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# STEP 1

- APPLY -



**HELLO**  
*I am HEARTY -  
your study buddy*

You decided to enrol for Higher Degree studies, but are you sure what it really entails? Let me tell you a bit about Higher Degree studies and then I will explain how you should go about to apply and ensure that you are ready to start the journey.

**Higher Degree readiness**

**Why do a Higher Degree qualification?**

While the cost can be high and the study intense there are many benefits to pursuing a higher degree qualification. Courses demonstrate knowledge of a subject, help facilitate career changes and even increase earning potential. Studying for a Masters or Doctorate degree is an exciting prospect and there are many valid reasons to consider taking a Higher Degree course. The most popular reasons for undertaking higher degree studies include:

- progressing a current career path
- improving employment prospects
- developing a personal interest
- progressing to a higher level qualification (such as Masters to progress to a PhD)
- entering a particular profession
- meeting the requirements of a current job.

A higher degree can also aid a career change, help you to gain professional recognition and provide useful industry contacts and connections.

However, any higher degree study is intense and often comes with a hefty price tag. You'll also often need relevant work experience for entry onto a programme. In order to make the most of higher degree study it's vital to have a solid reason for committing to a course.

## Will a Higher Degree qualification help me get a job?

Masters degrees are highly regarded by employers. Holding a higher degree qualification won't guarantee you a job, but statistics show that graduates and higher degree had higher employment rates than non-graduates.

Higher degree were also more likely to be in high-skilled employment (professional or managerial roles). For some roles, such as clinical psychologist, instructional designer or lecturer, a Masters degree is essential, while for many others it is highly beneficial. Having a relevant higher degree degree could give you a crucial competitive edge in a crowded job market - employers are increasingly looking for ways to distinguish between candidates, and this higher-level qualification shows your ability to commit to an intense period of work. Higher Degree studies may also be useful if you're looking to change career.

If you're already working in your preferred industry, a higher degree could lead to rapid career progression. It could emphasise your drive, determination and willingness to increase your ability in a chosen area. What's more, your employer may support you financially and give you paid study leave if your studies will benefit the company.

Keep in mind that in some instances you will only benefit fully from a higher degree qualification if it is complemented by relevant work experience. Without this, your employability will be weaker and you run the risk of getting into unnecessary debt.

## Is it worth the cost?

Obtaining a higher degree qualification can be expensive, time-consuming and emotionally draining. Therefore you need to weigh up your reasons for studying a course carefully.

On a positive note, higher degrees earn considerably more than their under-grad counterparts. Despite this, you must think about why you want to pursue a higher degree qualification before

committing. Many applicants wrongly believe that a higher degree qualification will automatically allow them to earn more - yet this is only true if the qualification gets them closer to fulfilling their ambitions. To be certain that a higher degree qualification will meet your expectations, and be worth the high costs, you should:

- be passionate about your subject
- browse relevant job advertisements to identify what employers value most, as industry certifications and accreditations are important for certain roles
- consider everything in the context of your overall career plan, ensuring that the qualification offers the best way of achieving your career goals
- consider whether a higher degree qualification will boost your credentials significantly above your existing under-grad education
- contact careers services, professional bodies or individual employers for further advice.

Avoid higher degree studies if you can't convince yourself it's the right move and if you're looking to study immediately after completing your under-grad degree, you may want to reconsider. Don't pursue a higher degree in the naïve hope that it'll automatically add to your CV or because you need more time to think about your career. Unless your goals are crystal clear, it might be a better idea to spend some time in the workplace, research your options, or take a gap year.

To enrol for a higher degree qualifications is a big decision. Make it an informed one. If you are still unsure consult a career advisor, discuss the options with a senior academic in your field or one of the senior managers at the company where you are employed or wish to be employed one day.

## If English isn't my first language, will it be a stumbling block?

If you are not an English First Language speaker you might feel a bit hesitant to enrol for a higher degree qualification. The idea of having to read the research of others, do your own research and produce a dissertation in a second or even third language is to say the least, daunting. Even though your supervisor might be communicating with you in your first language, the reality is that most of the process will be done in English. The NWU provides support for students to overcome this stumbling block.

