MASTERS AND DOCTORAL HANDBOOK

FOR DISSERTATIONS, THESES AND RESEARCH REPORTS

YEAR
2025-2026

UNISA | college of economic and management sciences

This handbook outlines the dissertations and theses research requirements and procedures for master's and doctoral students in the College of Economic and Management Sciences (CEMS). It provides substantial information to assist you in writing a quality dissertation or thesis that is of a high academic standard. Although the college has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information published here, should a circumstance arise, for whatever reason, the college reserves the right to amend and/or withdraw any of this published information. As our student, you may rest assured that you will be given timely notice of any such alterations and/or withdrawals.

YEAR
2025-2026

UNISA
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Table of Contents

Welcome Note

From the desk of the Head, CEMS Office of Graduate Studies and Research, Prof M Mkansi

Welcome to CEMS, and a hearty congratulations to you for making it this far in your academic journey. A research journey can be stressful, but it can also be intellectually challenging and ultimately rewarding. As a college, we endeavor to support you as much as we can, given certain resource constraints, but we cannot do the work for you – you have to do independent study. When problems arise, do not sit back, and do nothing, allowing precious time to slip away. Meet with your supervisor on a regular basis, submit drafts of your work in keeping with the required submission dates, and try to sort out any problems while they are still minor enough to be easily resolved. Each student has access to his/her specific departmental master's and doctoral degrees coordinator. If you experience significant problems which you and your supervisor cannot resolve, please contact the coordinator first.

I wish you all the best in your pursuit of academic excellence.

YEAR
2025-2026

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PART A: INFORMATION HUB

1. Office of Graduate Studies and Research Staff

Dr Nthabeleng Mmako

(Acting) Head: Office of Graduate Studies and Research

Email: mmakonm@unisa.ac.za
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(Acting) College Master's and Doctoral Degrees Coordinator

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(Acting) College Ethics Research Committee enquiries

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Research Coordinator: Office of Graduate Studies and Research

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Ms Cathrine Ndlovu

[Jan-June]

Administration Officer: Office of Graduate Studies and Research

Email: mzambc@unisa.ac.za

Tel: +27(0)12 429 8951

Office: Nkoana Simon Radipere Building, 5th floor, Office 07

2. M&D Coordinators

Each academic department has a senior faculty member responsible for coordinating master's and doctoral support. An administrator assists the M&D coordinator and, together, they will provide you with departmental procedures and guidelines. Please note that it is your responsibility to initiate contact with the academic department. The table below lists the various academic departments in CEMS. Please ensure that you contact the correct person on the list, depending on whether the enquiry is of an academic or an administrative nature.

2.1. School of Economic and Financial Sciences

Department of Decision Sciences

Coordinator	**Secretary**
Dr NKK Dukuza Email: dukuznkk@unisa.ac.za	Ms E van Wyk Email: vanwye@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 433 4684

Department of Economics

Doctoral Degree Coordinator	**Secretary**
Prof SY Ho E-mail: hosy@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 433 4634 **Master's Degree Coordinator** Dr K Amusa E-mail: amusako@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 433 4642	Ms M Selesho E-mail: selesmm@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 433 4663

Department of Finance, Risk Management and Banking

Master's Degree Coordinator	**M&D Administrator**
Prof A Sibindi Email: sibinab@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 429 3757	Ms K Kruger Email: Krugek@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 429 4825

Institute for Corporate Citizenship	
Coordinator Prof G Nhamo E-mail: nhamog@unisa.ac.za Tel: (012) 4334725	**Secretary** Ms M Novela E-mail: novelml@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 433 4685

2.2. School of Management Sciences

Department of Business Management	
Coordinator Dr I van Wyk E-mail: vanwyki@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 429 2085	**Secretary** Mrs F Mohlahlana E-mail: mokwef@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 429 6583

Department of Marketing and Retail Management	
Coordinator Dr C Rabie Email: vniekc@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 429 4376	**Secretary** Ms O Ramokolo E-mail: ramokok@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 429 2381

Department of Human Resource Management	
Coordinator Dr T Molotsi E-mail: molottk@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 429 4704	**Secretary** Mr V Peteke E-mail: petekvn@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 429 6278

Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology	
Coordinator Dr N Bekwa E-mail: bekwann@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 429 8203	**Secretary** Ms M Campher E-mail: camphm@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 429 8003

2.3. School of Public and Operations Management

Department of Applied Management	
Coordinator Dr N Mmako E-mail: mmakonm@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 433 4892	**Secretary** Mrs S Groenewald E-mail: groensf@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 433 4696

Department of Operations Management	
Coordinator Prof S van Antwerpen E-mail: vanans@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 429 4988	**Secretary** Ms JP Blos E-mail: blosjp@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 429 2689

Department of Public Administration		
Coordinator Prof I Makamu E-mail: emakamni@unisa.ac.za	**Secretary** Mrs S Sapula E-mail: sapulns@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 429 3785	**Departmental HDC Administrator** Ms N Nair Email: Naidon1@unisa.ac.za Tel: 012 429 6822

3. About the College

As the largest provider of business education in Africa, and one of the largest in the world, Unisa's CEMS makes a notable contribution to the provision of high-level employees to the private and public sectors. One in every four BCom degrees awarded by a South African university goes to a student from CEMS and, at the postgraduate level, almost half of the honours degrees and 30 per cent of master's and doctoral degrees were awarded to students in CEMS in the past five years. To establish the relevance and usefulness of its qualifications, the college constantly conducts intensive research in the private and public sectors. This, to ensure lifelong learning opportunities for all students through the articulation of qualifications, from certificates up to advanced postgraduate and even doctoral degrees.

The qualifications awarded by the college are widely recognised. A recent study by the Bureau of Market Research found that 86 per cent of employers employed CEMS graduates due to the quality of their qualifications. Eighty percent of employers indicated that CEMS qualifications are of good quality and credible. They were positive about the qualities and skills cultivated through the open distance and e-learning (ODeL) nature of graduates' studies and pointed out that CEMS graduates generally "hit the ground running" within six months of employment. The objective of CEMS is to provide relevant and functional qualifications of a high standard, quality tuition, and a professional caring and valued customer service to all its stakeholders.

CEMS is committed to identifying African solutions, to ensure that the college becomes a leading role player and producer of research in identified strategic niche areas on the African continent. Building mutually beneficial relationships with the community in which it functions is another important objective. By focusing on local problems, the college can contribute to solving universal problems. While the college is committed to educating and delivering graduates who can pull their weight in the public and private sectors, it is also actively seeking partnerships that will enrich the institution's tuition and research and enhance its footprint in the community.

4. Talk to Us

The college encourages all students to have a voice and have their say, to enable us to improve the quality of the service we provide at the master's and doctoral levels. We pride ourselves on fostering an environment that enables our students to thrive, and to feel seen and heard. Feel free to share your experience and/or opinions with us via the suggestion inbox and share your supervision experience by downloading the Academic Rating Index (ARI).

4.1. CEMS Suggestion Inbox

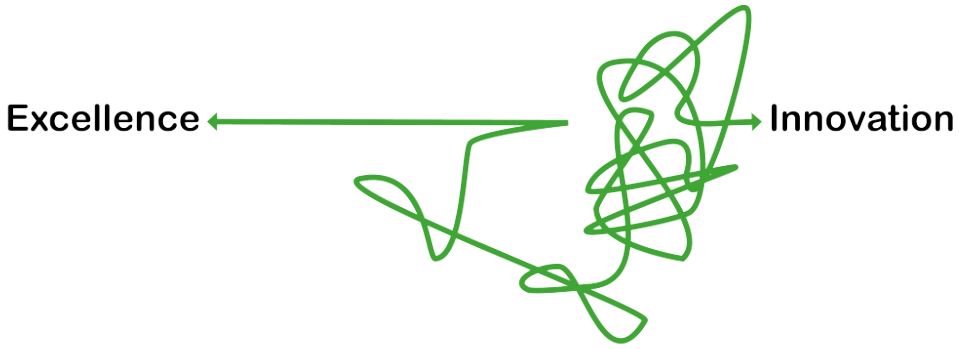
You can communicate your experiences, recommendations, suggestions, and compliments using the suggestion box email address cemsuggestion@unisa.ac.za. We will do our best to reply to your emails.

4.2. Academic Rating Index (ARI)

ARI is a digital tool designed to help identify areas of strength and weakness in the supervision process. The platform offers an interactive space for use by students and supervisors alike. Students can share their supervision experience on ARI, after which the university will extract data from ARI to design training sessions aimed at targeting areas of weakness, while also enhancing existing strengths. You can download ARI from Google Play or the App Store. You can also access ARI directly from the master's and doctoral students' dashboard, using the following link: https://mylifeunisaac.sharepoint.com/sites/MDStudentsDashboard/. In-depth information on ARI is available on the CEMS_M&D_2025 Moodle page.

5. Top CEMS Club

CEMS launched its TOP CEMS CLUB, on 21 April 2023. The club rewards those top-performing honours and master's students who have opted to further their education by enrolling for their next qualification in the college. In addition to this recognition by the college, the club provides an opportunity for members to have a more enriching academic experience through, for example, exchange programmes with other academic institutions around the world, funding opportunities, skills development, and the possibility of participating in grant-writing workshops. The college will shortlist and invite candidates to the club on a yearly basis. We look forward to seeing the club's potential come to fruition. 2025 will be a significant year for the club and its members as we look to fully maximise the opportunities the club has to offer. Over the past year, the club has developed a club chatter and elected a club council. We look forward to the club's activities in the 2025 academic year.



6. Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Excellence

Within CEMS we have a Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Excellence. This centre focuses on bringing to life innovative and creative ideas, and research projects that aim to address the challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

Entrepreneurship Hub

Entrepreneurship has been identified as a key focus area to achieve sustainable socio-economic development through the support to entrepreneurs, both aspiring and existing. The Entrepreneurship Hub is the College flagship initiative that interrelates to support the growth and capacitating of SMMEs and their owners through developmental programmes and business services. These initiatives are an important priority to address the challenges of inequality, poverty and unemployment.

The College facilitates engagements and workshops in collaboration with various stakeholders for beneficiaries in many sectors of our society, including the automotive, financial and hospitality industries, as well as members in a specific community. This facilitation process is to promote the

development of businesses that will create employment and reduce the inequality gap in our nation and promoting the realisation of the aspirations of the National Development Plan (NDP).

The College of Economic and Management Sciences (CEMS) envisages the establishment of a sustainable entrepreneurship and small business development hub in various regions. The need for such an innovation in emanates from its aim to create local jobs and reduce unemployment. The flagship initiative will serve as a centre to facilitate the support of entrepreneurs and SMME owners, and also promote research and student in-service learning.

Student Entrepreneurship Week (SEW)

The development of SMMEs offers potential for sustainable solutions to problems faced within our SMMEs and our communities. To assist in this regard, the College dedicates 2-3 days every year to promote student entrepreneurs through a series of presentations, training opportunities, as well a platform to present ideas to a panel of successful entrepreneurs. The SEW will be the platform where student entrepreneurs, SMMEs and other stakeholders can engage in discourse on both theoretical and practical matters that affect the SMME sector to achieve sustainability. The SEW is hosted annually with presentations, seminars, exhibitions and workshops to the benefit of existing and prospective student entrepreneurs. We work with key partners to ensure that relevant information and resources are availed for the duration of SEW and that the participants have access to information.

