Guidelines for Completing an ACA47 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

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Context

The memorandum of understanding is a formal agreement between a postgraduate student (Masters or Doctoral) and their supervisor regarding their expectations of each other, and the research requirements for completion of the degree.   The intention is for students and supervisors to discuss and agree on a number of important issues at the point of registration. While this document may seem daunting to you, it is important that you complete each section with care. In addition to helping you plan your Masters or Doctoral Research programme, the MOU will be referred to in the case of any conflict or

dispute arising during the course of your study at UCT. Common disputes includes issues over who funds research, authorship, intellectual property rights, insufficient contact time, dissatisfaction with a student's progress and lack of timely feedback from supervisors.

In addition to the actual outline of the research proposal, students and supervisors should agree on **the milestones** that need to be achieved so that students can graduate in the expected time for a Masters (2 years) or Doctoral (3 years) degree. This is important, as postgraduate funding for students is limited to 2 years for a Masters, and 3 years for a Doctoral degree. Your supervisor will also refer to the milestones that were set, when **assessing your academic progress** at the end of the year.

Students and supervisors need to have a discussion on what **funding** the postgraduate student has to support their living expenses and tuition fees, prior to embarking on the degree. There should also be a clear understanding of what financial resources are available to cover the **cost of research** incurred by the student.

It is also important to agree on a number of important **intellectual property issues**, prior to commencement of the degree, including authorship, use of third party data, plans for management of research data, and compliance with UCT's intellectual policy guidelines.

It is essential that students and supervisor discuss whether the proposed research requires **ethical approval, permits to collect material, and biosafety approval prior to commencement of any research**. It is both the supervisor's and student's responsibility to develop an ethically sound research proposal, ensure approval by the relevant committee's and ensure ongoing compliance. This includes communicating to the relevant research ethics committee any personnel amendments such as who assumes direct responsibility for the study during periods of absence of the supervisor or student. Please note that ethics approval has to be in place prior to any data collection.

The rest of this document is intended to assist you with the completion of each section of the MOU.

Note: This form is a writable pdf; and different fields will expand depending on what options you select.

A: Student and Supervisor details

A1-A2: This section captures important details for the student, including contact information.

A3: Jointly awarded or co-badged degrees are normally between a foreign University and UCT. A formal agreement has to be in place if this option is selected. The following URL provide a reference for information on jointly awarded and co-badged degrees: https://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/about/policies/Joint_Degrees_Policy.pdf

A4: It is important to acknowledge that you know what the word limit is of your Masters dissertation or Doctoral thesis. Special permission has to be obtained from your Dean if you exceed this word limit.

A5: It is important to list your academic qualifications so that they can be taken into account when planning your research. This is particularly important for students who are embarking on multi-disciplinary projects so that supervisors are aware of a student's strengths and where they may have limited knowledge.

A6: You need to provide a provisional **title** for your proposed research topic. This can be adjusted at a later stage. A provisional **research proposal** should be accompany this completed MOU. The research proposal is an important check to make sure that the proposed project is a coherent piece of research that is suitable for the level of the degree (i.e. Masters or PhD). You should seek from input from your supervisor while drafting your research proposal; it does not have to be long and 1-3 pgs is sufficient. The research proposal is also important as it lays the foundation for a discussion on what support will be needed for the student to conduct their research successfully, both in terms of access to equipment and facilities, as well as funding. The final version of your research proposal should be approved by your supervisor, and, where it is faculty practice, should be either attached to the MOU (if registration is manual), or uploaded to PeopleSoft (if registration is being done via on-line approval).

A7: The full contact details and staff number of the supervisor (and co-supervisors) should be recorded.

It is UCT's policy that the primary supervisor is typically a member of the UCT staff, appointed by the Faculty Board. The primary supervisor should have appropriate expertise in the area of research available to supervise the candidate's research, and normally (but not necessarily) be based in the same department as the student.

