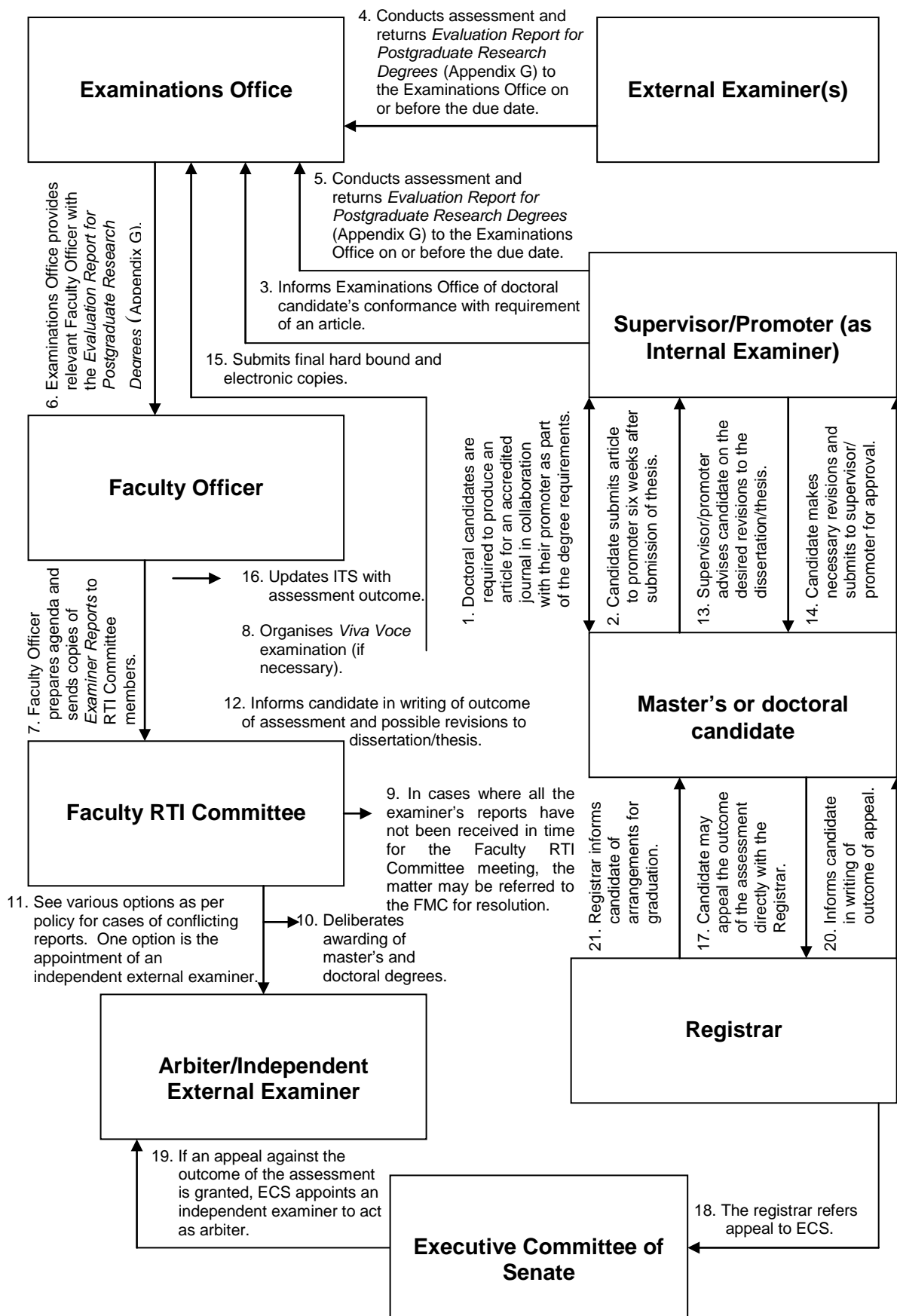
6.7 Procedure for the assessment and awarding of postgraduate research degrees

Figure 5 below illustrates the procedures for the examination and awarding of postgraduate research degrees.

6.7.1 Assessment procedure

- The Examinations Office provides each examiner, internal and external, with a copy of the dissertation/thesis, the evaluation form (Appendix G) and guidelines to examiners (see Appendix F) and claim form (where applicable).
- Examiners must conduct their assessment in accordance with the guidelines for examiners of research dissertations and theses as contained in Appendix F. Each examiner completes the *Evaluation Report for Postgraduate Degrees* (Appendix G) and returns it, together with their report, to the Examinations Office by the date indicated on the first page.
- Examiners should indicate whether all or part of their report may be made available to the candidate and whether their names may be divulged.
- Where examiners have indicated that the degree should be awarded with minor corrections or subject to minor changes, or that the dissertation/thesis should be revised and re-submitted, their reports should clearly indicate the nature of the corrections and revisions that are required, and/or return an edited copy where there is a surplus of revisions with the desired revision clearly indicated.
- The Examinations Office forwards all the evaluation forms and examiners' reports to the relevant Faculty Officer who distributes copies of the individual reports and evaluation forms to the members of the Faculty RTI Committee.

Figure 5: Assessment and awarding of master's and doctoral degrees



- The Faculty RTI Committee meets in order to discuss the evaluation reports. More specifically, the procedures for the awarding of master's and doctoral degrees are outlined in Sections 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 below.
- In cases where all the internal and external examiners reports have not been received in time for the Faculty RTI Committee meeting mentioned above, the matter should be referred to an urgent FMC meeting for resolution. If necessary the FMC may need to appoint an alternative internal or external examiner. It should be noted, however, that no degree can be awarded without the receipt of all the requisite examiners' reports. The University acknowledges that candidates who have submitted their final dissertations/theses for assessment on or before the due date in January have a legitimate expectation that the assessment process should not delay the awarding of the degree, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that problems in the assessment process are addressed in a timely and pro-active manner. As stated in section 6.6 of this document, candidates who have not submitted their dissertation/thesis on or before the due date in January, accept that the assessment process may not be completed in time for the degree to be awarded at the following graduation ceremony. Should the examination process not be completed in time for graduation, candidates will be required to register for another academic year. Candidates who submitted their dissertations or theses on or before the due date for submission will, however, be exempted from paying any additional registration or tuition fees.

6.7.2 Conduct of a *viva voce* examination

Faculty RTI Committees may make use of a *viva voce* examination in various cases in order to inform the decision on the awarding of either a master's or a doctoral degree. Such cases include:

- Cases where the authenticity of the candidate's work and/or the candidate's understanding and proficiency with respect to the research topic or broader research field are reviewed, for instance:
 - To determine that any contributions made by the candidate are in fact their own work;
 - To establish that the candidate has an adequate understanding of a particular research topic/discipline and/or the broader field of knowledge to which his/her research contribution belongs;
 - To establish that the candidate can defend his/her contributions in a particular field.

-
- Cases where the award of the degree is based or partially based on the candidate's ability to demonstrate technical competence, for instance by means of a practical design, a procedure or an artistic performance.
 - Cases where there is uncertainty as to whether the degree should be awarded.
 - For master's degrees, cases where there is a significant discrepancy in the marks awarded by the examiners.

Independent examiners who are appointed as arbiters in cases where there is a divergence of opinion concerning the awarding of the degree, may also make use of a *viva voce* examination to assist them in reaching a decision.

