SCHOOL OF THERAPEUTIC SCIENCES

2025

Postgraduate booklet

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

THERAPEUTIC Sciences

Purpose of the booklet

This booklet provides prospective postgraduate students with information on the research focus of the School of Therapeutic Sciences (STS) and helps registered postgraduate students find resources to improve their research approach. It aligns with the University's goal to become a leading research institution. The framework doesn't detail how these goals will be achieved. Instead, this will be done through rolling three-year strategic plans with clear objectives, indicators, and benchmarks in conjunction with robust student-supervisor engagements.

Developed by the School of Therapeutic Sciences' Research Committee

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1. Overview of the Departments in the School of Therapeutic Sciences

Department	Research coordinator	Area of expertise	Contact details
Physiotherapy	Prof Helena van Aswegen	The Department of Physiotherapy has a strong research focus. Niche research areas include disability rehabilitation, paediatrics, digital innovation and technology in rehabilitation research, musculoskeletal health and wellbeing, HIV disability, and acute illness including traumatology.	helena.vanaswegen@wits.ac.za
Exercise Science and Sports Medicine	Prof Philippe Gradidge	The Department of Exercise Science and Sports Medicine (DESSM) is committed to research and promoting health for all, as well as optimising athletic performance at all levels. Areas of focus include biokinetic rehabilitation, injury assessment, health and wellness, as well as corporate wellness.	philippe.gradidge@wits.ac.za
Occupational Therapy	Dr Janine van der Linde	The Department of Occupational Therapy places a strong emphasis on research that includes clinical and higher education foci. MSc coursework streams are Neurosciences, Psychiatry, or Paediatrics, which include expertise in sensory integration. Other research areas include hand therapy, vocational rehabilitation, community-based practice and occupational science.	janine.vanderlinde@wits.ac.za
Nursing Education	Prof Nokuthula Gloria Nkosi	As a department, the research of Nursing Education is anchored in key niche areas: • Managing Non-Communicable Diseases (Metabolic Syndrome & Mental Health): Enhancing quality of life through evidence-based interventions and integrated care models.	nokuthula.nkosi1@wits.ac.za

Department	Research coordinator	Area of expertise	Contact details
		• The Art and Science of Caring in Emergency and Intensive Care Units: Advancing critical care nursing through innovative approaches to patient stabilization, recovery, and long-term outcomes. • Sexual and Reproductive Health (Maternal & Women's Health): Improving healthcare access, education, and interventions to support reproductive well-being across the lifespan. Nursing Education and Management Research: Strengthening nursing leadership, education strategies, and workforce development to build resilient healthcare systems.	
Pharmacology	Dr Armorel van Eyk	The Pharmacology Division conducts both laboratory orientated and clinical research. The laboratory orientated research is mainly on drug discovery in the fields of cancer and malaria, whereas the clinical research encompasses various aspects of drug utilisation.	armorel.vaneyk@wits.ac.za
Pharmacy	Assoc. Prof Neelaveni Padayachee	Cutting edge research are done across any relevant field of Pharmacy including Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Pharmaceutics, Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmacy Practice.	neelaveni.padayachee@wits.ac.za

2. Research Units in the School of Therapeutic Sciences

2.1. Wits Advanced Drug Delivery Platform (WADDP) Research Unit

The WADDP is a world leading research entity established in 2007. It vibrates with a team of exceptionally passionate and responsive Pharmaceutical Scientists focused on researching and producing 21st century patient-centric pharmaceutical product innovations as neat solutions for the most challenging unmet therapeutic needs globally.

The WADDP is a formally recognised research entity at University of the Witwatersrand within the Faculty of Health Sciences consistently producing high quality research over two decades.

The WADDP provides the largest postgraduate and postdoctoral training and research platform in South Africa for candidates with a specific passion to undertake cutting-edge research in the pharmaceutical sciences.

Vision

Being the only research platform in its domain in South Africa, our vision is to continue leading the world in creating new patient-centric pharmaceutical treatment solutions for infectious, hereditary and lifestyle diseases.

Mission

- To achieve targeted delivery of drugs (or other bioactives) as either standalone prototypes or interfaced with Nanomedicine, Tissue Engineering, Regenerative Medicine and Functional Biomaterials.
- To undertake translational pharmaceutical research and generate intellectual property as a solution shop.
- To research hard to solve challenges in medicine through the discovery, design and development of first-in-the-world pharmaceutical therapies.
- To make a clinically meaningful impact through our research passion.

2.2. *WiSH Research Unit*

As a recognised Research Group of the University of the Witwatersrand, the vision of WiSH Research is “To create an active and winning nation through excellence in physical activity, exercise and sports-related research with impact”.

The WiSH Research pillar is concerned with research into physical activity, exercise and sports, which would in turn have a significant impact both locally and globally. The research agenda of WiSH-R is in direct alignment with the University of the Witwatersrand’s vision “to be a globally-leading research-intensive university and a gateway to research, engagement and intellectual achievement in Africa”. WiSH-R underpins two strategic objectives, which

arise from the Wits Vision 2022, namely: to produce research with impact, and to foster a swift, secure and stimulating postgraduate experience. In addition to being globally competitive, the WiSH-R vision depicts its locally responsive nature in that it also closely relates to the vision of Sport and Recreation South Africa namely "An active and winning nation".

This unit includes communities from different spheres and addresses the research needs throughout the lifespan while being true to the local South African and African context. The WiSH Research Unit has this research priority area:

- Non-communicable disease prevention and rehabilitation: A lifestyle creating wellness
- Injury & illness surveillance, prevention, management & rehabilitation (includes a major focus on concussion)
- Paediatric physical activity, exercise and sport
- Geriatric medicine and exercise
- Women's health and exercise
- Human movement analysis and intervention
- Genetics in sports
- Sports code specific research

2.3. Wits Cricket Research Hub for Science, Medicine and Rehabilitation

The mission of the Wits Cricket Research Hub is to create new knowledge, which is not only relevant to our local context but also innovative and competitive in the international sphere. We generate impact through the translation of findings into practice and meaningful collaboration with other researchers, while fostering an evidence-based culture amongst coaches, trainers, healthcare providers, players, and other cricket stakeholders. Read more here: https://www.wits.ac.za/wcrh/.

2.4. WRIM: Wits Research Institute for Malaria

Twelve years after being founded, the Wits Research Institute for Malaria (WRIM) has maintained a high level of excellence in order to continue with the traditions of 100 years of malaria research in South Africa. WRIM has produced top award-winning quality research, as well as trained researchers that contribute to the control of malaria across the African continent ensuring malaria transmission and control, from mosquitoes to parasites, treatment and epidemiology are all monitored and researched.

The WRIM Pharmacology team investigates various aspects of the *Plasmodium* malaria parasite and *Anopheles* mosquito vector. Numerous classes of synthetic and natural compounds are investigated for their potential antimalarial, repellent and mosquitocidal properties, which has resulted in the identification of several lead compounds that are currently being investigated for toxicological and pharmacokinetic properties, as well as to determine their mechanism of action.

3. Requirements for Admission to the MSc Programmes in the School of Therapeutic Sciences

NOTE: Criteria for MSc admission may vary across the various departments.

