Lincoln University of Eswatini (LUE)

Faculty of Social Sciences and Development Studies

PROSPECTUS

Master of Philosophy in Development Studies

(MPhil Development Studies)

Research the Change Eswatini Needs

2 Years | 4 Semesters | 60 Credits per Semester | 240 Total Credits | ESQF Level 9

ACCREDITATION STATUS: This programme has been developed by LUE in accordance with Eswatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC) Programme Approval Standards and is being submitted to ESHEC for accreditation. Prospective applicants should confirm the current accreditation status of this programme with LUE's Admissions Office before enrolling.

September 2026

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WELCOME

The Master of Philosophy in Development Studies is LUE's flagship postgraduate research degree — a two-year MPhil combining a full year of advanced coursework with a substantial, fieldwork-based thesis, designed to build the local development-research capacity Eswatini's national planning depends on.

Why Study MPhil Development Studies at LUE?

- Eswatini's own national reviews repeatedly call for stronger local research and monitoring-and-evaluation capacity — this degree exists to build exactly that.
- No other Eswatini institution currently offers a dedicated, research-intensive MPhil in Development Studies.
- A genuine MPhil, not a standard taught Master's: 75 of 240 credits (31%) are devoted to a real, fieldwork-based thesis.
- Every graduate produces both a publishable academic paper and a policy brief — your research is designed to reach policymakers, not just examiners.

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

Award:	Master of Philosophy in Development Studies
Faculty:	Faculty of Social Sciences and Development Studies
Duration:	2 Years | 4 Semesters | 60 Credits per Semester | 240 Total Credits | ESQF Level 9
Total Credits:	240 credits
ESQF Level:	Level 9
Mode of Study:	Full-Time, Campus Learning
Number of Modules:	13 modules
Practical/Workplace Learning:	A two-part MPhil Thesis (fieldwork, then analysis/writing/defence)

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- A Bachelor's Honours degree (or equivalent) with at least Second Class Honours (Upper Division) in Development Studies, Economics, Sociology, Political Science, Geography, Public Administration or a closely related social-science discipline.
- A research concept note (1,000–1,500 words) outlining a proposed area of thesis interest, submitted with the application.

International qualifications are accepted subject to LUE's equivalency assessment and Eswatini Qualifications Authority (EQA) confirmation. Mature applicants without the standard qualifications may apply via LUE's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process. All applicants remain subject to LUE's Admissions Committee decision, which may apply additional selection criteria where places are limited.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

240 credits over 2 years (4 semesters): a full year of advanced coursework, followed by fieldwork and thesis writing.

Semester 1

Module	Credits
Advanced Research Methods in Development Studies	15 cr.
Theories of Development	15 cr.
Global Political Economy and Development	15 cr.
Quantitative Methods for Development Research	15 cr.

Semester 2

Module	Credits
Sustainable Development and Environmental Policy	15 cr.
Governance, Institutions and Development	15 cr.
Research Proposal and Literature Review	15 cr.
Gender and Development	15 cr.

Semester 3

Module	Credits
MPhil Thesis Part I: Fieldwork and Data Collection	30 cr.
Seminar in Development Practice	15 cr.
Regional Integration and SADC Development	15 cr.

Semester 4

Module	Credits
MPhil Thesis Part II: Analysis, Writing and Defence	45 cr.
Publishable Paper and Policy Brief	15 cr.

Full Course Learning Outcomes, weekly teaching schedules and reading lists for every module are available in LUE's Detailed Course Outlines for this programme, available on request from the Admissions Office.

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

Advanced Theoretical Grounding

Theories of Development, Global Political Economy and Development, Governance, Institutions and Development, and Gender and Development.

Rigorous Research Training

Advanced Research Methods in Development Studies and Quantitative Methods for Development Research, before fieldwork ever begins.

Fieldwork and Impact

A two-part thesis — fieldwork and data collection, then analysis, writing and defence — followed by a Publishable Paper and Policy Brief module.

CAREER AND FURTHER-STUDY PATHWAYS

MPhil graduates are prepared for research, policy-analysis and doctoral careers:

- Development researcher or policy analyst (government, NGO or donor agency)
- Monitoring and evaluation specialist
- Economic-planning or public-policy roles
- UN or international-development-partner roles
- Doctoral (PhD) study in development studies or a related discipline

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Every module is assessed using LUE's standardised, criterion-referenced rubrics, moderated internally and, for capstone/thesis/dissertation components, externally examined. Marks are converted to a letter grade and grade point on LUE's institution-wide scale:

Percentage Mark	Letter Grade	Grade Point	Interpretation
80–100	A+	4.00	Exceptional
70–79	A	4.00	Excellent
60–69	B	3.00	Very Good
50–59	C	2.00	Good
45–49	D	1.00	Pass
0–44	F	0.00	Fail

Award Classification

Classification	Weighted Average
Distinction	70% and above
Merit	60% – 69%
Pass	50% – 59%

HOW TO APPLY

- Submit a completed LUE application form, available from the Admissions Office or LUE's website.
- Attach certified copies of academic transcripts and certificates evidencing the entry requirements set out above.
- Attach a certified copy of your national identity document or passport.
- Pay the non-refundable application fee specified by LUE's Finance Office.
- Attend an admissions interview or assessment, where required for this programme.

Applications are considered by LUE's Admissions Committee, and successful applicants receive a formal offer of a place, conditional upon final confirmation of qualifications and, where applicable, ESHEC accreditation status at the time of enrolment.

Contact

Faculty:	Faculty of Social Sciences and Development Studies

Office:	LUE Admissions Office

This prospectus is accurate as of the date shown on the cover page and is provided for general information. It does not form part of any contract between LUE and an applicant. Programme content, fees and accreditation status are confirmed at the point of offer.