



Thesis Handbook

for
Master of Theological Studies,
Master of Divinity,
Master of Arts (Historical and Theological Studies)
and
Master of Theology

*This handbook does not apply to theses completed in the Counselling Department.
Counselling students inquire with faculty in their department concerning a potential thesis.*

Fall 2024

Updated on: November 26, 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

A thesis is a substantial work of original scholarship, completed under the direction of a faculty advisor with relevant expertise. It should make a unique contribution to scholarly research and debate, offering new evidence, analysis, and/or arguments relating to the question at hand. A thesis will demonstrate thorough knowledge of relevant literature, appropriate use of relevant methodology, keen critical and synthetic thought, and a clear and persuasive argument.

ThM and MA students

- ThM and MA students who choose the thesis option are required to write a thesis in an area directly related to the student's particular discipline.

Prerequisites

- All language requirements must be completed satisfactorily prior to submitting a thesis proposal for departmental approval.
- All ThM and MA students will take the course *Advanced Research Methods* (INTD 0861) which investigates research methodologies appropriate for advanced study, culminating in the preparation of a thesis proposal, including a comprehensive bibliography.
- The thesis topic must be approved prior to registration for the thesis course. (See sec. 2 and 3 below).

Time Allotment

- A ThM or MA thesis is the equivalent of 2 courses (6 credits). Students are expected to invest at least 240 hours in the research and writing of their thesis.
- The thesis must be completed within one calendar year. Students who have not completed their thesis within one year will be required to pay a program continuation fee each year until completion (academic standing: "Incomplete -- extension granted"). The continuation fee is the equivalent of the tuition for one course. The time limit for completing the ThM and MA programs remains at 7 years, including the thesis completion.

MDiv or MTS students

Prerequisites

- MDiv and MTS students who wish to prepare for further academic studies may substitute a thesis for two elective courses, provided they have an overall GPA of at least 3.3.

- MDiv students must have completed at least 18 courses to qualify; MTS students must have completed at least 9 courses. Students must have completed advanced courses in their area of interest (i.e., beyond the required core courses) prior to beginning their thesis, normally chosen in consultation with their Program Director or Major Coordinator.
- Students will normally complete INTD 0861 Advanced Research Methods prior to submitting their thesis proposal to their department. Students writing a thesis in Practical Theology may take CHED/PAST 0662 Tools for Reading Social Contexts: Ethnography for Ministry as a substitute, with the approval of the thesis advisor. However, the advisor has discretion to require Practical Theology students to take both CHED/PAST 0662 and INTD 0861. These research courses culminate in the preparation of a provisional thesis proposal, including a comprehensive bibliography.
- The thesis topic and proposal must be approved by the appropriate department. Prior to registration for the thesis, the department chair will confirm via email to the Registrar's office that the proposal is approved (See sec. 2 and 3 below).

Time Allotment

- The MDiv or MTS thesis is the equivalent of 2 courses (6 credits). Students are expected to invest approximately 240 hours in the research and writing of their thesis.
- The thesis is to be completed within one year of registration. Students who have not completed their thesis within one year will be assessed a continuation fee each year until completion (academic standing: "Incomplete -- extension granted"). The continuation fee is the equivalent of the tuition for one course. The time limit for completing the MDiv program remains at 10 years, including the thesis completion. The time limit for completing the MTS program remains 7 years, including the thesis completion.

2. FINDING A THESIS ADVISOR

- Students are expected to find a thesis advisor while enrolled in the *Advanced Research Methods* (INTD 0861), or *Tools for Reading Social Contexts: Ethnography for Ministry* (PAST/CHED 0662). This is done by contacting Tyndale faculty members with expertise in the area of research. It is best if the student has taken at least one course from the prospective advisor. This will enable the student and advisor to evaluate the degree to which they share common interests and will be able to work together. This is important to remember when making course selections.
- The student and advisor will discuss possible readers for the thesis (to be determined by the advisor).