Minimum requirements for admission to an MSc Med (dissertation) or MSc course work in the following fields:

3.1. Occupational Therapy

A recognised qualification in Occupational Therapy (provide transcript of course). There are a limited number of places in this course.

MSc by coursework in Occupational Therapy:

- Minimum of one year of clinical experience post community service.
- Detailed curriculum vitae.
- Motivation letter stating:
- why you want to pursue an MSc by coursework and research report;
- area and number of years of clinical experience;
- relevant postgraduate courses attended;
- undergraduate curriculum relevant to the area of speciality/research.
- Complete the short motivation document describing your proposed study topic based on
- one of the OT research niche areas.

MSc by dissertation in Occupational Therapy:

- Minimum of one year of clinical experience post community service.
- Detailed curriculum vitae.
- Motivation letter stating: 1) why you want to pursue an MSc by coursework and research report; 2) area and number of years of clinical experience; 3) relevant postgraduate courses attended; 4) what was covered in your undergraduate training relevant to the area of speciality.
- Complete concept note document describing your proposed study topic based on one of the OT research niche areas (see section 3.7 for more details on the preparation of a concept note).

3.2. Nursing Education

MSc by Dissertation in Nursing

- Prospective candidates require the completion of an Honours degree with a **minimum of 65%**.
- A minimum of two years clinical experience in the speciality field.
- A concept note (see section 3.7 for more details on the preparation of a concept note).
- Curriculum vitae.
- Applicants must avail themselves for an interview to determine their experience in the field of study, as well as their level of leadership in professional activities.

3.3. Department of Exercise Science and Sports Medicine (DESSM)

MSc candidates require the completion of an honour's degree or equivalent, minimum 65% aggregate and completion of internship and/or community service.

MSc Coursework and Research Report:

- Assessment of competency may be required.
- Curriculum vitae.
- Concept note for the research report (see section 3.7 for more details on the preparation of a concept note).
- Interview with potential supervisor(s).
- Motivation letter for the master's by coursework.
- Minimum of one year of clinical experience.
- Reference letter(s).

MSc by Dissertation:

- Assessment of competency may be required.
- Curriculum vitae.
- Concept note for the research project (see section 3.7 for more details on the preparation of a concept note).
- Interview with potential supervisor(s).
- Motivation letter for the master's by coursework.
- Minimum of one year of clinical experience.
- Reference letter(s).

3.4. Physiotherapy

To be eligible for the MSc (Physiotherapy) by coursework and research report as well as MSc by dissertation, applicants must hold a BSc/B (Physiotherapy) degree and show evidence of at least one year's clinical experience (which can be the community service/ internship year).

MSc Coursework and Research Report:

- At least one year's clinical experience.
- Detailed curriculum vitae.
- Motivation letter stating: 1) why you want to pursue an MSc by coursework and research report; 2) area and number of years of clinical experience; 3) relevant postgraduate courses attended; 4) content covered in your undergraduate training relevant to area of MSc speciality.
- Reference letter - use prescribed template provided on the Physiotherapy webpage: (https://www.wits.ac.za/course-finder/postgraduate/health/msc-physiotherapy/)

MSc by Dissertation:

- At least one year's clinical experience.
- Detailed curriculum vitae.
- Motivation letter stating: 1) why you want to pursue an MSc by dissertation; 2) area and number of years of clinical experience; 3) relevant postgraduate courses attended; 4) content covered in your undergraduate training relevant to area of MSc speciality.
- Complete a concept note using template provided on the Physiotherapy webpage:

(https://www.wits.ac.za/therapeuticsciences/physiotherapy/academic-programmes/postgraduate/) - see section 3.7 for more details on the preparation of a concept note.

- Reference letter - use template provided on the Physiotherapy webpage: (https://www.wits.ac.za/course-finder/postgraduate/health/msc-physiotherapy/)
- Attend an interview if deemed necessary.

3.5. MSc Med (dissertation) in Pharmacology

- Students are required to have an Honours degree with **a minimum of a 60%** pass in Pharmacology or any of the allied biosciences, including Biochemistry, Chemistry, Microbiology, Physiology, Molecular Medicine, Cell biology.
- Pharmacy students: Students with a Pharmacy degree are accepted directly into an MSc, provided they have a 60% pass in their fourth year.
- Applicants must submit a motivation/concept note (see section 3.7 for more details on the preparation of a concept note).
- Applicants must avail themselves for an interview.
- Candidates must be able to attend the University on a regular basis.
- Successful applicants that have not completed an undergraduate pharmacology course or the Pharmacology Honours degree must complete and obtain a pass mark in the Nursing Pharmacology Course.

3.6. Master's programs in Pharmacy

Pharmacy offers MSc degrees by both dissertation and coursework. All MSc degrees in the Pharmacy Department require at **least a 65% pass** mark in the fourth study year of the Pharmacy degree, or in an acceptable Honours degree in an allied course. Candidates must be able to attend University on a regular basis. There is some variation in the entrance criteria of the different MSc courses offered in Pharmacy. Please see below:

All candidates must fulfil a requirement for an interview, for completion of the application process. A supervisor needs to be identified prior to applying for any of the full research Master's programs.

The following categories of interest will be evaluated:

1. **Research ability:** The qualifying learner should demonstrate interest in research and the ability to evaluate, teach and implement research findings.
2. **Attitudes and values:** The qualifying learner should demonstrate ethical and skilled ability to conduct all aspects of specialist pharmacy research, both in relation to the care of individuals and of populations.
3. **Teaching role:** The qualifying learner should demonstrate knowledge of the principles and practice of pharmacy from the basic to the advanced level and be able to train others in the speciality.
4. **Self-development:** The qualifying learner should demonstrate self-direction and independence in his or her learning in order to become a life-long learner, and will recognize personal education needs, utilize appropriate learning situations and evaluate her or his own progress.

Summary of the degrees offered by Pharmacy and the specific requirements of each: Research only MSc's

- **Entrance criteria for M. Pharm by dissertation**
  - **Degree Code: MRA03; Plan Code: MPAPHM70**
    - Candidates for this course must have completed an Honours degree in Pharmacy with a 65% pass.

- **Entrance criteria for MSc. Med by dissertation**
  - **Degree Code: MRA05; Plan Code: MCA08**
    - The candidate must have completed an Honours degree in Allied Health Sciences with a 65% pass.

Coursework and Research Report MSc's

- **Entrance criteria for MSc (Med) in the field of Pharmaceutical Affairs**
  - **Degree Code: MCA08; Plan Code: MFAPHAF60**
    - The candidate must possess a minimum average of 65% in their Honours program in Pharmacy or Allied Health Sciences. The candidate must have a minimum of 3 years working experience in the pharmaceutical industry/sector after achieving their Honours qualification.

- **Entrance criteria for MSc (Med) in the field of Clinical Pharmacy**
  - **Degree Code: MCA08; Plan Code: MFAPHPY60**
    - The candidate must have completed an Honours degree in Pharmacy with a minimum mark of 65%. The candidate must have a minimum of 3 years working experience in the pharmaceutical industry/sector after achieving their Honours qualification.