The *viva voce* panel should consist of:

1. The candidate;
2. A chairperson, preferably the faculty's Dean,
3. The relevant academic manager, and
4. The internal and external examiners, and in relevant cases the independent arbiter. All the examiners should participate in the *viva voce* panel. Where an arbiter is appointed, the examiners are requested to participate in the panel, but do not make a further recommendation on the award of the degree. While it is preferable that all the examiners should be physically present at the proceedings, the appropriate use of electronic media such as video conferencing should be considered in order to make it easier for external examiners to participate.

Where the *viva voce* examination is part of the formal assessment procedure, it should be scheduled in conjunction with the other components of the assessment process, so that it will inform the Faculty RTI committee's decision on the awarding of the degree. Where the *viva voce* examination is used to supplement the formal assessment procedure, it should be scheduled as soon as possible with a view to finalising the assessment process in time for the graduation ceremony. The *Procedures for the Conduct of a Viva Voce Examination* are set out in Appendix J.

6.7.3 Awarding of master's degrees

- As set out in the Evaluation Report for Postgraduate Degrees, the report on the evaluation of dissertations must make one of the following recommendations:
 - a) The degree be awarded with distinction.
 - b) The degree be awarded unconditionally.

- c) The degree be awarded but that minor corrections of a technical nature (e.g. spelling, typing, numbering of pages/ sections, references) be made to the dissertation to the satisfaction of the supervisor.
 - d) The degree be awarded subject to revisions or major technical corrections that should be made to the satisfaction of the supervisor.
 - e) The degree should not be awarded, but that the candidate should be invited to do further work and to re-submit the revised dissertation for re-examination by the examiners. Candidates should be informed that they will only receive one opportunity to make such a resubmission.
 - f) The candidate fails the examination.
- The final mark allocated for a master's degree should be calculated in such a manner that the marks awarded by the external examiner or examiners count at least 50% of the final mark, though the FMC may decide to allocate a larger weight to the marks allocated by the external examiner(s). Where there is more than one external and/or internal examiner their individual assessment contributes equally to the calculation of the mark awarded by the external and/or internal examiners.
 - Where all the examiners pass the candidate, but there is a significant discrepancy (for instance of more than 10%) between the marks awarded by the external examiner(s) and the internal examiner(s), the Faculty RTI Committee should consider the merits of the specific case, and may decide between the following options:
 - It may decide to award the degree, and has the discretion to weight the final mark towards the mark that was awarded by the external examiner(s);
 - It may decide to send the dissertation to another external examiner and/or require the candidate to submit to an oral defence of their work. The Faculty RTI Committee will decide on the award of the final mark in the light of the recommendations of the independent examiner, and/ or the results of the oral examination.
 - Where there is a discrepancy between the examiners' reports as to whether the candidate should pass or fail, the Faculty RTI committee may pursue one or more of the following strategies in reaching a decision on the awarding of the degree:
 - The candidate may be invited to make revisions to the dissertation and re-submit it to the dissenting examiner(s). The Faculty RTI Committee will then make a final decision based on the existing reports and any recommendations from the examiners who have re-evaluated the dissertation. If either the

-
- revisions to the dissertation or the re-valuation are not finished in time for graduation, the candidate has to re-register for another academic year.
- The dissertation as well as any other relevant information or work relating to the research project, for example, compositions, designs or artefacts, may be sent to another external examiner who acts as an arbiter. The recommendation of the independent examiner as to whether the candidate should pass or fail is final and binding, and should be given a commensurate weight in the determination of the final mark.
 - Use may be made of a *viva voce* examination – as discussed in Section 6.7.2 below.
 - Candidates are referred to the general rules of the University concerning the conferring of the degree *cum laude*. Each faculty must clearly specify the rules for awarding degrees *cum laude* in their guide for postgraduate candidates as governed by the rules in the *NMMU Prospectus*.

6.7.4 Awarding of doctoral degrees

- A doctoral thesis is not awarded a mark.
- As set out in the Evaluation Report for Postgraduate Degrees, the report on the evaluation of theses must make one of the following recommendations:
 - a) The degree be awarded unconditionally.
 - b) The degree be awarded but that minor corrections of a technical nature (e.g. spelling, typing, numbering of pages/sections, references) should be made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the promoter.
 - c) The degree be awarded subject to revisions or major technical corrections that should be made to the satisfaction of the promoter.
 - d) The degree should not be awarded, but that the candidate should be invited to do further work and to re-submit the revised thesis for re-examination by the examiners. Candidates should be informed that they will only receive one opportunity to make such a resubmission.
 - e) The degree should not be awarded.
- Only in exceptional circumstances should a degree be awarded to a thesis that has been failed by one or both the initial external examiners.
- In addition to the assessment of the thesis, it is part of the requirements for the awarding of doctoral degrees (see section 6.10) that all candidates hand in an article to their promoter based on the research for the thesis.

- Where there is a divergence of opinion amongst the examiners as to whether the degree should be awarded, the Faculty RTI Committee may make use of one or more of the following strategies in order to make a final decision:
 - The candidate may be invited to make revisions to the thesis and re-submit it to the dissenting examiner(s). The Faculty RTI Committee will then make a final decision based on the existing reports and any recommendations from the examiners who have re-evaluated the thesis.
 - The thesis as well as any other relevant information or work relating to the research project, for example, compositions, designs or artefacts, may be sent to another external examiner who acts as an arbiter. The arbiter may make use of a *viva voce* examination as part of the process of reaching a decision on the awarding of the degree. The decision of the arbiter as to whether the candidate should pass or fail is final and binding.
- In reaching decisions on the awarding of doctoral degrees in certain cases, including cases where there is a divergence of opinion amongst the examiners concerning the awarding of the degree, use may be made of a *viva voce* examination – as discussed in section 6.7.2 below.

6.7.5 Revisions to a dissertation or thesis

The supervisor/promoter must timeously supply the candidate with the relevant excerpts from the examiner's feedback relating to the desired corrections/alterations to be made to the dissertation or thesis. In the case of minor corrections or major changes as a condition for the awarding of the degree, the supervisor/promoter should ensure that such corrections are made, and inform the chairperson of the Faculty RTI Committee accordingly. Where the candidate is required to thoroughly revise the dissertation/thesis before submission for re-examination, the supervisor/promoter should ensure that the candidate fully understands the nature of the required revisions, and should continue to provide the candidate with guidance until the work is ready for re-submission. It should be noted that a candidate is only allowed one opportunity for re-submission.

6.8 Examination Appeals Procedure

- Candidates may appeal against the outcome of the formal assessment (e.g. the allocated mark, failure) on the grounds of, for example:

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- Procedural irregularities in the conduct of the examination;
 - Substantiated evidence of prejudice or bias or inadequate assessment on the part of the examiner(s).
 - Appeals are dealt with directly by the Registrar in accordance with the University's examination appeals procedure as stipulated in the *NMMU Prospectus*. Subject to the provisions of the *NMMU Prospectus*, the following procedures apply:
 - Appeals should be lodged within one month of the communication of the outcome of the formal assessment to the candidate;
 - The Registrar must submit the appeal to the Executive Committee Senate (ECS), which must decide within two weeks of the notification of the appeal on whether to grant an appeal hearing, as well as on the constitution of the appeal panel. The appeal panel may not consist of staff members who were involved in the supervision or examination of the research work;
 - The Registrar should communicate the ECS's decision on whether an appeal should be granted, as well as the grounds for this decision, to the candidate in written form within one week of the ECS meeting;
 - The Registrar should maintain records of the appeal hearing in an appropriate format, and communicate the results of the hearing to the candidate as well as the relevant academic manager in written form within one week of the hearing.
 - If an appeal is granted, the Registrar, on the advice of the Faculty RTI Committee and ECS, should appoint an independent examiner to act as arbiter. The independent examiner should receive a copy of the dissertation/thesis, as well as any other relevant information or work relating to the research (e.g. compositions, designs etc). The arbiter also has the right to interview any relevant party (e.g. the candidate, supervisor/promoter, etc.) involved. The recommendation of the independent examiner is final. The Registrar communicates the final decision to the candidate.