3. PREPARING A THESIS PROPOSAL

- Students are expected to prepare a provisional thesis proposal while enrolled in the *Advanced Research Methods* and/or the *Tools for Reading Social Contexts: Ethnography for Ministry*

course. Using feedback from the thesis proposal completed in the course, the first draft of the proposal should be submitted to the advisor. The student and advisor will meet to discuss the proposal, and the advisor may make suggestions and request modifications to the proposal. The advisor must be satisfied with the quality of the proposal. The proposal should display correct use of grammar, style and form.

- When the advisor is satisfied with your proposal, he or she may send the proposal to other department members for suggestions.
- Once the proposal has been revised in light of any relevant faculty feedback, it will be resubmitted to the advisor, who will forward it to the appropriate department Chair for approval at the next department meeting.
- The department will either approve the thesis proposal without recommendations, approve it with recommendations, or reject the proposal. If approved, the Department Chair will sign your thesis proposal. You and the advisor will keep a copy of the signed proposal.
- The Department Chair will email the registrar's office indicating that the thesis and advisor are approved. They will also email a signed copy of the proposal to the dean's office, which will keep a copy on file.
- Once accepted, the basic topic of your thesis proposal cannot be modified. If major modification is necessary, a revised proposal must be submitted to your advisor, who will require the approval of the department.
- Note: Any research involving living human participants requires review and approval by Tyndale's [Research Ethics Board](#). See the [Research Ethics Policy Manual](#) for details. Students must consider this approval process when planning the timeline for their thesis.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADVISOR

The responsibilities of the thesis advisor are:

- To give guidance about the nature of research and the standards expected, the planning of the research process and methodology, literature and sources, as well as various ways of engaging in theological reflection.
- To maintain contact through regular meetings with the student, having read and thought about the student's work, so as to monitor the student's progress, provide constructive feedback and advice about the development of the research and the emerging argument.
- To read the draft of the thesis and to give detailed feedback and advice on what needs to be done before submission.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT

The responsibilities of the student are:

- To meet with the advisor according to the agreed schedule and to submit written work at least seven days in advance of each meeting.
- To take initiative and engage in open and constructive discussion about the development of the project, including any problems (or problems which could arise).
- To submit an appropriate schedule for the research and writing and keep to it, regularly communicating with and updating the professor.
- To take seriously the advice provided by the thesis advisor. Responsibility for the thesis in its final form lies with the student, not the advisor.
- To generate a written thesis that contributes to scholarship in a particular area, makes excellent use of appropriate sources and methods, and adheres to the academic standards outlined by Tyndale Seminary and the thesis advisor.

6. WRITING YOUR THESIS

Thesis proposals and theses are to adhere to academic standards for style, format, citations and references as found in the most recent edition of a recognized style manual (e.g., *The SBL Handbook of Style*, *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA), *The Chicago Manual of Style*, and the *Turabian Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*). The advisor will inform the student as to the preferred academic style format for the thesis.

a. Tyndale Thesis Requirements

- Referencing:** Adhere to academic standards for style, format, citations and references as found in the most recent edition of a recognized style manual (e.g., *The SBL Handbook of Style*, *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA), *The Chicago Manual of Style*, and the *Turabian Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*). Refer to the [tip sheets](#) by [The Centre for Academic Excellence](#). Ensure complete accuracy of application. The thesis advisor may be able to guide the student toward the appropriate reference format for a particular discipline, although the responsibility for accurate, properly formatted citations lies with the student.
- Format:** Students should use Times New Roman 12 pt font. Script, italic, bold, and underlined fonts may be used as appropriate for emphasis, clarity, or grammatical correctness within the document (see style manuals for further details). Typing should be double-spaced for the text, single-spaced for quotations which are inset (no inverted commas). Notes can be single-spaced in 10-pt font.

