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5. Master’s programme in Research Psychology: Research and Mini-Thesis

   ➢ Requirements and format
   ➢ Examination
   ➢ Timetable (preliminary) for 2015
   ➢ Proposed topics for Research
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1. PROGRAMME PHILOSOPHY, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the programme is to:

- train and qualify researchers who are committed to the use of social research in a responsible manner and for the benefit of all communities of South Africa;
- stimulate and promote research as an academic, occupational and community enterprise;
- encourage the production of politically and socially meaningful knowledge that is preventative rather than curative in its approach to social problems;
- develop and foster skills in critical thinking, research design and research analysis;
- develop and foster informed understandings of various paradigms in social science research;
- promote a culture of research and knowledge production, especially in students of historically disadvantaged communities.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the course are to:

- develop and enhance critical understandings of traditional and new research paradigms, methodologies, methods, techniques, analytic tools;
- stimulate an appreciation of different methodologies and debates in researching social reality;
- develop students by exposing them to multiple paradigms, methodologies, methods, and techniques;
- engage students at a reflective level as well as a practical level through different stages of the research process;
- promote a culture of research and knowledge production; extending student’s ability to discourse critically in and about research and the production of knowledge.

In addition, it is expected that students will, at the end of the course, be able to: show an adequate and critical understanding of the course content; science; appreciate the different research methodologies and analytic tools in psychology and social studies in general.
## 2. TEACHING STAFF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAMES</th>
<th>HIGHEST PSYCHOLOGY QUALIFICATION</th>
<th>CONTACT DETAILS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Kelvin Mwaba</td>
<td>PhD (Registered Research Psychologist)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kmwaba@uwc.ac.za">kmwaba@uwc.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(021) 959-2839/2453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Shazly Savahl</td>
<td>PhD (Registered Research Psychologist)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ssavahl@uwc.ac.za">ssavahl@uwc.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(021) 959-2826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Michelle Andipatin</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mandipatin@uwc.ac.za">mandipatin@uwc.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(021) 959-2454/2453/2283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Athena Pedro</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aspedro@uwc.ac.za">aspedro@uwc.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(021) 959-2825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Maria Florence</td>
<td>M.A. (Research Psychology)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mflorence@uwc.ac.za">mflorence@uwc.ac.za</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Serena Isaacs</td>
<td>M.A. (Research Psychology)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sisaacs@uwc.ac.za">sisaacs@uwc.ac.za</a></td>
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### 2.1. SENIOR ACADEMIC OFFICER

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<tr>
<td>Ms. Thelma Fennie</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS Management (MPhil), BA Psych (Hons); Education (Primary Dipl); Administration Management (Dipl), Personnel Management (Dipl).</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tfennie@uwc.ac.za">tfennie@uwc.ac.za</a></td>
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3. MASTER’S PROGRAMME IN RESEARCH PSYCHOLOGY: CURRICULUM

3.1 Introduction

- This full-time ONLY programme must be completed within 1 year. This year entails: (a) compulsory core coursework, and skills training and practical research activities, and (b) a presentation of a thesis proposal, as well as a completed supervised mini-thesis.
- In the 2nd year, students should enter into a research internship at an approved training institution to enable them to register as Research Psychologists at the HPCSA. Internships are not guaranteed and do not form part of the degree programme. Students have to apply for these positions at research institutions and while the programme lecturers will assist them with finding positions, the ultimate responsibility is not that of the programme or the department.

3.2 Structure

The academic curriculum is structured in terms of the following modules:

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<th>Module</th>
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The total number of credits for the M.A (Research Psychology) degree is 240 (120 for the course-work and 120 for the Mini-thesis component).

3.3 OUTLINE OF MODULES

3.3.1 Philosophical and Social Issues (PSY 831)

(a) Specific aims

The specific aims of the course are to ensure that students understand and are able to reflect on:

- The assumptions and foundational issues of Psychology and linking them to issues in ontology and epistemology, and history of psychological research.
- The nature and development of psychological concepts, propositions, hypotheses and conclusions
- The forms of reasoning used to arrive at conclusions in Psychology
- The scope and limits of psychological knowledge and proclaimed scientific methods
- The relation of psychological knowledge to society.

