

How to approach grievances as a Stellenbosch University postgraduate student

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Importance of a student-supervisor memorandum of understanding

It is so important that the postgraduate student-supervisor relationship goes well, and this is why we encourage you as SU postgraduate to be proactive by having a discussion with your supervisor(s) regarding expectations, setting boundaries, and so forth at the start of your research journey, when signing your **Memorandum of Understanding** (MoU) with your supervisor(s). It is a compulsory process at Stellenbosch University to sign an MoU with your supervisor(s). Check with your department if they have a department-specific MoU.

If things do go wrong, and after efforts to resolve matters with your supervisor(s) directly are unsuccessful and you remain unhappy about your supervisor(s), academic department or the university administration, you can address such matters as follows:

Academic issues

If a postgraduate student-supervisor matter relates to poor supervisor feedback, or unexplained absences of your supervisor, etc., since these are performance areas, they are managed by the line of responsibility within the academic department. Try to resolve your concern with your academic supervisor first. Failing this, contact your head of department, your vice-dean for research or the dean of your faculty. Find their contact details in this document.

Authorship disputes

Contact the Office for Research Integrity and Ethics (ORIE) situated in the Division for Research Development (DRD) if you are, for example, experiencing a student-supervisor authorship dispute.

The ORIE is responsible for the **Policy for Responsible Research Conduct**. Reported cases of deviation from this policy are investigated by the Research Integrity Officers and escalated accordingly. The ORIE is also responsible for the management and support of SU Research Ethics Committees, when ethics approval is required for work involving humans, animals and the environment (e.g. biohazardous organisms, GMOs and Engineered Nano material). Please forward any complaints to integrity@sun.ac.za or alternatively contact Winston Beukes wabeukes@sun.ac.za or Clarissa Robertson cgraham@sun.ac.za for more information on ORIE functions. Access to the procedure for the investigation of allegations of breach of research norms and standards is available on the DRD website under **Policies and Procedures**.

Administrative issues

Contact your departmental or faculty administrator first. If you need further assistance, contact the Postgraduate Office (3rd Floor, Room 3018, Krotoa Building, Ryneveld Street, Stellenbosch).

Email: postgraduate@sun.ac.za

Non-academic issues

If the grievance is about allegations of harassment, unfair discrimination, etc., then the matter should be brought to the attention of the **Equality Unit**. See their website to lodge a **complaint** or email them to lodge an unofficial complaint via unfair@sun.ac.za.

If all these structures fail, then students and/or staff can take matters to SU's **Ombud**.

AgriSciences

www.agric.sun.ac.za/

Dean

Prof Danie Brink

db@sun.ac.za

Dean's Personal Assistant

Ms Karin Vergeer

Tel: 021 808 4792; ccav@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Teaching and Learning

Prof Maret du Toit

Tel: 021 808 3772; mdt@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies

Prof Kennedy Dzama

Tel: 021 808 4740; kdzama@sun.ac.za

Faculty Manager

Dr Michael-John Freeborough

Tel: 021 808 4802; mfree@sun.ac.za

Faculty Administrator

Mr Erik van Zyl

Centre for Student Administration

Tel: 021 808 9111; erik@sun.ac.za

Postgraduate Registration

PhD - Mr Erik van Zyl; erik@sun.ac.za

PG Diplomas, Honours and Master's - Ms Cheryl Nieuwoudt; cn2@sun.ac.za

Arts and Social Sciences

www.sun.ac.za/arts

Dean

Prof Anthony Leysens
ajl2@sun.ac.za

Dean's Personal Assistant

Ms Liesl van Kerwel
Tel: 021 808 2138; lek@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Research

Prof Lindy Heinecken
Tel: 021 808 2095; lindy@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Teaching and Learning

