# The Masters Programme

The department offers two types of Masters Degrees.

1. A Masters by coursework full-time takes two years. Students take four courses in year 1 and write a 25,000 word dissertation in year 2.
2. A Masters by coursework part-time, students take four courses where the coursework is completed over 2 years and write a 25,000 word dissertation.
3. A Masters by research (REL5000W) does not involve coursework. Students write a substantial 50,000 word dissertation

**Lectures (Coursework Masters only)**

✓ *All PG lectures take place on Wednesdays at the allotted times in the REL Seminar Room*

Attendance is compulsory. Your lectures are intended to give you all of the necessary information needed to get you started with, and guide you in, conducting your research.

***Link to timetable:*** ***REL Postgrad Timetable 2027***

**Seminars**

✓ The Department offers lunch-time seminars that take place on Wednesdays from 1-2pm.

✓ These PG seminars are presented by various experts in the field of Religions and takes place every alternate Wednesday. All seminars require the compulsory attendance of our PG students.

✓ Seminar will be offered either in-person in the Study of Religions Seminar Room (LS5.67) or online via MS Teams. We will confirm the platform when communicating the seminar details.

**Registration**

**Coursework Masters**

- In year 1 of your Coursework Masters you register for your 4 taught courses only.
- In year 2 of your Coursework Masters you will register for your Dissertation component (REL5003W)
- You must submit your thesis proposal 3 months from the date of your registration of the thesis component.
- Registration takes place online via the UCT PeopleSoft system.

NB! If you are planning on completing both coursework and thesis in one year – i.e. before the official start of the next academic year – be sure to submit your proposal and ***register*** before the course addition cut-off date for the year!! (see faculty website)

**Research Masters**

- For research masters you will register for your Dissertation component (REL5000W)
- You must submit your thesis proposal 3 months from the date of your first registration.

- Registration takes place online via the UCT PeopleSoft system.

## Supervision

At the heart of the postgraduate experience is a more intensive relationship with a researcher who is your appointed supervisor, whether for your Masters dissertation, or the capstone PhD work. You are entitled to expect a steady level of support from your supervisor; s/he in turn is entitled to expect a specific level of application from you. These expectations are recorded in a Memorandum of Understanding or an annual supplement between the student and supervisor.

As postgraduate work becomes more independent, and the onus falls more and more on the researcher, the Department is committed to ensuring that your relationship with your supervisor and the department is as productive as possible.

Students should consult with prospective supervisors who have expertise in their proposed topic. Your programme convenor (Prof Sa'diyya Shaikh / Sadiyya.Shaikh@uct.ac.za / room 5.37) will be able to advise you on who best to approach.

Finding a Supervisor:

Choosing a supervisor for your postgraduate research is probably not the most important decision you will make in your life. Choosing a supervisor, however, is no light-weight matter. Even though such choice may be constrained by your research interests or by the people available in a particular department to work with, it is critical to spend some time dreaming and planning. In your ideal world, with whom would you like to work as a young researcher and writer? In this ideal world, what kind of relationship would suit you best? What does your own experience, to date, tell you about the kinds of evaluation, support, and feedback from teachers that work well for you?

Broadly speaking, there are three main areas in which it is useful to try and assess someone's skills if you want to work with them as a postgraduate research student.

- Do they have a solid sense of the academic conventions and guidelines through which a research project can be transformed into a "Masters" or "Doctoral" dissertation?
- Do they have intellectual standing as researchers and writers within the specific discipline, and research field, in which you want to work?
- Does their communicative and pedagogic style suit you?

***The way to find some answers to these questions is to engage in some research of your own.***

- Use the internet, or other sources, to find and read material authored by people you might want to work with.
- Speak with other young researchers about their experiences of working with particular supervisors (each person is different, so you will need to take such information on board with care).
- Attend a prospective supervisor's seminars, or lectures; while this does not say everything about their communicative style, it will give you a hint of their approach to pedagogy (do they appear to respect their students? is there evidence that they prepare inputs with thought? do they use contemporary research to support arguments made in lecture space? are they flexible when it comes to hearing others' ideas?).
- Arrange to meet a prospective supervisor, and talk with them about your ideas, experiences, and hopes. Ask them about their own supervision style.
- Read dissertations written by students with whom they have worked.
- Find out how accessible they are (do they have a reputation for missing appointments, being extremely busy, not handing back marked material timeously?)