(b) **Objective**

The course is **not** a comprehensive course in Philosophy but a contained discourse on some of the central epistemological frameworks, which impact on Psychology as a discipline. The course is intended as a broad introduction to philosophical thinking and meta-theory.

(c) **Content**

1. Traditions in trouble: The evolution of scientific traditions: A model of social science
2. Epistemological positions in psychology:
   a. Positivism
   b. Critical theory
   c. Interpretivism and Hermeneutics
   d. Phenomenology
   e. Grounded theory
   f. Feminism
   g. Social constructionism
3. Ethics and research

(d) **Method of Assessment**

**Course evaluation:**

Each student will be required to critically evaluate one major epistemological discourse outlined in the course, with particular reference to the contributions it has to make to psychology in contemporary South Africa. This will be achieved by TWO written position papers as well as a seminar presentation to the class.

### 3.3.2 Programme Evaluation (PSY 832)

(a) **Specific aims**

- Analyse and solve problems
- Work in a team
- Collect, analyse and evaluate information
- Be culturally sensitive
- Recognize problem solving contexts

(b) **Objective**

To ensure that students are equipped with an understanding of established approaches in programme designs, methods, and techniques of data analyses.
(c) Content

- Introduction to Programme Evaluation (PE)
- Planning of PE
- Uses and types of PE
- Data Collection Methods
- Analysing & Interpreting Information
- Reporting Evaluation Results

(d) Methods of Assessment

Assessment Criteria

- Demonstrate knowledge of most major types of programme evaluation
- Evaluate a programme according to established criteria
- Demonstrate understanding of strengths, weaknesses and limitations of programme evaluation

Assessment Tasks
- Produce a written seminar on an ascribed approach to programme evaluation
- Written case study for qualitative feedback
- Seminar paper to class for qualitative feedback

3.3.3 Qualitative Methods (PSY 833)

(a) Objective

Students must demonstrate that they have informed understandings of both old and newer paradigms in social science research and be able to conduct qualitative research

(c) Content

- Philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research
- Phenomenology
- Grounded theory
- Social constructionism
- Ethnography
- Feminist research
- Focus group research

(d) Methods of Assessment

- Class attendance, class participation, class presentations, class assignments, term papers.
3.3.4 Survey Research (PSY 834)

(a) Specific aims

- To collect, analyze and evaluate information, integrate quantitative research methods with Psychology, identify and solve problems
- To understand survey research methods.

(b) Objective

Students must demonstrate that they are able to collect, analyze and evaluate information, integrate quantitative research methods with Psychology, and identify and solve problems using survey research methods.

(c) Content

- Introduction and overview of Positivism
- Types of survey designs
- Conceptualization and measurement
- Questionnaire construction
- Sampling
- Overview of data analysis

(d) Methods of Assessment

- Class attendance, class participation, class assignments, and term papers

3.3.5 Advanced Quantitative Technology (PSY 835)

(a) Specific aims

By the end of the course students will:
- understand the process of designing a quantitative research study and be able to operationalise research questions;
- plan different designs and fit a design to a research question;
- select and/or develop instruments to use in the research study;
- plan sampling;
- use different data collection techniques;
- select, execute and interpret appropriate statistical techniques; and
- do research across/within diverse groups

(b) Objective

Students must demonstrate that they are able to think critically, plan research studies and apply appropriate research designs and data analyses;
(c) Content
- Quantitative research methodology
- Designs
- Sampling
- Instrument evaluation
- Cross-cultural research
- Data collection
- Statistics: ANOVA, Regression and factorial ANOVA

(d) Methods of Assessment

• Continuous assessment (50%):
  - Seminar
  - Participation in discussions - Statistical assessment tasks

• Summative assessment (50%):
  The students will be assessed towards the end of the third term. This test will be an integrated assessment consisting of this module and the module Measurement Design and Construction and will assess the application of theoretical and practical knowledge gained in these courses.

