

## College of Accounting Sciences

### Research focus areas for 2023: Department of Financial Intelligence

#### RESEARCH FOCUS AREA: MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

Please note that the bullets are not Topics *per se*, but areas of potential investigation. You have to find the gap in the knowledge or research problem in one of these areas, or a new area of investigation that still resides under the broad focus area.

This focus area includes *inter alia* research on:

- Management accounting systems and tools contributing to decision-making in the entity
- Performance measurement and/or evaluation (entity financial and/or non-financial performance measures; managerial compensation incentives; lease versus buy decision of fixed assets such as home-ownership versus rent)

#### Recommended reading list:

In April 2015, a 25th Anniversary Conference of the journal *Management Accounting Research* was held at the London School of Economics and Political Sciences. You will note that the majority of the articles and editorials listed below are from the subsequent anniversary edition of the journal. The articles therefore reflect recent management accounting debates which could be used to ascertain what has been researched – and then to find a gap in the literature. The articles include a wide range of debates, only some of which would fall within our research focus area. It is therefore your responsibility to ensure that any topic you select falls within the scope of the focus area.

Baiman, S. 2014. Some ideas for further research in managerial accounting. *Journal of Management Accounting Research*, 26(2), 119–121.

Bromwich, M. & Scapens, R.W. 2016. Management accounting research: 25 years on. *Management Accounting Research*, 31, 1–9.

Burns, J., Euske, K.J. & Malina, M.A. 2014. Debating diversity in management accounting research. *Advances in Management Accounting*, 24, 39–59.

Franco-Santos, M. Lucianetti, L. & Bourne, M. 2012. Contemporary performance measurement systems: A review of their consequences and a framework for research. *Management Accounting Research*, 23(2), 79–119.

Harris, J. & Durden, C. 2012. Management accounting research: An analysis of recent themes and directions for the future. *Journal of Applied Management Accounting Research*, 10(2), 21–41.

Luft, J. 2016. Cooperation and competition among employees: Experimental evidence on the role of management control systems. *Management Accounting Research*, 31, 75–85.

Malmi, T. 2016. Managerialist studies in management accounting: 1990–2014. *Management Accounting Research*, 31, 31–44.

Messner, M. 2016. Does industry matter? How industry context shapes management accounting practice. *Management Accounting Research*, 31, 103–111.

Salterio, S.E. 2015. Barriers to knowledge creation in management accounting research. *Journal of Management Accounting Research*, 27(1), 151–170.

Shields, M.D. 2015. Established management accounting knowledge. *Journal of Management Accounting Research*, 27(1), 123–132.

Van der Stede, W.A. 2016. Management accounting in context: Industry, regulation and informatics. *Management Accounting Research*, 31, 100–102.

Wagenhofer, A. 2016. Exploiting regulatory changes for research in management accounting. *Management Accounting Research*, 31, 112–117.

<b>STAFF MEMBER</b>	<b>Current supervision allocation</b>	<b>Number of available positions for 2023</b>
<p><b>Mr W Coetzee</b>            Willem Coetzee is a senior lecturer in the Department of Financial Intelligence. His master’s study encompassed the relationship between CEO compensation and company performance measurements.            He qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 2008 and as an associate member of CIMA in 2015.            Willem joined Unisa in 2011 after completion of his articles and he teaches on the CTA financial management stream.</p>	<p>1 MCompt Master’s student (co-supervision)</p>	<p>1 MPhil Master’s student (co-supervision)</p>

