

Introduction to the Research Dissertation: PhD Level

The Research Dissertation for the PhD degree in Gender Studies should be thought of as a substantive and original piece of research, independently imagined, and completed through an intensive, long-term, engagement with the realities of activist and practical work which engages gender analysis, with academic peers, with supervision, and with the critical and applied field relevant to the research. Aspects of the final dissertation may well be publishable as they stand, and if not, should certainly lay the groundwork for publication in academically significant journals, books, relevant documents of technical application, and so on. Undertaking research for a PhD degree should be thought of as a demanding – and rewarding – commitment, and most researchers take a minimum of 4 years to complete the work required. On-going in-depth contact with supervisors, and – where possible – with a research community is an essential facet of the work.

- **Length:** the Research Dissertation should be approximately 80,000 words in length, including bibliography, but not appendices.
- **Supervision:** you will work closely with your dissertation research topic. Your primary supervisor will be located within the African Gender Institute. The choice of supervisor depends on your topic, and the availability of the supervisor. It may be useful for you to work with two supervisors, rather than one – this will depend on your topic, and the AGI faculty's areas of expertise.
- **Examination:** the Research Dissertation is examined by three external examiners, nominated by the AGI and accepted by the Faculty.
- **Dissertation Development Support:** beyond supervision, your research development will be supported in two ways. Firstly, the supervisor may recommend that you participate in a Masters level course on Gender Research Methodologies offered by the department. Secondly, you will be required to participate throughout the year in AGI-based research seminars, through which discussion of your own, and other researchers' work, will take place regularly.

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