3.3.6 Measurement Design and Construction (PSY 836)

(a) Specific aims
By the end of this course the student will have:
- A conceptual understanding of assessment, tests and measurement; types of tests
- A conceptual understanding of ethics in testing and test construction; SA legislation on testing and the history of testing in SA
- A conceptual understanding of test construction and test validation
- An understanding of score interpretation: the setting of standards and norms
- A conceptual and practical understanding of the statistical basis of test construction and especially test evaluation
- A conceptual and practical understanding of cross cultural and cross linguistic testing and the evaluation of tests for use in heterogeneous groups
- A conceptual understanding of “critical testing” and its relevance for researchers

(b) Objective
The course moves from an overview of psychometric theory and the psychological testing enterprise, through internal structures of measures, specifically validity and reliability, past theory of measurement error, scale construction, contingent variables and their effect on assessment, to legal and ethical considerations in assessment.
(c) Content

Introduction
- Tests, measurements, and assessment: issues of terminology
- Measurement levels: relevance for test construction

Types of tests:
- norm referenced versus criterion referenced
- educational tests versus psychological tests: distinction and different kinds e.g. intelligence, personality, language tests etc
- purposes of tests e.g. selection (admission), screening, diagnostic etc; high stakes versus low stakes testing

How do we construct tests?
- The process of test construction
- Frameworks and constructs
- Item analysis (choose item difficulty and item discrimination for practical example)
- Scale construction

What do the scores of tests mean?
- The meaning of raw scores
- The transformation of scores
- Equating scores: what it is, and why and when do we equate tests?
- The setting of standards
- Norm setting:
- Percentiles
- Age and grade scores
- Standard and standerdised scores
- Normalised scores

Psychometric properties of tests
- Validity: what it is, and how do we evaluate it? (Choose one aspect of validity for practical example)
- Reliability: what it is, and how do we evaluate it? (Choose one form of reliability for practical example)
- What are the implications of reliability for error of measurement and test score interpretation?
- The relationship between validity and reliability

The distinction between Item Response Theory and classical test theory and implications for test development and evaluation (psychometric properties of tests)

Ethics and standards in testing and test development and history of testing
- The history of testing in SA and internationally (focus on USA): relevance for ethics and legislation:
- Code of conduct of psychologists: International and SA
- Code of conduct for educational testing: International
- APA Standards
- Legislation in SA: Employment Equity Act; draft legislation on testing in schools
Cross cultural and cross linguistic testing
- What it is
- APA Standards on fairness and bias; relevance for SA
- The development of cross cultural and cross linguistic tests: 22 guidelines of the International Test Commission
- Central concepts: group differences, fairness, equivalence and bias.
- How do we evaluate it?

Critical testing
- What is “critical testing”?
- Why is “critical testing” important for researchers?
- How do we do “critical testing”?: backwash, argumentation, consequences of testing and stakeholder involvement

(d) Methods of assessment

Continuous (formative) assessment (50%):
- Presentations on topics
- Assignments on: - Test construction and item analysis assignment (group project); Test evaluation assignment (practical part three in a group; individual writing up); Bias and equivalence assignment (practical part three in a group; individual writing up)

Summative assessment (50%):
- A final test will take place at the end of term.

3.3.7 Thesis and Proposal Writing (PSY 837)

(a) Specific aims
- The module aims to help students gain an understanding of the process of conducting a research project. Students will be expected to meet with an assigned research supervisor in order to develop the research proposal.
- At the end of the module, students are expected to produce a research proposal that will be presented to the Department of Psychology for evaluation.

(b) Objective
The objective of the module is to teach students how to develop research ideas into a feasible research proposal.