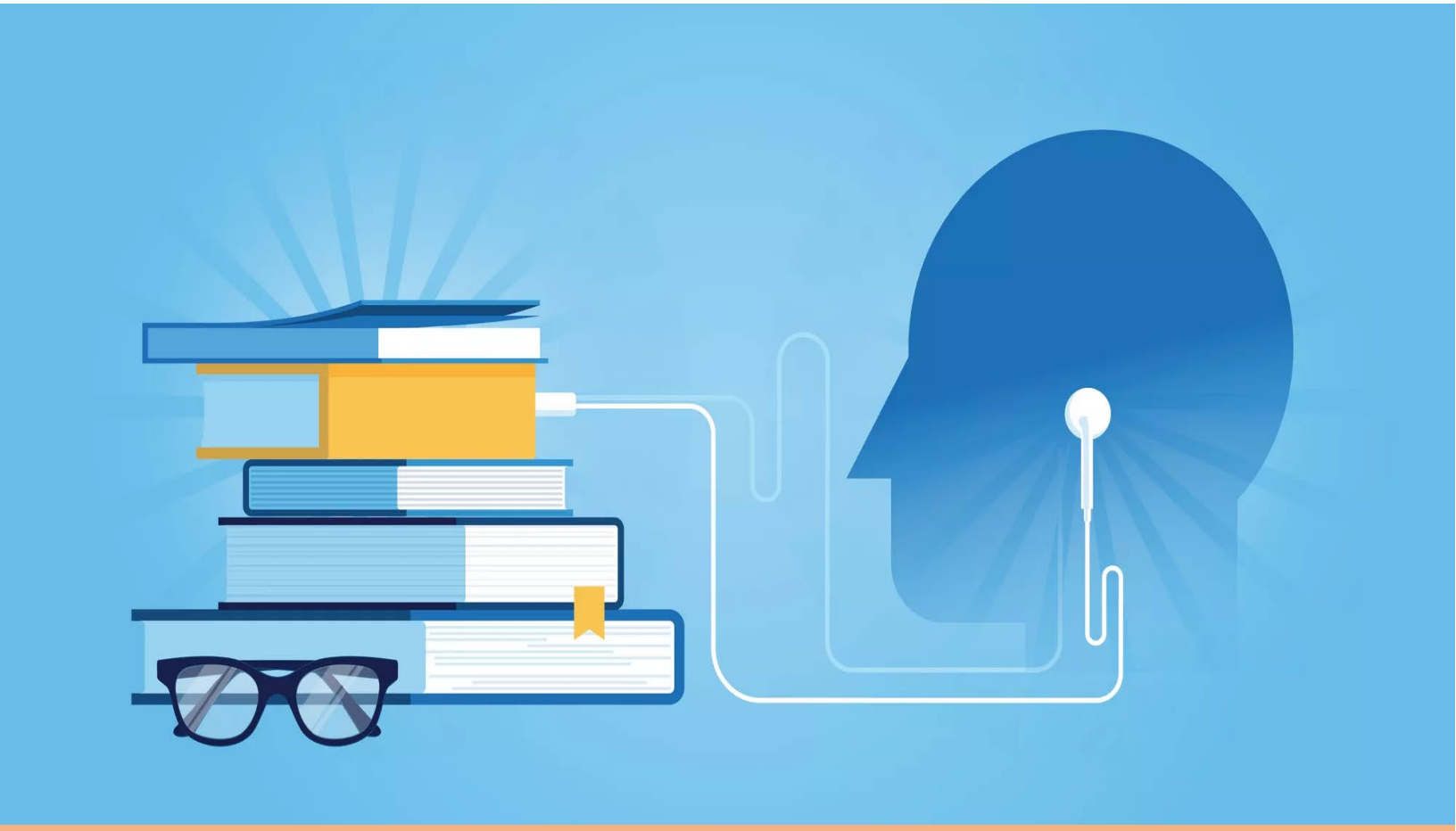
Source:https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Economic-and-Management-Sciences/Community-engagement/Entrepreneurship

7. CEMS Important Dates & Submission Deadlines

Date		Task
JANUARY 2025	10	M&D registrations open
	29	Meeting of Top CEMS CLUB Members
	31	Bursary applications supervisor support closes for the 2025 academic year.
FEBRUARY 2025	5,12,19 & 26	Workshop: Apply for research ethics (RE) clearance using the online RE application system
MARCH 2025	15	Submission of intention to submit (for final submission of thesis/dissertation by 15 June 2025)
	25	College deadline for deferment of studies
	31	M&D registration closes
APRIL 2025	22-23	College M&D orientation day
MAY 2025	13	Ethical Authorship and Research Collaboration
	23	Proposed submission date for first draft of research proposal
JUNE 2025	3	Research Ethics toolkit: for Supervisors & Researchers
	15	Dissertation/thesis submission for Spring graduation 2025
JULY 2025	13	Submission of intention to submit for 15 November 2024 submission
	25	Proposed submission date for second draft of proposal
SEPTEMBER 2025	16	Proposed submission date for third draft of proposal
	30	Students receive final official communication of insufficient progress.
OCTOBER–NOVEMBER		**Departmental colloquium/review preparations**
NOVEMBER 2025	November	2026 bursary applications open
	15	**Students' final proposal submissions for 2025**

	15	Dissertation/thesis submission for Autumn graduation 2026
JANUARY 2026	18 Last week for outstanding 2025 M&D colloquium/proposal review	

**dates may be subject to change. Please check myUNISA for the most accurate dates*



8. CEMS Training Schedules

The College organises several training and workshop sessions for M&D students at every stage of the research journey. An accurate training calendar will be uploaded on the myUNISA platform once bi-monthly. Please complete the registration form accompanying a specific session. It is vital that you attend these sessions.

8.3. CEMS & Unisa Research Ethics Workshops

TRAINING PROGRAMME
January–June 2025

January 2025 OREMS Training		
08 January 2025 12:00 – 13:30	Ensure you have registered and activated your account using your student email address.	Join Online
15 January 2025 12:00 – 13:30		Join Online
22 January 2025 12:00 – 13:30		Join Online
29 January 2025 12:00 – 13:30		Join Online
February 2025 OREMS Training		
05 February 2025 12:00 – 13:30	Ensure you have registered and activated your account using your student email address.	Join Online
12 February 2025 12:00 – 13:30		Join Online
19 February 2025 12:00 – 13:30		Join Online
26 February 2025 12:00 – 13:30		Join Online
March 2025 OREMS Training		
05 March 2025 12:00 – 13:30	Ensure you have registered and activated your account using your student email address.	Join Online
12 March 2025 12:00 – 13:30		Join Online
19 March 2025 12:00 – 13:30		Join Online
26 March 2025 12:00 – 13:30		Join Online
April 2025 OREMS Training		
02 April 2025 12:00 – 13:30	Ensure you have registered and activated your account using your student email address.	Join Online
09 April 2025 12:00 – 13:30		Join Online
16 April 2025 12:00 – 13:30		Join Online
23 April 2025 12:00 – 13:30		Join Online

June 2025 OREMS Training		
04 June 2025 12:00 – 13:30	-+ Ensure you have registered and activated your account using your student email address.	Join Online
11 June 2025 12:00 – 13:30		Join Online
18 June 2025 12:00 – 13:30		Join Online
25 June 2025 12:00 – 13:30		Join Online

Ethics training dates for other quarters will be uploaded on the CEMS_M&D_2025 Moodle page.

8.4. CGS Training Workshops

The School of Interdisciplinary Research and Graduate Studies (SIRGS), which is in the College of Graduate Studies (CGS), is there to support you on your research journey as you undertake postgraduate studies. CGS works closely with all the colleges – including the library – through its intercollege committee, to meet the needs of all postgraduate students.

The research training workshops are interdisciplinary in nature and accommodate postgraduate students across all colleges at Unisa. They provide a broader understanding of the research process and concepts, to ensure that you understand the role of theory, methodologies and ethics (amongst others) in research. The research training workshops hosted by SIRGS are not meant to replace discipline-specific workshops in your respective colleges or departments but are add-ons which provide a foundation for understanding the basic concepts of research. Remember that research is a social activity that forms part of unstructured learning opportunities on your career path, and it is highly likely that you will face several difficulties in undertaking related activities. You will be called upon to be committed and resilient, to work hard, display maturity, develop patience and understanding, and grow a thick skin. Your journey is likely to be smooth and rewarding if you use and apply the learning outcomes from the training provided in the research training workshops.

MS Teams is the platform of choice for hosting research training workshops, and postgraduate students should ensure that their myLife and myUnisa accounts are activated, in order to access this online platform. We hope you will enjoy these research training interventions, which are intended to contribute positively to your academic journey.

Source: About us (unisa.ac.za)

The College of Graduate Studies (CGS) training schedule can be accessed at any time from :
M&D Training Programme

9. RESOURCES PAGE

9.1. Joining myUnisa

The myUnisa learning management system is the university's online campus that will help you communicate with your lecturers, fellow students and the administrative departments at Unisa – all via the computer and the internet. To access myUnisa, follow these steps:

STEP 1: To go directly to myUnisa, click on https://my.unisa.ac.za

OR

Start at the main Unisa website at http://www.unisa.ac.za and then click on the myUnisa orange block.

STEP 2: Click on **Claim UNISA Login** on the right-hand side of the screen on the myUnisa website. You will be prompted to type in your student number, to claim your initial myUnisa details as well as your myLife e-mail login details.

NB: It is crucial that you use your myLife e-mail account to communicate with your supervisor(s). Academic departments need to capture all communications, feedback and support provided to students on the system. It is in your own best interests to use the official communication platform, should any issues arise during the academic year. In addition, important notifications from the university will also be delivered to your myLife e-mail account, and you may miss valuable information if you do not make use of this platform.

9.2. Master's and Doctoral Dashboard Training

All M&D students have access to the master's and doctoral dashboard, which has information pertaining to student tasks, notices from supervisors, and requests for extensions. Check this dashboard regularly for important information which may be relevant to your research dissertation and/or report. Below are the links to student training videos on how to access and utilise the dashboard.

****Student training video link:** https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/38a2a63b-10e9-467c-8115-7d0e365e0c13

The code to JOIN A TEAM is: **cehsd1d

PP Get In Touch With Us:
https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=jIuayqM-

9.3. M&D Orientation Week

For a comprehensive overview of the research support offered, we strongly recommend that you attend the M&D orientation, hosted online via Microsoft Teams.

You will be introduced to support departments, such as the library and CGS, which are essential for helping you to graduate.

9.4. Research Proposal Material

To assist you with your research proposal, additional support material in the form of a study guide for writing a research proposal for M&D studies, is available on the myUnisa/Moodle site in the CEMS_M&D_2025 module and under the **Additional Resources** folder.

9.5. Departmental Resources

Most departments will make additional department-specific documentation available to you.

Guidelines on how to write research proposals will be available on your discipline-specific myUnisa/Moodle site.

To access material that is applicable to you, please access the correct folder under the **Additional Resources** tab.

9.6. Unisa's M&D Policies

- Several policies and guidelines govern master's and doctoral degree studies at Unisa. You need to familiarise yourself thoroughly with the contents thereof.
- Refer to the College of Graduate Studies' website. View the policies and guidelines applicable to the proposal, dissertation and thesis procedures.
- Additionally, the College of Graduate Studies offers important information on various aspects that will assist you with applying for funding, academic writing, M&D forms, frequently asked questions, etc.

9.7. Library Services

Library (unisa.ac.za)

One of the main requirements of any research proposal – especially at the master's and doctoral levels – is that students review the most recent, credible, and relevant scholarship in their area of interest. The Unisa library is one of the main sources to help you meet this requirement. One of the largest academic libraries in Africa, it is well endowed with information resources, information technology and expert staff. The printed book collection includes more than 1.5 million items. The library stocks over 300 000 other items, as well as 4 000 current periodical titles. Unisa's librarians also subscribe to a growing number of electronic journals (e-journals). Both the e-journals and the growing collection of electronic books (e-books) are available online to Unisa students and staff, seven days a week, 24 hours a day, regardless of the user's physical location.