6.9 Dissemination and storage of postgraduate research that is subject to a confidentiality agreement

The dissemination of research that is bound by confidentiality agreements (see Appendices M and N) is subject to the terms and conditions of the specific agreement. The relevant Academic Manager, via the FMC, makes a submission to the ECS with respect to the degree and nature of the restricted access to which the research work is subject, and the time period during which limited access will apply. The ECS may then

decide that the content of the dissertation/thesis may not be revealed in any document or in any other way within the period as determined by the Executive Committee of Senate, except with the written permission of the organization/candidate/promoter/supervisor or person who originally requested the classification of the document. The period of confidentiality will commence on the date on which the research work is submitted for assessment purposes.

In cases where research is bound by confidentiality agreements, the prescribed bound copies as well as the electronic copy must be stored in the Safety Section of the Library for the stipulated period of time or until declassification has taken place, after which the research work may be released for general dissemination.

6.10 Publication and submission of article based on research output

As an integral part of its commitment to the development of a vibrant institutional research culture, the NMMU encourages the dissemination of research work done towards higher degrees. It is regarded as good practice that all postgraduate candidates should produce research outputs in an appropriate format, including papers published in recognised and accredited journals¹⁵, papers presented at prestigious conferences, patents, exhibitions, recitals, etc, based on the research work undertaken for the degree. For instance, research articles can be prepared from suitably edited sections of the dissertation or thesis.

Consequently, as part of the requirements for the awarding of doctoral degrees, candidates are required to prepare an article in the format required by an appropriate accredited journal, based on the research work for the thesis. The article should be submitted to the promoter within six weeks of the submission of the thesis for examination, and no later than six weeks before the graduation ceremony at which the degree will be awarded. Unless, the relevant faculty or academic unit specifies otherwise the article is not assessed as part of the research work for the degree, but the degree will not be awarded if the relevant article has not been submitted to the promoter. Furthermore, it should be noted that faculties may have additional rules regarding research outputs prior to the submission of the dissertation or thesis for

¹⁵ These are journals recognised by the Government's Department of Education for subsidy purposes.

assessment, or prior to the awarding of the degree. Candidates are encouraged to consult the faculty-specific guidelines for postgraduate research degrees in this regard.

As specified in the *NMMU Intellectual Property Policy*, as well as Section 5.3 of this policy document, supervisors/promoters should encourage candidates to submit appropriate research outputs for publication and should be actively involved in the process of developing research outputs on the basis of the work undertaken for the research degree. Supervisors/promoters should be cited as joint author should the paper be published or presented.

6.11 Submission of final copies

After the candidate's dissertation/thesis has been accepted and the proposed amendments have been made to the satisfaction of the supervisor/promoter, the candidate must submit at least:

- (a) one hard bound copy of the final dissertation/thesis for the Library;
- (b) one hard bound copy of the final dissertation/thesis for each supervisor/promoter, and;
- (c) one copy in an acceptable electronic format, namely, such as postscript, PDF or HTML. The electronic document may be submitted on CD, or if possible it may be e-mailed to the relevant Examinations Officer (see Appendix H for contact details).

The final document should be handed in to the Examination Office by no later than three (3) working days before the graduation ceremony. The Faculty Officer shall then update the ITS database to indicate that the candidate has adhered to all requirements for the awarding of the degree.

6.12 Graduation

Graduation ceremonies take place after the short vacation in April (see the *NMMU Prospectus* for specific dates). The title 'Dr' and the letters LLM, MA, MArch, MCom,

MCur, MEd, MMus, MPhil, and MSc may only be used after the graduation either *in praesentia* or *in absentia*.

Particulars about graduation are posted to successful candidates from February to March of the relevant year. Enquiries about graduation should be directed to the Registrar, Examinations Officer and Candidate Records (see Appendix H for contact details).

7 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

- The University's procedure and that of its faculties for resolving postgraduate research candidates' complaints during the course of their studies should be effective, fair, transparent and consistently applied, thus protecting the rights of all concerned. The procedure should:
 - Describe in simple and clear terms how a complaint or appeal will be handled.
 - Provide candidates with a full opportunity to raise matters of concern to them properly without fear of disadvantage and in the knowledge that privacy and confidentiality will be respected.
 - Ensure that procedures are fair and decisions are reasonable and have regard to any applicable law.
 - Indicate what further procedures are open to candidates who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint and wish to appeal.
 - Ensure that where a complaint or appeal is upheld, appropriate remedial action is implemented in a timely manner.
 - Reimburse reasonable and proportionate incidental expenses necessarily incurred by a successful complainant or appellant, for example, where registration or other fees had to be paid while awaiting the outcome of a complaint.
 - Be reviewed, monitored and evaluated on a regular basis, taking into account current good practice.
- Each faculty must ensure that their complaints and appeals procedures are well-publicised, for instance by clearly specifying them in their written guide to postgraduate candidates.
- Each faculty needs to ensure that their staff are aware of these procedures and the circumstances in which they may be used.

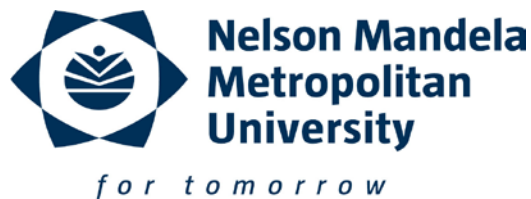
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- Should any dispute arise between the supervisor/promoter and research candidate about supervision or any related academic matter that cannot be resolved within the academic unit concerned, candidates should submit their complaints in writing to the RTI co-ordinator who will take it to the appropriate faculty committee. This committee
 - Serves as the first line of communication and should inform the candidates or supervisor/promoter of their decision within two weeks of receiving the written complaint.
 - Should be fully informed of the procedures and circumstances relating to complaints and appeals and should act competently in their consideration thereof.
 - May decide to deal with the matter internally (within the faculty) or, in the case of a more serious complaint, refer it to the DVC (Research, Technology and Planning) for appropriate action – usually by means of a decision by ECS. Matters that are referred to the DVC (Research, Technology and Planning) should be dealt with within two weeks, unless the nature of the complaint necessitates a longer period.
 - Those responding to, investigating or adjudicating upon complaints or appeals must do so impartially and must not act in any matter in which they have a material interest or in which any potential conflict of interest might arise.
 - The Faculty RTI Co-ordinator should keep a record of the nature and outcomes of postgraduate research candidates' complaints and appeals, and be able to supply such information to ECS if necessary.

8 MONITORING THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF RESEARCH DEGREES

- The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University will regularly monitor and review the standard of the postgraduate research degrees awarded in its name and the quality of the education provided to enable postgraduate research candidates to attain those standards.
- In its review of the standards and quality of its postgraduate degrees, the University will take the following into account:
 - The time taken to submit dissertations/theses.
 - Pass and failure rates.
 - Feedback received from postgraduate research candidates, employers, sponsors and any other external funders.