The supervising UCT staff member may be a GOB-funded or soft-funded staff member on academic conditions of service. If soft funded, the staff member should be on at least a T2 contract funded through the anticipated period of student supervision, and must have a line of accountability to a Head of Department. Senior Scholar appointees may undertake primary supervision as they are employed by UCT on T2 contracts. Adjunct academic appointees, emeritus rankings and retirees may not be sole supervisors. Honorary appointments and Postdoctoral Fellows are generally excluded from primary supervision, but may co-supervise in which case it should be stipulated in their appointment conditions and/or MoU. In rare cases it may be appropriate for a member of PASS staff to supervise or co-supervise a student, in which case motivation must be given and permission sought from their appropriate line manager (normally the Head of Department) and Dean (or in some cases Executive Director). In the rare event that the Primary supervisor is external to UCT then an 'Administrative supervisor' needs to be nominated and indicated in the university administrative systems. Motivation to the appropriate Board and HOD must be given and approval sought.

The primary supervisor is responsible for the largest proportion of academic supervision and ensuring that the student is given guidance about the nature of research, developing the proposal, the standard expected, facilitating any scientific and ethics approvals and reporting required, planning of the research

programme, literature and sources, attendance at taught classes, requisite techniques (including arranging for instruction where necessary), issues of plagiarism and compliance with UCT's rules and administrative requirements including assisting with approving progress codes each year, and approving the Memorandum of Understanding, and Progress and Planned Activity forms.

B: Supervisor's Expectation and commitments (to be completed by the supervisor, in discussion with the student)

This section should include a detailed description of the milestones that the Supervisor expects the student to achieve so that they graduate within the expected time for a Masters (2 years) and Doctoral (3 years) degree.

The supervisor should also indicate what their expectations are for the student in terms of taking part in activities in the Department and the University, including the attendance of seminars, and teaching in the Department.

It is important the Supervisor indicates what their style of supervision is, and how often they are available to meet with students.

Supervisors should inform students if they plan to take Study and Research Leave, and what arrangements are in place for supervision while they are away.If the primary supervisor is unable to fulfil their role in full, arrangements are normally made with the co-supervisor/s to assist in this role, and with the HOD's knowledge.

C: Expectations and plans of the student (C1 to be completed by the student, C2 by supervisor, and C3-C6 by student after discussion with the supervisor)

C1: This pdf writable MOU template is used by all Faculties at UCT and tries to cater for a wide range of research projects.   Some of these sections will not suit some students and supervisors. A short note of "not applicable" should be indicated if this is the case.

This section is for the student to clearly describe what sort of support they expect from their supervisor and the Department during their Masters/Doctoral degree. It is important to record here whether there are any special requirements for the research to succeed, for example, if access to specialized equipment or facilities is required for the research programme. A plan should be given on how access will be arranged, if it is currently not in place.

A suggested template is given for the agreed plan and broad timetable. This should be edited taking into account the requirements of the student and their degree programme. The intention of this section is to put a plan in place to ensure that the student submits their thesis in the expected time for their degree. In subsequent years, this plan will be referred to in reporting on progress made during the Masters/Doctoral degree each year.

C2: A supervisor can insert any additional comments that might be relevant.

C3: Logistics. This section should be completed if the student has any special requirements for their proposed research, for example support for field work, or support needed if consulting communities, storing data, access to high performance computing.

C4: Employment and teaching commitments at UCT by the student

A student and supervisor should agree on whether any teaching or employment opportunities are offered to the student, and what mentorship or support will be available to the student, as well as what the expectations of their duties, and payment will be.

C5: Skills required, courses and classes

It is important for a supervisor to discuss whether any specific skills are required for a student to master during the duration of a research masters and doctorate. For example, a supervisor might recommend that a student should attend a particular course, or acquire specific skills to succeed in their proposed research. A student and supervisor should agree on who will cover the costs of these courses.

C6: Student's leave arrangement

It is important to complete this section so that there is no misunderstanding between the student and supervisor on leave taken during the masters/doctoral degree.

The section on the student's presence on campus is to get an idea of whether the student will be on campus daily (and therefore requires space and facilities to do their research), or whether they will be working off-campus, coming to campus on a weekly or monthly basis to consult with their supervisor. Some students are employed full-time while doing their masters/doctoral degree, and thus might only be on campus once a month. The intention is for the student and supervisor to agree on what is reasonable for the proposed research degree.

