



PhD in Social Science with Ageing and Development

Qualification Code:
1CC R18 L901V

The global rapid growth of the older-person population, particularly in the developing world, has created unprecedented demographic changes and subsequent challenges. Likewise, the ageing of individuals and populations in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and their emergent livelihood situations present key questions that African nations must begin to address. Societies need to understand the dynamics and implications of individual and population ageing, and governments have to develop policy responses to enhance the well-being and capacity of older people at present and in the future. The particular need for higher-degree research on ageing in SSA arises as a result of three coinciding factors:

Firstly, current demographic projections show that SSA has the fastest growing absolute numbers of older populations globally. While the share of persons aged 60 years and over in SSA's populations will remain lower than in other parts of the world (the share will rise from 5.4% at present to 10.6% by 2050), the absolute number of older persons will rise fourfold, from 46 million to 166 million, over the same period.

Secondly, population ageing in Africa is occurring in a context of it being (population-wise) the youngest continent and of pervasive economic strain and rapid social change, which raises concerns about the heightened precariousness of older persons in terms of poverty and social exclusion, in particular.

Thirdly, older people make critical contributions to the welfare of younger generations in their families and communities – most prominently as carers of children or grandchildren including those diseased or orphaned by Aids. We need to better understand that they are potentially powerful agents for inclusive development and to harness a demographic dividend.

About the PhD

The lack of evidence and knowledge on which to build a nuanced understanding of ageing in SSA and for policy and programmatic impact points to the vital need for enhanced research on ageing, poverty, and development in SSA (a) to act as a catalyst to promote and inform policy development and (b) to enable Africa to gain a fuller understanding of the ageing-related social processes that shape the development of its individuals, families, and societies. This research-oriented PhD in Social Science (Ageing and Development) is a first in Africa and aims to explore issues of individual and population ageing in relation to development in (South) Africa from multidisciplinary perspectives. The purpose is to equip students from a variety of disciplines to develop a comprehensive understanding of the causes, dynamics, and implications of individual and societal ageing in order for them to promote the well-being and quality of life of older people, meet older people's present and projected needs, enable older people to remain in their own communities for as long as possible, and apply new knowledge to plan and implement appropriate interventions, activities, and proposals in complex contexts such as HIV/Aids, poverty, and changing family dynamics.



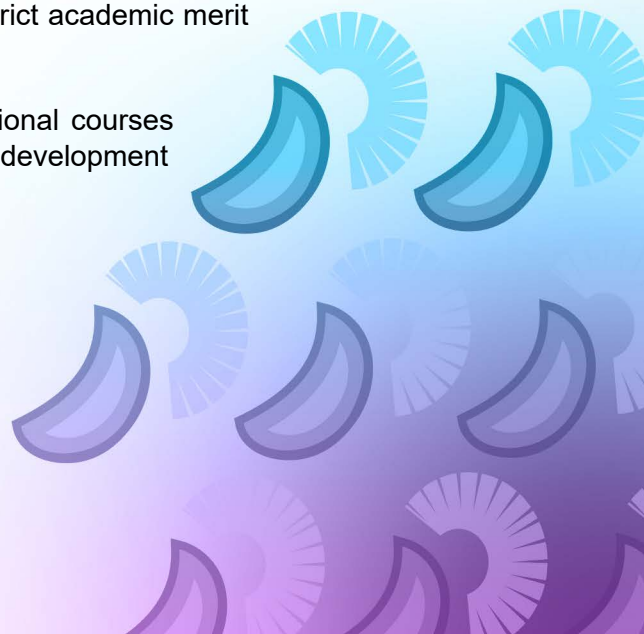
Entry requirements

As a minimum, applicants should hold the equivalent of the following South African qualifications:

A master's degree with a mark of at least 65% (or an equivalent qualification as approved by Senate) in any discipline related to social and human development and/or management in different contexts across multiple levels (individual, familial, societal, and/or policy/programmatic environments).

For international applicants, an evaluation certificate issued by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) must be submitted if a previous qualification was obtained in a foreign country. Applications are assessed on strict academic merit and requirements.

In addition to a master's degree, any proven record of additional courses related to the field of individual and/or population ageing and development will be considered.



Selection procedure

Candidates who fulfil the entry criteria may receive provisional acceptance based on the capacity available. A further selection process before final approval includes:

- Preparation of a draft research proposal
- Selection interviews
- Successful completion of a short learning programme in research methodology



Programme requirements

All admitted students must attend an introductory and orientation meeting and at least two workshops on topics related to broad theoretical frameworks and interdisciplinary research, which will be offered online. PhD students are required to submit a research proposal that meets the required standard for title registration within six months of registration. Should students be accepted for the PhD, they may not change their programme during the academic year. Should students wish to change their programme, they would have to formally cancel their studies and reapply for admission to the other programme the following year. In this case, acceptance is not guaranteed, and the application will undergo the prescribed selection process.



Supervision

Over the course of this three- to four-year programme, a group supervision model will be followed: students will receive supervision as a group from a multidisciplinary team and collegial input from other PhD students.



Programme outcomes

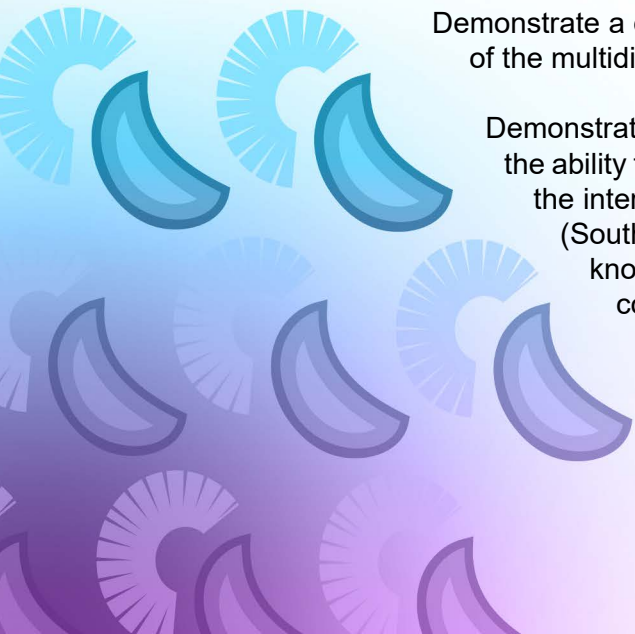
Present a thesis that constitutes original research that meets national and international standards and contributes to the national and international advancement of knowledge and understanding of ageing and its developmental aspects on the individual, familial, intra/intergenerational, communal, or broader societal levels from a social sciences perspective in the African context.

Show mastery of the literature and state of research.

Demonstrate a depth of knowledge and high levels of theoretical understanding of the multidisciplinary field of Gerontology.

Demonstrate intellectual independence and advanced research skills through the ability to apply sophisticated knowledge and research methodologies to the interdisciplinary solution of complex challenges of Ageing Studies in (South) Africa and the competence to integrate and apply theoretical knowledge and research findings in relevant local and global contexts, with the potential to inform policy and practice.

Demonstrate research leadership within a field or across disciplines, including the ability to plan, resource, manage, and optimise all aspects of research processes in complex and unpredictable contexts.



Demonstrate high levels of responsibility, self-reflexivity, and adaptability concerning the determination of socially relevant issues and research needs in, as well as ethical implications for, (South) Africa. Furthermore, demonstrate the ability to relate and mainstream these issues to international contexts.



Contact

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