- Information on the career progression of postgraduates.
- Reports and comments received from external examiners.
- Published papers emanating from completed research.
- Presentation of research findings at national and international conferences.
- Incorporation of research results in technical reports (as sometimes required by funding organisations).
- Confidential research must be identified and their standards commented on by contracting agencies (e.g., the Defence Force; SAPS; NECSA).

APPENDIX A
UNDERTAKING BY THE RESEARCH SUPERVISOR/PROMOTER



Please type or complete in black ink

I, (full names of supervisor/promoter) _____

agree to provide the necessary supervision and/or guidance to

(full names of prospective candidate) _____

a prospective candidate for the (full description of qualification) _____

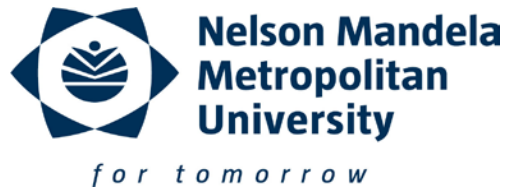
with the following as a provisional title for a dissertation/thesis

in terms of the prescribed instructions as specified in institutional and faculty policies and procedures for postgraduate research degrees.

SUPERVISOR/PROMOTER _____ DATE _____

(Please attach academic records of candidate and academic qualifications and curriculum vitae of supervisor/promoter. Where available, the latter may be provided by the Faculty Officer.)

APPENDIX B
LEARNING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE POSTGRADUATE CANDIDATE AND
THE SUPERVISOR OR PROMOTER



Instructions to the candidate for completion:

Save the file electronically as a Word document. Type your comments under the headings, print the form and sign it by hand. **Send the original to your Faculty Officer.** You and your supervisor(s)/promoter(s) should also keep signed copies for your own records.

Name of Candidate:	
Student Number:	
Degree for which enrolled:	
Faculty:	
Department/School:	
Supervisor/promoter:	
Co-supervisor(s)/ co-promoter(s):	
Year of first registration:	
Provisional title of proposed study:	

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE POSTGRADUATE CANDIDATE AND THE SUPERVISOR/PROMOTER

The postgraduate candidate and the supervisor or promoter agree to observe the code of conduct and responsibilities for supervisors/ promoters and research candidates as contained in Sections 5.3 and 5.4 of the *NMMU Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees*. In addition, and as appropriate, the following arrangements serve to supplement the code of conduct:

Specific responsibilities of the supervisor/ promoter and co-supervisor/co-promoter for research supervision	
Research support required for the successful completion of the study	
Research training needs on the part of the candidate and process to address them	
Frequency and nature of consultation sessions	
Research schedule/plan to be adhered to by the candidate	
Reviews of the candidate's work (for example, the format in which feedback will be given, the time taken to provide feedback)	
Availability of supervisor/promoter during period of research and/or ordinary leave	

This Learning Agreement is made on _____
(date) between the above named Postgraduate Candidate and Supervisor/Promoter.

Signed by the Supervisor/promoter(s)
Candidate

Signed by the Postgraduate
Candidate

APPENDIX C
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT: SUPERVISOR/PROMOTER

SECTION A – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Name of Candidate:	
2. Student Number:	
3. Department/School:	
4. Degree for which registered:	
5. Date of first registration for this qualification:	
6. Full-time or Part-time:	
7. Supervisor/promoter:	
8. Co-supervisor/co-promoter (if applicable):	

SECTION B – RESEARCH COMPONENT

1. Has the candidate kept to the arrangements for consultations as specified in the Learning Agreement?	YES	NO
2. On average, how often has the candidate had contact (telephone, letter, e-mail, one-on-one discussion) with you or the co-supervisor/co-promoter during the conduct of the research?		
Weekly or more	Fortnightly	Monthly
Other, please specify:		
3. Do you consider this amount of contact to be satisfactory?	YES	NO
3a If NO, please specify:		

4. In your opinion, has the candidate worked consistently?			YES	NO
5. Would you describe the candidate's progress this year as:				
Excellent	Good	Poor	Non-existent	
6. To your knowledge, has the candidate experienced any personal, financial, academic or research problems that may have impeded progress?			YES	NO
7. What is the anticipated date by when the candidate should complete the dissertation or thesis?				
8. Recommendation with respect to academic status for the forthcoming year (please tick one of the following):				
Good standing	Conditional	De-registration	N/A (i.e., candidate will complete in current year)	
9. Any other comments:				
Signature:			Date:	

APPENDIX D
ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT: POSTGRADUATE CANDIDATES

SECTION A – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Name of Candidate:			
2. Student Number:			
3. Department/School:			
4. Degree for which registered:			
5. Date of first registration for this qualification:			
6. Full-time or Part-time:			
7. Supervisor/promoter:			
8. Co-supervisor/co-promoter (if applicable):			
9. Have you read the guidelines stipulated in the <i>Policy Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees</i> ?	YES	NO	

SECTION B – RESEARCH COMPONENT

1. Has your supervisor/promoter kept to the arrangements for consultations as specified in the Learning Agreement?	YES	NO	
2. On average, how often have you had contact (telephone, letter, e-mail, one-on-one discussion) with your supervisor/promoter or co-supervisor/co-promoter)			
Weekly or more	Fortnightly	Monthly	Other, please specify:
3. Do you consider this amount of contact to be satisfactory?	YES	NO	
3a. If NO, please specify:			
4. Are you satisfied with the standard of supervision you are receiving?	YES	NO	
4a. If NO, please specify:			

5. Would you describe this year as:				
Excellent	Good	Poor	Non-existent	
6. Have you had any difficulties in your programme, either personal, financial, academic or research problems that may have impeded your progress?			YES	NO
6a. If YES, please comment:				
7. If you are studying on campus do you have adequate access to computing, library, laboratory and other campus facilities?			YES	NO
7a. If NO, please specify:				
8. Please comment on the quality of the research culture in your Department/School, the level of support received and the extent to which you have been informed of research seminars and related activities.				
9. For off campus candidates, please comment on the general level of support from your Department/School.				
10. What is your anticipated dissertation/thesis completion date?				
11. Any other comments:				
Signature:			Date:	

**APPENDIX E
LOGBOOK**

Session No:	
Date:	
Nature of Contact (e.g., telephone, letter, e-mail, one-on-one discussion, etc.):	
Form of Interaction (e.g., providing guidance, informal discussion, answering queries, workshop, etc.):	
Future Action (i.e. strategies decided, work assigned, feedback provided, etc.):	
Date for next meeting:	
Reason for cancellation of meeting, if applicable:	
Signature of supervisor/promoter:	

APPENDIX F
GUIDELINES FOR THE EXAMINATION OF RESEARCH
DISSERTATIONS AND THESES

1. Upon the completion of the evaluation process, examiners must submit their Examiner's Reports (see guidelines below) and complete the attached Evaluation Form and return it to:
The Examination's Officer
PO Box 77000
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
Port Elizabeth
6031
2. According to the University's *Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees* a supervisor/promoter must be appointed for master's dissertations and doctoral theses respectively. It is recommended that co-promoters should be appointed for theses, while co-supervisors may also be appointed for dissertations. The policy stipulates that the supervisor/promoter and co-supervisor/co-promoter may be appointed as *internal* examiners for research degrees. Similarly, the policy states that at least one *external* examiner must be appointed for a dissertation, while at least two *external* examiners must be appointed for doctoral theses.
3. Examiners must work independently of one another in evaluating a candidate's work, and may not communicate with the candidate or other examiner(s) at any time. The only exception to this rule is that external examiners may consult the candidate's supervisor/promoter to clarify any uncertainties or problems relating to the formal requirements for the assessment of the research work. Such consultation should be handled with caution so as not to influence the external examiner's impartial assessment of the work.
4. Acceptance of the role of external examiner does not in any way require the examiner to provide guidance to the candidate.
5. The identity of external examiners is regarded as confidential until the completion of the examination process. External examiners should, however, provide an indication of whether their names may be disclosed to the candidate in the attached Evaluation Form.
6. A dissertation or thesis may be submitted for examination with a hard or soft cover.