3.7. Introduction of a concept note

The inclusion of a concept note, as part of the requirements, can be implemented at the discretion of each department.

Rationale for a concept note:

All students wishing to do a dissertation should present the supervising department with a concept note, focussing on the idea of research. This concept note should be submitted to the research coordinator and should be evaluated either by the potential supervisor or the research committee of the department.

- The evaluation of the concept note must fulfil the specific criteria set by each department.

- The following criteria are suggested:
  - The value of the topic within the research needs of the various departments.
  - The ability of the department to supervise the topic.
  - The resources required to complete the project.
  - The language skills and computer skills of the applying student.
  - The ability of the student to write a critical argument for a topic.
  - Ability to obtain, read and evaluate available relevant literature.

4. Registration for the MSc Programmes in the School of Therapeutic Sciences

4.1 Administration issues

- **Registration:** Please note that if you have any queries about registration or PG fees that you need to contact Anna Muronga on anna.muronga@wits.ac.za. You need to get a letter from your supervisor that is also signed by the HOD to assist with registration if you are doing a dissertation.

- **Fee Payment:** You need to contact the Fees office for information on payments. https://www.wits.ac.za/study-at-wits/student-fees/

- **Student Card:** Once you have registered you can collect your student card at Wits Education campus Kudu Card Office, 1st Floor, Administration Block.

- **Parking:** Please contact vijanthi.purmasir@wits.ac.za for assistance with parking access at Wits Education campus.

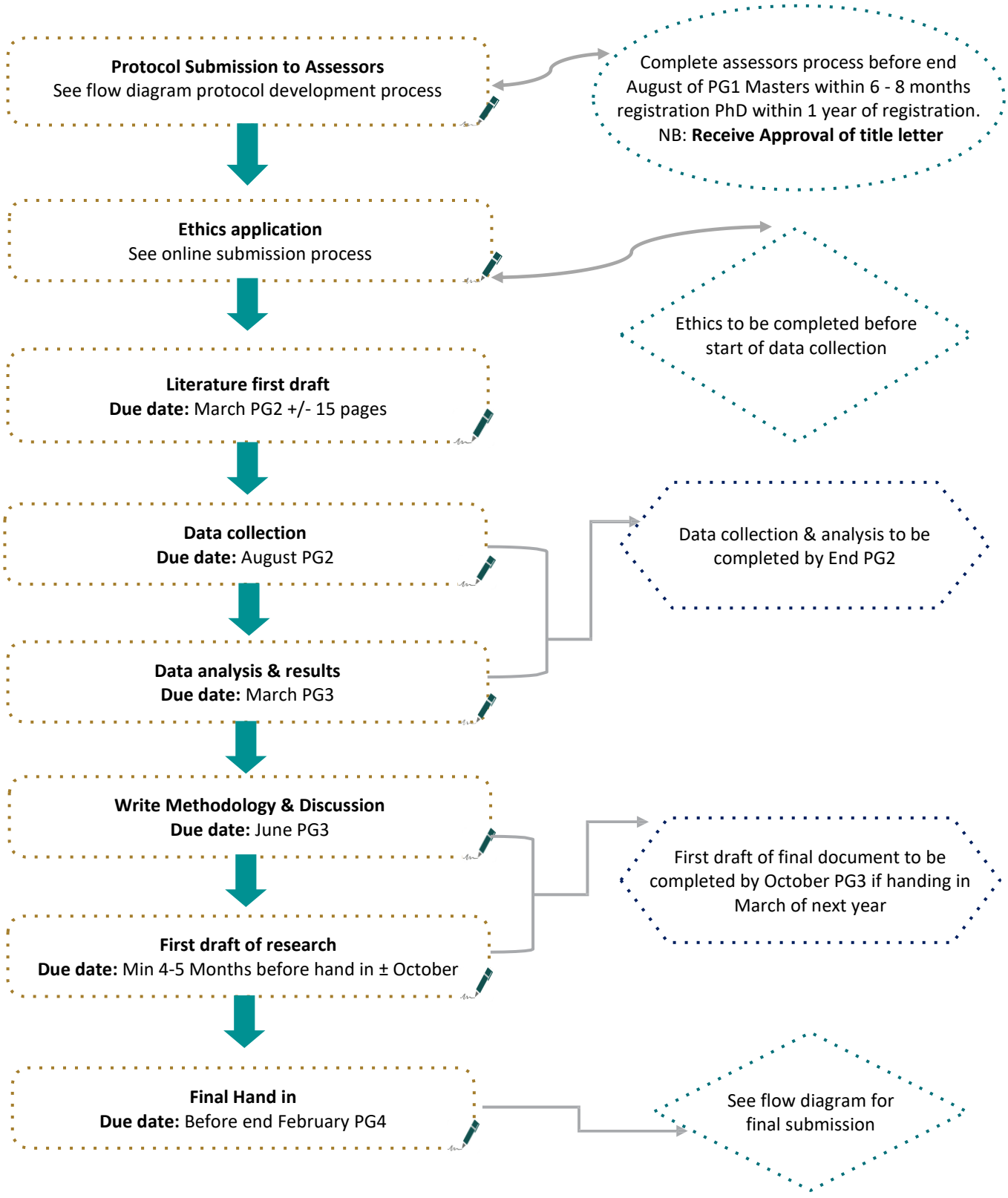
- **Student email and login:** You will receive your student email and login details from Wits ICT once you have registered. ITStudentHelp@wits.ac.za.

- For any other information please access the student portal: https://www.wits.ac.za/students/ Or the Postgraduate research page: https://www.wits.ac.za/health/research/research-office/postgraduate-research- support/

To note: the School of Therapeutic Sciences does not have access to university administrative systems and won't be able to assist within any of the above.

