TABLE OF CONTENTS

COPYRIGHT **i**

DECLARATION **ii**

DEDICATION **iii**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS **iv**

ABSTRACT **v**

CHAPTER ONE - OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH STUDY **1**

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 Background to the Study 3

1.3 Problem Statement 6

1.4 Purpose and Objectives of the Study 7

1.5 Researcher's Assumptions 8

1.6 Operational Definitions 10

1.6.1 Emergency Care Units 10

1.6.2 Registered Nurse 11

1.6.3 Specialist Nurse 11

1.6.4 Student Specialist Nurse 12

1.6.5 Handover 12

1.6.6 Private Sector Hospital 12

1.7 Significance of the Study 13

1. 8 Overview of the Research Report 13

1.9 Summary 14

CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW **15**

2.1 Introduction 15

2.1.1 South African Perspective 15

2.1.2 Factors Influencing the Handover 18

2.1.3 Summary 21
2.2 Verbal, Non- Verbal and Written Communication between Nurses 21
2.3 Experience, Education, Reflection and Decision Making 26
2.4 Patient Safety and Continuity of Care 29
2.5 Summary 32
CHAPTER THREE - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 33
3.1 Introduction 33
3.2 Research Design 33
3.3 Research Methods 34
3.3.1 Population and Sample 34
3.3.2 Sampling Method 35
3.3.3 The Research Instrument 36
3.3.4 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument 36
3.3.5 Data Collection Procedures 37
3.3.6 The Research Setting 38
3.4 Pilot Study 38
3.5 Ethical Considerations 41
3.6 Summary 42
CHAPTER FOUR - DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS 43
4.1 Introduction 43
4.2 Data Analysis 43
4.3 Results 45
4.3.1 Results of Section A – Socio-Demographic Data 45
4.3.1.1 Basic Nursing Education and Qualifications 46
4.3.1.2 Basic Nursing Education of Specialist vs. Non-Specialist RN 47
4.3.1.3 Practical Working Experience in Emergency Care Units 49

4.3.1.4 ER Working Experience – Specialist vs. Non-specialist RN 52
4.3.1.5 Employment Status and Working Capacity of Nurses 53
4.3.2 Results of Section B – Handover Procedure 55
4.3.2.1 Formal Handover Procedure Training of Registered Nurses 55
4.3.2.2 Current Handover Patient Documentation 55
4.3.2.3 Logical Sequence of Current Handover Patient Document 56
4.3.2.4 Contents of Current Handover Patient Documentation 56
4.3.2.5 Understanding the Contents of Current Documentation 57
4.3.2.6 Finding the Information Required for the Handover 57
4.3.2.7 The Primary Handover 58
4.3.2.8 The Primary Handover of Specialist vs. Non-specialist RN 59
4.3.2.9 Repetition of the Handover by Registered Nurses 60
4.3.2.10 To Whom was the Handover Repeated 62
4.3.2.11 Handover Repetition of Specialist vs. Non-specialist Nurses 63
4.3.2.12 Location of Registered Nurses Handover Practices 64
4.3.2.13 Location of Specialist vs. Non-specialist Nurses Handover 65
4.3.2.14 Information Contained in the Handover Procedure 65
4.3.2.15 Additional Information that should be in the Handover 66
4.3.2.16 Itemized Structured Ranking of the Handover Procedure 66
4.3.2.17 Specialist Nurses Itemized Ranking of the Handover 68
4.3.2.18 Experienced Nurses Itemised Ranking of the Handover 69
4.3.2.19 Non-specialist Nurses Itemized Ranking of the Handover 70
4.4 Summary 73

CHAPTER FIVE - DISCUSSION OF RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 75

5.1 Introduction 75
5.2 Discussion of Results 75

5.2.1 Demographics, Education and ER Employment Status 75

5.2.2 Handover Training, Documentation and Procedures 83

5.2.3 Content and Structured Ranking of the Handover 92

5.3 Conclusions Drawn 99

5.4 Limitations of the Study 101

5.5 Recommendations 102

5.6 Conclusion 104

REFERENCES **106**

APPENDICES and ANNEXURES **110**

ANNEXURE A – Instrument Approval Certificate 110

ANNEXURE B – University Ethics Clearance Certificate 111

ANNEXURE C – Private Hospital Group Approval Certificate 112

ANNEXURE D – University Research Title and Approval Certificate 113

ANNEXURE E – Private Hospital Group Research Request Letter 114

ANNEXURE F – Research Information Letter - Registered Nurses 115

ANNEXURE G – Research Questionnaire and Instrument 116

ANNEXURE H – Handover Acronym Pocket Card and Explanation 122

ANNEXURE I – Certificate of Proofreading for MSc Thesis 126