



**MASTERS OF PHILOSOPHY
PALLIATIVE MEDICINE**



**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
PALLIATIVE MEDICINE**

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MPHIL IN PALLIATIVE MEDICINE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Masters of Philosophy in Palliative Medicine!

The programme leading to the MPhil in Palliative Medicine has been designed for experienced palliative care professionals including doctors, nurses, social workers and other disciplines who wish to gain expertise in research methods and to undertake palliative care research in an area of their interest. The programme has been designed as a distance-learning programme using the principles of adult learning introduced at residential learning blocks at the start of each module.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAMME

The MPhil Pall Med is a degree by coursework and research dissertation and aims to contribute to the evidence-base for palliative care in Africa.

3. DURATION OF THE PROGRAMME

The PG Diploma Pall Med from UCT or equivalent qualification from another university is an entrance requirement for the MPhil Pall Med. The curriculum outline is as follows:

- PPH7080H Advanced Palliative Care Research Methods
- PPH7048W Palliative Medicine minor dissertation

4. COURSE OUTLINE:

4.1 PPH7080H

The aim of this course is to equip palliative care professionals with knowledge and understanding of research methods and to impart the skills needed to conduct independent research. It covers the topics of palliative care research methods, quantitative methodology and analysis, biostatistics and epidemiology, qualitative methodology and analysis, research ethics and scientific writing skills.

These topics are explored through interactive workshops, focused readings, and online discussions with web-based support of learning.

DP requirements: Completion and attendance of all coursework commitments.

Assessment: Assessment is conducted on the basis of 5 written assignments, and research ethics approval of the research proposal. A pass mark of 50% is required in each component of the assessment. The external examiner has the authority to allocate final marks.

4.2 PPH7048W (Palliative Medicine minor dissertation)

The minor dissertation, prepared under supervision, must be about 25 000 words in length and must be on a topic in palliative medicine. Having submitted their research proposals for approval and obtained formal ethics approval where necessary, candidates proceed with their research, analyse the results and write up the dissertation.

Assessment: External examination of the minor dissertation. Master's degree candidates must be able to reflect critically on theory and its application. They must be able to deal with complex issues systematically and creatively, to design and critically appraise research, to make sound judgements using the data and information at their disposal, and to communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

5. TEACHING METHODS

There are two **5 day periods** of interactive workshops presented at the University of Cape Town on the campus of the Faculty of Health Sciences. **Attendance at these face-to-face sessions are compulsory.**

During the year, teaching material will be posted onto the Vula website for Palliative medicine. Current palliative care and research methods publications will be posted as essential reading material and additional references are also identified.

Internet access is a requirement for participation on the course. Students will be assigned a research supervisor during semester 1 and will be asked to sign a memorandum of understanding with their supervisor that guides work plans and interaction with the supervisor to facilitate timely completion of the research dissertation.

6. REGISTRATION

Students should take responsibility for their own registration for each consecutive year until graduation.

- 6.1 The departmental form should be completed & submitted with a copy of your CV, transcripts & ID or passport and submitted to naomi.fray@uct.ac.za by 30 September prior to the academic year of registration
- 6.2 Please refer to the link below and complete the online application:
http://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/apply/forms/pg_application_form.pdf
- 6.3 Please refer to the Directions for Postgraduate Applicants
http://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/apply/forms/pg_applicant_guide.pdf for information and code tables needed to complete the online application form.

Please ensure that these forms are completed timeously and submitted with supporting documents to avoid unnecessary delays in processing your application

7. BURSARIES/ FUNDING

We will keep you updated of bursary opportunities.

8. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

8.1 **SADC Students:**

For the purpose of fees - Citizens and Permanent Residents of the SADC countries are treated the same as South African Residents. (Note that study visa regulations, etc. do still apply). You will be allowed to register only if your tuition fees and administration fees are paid in full. The international term fee is over and above the local tuition fees.

8.2 **NON-SADC (i.e. Rest of the World) Students:**

Non-SADC International Students are required to pay an International Fee over and above the local course fees for tuition and are billed in South African Rands (ZAR). You will be allowed to register only if your tuition fees; international term and administration fees are paid in full. The international fee & international term fee is over and above the local tuition fees.

You may apply for a Faculty International Student Bursary (FISB) towards the international fee. Application forms will be emailed on request.

9. **PLAGIARISM**

What is Plagiarism?

Whenever you do written work you must differentiate between your own ideas and those, which you did not think of yourself, but which you have read elsewhere - in particular you must distinguish what you have written from what you are quoting.