To put your mind at ease or to start looking for support do one of the several free online tests such as the test developed by EF SET. [Click here to access the test.](#)

Keep in mind that language requirements differ between institutions, and even from faculty to faculty within an institution depending on your subject of study. The entry requirements of a particular course at the NWU can be checked in the [Academic Yearbook](#).

## Will I have time to do a higher degree qualification?

A higher degree study must fit around your lifestyle, so identifying the mode of study that's right for you is essential.

**Full-time study** is the most common, and suits continuing students. You'll work intensively for the duration of the programme, achieving your qualification as quickly as possible. Contact hours vary from course to course, but full-time study involves several lectures and seminars each week. Alternatively, it could require you to attend university from 9am to 5pm every weekday. Business, law and science courses generally require more contact time than programmes in arts and humanities. Regardless, you'll be expected to dedicate six to seven hours per day to self-study.

**Part-time study**, meanwhile, is primarily aimed at students with family commitments and/or in full-time employment. You'll usually study for around 20 hours every week. While qualification takes longer - often two to four years - teaching is flexible, and lectures and seminars take place during the daytime or evening. Sessions are commonly hosted during the weekends or even recorded for students to access online. Full-time work and part-time study is particularly popular with those who are self-funding their course or being funded by their employer.

Depending on the qualification, you might be able to choose one of the other modes of study:

- Blended learning - combines face-to-face classroom time with online learning. You can interact with lecturers, tutors and fellow students, while also working from home.
- Block mode learning - involves intense face-to-face study over a fixed period, often weekends or consecutive days allowing students to book time off work in advance.

## Can I do a PhD without a Masters?

To be accepted onto a PhD which is the highest qualification that a student can achieve, students usually need a relevant Masters degree. This is because students can not attain the requisite level of in-depth knowledge about a particular area without Masters study. Those looking to progress onto a PhD from Masters study can benefit from making contacts for future reference, and surrounding themselves with students and colleagues who share their aims and interests.

Get more information about the possibility of using the **recognition of prior learning** (RPL) process to enrol for a degree without the necessary required qualification.

## To Higher Degree or not to Higher Degree?

Answer the following questions to determine if you are ready for studies or should rather opt for a holiday on an island.

- Am I fully aware of the level of commitment required to undertake Higher Degree studies?
- Am I prepared to do more studying and less partying than at undergraduate level?
- Am I excited by the opportunity to write another, even longer dissertation or research project?
- Can I afford the study, in terms of tuition fees and living costs?
- Am I willing to accrue more graduate debt, or alternatively make potentially lengthy applications for funding?
- Am I willing to live on a budget in order to cover living expenses, while my friends are in full-time employment?
- If I am in full-time employment will I be able to juggle work and studies?
- Do I have the support of my significant other and family members?
- Will the Higher Degree qualification improve my career prospects?
- Is the qualification rated highly by employers within my ideal industry?
- Will my friends understand that I will no longer have time for long phone calls or visits?
- Will the qualification equip me with the specific skills needed for my ideal career?
- Will my studies allow me to qualify as a professional?
- Am I genuinely passionate about the qualification and subject? Am I certain that the courses that I'm looking at are right for me?

## What do I have to do next?

You can now proceed to the application step of the process.

## Application

## How to apply online

At the North-West University (NWU) the application needs to be completed online. During the application phase you will be pre-screened to determine if you qualify to enrol for the qualification that you applied for. This process includes that you have to meet the requirements for admission into the course. There may be a limited number of places available and a supervisor needs to be available.

These links explain the online registration process in case you have not been able to apply online and were given access by a Supervisor.



[NWU website: How to apply online](#)

[NWU website: Apply](#)

**Well done! Remember to familiarise yourself with the Yearbooks for Higher Degree studies at the NWU where information about various courses are presented, as well as the Manual for Higher Degrees, that will provide you with the information you need regarding the processes related to Higher Degree studies.**

**Now is time to sort out your work space at work and home, dust off your computer and buy a new chair, water container, glass and notebook. Please follow me.**



## Academic Yearbook

Click on this link to access the Academic Yearbook for information about the different qualifications that you can apply for.