- iii. **Pagination:** Normally the pages of sections before the text are numbered with lower case Roman numerals, while the body of the text, bibliography and appendices are paginated with Arabic numerals. You should review the final document to ensure all pages are in the correct order, with no duplicates or omissions.
 - iv. **Margins:** The text will have a margin of one inch on the left, right, bottom, and top.
 - v. **Length:** A ThM thesis should normally be 30,000-35,000 words (ca. 100-120 pages) in length. An MA thesis should normally be 20,000-25,000 words (ca. 65-85 pages) in length. An MDiv or MTS thesis should normally be 20,000-25,000 words (ca. 65-85 pages) in length. This word limit covers the text including all footnotes, but not the bibliography or appendixes.
 - vi. **Binding (optional):** The official version of the thesis is the digital copy that will be placed in the Tyndale Digital Collections online repository. The library does not arrange the binding of student theses. Individual students who wish to have a bound copy of their thesis may take advantage of other commercial services available, and should consult with such services regarding appropriate paper, print quality, etc.
- b. **General Thesis Outline:** A thesis should include the following sections in the order given below. See also the “Thesis Submission Protocol” (sec. 7) below.
- i. **Title Page:** For sample title page, see Appendices.
 - ii. **Abstract:** Summary (ca. 200 words or 1 page) of what was argued in the thesis.
 - iii. **Dedication Page:** Some students like to dedicate their work. If this is done, the page should follow the abstract.
 - iv. **Table of Contents**
 - v. **Lists of Tables and Figures** (if used).
 - vi. **Acknowledgements.** Many students include an acknowledgements section in the thesis, though this is not required.
 - vii. **Introduction**
 - viii. **Text:** Your main body of research, appropriately divided into chapters.
 - ix. **Conclusion**
 - x. **Appendices:** In some cases it is necessary to include appendix material. This should be discussed at an early stage with the advisor. This material will not be counted as part of the word limit.

- xi. **Bibliography:** A complete bibliography should be provided, adhering accurately to the appropriate standards for formatting (see 6.a.i.).

7. THESIS SUBMISSION PROTOCOL AND CONCLUDING EXERCISE

- Students will work out submission dates with their advisor for draft versions of each chapter as well as for the final composite draft, keeping in mind that **a thesis will normally need to be in the hands of the advisor and reader about six weeks before the end of a given semester in which the student is completing the work (e.g., mid-November if completing in fall, mid-March if completing in winter, or mid-July if completing in summer).**
- Once the thesis is completed to the satisfaction of the thesis advisor, a concluding thesis exercise will be conducted.
 - For MDiv and MTS students, the concluding exercise could be a public presentation or an oral examination conducted by the thesis supervisor and the reader. This concluding exercise may be open to other faculty members and students. The type of exercise will be determined in consultation with your advisor and reader. You should arrange a date and time when you will meet with your advisor and reader for the concluding thesis exercise.
 - For MA and ThM students, the concluding exercise will be an oral examination conducted by the thesis advisor and the reader.
- Assuming that the thesis passes, the advisor and reader will provide the student with a list of any necessary revisions. The advisor and reader shall assign a letter grade to the thesis. (Please note: theses with a grade of C+ or lower will not be placed in the Tyndale Library.)
- If no revisions are required, the advisor will sign an *Advisor Clearance Form* (see appendices), which must be **secured before the thesis is submitted to the dean's office**. If revisions are required, the advisor will sign the *Advisor Clearance Form* when such revisions have been completed. The advisor will also ensure that norms for formatting have been met (see section 6 above).

8. AFTER THE CONCLUDING EXERCISE

- After any required revisions are made and your *Advisor Clearance Form* has been signed, you must submit the following to the Seminary Dean's Office (See Appendices):
 - The completed *Advisor Clearance Form*
 - The *Declaration and Disclaimer Form*
 - The completed *Tyndale Library Release Form for Theses*
 - The completed *TREN Agreement Form*
 - The final pdf version of the thesis. This copy will be used for Tyndale's thesis repository and TREN.

- After all of the above have been received, the Dean's Office will forward the pdf copy of the thesis, Library Release Form and TREN Agreement Form to the Library. The Library will then deposit the pdf version in Tyndale's digital repository.