7. External examiners may keep the copy of the dissertation or thesis sent to them (i) subject to the *NMMU Intellectual Property Policy* requirements; or (ii) unless the dissertation or thesis is not accepted, in which case it must be returned to the above-mentioned address as soon as possible. If the dissertation or thesis is accepted on condition of minor adjustments, an amended version will be sent to the examiner upon inclusion of the suggested amendments.
8. Examiners should critically evaluate a candidate's work taking the following considerations into account:
 - a) In the case of a dissertation, the candidate is not required to make an original contribution to the knowledge of the subject or field, but should demonstrate the ability to undertake critical enquiry on the basis of a thorough understanding of existing research in the relevant field, as well as effective report writing skills.
 - b) In the case of a doctoral thesis, the candidate is required to make an original contribution to the study area and the relevant field of research.
 - c) A candidate may not be penalised for belonging to any particular school of thought.
 - d) A candidate may not be penalised if the contents and findings of the dissertation or thesis can only be applied in practice to a limited extent.
9. Examiners are expected to compile a report which deals clearly with the following issues with due consideration to the nature of the study:
 - a) Research:
 - The evaluation of the dissertation or thesis against the requirements for academic research on that level.
 - Understanding of current research, explanatory frameworks and problems within the field of enquiry.
 - The delineation of appropriate research aims and objectives, and where appropriate the research hypothesis or hypotheses.
 - The delimitation of the scope of the study as evident from the research aims and objectives.
 - The extent to which the focus of the study remains consistent with the aims and objectives of the research.
 - b) The Title:
 - The formulation of the title must be unambiguous and should convey the focus of the study.

c) Literature Study/Review:

- The relevance, contemporary nature and authority of the scientific and other sources consulted by the candidate.
- The comprehensiveness of the literature study.
- The candidate's ability to critically review and logically present the relevant literature in the field of study.

d) Research Design and Methodology:

- The design should be a logical progression from the research aims and objectives, and the research hypothesis or hypotheses.
- The relevance of the research design in serving the research process.
- The candidate's critical evaluation of the research design and method(s) employed.
- The relevance and scope of the processes that are used to identify and collect the objects of the research (data, documents, artefacts, specimens, compositions etc).
- The use of appropriate techniques for the analysis of the research objects in order to meet the objectives/aims/hypotheses of the study.
- The accurate interpretation and discussion of findings, well substantiated by the results of the analysis.
- The presentation of the results in terms of the research objectives/aims/hypotheses.

e) Conclusions and Contributions

- The candidate must be able to draw logical conclusions from the results.
- The candidate must consider the application/ implication/contribution of the research findings in practical, scientific and/or research fields.
- Appropriate recommendations/proposals should be made for future research.
- The candidate should have considered the limitations and shortcomings of the study.

f) Technical Presentation:

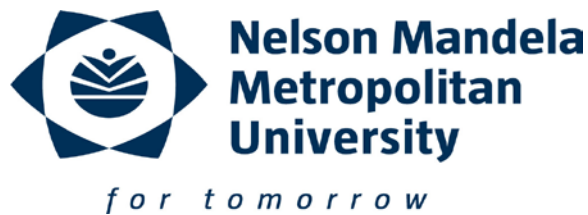
- The overall linguistic and technical presentation of the dissertation or thesis, for example, the use of tables and/or graphic illustrations.
- The schematic division into chapters and the table of contents.
- The abstract.
- The consistent application of a particular referencing style.
- The reference list or bibliography.

- The inclusion of appropriate annexures and/or appendices, such as questionnaires, computer programmes, and other research documents.
- g) Suggestions and Recommendations:
- The examiner should explicitly state in which respects the study should be expanded, revised and/or amended.
10. Examiners should complete the attached Evaluation Form in informing the University of the outcome of the examination process. The outcome of the examination process consists of one of the following options:
- a) That the dissertation or thesis be accepted in fulfilment/partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree, with or without distinction.
- In the cases of a dissertation a mark not exceeding 100 should be awarded. The candidate passes by obtaining a mark of not less than 50 and passes with distinction by being awarded a mark of not less than 75. Where the external examiner has not awarded a distinction, he/she should indicate on the attached Evaluation Form whether he/she would object if a distinction is awarded in terms of the applicable institutional rules.
 - In the case of a thesis, no mark is awarded and the examiner is merely required to indicate whether the degree should be awarded.
- b) That the dissertation or thesis be regarded as complying with the requirements for the degree concerned, subject to the incorporation of minor corrections of a technical nature as pointed out in the examiner's report, to the satisfaction of the candidate's supervisor/promoter. In such cases, extracts from the examiner's report may be provided to the candidate without disclosing the name of the particular examiner.
- c) That the dissertation or thesis be awarded subject to revisions or major corrections of a technical nature that should be made to the satisfaction of the supervisor/promoter. In such cases, extracts from the examiner's report may be provided to the candidate without disclosing the name of the particular examiner.
- d) That the dissertation or thesis not be accepted in its present form and the candidate be requested to expand, revise or amend the content with a view to its re-examination, in which case the examiner should indicate his or her availability to conduct the further assessment of the research work.
- e) That the dissertation or thesis be rejected, in which case the candidate has the right to appeal the outcome of the examination according to the formal appeals

procedure as outlined in the University's *Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees*.

11. In the case of differences of opinion regarding the outcome of the examination process, the University reserves the right to appoint an additional external examiner who acts as arbiter as stipulated in Section 6.7 of the NMMU *Policy, Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees*. The final decision regarding the awarding of master's and/or doctoral degrees remains with the University.

APPENDIX G
EVALUATION REPORT FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES



SECTION A (To be completed by the Examinations Officer)

1. RESEARCH PROJECT NUMBER: _____

2. CANDIDATE:

2.1 Surname and Initials: _____

2.2 Candidate Number: _____

3. TITLE OF DISSERTATION/THESIS:

4. QUALIFICATION FOR WHICH THE RESEARCH IS BEING UNDERTAKEN:

5. EXAMINER (surname, initials and title):

6. DUE DATE FOR COMPLETION OF EVALUATION: _____

SECTION B (To be completed by the Examiner)

Mark awarded (out of 100) (only for dissertations): _____%

Recommendation (please tick the appropriate block):

1. Unconditional acceptance (in the case of a dissertation a mark of at least 50% must be awarded)	
2. In the case of a dissertation, indicate whether the candidate should pass with distinction (a mark of at least 75% must be awarded)	
3. Accepted subject to minor corrections and/or editorial alterations as outlined in the attached examiner's report	
4. Accepted conditional upon revision and/or major technical corrections to the satisfaction of the candidate's supervisor/promoter as addressed in the attached examiner's report	
5. Rejected, needs considerable revision after which the dissertation may be resubmitted for examination	
6. Rejected, the degree should not be awarded and this study may not be resubmitted for examination.	