5. Research process in the School of Therapeutic Sciences

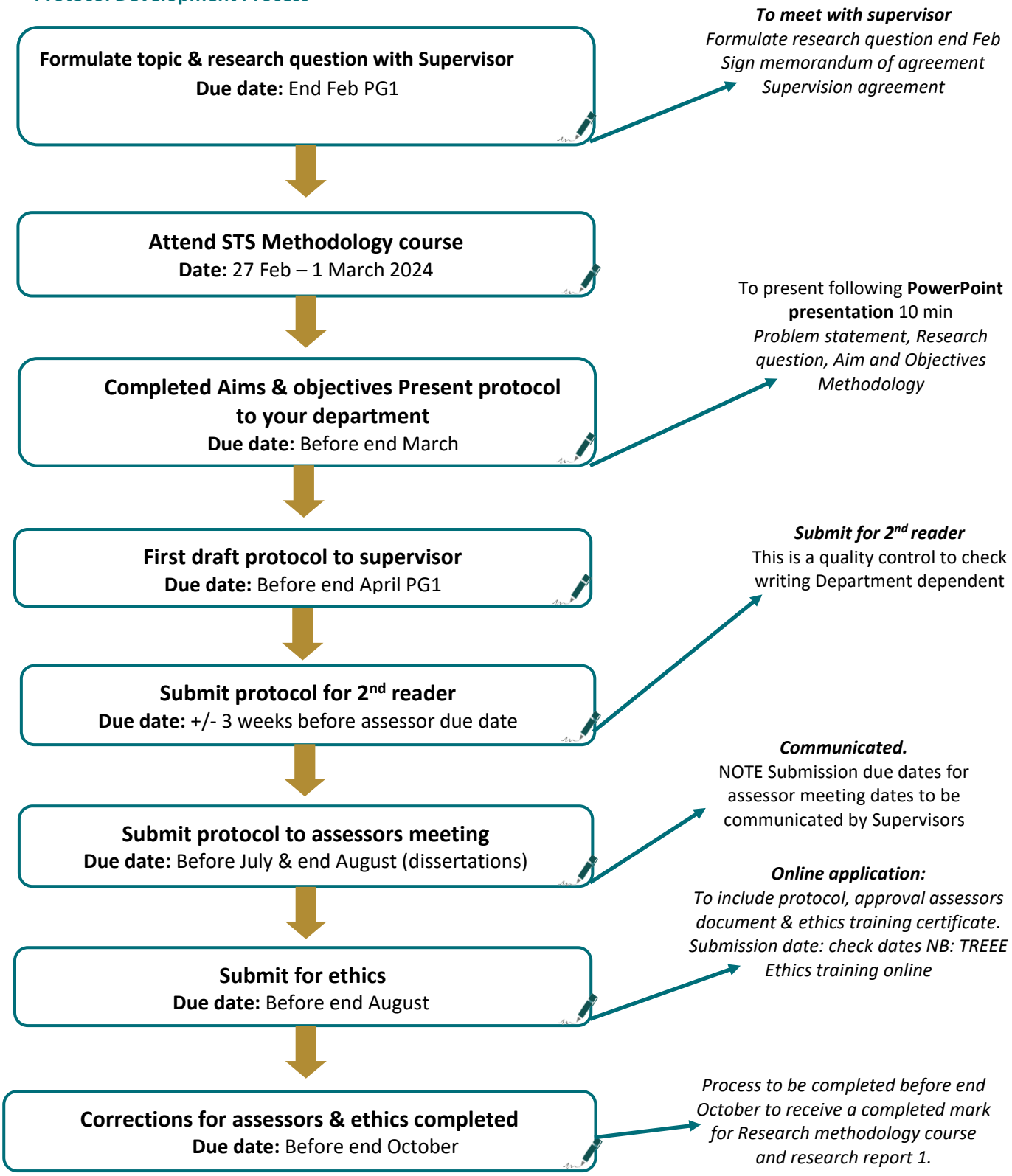
Research process (general guidelines for max timeline)



PLEASE NOTE: Some dates or timelines may differ from department to department and within degree codes

6. Protocol development process in the School of Therapeutic Sciences

Protocol Development Process



PLEASE NOTE: Some dates or timelines may differ from department to department

7. Research Process in the School of Therapeutic Sciences

Research Task	Description	Documents for task	Person Responsible	Time Frame
Development of protocol	1. Formulate the topic & research question with Supervisor. 2. To attend the Research Methodology course in March. 3. To present research ideas to the Department. 4. Student and Supervisor work on the development of the protocol.	Protocol examples on Moodle Turnitin Plagiarisms MOA supervisor & student	Student & Supervisor	**PRESENT: Friday** in research methodology week
Submission for 2nd reader (OT department)	1. The protocol needs to be submitted to a 2nd reader. 2. Submission: 4 weeks before the Assessors submission 3. To be sent to the Research Coordinator for distribution to a second reader. 4. The second reader has 2 weeks to review that protocol.	2nd reader checklist	Research Coordinator	SUBMIT **4 weeks** before assessors. FEEDBACK: 2nd reader **2 weeks** to check
Submission to assessors	1. The protocol needs to be checked AND signed off by the Supervisor. 2. The Supervisor should especially check ethical issues and forms. 3. The Research Coordinator will sign the documents for submission **AFTER 2nd reader changes** were made. 4. The Moodle site for submission will open **ON THE DAY** of submission	Frontpage Appointment of Supervisor Form Turnitin (when done with 2nd reader corrections) Plagiarisms (Check the tick list for documents to be submitted for assessors)	Signed by the Student & Supervisor and HOD.	SUBMIT SIGNATURE: **1 week** before assessors.
Assessors' correction	1. Students are to make changes based on the assessor's feedback. 2. Supervisors should check corrections.	Corrections document Supervisor approval of corrections	Student Supervisor HOD (if required)	SUBMIT CORRECTIONS: Within 6 weeks after receiving feedback

Research Task	Description	Documents for task	Person Responsible	Time Frame
Submission to Ethics	1. Only apply AFTER the assessor's feedback. 2. Supervisors, please check ethics applications, especially the use of correct documents. 3. Upload **FINAL PROTOCOL AFTER CORRECTIONS**.	Ethics Documents available on website https://www.wits.ac.za/research/research her-support/research-ethics/ethics-committees/ **TREEE certificates** of student and supervisor.	Student Supervisor Research Coordinator	SUBMIT SIGNATURE RESEARCH COORDINATOR: **1 week** before ethics to the Research Coordinator for signature on behalf of HOD.
Data collection	1. Complete data collection according to the protocol		Student Supervisor	
Appointment examiners	1. Supervisor to inform the research coordinator of students who intend to submit.		Supervisor Research Coordinator	**REQUEST EXAMINERS** **3 Months** before the intended submission date
Submission examination	1. The write-up can be done in the following formats: ● Block format (typical format) ● Submissible format (article format)	Formats of documents for submission on Moodle. SUPERVISOR Certificate of Submission for Examination – CANDIDATE Certificate of Submission for Examination Other documents as indicated on the checklist	Student Supervisor signed by all Supervisor(s) Research Coordinator	SUBMISSION: BEFORE **End of Feb** of the following year SUBMISSION SIGNATURES: **2 Weeks** before submission
Corrections for final submission	1. Supervisors to check and sign off on corrections. 2. The research coordinator needs to check the corrections and then send a letter to the HOD to say that the corrections were appropriately done.	Corrections document Supervisor approval of corrections Final corrections are to be approved by the HOD.	Student Supervisor Check and a letter signed by research Coordinator A letter signed by HOD	SUBMIT FOR CHECKING CORRECTIONS AND SIGNATURES: **2 Weeks** before the final submission
Final submission	1. Please contact one of the following people. Mpho Moiloa mpho.moiloa@wits.ac.za Modie Maumela modie.maumela@wits.ac.za For more information on the final submission	1. Certificate of Final Submission for Graduation 2. ETD form 3. Supervisor approval letter signed. 4. Coordinator letter 5. HOD letter CHECK FINAL SUBMISSION CHECKLIST	Student & Supervisor	SUBMIT FOR SIGNATURES: **2 Weeks** before the final submission
Graduation	Please contact the graduation office (EGO) for information on this.			

https://www.wits.ac.za/health/faculty-services/research-and-postgraduate-offices/postgraduate-studies/protocols--research/

PLEASE NOTE:

1. All research documents are available through the Departments or, if applicable, on the Department MS Teams under the Postgraduate research channel.
2. Please check the protocol to ensure that all the appropriate information is in before sign-off, of the protocol. The Research Coordinator will not sign off on documents if a Supervisor does not sign it.
3. The Research Coordinators are unable to assist with any registration admin etc, as they do not have access to the university admin sites.
4. Your Supervisor is the first port of call for all questions and documents. Please ask them before you contact the Research Coordinator.
5. Please check your documents for grammar and spelling mistakes.
6. Please plan your submission dates etc. according to the timelines. It has a considerable influence on your Supervisor as well as on the Research Coordinator's work timelines if you are late with submissions.
7. Please note the Research Coordinator may sign off on documents on behalf of the HOD in some Department(s).

