Research Support Services at the University of Cape Town Libraries

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Research Commons Librarian
• UCT Libraries in collaboration with the Research Office planned an exciting Research Week in May 2014

• To address the unique interests of research students and researchers

• Sessions included Research and Publication, Open Access and Research Ethics

• Research Expo provided students the opportunity to promote their own research

• Topics emerging from an “Inspire Idea Tree” included: supervisor relations, loneliness, funding, ethics clearance and data management
Inspire Idea Tree

- Choosing the Right Methodology
- Research Related Stress
- Technical Issues and Writing Up
- Dealing with Your Data
- Loneliness
- Supervision
- Writer's Block
- Choosing the Right Topic
- Rejection
- Referencing and Citation
- Funding
- Perseverance
Researcher Loneliness

• Research is a lonely activity

• Creating student support groups for postgraduate students working on their own

• Balancing studies and work is challenging – “wish I had classmates”

• Networking with other postgraduates in different faculties (but may be doing similar work)
Researcher Loneliness

- Services offered at UCT to combat loneliness and isolation:
  - **Research Commons** at UCT Libraries offers a well-appointed workspace
  - Creating a conducive environment to producing quality research
  - Develop a community of practice that young researchers will aspire to join
Researcher Loneliness

- **Research Commons Blog**: a new initiative to connect with those who feel isolated can accessed at [http://researchcommonsblog.uct.ac.za/](http://researchcommonsblog.uct.ac.za/)

- **Student Wellness Service**: [www.uct.ac.za/students/health/wellness/clinical/](http://www.uct.ac.za/students/health/wellness/clinical/) offers short-term counselling to students encountering personal, emotional or psychological problems

- **Postgraduate Students Association (PGSA)**: an academic association of all postgraduate students at UCT [www.uct.ac.za/apply/funding/postgraduate/association](http://www.uct.ac.za/apply/funding/postgraduate/association)

- To foster an active, vibrant and diverse postgraduate culture

- Contributing towards the development of the University of Cape Town as a world-class research-driven institution.
Supervisors

- Supervisor – supervisees relationships amongst postgraduate students: personality clashes, rigid interpersonal relations, delays in receiving feedback, lack of supervision guidelines

- Often leads to students becoming demotivated

- Supervisor has varied roles including those of an adviser, teacher, guide and critic

- Giving criticism is one of a supervisor’s main activities
Supervisors

Services offered at UCT to support students with academic writing:

- **The Writing Centre**: offers a one-on-one and group consultancy to students who want to talk about their writing located at: [www.writingcentre.uct.ac.za](http://www.writingcentre.uct.ac.za/)

- **Research Commons Writing Centre Consultations**: a collaborative effort with the UCT Writing Centre making themselves available in the Research Commons to further support postgraduate students.

- **Writing Centre consultant Libby Eaton** is available to students in the Research Commons Seminar Room weekly, on Tuesdays from 9:00 – 13:30.
To book an appointment at the Writing Centre is to register and make use of their online booking system at: [http://www.writingcentre.uct.ac.za/writing/booking](http://www.writingcentre.uct.ac.za/writing/booking)

- **Savvy Researcher Series:** aims to meet the evolving needs of postgraduates

- Hosted annually by UCT Libraries, the Savvy Researcher is a collective series of seminars and workshops aimed at postgraduate students.

- The series targets all aspects of the postgraduate experience, covering numerous topics that feed into the research cycle.

- Workshops take place every Thursday from 15h00 – 16h30 in the Ulwazi Training Room in the Chancellor Oppenheimer Main Library and will run until October 2015.

Interlibrary loans

- Another useful service for postgraduate students is that of the Interlibrary Loans Department situated on level 4 of the Chancellor Oppenheimer Library.

- Staff will source research materials that are not available at UCT from other libraries in South Africa or beyond.

- All UCT staff and students may use this service. There is no cost for items obtained in South Africa. See more at: http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/lib/interlibrary-loans#sthash.NbYcNeQy.dpuf
Referencing and Citation challenges

- Is an essential component of academic writing

- Feedback received from attendees at Research Week indicated students experienced countless problems with referencing
Referencing and Citation challenges

• UCT offers the following interventions to support their students overcome these challenges:

• Harvard UCT: Handbook on citation available at:  

• LibGuide on referencing for the UCT community

• UCT Writing Centre and avoiding plagiarism

• Citation Managers: RefWorks and EndNote

• Savvy Researcher Workshops on “Academic writing skills for postgraduates and citation management
Dealing with your data

- At UCT a Research Data Management Plan is underway. More information is available at the following link: [http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/research-data-management](http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/research-data-management)

- Partners such as:
  - UCT Libraries,
  - UCT ICTS,
  - Research Office,
  - Deputy Deans of Research for each faculty at UCT,
  - UCT Contracts,
  - Intellectual Property Services
  - DataFirst
Dealing with your data

- Supporting researchers is a multi-layered approach:
  - LISC & the MLIS (Masters in Library and Information Studies) Digital Curation course
  - Savvy Researcher Series
  - eResearch portal [http://www.eresearch.uct.ac.za/](http://www.eresearch.uct.ac.za/)
Research Ethics

- Ethics clearance help

- Ethics clearance

Postgraduate Research Office for ethics assistance

http://www.researchoffice.uct.ac.za/
Research Engagement Evening

• A new initiative that the Library would like to host once a term

• The purpose of hosting this *Research Engagement Evening* is to grow a culture of research at UCT

• To get prominent researchers to share principles/experiences/methodologies and such with younger researchers.

• It is more in the mode of an elder sharing research knowledge with a new generation of researchers.
Thank you!
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