NWU website: [Academic Yearbooks](#)

## Manual for Higher Degree studies

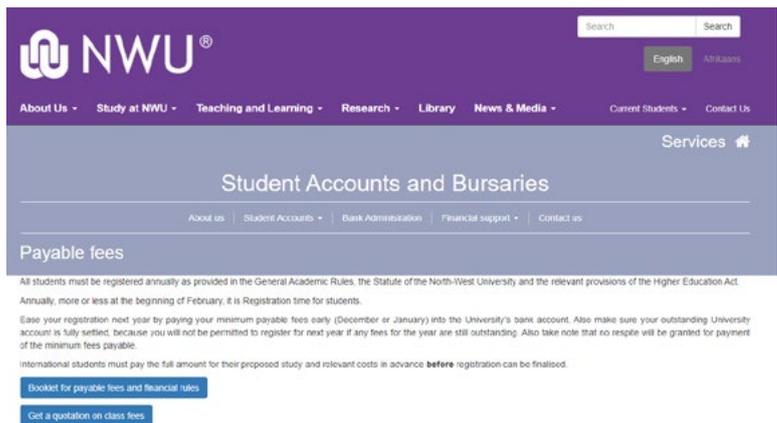
Click on the link below to access the Manual for Higher Degree studies. This document will answer your questions about Higher Degree studies at the NWU.

NWU website: [Manual for Higher Degrees Studies \(PDF\)](#)

## Fees

This is a screenshot that shows where you can access the booklet that give you an indication of the latest fee structure as well as the button to a request a quotation for the class fees should you want to apply for funding from your employer.

NWU website: [Student Accounts and Bursaries](#)



The screenshot shows the NWU website's 'Student Accounts and Bursaries' page. At the top, there is a search bar and a language selector set to 'English'. Below the header, a navigation menu includes links for 'About Us', 'Study at NWU', 'Teaching and Learning', 'Research', 'Library', 'News & Media', 'Current Students', and 'Contact Us'. The main heading is 'Student Accounts and Bursaries', with a 'Services' icon to the right. Underneath, there are sub-links for 'About us', 'Student Accounts', 'Bank Administration', 'Financial support', and 'Contact us'. The 'Payable fees' section contains text about annual registration and a note for international students. Two buttons are visible: 'Booklet for payable fees and financial rules' and 'Get a quotation on class fees'.

## Bursaries

Student bursaries and loans are available to support you financially if needed. You can visit the NWU website for more information on general bursary and loan information at the NWU, but you can also contact your faculty/research unit to obtain more information on bursaries available in your specific study field.

This is a screenshot of the page where you will find the information under the heading the link Financial Support.

NWU website: [Bursaries and loans](#)

## Faculty Specific Bursaries and Research Support

Please contact your Faculty for more information about faculty specific grants and bursaries.

Your supervisor, Director of the research unit or Faculty SALA representative should be able to provide more information in this regard.

## Pre-research IT setup



Higher Degree studies is not about the research only. Good infrastructure and support will make your life much easier. The aim of this section is getting everything ready to start with your research. I will take you through all the administrative and support information you need to know about when enrolling for Higher Degree studies. There will be some documents to read, sign and submit, as well as valuable training offered by various departments of the NWU, including the library and IT support.

Did you know this site has a dedicated section on the available trainings which you can return to at any time? You can find it under the Quick links section on the left hand menu. But, let us first get those computers ready. We will start in the IT department.

## IT Support

The NWU has a dedicated section on the main website for Information Technology support. Please visit the following resources to familiarise yourself.

Click on this button to setup your computer, register your email and download software.

NWU website:  
Information Technology  
student orientation page

This video gives you an overview of the IT support available for students.