8. MSc Protocol Assessor Dates 2025 in the School of Therapeutic Sciences

The School of Therapeutic Sciences has approximately seven research protocol submission and assessment dates annually. These meetings are hosted virtually on MS Teams. During the protocol assessment meetings, each panel consists of 3- 4 assessors and one member who chairs the meeting. Protocols are submitted one month prior to the assessors meeting, as per procedure outlined in point 9.

The dates for the 2025 academic year are as follows (time of presentation/assessors feedback are allocated shortly after submission and can be any slot from 08:30-16:00):

SUBMISSION DATES MSc	ASSESSORS COMMITTEE DATES MSc
Tuesday, 21 January 2025	Wednesday, 19 February 2025
Tuesday, 11 March 2025	Wednesday, 16 April 2025
Tuesday, 15 April 2025	Wednesday, 14 May 2025
Tuesday, 17 June 2025	Wednesday, 16 July 2025
Tuesday, 15 July 2025	Wednesday, 13 August 2025
Tuesday, 12 August 2025	Wednesday, 10 September 2025
Tuesday, 9 September 2025 **(Dissertation only)**	Wednesday, 8 October 2025 **(Dissertation only)**

SUBMISSION DATES PhD	ASSESSORS COMMITTEE DATES PhD
December, 2024	Thursday, 20 February 2025
Friday, 28 February 2025	Thursday, 15 April 2025
Friday, 25 April 2025	Thursday, 12 June 2025
Friday, 20 June 2025	Thursday, 7 August 2025
Friday, 22 August 2025	Thursday, 9 October 2025
Friday, 10 October 2025	Thursday, 27 November 2025
Friday, 12 December 2025	Date for February 2026 to be announced

PLEASE NOTE

Students should complete protocols within the first six months of the first year of registration.

The final Assessors committee scheduled in October is for full dissertation protocols only, and only one per Department may be submitted.

The protocol submission process is online on the Moodle platform for MSc students and via the Faculty Postgraduate office for PhD students. You will then be given access for submission a day or two before the submission date.

9. Process to Submit Protocols in the School of Therapeutic Sciences

The protocol submission process changed from submission via email to **uploading protocols on the Moodle platform**.

9.1. Administrative Process before submission

- The Research Coordinator of each of the departments completes the protocol details excel sheet and submits to the STS administrative officer 2 weeks before the submission date. (*Student and Supervisors are to ensure that they inform the Research Coordinator of the students intend to submit their protocol*).
- The STS administrative officer will upload the students to the Moodle page for submission.
- The Student will be able to upload the documents from the Monday before the submission date or on the submission date.
- The students upload **one PDF document** of the signed submission forms and protocol on Moodle.
- The Department responsible for coordinating the protocol submission and assessor meetings facilitate this process.
- The STS administrative officer will inform students of the date and time for their assessors meeting.

PLEASE NOTE: The supervisors need to inform Mrs. Irene Janse van Noordwyk of your intention to submit so that you can be loaded on the system. If your Supervisor did not inform the STS assessors coordinator you will not be able to submit.

9.2. Submission Process

* All students will be required to upload their protocols to Moodle. Moodle page: **2025 STS Assessor Submissions**

The School of Therapeutic Sciences had been working on a paperless system for the past couple of years, hence the limited amount of copies that needs to be submitted, however, if a student does not submit online (i.e. upload to Moodle)) s/he will not be assessed (as we will not be able to circulate the protocol electronically).

- Students will upload their protocols (with all the necessary forms) in PDF as per the norm to the Moodle. Everything still needs to be signed off by the supervisor and student (as per the normal procedures).
- Change: students do not have to submit a hard copy to the PGO nor does it have to be stamped, but some proof of registration needs to be included in the documents. Students have to upload their protocol to Moodle. Once uploaded, the onus will be on the Research Coordinator to submit to the PGO electronically. Mpho will then sign and tick whether the student is registered or not and then return to the Research Coordinator.

Protocol document for upload:

All required information should be typed (this pertains to all forms).

- The protocol may **ONLY be 10 pages** (1.5 line spacing, margins 2.54 all around) excluding appendices, cover page, agreement, and plagiarism documents.
- The Cover Page and Forms must be **typed, signed** by the Student and Supervisor/s
- **1 x complete (single file) PDF copy** (file should preferably not exceed 2MB) (signed, appendices; relevant (signed) forms etc) should be uploaded to Moodle.
- PDF File should be saved as follows **SURNAME INITIALS_DATE OF ASSESSMENT.PDF** [i.e: Slabbert TM_090920.pdf]
-

Order of documents

- **Protocol Cover Page** (signed by all).
- **Protocol** (10 pages max) with appendices.
- **Plagiarism** Declaration (x1).
- **Student/Supervisor** Agreement (x1).
- **Human and Animal Research Ethics Declaration** (x1) (please note that this is a requirement from the Faculty Postgraduate Office and should be included with all protocol copies).
- **Appointment of Supervisor** (x1) (please note that this is a requirement from the Faculty Postgraduate Office and should be included with all protocol copies).
- **Proof of Registration.**
- **Tick List** (x1).

Submissions that do not comply with these requirements will be declined.

In lieu of the present extraordinary circumstances, some of the processes had to be adapted and approved of by the Faculty of Health Sciences. As such, the following changes will be implemented until further notice:

Please note that students will only be able to upload their protocol to Moodle if they are listed on the Excel sheet i.e. if not listed, then they won't be assessed.

10. Ethics Applications in the School of Therapeutic Sciences

10.1. Dates for submission 2025

- For Full study applications (that are not grant/commercially funded) processed by the Wits Research Office housed within the Phillip V Tobias Building (WRO) - Click here.
- For Grant / Commercially Funded study applications processed by the Secretariat housed within Wits Health Consortium (WHC) - Click here.

For more information regarding the submission process for the grant/commercially funded study applications follow this link: https://www.witshealth.co.za/Services/Research-Ethics/Application-Forms.

Please note the other categories of applications following the expedited review process listed below should be submitted through the office email HREC-Medical.ResearchOffice@wits.ac.za. Hard copies are not required.

*10.2. PROCESS TO REQUEST ETHICAL CLEARANCE **Human Research Ethics Committee (Medical)***

https://www.wits.ac.za/research/researcher-support/research-ethics/ethics-committees/, chose HREC (Med), see "Downloads."

Apart from the study types listed below under the heading Exceptions, Principal Investigators (PIs) should apply for ethics clearance using the online system at http://www.witsethics.co.za/login.aspx. Meetings are held monthly (January to November), usually on the last Friday of the month and the closing date for applications is usually the 7th day of that month. Applications received after that date will be held over to the following month. Closing and meeting dates are listed at https://www.wits.ac.za/research/researcher-support/research-ethics/ethics-committees/ - select the HREC (Medical) option, under "Downloads". The Medical Ethics Office endeavours to provide feedback to applicants within 28 working days of the meeting. Applicants normally have up to 3 months to respond to the feedback.