Confidentiality:

My identity may be revealed to the candidate upon completion of the examination process.	YES	NO
The candidate may be given a copy the attached examiner's report.	YES	NO

Outcome of the examination process (only for dissertations):

I agree that the degree can be awarded <i>with distinction</i> even if the mark allocated in this report is not 75 or above.	YES	NO
--	-----	----

Signature of Examiner

Date

SECTION C: EXAMINER'S REPORT

Please attach to this document your **typed** report, **signed** on each page. Your report should address the guidelines/criteria for the examination of dissertations and theses (hereto attached) and be structured accordingly.

APPENDIX H

RESEARCH SUPPORT OFFERED TO POSTGRADUATE CANDIDATES AND STAFF

In addition to the information contained in the various sections of the policy document, this appendix provides information on a range of support services that are available to postgraduate candidates and staff from various units within the University. These services are available to all postgraduate research candidates, irrespective of their mode of study. The contact details for the various Departments and Units follow below in alphabetical order.

1. Department of Research Management

- Funding: Information regarding funding opportunities for master's, doctoral and postdoctoral research is available at the Department of Research Management. The Department also administers funding from donor agencies such as the NRF, MRC, VODACOM, and others.
- Conduct of the research: The Department can advise and assist postgraduate staff and candidates with proposal and report writing, writing articles, aspects of research methodology, research budgets, and project planning. It should be noted that training in research skills and research methodology is usually provided by academic departments and faculties. The services provided by the Department of Research Management will be an add-on service, and will not replace what is offered by academic departments and faculties.
- Research development: Workshops are organised during the year for selected staff and candidates who are grant holders of specific development programmes. If space is available, others may also participate in such events.

2. Assistance with Statistical Analyses

The Department of Statistics at the NMMU provides a statistical support service to postgraduate candidates and staff members. This service includes:

- One on one consultations between the candidate and a competent statistician on how the research needs to be structured in order to obtain valid data.
- An analysis of the data.
- Advice on how to interpret the results.

- Advice, if required, on relevant qualitative research techniques.

The statistical support service does not include:

- Compilation of documents (questionnaires, forms etc).
- Data coding.
- Data capturing.
- Ensuring the accuracy of the source data.

For more information on statistical support services contact the Department of Research Management.

3. NMMU Writing Centre

The Writing Centre offers guidance regarding the writing of all academic texts. Its services are aimed at helping candidates clarify their thought processes so that they can write more clearly. The consultants introduce candidates to argument development, cohesion and coherence, selection and integration of information sources, using appropriate academic register and referencing techniques, amongst others. Although editing is not part of their work, they can provide candidates with a list of editors who offer this service at a fee. See below for contact details.

4. NMMU Library Services

- Information Retrieval: The Library offers access to many methods of retrieving information. Most of these are of an electronic nature, but the paper sources remain important. Information may be retrieved from:
 - The Library Catalogue (OPAC) - OPAC is the computerized catalogue of the Library and is accessible on campus as well as off campus (by registering for off campus use through the Computing Centre);
 - Reference works;
 - Databases on CD ROM- CD-ROM journal indexes to various disciplines are available for use by registered members of NMMU Library;
 - Online databases – Postgraduate candidates and staff can register with one of the information librarians in order to arrange for access to online databases;
 - Periodical indexes and abstracts on CD-ROM and/or paper;
 - Government Documents; and
 - The Internet through the use of purchased units.

-
- Information Services - Information Librarians assist with research requests, which should be filled out in detail on a Request for Information Form and submitted to one of the librarians.
 - Inter-lending services - The Inter-lending Department offers a service which enables users to have access to the collections of other libraries (nationally and internationally), subject to the Copyright Act. Requests may be made on line via the candidate portal or OPAC. Inter-lending transactions are subject to differentiated costs.
 - Training: Postgraduate students and staff can make bookings for training relating to various aspects of information retrieval, including training in the use of databases and the Internet. The contact details for various sections of the library are provided below.

5. ICT Services

- Access to Computing Facilities: Postgraduate candidates can register at ICT Services to obtain access to various computer laboratories for general use on South Campus (general purpose computer labs for other campuses in planning stage). Candidates will be provided with a user code, personalized e-mail address and can also open an account to obtain access to the Internet. See below for the contact details of ICT Services.
- Training: The Department for Computer Science and Information Systems offer various computer literacy short courses at a cost to staff and candidates. Postgraduate candidates can contact the Department to obtain more information (See below for the contact details).
- Submission of final dissertation/thesis: ICT Services can also assist candidates in converting their final dissertations/theses for submission from Word (on condition that the document is in the required edited format) to PDF and to write the PDF version to CD Rom for submission to the Examinations Office.

6. On-campus accommodation available to postgraduate candidates at the NMMU

Postgraduate research candidates may apply for accommodation in the Postgraduate Village or the Guest Quarters (also known as Student Village 7), which are designed specifically for housing postgraduate candidates, on the South Campus of the NMMU. The Postgraduate Village can accommodate 120 postgraduate candidates in one-, two- or three-bed flatlets, while the Guest Quarters can house 39 candidates in single

rooms. As there are limitations on the number of places available, applications are subject to a selection process based on criteria such as the seniority of the candidate, his/her academic record, etc. Postgraduate candidates may obtain application forms and details regarding the cost of this type of accommodation directly from the Manager: Postgraduate Village (see below for contact details).

Postgraduate candidates are not required to vacate the accommodation in the Postgraduate Village or Guest Quarters during the period from registration in February to the start of the University recess in December. Furthermore, master's and doctoral candidates who are required to remain on campus in order to continue their research during the official December recess may apply in writing for special permission to stay on campus to the Manager: Postgraduate Village (for attention: Student Housing Management - see below for contact details) motivating the reason(s) for the request. This letter should be submitted by the beginning of October every year to serve at the relevant Management Committee meeting. It should be accompanied by a letter from the relevant candidate's Academic Manager confirming that the student will be required to stay on campus during the December recess period or will be required to return to the Village before the residences officially open at the start of the new academic year. Candidates will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.

7. Contact Details

Centre for Teaching, Learning and Media	(041)5043207/3418
Computer Services	(041)5042321/2773/ 2749
Department of Computer Science and Information Systems	(041)5042091
Department of Research Management	(041)5042538/4536
Environment, Health, Safety and Cleaning Management	(041)5049110
Examination and Candidate Records	(041)5042586 (South) (041)5043392 (North)
Higher Education Access and Development Services	(041)5042918

Faculty Officers

Arts:	(041)5042802 (South)
	(041)5043252 (North)
Built Environment:	(041)5043359
Business and Economic Sciences:	(041)5042248/2120
	(South)
	(041)5043706/3845
	(North)
Computer Science:	(041)5043480
Education:	(041)5042152/2917
Engineering:	(041)5043447/3446
Health Sciences:	(041)5042121
Law:	(041)5042309
Management:	(041)5043741/3804
Nursing Science:	(041)5042241
Science:	(041)5042268 (South)
	(041)5043463 (North)

Library

Interlending Department:	(041)5033006 (North)
	(041)5042291 (South)
Information Librarians per Faculty:	
Arts:	(041)5042284
Engineering:	(041)5043026
Education:	(041)5042284
Business & Economic Sciences and Law:	(041)5042391 (South)
	(041)5043846 (North)
Sciences and Health Sciences:	(041)5042391 (South)
	(041)5044083144
	(Vista)