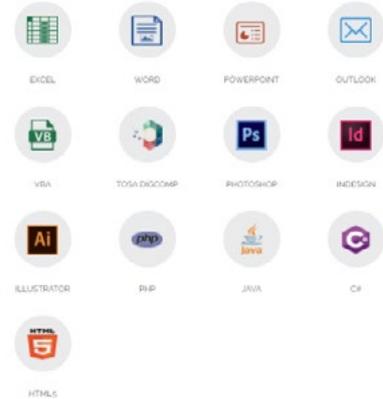


## Technology questionnaire

Are you familiar with your computer settings and software and are you skilled in all the programs you will use during your Higher Degree studies? To determine your own computer skills you can take this test to evaluate your Word, Excel and PPT proficiency and to see if you need some additional training and support.

[IsoGrad: Free computer literacy test](#)

### TAKE A FREE TEST



## Testing my own computer knowledge

This questionnaire gives you an indication of the computer terminology that you need to understand. Take the test as many times as you like.

[Test your skills](#)

## Setting up your hardware

It is important to setup your computer, so be sure that it has the correct specifications that will be able to support all the software you will need during the course of your Higher Degree studies.

[NWU website: IT Student Service & Software Catalogue](#)

### Computer specifications

To ensure optimal functioning of the eFundi platform and available NWU templates your computer should have the following specifications

[NWU website: IT Student Service & Software Catalogue](#)

See Laptops & Tablets

[NWU website: LAPTOPS FOR STUDENTS \(recommendations\) \(PDF\)](#)

Please use the following checklist to ensure that your computer hardware is up to date and ready to use.



## Technology check

**Did you check and setup the following:**

- The specifications of your computer
- Sound and camera for your computer
- External hard drive/thumb drives
- Computer literacy skills checked

## Setting up your Software

You can find all the NWU Information Technology services here.

### **Microsoft account and Gmail address**

In order to communicate in the electronic world it is important to have an email address. Once you have been registered as an NWU student, the following email address will be linked to your profile: NWU#@student.nwu.ac.za (e.g. 12345678@student.nwu.ac.za) and the email will be sent to the default specified email address, whether it be yahoo, gmail or whatever else.

We also suggest that you get yourself a Gmail address to use throughout your studies. The benefit of this is that you can also setup a Microsoft account and everything is available in one place. With Gmail you will be able to access your emails on various devices.

[Google: Get started with Gmail](#)

## WiFi

If you are visiting the NWU on campus you will be able to access the WiFi, but your computer need to be set-up and the IT support desk can also help you with this.

Use the steps in the training video and set-up your NWU WiFi. If you experience any problems of cannot connect (when on campus), please contact IT.



## AnyDesk software

To be able to get help from the IT support department or eFundi support desk, it is sometimes helpful if the technician on the other side of the phone line can view your computer desktop. To enable this function, the NWU use AnyDesk software. This is a software that will allow the technician to view and work on your computer once you have provided him with consent to access your computer. The technician will log out after your problem has been resolved.

Please follow the link and download AnyDesk software here.

[NWU website: IT Remote Support Software AnyDesk](#)

## Office 365 ProPlus

As a registered student of the NWU you will also be able to download Office 365 ProPlus FREE from the NWU website.

Here is the link to download Office 365 ProPlus from the NWU website.

[NWU website: IT Office 365 ProPlus](#)

## Antivirus Software

You have to protect your computer from viruses and for this reason Antivirus software is a critical part of your IT toolbox. You can install NWU-supported antivirus software here.

[NWU website: IT Antivirus Software](#)

## Password Management

In our current lives passwords play a huge role and it can be very overwhelming. Make sure that your passwords are available to you, but also safely stored, so that no one else can access it. You can manage your password to access the NWU IT platforms at this link.

[NWU website: IT Password Management](#)

## NWU mobile App

[NWU website: IT NWU Mobile App](#)

## General software setup

You can use this section to learn more about basic software programs which one uses during a research journey. Explore more about Microsoft Word, Power Point, Excel and PDF.