9. PUBLICATION OF THE RESEARCH

- Students are encouraged to make the results of their research available to a wider audience after the successful completion of their thesis. This may mean the writing of a journal article or publication of a chapter in a collected work. Revisions may be necessary. Thesis advisors, program directors and departmental chairs may be consulted to assist students toward publication.
- If the thesis is published, the full bibliographic reference should be given to the director or chair. It is important that Tyndale Seminary has this information so that it can include it within public statements of its research output. Please notify the [Dean's Office](#) of any published work for inclusion in the Tyndale Library.
- In the published form, the work should acknowledge its origins in the ThM, MDiv, or MTS thesis at Tyndale Seminary. Please include this acknowledgement: "This work is a revised form of a thesis undertaken at Tyndale Seminary of Tyndale University, successfully submitted 20xx for the degree of Master of ..."

[Sample Thesis Title Page]



Holiness and its Relationship to Eschatology in 1 and 2 Thessalonians

by

[full legal name]

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of ... awarded by Tyndale University

December 2024

Toronto, Canada



ADVISOR CLEARANCE FORM

DATE: _____

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

THESIS TITLE: _____

THESIS ADVISOR: _____

THESIS READER: _____

APPROVAL DATE: _____

The academic requirements for this thesis have been satisfactorily completed.

(Thesis Advisor's signature)

Date

DECLARATION AND DISCLAIMER

Statement 1

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

(Signed) (candidate)

(Date)

Statement 2

This thesis is the result of my own independent work/ investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged with explicit references.

(Signed) (candidate)

(Date)

Statement 3

The views expressed in this thesis are my own and do not necessarily express the views of the thesis advisor, the thesis reader, or Tyndale Seminary.

(Signed) (candidate)

(Date)

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(Signature)

(Date)

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Author Profile

Explanations

1. Full Legal Name _____
(last name)

(first name) (middle name)

2. Year of Birth _____

3. Country of Citizenship _____

4. Present Mailing Address _____

5. Future Mailing Address _____

Effective on _____
(date)

6. Email Address _____

Degree Information

1. Degree Nomenclature _____ (Abbreviation for Degree)

2. Degree Date _____ (As Authorized by Institution)

3. Full Name of School Granting Degree

Title Information

1. Exact Title of Thesis/Dissertation as it Appears on Your Title Page

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Tyndale Seminary Thesis Completion Checklist

Prior to Registering for a Thesis

- ☐ Student has completed any necessary prerequisites.
 - For ThM or MA program: student has completed any language requirements.
 - For MDiv program: student has completed at least 18 courses.
 - For MTS program: student has completed at least 9 courses.
 - For all programs: student has completed advanced courses in area of interest.
- ☐ Student has sought advice sought from faculty members about the potential thesis topic and student's prospects for successful completion of a thesis.
- ☐ Student has taken Advanced Research Methods (and/or Tools for Reading Social Contexts, if applicable).
- ☐ If the proposed research involves living human participants, the student has sought approval from the [Research Ethics Board](#).
- ☐ Student has sought feedback on Thesis Proposal from their proposed advisor.
- ☐ Student (or advisor) has submitted the Thesis Proposal to the relevant department.
- ☐ The relevant department has approved the Thesis Proposal and advisor (may be granted pending recommended revisions).
- ☐ Department Chair has emailed a signed copy of the approved thesis proposal to the Dean's office.
- ☐ Department Chair has emailed the Registrar to indicate that the thesis and advisor are approved and the student is ready to register.
- ☐ Student has submitted "[Registration for a Non-Classroom Course](#)" form to the Registrar's office.

At the Completion of the Thesis

- ☐ Advisor deems the thesis ready to be submitted and has provided it to the reader.
- ☐ Concluding exercise with advisor and reader has taken place.
- ☐ Advisor and reader have assigned a grade and provided a list of any necessary revisions.
- ☐ Student has made required revisions.
- ☐ Advisor has submitted the grade to the Registrar's office.
- ☐ Advisor has signed "Advisor Clearance Form."
- ☐ Student has submitted necessary documents to the Dean's office: the Advisor Clearance Form; the Declaration and Disclaimer Form; the Tyndale Library Release Form for Theses; the TREN Agreement Form; the final pdf version of the thesis.