You commit plagiarism when in any written work you use another person's words, ideas or opinions without acknowledging them as being from that other person. You do this when you copy the work word-by-word (verbatim); or submit someone else's work in a slightly altered form (such as changing a word with one meaning to another word with the same meaning); and you do not acknowledge the borrowing in a way that shows from whom or where you took the words, ideas or reasoning.

You must provide references whenever you quote (use the exact words), paraphrase (use the ideas of another person, in your own words) or summarise (use the main points of another's opinions theories or data).

It does not matter how much of the other person's work you use (whether it is one sentence or a whole section), or whether you do it unintentionally or on purpose; if you present the work as your own without acknowledging that person, you are committing theft. Because of this, plagiarism is regarded as a very serious offence and carries heavy penalties.

Even if another student gives you permission to use one of his or her past assignments to hand in as your own, you are not allowed to do it. It is another form of plagiarism.

While academic staff must teach you about systems of referencing, and how to avoid plagiarising, you too need to take responsibility for your own academic career.

9.1 Referencing Conventions

The responsibility is on your lecturer to ensure that you are (or become) familiar with, and observe, one of the internationally recognised guides to scholarly conventions on presentation, documentation of sources and referencing. It is your responsibility to question any part of this that you do not understand, to apply the rules, and to be aware of the consequences of plagiarism.

There are many ways of referencing, and the University has not set one way as preferable to another. The Writing Centre, however, recommends one of the following three forms: the Harvard system, Vancouver system, Modern Language Association (MLA) or Footnoting. PG students submitting assignments for the Dip Pall Med and MPhil Pall Med and the dissertation towards the MPhil Pall Med should follow the **Vancouver** referencing system.

The Health Sciences library website has information on referencing styles at

<http://www.medical.lib.uct.ac.za/plagiarism-and-referencing-styles>

and provide a summary in the following 2 documents:

- Harvard referencing style
- Vancouver referencing style

You may refer to the following websites for further information:

<http://library.soton.ac.uk/referencing/vancouver>

http://www.medical.lib.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/42/healthscienceslibraryguide2016.pdf

9.2 Consequences of plagiarising

By committing plagiarism you will get zero for the plagiarised work, and may fail the course. In addition, the matter must be referred to the Vice-Chancellor or nominee for possible disciplinary jurisdiction and procedures (DJP1.1) taken against you. This may be that you are asked to leave the course and will not be eligible to enrol at UCT for any other course.

The subject of plagiarism, and how to avoid it, will be discussed at the beginning of the programme and at points along the way.

10. SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE

The research supervisor is required to complete a report of satisfactory performance of the MPhil student to allow for progress to the next year. Students are required to submit a progress report at the end of each year to the research supervisor for review by the postgraduate committee.

11. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Formal assessment:

Assignments are marked by internal staff and moderated by the external examiner.

The research dissertation is submitted to 2 external examiners for marking.

12. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

This programme is CPD accredited for each consecutive year of study.

13. EXAMINATIONS

There are no examinations for the MPhil Pall Med

14. GRADUATION

Complete the online graduation reply form by mid- October and indicate via 'Student Self Service' whether or not you will be attending your graduation ceremony. You must do this, even though you may still be awaiting your results, or cannot attend your graduation ceremony.

- If you are unable to attend your graduation ceremony, you will graduate *in absentia*. It is essential that you complete and return the Graduation reply form and indicate via the 'Student Self Service' that you will not be present at your ceremony.
- If you indicate on the reply form and the 'Student Self Service' that you wish to attend and then, for whatever reason, cannot attend the ceremony, you will still graduate, but *in absentia*. Up until 1 December you may change your attendance status on 'Student Self Service'.
- After this date, please contact Student Records directly to inform them of this change.
- Liaise with the Student Records Office to arrange collection of your certificate or to provide an address so that it may be posted. If you have not received your degree/diploma certificate in the post by mid-January, please follow up with the Student Records Office directly.

Enquiries: Tel: 021 650-4292 • Fax: 021 650-5986

Email: reg-records@uct.ac.za

15. DISSERTATION

(i) Standard

The MPhil Pall Med is primarily a coursework degree. The mini-dissertation thus needs to be distinguished from that required for a Masters by thesis alone.

The purpose of the dissertation is to show that the candidate is able to carry out supervised research, has a grasp of some of the research tools in the chosen field and is familiar with the more important publications on the subject. It should also demonstrate that the candidate is able to communicate results and evaluate their own work and that of others critically.