Manager: Postgraduate Village

(041)5042485

Office for International Education

(041)5042161

(South)

(041)5043982

(North)

Registrar

(041)5043370

Student Accounts

(041)5042539

(South)

(041)5043221

(North)

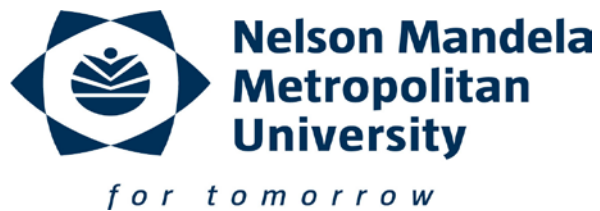
Student Housing Management

(041)5042485

Writing Centre

(041)5043378/3773

APPENDIX I
PERMISSION TO SUBMIT A DISSERTATION/THESIS FOR EXMINATION



Please type or complete in black ink

FACULTY: _____

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT: _____

RESEARCH PROJECT NUMBER: _____

I, (surname and initials of supervisor/promoter) _____

the supervisor/promoter for (surname and initials of candidate)

(student number) _____

a candidate for the (full description of qualification) _____

with a dissertation/thesis entitled (full title of dissertation/thesis):

hereby certify that I give the candidate permission to submit his/her dissertation/thesis
for examination.

SUPERVISOR/PROMOTER

DATE

APPENDIX J

PROCEDURES FOR THE CONDUCT OF A VIVA VOCE EXAMINATION

The Faculty Officer takes responsibility for:

- Informing all relevant parties in writing of the proposed date, time and venue of *viva voce* sessions.
- Organizing an appropriate venue for the *viva voce* sessions. The *viva voce* examination will normally take place on one of the NMMU campuses. However, in exceptional cases, the supervisor/promoter may seek the permission of the relevant faculty committee through the Faculty Officer for the *viva voce* examination to be held in another location, provided that the agreement of the examiners and the candidate is obtained and the proposed location is one that is deemed by them all to be suitable for the purpose. Furthermore, if circumstances demand it, a *viva voce* examination may be organised in another form (e.g. by a teleconference or videoconference) provided that permission is sought from the Faculty RTI Committee. Before approving such a request the relevant faculty committee must be provided with detailed information on the procedure which will be adopted for the examination, and shall require written confirmation that the candidate and the examiners have agreed to the proposal.

The chairperson should ensure that the conduct of the examination adheres to the following procedures:

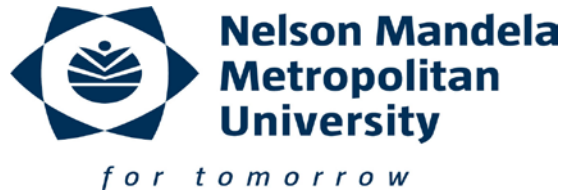
- The examination panel should meet initially (without the candidate being present) and draw up an agenda. Here the committee should decide (*inter alia*) on issues such as:
 - The principle aims of the *viva voce* session.
 - The key questions which will be put to the candidate.
 - The examiner responsible for presenting a particular question to the candidate. In cases where an arbiter is appointed, the arbiter conducts the examination.
 - The amount of time to be allocated for questions.
 - The amount of time to be allocated for the candidate's oral defence.
- The *viva voce* session normally should take the following form:
 - The *viva voce* should be held in English or any other official language as long as the candidate and all members of the examination panel are competent in

that language and have agreed to the conduct of session in a language other than English.

- The candidate presents the essential contents of his/her research work, as contained in the dissertation/thesis or other forms of research output, in a specified period of time.
- The candidate may be required to physically demonstrate the operation of a piece of equipment, conduct a procedure etc.
- The examiners may then question the candidate on the content of the dissertation/thesis, as well as other research outputs where appropriate, for a specified period of time.
- Following the *viva voce* examination the examiners will complete and sign the joint report form (see Appendix K), indicating their unanimous recommendation on whether the degree should be awarded or not. In cases where an arbiter is appointed, that person completes the report.

The chairperson should submit the joint examination report to the Faculty Officer as soon as possible, so that the result can be recorded and so that the Faculty RTI Committee can consider the report in its deliberation on the awarding of the degree.

APPENDIX K
VIVA VOCE EVALUATION REPORT FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH
DEGREES



SECTION A (To be completed by the Chairperson)

1. RESEARCH PROJECT NUMBER: _____

2. CANDIDATE:

2.1 Surname and Initials: _____

2.2 Candidate Number: _____

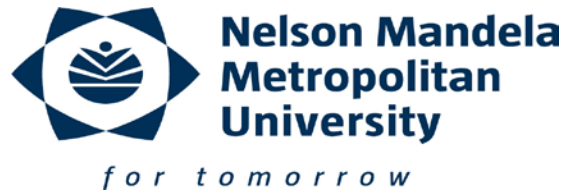
3. TITLE OF DISSERTATION/THESIS:

5. EXAMINATION PANEL/ARBITER (surname, initials and title):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

APPENDIX L

**ACCEPTANCE OF APPOINTMENT AS EXTERNAL EXAMINER FOR A
DISSERTATION OR THESIS TO BE SUBMITTED FOR A MASTER'S OR
DOCTORAL DEGREE AT THE NMMU**



Please type or complete in black ink

I (surname and initials of examiner) _____
accept the appointment as external examiner for the research project with the following
title (full title of the dissertation/thesis)

to be submitted by the candidate (surname and initials of the student)

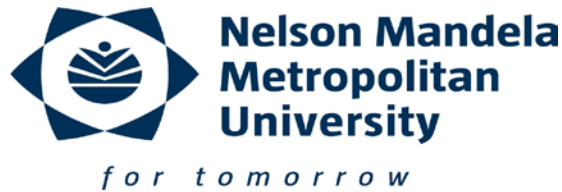
_____ towards fulfilment of the requirements
for the (full name of the qualification) _____ degree

and I declare that I am willing to perform the duties of an external examiner within a
maximum period of 6 weeks, in accordance with the attached *NMMU Policy,
Procedures and Rules for Postgraduate Research Degrees.*

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

DATE

APPENDIX M
CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NMMU AND THE
SUPERVISOR/PROMOTER/EXTERNAL EXAMINER



This agreement shall be effective on the date of signature of the last signing party hereof (the "Effective Date") and is between

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and

Name and street address of supervisor/promoter/external examiner:

.....

BACKGROUND

Mr/Ms..... **(FULL NAME)** is a registered student at the NMMU and is pursuing the degree As part of his/her degree requirements, Mr/Ms..... **(SURNAME OF CANDIDATE)** will be disclosing information regarding **(SUBJECT)** which he/she acquired as a registered student of the NMMU and which the NMMU considers confidential ("Confidential Information"). This confidential information will be disclosed to you **(NAME OF SUPERVISOR/PROMOTER/EXTERNAL EXAMINER)**.

