

PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION AND EXAMINATION OF THESES AND DISSERTATIONS (2026)

Appointment and availability of examiners

When appointing examiners, supervisors should inform examiners that they will only receive an electronic copy of the thesis/dissertation, which they are welcome to print. Supervisors should also advise examiners when they can expect to receive the thesis/dissertation for examination. Examiners of doctoral dissertations should also be made aware of the possible dates for the oral examinations.

Supervisors should please confirm the availability of examiners in cases where examiners were appointed well in advance (not in the same year as submission) or where students have delayed the submission of their work (not in the same year as they submitted their intention to submit form).

Procedure for submitting a thesis or dissertation for examination

1. The supervisor must approach the proposed examiner informally to ascertain whether or not they are available for examining the work. The required **nomination form** for Master's students and doctoral candidates must be sent to fasscomm@sun.ac.za by the closing date (15 June 2026 for March/April 2027 graduation) for the agenda of the Higher Degrees and Research Committee meeting. After the nomination has been approved by the Higher Degrees and Research Committee, Faculty Board and Senate, the Postgraduate Examinations Office (PEO) manages the process of official nomination and appointment.
2. The student must inform the PEO (and their supervisor) of their intention to graduate by completing the prescribed **Intention to Submit form**. This form is available on the [HDRC webpage](#) and is accessible by students.
3. When the thesis/dissertation is ready for examination, all required documents must be packaged in a folder using the student's name and student number as the folder name, for example: Adam Smith (12345678). It can be shared with the Postgraduate Examinations Office (fasspeo@sun.ac.za) as a zip folder via email, via an institutional OneDrive link, or via file sharing systems such as WeTransfer.
4. The prescribed **declaration by the supervisor** stating whether they support the submission of the work must be emailed with the thesis/dissertation. No thesis/dissertation may be sent out for examination without the supervisor's consent. In addition, the declaration **must include the credit value (the thesis weight) and word count**. The declaration is available on the [HDRC webpage](#). This will be sent to examiners.
5. An electronic copy of the **ethics exemption declaration** OR the ethical clearance approval must be emailed with the thesis/dissertation. Ethical clearance is issued by the **Research Ethics Committee** after a student has successfully submitted an ethical clearance application via the online system. The **ethics exemption declaration** is available on the [HDRC webpage](#) and is only applicable for studies exempt from ethical clearance.
6. An electronic copy summary page of the Turnitin report, which shows the similarity percentage, must also be submitted. This will be sent to examiners.
7. A signed **Examination Declaration on AI Use** must be submitted. This will also be sent to examiners.

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8. The Postgraduate Examinations Office is responsible for:
 - sending the letter of appointment to the external examiners;
 - sending the thesis/dissertation to the *internal* and *external* examiners;
 - managing the examination process;
 - receiving the reports of all the examiners;
 - sending the examiners' reports of Master's candidates to departments for the calculation of the final mark;
 - dealing, in accordance with the prescribed procedures, with cases where serious differences have arisen between examiners of Master's candidates;
 - dealing, in accordance with the prescribed procedures, with cases where serious differences have arisen between examiners of doctoral candidates which the examination committee has been unable to resolve;
 - arranging the oral examinations of doctoral candidates; and
 - payment of external examiners.
9. Departments are responsible for recording the marks of Master's candidates.
10. The Faculty Administrator is responsible for recording the results of doctoral examinations.

Important links and resources

- Faculty policy documents and forms (for higher degree students and supervisors):
<https://arts.sun.ac.za/hdrc>
- Information relating to ethical clearance, meeting dates and online application:
<https://www.su.ac.za/en/research/research-development/integrity-ethics/research-ethics-committee-social-behavioural-and-education-research>
- Information relating to the submission of theses or dissertations on SUNScholar:
<https://www.su.ac.za/en/library/help/thesis-and-dissertation-submission>
- Institutional research-related policy documents, including responsible research conduct and plagiarism:
www.su.ac.za/en/research/research-development/policies-and-guidelines

Contact details of Postgraduate Examination Office

All queries about the examination process and procedures for higher degrees students should be directed to the Postgraduate Examinations Office via email (fasspeo@sun.ac.za).

DATES AND DEADLINES FOR THE EXAMINATION OF THESES AND DISSERTATIONS (2026)

The Postgraduate Examinations Office (PEO) manages the examination process for all higher degrees (MA and PhD) within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

In order to be eligible to graduate in March/April 2027, higher degree students must submit their thesis or dissertation for examination on or before a specific deadline date. These fixed dates coincide with the closing dates for the agendas of the Faculty's committee system and with the **deadlines of University Administration**.

IMPORTANT: All deadlines below should be regarded as absolute. Any thesis or dissertation received after the closing date will be held over for the next graduation cycle, which will require registration for an additional year of study.

DATE	ACTIVITY	MA	PhD
13 January	Higher Degrees and Research Committee (HDRC) agenda closes. Meeting date: 27 January (includes approval of PhD examination results).	X	X
25 February	Faculty Board meeting (for approving recommendations of HDRC; SENATE: 10 March).		
27 February	Last day for recording marks for Master's candidates.	X	
3 March	DEADLINE: Last day for uploading electronic version of thesis/dissertation to <u>SUNScholar</u> for March 2026 graduation.	X	X
23 – 27 March	Graduation ceremonies	X	X
24 March	Higher Degrees and Research Committee (HDRC) agenda closes. Meeting date: 7 April.	X	X
6 May	Faculty Board meeting (for approving recommendations of HDRC; SENATE: 9 June).		
12 May	STUDENT DEADLINE: Last day for submitting the form indicating a student's <u>intention to submit their thesis/dissertation</u> for examination in time for March/April 2027 graduation.	X	X
15 June	Higher Degrees and Research Committee (HDRC) agenda closes. Meeting date: 14 July.	X	X
	SUPERVISOR DEADLINE: Last opportunity for <u>nominating examiners</u> for Master's and Doctoral candidates for March/April 2027 Graduation.	X	X
12 August	Faculty Board meeting (for approving recommendations of HDRC; SENATE: 22 September).		
15 September	Higher Degrees and Research Committee (HDRC) agenda closes. Meeting date: 29 September	X	X

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DATE	ACTIVITY	MA	PhD
9 October	SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Last day for submitting PhD dissertations to the Postgraduate Examination Office for examination for March/April 2027 graduation. Late submissions will be held over for the following graduation cycle.		X
28 October	Faculty Board meeting (for approving recommendations of HDRC; SENATE: 10 November).		
30 October	SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Last day for submitting Master's theses to the Postgraduate Examination Office for examination for March/April 2027 graduation Late submissions will be held over for the following graduation cycle.	X	
23 November – 11 December	ORAL EXAMINATIONS for Doctoral candidates for March/April 2027 graduation.		X
February 2027	<i>The date for recording the marks for Master's candidates will probably be during the last week in February 2027.</i>	X	
February 2027	<i>The date for uploading electronic version of theses/dissertations to SUNScholar for the March/April 2027 graduation will only be available when the Calendar for 2027 is finalised.</i>	X	X
March/April 2027	Graduation ceremonies	X	X