Length should be a minimum of 20-25,000 words about 80-100 pages, A4 size, double spaced, with headings and subheadings of text, plus: Title, Abstract, Acknowledgements, Tables, Figures, and relevant Appendices.

The dissertation should have a limited focus, e.g. on one research question or audit standard rather than many. The candidate will need to work closely with their supervisor to focus the question to make the project manageable with limited resources. The research could be one part of a larger research project.

The literature review does not necessarily have to be comprehensive as long as it covers relevant and up to date publications in the field and shows that the candidate is aware of the important publications.

The standard aimed for should be that of a "publishable" article in a peer-reviewed journal. An article intended for submission to a peer-reviewed journal is a required outcome of the course.

(ii) Contribution to degree

The thesis contributes a notional 50% to the degree weighting. However, the dissertation and coursework have to be passed independently, i.e. the coursework mark cannot compensate for a fail on the dissertation, and vice versa.

"In the case of a degree by coursework and dissertation, the degree shall be awarded with distinction where a candidate:

- (a) obtains an average mark of 75% for both components; and
- (b) obtains at least 70% for each component"

(Faculty of Health Sciences Handbook).

(iii) Subject

The mini-dissertation can be done in any area of palliative care in which coursework has been done. There may be limitations on choice of a subject or even subject area due to lack of a suitable supervisor.

A systematic review (as in Cochrane review), using the formal methods of such review, is acceptable. Audit of a particular aspect of palliative care in the candidate's own work place is also acceptable as a mini-dissertation. The choice of topic will be identified by the learners themselves.

The audit cycle will have the following phases: setting a standard; measuring practice against that standard; identifying what needs changing and why; planning the change needed; implementing the change; modifying the standard if necessary; re-assessing against the standard.

(iv) Methods

The research should involve collection of data using quantitative or qualitative methods or a combination of the two (or formal review methods if systematic review). This may be data from interviewing or examining research participants or data from official publications, records, registration or notification systems or other databases.

(v) Prior work

Candidates are encouraged to arrive with a topic of interest and a research proposal if possible. The principle is that a substantial part of the research should be completed during the degree period under supervision. Where data have already been collected, analysis and write up of these data could form the basis of the dissertation, at the discretion of supervisor and course convenor.

(vi) Timing

The earlier the research protocol development is commenced, the better. The research proposal and application to conduct research should be submitted by June of the first year of the MPhil degree. This allows for data collection to be completed during the second half of year one and data analysis and dissertation write-up to be completed in year 2. Candidates will not be re-registered beyond 5 years from first registration for the degree and are required to register and pay for each year until completion of the dissertation.

(vii) Supervisors

A supervisor will be allocated to the student from UCT once the draft research proposal has been reviewed by the course convenor. The course convenor will approach an experienced researcher with a request to supervise the candidate in the topic of their chosen research. Candidates are encouraged to seek out a co-supervisor, who should ideally be knowledgeable in the content and methods of the subject area, if candidates reside outside of Cape Town. Candidates should feel free to approach faculty members for guidance. Additional statistics guidance may be needed - candidates should approach the faculty who teach biostatistics in the first instance.

The primary supervisor can be based outside the university - in such a case, an internal supervisor will be required as well, to serve as a guide and link to university procedures. Primary supervisors retain responsibilities to the candidate and the university, and their willingness and ability to meet these responsibilities until the dissertation process is complete, i.e. graduation, need to be established by the candidate in advance.

One arrangement that candidates may reach with supervisors is an undertaking to publish the study, if of appropriate standard, with the supervisor as a co-author. This will usually require work beyond the graduation date. Such arrangements should be discussed in advance.

(viii) Departmental approval for research proposal

Faculty approval for a research proposal must be sought by submitting a copy of the proposal as soon as it is ready to the Chairman of the School of Public Health and Family Medicine research committee.

(ix) Ethics approval for research proposal

This should be sought by submitting a proposal to the Human Research Ethics Committee, using the Ethics Committee application form. Many sections of this form may not be applicable, and should be marked "N/A".

If the proposal is later substantially changed in a way that has ethical implications, fresh approval of the change needs to be sought.

No data should be collected before a letter is received from the UCT Human Research Ethics Committee with approval. Such letters should be kept by the candidate and included in the dissertation appendices.

(x) Submission of dissertation

Form D8 (Intention to Submit) - this form must be signed by your supervisor and is usually required a month before submission of the dissertation. Please upload the D8 and an up-to-date abstract via PeopleSoft as soon as you possibly can (form uploaded to VULA).