D: Funding

The intention of this section is for the students and supervisor to discuss what funding has been secured to i) support the student during their studies, and ii) to cover the running expenses of the proposed research. It is important to have this discussion prior to the commencement of the research so that students and supervisors are 100% clear on who is covering the costs of a student's living expenses (including fees) and research.

Students should be proactive in applying for bursaries/scholarships to support their living expenses, by applying to UCT, and external grant agencies. Supervisors should indicate here if they have a student scholarships available as part of their research grants, including the value. It is important to note the expected dates of disbursement, and what the requirements are for renewal of scholarship funding. This can be referred to during the course of the year if the payment of scholarships is late, and the supervisor should be proactive in assisting the student in resolving why payment of their bursary/scholarship is late.

It is very important that supervisors and students have a frank discussion on how much it will cost to cover the proposed research, and how these costs will be covered. In some cases, a supervisor might have a research grant with a specified budget to cover the expenses. In other cases, there might not be any research grants available, and the student might have to cover their own expenses. In either case, the student and supervisor should agree, prior to registration, on where funding to cover research expenses is coming from, and whether it is sufficient to cover the cost of research.

E: Authorship, Third Party Data and Intellectual Property Issues

E1: Authorship

Whilst this might seem a low priority at the outset of your Masters/Doctoral research project, it is very important that issues of authorship and intellectual property are agreed on, prior to research commencing. Disputes over authorship occur frequently and it is important to have agreements in place. The MOU requires that you note that you are aware of UCT's guidelines on authorship. However it is strongly recommend that you set up a meeting with your supervisor to specifically go through the UCT authorship policy; ensure that your supervisor is aware of the policy and that the core "governing **ethical value** underpinning this guideline is **justice**, made manifest by processes that foster the **principles of fairness, transparency and reasonableness".**

Available faculty dispute resolution mechanisms should also be discussed.

Traditions regarding authorship order and allocation differ from discipline to discipline, and there is no 'one size fits all' advice. However the UCT authorship policy require **significant or substantial contribution** meaning that "**1) each author should have participated in formulating the research problem, or analysing and interpreting the data or have made other substantial scholarly effort or a combination of these; and/or 2) have participated in writing the paper; and 3) should have approved the final version for publication and be prepared to defend the publication against criticisms".**

There is space for you to specify any particular agreement that you have with your supervisor on the order of authorship, and whom will be the corresponding author. This may be difficult to do at the beginning of a project and hence it is advised that the regular progress meetings set up to discuss your research, include ongoing discussions about authorship.

E2: Third party data

In some cases, researchers make use of data from other research groups, and approval might be required, or there might be restraints on the publication of the data. You should indicate NO if you are not using data from third parties. You should indicate YES, if you are using data from third parties, and should make a note if permission has been obtained, and whether there are specific restraints that comes with the use of this data.

E3: Research Data Management Policy

UCT approved a Research Data Management (RDM) policy in 2018 which commits research at UCT to meet the FAIR principle to enable effective sharing of data that directly substantiate published research findings. This means that data generated by students (from Masters' level upwards), and staff at UCT

should be findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable (FAIR).   This is of course subject to, that does not exceed legitimate limitations on data availability, such as privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual property rights. Further information on the RDM policy, and support services to assist you with data storage and data management are available online at:

http://www.researchsupport.uct.ac.za/managing-research-data

Other resources include

Further information on UCT's Research Data Management Policy

Guidelines on how to prepare your research data management plan

E4: UCT Intellectual Property (IP) Policy

This section has been included in the MOU (or PPA) to make sure that you are fully aware of UCT's policy on Intellectual Property (IP), before you start your research. A more detailed overview and guidelines on the policy governing IP at UCT can be found here.

Your research has the potential to generate intellectual products or property (IP) that has commercial value. This IP includes inventions, discoveries and other developments of a technical nature, as well as tangible research property, such as drawings, designs and diagrams, biological organisms and software. Patents are usually drawn up to protect this IP. It is important to familiarize yourself with UCT's policy on IP prior to starting your research, so that you know what to do when you make a discovery, and what the arrangements are for who owns and benefits from the IP.

