

The University Capacity Development Programme Office

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Workshop Overview



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Proposal writing workshops for Masters and PhD students Workshop

Prepare to embark on a transformative journey in academic excellence! Our workshop, tailored exclusively for postgraduate students - Masters and PhD, delves deep into the essential pillars of successful proposal writing. Led by seasoned academics, this immersive experience will guide you through the intricate processes of conceptualising a research problem, navigating ethics and plagiarism concerns, crafting a robust literature review, and mastering the art of academic writing. In our dynamic sessions, you'll learn to refine your research ideas into clear and compelling proposals, ensuring alignment with ethical standards and avoiding the pitfalls of plagiarism. We'll explore the nuances of constructing a comprehensive literature review, equipping you with the skills to synthesize existing knowledge and identify gaps in the field. Through practical exercises and personalised guidance, you'll hone your academic writing skills, mastering clarity, coherence, and conciseness in your scholarly work.

Date: 4 – 6 August 2026

Time: 09h00 to 16h00

Venue: Council Chamber, Westville Campus

Meet the Facilitator



Professor Nirmala Devi Gopal is a distinguished scholar and educator with an esteemed career spanning 40 years in the basic and higher education sectors. Currently, she serves as the Head of the Department of Criminology and Forensic Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, where she has been instrumental in shaping the field through her dedication to research, teaching and academic leadership. She has actively engaged in the NIHSS SABTT with commitment and integrity, during which she broadened her academic research profile by integrating discussions pertinent to the Global South, particularly regarding poverty and various forms of discrimination and the digital divide, which influences the cycle of economic poverty.

Beyond her departmental leadership, Professor Gopal was the Acting Director of Teaching and Learning within the College of Humanities. Her extensive contributions to higher education reflect her commitment to student-centred learning, fostering critical inquiry and inspiring the next generation of criminologists and students generally. Professor Gopal is a prolific researcher who has authored numerous scholarly works on criminology, forensic studies, and social justice. Her research interests encompass crime and justice in South Africa, school and gender-based violence, international peace and security, illicit drug use and cybercrime, contributing to policy discussions and reform efforts in these critical areas. Recognised for her expertise, she is a sought-after speaker at academic conferences and professional forums where she shares her insights on crime trends, justice systems and the evolving role of criminology in contemporary society. Her leadership extends beyond academia as she collaborates with governmental and non-governmental organisations to bridge the gap between research and real-world application.