10.3. EXCEPTIONS

Studies fitting the descriptions below are not catered for on the online system and applications may be lodged by bringing or sending 1 hard copy of the application into the Medical Ethics Office, which is located on the 3rd Floor of the PV Tobias Building (corner of St Andrews and York Roads in Parktown). The Medical Ethics Office endeavours to provide feedback to applicants within two weeks of receipt.

In cases 1-3 below, an application form (HREC(Med)AppForm2023) may be downloaded from https://www.wits.ac.za/research/researcher-support/research-ethics/ethics-committees/ - select the HREC (Medical) option, under "Downloads".

Case Studies

Definition: Case studies usually present a report on the records of between 1 and 5 patients, who have exhibited a very unusual condition while being treated in hospital. The patient(s) is/are not identified in the report.

Process: If not evident from the Application Form, it helps to have a covering letter which explains why the case is unusual and likely to be of interest to peers of the author(s). Standard supporting evidence includes support from the hospital CEO, the signature on the Form of the Head of Department and Supervisor (where applicable) and the informed consent of the patient(s). Where the patient(s) is/are lost to follow-up, a brief account should be recorded of the efforts made to contact him/her/them.

Sub-studies

Definition: a sub-study usually involves data mining of the results from a larger study which has already received ethics clearance. Evidence will be required from the holder of the original ethics clearance that the applicant has been given approval to have access to the data.

Exclusions: a sub-study may not include the gathering of any new data, collection of additional specimens, new interviews and the like. If these activities are contemplated, a full online submission is required, as described above.

Process: If not evident from the Application Form, it helps to have a covering letter which explains how the study fits into or complements the original study. Standard supporting evidence includes support from the holder of the original ethics clearance and the signature on the Form of the Head of Department and Supervisor (where applicable).

Laboratory studies

Definition: In many respects these are similar to waivers (see section 0 Waivers below), except that human materials are being studied in the laboratory, rather than cell lines and the like.

Process: If not evident from the Application Form, it helps to have a covering letter which explains the antecedents of the study, with a particular focus on demonstrating that the persons from whom the study material was derived gave informed consent to further studies on their specimens; this is usually achieved by furnishing a copy of the Consent Form. In some instances, the material may be surplus left over from routine hospital treatment. Such cases will be assessed on their merits, having regard inter alia to whether patients were asked to give a blanket consent on admission and whether the material is truly anonymized.

Waivers

Definition: A waiver of ethics approval may be applied for when the applicant is not working on any material derived from humans; typically, such studies would involve commercially available cell lines, or bacteria or viruses isolated in the laboratory. Application formats are essentially the same whether or not the study is from a student, for degree on non-degree purposes, or from a member of staff.

The other circumstance in which a waiver may be applicable is in a study based on information which is truly in the public domain. This can be in the nature of a literature search on open databases, or data analysis from public datasets. There should be no gatekeeper involvement and no other prerequisite, such as a membership of a particular body, fees for access and the like.

Process: An application form (HREC(Med)WaiverAppForm2023) may be downloaded from https://www.wits.ac.za/research/researcher-support/research-ethics/ethics-committees/ - select the HREC (Medical) option, under "Downloads." If not evident from the Application Form, it helps to have a covering letter which explains the context of the study. Standard supporting evidence includes the signature on the Form of the Head of Department and Supervisor (where applicable).

10.4 POST-CLEARANCE STUDY AMENDMENTS

The range of study amendments and reasons for them is considerable and thus there can be no "one-size-fits-all" application form. There are two approaches for requesting and post-clearance amendment.

(a) In the case where an online application was used for the original clearance:

Visit the online ethics system (http://www.witsethics.co.za/login.aspx) and click on the Tile labelled: Track My Application. Search for the protocol that needs to be amended. Follow the prompts to request an amendment.

(b) In the case where no online application was used for the original clearance:

A letter (1 copy) with appropriate supporting documentation should be submitted to the Medical Ethics Office. A further copy of the study protocol would only be required if the amendments are extensive and difficult to comprehend out of this context. If the applicant is a student, it often helps to have evidence of supervisor support.

Any study which proposes to involve Wits staff or students must also be cleared by the university's Deputy Registrar (Nicoleen.Potgieter@wits.ac.za), after ethical clearance is granted, before it may begin.

10.5. Check List

Please add a tick against each required document:

Document description	✓
Complete ethics application form, including all relevant sections	
- Please check that all forms are signed by the Principle Investigator	
- Please check that all forms are signed by the Academic Head of School or Department	
- Where appropriate signed by the Supervisor	
Research tools needed in the study (where appropriate)	
- Questionnaires	
- Interview schedules	
- Information sheets	
- Informed consent form	
- Assent form	
- Data collection sheet	
Approvals and letters of permission	
- Letter of permission to conduct research from the HOD – only if Application Form not already signed by this person	
- Letter of permission to conduct research from the hospital CEO	
- Letter of permission to conduct research from other relevant authorities, e.g. participating company, Dept of Health, database gatekeeper, owner of proprietary tool, NHLS, etc	
- Evidence of ethics training Applicant, all co-applicants, supervisor and co-supervisors	

10.6. Ethical permission within the Department of Health

Every MSc and PhD student who is planning on doing research within a Department of Health setting needs to register their project on the National Research Database:
https://nhrd.hst.org.za

10.6.1. CLINICS: If you are doing research in a clinic:

10.6.1.1. For **clinics in the Johannesburg Metro,** submit the protocol and provisional ethics letter to the Johannesburg Health District Research Committee (DRC) to Prof Moosa. Please follow the instructions on the following website.

https://profmoosa.com/jhb-drc/apply-to-do-research-in-jhb/

10.6.1.2. Please note that you need to make sure that your National Research Database registration number is on this application.

10.6.2. HOSPITAL: If you are doing research in a hospital:

10.6.2.1. Permission **from hospitals** must be obtained by loading the research into the **National Research Database** https://nhrd.hst.org.za

11. Data management

11.1. Data management plan – template

0. Proposal name
Data Management Plan for the study titled: "……"
1. Description of the data
1.1 Type of study Study 1 – Validity and reliability study where quantitative data will be collected through a questionnaire on the questionnaire intended for use in the main study by high school cricketers. Study 2 – This is a longitudinal prospective study where quantitative data will be collected through questionnaires on the training intensities of high school cricketers. **1.2 Types of data** Quantitative data generated from questionnaires. **1.3 Format and scale of the data** Data from questionnaires will be extracted into a data collection sheet and will be stored as tabular data in a comma-separated values (.csv) file and in a text-file as a Rich Text Format (.rtf) or plaintext (.txt) format.
2. Data collection / generation
2.1 Methodologies for data collection / generation Data from the questionnaire will be extracted by the principal investigator into a REDCap form. The following data will be extracted for bowling, batting, fielding, strength and conditioning for cricket, and other sports: type of session (practice or match), session duration, session rating of perceived exertion (RPE), session RPE, acute:chronic workload ratios, session mood rating. Specific to type of activity: number of deliveries bowled, number of balls faced, and number of balls thrown. **2.2 Data quality and standards** Using a data collection form in REDCap which will be developed prior to data collection, the data extraction process will be standardized for all records.