The college has a dedicated team of subject librarians that you must utilise during your studies. The subject librarians for the college can be contacted via the details below:

Ms Mèlanie Malan **012 429 3595** **malanmm@unisa.ac.za**
Departments responsible for: **School of Management Sciences** Department of Business Management Department of Human Resource Management Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology Department of Marketing and Retai**l** **School of Public and Operations Management** Department of Applied Management

Mr Collen Molefe
011 630 4537
moleftc@unisa.ac.za
School of Economic and Financial Sciences
Department of Decision Sciences
Department of Economics
Department of Finance, Risk Management & Banking
School of Public and Operations Management
Department of Public Administration and Management
Department of Operations Management
Institute for Corporate Citizenship

Research support and services	http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Library/Library-services/Research-support
Finding and using library resources and tools	http://libguides.unisa.ac.za/Research_skills
CEMS Harvard referencing	https://libguides.unisa.ac.za/CEMSHarvard
Request and download recommended material	http://libguides.unisa.ac.za/request/request
General library guides	http://libguides.unisa.ac.za
Postgraduate information services	http://libguides.unisa.ac.za/request/postgrad
Services to students living with disabilities	http://libguides.unisa.ac.za/disability
Frequently asked questions	http://libguides.unisa.ac.za/ask

10. Student Support

10.1 Unisa Health and Wellness

UNISA has health clinics in two campuses in South Africa, with limited primary health care services.

- Muckleneuk campus (Pretoria)
- Florida Campus (Johannesburg)

Most municipalities in South Africa have community health centres within reach from UNISA regional offices. Most of these centres and clinics offer health care services free of charge or at a very minimal cost. Feel free to ask from the regional office where you can find the nearest clinic.
For more information on health and wellness resources click the link below:
Health and Wellness Resources (unisa.ac.za)

Unisa's counselling services provide career, academic and personal support to students. Support is available online and by e-mail, in person, by telephone and by letter. Visit www.unisa.ac.za/counselling for more information.

10.2. Student Funding

- Unisa's Student Funding Division (DSF) offers services to assist you in obtaining funding to cover the cost of your studies. Bursaries and loans are available to academically deserving and students with financial needs to relieve the stress of worrying about paying for your studies. Visit: www.unisa.ac.za/studentfunding for more information.

- Every month, the college issues a student bulletin that highlights student funding opportunities, student scholarships and fellowships.

PART B: GETTING STARTED

Section 1: Topic Choice

The key to producing a successful dissertation is to choose a feasible topic, with research that you know you can complete within the set time and resource constraints. Most students start with an idea which is far too wide ranging or ambitious. They also have an unrealistic appreciation of the difficulties in obtaining valid data. Thus, when choosing a topic, think about where and whether you will be able to access the information you need for your dissertation or thesis. Some topics might be very interesting to research, but will have to be modified in light of these constraints.

Think very carefully about the topic you choose. Study the lists of past titles and staff supervision areas, to generate ideas. Scrutinise articles in academic journals or discipline-specific magazines. Consider what issues are currently being researched or raised in the media but be careful that they are not so current that there will be insufficient literature or data on your topic.

Discuss ideas with members of staff, to explore possible areas and the type of study you want to undertake. Make sure there is sufficient range and depth of literature to support your topic, and that it is feasible to collect the data required.

Unisa's institutional repository provides a wealth of information on the M&D studies that have been undertaken at the institution. This is a good starting point when deciding on a topic.

Hofstee (2006: 14) describes a topic as "the specific subject of your dissertation". Your topic will assist you in identifying a problem and will guide your search for relevant information on that subject. This information will form part of your preliminary literature review, offering background information and giving an indication of the contribution your study will make to your specific field (Hofstee, 2006: 14–15).

It is important to give independent and systematic thought to your research topic. There are many ways in which research ideas can be developed, and personal experience, coursework, your job or your interests might play a role (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2012: 13). Notable events, as well as

discussions with colleagues or topics explored during the conferences and seminars you attend, might give you ideas which merit further investigation. Reading scientific literature will also expand your horizons. It may be a good idea to read a few master's dissertations or doctoral theses, as well as research articles in scientific journals (Roberts, 2004). The library has several databases that may be used for this purpose.

The easiest way to find resources in the library is to make use of the subject guide for your subject. Select your subject from the A–Z list. The subject guides contain tabs that divide the resources available into types of material. To access the list of resources on theses and dissertations, click on the **Theses and Dissertations** tab to see the list of links to use. The National (ETD) Portal database contains full-text theses and dissertations, while the Nexus Current and Completed Research database contains only bibliographic details.

After deciding on a topic, start thinking about a specific problem within this topic or subject that you want to investigate. Without a problem, it might be difficult to find anything to investigate, or draw conclusions about (Hofstee, 2006: 13).

Section 2: Supervisor–Candidate Roles and Responsibilities

For a successful supervisor–candidate working relationship, each stakeholder has to fulfil key roles and responsibilities. It is important to know what roles you and your supervisor must play respectively, to fulfil all your academic requirements successfully and pleasantly. All graduate students must ensure that they read and understand the roles of the supervisor and student. Click on the following link, for more on this: College of Graduate Studies

PART C: RESEARCH PROPOSAL

New knowledge is discovered through the process of research, and the research proposal is the first step in the research process. Theory (such as the theory of learning, motivation, or development) helps you to organize the new information. “Research is actively based on the work of others” (Van Zyl, 2014: 3), but it is not simply a duplication of research already done.

Existing research offers a foundation for your research and suggests possibilities as to how your research might be conducted. Van Zyl (2014: 3) identifies the following characteristics of high-quality research:

•It is based on other relevant research
•It can be replicated
•It can be generalised to other settings
•It is based on some logical rationale and tied to theory
•It is achievable.
•It brings forth possibilities for further research
•It should be undertaken for the advancement of society

When you complete your research proposal, it may feel as if you have already completed half the research (Wentz, 2014: xiii). Keep in mind that a solid proposal will keep you on the right track. If the proposal is not of a high standard, you will have to get all the elements that should have been correct in the proposal in place later, and you will not have the clear direction offered by a good proposal (Hofstee, 2006: 59)

You will have a maximum of one academic year to submit an acceptable research proposal before you will be permitted to proceed to the dissertation/thesis writing. The final proposal should be of an acceptable standard for examination purposes – depending on departmental preferences, either by means of a blind review or a colloquium. If the final submission is not of an acceptable standard, you will not be allowed to continue in the programme.

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Section 4: Research Proposal Structure

There is no single, fixed structure for a research proposal (Miller & Salkind, 2002a), and different academic departments or subject disciplines might require you to follow different outlines. According to Babbie (2013: 118), however, there are certain fundamental components that must appear in any research proposal, and these are discussed below in more detail.

4.1. Title
4.2. Research problem
4.3. Research purpose and objectives
4.4. Literature review and theoretical framework
4.5. Research methodology
4.6. Data-collection and -analysis techniques
4.7. Ethical considerations
4.8. Rigour
4.9. Limitations and recommendations
4.10. Timeline and budget
4.11. Dissertation outline
4.12. Reference list

4.1: Title

Once you have thought of the research topic you want to investigate or explore, start thinking about the working title of your research proposal. The title must capture the essence and key elements of what the research is about. It must be clear, succinct, and informative. A useful strategy is to formulate the title after writing the research proposal. The title should not be so long that it becomes cumbersome, or so short that it omits important/key elements of the research.

4.2: Research Problem

Most students struggle to clearly define the problem they plan to investigate. Defining or formulating the problem is an important part of your proposed research, and you should spend sufficient time on this. Formulating the research problem helps you to obtain clarity on the exact scope of your research. It will also help you to focus on a particular problem which is small enough to investigate. The research problem is formulated as a result of a study (including a literature review) that reveals gaps in the existing knowledge about a specific area (Welman *et al.,* 2012: 13).

The research problem "tells the story behind the variables or concepts to be studied and provides background for the purpose statement and research question" (Roberts, 2004: 120). The research problem becomes clear when you ask: "What problem influenced the need to undertake this study?" (Babbie & Mouton, 2011: 103). The problem statement provides the background for the purpose statement, the concepts to be studied, and the research question. You need to cite literature sources to give an indication of where this study will fit into the existing body of research, and address the actual problem being investigated. You can cite your sources manually, according to the college's chosen referencing style (Harvard), or you can do this electronically, by making use of a reference management software programme.

There are many software packages available, but the library supports Mendeley and RefWorks. Consult Reference Management Tools Library Guide for links to these products, as well as training

material. In addition, you are advised to make use of the CEMS Harvard Referencing Style Library Guide for guidelines on the official referencing style used by the college.

The problem statement concludes with the contribution that your intended study will make to a specific field (Roberts, 2004: 120–121).

4.3: Research Purpose/Objectives, Questions, Rationale, Hypotheses and Propositions

4.3.1. Research Purpose or Objective

"A research objective is a declarative statement describing an outcome-based goal investigating facts, theories, or methods. The outcome is a better understanding into a gap identified in the literature review" (Wentz, 2014: 131). The purpose statement of your research proposal is usually forthright, simple and brief (Locke *et al.,* 2007: 9). The purpose states the intention of your study, in other words, "what exactly you are going to find out" (Roberts, 2004: 124–125). We could say that the purpose statement reflects the essence or focus of your study. Objectives or aims are also used to expand the purpose statement.

One of the difficulties when writing a research objective is in identifying what is research, and what is a task that does not advance knowledge or understanding. You need to solve a problem or accumulate new insight (Wentz, 2014: 131). According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006: 84), the purpose of the research is formulated in three stages, as indicated in the figure below.

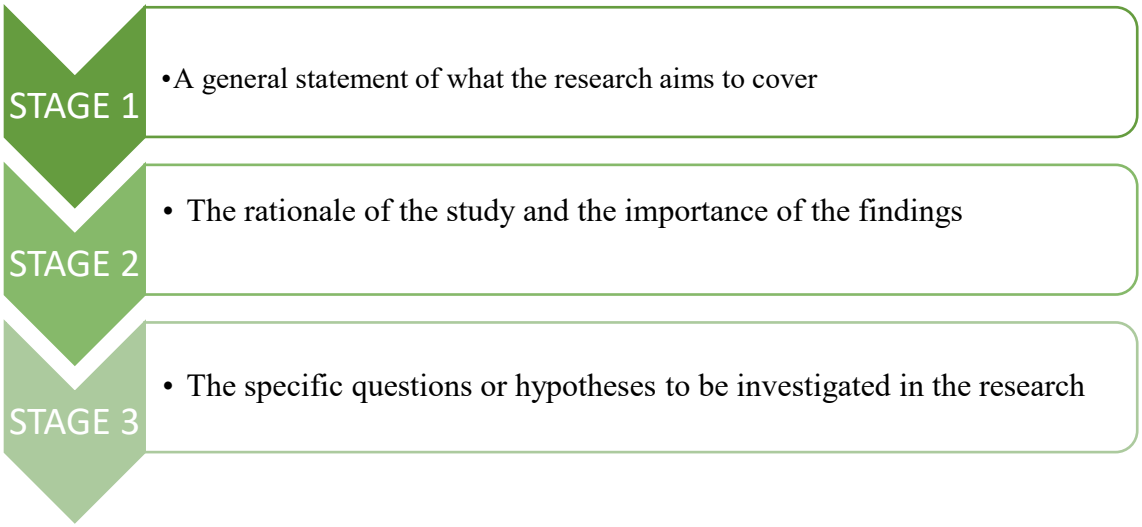


Figure 1: The three stages of research

4.3.2: Research Question

The question of what you are going to research, is crucial. To decide what the research question will be, you have to make some decisions (Race, 2010). A research question is a specific way of stating the research problem in the form of a question (Vogt, 2005: 277; Horn, 2009: 55). It is a specific construction of "interest and intent" (Van Zyl, 2014: 44). "The research question is an interrogative statement" (Wentz, 2014: 132–133). The questions you pose can be descriptive, identify relationships, and suggest or prove the relationship between cause and effect. The primary research question is the purpose of the study, rephrased as a question. You may want to research more than one question. Your decision about the number of research questions may be influenced by the subject of the study, and whether you will be applying a quantitative or qualitative methodology (Race, 2010).