In other words, take the choice seriously and simultaneously allow for the reality that even with careful planning, the real potential of a good supervisory relationship cannot always be predicted.

Good supervisory relationships can last into a lifetime of collegial friendship, and support; poor ones cause sleepless nights and confused days. We do our best to support you in the process of making a choice that will work for you.

- Students should consult with a prospective advisor with expertise in their proposed research topic/area.

- Your programme convenor (Prof Sa'diyya Shaikh / Sadiyya.Shaikh@uct.ac.za / room 5.37) will be able to advise you on who best to approach.

- Masters students should secure an advisor as early as possible (we recommend that your topic and supervisor be finalised by March).

- Once your supervisor is confirmed, you need to send an email to the PG Administrator (Mrs Tasneem Wise Tasneem.Wise@uct.ac.za) to confirm your advisors details and provisional research title.

What to expect from your Supervisor:

What can you expect of your supervisor?

1. Your supervisor will meet you regularly to discuss your progress with your research project and to comment on the material you have submitted.
2. Your supervisor will provide you with support and advice, drawn from the supervisor's experience and expertise.
3. Research projects are lengthy and demanding commitment, and you will need the general support of your supervisor (and your friends and family).
4. Your supervisor will provide timeous feedback on your written submissions, with constructive criticism.
5. In addition, your supervisor will provide regular contact, guidance, encouragement and feedback

What your Supervisor expects from you:

What can your supervisor expect of you?

**The supervisor will expect: regular contact, hard work and commitment as well as responsiveness and openness to advice from you.*

- It is very important to note that it is YOUR ROLE as the student to initiate contact with your advisor and to request the necessary meetings you require in order to meet the obligations for your Master's thesis
- Maintain regular contact with your supervisor. You need to take the initiative in seeking regular contact with your supervisor. Your obligation is to keep closely in touch.
- You should have a clear programme of action. Together with your advisor you should set and agree on necessary deadlines that need to be met throughout the year
- You should provide regular delivery of work based on the programme of action agreed upon
- You need to work hard and remain committed to the research project
- Be responsive and remain open to taking advice from your academic advisor. You need to respond positively to the constructive criticism of your supervisor, and incorporate this into your work.

  For more information, see guidelines for the appointment of supervisors of Doctoral candidates and responsibilities of supervisors of Masters and Doctoral candidates.

**Guidelines:**
http://www.humanities.uct.ac.za/downloads/humanities/postgrad/gradschool/navthesis/supervise/mou.pdf)

**Responsibilities**:
http://www.humanities.uct.ac.za/downloads/humanities/postgrad/gradschool/navthesis/supervise/responsibilities.pdf

## Research Ethics

If your research involves interaction with other human beings as part of the research process (including interviews, filling out of questionnaires or focus groups with "human subjects") it is important that you get ethics clearance.

**For Ethics Clearance** please contact Tasneem Wise (Tasneem.Wise@uct.ac.za) with subject "Ethics Clearance" to obtain details on the required application process.

## Proposal Presentations

Masters and PhD students are required to make formal presentations of their research as they progress. All students need to present proposals before they start with the research, Subsequently, presentations could be structured as per stages of one's research to assist students to develop their work over the year. Presentations are held in **May** and **October**, during which staff will be present to give feedback. These are vital feedback sessions that must be attended, as well as supported by fellow students. These are co-ordinated by Dr Louis Blond / Prof Asonzeh Ukah and Tasneem Wise. Further details regarding these sessions and its requirements will be sent out via email closer to the time

### Objective of the PG Presentation

- On this day all post-graduate students (Masters by coursework, research Masters and PhDs) are required to present a piece of their work to a wider audience as a means of tracking progress.
- This is an opportunity to share ideas with colleagues and faculty staff and to receive feedback on aspects of your work from staff members and fellow PG students.
- Presenting at this event provides an exceptionally useful opportunity for:
    - training oneself in presentation skills;
    - re-thinking aspects of one's work based on constructive comments received;
    - gaining new insights and inspiration from listening to the presentation of fellow students who are working on topics that are often only apparently distant to one's own.