<b>Model of supervision</b>	<p>Candidates will be allocated to a supervisor but will be required to work independently within the requirements of higher degree studies. Each department in the College of Accounting Sciences has various research focus areas, which may change over time. With regards to this research focus area, the supervisors in the Department of Financial Intelligence and supervisors from other departments, can work together, as their interests are linked to this focus areas.</p>
<b>Selection criteria: M Compt (Accounting Sciences) MPhil (Accounting Sciences) and PhD (Accounting Sciences)</b>	<p>In addition to the minimum admission criteria on the application website, and in terms of par. 3.3 in the <i>Procedures for Master's and Doctoral Degrees</i>, the acceptance of potential students is based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adequate supervisory <u>capacity</u> and <u>research expertise</u> in the discipline or department;</b></li> <li>• Academic record and background of student;</li> <li>• Language competency of student;</li> <li>• Suitability and viability of the intended research;</li> <li>• An approved selection procedure, which is in line with Unisa's policies on equality and diversity in the discipline or department.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>It is compulsory for all applicants to prepare a five-page expression of intent essay.</u></b> The quality of the essay will be used to rank the applications based on the criteria stated above. The expression of intent essay must include the following compulsory elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal motivation to pursue studies in this topic (maximum 60 words)</li> <li>• Topic</li> <li>• Short literature review (<i>with in-text references using Harvard referencing style</i>). Please refer to the section on Recommended Reading – the research process and methodology, on <b>how to buy a Unisa Library membership in order to access full text</b> research articles (not all articles are Open Access). The literature review should demonstrate, as a minimum that you have at least read the recommended articles for the specific focus area under which you are applying. Consulting free webpages (e.g. Wikipedia) and textbooks alone does not constitute an academic literature review. The literature review should also speak to your topic and the broad focus area that you are applying to.</li> <li>• Potential <b>contribution</b> of the study answering the question “<b>What</b> do you want to research?” For PhD applications, please note that replication studies are not acceptable, i.e. investigating a phenomenon in Country/Province/Exchange X, when it has already been investigated in multiple domains, is not a theoretical contribution.</li> <li>• Research problem / research question/ research objective/ research aim answering the question “<b>Why</b> do you want to do research on the topic?”</li> <li>• Proposed methodology answering the question “<b>How</b> are you going to achieve the above?”</li> </ul> <p>List of references (use <b>Harvard</b> Referencing method). There are multiple free sources on how to apply Harvard Referencing. Please show that you are serious about academic research by following this instruction.</p>
<b>Selection procedure</b>	<p>1. <a href="#">Apply for a student number.</a></p>

	<p>2. Apply during the prescribed application period for a space in the <i>Department of Financial Intelligence</i> research focus areas. Ensure that you <a href="#">apply online</a>, and attach your essay of intent and other requested documentation.</p> <p>3. Staff members from the relevant registration support department will verify that you have provided the required information and that your qualifications meet the criteria for admission to the degree. Only complete and qualifying applications are sent to the academic department for consideration.</p> <p>4. The selection process firstly ranks the applications of the candidates within each specific focus area based on the criteria stated above. Therefore, the content and quality of the expression of intent essay is important as students are competing for a limited number of supervision openings. The specific focus areas indicate the expertise in the department. The highest ranked applications are then reviewed for equality and diversity. The applications are therefore ranked to match the applications with the available supervision capacity and expertise, while taking equality and diversity into account. Where adequate <i>supervision capacity remains</i>, applications beyond the specific focus areas will be considered, especially where a high quality essay of intent indicates a suitable and viable topic and a supervisor with the expertise is available.</p> <p>Generally, you should be notified of the outcome of your application during January. The notification will be done by staff from the relevant registration support department.</p>
<p><b>Documents to support the application in addition to the Expression of intent essay</b></p>	<p>One-page abbreviated CV including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic qualifications</li> <li>• Work experience</li> <li>• Contact details</li> <li>• Previous research (if any)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommended reading – the research process and methodology</b></p>	<p>You will be required to write an essay of intent on your own. Normally when you decided to do a Master’s or PhD study, you have an idea in mind or a topic that is of interest to you. The expression of intent essay is therefore your initial documentation of the idea, which has been developed into a rough topic in the chosen field of study.</p> <p>You therefore need to take the idea and review recent literature on the area of interest to establish what has already been done and whether the research problem is topical and sufficient sources exist. <b>Please ensure that you refer to the reading list of the Focus Area that you intend to apply in.</b> As part of the research process, you have to find a research problem/question. What you intend doing in your study to address the research problem or answer the question (the objectives) will be the focus of your proposed study.</p> <p>You will note that when you search articles on Google Scholar, an abstract appears. To access the full text, an access fee of approximately \$40 per article is payable, which you may not be able to afford. As a prospective student, you may contact the Unisa library to apply for special library membership. Click on the following link for details: <a href="http://libguides.unisa.ac.za/ask/LibraryMembership">http://libguides.unisa.ac.za/ask/LibraryMembership</a></p> <p>The following reading list will help you understand the research process and methodologies better:</p>