4.3.3: Research Rationale and Justification

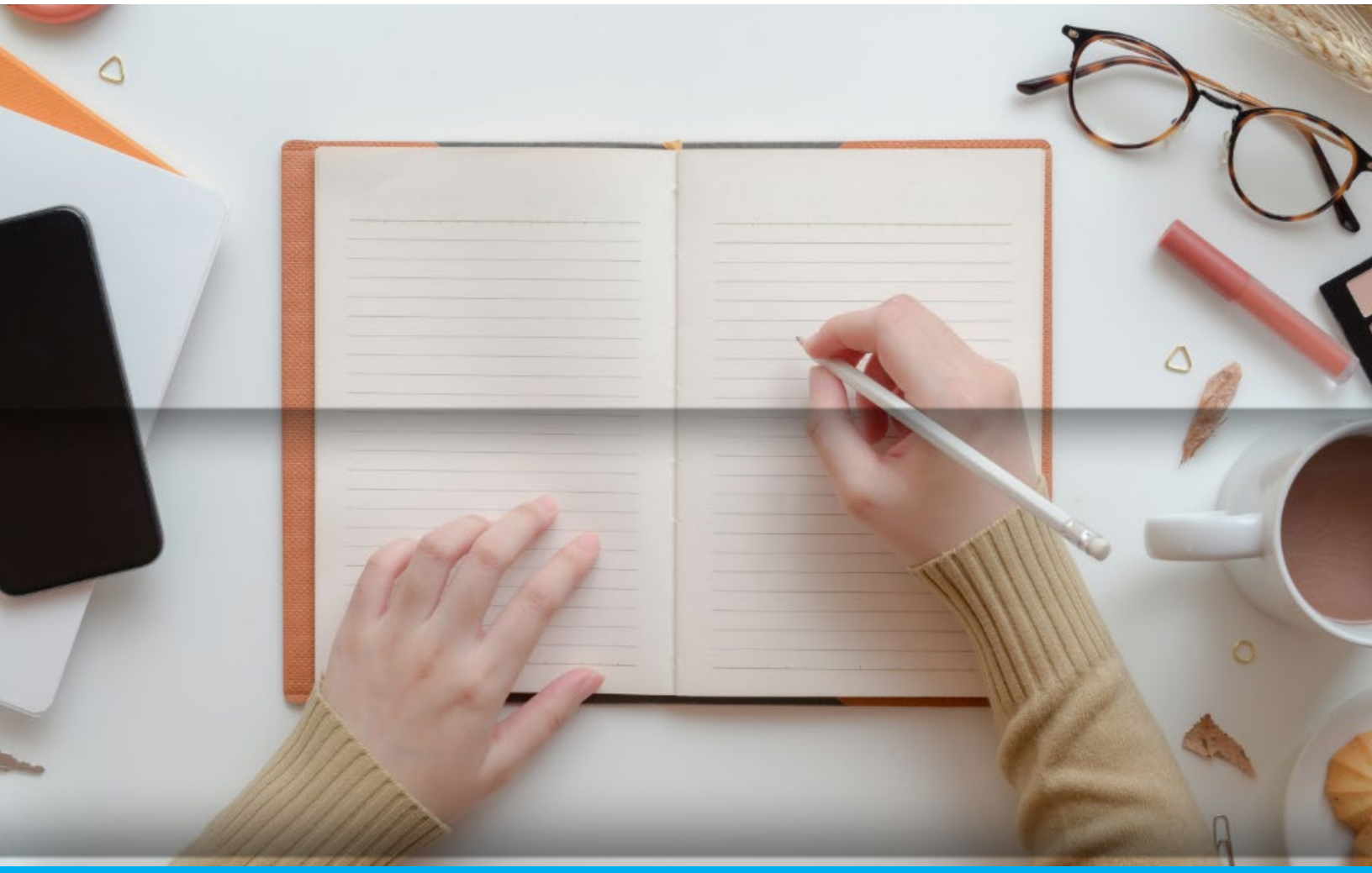
In the research rationale you supply the reasons why you plan to conduct a particular study. The rationale is developed "alongside a review of some central ideas in the relevant literature. The purpose is to indicate that the proposed study is part of a broader context of academic enquiry" (Terre Blanche *et al*., 2006: 84). The research justification sets out the rationale for the research.

It not only explains the reason for the research, but also accounts for the research methods as well as the design of the research (Given, 2008).

4.3.4: Hypothesis and Propositions

Paradigms are general frameworks or viewpoints. Whereas a paradigm is the way we look at things, theory "aims at explaining what we see" (Babbie, 2013: 69) [also see *Research methods* by Salkind (2010) for more information on research paradigms]. Concepts, which are the building blocks of a theory, can be defined as "abstract elements representing classes of phenomena within the field of study". Propositions are the "relationships among concepts" (Babbie, 2013: 70). Propositional knowledge may be used in the literature on qualitative inquiry in a way that "connotes something more like abstract formal language" (Miller & Brewer, 2003). Cooper and Schindler (2005: 62) define a proposition as a statement about observable phenomena (concepts) that may be judged as true or false. When a proposition is formulated for empirical testing, it is called a hypothesis.

A hypothesis is an important milestone in a quantitative study. It is a tentative statement about the relationships between two or more variables. The hypothesis will guide the study and predict the relationship between the variables. It has not yet been proved, and so the hypothesis will be either rejected or accepted. The literature review originates the hypothesis in the theoretical proposition already established (Locke *et al.,* 2007: 11; Kasim & Kalaian, 2008; Van Zyl, 2014: 7). The hypothesis should be testable and adequate for its purpose, and so the techniques required should be available. Researchers generally make use of two kinds of hypotheses, namely (1) the null hypothesis and (2) the alternative hypothesis. A null hypothesis (illustrated as H_0) indicates that there will be no relationship between variables – in other words, it implies a zero correlation between variables. When the null hypothesis is rejected, the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The alternative hypothesis (also termed the research hypothesis, and illustrated as H_a or H_1) is the opposite of the null hypothesis (Cooper & Schindler, 2005: 45; Van Zyl, 2014: 30–31, 95). The research hypothesis should be short and to the point. Furthermore, it should be testable, and should reflect the literature or theory that forms the foundation of the research (Van Zyl, 2014:32).



4.4: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

A literature review can be defined as a "systematic synthesis of previous work around a particular topic" (Card, 2010). Notably, a literature review is not a chronological summary of what other researchers have found. Instead, it is a synthesised account of the body of knowledge on the proposed topic.

When starting your project, remember to keep a record of all the information you deem applicable to your research topic.

The referencing software packages referred to earlier can help you with this, in addition to organising the material. Links to online training are available in the Reference Management Tools Library Guide. If you require additional training, the CEMS personal librarians will be able to assist.

When you start writing down the information you have found, group ideas in a logical manner, with a clear indication of the relationship between the concepts. Pay attention to the sequence in which you present your ideas: it is best to state a general idea that summarises a topic before presenting individual, more detailed, ideas. By doing this, you will show the relationship between the facts and ensure that the correct information is communicated (Minto, 2002: 8–9). Minto (2002: 5) refers to this as a pyramid structure. Hofstee (2006: 94–100) uses the term "funnel method", to describe more or less the same thing.

A literature study serves several purposes. It shows (Hofstee, 2006: 91)

- that you are aware of what is going on in the field
- that there is a theoretical base for the work you are proposing to do
- how your work fits in with what has already been done (the context)
- that your work has significance (to ensure that you are not merely duplicating work that has already been done); and
- that your work will lead to new knowledge.

4.4.1: Background Information

To refine a suitable research topic in a particular field, you need to familiarise yourself with the existing knowledge in that field. Initially, this should involve at least two procedures: general reading in your field of interest, and a specific literature search for relevant references.

Use your subject guide to find suitable literature on your topic. It is important to make use of African Journals (SA ePublications) for full-text South African journal articles. This resource is accessible via the **Article** tab of your subject guide and is just one of many resources available via that guide.

Do not confine your reading to a clearly demarcated topic at this early stage, but instead read to build up adequate background. The purpose of a literature review in the proposal is to ensure that you become acquainted with an adequate sample of earlier work on which you can base your own research, and which you can use to create something new. It will also give the readers of your

proposal the knowledge they need in order to contextualise and understand it. The literature review in your proposal is not an explanation of everything you know about the subject, but rather a synthesis of the material which is relevant to your proposed research (Wentz, 2014: 81).

Locke *et al.* (2007: 65) suggest speaking to your supervisor and research colleagues or fellow students who are knowledgeable about the area of your research proposal, before you start your literature search.

Writing the literature review is different from exploring the literature. Exploring the literature involves discovering what sources (books and articles) are available, that you might use. Writing the preliminary literature review is more like writing an essay, to give an overview of the literature that is appropriate to your research (Levin, 2011: 28).

For more information on notetaking during the exploratory phase of the literature review, consult Rilley et al. (2000: 69–71).

4.4.2: Literature Review Search Guidelines

The literature review, as part of the research proposal, focuses on the main directions that previous researchers took in this area, as well as the methodologies they used. Your conceptual and theoretical formulation should receive significant attention. Only discuss those studies that provide a foundation for your proposed investigation. The relevance and contribution of those studies to the proposed research, should be clear. An organised conceptual framework "represents the most important single opportunity for the application of original thought" (Locke *et al.*, 2007: 18). This may lead to new ways of interpreting relationships.

Levin (2011: 29–30) gives a few guidelines on what you need to look out for.

4.4.5: Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is "a guiding principle for research that provides structure or an explanation to a problem" (Wentz, 2014: 83). In this section of your proposal, you need to show that you understand the major theories that support your own research work, and can relate your work to them. In the words of Hofstee (2006: 92), theory, in academic terms, is

> a logical explanation for why something is as it is or does as it does. Theories are not cast in stone – something may come along and disprove them tomorrow – but they are the best explanations we currently have.

There might be several (even conflicting) theories about why something is the way it is. To establish a theorical base for your dissertation or thesis, you need to identify the major explanatory

theories that pertain to what you are doing, and comment on them as they relate to your work. Theories can involve either deductive or inductive reasoning. Both are forms of logical thinking. Theory is used to learn about, and explain, the world. Wentz (2014: 83–84) offers the following explanation: "Theory is either used as the starting point, and conclusions about a selected group are identified (deduction), or observations about a group are the starting point and the theory is the conclusion (induction)." Several researchers make use of both deductive and inductive reasoning. Existing theories are used to draw conclusions (theoretical framework), and we use observations to develop (or affirm) a theory.

A good idea is to consult your supervisor regarding your choice of a theoretical framework for the research project.

The Unisa library is an important source of information as you compile your preliminary literature review. If you have not yet started to use your subject guide or contacted the personal librarian assigned to your academic department, now would be a good time to do so.

Wentz (2014: 85–94) suggests "concrete steps" to assist with the writing of a literature review for a proposal. You may find these helpful if you feel stuck and do not know where to start.

4.5: Research Methodology

This section should indicate how you intend to conduct your research. There should be sufficient detail in this section to clearly show what you propose to do. Remember that the methods section should be appropriate for the aims and objectives of the proposed study.

4.5.1: Research Approach

The research approach can be classified as either **qualitative, quantitative** or **mixed-method (triangulation)** (Roberts, 2004: 110–114). The difference between the approaches lies in their philosophical or theoretical foundation.