You should have a conversation with your supervisor about any IP that might be generated during your studies. You need to check whether the funding of your research comes with any strings attached, for eg, has the IP been assigned to the funder? If there are no obligations to the funder of your research, then with a few exceptions, any IP arising from research conducted at UCT is owned by UCT.

Read the UCT Inventor's Guide if you would like more information on how the process of generating a patent to protect the IP generated in your research works.

F: Ethics in Research and Biosafety

Your research may require a permit to collect material, or ethical approval to conduct the research.

It is essential that you have permits in place to collect material, and approval for ethics and biosafety prior to starting your research.

You should carefully check what your Faculty's requirements are for ethical approval. Additional information on UCT policies on ethics and biosafety, as well as application forms, can been found at the UCT Research Support Hub.

G: Presentation of research findings and submission of the thesis/dissertation

G1: It may seem like a long way away, but it is important that you understand what is required when you write up and submit your Masters dissertation of Doctoral thesis for examination. Students need to be very careful that they do not plagiarize any work that they submit for examination, as this can lead to immediate failure and disciplinary action.

G2: This section also includes instructions on how to submit your thesis, and to load a copy onto the libraries OpenUCT site. All Masters dissertations and Doctoral theses, are published on the OpenUCT site so that they are freely available for other researchers to read.

In rare cases, there might be an embargo on you loading your dissertation/thesis to the OpenUCT site, and you should check with your supervisor whether any such restrictions apply to the research that you are going to be doing. Good reasons for why there might be a short delay in publishing include, for example, further time required to protect the intellectual property generated in your research, or there may be restraints due confidentiality of the data you used from a 3rd party (see Section E2) in your research.

If this applies to you, you will need to apply to your Faculty (Masters students) or the Doctoral Degrees Board (PhD students) for permission to delay the publication of your dissertation or thesis.

More information on what reasons are acceptable to UCT, and how to access MSc001 (Masters) or DB008 (Doctoral) forms to apply for delayed publication, can be found here.

G3: Finally, many UCT students are funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF). We have an agreement that all students who are recipients of NRF scholarships will notify the NRF where their dissertation/theses are lodged within a month of graduation. You need to acknowledge that you are aware of this rule, and that you may have to repay your scholarship if you don't submit the link from OpenUCT (where your dissertation/thesis is lodged) to them.

H: Social Media

Improper use of social media platforms can be very damaging to the reputation of students, staff and the University. This section is for a student to acknowledge that they have read UCT's guidelines on the use of social media and will use it responsibly.

I: Dispute resolution procedures and communication channel

A student-supervisor relationship, like any human relationship, can run into trouble. This is why it is important that you describe what respective expectations are in the MOU. If a dispute does arise over what you have agreed, or a break down occurs in your relationship, try and resolve it as soon as possible. It is usually best to resolve disputes informally, and then to follow more formal methods if this is unsuccessful.

You need to read UCT's guidelines on the conflict resolution process so that you know what to do if any disputes arise. You should also check with your supervisor whether there are any additional Faculty specific guidelines.

J: Approval by all parties, including HOD/Dean/Dean's nominee

Everyone should sign or approve this document (via PeopleSoft) once it has been completed.

In the Faculty of Science, Course Work Masters students should print out a hard copy of the MOU, and after signing it, forward it to their supervisor and HOD for approval. The research proposal should be attached, as well as any permits for ethics or collection of materials.

Research Masters and Doctoral students should upload the completed document to PeopleSoft, together with their Research Proposal, where it will be approved on-line. All permits for ethics or collection of materials should also be uploaded to PeopleSoft.

The approved MOU will be referred to when considering your progress at the end of the year, and if any disputes arise.

Saving your ACA47a MOU

Please remember to save your completed ACA47a MOU with the following file name, before uploading it to PeopleSoft. This will make subsequent administration a lot easier for the staff in the Faculty office.

Student number_Student surname; for example MDGANN004_Midgley_MOU 2019.

These draft guidelines were originally written by Prof Nicola Illing and adopted by the Board for Graduate Studies on 13 November 2019.