General software

## Software check

Did you download the following software?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gmail account setup | <input type="checkbox"/> Antivirus software     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WiFi                | <input type="checkbox"/> Password Management    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office 365 ProPlus  | <input type="checkbox"/> NWU mobile APP         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AnyDesk             | <input type="checkbox"/> General software setup |



Now, that was a huge job, but trust me, it will make your life so much easier in the future. You now have a good e-working space. Be sure to bookmark the contact details for the student IT support department and remember that each campus has an IT walk-in center who will be able to help you with support on any of the devices which the NWU support.

## Finalizing your workspace

The most important software has now been installed. There will be some more software that will make you life easier, but I will share that as we go along. Now, you need to organise your e-workspace. You will have to become familiar with the eFundi student management platform, learn a bit about project management for your Higher Degree studies and VERY important - back-up your work!



## eFundi and project management for higher degree studies

eFundi is the Learner Management System (LMS) which the NWU uses and a very useful tool during your Higher Degree studies. Project management is also a very valuable skill to manage your time and outcomes and you can learn more about it here.

NWU eFundi teaching platform

Project management for researchers

Library access (off-campus)

## Back-ups

Before you can start.... make sure that your electronic workspace is sorted out. All the relevant software is downloaded. You have a computer that will work well to ensure that you can access study materials online, have enough memory to store your data and is password protect. Remember to ensure that you have a secure Cloud account where you can backup

your work at least once very week. It is also good to backup to another external hard drive, but ensure that this hard drive is either password protected or locked in an cupboard or office to ensure that all your research data are protected.

The NWU support GoogleDrive for students.

NWU website: [IT Google Drive for Students](#)

The screenshot shows the 'IT Service Catalogue' page for 'Google Drive for Students'. The page is divided into several sections: 'Service', 'Service Targets', 'User Responsibilities', and 'Other Resources'. The 'Service' section includes a description, cost (Free), and availability (Students). The 'Service Targets' section lists prerequisites such as an NWU Gmail email address, Windows or Google Chrome browser, and the Google Drive App. The 'User Responsibilities' section provides a step-by-step link to the service and instructions on how to request the service and report a problem. The 'Other Resources' section includes documents and best practices. The page also features a navigation menu at the top and a footer with various links like Alumni, Human Rights, and Vacancies.

**Set up your Google Drive like this!**

Here is a guide on how to use Google Drive as your cloud backup system.

PDF: [Google Drive for Students](#)

**eFundi Dropbox**

At the NWU you can use the eFundi Dropbox function to both back-up different versions of your work and to share it with your supervisor. Learn more about this function here.

Youtube: [eFundi - Dropbox](#)

## Assignment: Backup with Dropbox

Visit the **assignments** button on the left-hand menu of the eFundi module page which you are enrolled for, e.g. REAS111 and view the assignment titled **Back up with Dropbox**.

Open your Dropbox folder (in the left hand menu), and create the following folders (or more if you want to):

1. Administrative documentation
2. Study resources
3. Proposal
4. Dissertation/ Thesis
5. Examination version

You can view the tutorial on YouTube which explain the use of eFundi Dropbox. [eFundi Dropbox function](#).

Once you have completed your setup you can type DONE in this assignment text box on the eFundi module page which are enrolled for, e.g. REAS111.

## Finalizing your e-workspace

Use this checklist is to help you ensure that you worked through all the information you need to be ready for your studies.

The aim of this checklist is to help you ensure that you worked through all the information you need to be ready for your studies.

- eFundi tour video wathched
- Project management system identified, downloaded & attended training
- Higher Degrees Manual downloaded and familiar with the content
- General Academic, rules of the NWU (A Rules)
- Set up your back up system such as eFundi Dropbox



# STEP 2

## - REGISTRATION -



About registration, re-registration, and pausing of studies...

Please ensure that you register annually for your Higher Degree studies under the student section > registration, <http://studies.nwu.ac.za/studies/registration> on the NWU website. Registration fee is paid annually and is a standard fee. Added to your registration fee is your class fees. You will pay tuition fees, even if you only work on your dissertation or thesis, since you receive supervision - this count as 'class'. Fees are available from the finance department and are not handled within the Faculties.