In quantitative research, the researcher collects predominantly numerical data and uses deductive reasoning. The analysis of the data is mostly statistical (Horn, 2009: 6–7). In philosophical terms, the quantitative approach is termed logical positivism. The inquiry begins with a specific plan. The researcher is looking for facts; s/he wants to know a lot about a small number of variables in order

to identify differences. The collected data are primarily numerical, and comprise the results of surveys, tests, experiments and so on. Most quantitative approaches manipulate variables and control the research setting. Quantitative designs include descriptive research, experimental research, quasi-experimental research, ex-post facto/causal comparative research and correlational research (Roberts, 2004: 110; Brewer & Kubn, 2010; Brown, 2010; Muijs, 2011).

The qualitative approach is underpinned by the philosophical orientation termed phenomenology (Miller & Salkind, 2002b), which focuses on people's experiences from their perspective. Qualitative inquiry begins with general and broad questions regarding the research topic, and the researcher looks for a holistic picture in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon s/he is studying. There is a lot of fieldwork involved. Observations, in-depth and/or open-ended interviews and written documents are used. The data comprise words that describe or convey people's knowledge, opinions, perspectives, feelings, activities and interpersonal interactions. Qualitative research looks at the essential character or nature of a phenomenon, not the quantity. Also called naturalistic inquiry, it is conducted in real-world settings; no attempt is made to manipulate the environment. Researchers want to get to the meanings people attach to activities and events in their world, and are open to whatever emerges. Qualitative research refers to several research genres (Barbour, 2008), including case study research, historical research, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative analysis, action research and hermeneutics (Charmaz, 2004, Clendenin & Caine, 2008, Farquhar, 2012, Graham & Al-Krenawi, 2001, Hammersley, 2006, Horn, 2009: 6–7, Noffke & Bridget, 2009: 2, Roberts, 2004: 111, Barbour, 2008).

It is possible to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches in one study (i.e., mixed methodology), even though they are grounded in different paradigms. Numerical data may form part of a qualitative study, and narrative data (open-ended questionnaire responses) may be part of a quantitative study. Using qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study may complement each other, by providing results with greater breadth and depth (Roberts, 2004: 112–113).

	Quantitative	Mixed-methods	Qualitative
Approach	Deductive reasoning. Focuses on quantity of phenomena	↔	Inductive. Focuses on meaning, experiences
Goals	Hypothesis testing	↔	Rich and in-depth understanding of phenomena
Setting	Experimental or natural	↔	Natural
Sampling	Random	↔	Non-random sampling
Data collection	Descriptive numerical data	↔	Observational, open-ended, flexible data-collection tools
Data analysis	Statistical analysis of numeral data	↔	Interpretation of textual data
Results	Statistical tests and analyses	↔	Recurring themes across the dataset

4.5.2: Sampling and Participants

In a research study, the population is that group (e.g., people, objects or events) that the researcher wants to study and on which s/he intends to base conclusions. The researcher must clearly define the target population of the study. It is not possible to study all the members of a population, and so a sample of the population is usually taken (Gott & Duggan, 2003; Babbie & Mouton, 2011: 75). Salkind (2014: 185) describes a population as "a group of potential participants to whom you want to generalise the results of a study. A sample is a subset of that population." [See also Van Zyl (2014: 95).] The sample should therefore be of a suitable size to represent the population and to enable the researcher to make generalised remarks or draw conclusions that are relevant to the population.

There are several reasons for sampling: it is more economical; lowers the cost; increases the speed of data collection; and may improve the accuracy of the results, since the investigations or interviews might be conducted in a more thorough way (Cooper & Schindler, 2006: 403).

When it is possible to apply results to different populations with the same characteristics in different settings, we say that the results can be generalised. In cases where the sample is not an accurate representation of the population, the results are applicable only to people in the same sample who participated in the original research (Van Zyl, 2014: 95).

Caution should be applied to the sample size for quantitative research studies. Certain statistical analyses require a minimal number of *complete* responses, to deliver reliable results. It is therefore advisable to keep the statistical analyses in mind, when defining the sample.

It is not easy for a researcher to select a sample that "perfectly represents the population" (Salkind, 2014: 192). If the sample size is too small, it is not representative of the population, and if it is too large, it might be "overkill" (Salkind, 2014: 195).

The sampling strategy and type of sampling used, will influence the sample size.

For more information in this regard, see Salkind (2014: 195–196).

NB: Your research proposal needs to convince the academic panel that the sampling strategy is appropriate for the planned research, and sufficient to meet the research objectives or answer the research questions. Your rationale for choosing a sampling strategy should be clearly supported, based on the existing body of knowledge on research methodology.

4.5.2.1: Sampling Strategies

You need to know the difference between two general sampling strategies, namely **probability sampling** and **non-probability sampling.** These sampling strategies are explored further below. [For a review of sampling techniques, see Miller and Salkind (2002c: 52–57).]

Probability Sampling

In the case of probability sampling strategies, the selection of the participants is determined by chance. Non-systematic and random rules determine the sample, hence the possibility that the sample will "truly represent the population is increased" (Salkind, 2014: 186). The types of probability sampling are detailed below.

Simple random sampling

- Simple random sampling is the most common type of probability sampling. Each member of the population has an equal and independent opportunity to be part of the sample. By "equal opportunity" we mean that there is no bias that one person will be chosen rather than another, and by "independent opportunity" we mean that the choice of one member of the population does not bias the researcher either for or against the choice of another (Salkind, 2014: 186). A table of random numbers can be used to select the sample, or a computer can generate a random sample (Salkind, 2014: 187–190).

Systematic sampling

- Systematic sampling is when "every kth name on the list is chosen. The term 'kth' stands for a number between 0 and the size of the sample that you want to select" (Salkind, 2014: 190). Salkind (2014190) explains this practically by means of an example. If you want to select ten participants from a list of 50 people, you start by dividing the population by the size of the sample (50 divided by 10 is 5). The starting point can be selected in any manner, and from there on every fifth name is selected.

Cluster random sampling

- The researcher divides the population into convenient groups (clusters), and from there any number of participants is randomly selected from these groups. Clusters may be formed based on any common characteristic, for example a geographical area (Salkind, 2014: 192).

Stratified random sampling

- The researcher divides a population into sub-populations or strata, and then random samples from each of these strata are selected. The number of items is predetermined (Terre Blanche *et al.,* 2006: 136–138).

Non-probability Sampling

Non-probability sampling is based on the probability that any particular member of the population being chosen, is unknown. Non-probability sampling seems to be more absolute and subjective than probability sampling. Personal judgement plays an important role, therefore particular members of the population do not have an equal and independent chance of being selected (Salkind, 2014: 192). However, non-probability sampling is not so complicated, and might be more economical in terms of time and financial expenditure. The different non-probability sampling techniques are explored below.

Convenience sampling

- A convenience sample is chosen on the basis of availability: participants are selected because they are available (Salkind, 2014: 192). This may lead to some elements in the population being over-represented and others being under-represented.

Purposive or judged sampling

- In terms of this sampling method, the researcher selects the participants on the basis of the nature or aim of the research, or his/her judgement (Babbie & Mouton, 2011: 166). The researcher is interested in a specific type of subject, and s/he is able to exercise expert judgement.

Snowball sampling

- Snowball sampling involves asking the participants in a target population to provide information about other members of that population, whom they might know. This method is used when it is difficult to identify members of a specific target population (Babbie & Mouton, 2011: 167).

Quota sampling

- Participants are selected on the basis of specific characteristics. Therefore, quota sampling often starts with a matrix or table reflecting the characteristics of the target population. Once the matrix has been completed, the sample is taken from people who have all the characteristics required (Babbie & Mouton, 2011: 167).

Sampling Tips

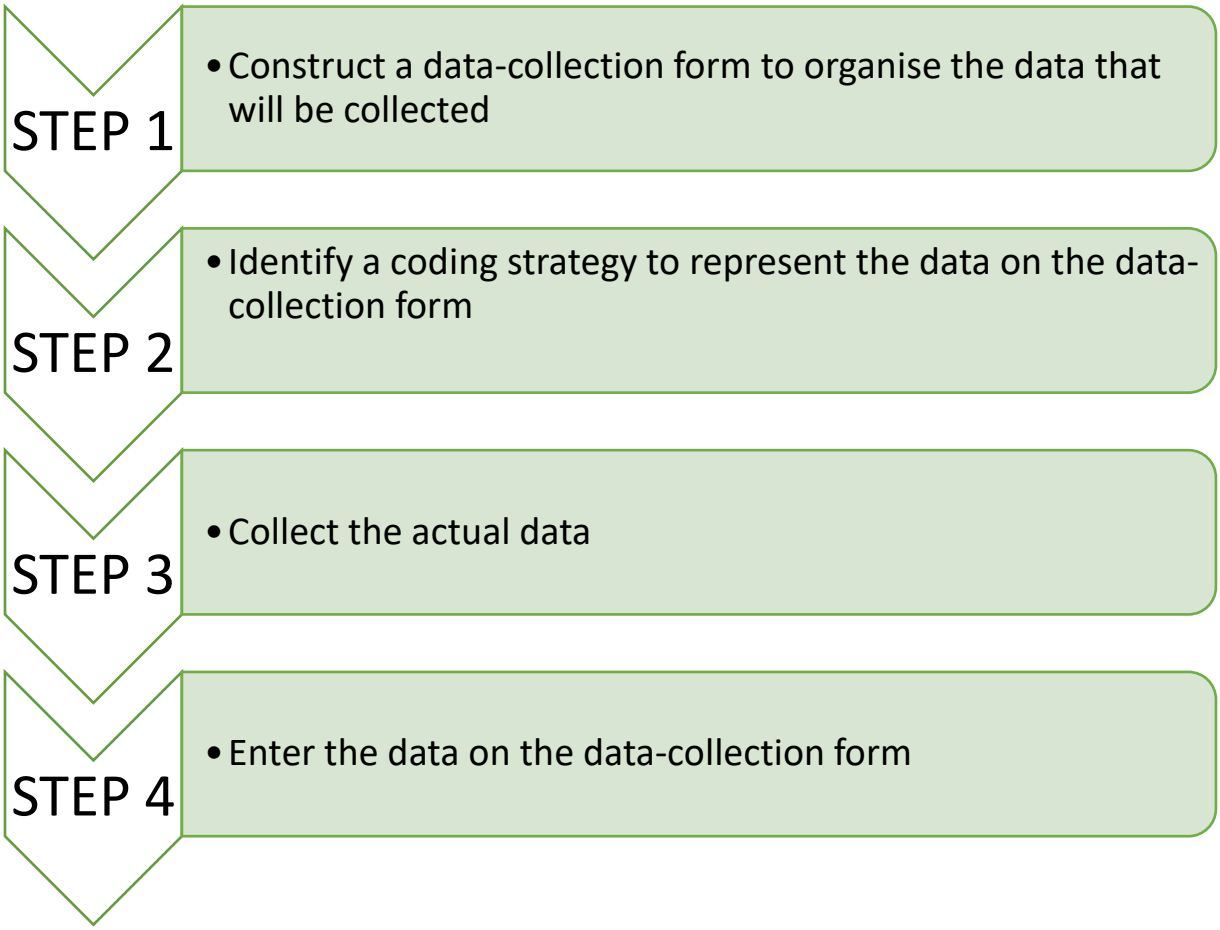
Consult Salkind (2014: 194) for a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of sampling.

The guidance of your supervisor or a research expert in deciding on the sampling method that will best fit your research, is invaluable.

4.6: Data-collection and Analysis Techniques

There are several methods you can use to collect data for your research. You can use either primary sources (in this case, you are involved in the collection of data) or secondary sources (another researcher has collected the data for a different research project). Data collection can be interactive or non-interactive. It can be done by means of observation or communication. The choice of data-collection and -analysis methods will depend on the approach and method you select for your research project. Make sure that your data analysis is consistent with the data collection (Roberts, 2004: 142–144; Franklin, 2012: 167–168).