(c) Content
- Course overview; Assigning Supervisors; Student/supervisor relationship; Evaluation
- Overview of the Research Proposal; Conceptualising the Proposal; Identifying the Research Problem; Developing the Research Questions (Aims and Objectives)
- Structure of the Proposal
- Reviewing the Literature; Identifying a Theoretical Framework
- Overview of Research Method; Research Designs: Qualitative or Quantitative
Sample/ Participants; Instrumentation
- Scholarly writing; Referencing
- Developing the Research Instrument; Questionnaires versus interviews (focus
groups and individual interviews)
- Ethics; Managing the data collection process; Data Collection
- Data Management; Preparing for Analysis
- Data Analysis
- Writing up the Final Report
- Proposal Presentations

(d) Methods of assessment

- Class attendance, class participation, class presentations, written research
proposal and proposal presentation.

3.3.8 Contextual and Community Psychology (PSY 839)

(a) Specific aims

Critical crossfield outcomes

Students will be able to:
- Critically interrogate mainstream approaches
- work in groups
- collect, analyse and evaluate information
- communicate effectively
- develop problem solving skills
- reflect on and explore effective learning strategies
- be culturally and aesthetically sensitive
- develop a social justice perspective

Specific outcomes

- Display content knowledge about the differences between mainstream and
community psychology approaches.
- Display a clear understanding of research within the community psychological
framework
- Ability to apply theoretical knowledge on case study
- Display understanding of different research strategies within community
psychology context
- Ability to critique articles on community psychological research.
(b) **Objective**

This course explores and presents students with an overall view of what is meant by contextual/community psychology; the central theoretical frameworks, debates and intervention strategies, and how it overlaps and interconnects with other sub disciplines in psychology. It explores ways in which students may use their existing knowledge and developing research skills in a more psycho-educational, community orientated and preventative, primary health care framework. It provides a picture of the local and international context of contextual/community psychology through the presentation of case studies and practical projects. Students are further exposed to community psychology research methodology and methods including participatory and action research. This is aimed at facilitating students’ practice in community research skills.

(c) **Content**

- Introduction to community psychology.
- Community psychology and research.
- Ecological perspective (theory and application)
- Models of community psychology
- Different research strategies within the community psychological context
- Published community psychology research
- Critical perspectives to community psychology (e.g. Marxism)

(d) **Methods of assessment**

- Oral presentation; written seminar reports; written critique of articles

3.3.9 **Health Psychology (PSY 840)**

(a) **Specific aims**

- Develop a relevant research agenda
- Explore concepts and theoretical models
- Make link between lifestyle, wellness and illness
- Identify Health belief determinants of behaviour change
- Explore examples of health psychology research
- Debate research methodology issues
- Understand the relevance of health psychology in South Africa

(b) **Objective**

The module looks at theoretical issues and relevant research considerations in Health Psychology with particular focus on the bio-psychosocial, and health belief models. The following areas within the sub discipline are covered with due attention to the research problems around them: lifestyle issues – changing behaviour, prevention and compliance; health and the community; stress, coping, A-type personality, cardiac rehabilitation, and
burn-out; chronic disease, pain, and cancer; HIV/AIDS, STD’s, and TB; women’s issues; substance abuse and smoking cessation; nutrition, exercise, and eating behaviour; and gerontology and complementary health.

(c) **Content**

- Prevention and health promotion
- Theories of lifestyle change
- Research in health
- The burden of TB in S.A.
- Multi-drug resistance and the DOTS programme
- Issues around HIV and AIDS

(d) **Methods of assessment**

- Lectures, class discussions, seminars and proposal presentations

### 3.3.10 Skills Training (PSY 842)

(a) **Specific aims**

At the end of this module students will be able to:

Analyse quantitative data using SPSS
- Demonstrate understanding of navigating the SPSS environment
- Demonstrate basic understanding of developing a measuring instrument and SPSS codebook
- Demonstrate understanding of generating and interpreting descriptive statistics
- Demonstrate understanding of generating and interpreting inferential statistics
- Demonstrate understanding of generating and interpreting graphs

Analyse qualitative data using one the following techniques:
- Thematic Analyses
- Discourse Analyses
- Phenomenology/Heuristic Analysis
- Narrative Analysis

Have a basic understanding of qualitative analysis software (using Atlas Ti)

(b) **Objective**

This hands-on course includes research proposal writing, introduction to computing in research, computer data analysis, training in statistical packages, and other relevant skills.

