



DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN HEALTH SCIENCES WITH POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY INFORMATION BROCHURE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Positive psychology as a scientific discipline is seeking an understanding of how humans flourish and how individuals, groups, communities and institutions can be strengthened. The PhD in Health Sciences with Positive Psychology allows candidates to further this field of research. It is the first specialised Positive Psychology PhD-degree in Africa, and one of the first in the world. This degree will require from candidates to conduct high-level research and make significant and original academic contributions to the field of Positive Psychology. This may contribute to an advanced knowledge base of and research competence into the nature, development, and enhancement of well-being in diverse contexts. The curriculum offers candidates the opportunity to develop specialised and advanced knowledge in Positive Psychology, with the accompanying relevant applied skills, attitudes and values as researchers in this field. It prepares the student for postdoctoral study in Positive Psychology. This qualification does not lead to a professional qualification or registration with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA).

The curriculum composition of this programme is of an academic nature, where candidates collaborate with a promotor for a minimum of two years and a maximum of three years to write a thesis in article format. It is presented full time and part-time in English as mode of instruction. All applications follow a selection process. Selected candidates will only be allowed to register once an adequate research proposal is ready for approval by a scientific committee within six months from registration. This information brochure provides information to prospective students and accepted applicants.

CURRICULUM

Qualification code: 8CB R09. The module code is PSYP971 and entails 360 credits presented as a thesis.

DURATION

The minimum duration of the study is two years and the maximum duration three years. Students who apply for an additional study year in accordance with the Academic rules of the North-West University must note that it will have financial implications for them.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- A masters degree in a relevant field (e.g., positive psychology or psychology) or an equivalent qualification as approved by Senate. Students must have achieved at least 65% for the masters degree.
- Proof of adequate prior knowledge in positive psychology is a prerequisite.
- Recognition may be given to additional experience and expertise.

- The research concept must fall within the research focus, projects and expertise of the subject group.
- Provisional admission is granted after completion of a selection process and is subject to a suitable qualification and academic performance.
- Final admission and approval is subject to available capacity and expertise in the subject group.
- Candidates may be required to attend additional workshops to improve their research skills.
- Attendance of ethics training presented by the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the NWU is compulsory.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Two sets of completed documents need to be submitted before the deadline of 30 September for application to the PhD in Health Sciences with Positive Psychology programme.

1. The official NWU application must be submitted on the NWU's online platform before 30 September. Information about the official NWU application process is available on the webpage for postgraduate students of the NWU: <http://studies.nwu.ac.za/postgraduate-studies>.
2. Apart from the official NWU application documents, the following programme-specific documents must be submitted via email to Juanita.Brits@nwu.ac.za, CC'ing Lusilda.Schutte@nwu.ac.za:
 - a. A programme-specific application form that can be downloaded from the NWU website at: <http://health-sciences.nwu.ac.za/auther/phd-health-sciences-positive-psychology>
 - b. The names, email addresses, and contact numbers of 2 references of which at least 1 must be from an academic context should be provided on the application form referred to in (a).
 - c. A complete CV of the applicant.
 - d. The full academic record of all previous academic degrees completed by the applicant.
 - e. A concept proposal of the planned study (maximum of 5 pages). The concept proposal should contain the following elements: Title of the proposed study; Background and problem statement (gap in knowledge); Aims and objectives; Method (e.g., design, participants, procedure, measures, data analysis, ethical considerations); References (referencses not included in page count). APA 7 referencing style should be used.

SELECTION PROCESS

Selection is based on the following information:

- an official NWU application form submitted to NWU Higher Degree Administration;
- the student's previous qualifications and academic record;
- proof of the candidate's prior knowledge in positive psychology;
- proof of the candidate's research skills;
- a research protocol which will be evaluated by a specialist panel;
- the research concept must fall within the research focus, projects and expertise of the subject group;
- final selection and approval is subject to available capacity.

The selection process may include various stages, such as paper-based pre-selection, interviews, further assignments, the attendance of workshops, etc.

OUTCOMES OF THE QUALIFICATION

After completion of this qualification the graduate must demonstrate:

- Depth of critical knowledge and high levels of theoretical understanding in a complex and specialised area within the field of Positive Psychology and/or across specialised or applied areas and the ability to expand or redefine existing knowledge in the field of Positive Psychology.

- knowledge and research methodologies to the solution of complex, unfamiliar problems in the field of Positive Psychology.
- The competence to integrate and apply theoretical knowledge and research findings within local and global contexts.
- The competence to question existing knowledge boundaries and practices in the field of Health Sciences within the specific focus area of Positive Psychology.
- The competence to deal with complexity, *lacunae* and contradictions in the knowledge base of the field of Positive Psychology.
- The ability to make autonomous independent judgements about information and concepts at highly abstract levels and make evaluations on the basis of independently generated criteria.
- Mastery of the literature and state of research in Positive Psychology.
- Research leadership within a field or across disciplines to optimise all aspects of research processes within complex and unpredictable contexts.
- High levels of responsibility, self-reflexivity and adaptability, with respect to the ethical implications of research, the determination of socially relevant issues and research needs in South Africa, and the ability to relate these issues to international contexts.

MODE OF DELIVERY

Full time / part-time. Contact. Attendance of the ethics training presented by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University on campus is compulsory. Attendance of specific research-related workshops relevant to the study will be compulsory. While most of the study guidance are often done electronically using email, virtual meeting platforms, and other virtual platforms, in-person meetings between the promotor and student will be also scheduled. The nature of the specific study with its resulting specific needs in terms of, for example, data gathering and data analysis, will determine the periods for which the student will have to be onsite.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

As proof that the outcomes have been reached, the candidate will have to:

- Defend the planned research within six months after the onset of the study in the form of an oral presentation of the protocol.
- Have the research protocol approved by a research committee of the research entity and the ethics committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences within six months after registration.
- Participate in and meaningfully reflect on the progress of the study in regular meetings with the promotor(s).
- Submit segments of the thesis to the promotor on a regular, scheduled basis for feedback, and demonstrate the ability to critically engage with the feedback to improve the product.
- Participate in debates where the candidate demonstrates the ability to critically reflect on his/her own work, the ethical implications thereof, and how it addresses socially relevant issues and needs in the South African and international contexts.
- Successfully defend the results of the thesis to a specialist and non-specialist audience.
- Successfully pass the final evaluation of the thesis by a team of internal and external examiners.
- Submit an article(s) to peer reviewed journal(s).

CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

NWU webpage for postgraduate students that also contains official NWU online application form:

<http://studies.nwu.ac.za/postgraduate-studies>

Costs and other general NWU enquiries:

For enquiries about costs and other NWU postgraduate enquiries contact: HigherDegreeEnquiries@nwu.ac.za

Programme-specific contact details and information:

Administrative enquiries: Mrs Juanita Brits, Juanita.Brits@nwu.ac.za

Academic enquiries: Prof Lusilda Schutte, Lusilda.Schutte@nwu.ac.za

Website: <http://health-sciences.nwu.ac.za/auther/phd-health-sciences-positive-psychology>