According to Salkind (2014: 223), the data-collection process consists of four steps:



It is vital to have an appropriate method and sampling strategy which are designed to meet your research objectives. There is no absolute rule about how much data to collect, or by which method. You should discuss this with your supervisor in relation to your objectives. The amount of data to collect will vary according to whether you are only using one method, or a mixed-method approach.

You must also anticipate delays in participant response rates, and how that could potentially influence the amount of data you can collect within the specified time. You do not have to use more than one method of data collection. It all depends on your objectives and sampling strategy, but a very general indication for a single-method approach could be the following:

	Duration	How many	Data storage
In-depth interview	45–60 minutes	~4–6	Preferably recorded
In-depth interview	20–30 minutes	~6–8	Preferably recorded
Short interview	10–20 minutes	~8–10	Preferably recorded
Questionnaires		± 100	Stored in a file

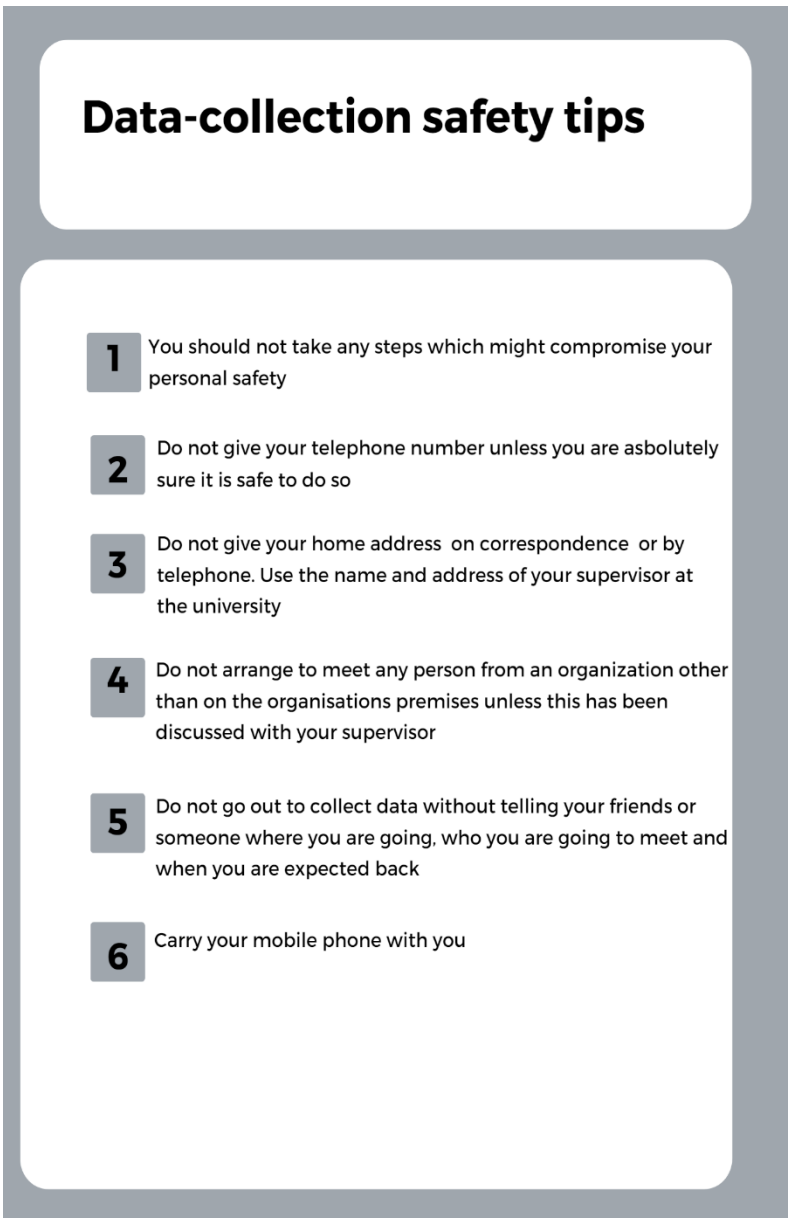
**You must show your supervisor sufficient evidence of data collection and -analysis during the supervision process and before you submit your dissertation, so that your data-collection method can be verified.

In terms of the **policy on research ethics**, before you start collecting data, you must obtain ethical clearance from the appropriate research ethics committee for all research involving human participants, data, animals, or other living or genetically modified organisms (Unisa, 2013). Ethics will be discussed further in Part C.

4.6.1: Data-collection Etiquette and Safety Tips

You must take several factors into consideration when contacting persons outside the university to collect your data. Remember: you are acting as a student representative of the department and the university (often, you will be the only contact a member of the public or an organisation has with the university), and you should therefore endeavour to act with the utmost professionalism, in order to maintain and enhance our reputation. It is also important that you remain safe during the data-collection process. Always ensure that you inform your supervisor, colleague or a loved one when

you are out collecting research data. It is crucial that you consider the safety tips and etiquette guidelines prescribed below.



4.7: Ethical Considerations

Unisa requires all students and supervisors to adhere to a moral code of ethics that will allow for honest and respectful research practices, hence ethical clearance must be obtained for all research projects before they can be conducted. Even if your research does not involve living participants (i.e., people or animals), as the researcher you must consider the wellbeing of all the stakeholders

who might be affected by the outcomes of the research process. This section of the research proposal must consider the issues and strategies of transparency, consent, confidentiality, anonymity, data storage, participant safety and the right of withdrawal. Please note: additional ethical reviews and permissions will be required if you conduct research within public/private schools, work with Unisa data and conduct research within the Department of Health and/or Environmental Sciences. These considerations are explored below:

Participant information sheet
▪ You must include a detailed scope of the nature of your study. This must describe the data-collection process, risk/benefits associated with participation, the implications for confidentiality/anonymity, and your or your supervisor's contact details
Consent
▪ Anyone under the age of 16, or other vulnerable groups such as the elderly or infirm, may be deemed incapable of giving informed consent. Therefore, you would need to obtain consent from their teachers and parents, or other responsible persons, in writing ▪ All participants must sign a form consenting to participate in the study ▪ All participants must sign a form consenting to be audio- and/or video-recorded
Confidentiality
▪ Reassure participants that any information you collect will be treated confidentially and will be used only for the purposes of your research, and will not be passed on to any third party, without their consent. However, data-collection techniques such as focus groups do not enable confidentiality to be assured. In such cases, participants need to be informed that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. This needs to be clarified and stated explicitly in your participant information sheet
Anonymity
▪ You must reassure participants that no names will be used, and the views of any one individual will not be identified. This needs to be clarified and stated explicitly in your covering letter and at the beginning of your questionnaire or interview. It has

implications for the way you code and present your results. You should refer to participants by using pseudonyms (e.g., Respondent 1, Organisation A)
Right to withdraw
▪ Participants have a right to withdraw from your study without fear of penalty ▪ Let participants know that they can stop cooperating at any stage, including by withdrawing information already supplied. This needs to be clarified and stated explicitly in your participant information sheet and at the beginning of your questionnaire or interview
Safety
▪ All participants have the right to safety
Research ethics within public/private schools
▪ If you conduct research at a government (public) school, you must obtain permission from the Department of Education to do so ▪ The process and application forms are available on the websites of the respective provincial departments of education ▪ In some instances, the Department of Education requires the university's research ethics approval, prior to granting its own approval. If this is the case, please specify it in your research ethics application form ▪ Your research ethics application must include a signed permission letter from the principal or appropriate gatekeeper (public and private schools) ▪ A parental consent and child assent form must also be included in the application
Unisa employee or student data in research
▪ If you need Unisa employees and/or students to participate in your research, you must obtain additional approval from Unisa's Research Permissions Sub-committee (RPSC) ▪ You first need to apply for CEMS research ethics approval, and then email the completed RPSC application form with your CEMS research ethics certificate to the CEMS advisor for sign-off

- Thereafter, the signed RPSC application forms can be submitted to the RPSC submission mailbox at rpsc@unisa.ac.za
- The RPSC review dates should be consulted, and the application forms completed. You can obtain the dates and application forms from Esambovt@unisa.ac.za
- Make sure that you state on your CEMS research ethics application form that you will apply for clearance from the RPSC

Research ethical approval with health/environmental data
• Please refer to the definition of health research in the *Unisa Policy on Research Ethics* to determine whether your study resorts under health research • Please also consult the *Ethics in Health Research Principles, Processes and Structures* (second edition) from the Department of Health (2015) • Health-related research requires research ethical approval from a research ethics committee that is registered with the Department of Health • The CEMS Ethics Research Committees (ERCs) are not registered committees, hence the application cannot be reviewed by them • Health-related research ethics applications can be submitted to the Research Ethics Advisor who will facilitate the process: Esambovt@unisa.ac.za • Remember: you may also need to obtain approval from the Department of Health. Such approval should be attached to your research ethics application form, when you apply

The main parts of the academic ethics framework that relates to the data-collection stage of your dissertation, are the policies on informed consent; confidentiality; anonymity; the right to withdraw; and participant safety. These policies will affect where and how you collect data, and what you do with the data afterwards. They will affect the design and wording of your questionnaire, how you conduct interviews, and any related letters to organisations.

4.7.1: Ethical Resources Templates

You must have a paper trail of documents testifying to ethical and sound research practices.

Templates	
Policy on Research Ethics_2024_Approved	Updated Policy on Research Ethics
Form_4_Amendment Application.doc	Request for amendment and/or extension form (**the form is to be used if the progress/amendment relates to a certificate that was issued manually**)
RPSC Application form_Oct2024.docx POLICY FOR CONDUCTING RESEA	Application to the Research Permission Sub-Committee (RPSC) to use Unisa institutional/student/staff data: RPSC application form (to be submitted only after ethics clearance certificate has been issued). Contact person: Ms Leonie Louw: louwlb@unisa.ac.za
Information sheet_qualitative	Participant Information Sheet and consent form – Qualitative studies
Information sheet_quantitative	Cover letter to an Online Anonymous Web-Based Survey
Consent to participate.doc	Informed consent template
UNISA RESEARCH ETHICS 3rd Party	Confidentiality agreement with third parties (statisticians, transcribers, field workers)
	Gatekeeper letters and requirements

gatekeeper research permission.pdf SOP_Gatekeepers_Guidelines.pdf	Refer to the SOP and annexures for instruction on how to engage gatekeepers (email template included) Use the application PDF fill in form to apply directly to gatekeepers for permission.

All outgoing letters should be shown to your supervisor before they are sent. Where necessary, your supervisor will supply you with a covering letter confirming that you are a current student and that your request for information is part of your dissertation.

4.8: Rigour in Research

This section of the proposal considers the authenticity and integrity of the research process, procedures, interpretations, and findings. You should provide a comprehensive account of the strategies that will be used to ensure the trustworthiness of your research findings. The different research approaches employ different terminologies to establish a criterion for trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in quantitative research embraces such notions as internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. The criteria for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research will hinge on the degree of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. As you write out this section of your proposal, keep in the mind the strategies that are required to achieve rigour and/or trustworthiness in your research study.