### Obligations of PG students:

- All Masters, Research Masters and PhD students MUST present at one of the sessions each year.
- Students who are already in the process of writing their theses can either present a draft chapter of the thesis OR some reflections on theoretical and methodological issues they have been thinking upon during their work
- Students who have just started should present their research proposals.
- Non-research students (Masters by Coursework) are also warmly encouraged to grab this opportunity to present their research in the form of a Poster (including title, research questions and a few lines about the theoretical framework) which will be exposed in the Department. This would be an excellent way to showcase your work in the Department and receive feedback from senior students and staff.
- Research Masters and PhD's to present each year as a way to keep track of their progress
- Students should share copies of presentations or papers prior to the day that will be circulated among staff and fellow students

### Presenting at this event:

- You will be allocated at least 25minutes (15 mins + 10 mins feedback/discussion)

- A laptop and speakers will be set up for you to utilise, so please bring your presentations along on a flash OR you may bring your own laptop along
- Please remember to send a copy of your presentation or paper at least 5 days prior to the event so that this can be circulated to all staff and fellow students

**Submission and Examination Procedures for the Dissertation**

***All Masters dissertations are examined by the Humanities Faculty Office and not by the Department.***

**For details on submission procedure please contact the Faculty Admin Officers as follows:**

- Ncumisa Mdingi ncumisa.mdingi@uct.ac.za
- Kerewin Parfitt Kerewin.Parfitt@uct.ac.za
- CC - Humanities Postgrad hum-postgrad@uct.ac.za

The faculty ask that students give notice of their intention to submit six weeks prior to uploading their dissertation. This notice allows the Faculty Office sufficient time to process your request, prepare for the examination, and appoint examiners.

Graduation Timeline: It is highly recommended that the student submit the dissertation for examination five months before they intended graduation ceremony to allow the full examination process to run its course.

2027 Graduation Ceremonies are scheduled for March and August 2027

| **CHECKLIST FOR DISSERTATION/THESIS SUBMISSIONS** |
| --- |
| Master's Dissertation |
| **Presentation and submission of a Master's dissertation/ PhD thesis**<br>• Master's and PhD candidates are to submit electronic versions of (full or minor) dissertations/theses online via the PeopleSoft Student Administration Self-service functionality. Hard copies of 'intention to submit' forms and dissertations/theses no longer need to be physically deposited at UCT1; you must submit your work for examination from any digitally-connected destination.<br>• 1 In the event that any of your external examiners request a hard copy of your dissertation/ thesis, you will be required to supply this. The Faculty or the Doctoral Degrees Board Office will contact you should this be necessary.<br>• At the conclusion of your research, you will be required to complete and upload your 'intention to submit' form on PeopleSoft, followed by the upload of your dissertation/thesis. All communication from UCT regarding the examination process will occur via your UCT e-mail address –[student number]@myuct.ac.za.<br>• **Please make sure that you have your username and password and are able to access the PeopleSoft Student Administration Self Service**.<br>• Should you have any problems with this service, please consult the following document: Accessing PeopleSoft Self Service for Students, or get help by accessing Student Self Service Help or emailingsss-helpdesk@uct.ac.za. |

**Intention to submit**

- Approximately 4-6 weeks before you submit your dissertation/thesis for examination, you need to notify UCT of your intention to do so by uploading an 'intention to submit' form. This will let the University know that examiners need to be secured for you. If you do not upload the 'intention to submit' form in good time, it potentially delays your examination.
- In addition, students registered in the Faculties of Science, Health Sciences and Engineering and the Built Environment must also upload, along with the 'intention to submit' form and abstract, the **IP Assessment form.**
- If you are a Master's candidate, please download an 'intention to submit' form from your Faculty's website.
- If you are a PhD candidate, please download the intention to submit form found here: Notice of Intention to Submit a PhD Thesis
- In addition to the 'intention to submit' form all students are to upload an abstract. The file must be named as follows:
- **Abstract-open.pdf**3