Prof Vasti Roodt
Tel: 021 808 2103; vroodt@sun.ac.za

Faculty Manager

Mr Pieter Janse van Rensburg
Tel: 021 808 3848; pjrvr@sun.ac.za

Postgraduate Registration

PhD - Ms Cheryl Richardson; cherylr@sun.ac.za
Master's - Ms Jabu Nxumalo; jabs@sun.ac.za
Master of Philosophy and PG Diplomas - Ms Winifred Fourie; wf1@sun.ac.za
Honours - Ms Karla Koopstad; karlak@sun.ac.za
PG Diplomas (monitoring and evaluation) - Mr Pasquin Petrus; ppetrus@sun.ac.za

Economic and Management Sciences

www.sun.ac.za/english/faculty/economy/

Dean

Prof Ingrid Woolard
deanems@sun.ac.za

Dean's Personal Assistant

Ms Tanja Malan
Tel: 021 808 9564; tanja@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Research, Postgraduate Affairs, and Internationalisation

Prof Michael Graham
Tel: 021 918 4261; michael.graham@usb.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Teaching and Learning

Prof Ronel du Preez-Snyman Tel: 021 808 9562; rdp@sun.ac.za

Faculty Director

Mr MJ Brooks
Tel: 021 808 2078; mjbrooks@sun.ac.za

Postgraduate Registration

PhD - Ms Lauren Delport; laurend@sun.ac.za
PG Diplomas, Honours and Master's - registrarems@sun.ac.za
SU Business School (USB) programmes - admissions@usb.ac.za

Education

www.sun.ac.za/education/

Dean

Prof Mbulungeni Madiba
madiba@sun.ac.za

Dean's Personal Assistant

Ms Chantal Newman
Tel: 021 808 2258; cnew@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies

Prof Liezel Frick
Tel: 021 808 3807; blf@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Teaching and Learning

Prof Michael le Cordeur
Tel: 021 808 2265; mlecorde@sun.ac.za

Faculty Manager

Mr Robert van Staden
Tel: 021 808 3960; rwvs@sun.ac.za

Faculty Administrator

Ms Euné Louwrens
Centre for Student Administration Tel: 021 808 9111; eel@sun.ac.za

Postgraduate Registration

PhD - Ms Euné Louwrens; eel@sun.ac.za
PG Diplomas, Honours and Masters - Ms Carmen Jordaan; cdj@sun.ac.za

Engineering

www.eng.sun.ac.za

Dean (on sabbatical)

Direct enquiries to engdean@sun.ac.za

Dean's Personal Assistant

Ms Marilie Oberholzer

Tel: 021 808 9320; marilie@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Research and Industry Liaison

Prof Corne Schutte

Tel: 021 808 3617; corne@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Teaching and Quality Assurance

Prof Celeste Viljoen

Tel: 021 808 4444; engvdteach@sun.ac.za

Faculty Director

Mr Enzo D'Aguanno

Tel: 021 808 4986; vsd@sun.ac.za

Postgraduate Coordinator

Ms Portia Adonis

Tel: 021 808 4203; portiaadonis@sun.ac.za

Faculty Administrator

Ms Nicole Hartzenburg

Tel: 021 808 4835; nicolepa@sun.ac.za

Postgraduate Registration

PhD - Ms Nicole Hartzenburg; nicolepa@sun.ac.za

PG Diploma and Master's - Ms Wilna Wessels; wilnaw@sun.ac.za

Law

www.sun.ac.za/law

Dean

Prof Nicola Smit
nsmit@sun.ac.za

Dean's Personal Assistant

Ms Yolandi Filander
Tel: 021 808 4853; yolandi@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Learning and Teaching

Prof Richard Stevens
Tel: 021 808 3779; rastev@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Research and Internationalisation