(c) **Content**

Quantitative data analysis
- Basic concepts in quantitative research
- Navigating the SPSS environment
- Codebook construction
- Data capturing
- Cleaning and verifying the data
- Data management
- Descriptive statistics
- Inferential statistics
- Generating and interpreting graphs using SPSS

Qualitative data analysis
- Developing the data collection schedule
- Collecting qualitative data
- Managing qualitative data
- Thematic analyses

(d) Methods of assessment

- Quantitative analysis assessed by means of three written assignments:
  Assignment 1 = 20%, Assignment 2 = 20%, Assignment 3 = 60%

- Qualitative analysis assessed by means of 1 assignment.

- Project management assessed by means of 1 assignment

- Total Course = 40% Quantitative analysis
  40% Qualitative analysis
  20% Project Management

4. Master’s programme in Research Psychology: Practical component

Practical training consists of practical training sessions in the Statistics section of the Quantitative Technology course as well as in the Measurement Design and Construction course, and workshops in practical components of other selected modules. In the skills course the students are exposed practically to the conceptualisation of research, data analyses (quantitative and qualitative) and project management.

5. Master’s programme in Research Psychology: Research and mini-thesis

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the M.A (Research Psychology) degree, a mini-thesis on a topic in the field of psychology has to be completed. This mini-thesis may be based on either an empirical or qualitative study.

Requirements and format

- The approval of the relevant head of department has to be obtained before a candidate is allowed to register. The proposed title of the candidate’s mini-thesis, as well as the supervisor, must be approved by the Senate before the end of the first year of registration.
- A student shall pursue his/her course of study at the University under the guidance of a lecturer appointed by Senate; but Senate may appoint as supervisor, a person from outside the University, in which case a co-supervisor may be appointed.

- The title of a mini-thesis shall be approved for a period of five years, after which period the student may apply for an extension. Extension can only be granted for one year, after which re-application must be made. Interruption of study shall only be permitted with the approval of the Senate.

- The mini-thesis shall show proof of the ability of the student to work independently; the language shall be correct and the technical aspects satisfactory.

- No mini-thesis which has previously been submitted for a degree at another university shall be accepted, but material taken from publications of the candidate may be incorporated therein.

**EXAMINATION**

- The mini-thesis shall be submitted not later than three months prior to the date of the graduation ceremony at which the student wishes to have the degree conferred upon him/her.
M.A. PSYCHOLOGY (Research)
Programme code: 8813

** Workshop topics and dates will be confirmed.**

The following module takes place the week before classes commence in January (Mon, 20 January – Fri, 24 January 2014):
**PSY 837: Proposal and Thesis Writing**
**Presenter:** Prof. Kelvin Mwaba

**TERM 1:** Monday, 27 January – Friday, 14 March (7 weeks)

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**TERM 2:** Monday, 24 March – Friday, 20 June (13 weeks)

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## TIMETABLE: 2014

### ACADEMIC CALENDAR: TERMS

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<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Term</td>
<td>Monday, 27 January – Friday, 14 March (7 weeks)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Term</td>
<td>Monday, 24 March – Friday, 20 June (13 weeks)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Term</td>
<td>Monday 14 July – Friday, 29 August (7 weeks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Term</td>
<td>Monday, 8 September – Friday, 28 November (12 weeks)</td>
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### TERM 3: *Monday 14 July – Friday, 29 August (7 weeks)*

<table>
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### TERM 4: *Monday, 8 September – Friday, 28 November (12 weeks)*