- If you have sought and been granted permission for embargo of your dissertation/thesis (please see http://open.uct.ac.za/thesis_guidelines.html) you must additionally provide a neutralised/ restricted abstract which will be placed on *OpenUCT* after examination. After the expiry of the embargo period, the full or open abstract will be placed on *OpenUCT*.
- The file must be named as follows:
  **Abstract-Restricted.pdf**
- Complete the 'intention to submit' form and then log in to the PeopleSoft Student Administration Self Service. Select 'Self-service' and navigate to the 'Research Activities' section.
- Go to 'Service Requests' and select 'Create New Request'. On the following screen, select the Request Category of 'Thesis/ Dissertation related requests'. On the next screen choose 'Intention to submit' as the request type.
- Select the Request Subtype appropriate to you, taking particular note of which degree (PhD or Master's) and the faculty in which you are registered, and upload your completed 'intention to submit' form and your abstract as separate PDF documents.
- You may also view what you have uploaded to confirm that all is in order and may add any additional notes in the 'Comment' section if you so wish, but this may be left blank. Once your form has been successfully uploaded, click the 'Submit' button.
- Once your form has been submitted and processed, you will receive an acknowledgement of receipt via e-mail. You may also log in to PeopleSoft Student Administration Self Service to check the status of the service request.
- In cases where a submission is incomplete it will be rejected, and you are required to upload the incorrect or missing document/s as a **new** service request (if you add them to the existing service request, the DDB Office/Faculty Office is not made aware that new/additional documents have been uploaded).

**Uploading and submitting your dissertation/thesis for examination**

You will need to submit the following documents:

- **Thesis**: Once you are ready to submit your dissertation/thesis for examination save it as a PDF file type. The file must be named as follows:
  - **Thesis.pdf** (This name is to be used by both PhD and Master's students).

- **Abstract**: All students must again upload an abstract (it may have changed since it was first uploaded at the 'intention to submit' stage).

- If you have sought and been granted permission for embargo of your dissertation/thesis (please see http://open.uct.ac.za/thesis_guidelines.html) you must additionally provide a neutralised/ restricted abstract which will be placed on *OpenUCT* after examination.
- The abstract files must be named as follows:
  - **Abstract-open.pdf**(the full abstract), or
  - **Abstract-Restricted.pdf**(the neutralised abstract which has all sensitive information removed)

  This will ensure that the correct versions of the documents are made available on *OpenUCT*.

- **Turnitin originality report**: All Doctoral and Master's students who submit their dissertations/theses for examination must include a plagiarism report from Turnitin-also known as an Originality Report– with their submission. **The onus is on you as the student to ensure that the Turnitin Originality Report is signed off by your supervisor and included in your submission**.

- **The submission declaration/word count form;**

- If applicable, the **OpenUCT suppression form**, where the supervisor supports a delay in making the dissertation/thesis available via *OpenUCT* to enable publication.

Log in to the PeopleSoft Student Administration Self Service. Select 'Self-service' and navigate to the 'Research Activities' section. Go to 'Service Requests' and select 'Create New Request'. On the following screen, select the Request Category of 'Thesis/ Dissertation related requests'. Then choose 'Upload Thesis/ Dissertation for Examination' as the request type.

Please choose the Request Subtype, taking particular note of which degree (PhD or Master's) and the faculty in which you are registered, and upload your dissertation/thesis for examination, along with the additional documents listed above.

You may view what you have uploaded to confirm that the correct file will be submitted. Type the following confirmation statement in the comment section:
"*I confirm that the uploaded document is the dissertation/thesis to be examined.*" and then click 'Submit'.

Once your dissertation/ thesis has been submitted and processed, you will receive an acknowledgement.

You can check the progress of your submission on PeopleSoft.

In cases where a submission is incomplete it will be rejected, and you are required to upload the incorrect or missing document/s as a **new** service request (if you add them to the existing service request, the DDB Office/Faculty Office is not made aware that new/additional documents have been uploaded).