3. Data management, documentation, and curation

3.1 Managing, storing, and curating data

Consent will be obtained from x, y and z. An information letter will be provided where we will explain that we would like to get the permission to deposit the data from the questionnaires into the …. research database that will be used for future research by bona fide researchers. The letter will also explain that at the moment, we do not know what the future research questions are, but if there is any specific topic that the parents and participants would prefer this data not to be used for, then this can be specified in the consent form. The participants can also indicate if this data can be used in commercial projects (e.g., ….).

Upon completion of the study, raw de-identified data will be stored in REDCap together with the consent form from the [parties who gave permission], data dictionary, comprehensive protocol with outcome measures and the ethical clearance certificate.

REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture) hosted at the University of the Witwatersrand is a secure, web-based software platform designed to support data capture for research studies, providing 1) an intuitive interface for validated data capture; 2) audit trails for tracking data manipulation and export procedures; 3) automated export procedures for seamless data downloads to common statistical packages; and 4) procedures for data integration and interoperability with external sources (Harris et al 2009; Harris et al 2019).

The participant's name, surname, and contact details will not be extracted from the online questionnaires and data will be recorded next to a study number only.

If there are any other direct identifiers as well as information that could lead to "deductive disclosure" of participants identities these will be removed following the process described in: Hrynaszkiewicz, I., Norton, M. L., Vickers, A. J., & Altman, D. G. (2010). Preparing raw clinical data for publication: guidance for journal editors, authors, and peer reviewers. British Medical Journal, 340, c181. doi:10.1136/bmj.c181.

Researchers who would like to use the data on the … database in future research projects will apply for ethical clearance. In addition, these applications will be reviewed by a DAC in the light of the intention of the parents and participant's original consent. If the committee is satisfied with the intentions of use, a Conditions of Use Agreement will be signed by all parties where after access will be granted to the specified REDCap project containing the data and associated documents. Upon completion of the project, the researcher will be required to upload the modified datasheet onto the REDCap system and remove the copies from his/her computer, whereafter the researcher's access to REDCap will be terminated.

3.2 Metadata standards and data documentation

The following information forms part of the meta-data:

- Depositor details (address, contact number, email)
- Creator's (principal investigator's) details (affiliation, ORCID, email)
- Title of dataset
- Data collection timespan
- Date data was created (including versions)
- File format
- Kind of data
- Population
- Context/setting
- Outcome measures used
- Interventions (if applicable)
- Variable list
- Keywords
- MeSH terms
- ICD-10 codes (if applicable)
- Unique identifier
- Associated publications (Full citation for publications, datasets, and other materials associated with the data)
- Potential future research questions (optional)
- Grant/funding agency
- Grant/funding number
- Brief Abstract (Maximum of 100 words)

The following documentation should be provided at the end of a project employing a quantitative study design:

1. Consent form from [all the relevant parties]: either collected via e-consent or via hard copy (scanned in).
2. Data dictionary in .csv format. Before extraction of the data dictionary, the Primary Investigator should review the "Data Dictionary Codebook" in REDCap to ensure that each of the variables are clearly explained.
3. Raw de-identified data after it has been cleaned in .csv format. The raw data file is downloaded from REDCap and then cleaned, however data should remain in the "raw" format e.g., where multiple choice options are used, the raw coded value (e.g., 0, 1, 2) should be added to the spreadsheet. Variable names should correspond to the variable names in the data dictionary.
4. Comprehensive protocol in .rtf format.
5. Ethical clearance certificate.

3.3 Data preservation strategy and standards

Data will be stored on the REDCap database hosted on the University of the Witwatersrand servers for an indefinite period, unless parents of participants or participants stipulate otherwise when completing the consent form. Data will be stored as tabular data in a comma-separated values (.csv) file and in a text-file as a Rich Text Format (.rtf) or plain text (.txt) format.

4. Data security and confidentiality of potentially disclosive information

4.1 Formal information/data security standards

The University of the Witwatersrand is a public university and is compliant with the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) ISO 27001 Information Security. Data will be stored in REDCap in an access-controlled project. REDCap uses encryption to protect traffic between the Web server and the End User as well as to protect REDCap authenticators. Only the Research Group Director will have access to the passwords for the projects.

Data will not be destroyed unless required for ethical or legal reasons in which case the University of the Witwatersrand's Central Records Office will be consulted for advice on expertise. For destruction of physical data, the guidance on Biobanks is followed. For destruction of data on the internet, the University of the Witwatersrand follows the guidance of the South African National Research Network: Computer Security Incident Response Team.

4.2 Main risks to data security

No names, surnames or contact details will be captured. Study numbers will be assigned to each participant at the time of data collection. REDCap is a secure database. We therefore do not foresee risks to data security related to this project.

5. Data sharing and access

5.1 Suitability for sharing

The data from this project is suitable for sharing because information captured is not of a sensitive nature.

5.2 Discovery by potential users of the research data

A project description with its meta-data will be shared on the research unit's website as well as on the Wits Wired Space platform. Data can be located through the use of a search function. From here, interested researchers will follow a REDCap link where more information (project metadata) can be found. The process for requesting access to data will also be described on the research unit's website and the Data Management and Sharing Guide will be available via a download function on this same website.

The DOI of the dataset (if available at the time of publication) on which the publication findings are based will feature in the associated publication.

5.3 Governance of access

The Recipient (researcher who would like to reuse the data) will complete an online data request form via the link https://redcap.link/datarequestform . The link for the data request form link will also be made available on the data sharing webpage on the … website. The REDCap form will request the following details: name, surname, contact number, email address, affiliation, detailed description of the objectives of the study, data needed and intended use of the data and a study protocol. A Recipient may be internal or external to Wits. Priority of access to data will be given to members of the … Research Group, unless if funders or publishers of a specific study require otherwise.

The request will be sent to the research group director who will review the request in relation to the following questions:

- Is the intended use of the data similar to what it has already been used for? If yes, the motivation for the request needs to be made clear.
- Are the scientific methods rigorous and ethical approaches sound as described in the protocol?
- If there are other data available which are more appropriate, these can be suggested.

Recipients are encouraged to submit their requests for data at least six weeks before the start of the intended period of use. The data access committee, research group director and principal investigator who collected the data will review the request and inform the Recipient of the outcome via email within three weeks from the data on which the request was received. If the request is denied, reasons will be provided, and the Recipient can appeal through the University's Data Access Committee.

The Recipient will sign a Conditions of Use Agreement which can be found in Appendix …. Once the Recipient has obtained ethical clearance and the access agreement has been signed, the data will be released to the Recipient.

The research group director will keep a record of who the data is shared with as well as the intended use of the data. The research group director will share this report with the University or funders as required.