### The Registration Process

This link will take you to the NWU website for registration. Here you will get on overview of the registration process.

NWU website:  
Studies Registration

NWU website: Higher  
Degree Studies

NWU website:  
Higher Degree annual registration

## Registration and Re-registration

This link takes you to the NWU electronic registration page.

If you have not yet registered please do so using the link. If you have registered ignore this for now and when you have to re-register at the beginning of every year you can come back to this step.

[NWU website: Higher Degree annual registration](#)

Re-registration must take place annually before 31 March. If students want to use their student cards, for example to access the Library, they need to register before 22 February of each year otherwise the cards will be deactivated. If you do not re-register in time, your study **EXPIRES**; with all the accompanying consequences. It is then regarded that you cancelled your own study. Students who want to register after the re-registration date (31 March) will have to pay an additional fine.

This request form can also be completed in cases where examination took longer than prescribed or supervisor feedback took longer than indicated in the Manual for Degree Studies.

[Request for financial arrangements FORM C](#)

## Upload Proof of Registration

**Don't worry if you don't know how to upload an assignment you can click on this link to watch a video that will explain the process.**

Once you received your Proof of Registration save it to your device and then upload it to eFundi for safe keeping. Click on the button below to upload the document via the assignment tool.

[NWU: How to submit an assignment](#)



### **Assignment: Proof of registration**

Visit the **assignments** button on the left-hand menu of the eFundi module page which you are enrolled for, e.g. REAS111 and upload a PDF version of your proof of registration to your student page, dropbox or as an assignment (as directed by your research unit).

The MODULE must reflect on this proof of registration.

File name should be as follow: **Student surname, Name, student number, Type of document, Date**

example: **Louw, Tandi, 123456, Proof of registration, 12 May 2021**

### **Assignment: Proof of re-registration**

Visit the **assignments** button on the left-hand menu of the eFundi module page which you are enrolled for, e.g. REAS111 and upload a PDF version of your proof of registration to your student page, dropbox or as an assignment (as directed by your research unit).

File name should be as follow: **Student surname, Name, student number, Type of document, Date**

example: **Louw, Tandi, 123456, Proof of registration, 12 May 2021**

## **Faculty representatives in Higher Degrees**

Faculty representatives coordinate the administration of Higher Degrees within each faculty. They will also be the people to support you with any queries regarding your studies, which you may have. Please visit the postgraduate studies page on the NWU website and follow the link on high degree (M&D) enquiries

[NWU website: Postgraduate Studies - Contact us](#)

## SALA representatives for Faculty

The Student Academic Life Cycle Administration (SALA) Department is centrally managed, but with a strong locally deployed presence: Its strategic framework is to strive towards consistency, alignment and good service delivery, which is to be accomplished by providing effective academic administrative support to clients through the optimisation of processes and systems and the consistent and accountable application of policies and rules relevant to this environment (within the framework of the NWU's strategic agenda and value statement).

Each faculty has a representative who is responsible for the SALA process. You can find your Faculty Representative on the link below.

[NWU website: Sala Contact us](#)

## Pausing (interrupting / freezing) of studies

Unfortunately it does sometimes happen that studies need to be paused for personal or other reasons. The Higher Degree process makes provision for this, however it is the student's responsibility to ensure that you are aware of the rules and regulations surrounding this event. You have to complete a STUDENT REQUEST FORM for this step.

Visit the Higher Degree site and go to Master and Doctoral studies, select Important forms for M & D students and then select the correct form.

[NWU website: Higher Degree academic lifecycle forms \(M & D\)](#)

### **General requests**

General requests include:

- Changing of campus
- Adding of modules
- Freezing of studies (delay for one year, versus completing after a long inactive period of e.g. two years)

[Student request form for GENERAL requests FORM A](#)

## **Re-admission or extension of study request**

Permission to be re-admitted after freezing of study or permission to extend longer than stipulated in the A-rules - full-time and part-time.

Re-admission and study extension FORM B



**Congrats, if you  
completed all the above  
steps you should now be a  
registered student!**