**Please note**: In the event that any of your external examiners request a hard copy of your dissertation/ thesis, you will be required to supply this. The Faculty or the Doctoral Degrees Board Office will inform you should this be necessary.

**Library access: providing the library with a corrected copy of your dissertation/ thesis**

- Once you have received the result of the examination of your dissertation/ thesis, you will be required to upload a final corrected copy as a PDF file type for the library in order to be eligible for graduation.
- To do this, log in to the PeopleSoft Student Administration Self Service. Select 'Self-service' and navigate to the 'Research Activities' section. Go to 'Service Requests' and select 'Create New

Request'. On the following screen, select the Request Category of 'Thesis/ Dissertation related requests'. Then choose 'Library Copy –upload final Thesis/Dissertation for Library' as the request type.

- Choose the Request Subtype, taking particular note of which degree (PhD or Master's) and the faculty in which you are registered and upload your corrected dissertation/thesis for the library.
- All students must again upload an abstract (it may have changed after being examined).
- If you have sought and been granted permission for embargo of your dissertation/thesis (please see http://open.uct.ac.za/thesis_guidelines.html)you must additionally provide a neutralised/ restricted abstract which will be placed on *OpenUCT* after examination. The abstract files must be named as follows:
  - **Abstract-open.pdf**(the full abstract), or
  - **Abstract-Restricted.pdf**(the neutralised abstract which has all sensitive information removed)
- This will ensure that the correct versions of the documents are made available on *OpenUCT*.
- You may view what you have uploaded to confirm that the correct file will be submitted. Once confirmed, please click 'Submit'.
- You need to insert a statement in the comment section confirming that the uploaded files are the correct versions for the Library/ *OpenUCT*.
- Once your dissertation/thesis has been submitted and processed, you will receive an acknowledgement of receipt.

**Assistance with digital submissions**

- Should you have any technical issues with the digital submission processor PeopleSoft system, please contact Student Systems Support sss-helpdesk@uct.ac.za.

**Using Amathuba and Turnitin**

1. Send an email to CILT Helpdesk cilt-helpdesk@uct.ac.za to request access to the Turnitin 2015 Vula tab.
2. Once you receive confirmation that you have been granted access to the tab, open an internet go to the UCT homepage at http://www.uct.ac.za and use the Vula quick link
3. Login (UCT Login) by entering your UCT Student Number and Password in the top right hand corner
4. Click 'Login'
5. Once logged in to Vula you will find yourself in My Workspace
6. Along the top of the screen you will see a series of tabs of the Vula sites you are a member of
7. Click the tab called "Turnitin 2015" to enter the site
8. Click "Assignments" on the left hand side of the screen
9. Under the heading "Submission", you will need to upload your dissertation/thesis as an attachment
10. Click "choose file"

i. A new window will open up allowing you to select the document

ii. Find your file and click Open

11. You will return to the Vula page
12. Tick the plagiarism box found under the declaration
13. Click "submit"
14. Your report will generally be generated within an hour to 24hours.
15. To view your report:

i. Repeat the above process up to step 9

ii. Once you have opened the assignment you will see an icon next to Turnitin Report to view your report

iii. If you would like to submit a revised or other document, click "Remove" and go through the process of submission again

When you first arrive in Vula, click on 'Profile' in the left menu to update your details. You can also use the 'Preferences' tool to edit your tabs and adjust your notification options.

The Turnitin report (the first pages of the report with the percentages up to the title of your actual thesis) is to be signed by yourself and supervisor and uploaded together with your Thesis submission.

Note:
**The file size may not exceed 20MB**. Files of larger size may be reduced by removing non-text content (pictures, graphs etc.) or submitted by chapter or in sections.

**NEED HELP?**
Please contact the CILT Helpdesk cilt-helpdesk@uct.ac.za for assistance 021-650-4500.
You may also visit the UCT Library knowledge commons: http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/lib/knowledge-commons

*NOTE: ALSO REFER TO STEP-BY-STEP GUIDES: HUM Guide On Uploading Masters Dissertation*