	<p><b>The research process:</b></p> <p>Biggam, J. 2018. <i>Succeeding with your Master's Dissertation: a step by step handbook. Fourth Edition.</i> Berkshire, England: Open University Press.</p> <p>Hofstee, E. 2006. <i>Constructing a good dissertation: a practical guide to finishing a Master's, MBA or PhD on schedule.</i> Johannesburg: EPE. (Available from the following website: <a href="http://www.exactica.co.za/book.php">http://www.exactica.co.za/book.php</a>).</p> <p>Mouton, J. 2001. <i>How to succeed in your Master's and Doctoral studies.</i> Pretoria: Van Schaiks.</p> <p>Trafford, V &amp; Leshem, S. 2008. <i>Stepping stones to achieving your Doctorate: By focusing on your viva from the start.</i> Berkshire, England: Open University Press.</p> <p><b>The research methodology:</b></p> <p>Leedy, P.D. and Ormrod, J.E. 2016. <i>Practical research: planning and Design.</i> 11<sup>th</sup> edition. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.</p> <p>Ryan, B, Scapens, RW &amp; Theobald, M. 2002. <i>Research method and methodology in finance and accounting.</i> 2nd edition. London: Thomson.</p> <p>Salkind, MJ. 2016. <i>Exploring research.</i> 9<sup>th</sup> Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education International.</p> <p>Smith, M. 2020. <i>Research Methods in Accounting.</i> 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. London: SAGE publications Ltd.</p>
<p><b>Recommended reading – search tools</b></p>	<p><b>Search tools:</b></p> <p>Google Scholar is a helpful tool to search for information relating to your research topic. If you have a student number, you can use the facilities of the University.</p> <p>A link to Library guides on Unisa's Library home page is another source of information. You can consult the completed Theses and dissertations portal under the institutional repository in the Library to familiarise yourself with what is required to complete your qualification. You can also search the aspects of the research process you would probably like to know more about on YouTube, for example: how to develop a good research topic; the literature review; academic writing; research methodology; etc. You will note that many of these YouTube videos are from academics at universities. The videos will obviously not replace the more detailed reading that you will need to do if your application is successful, but they provide a fair source of background information on the research process, which should assist you both in the writing of the required essay and in continuing with the study if your application is successful.</p>
<p><b>Difference between a Master's and a PhD study</b></p>	<p>In a PhD study, the student must demonstrate that they are contributing to the <b>advancement of the theory in the discipline</b>. Investigating something purely because it has not been done before, or prior results are inconclusive is not sufficient. Please review the NQF level descriptors on the SAQA website <a href="http://www.saga.org.za/docs/misc/2012/level_descriptors.pdf">http://www.saga.org.za/docs/misc/2012/level_descriptors.pdf</a> to differentiate between what is expected at NQF level 9 for a Master's study and level 10 for a PhD study.</p> <p>The following blogs (in the field of education, but the principles are still universal) may also be helpful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://sites.google.com/site/johannescronje/">https://sites.google.com/site/johannescronje/</a></li> </ul>

- <https://patthomson.net/2018/04/02/thesis-knowhow-how-the-contribution-can-create-coherence/>
- <https://thesiswhisperer.com/>

**Other Research Focus Areas in the Department of Financial Intelligence (refer to separate documents)**

**Research focus area:**

**Stakeholder  
communications by stock  
exchange listed-companies**

**Research focus area:**

**The Fourth Industrial  
Revolution (4IR) and  
Development Finance**