Prof Juanita Pienaar
Tel: 021 808 3199; jmp@sun.ac.za

Faculty Manager

Ms Karin Wiss
Tel: 021 808 3780; karinwiss@sun.ac.za

Faculty Administrator

Mr Shirle Cornelissen
Tel: 021 808 4850; shirle@sun.ac.za

Postgraduate Registration

PG Diplomas, LLM and LLD - Mr Shirle Cornelissen; shirle@sun.ac.za

Medicine and Health Sciences

www.sun.ac.za/health

Dean

Prof Elmi Muller
deanfhs@sun.ac.za

Dean's Personal Assistant

Ms Pearl Pretorius
Tel: 021 938 9104; pearl@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Research and Internationalisation

Prof Nico Gey van Pittius
Tel: 021 938 9098; researchfhs@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Teaching and Learning

Prof Karin Baatjes
Tel: 021 938 9035; educationfmhs@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Clinical Services and Social Impact

Dr Therese Fish
Tel: 021 938 9096; clinicalsocialfmhs@sun.ac.za

Senior Director: Business Management

Mr Eben Mouton
Tel: 021 938 9437; ebenm@sun.ac.za

Doctoral Office

Dr Liela Groenewald
Tel: 021 938 9778; tyg-phd@sun.ac.za

Postgraduate Registration

All Programmes - Ms Megan Jantjies; mjantjies@sun.ac.za
Ms Vanessa Joseph; vbj@sun.ac.za

All Programmes (Stellenbosch campus) - Ms Anthea Roberts; anthear@sun.ac.za

Theology

www.sun.ac.za/theology

Dean

Prof Reginald Nel
rwnel@sun.ac.za

Dean's Personal Assistant

Ms Marieke Brand
Tel: 021 808 2142; mariekeb@sun.ac.za

Research Development and Support

Prof Len Hansen
Tel: 021 808 3260; ldhansen@sun.ac.za

Faculty Manager

Ms Escois Benjamin
Tel: 021 808 9041; ebenjamin@sun.ac.za

Faculty Administrator

Mr Shirle Cornelissen
Tel: 021 808 4850; shirle@sun.ac.za

Postgraduate Registration

Postgraduate Diploma in Theology, Master's, and PhD
Mr Shirle Cornelissen; shirle@sun.ac.za

Science

www.sun.ac.za/science

Dean

Prof Burtram Fielding
bfielding@sun.ac.za

Dean's Personal Assistant

Ms Suzette Els
Tel: 021 808 3072; se@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Research and Postgraduate Students

Prof Frederick Scholtz
Tel: 021 808 3383; fgs@sun.ac.za

Administration Officer: Research and Postgraduate Students

Ms Hayley du Plessis
Tel: 021 808 3063; duplessisha@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Teaching and Learning

Prof Ingrid Rewitzky
Tel: 021 808 3282; rewitzky@sun.ac.za

Faculty Manager

Ms Mariëtta van den Worm
Tel: 021 808 3760; mvdworm@sun.ac.za

Faculty Administrator

Ms Shivvon Ruiters
Tel: 021 808 4832; shivvon@sun.ac.za

Postgraduate Registration

Honours and Master's - Ms Lauren Onraët; laureno@sun.ac.za
PhD - Ms Shivvon Ruiters; shivvon@sun.ac.za

Military Science

www.sun.ac.za/english/faculty/milscience

Dean

Prof Maashuntha Samuel Tshehla
samuel@sun.ac.za

Dean's Personal Assistant

Liesle van Rensburg-Galant
Tel: 022 702 3003/3019; liesleg@sun.ac.za

Vice-Dean: Teaching & Learning, Community Interaction

Dr Fankie Monama
Tel: 022 702 3121; fankie@sun.ac.za

Vice Dean: Human Resource and Social Impact

Lt Col (Dr) Michelle Nel
Tel: 022 702 3094; michellen@sun.ac.za

Director: Faculty Management

Mr Andries Fokkens
Tel: 022 702 3094; fokkens@sun.ac.za

Faculty Officer

Ms Maria C Basson
Tel: 022 702 3050; basson71@sun.ac.za

Faculty Administrator

All Postgraduate programmes - Jean-Marie McLachlan
Tel: 022 702 3017; jeanniem@sun.ac.za