Qualitative		
Approach	**Defined**	**Strategy**
Credibility	Credibility refers to the value and believability of the findings, and involves two processes: conducting the research in a believable manner, and being able to demonstrate credibility (Houghton et al., 2013)	• Prolonged engagement and observation • Triangulation • Peer-debriefing • Member checking
Transferability	Transferability refers to whether or not particular findings can be transferred to another similar context or situation, while still preserving the meanings and inferences from the completed study (Houghton et al., 2013)	• Thick descriptions
Dependability	Dependability is often compared to the concept of reliability in quantitative research, and refers to how stable the data are (Houghton et al., 2013)	• Audit trail • Reflexivity
Confirmability	Confirmability refers to the neutrality and accuracy of the data (Tobin & Begley, 2004), and is closely linked to dependability. The processes for establishing both are similar (Houghton et al., 2013).	• Audit-trail • Reflexivity

Quantitative		
Approach	**Defined**	**Strategy**
Internal validity	Internal validity is defined as the degree to which study findings represent the truth	• Statistical analysis
External validity	The degree to which you can generalise the findings of the study to other people or another setting(s), is indicative of external validity	• Thick descriptions
Reliability	Reliability means consistency, or the degree to which a research instrument measures a given variable consistently, every time it is used under the same conditions, with the same subjects	• Statistical analysis
Objectivity	The objectivity of the study refers to the degree to which the study findings are void of researcher bias	• Statistical analysis

4.9: Limitations and Recommendations

The truth is, your research will face certain limitations, which confirm that your research study is limited, and that not everything is (or can be) done perfectly (Hofstee, 2006: 87). There are limitations in every research project. If you discuss these honestly, the readers can decide what their effect on the study is. Limitations are those areas "over which you have no control" (Roberts, 2004: 146–147). You must consider what challenges or shortcoming you might face during your research process. And, more importantly, you must suggest techniques, strategies or recommendations for how to overcome those shortcomings. You may include recommendations, which are your suggestions for how the work could be taken further (Hofstee, 2006: 159). You can include recommendations in your research proposal, but they usually form part of your actual dissertation or thesis.

4.10: Timeline and Budget

It is important to plan and manage the phases of your dissertation or thesis. The research proposal is a good time to start this process. At this stage, the timeline can be set out in broad terms (Horn, 2009: 61), to show that you know how to divide the research project into specific tasks, and how long you estimate each task will take. Be as realistic as possible, and keep in mind that unexpected events may be part of your research journey (Wentz, 2014: 171).

According to Unisa's *Procedures for master's and doctoral degrees* (Unisa, 2017), you must update the research plan, including target dates, in consultation with your supervisor. Locke *et al.* (2007: 155) write that "every research study has a price tag". The cost of the research may be indirect or direct, and it is important to estimate this during the proposal phase.

According to the *Policy for master's and doctoral degrees,* Unisa "will supply all master's and doctoral candidates with the necessary information regarding financial support, including bursaries" (Unisa, 2017a: 5). Information on bursaries for master's and doctoral studies is available on the College of Graduate Studies website under Bursaries: masters and doctoral studies.

4.11. Dissertation Outline

In your research proposal, you need to give an indication of the chapter outline of your intended dissertation or thesis. A possible outline of the study could be the following (Roberts, 2004: 130):

- Table of contents
- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Conceptual framework
- Chapter 3: Research methodology
- Chapter 4: Research results
- Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations
- Reference list
- Appendices

4.12: Reference List

The sources you consult are an extremely important component of your research proposal, and you must acknowledge them correctly. There are many referencing styles (Wentz, 2014: 172), but CEMS makes use of the Harvard and APA (7th edition) styles. Always use the referencing style that is prescribed for your specific subject discipline. Consult the Reference Management Tools Library Guide for links to these products and training material, and the CEMS Harvard Referencing Style Library Guide for the official referencing style of the college.

As stated earlier, various referencing software packages are available free of charge, and will assist you with adding in-text citations and compiling your reference list according to the required referencing style. Consult the Reference Management Tools Library Guide for links to these products and online training material. The CEMS personal librarians will be able to provide additional training, if needed. Unisa (2005) has a strict policy in respect of copyright, infringements, and plagiarism. Please familiarise yourself with this extremely important policy.

It is important to discuss the referencing style with your supervisor, to ensure that it is in line with the guidelines of the specific subject discipline.

Make sure that you read and abide by Unisa's (2005) policy regarding copyright infringement and plagiarism.

Section 5: Proposal Submission Guidelines

Draft proposal submission

You and your supervisor(s) need to agree on a draft proposal submission, for feedback. As a guide, we recommend that a minimum of (but not more than) three drafts be submitted throughout the year (i.e., May, July, and September).

Research proposal due date

The final proposal should be submitted on or before 15 November. This date may, however, differ from one department to the next. Consult the academic department's M&D coordinator for specific dates.

Proposal submission guideline

All submission must

- adhere to departmental requirements
- be submitted electronically to your supervisor(s) for feedback
- be free from technical or grammatical errors.

You have one academic year to compete the research proposal.

If the proposal is not accepted at the end of the year, you will not be allowed to continue in the programme.

After submission

Only once your proposal has been accepted and approved, will you be allowed to proceed to writing the thesis or dissertation.

PART D: ETHICS APPLICATION AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY

An Introduction to Ethics

Research ethics approval is mandatory for all types of research at Unisa, and self-exemption is not allowed.

All research must, in terms of the *Unisa policy on research ethics* (Unisa, 2013; Unisa 2018) be considered for ethical clearance before it may commence. This includes research involving human participants, animals, conceptual work, the use of secondary data, laboratory experiments and literature review studies. It is not for the candidate to decide whether his/her research requires ethical clearance.

It is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that s/he does not undertake research without receiving ethical approval from an appropriate Ethics Research Committee (ERC).

NB: Candidates must be able to include an appropriately issued ethical clearance certificate (confirming approval or exemption) when submitting a thesis or dissertation for examination purposes.

The term "ethics" in research originated from the philosophical study of moral principles. It explains the code of conduct that determines how research will be done. Professional bodies each draft their own code of ethics, to provide guidance where there is uncertainty. Even if your research does not involve living participants (humans or animals), the wellbeing of everybody who may be affected by the results of the research, must be considered. Both natural and social scientists working with people in their research, need to take ethics into account (Denicolo & Becker, 2012: 70–71). Strict ethical rules apply when your research involves human beings, animals, health-related data, secondary data and confidential or sensitive documents, and if chemicals or substances are used which could result in risk from a health and safety perspective. This is especially true when people are vulnerable, such as minors, the elderly, mentally impaired individuals, or incarcerated persons. The use of confidential and sensitive documents, as well as conducting research on private and business premises, are all subject to ethical guidelines. Ethical principles also apply to

the way you deal with research data and interpret your results.

All research must – in terms of Unisa's *Research ethics policy* (Unisa, 2013) – be considered for ethical clearance before it may commence. All research involving human participants, data, animals, or other living or genetically modified organisms must receive ethical clearance from an appropriate REC. If the research involves Unisa employees or students, permission to do the research must be obtained from the Senate Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Degrees and Commercialisation Committee, in terms of the *Policy on conducting research involving Unisa employees, students or data* (Unisa, 2016).

The ethical implications of the proposed research must be considered when you are formulating your research proposal. Ethical clearance may have to be formally obtained during this phase, but must be sought before you commence data-gathering. You will be guided by the college in this regard, in accordance with the procedures and processes set out by the relevant college REC. No ethical clearance will be granted *ex post facto*.

1: Research Ethics and Integrity in Practice

In an ideal world, research should always aim to "do good" (i.e., be beneficent) and "not do harm" (i.e., non-maleficent.) However, in adopting a more innovative approach, a more realistic goal for research is to try to do more good than harm, while avoiding unnecessary or disproportionate harm (see Singapore Statement – WCRI, 2016). Any harm caused by the research should be outweighed by the good that researchers hope to achieve. Thus, researchers should optimise the potential benefits of their research and try to minimise the risks of unwanted effects associated with the research (e.g., discomfort, social consequences, exploitation, inconvenience, and emotional burden). Below is a list of general ethical guidelines researchers must adhere to (Babbie & Mouton, 2011: 521–525; Van Zyl, 2014: 85–89):

- Voluntary participation
- Protection of participants from harm
- Anonymity and confidentiality (privacy)
- Subjects must never be deceived
- Debriefing (in cases where participants may need this).

Researchers have a responsibility towards those involved in, or affected by, their work. They should make reasonable efforts to anticipate and guard against the possibility of their research having undesirable or harmful consequences. They must be prepared to take responsibility and be held accountable for all aspects and consequences of their research activities. Researchers have a right, as well as an obligation, to refrain from undertaking or continuing any research that contravenes the university's *Policy on research ethics* (Unisa, 2013), violates the integrity and/or validity of research, and/or compromises their autonomy in research.

The policy aims to

- inform the researcher of his/her responsibilities in conducting ethical research
- clarify and promote adherence to all applicable procedures
- protect the rights of all stakeholders.

You are required to read the *Policy on research ethics* (Unisa, 2013) before applying for ethical clearance. As stated in the *Policy on academic integrity* (Unisa, 2017b), all research and innovation must be based on academic integrity, quality, and good practice. Academic integrity is defined as the meaningful and concerted effort to ensure concern for human dignity, honesty, trust, fairness, truthfulness, accuracy, respect and responsibility in research, teaching and community involvement. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

i. Plagiarism: This is defined as the appropriation of another's work – whether intentionally or unintentionally – without proper acknowledgement. In this context, misrepresentation generally means not acknowledging one's sources in a transparent manner. It is worthwhile to study the *Policy on copyright and plagiarism* (Unisa, 2005) before you start on your research proposal.

ii. Falsification of data/information: This refers to the intentional misrepresentation or alteration of any information, source, results, data, process, materials or citation, in the process of creating an academic output.

iii. Fabrication: This is related to falsification, and refers to the intentional invention of facts, results, or other information. An example of fabrication is creating results for surveys or interviews that never took place.

2. CEMS 2025 ETHICS AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY WORKSHOPS

January – December 2025

LEVEL ONE TRAINING	
11 February	**Workshop: Research Ethics Refresher Training: New Developments and Trends** • **Objective:** To provide participants with comprehensive insights and practical strategies for proficiently handling, organising, documenting, and preserving research data, ensuring data integrity, reproducibility, and compliance with ethical and regulatory standards throughout the research process. • **Target audience:** REC Reviewers and Administrators, Supervisors, Researchers and Postgraduate Students **Time:** 10:00 - 14:00 **Presented on MS Teams** **Registration link:** https://forms.office.com/r/gwyJ43RtFV
11 March	**Workshop: Ethical Data Management and Planning - Building Foundations for Integrity** • **Objective:** To provide participants with comprehensive insights and practical strategies for proficient handling, organising, documenting, and preserving research data, ensuring data integrity, reproducibility, and compliance with ethical and regulatory standards throughout the research process. • **Target audience:** Supervisors, Researchers and Postgraduate Students **Time:** 10:00 - 13:00 **Presented on MS Teams** **Registration link:** https://forms.office.com/r/z6m2DMuCqf

13 May	**Workshop: Ethical Authorship and Research Collaboration** • **Objective:** To delve into the ethics of authorship and collaboration, ensuring fair recognition of intellectual contributions, transparency in research partnerships, and the prevention of ethical violations such as plagiarism or authorship disputes. • **Target audience:** Supervisors, Researchers and Postgraduate Students
	Time: 10:00 - 13:00 **Presented on MS Teams** **Registration link:** https://forms.office.com/r/nnd8nxjKi4
26- 30 May	**UNISA Research and Innovation Week** **Objective:** Showcase cutting-edge research innovations across disciplines while critically engaging with the ethical considerations that arise and promoting responsible and inclusive research practices in both emerging and traditional fields. **Time:** TBC **Venue:** TBC **Registration link:** https://forms.office.com/r/z89HVaECfL
3 June	**Workshop: Research Ethics toolkit: for Supervisors & Researchers** • **Objective:** To empower and guide both supervisors and researchers in navigating complex ethical considerations, fostering a culture of responsible and ethical research conduct through comprehensive resources and practical tools. • **Target audience:** Supervisors and Researchers **Time:** 10:00 - 13:00 **Presented on MS Teams** **Registration link:** https://forms.office.com/r/3jhgXKjWRL