- Digital Submission (Guidelines for the uploading of the Intention to Submit form and dissertation) uploaded to VULA
- Form D15 (IP Assessment form) - to be completed and digitally uploaded with the Intention to Submit form
- Turnitin documents - your dissertation must be submitted on Turnitin and the Turnitin Summary Report, checked and signed by your supervisor, must be submitted via PeopleSoft

Please note the naming convention for the abstract must be:

Abstract-open.pdf

And the dissertation must be:

Thesis.pdf

Supervisors will be asked by the Faculty Officer to submit a letter supporting submission. This letter should be supplied by the primary supervisor. If the primary supervisor is external, the internal supervisor must be kept informed at every stage of the process.

(xi) Examiners

Three examiners are nominated by the supervisor, two of which are invited to examine, and one held as an alternate. At least one of the examiners should be from an international academic institution. These nominations are circulated to the Postgraduate Programmes Committee for approval.

The candidate's supervisor may not examine the dissertation. The candidate may not be informed of the identity of the examiners. After the outcome of the dissertation has been finalised, the examiners' identities are made known, if the examiners have indicated that they do not object to this.

It is the primary supervisor's responsibility to submit names of potential examiners to the Faculty Officer, when the candidate is ready to submit.

The examiners will be sent a note describing the standard required, including the contribution of the dissertation to the degree as a whole. Examiners are asked to respond within 6 weeks of receiving the dissertation and students may be required to complete corrections following examiners comments.

(xii) Publication

Candidates are not obliged to publish their research. However, where research subjects have contributed time, effort or resources, failure to meet dissemination or publication commitments made in the Ethics section of the research protocol or on a consent form, can be regarded as unethical. Reporting or dissemination commitments should be met as soon as possible after the research is completed. Publication commitment will usually extend well beyond graduation.

Likelihood of being able to meet such commitments should be taken into account when preparing the protocol and consent form. Supervisors should be approached to advise during preparation for publication and should be included as co-authors.

A draft article intended for submission to a peer-reviewed journal is a required outcome of the course.

(xiii) Language and writing

Clear, grammatically correct English is essential. Candidates who may have difficulties are encouraged to seek help from the writing support facilities on main campus. Supervisors are not required to do detailed editing nor correction of spelling, grammar or style. They may refer candidates elsewhere for this.

(xiv) Layout & style

As long as the thesis is readable and internally consistent, any of a number of styles is acceptable.

It is suggested that candidates look at previous examples of Master's theses in the library for appealing layouts. Master's dissertations are archived in the African Studies section of Jagger library on main campus, and may also be available as loan copies in the main Jagger library. A search will need to be done to obtain a list of titles and authors. This search can be done at the Health Sciences library, using search words (e.g. thesis, health/health sciences, etc.). The librarian should be asked for assistance. It should be noted that dissertations as part of a coursework Masters (MPhil or MPH) are a relatively new phenomenon, from approximately 1997 onwards. Recommended format includes the following Chapter headings: Introduction, Literature review, Aim and objectives, Methods, Results, Discussion (including discussion of limitations of the study), Conclusion and recommendations.

(xv) Co-authors on publication

This can include anyone who has made a substantial intellectual or academic contribution to the study. Measures of this contribution include time spent at planning meetings, time spent supervising analysis, time spent reviewing results and editing the thesis.

16. THE FOLLOWING FORMS SHOULD BE COMPLETED WHEN SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL FOR DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW (DRC) AND ETHICS (HREC)

- **FHS013** New Protocol Application form (check for updates)
<http://www.health.uct.ac.za/fhs/research/humanethics/forms>
- **Form D1 + D3:** Approval of Study proposal
- **Form MoU ACA47B:** Memorandum of Understanding (1ST Year)
- **Form MoU ACA48:** Progress Report (Returning students)
- **Form R2:** PG Student Ethics Application Checklist (VULA)

THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE POSTGRADUATE OFFICE AFTER ETHICS APPROVAL

- Form D1: Approval of study proposal
- Letter of approval from Ethics Committee (HREC)
- Protocol
- Protocol Summary (synopsis)

THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE POSTGRADUATE OFFICE WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR DISSERTATION AND READY TO SUBMIT

According to the Apha - please contact the following administrator in the Faculty Office at least one month prior to your intention to submit and they will forward the relevant forms and advise you of the process to follow for digital submission.

- **A-G** -Dianne Pryce dianne.pryce@uct.ac.za
- **H-N** - Crystal August crystal.august@uct.ac.za
- **O-Z** - Jackie Cogill jackie.cogill@uct.ac.za