AGREEMENT

Accordingly, the party agrees as follows:

1. **(NAME OF SUPERVISOR/PROMOTER/EXTERNAL EXAMINER)** agree not to disclose to any third party such of the NMMU confidential information as is submitted in writing as part of the dissertation/thesis or is disclosed orally as part of the *viva voce examination* (where applicable) of the dissertation/thesis or is discussed during consultation sessions with the candidate. I agree not to use the NMMU's confidential information other than for the evaluation of Mr/Ms **(SURNAME OF CANDIDATE)** as a candidate for the **(NAME OF DEGREE)** degree (the "Purpose of this Agreement").
2. The parties agree that years after the effective date of this Agreement the parties shall be relieved of all obligations of confidentiality under this Agreement.
3. The recipient shall not disclose any of the NMMU's confidential information to any third party without the written consent of NMMU.
4. **(NAME OF SUPERVISOR/PROMOTER/EXTERNAL EXAMINER)** will at the request of the NMMU promptly return to the NMMU all of the NMMU's confidential information, including all physical embodiments containing such confidential information, and any translations, copies or excerpts thereof (save for one copy to be retained solely for record purposes). In addition, all electronic recordings and any other reproducible forms of the NMMU's the confidential information shall be promptly erased or destroyed.
5. Subject to the terms of paragraph 1 and 2 above, this Agreement shall not be subject to modification except by a written document signed by the parties hereto. The parties shall attempt to amicably resolve any disputes arising under this Agreement. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as requiring the parties to enter into any further agreement or understanding.

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE NMMU

Signature:.....

Capacity:

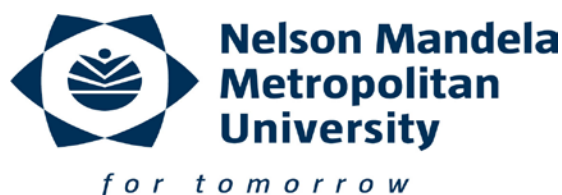
Date:.....

SIGNED BY SUPERVISOR/PROMOTER/EXTERNAL EXAMINER:

Signature:.....

Date:.....

APPENDIX N
CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NMMU AND POSTGRADUATE
CANDIDATES



CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

ENTERED INTO BETWEEN

THE NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

(A University established in accordance with the Higher Education Act, 1997)

AND

STUDENT NAME

(A registered student at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University)

WHEREAS: STUDENT NAME (hereinafter referred to as “the student”) is a registered student at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (hereinafter referred to as the “NMMU”) in the degree programme NAME OF QUALIFICATION in the NAME OF ACADEMIC UNIT for which the student will have to complete a research project; and

WHEREAS: the NMMU will be disclosing confidential information relating to NAME OF PROJECT for the pursuance of the research project referred to above (hereinafter collectively referred to as the “work”);

THE PARTIES THEREFORE NOW AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

1. For the purposes of this Agreement the information that shall be regarded as being of a confidential nature shall be information, whether conveyed to the student or developed by the student during the course of the work, which could be of commercial value to the NMMU, but such information shall not include information which is already in the public domain at the time of signing this Agreement.
2. Such information shall only be used by the student for the purpose of the work.
3. Such information shall be treated as strictly confidential and, subject to Clause 4 of this Agreement, the student shall not divulge such information to any other person or concern other than the persons contemplated in this Agreement.
4. The student shall not disclose any confidential information to any other person or concern unless permitted to do so in writing by the NMMU.
5. No publication of any matter of a confidential nature shall take place unless the NMMU agrees to such publication and such agreement shall be reduced to writing and signed by both parties.
6. Such terms of secrecy shall endure for a period of **(AS SPECIFIED BY THE PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT)** years as from the date of signature of this Agreement.
7. The student shall, at the request of the NMMU, promptly return to the NMMU all confidential information of the NMMU, including all physical embodiments containing such confidential information, and any translations, copies, or excerpts thereof. In addition, all electronic recordings and any other reproducible forms of the confidential information shall be promptly erased or destroyed.
8. No amendment of whatever nature to the Agreement shall be of any force or effect unless same is reduced to writing and signed by the parties hereto, provided that, subject to clause 5 of this Agreement, nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as requiring the parties to enter into any further agreement or understanding.
9. The parties shall attempt to amicably resolve any disputes arising under this Agreement.
10. Save in respect of any claim for damages by the one party against the other, any dispute, which could not be resolved in terms of Clause 9 of this

Agreement, shall be dealt with by way of arbitration according to the following terms and conditions:

- 10.1 the Arbitrator shall be a firm of attorneys practising in South Africa, agreed upon by the parties;
- 10.2 such arbitration shall not be subject to the Arbitrations Act;
- 10.3 the decision of the Arbitrator shall be final.
- 11. The Magistrates Court shall have jurisdiction to deal with all claims for damages arising out of and in connection with this Agreement.
- 12. For the purposes of this Agreement the *domicilia citandi et executandi* of the parties shall be as follows:

NMMU: North Campus
 University Way
 Summerstrand
 Port Elizabeth

STUDENT:

Signed at Port Elizabeth on this day of 2005.

.....
 for **NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**

Name:

(Authorized signatory)

WITNESS:

.....

STUDENT

.....

WITNESS

GLOSSARY

Academic development – Also known as Educational Development. A field of research and practice that aims to enhance the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in higher education, and to enable institutions and the higher education system to meet key educational goals, particularly in relation to equity of access and outcomes. Academic development encompasses four interlinked areas of work: student development (particularly foundational and skills-orientated provision), staff development, curriculum development and institutional development.

Academic manager – person in charge of an academic unit such as a department or school. Previously known as the Head of Department (HOD).

Accreditation – Recognition status granted to a programme for a stipulated period of time after an HEQC evaluation indicates that it meets minimum standards of quality.

Assessment – Systematic evaluation of a student's ability to demonstrate the acquisition of the learning goals intended in a curriculum.

Exit level outcomes – The outcomes to be achieved by a qualifying learner at the point at which he or she leaves the programme, leading to a qualification.

HEQC - The Higher Education Quality Committee is constituted as a permanent subcommittee of the Council on Higher Education in terms of Section 7.1 of the Higher Education Act, no 101 of 1997. The mandate of the HEQC includes quality promotion, institutional audit and programme accreditation.

Institutional audit – An improvement orientated, external evaluation of institutional arrangements for quality in teaching and learning, research and community engagement, based on a self-evaluation conducted by the institution. The external evaluation is conducted by a panel of peers and experts against the HEQC's criteria and other quality requirements set by the institution itself. The audit panel's report forms the basis of the HEQC's report to the audited institution with commendations on good practice and recommendations for improvement.

Institutional quality management system – Institutional policies, systems, strategies and resources for assuring, developing and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, research, and community engagement.

External examiner – A person, apart from the internal examiner(s), who is appointed by the institution to be responsible for ensuring the standard of a dissertation, thesis or any other research work that is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a master's or doctoral degree. An external examiner is a recognised expert in the field who is not attached to the NMMU in any way, such as by means of a formal contract of appointment, or a consultancy contract.

Postgraduate supervision - Postgraduate supervision refers to the supervision or promotion of students' research activities; typically leading in whole or in part to the awarding of a master's or doctoral degree.

Programme – A purposeful and structured set of learning experiences that leads to the award of a qualification.

Quality assurance – Processes of ensuring that specified standards or requirements have been achieved.

Quality management – Institutional arrangements for assuring, supporting, developing and enhancing, and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, research and community engagement.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) – Formal identification, assessment and acknowledgement of the full range of a person's knowledge, skills and capabilities acquired through formal, informal or non-formal training, on-the-job or life experience.

SAQA - The South African Qualifications authority established in terms of section 3 of the South African Qualifications Act, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995)

Viva Voce - 'by word of mouth'; oral(ly); *n.* oral examination (*abbr.* **viva**).