22 July	**Workshop: Research Integrity – Beyond Allegations** • **Objective:** Equip participants with the skills to manage and resolve research integrity breaches, ensuring fair, transparent, and efficient processes that comply with institutional and ethical policies while fostering a culture of accountability and integrity. • **Target audience:** REC Reviewers and Administrators, Supervisors, Researchers and Postgraduate Students **Time:** 10:00 - 13:00 **Presented on MS Teams** **Registration link:** https://forms.office.com/r/FB3WwJDwdx
12 August	**Workshop: Safeguarding Research Participants and Sites** • **Objective:** To equip researchers, ethics committee members, and research administrators with the knowledge and practical strategies to ensure the ethical and responsible protection of research participants and study sites. The focus will be on identifying potential risks, implementing measures to uphold participants' rights, privacy, and well-being, and safeguarding research sites from harm or misuse. Through case studies and discussions, participants will develop the skills to navigate ethical dilemmas, comply with regulatory frameworks, and foster trust and integrity in research practices. **Time:** 10:00 - 13:00 **Presented on MS Teams** **Registration link:** https://forms.office.com/r/9nNYCvi119

LEVEL TWO TRAINING	
19 March	Workshop: Online **TRREE training**: Introduction & Module 1 Time: 10:00 – 12:00 Presented on MS Teams Registration link: https://forms.office.com/r/SPjkGuSAKY
16 July	Workshop: Online **TRREE training**: Introduction & Module 1 Time: 10:00 – 12:00 Presented on MS Teams Registration link: https://forms.office.com/r/Kt21JTiM0J
19 February	Workshop: Online **EPIGEUM training**: Introduction & Module 1 Time: 10:00 – 12:00 Presented on MS Teams Registration link: https://forms.office.com/r/GCfrZh78pN
25 June	Workshop: Online **EPIGEUM training**: Introduction & Module 1 Time: 10:00 – 12:00 Presented on MS Teams Registration link: https://forms.office.com/r/e7SipYq75W
27 August	Workshop: Online **EPIGEUM training**: Introduction & Module 1 Time: 10:00 – 12:00 Presented on MS Teams Registration link: https://forms.office.com/r/2C2qfN1uh4
10 September	Workshop: Online **EPIGEUM Q&A and Troubleshooting** Time: 10:00 – 12:00 Presented on MS Teams Registration link: https://forms.office.com/r/ZAjNt58ywD
21 October	Workshop: Online **EPIGEUM training: Introduction & Module 1** Time: 10:00 – 12:00 Presented on MS Teams Registration link: https://forms.office.com/r/ezBz6yRjN4
12 November	Workshop: Online **EPIGEUM training: Introduction & Module 1** Time: 10:00 – 12:00 Presented on MS Teams Registration link: https://forms.office.com/r/vWsEvivZyJ
For more information on TRREE, Epigeum or Macquire research ethics and integrity training, please contact Ms Leonie Louw (louwlb@unisa.ac.za).	

AWARENESS RAISING WORKSHOP	
March (TBC)	**Roundtable discussion: TBC**
13 June	**Roundtable discussion: Ethical Oversight in Emerging Fields - From Genomics to Climate Science** **Time:** 09:00 - 11:00 **Presented on MS Teams** **Registration link**: https://forms.office.com/r/cfc2PPsTAu

WEBINAR SERIES	
April 2025	**Webinar Series: Research Ethics in the Age of AI** • **Objective:** The webinar series aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of the ethical challenges and opportunities associated with the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in research and academic practice. Designed to engage researchers, academics, and professionals, the series will foster critical discussions on pivotal topics such as the responsible use of AI tools, the evolving landscape of plagiarism in the AI era, the application of virtue ethics and Afrocentric perspectives to AI, and strategies for mitigating bias in AI deployment. Through these sessions, participants will gain actionable insights, ethical frameworks, and culturally nuanced perspectives to navigate the complex intersection of AI and research integrity, ensuring that AI is harnessed responsibly and equitably in diverse research contexts. • **Target audience:** Supervisors, Researchers and Postgraduate Students **Session outline:** • Session 1: Ethical Use of AI Tools In Research (08 April 2025) • Session 2: Postplagiarism - Myth or Future Direction (15 April 2025) • Session 3: AI Virtue Ethics and Afrocentric Views (22 April 2025) • Session 4: Addressing Bias in AI Use (29 April 2025) **Time:** 09:00 – 10:30 **Presented on MS Teams** **Registration link:** https://forms.office.com/r/9KPvBXsNsq

2: Ethics Application

All students are required to apply for ethical clearance before commencing with the data-collection process. To apply for ethical clearance, click on the following link: https://unisa.forms.ethicalreviewmanager.com/

****Enquiries:**

Research Ethics and Integrity Officer: Ms. Tanya Coetzee || coetzt@unisa.ac.za

General enquiries: Reapplications@unisa.ac.za

Ethics coordinator: Prof Vaola Sambo || esambovt@unisa.ac.za

3: Ethics Application System – YouTube Link

It is your responsibility as a student to apply for ethical clearance on the Ethics Application System. The following links will assist and guide you on how to use the online system for applications and amendments, etc.

Ethics Application System guideline links	
How to register	https://youtu.be/DOABmmbW0I4
Log in and work area explanation	https://youtu.be/3gOEdVGqUD4
Create a project	https://youtu.be/WCXJ3Dzde3U
How to fill in questions	https://youtu.be/5GRQAKBAsic
Supervisor manual	https://youtu.be/GMjWj_LfTuo
Referred back and changes	https://youtu.be/mqlvWL7YGFA

PART E: DISSERTATION, THESIS AND RESEARCH REPORT

Introduction: Dissertations, Theses and Research Reports

Your dissertation, thesis or research report is an opportunity for you to work independently, to conduct research into a particular topic, and demonstrate the analytical and evaluative skills which are the hallmarks of a postgraduate student.

1: Dissertation, Thesis and Research Report Structure

There is no absolute rule about the structure of a dissertation or the word length per chapter. It may not always be appropriate to follow the format below, and it depends on the type of dissertation you chose. You should discuss your structure with your supervisor. This is a suggested structure for a typical empirical research dissertation. All chapters should have an introduction at the beginning, and end with a link forward to the next chapter, by explaining what will be addressed in that upcoming chapter. Each chapter should be structured under numbered headings and subheadings. It is up to you to decide which headings and subheading to use, and how to number them.

The outline below offers an indication of what could be included in your chapters. It is by no means exhaustive, as it is impossible to give an exact list to suit every project. Please discuss the specific details of your dissertation with your supervisor.

- ✓ Cover page
- ✓ Acknowledgements
- ✓ Declaration
- ✓ Abstract
- ✓ Chapter 1: Introduction
- ✓ Chapter 2: Literature review
- ✓ Chapter 3: Research methodology
- ✓ Chapter 4: Findings
- ✓ Chapter 5: Discussion and conclusions
- ✓ References
- ✓ Appendices

There should be an introduction to each chapter, which links to the purpose and structure of the study. This lets the reader know what to expect in a chapter.

At the end of the Findings chapter, briefly summarise the main points from the review; re-emphasise your argument; refocus the research question, and then link this forward to the next chapter.

For more information on the structure, layout and technical components of the final dissertation or thesis, consult the M&D procedures on the College of Graduate Studies' website.

PART F: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

1: Academic Writing

Academic writing is different from other genres of writing, and you may find it somewhat of a challenge. Academic writing "has particular formalities, stylistic and professional idioms" (Franklin, 2012: 249). Effective academic writing also has a narrative aspect (Franklin, 2012: 253). Every aspect of the research proposal should be aligned with the research question and the research objectives. It is always good to revise and edit the entire document, before handing it in. According to the *Procedures for masters and doctoral studies* (Unisa, 2017), the supervisor should only draw the candidate's attention to linguistic errors, inadequately substantiated or poorly formulated statements, and incorrect referencing. It is your responsibility to improve these aspects.

To focus your readers' attention on a specific point you wish to make, consider using graphics (tables or figures). Keep in mind that the type of graphic you use in a specific circumstance should be appropriate, otherwise it might be more confusing than helpful (Emerson, 2009: 111).

Word processing programs (e.g., Microsoft Word) have functions to help you check your grammar and spelling. There are also formatting functions, which can create various levels of headings for inclusion in a table of contents.

You can also download typing assistant programs such as Grammerly to help you.

2: Style and Conventions of Academic Writing

In addition to the academic content, your work will be judged on the coherence of the argument you present, and the standard and style of your academic writing. For that reason, it is important to follow the general conventions of academic writing.

2.1: General Academic Style and Grammar

- ✓ Do not write in the first person singular – do not use "I". Maintain a consistent, formal academic style of writing throughout, namely the third person neutral. For example: "The researcher distributed the questionnaire …"; "The literature argues…" or "The findings indicate that ...".
- ✓ Direct quotations should appear in double inverted commas: "...". Use single inverted commas to emphasise a word or phrase. When using a direct quotation, supply the page number in your reference citation.
- ✓ Do not start a sentence with a numerical number (e.g., 36% of respondents reported...). Use words instead, no matter how large the number is (e.g., Thirty-six per cent of respondents reported typically watching sport on TV once or twice a week, and 45% on a more frequent basis). Alternatively, rephrase the sentence so that the number does not appear at the beginning.
- ✓ When using numbers in-text, the numbers "one" to "ten" are written as words, and from 11 onward, you can use the numerical number (e.g., Of the 20 managers interviewed, only seven …).
- ✓ When writing about percentages, either use the term "per cent" or the % symbol. Be consistent. Usually "per cent" is used in a sentence, and the symbol (%) where a number appears in brackets, for instance (36%).
- ✓ Each chapter should have an introduction to give a brief indication of its purpose and structure.
- ✓ Chapters should be broken down into sections and subsections with appropriate headings.
- ✓ Sections should be numbered in sequence according to the chapter (e.g., in the literature review chapter, the sections and subsections could be:

  2.1 Introduction

  2.2 Literature review

  2.2.1 XXX

  2.2.2 YYY

  2.3 etc.

- ✓ Further subsections may also be numbered but need not be numbered if there are too many subsections. You could, for instance start level 1 headings with **CAPS BOLD**, then for level 2 headings use **Sentence case bold**, then for level three headings, *Sentence case italics* (not bold). Make sure the reader can easily understand the structure and flow of each chapter.

2.2: Typing

Typing	
Font	Arial or Times New Roman
Font size	12 pt or 11 pt
Page numbering	Pages should be numbered sequentially, at the bottom of the page. The table of contents, abstract, declaration pages, list of abbreviations and acronyms, and the lists of tables and figures are all numbered in small Roman numerals (e.g., I, ii, iii, iv), and, starting from Chapter 1, the pages are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, …
Alignment	Justified
Margins	Top and bottom margin 2.54 cm Side margins: 3.1 cm

2.3: Tables, Charts and Pictorial Representations

- ✓ All tables should be numbered in sequence and start with the number of the chapter: for instance, Table 3.1, Table 3.2 (for tables in chapter 3), and Table 4.1, Table 4.2 (in chapter 4). Do not number them as Table 1, Table 2, Table 27, etc.
- ✓ All tables must have a title which reflects the content (e.g., Table 4.6: Relationship between gender and number of hours worked).
- ✓ Any other pictorial representations such as graphs, bar, and pie charts, etc., are figures and must be numbered, titled as you would do with tables. Label them Figure 3.1, Figure 3.2, Figure 4.2, and caption them as: Figure 4.5: Hours worked in an average week. Do not use titles such as: A graph to show … or A bar chart to show…
- ✓ In the text of the chapter, draw the reader's attention to the tables or figures, for instance by inserting, in brackets (see Table 4.3) or as part of your sentence: Figure 4.2 illustrates the…
- ✓ Do not just cut and paste your SPSS or Excel data output into your chapter and use that as a table.

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