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</table>
| Prof Kelvin Mwaba                      | Qualitative and quantitative | • HIV and AIDS  
• Drug research  
• Risk taking |
| Dr Shazly Savahl                       | Qualitative and quantitative | • Childhood  
• Child well-being  
• Children’s subjective well-being and quality of life |
| Dr Mario Smith                         | Qualitative and quantitative | • Supervision practices (Research & Clinical)  
• Clinical practice  
• Health professions Education/clinical training  
• Methodology and psychometrics |
| Dr Athena Pedro                        | Qualitative and quantitative | • Reproductive health  
• High-risk pregnancy  
• The psychology of people management  
• Women in management  
• Programme evaluation  
• Research capacity-building |
| Dr Michelle Andipatin                  | Qualitative and quantitative | • Women’s health  
• Reproductive health  
• High-risk pregnancy  
• Alternative healing  
• Science and spirituality  
• Issues in feminist research  
• Methodological issues in research |
| Dr Anita Padmanabhanunni               | Qualitative and quantitative | • Psychotherapy outcome research  
• Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy  
• Schema Therapy  
• Post-traumatic Stress Disorder  
• Gender-Based Violence  
• Imagery rescripting in the treatment of anxiety and personality disorders  
• Participatory activism: Psychological benefits of participating in campaigns against gender based violence for survivors |
| Ms Maria Florence                      | Qualitative and quantitative | • Substance abuse  
• Youth wellness  
• Questionnaire construction and validation  
• Gender issues  
• Health-related issues  
• Family resilience |
| Ms Serena Isaacs                       | Qualitative and quantitative | • Hope and community violence  
• Childhood and youth wellbeing  
• Substance abuse |
| Mr Umesh Bawa                          | Qualitative and quantitative | • Children and violence  
• Trauma research  
• Psychological recovery and reconstruction in post-conflict countries |
| Mr Kamal Kamaloodien                   | Qualitative and quantitative | • Substance abuse interventions  
• Co-occurring diagnosis with substance abuse  
• Clinical interventions |
| Mr Rashid Ahmed                        | Qualitative and quantitative | • Community resilience  
• Violence prevention  
• Mental health issues |
| Mr Charl Davids | Qualitative | • Sport Psychology  
• Racism  
• HIV and sport  
• Substance abuse  
• Trauma |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Ms Mariska Pienaar | Qualitative and quantitative | • Applications of psychoanalytic Self Psychology  
• Personality Psychology  
• Eco Psychology  
• Substance abuse and addiction  
• Criminal Psychology |
| Mrs E Munnik | Qualitative and quantitative | • Children and development  
• Child well-being  
• Mental Health, including depression, loss  
• Burnout and stress  
• School readiness  
• Psychological assessment |
NOTE: Although the online applications for the University are already open from 31 April 2014. Please note that departmental applications for the MA Psych (Research) code 8813, close on 18 August 2014.

In order to get into the UWC system, you could do your e-application at any time. The Application fee is R100 - payable by the 18 August 2014 and thereafter the late application fee is R150.

You may pay at the cashiers' office, or directly into the university's banking account. Please use your application number received, as the reference number.

Application fee may be paid using the following methods:

- Cash, debit card, credit card, cheque at our Cashiers on the on the ground floor of the Student Administration, West Wing building.
- Direct deposit at ABSA bank
- Electronic funds transfer (EFT) from your bank
- Credit card payment will be accepted – online at www.uwc.ac.za

Cash Office hours: Monday – Friday: 08h30 – 16h30

Banking details:

- Account Name: University of the Western Cape, Student Deposits, Current Account
- Institution: ABSA Bank
- Bank Address: 1ST Floor, Tygerpark 4, Willie Van Schoor Drive, Bellville, 7530, South Africa
- Account Number: 40 4960 4740
- Branch Code: 632005, Public Sector Western Cape
- Swift Code: ABSAZAJJ – for payments made outside of the Rand currency area

This university application should include copies of (i) your matric results, and (ii) your ID book.

These should be submitted by slow mail/personally to the Admissions Office. The direct contact number is 021-959-3348.

Your ADDITIONAL documents, including your proof of application payment, may be submitted directly to the Department closer to the relevant due date.

For Student Credit Management enquiries, please contact Thembile at 021-959-3109.

For Student Fees enquiries, please contact the Student Accounts office at 021-959-2154.

For NSFAS/Financial Aid matters, please contact the NSFAS office 021-959-2737/3157.