The application, review and approval processes are shown in Figure 1 (based on the MRC UK's suggested processes):

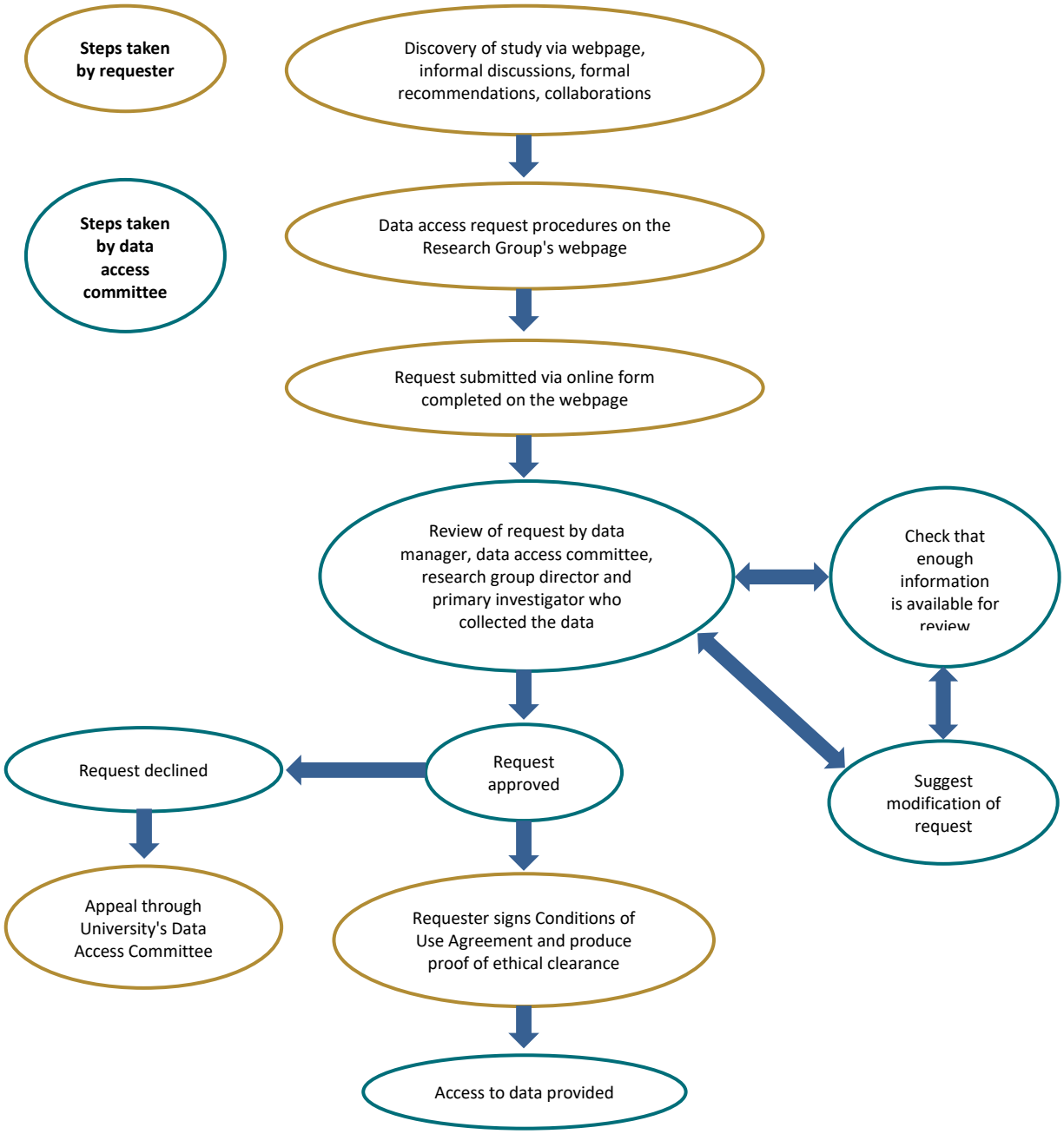


Figure 1. The application, review, and approval processes.

5.4 The study team's exclusive use of the data

Data will be made available for sharing after acceptance for publication which will be within 12 months after the end of the data collection period. The data collection period ends on the … (date of the ethics committee meeting where this proposal will be considered) and will therefore be made available for sharing by the ….(date of data availability)

5.5 Restrictions or delays to sharing, with planned actions to limit such restrictions

There are no restrictions or foreseen delays to sharing of this data.

5.6 Regulation of responsibilities of data users

Researchers who are not affiliated with the … Research Group can request access to data on the … Database and will be held to the same conditions as researchers who are affiliated with the … Research Group. All Recipients, Recipient Institutions and Data Users will be bound by the Conditions of Use Agreement which can be found in the Occupational Therapy Data Management and Sharing Guide or the respective Department's equivalent.

6. Responsibilities

The principal investigator is responsible for the data management, metadata creation, data security and quality assurance of data as no formal, paid data management services are currently available. The data access committee, research group director and principal investigator will review and process requests for reuse of the data.

7. Relevant institutional, departmental or study policies on data sharing and data security

The following documents were considered in the development of this data management plan:

- Wits Data Classification Policy
- Wits Data Cloud Policy
- Wits Research Data Policy draft 1 (8 July 2020)
- Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)
- Intellectual Property Policy C2012/228

8. Author of this Data Management Plan (Name) and, if different to that of the Principal Investigator, their **telephone & email contact details**

[Student Name], [Student Contact Number], [Student Email]

12. Dates for School Writing Retreats and Writing Dyads in the School of Therapeutic Sciences

The School of Therapeutic Sciences hosts one Writing Retreat Session a year, (not exclusive of additional writing retreats organised by the Departments). The aim of a Writing Retreat is to give dedicated writing time to academic staff members for the purpose of progressing their writing projects in a supportive, uninterrupted environment.

A written motivation is submitted to the Head of Department by the staff members who want to attend the session. Bookings are sent to the School's administrative officer to reserve the slot. The dates for the 2025 writing retreats are 20, 21, 22 August 2025.

The School has funding to host one Writing Dyad a year. The Writing dyads are designed mainly for postgraduate students whose theses are near submission or who have started with the writing- up process. These sessions are for three full days and supervisors are expected to accompany the students. The dates for the 2025 STS Writing Dyad are 1, 2, 3 October 2025.

13. Process for Students Applying for NRF Postgraduate Bursaries in the School of Therapeutic Sciences

The University Research Office provides financial support to Postgraduate students pursuing Honours, Masters and Doctorate.

The call for application for NRF postgraduate bursaries open in June of each academic year for the following year's funding.

The Postgraduate students who meet the eligibility criteria stipulated in the NRF new Postgraduate Funding Policy apply using the online application system.

All applications must be submitted via the NRF online submission system: https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za/

The University Research Office offers a briefing session and a recording for students to listen to before using the online application system. After registration, applicants are expected to upload an abstract summarising the following:

- the significance of the research project,
- the hypothesis and major objectives of the project,
- the procedures to be followed to accomplish the objectives, and the potential impact of the work.

All applications are rated/ reviewed using the NRF review criteria by the task team of assessors at School level.

The Chair of the School Postgraduate Research Committee collates the information and submits it to the Faculty.

Developed by the School of Therapeutic Sciences' Research & Postgraduate Studies Committee