



Note: Before writing the dissertation project proposal, students should review the policies and procedures governing the writing of dissertation projects. The proposal should also include Research Ethics Board application for any qualitative research involving human subjects.

Instructions: Students in the Doctor of Practical Theology (DPT) program should create their dissertation proposal based on the following template. The proposal should be 4,000–6,000 words in length (including bibliography) to support a dissertation of 40,000–50,000 words. This proposal is to be developed by the student in consultation with the student’s supervisory committee. The primary supervisor will take the lead in the initial phases of the development of the proposal but will involve the secondary supervisor as the proposal takes shape. The supervisory committee must review and approve the proposal before it proceeds to the faculty for consideration and approval. In developing a dissertation project proposal, it is essential that a focus on the professional practice of the researcher be maintained. The ministry practice that the researcher is studying must be kept in the forefront, at the same time demonstrating a vigorous interchange between that practice and theological and theoretical literature that is relevant to the advancement of that practice.

Criteria for Evaluation and Approval

In order to receive approval by majority vote of faculty, the proposal document must:

- A. Provide, in full, all information requested below;
- B. Include a thesis statement that articulates the anticipated findings or outcome of the research project in a clear and concrete fashion (as distinct, for instance, from announcing a general intention to “examine” or “explore” the subject area in question);
- C. Indicate sufficient familiarity with the relevant primary and secondary literature, demonstrating an awareness of the history of research and its bearing on the project;
- D. Demonstrate the heuristic adequacy of the proposed methodological model or critical approach by delineating the specific procedures to be followed;
- E. Lay out the stages of investigation in logical sequence and indicate the manner in which each chapter of the dissertation contributes to the argument as a whole;
- F. Be free from errors of grammar and spelling, and conform in full to all requirements of the most recent edition of the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guide*.

Proposal documents that do not meet these requirements will be returned to the student for revision prior to further consideration.

- I. Please provide the following information on the cover page (in place of a title page):

APPLICATION TO WRITE A DPT DOCTORAL DISSERTATION PROJECT

A. Student Information

1. Student Name and ID number
2. Degree Program DPT, year of entry into the program
3. Date of submission
4. Date of projected submission of dissertation

B. Program Progress

1. Courses (name of course, semester taken, grade)
 - a. Critical Understandings in Ministry Leadership:
 - b. Advanced Research in Practical Theology:
 - c. Research Design and Implementation:
 - d. Professional Ethics:
 - e. Advanced Electives:
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
2. Professional Practice: Write a paragraph that describes your area of professional practice and the primary research interest that has arisen in that practice.

C. Supervisory Committee

1. Primary Supervisor:
2. Secondary Supervisor:

D. DPT Dissertation Project Proposal

1. Proposed title
2. Brief description of the topic (approx. 200 words):

E. Approvals

Approved by Primary Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Approved by Secondary Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Approved by Faculty (VP Academic or designate): _____ Date: _____

II. Beginning with a new page provide this information:

PROPOSED TITLE

Core Practice

Identify the core practice that you are researching in this dissertation project. State the contribution to the theoretical and theological significance of this practice. Discuss professional experience(s) that guide your research on this practice.

Topic and Purpose

Importance of the Research

Explain the reason for and potential significance of this inquiry. Articulate the research question(s) that the dissertation will address. It is appropriate to note that there may be no hypothesis to test because PLR seeks to identify emergent knowledge. As necessary, clearly express the limitations of the study (i.e., What will the study examine? What will the study not examine?). Give a rationale for your focus. Provide definitions for key terms and concepts that are relevant to this study.

Theoretical Perspective

Discuss the governing theories that guide the research on this topic/practice. Include the researcher's assumptions about the topic/question.

Theological Framework

Identify the theological resources and primary theological orientation that will guide the dissertation project.

Overview of Research

Provide a review of published literature and its potential contribution to the project. Also, identify any qualitative research that has already been done or that will be done as part of the dissertation project. Provide Research Ethics Board application and approval, if required by the topic.

Design and Methodology

Explain the following:

The methods of inquiry that will be employed (e.g., qualitative [specify type], mixed methods, quantitative).

The format of the research output. Discuss the artefact or what types of data may be generated (e.g., assessment or evaluation tool, concept maps, documentation of "outputs" and practice, flowcharts or matrices, memos, practice methodology, sermon or other "output").

The methods of analysis that will be used (e.g., exegesis, hermeneutical analysis, interpretive phenomenological analysis, thematic analysis, etc.).

Ethical considerations (e.g., Does this research raise any possible ethical questions or concerns? How will these be addressed? etc.).

DPT Dissertation Project Outline

Provide a proposed title and summary of each chapter of the dissertation project that reflects the overall flow and general direction of the dissertation as a whole and each chapter as a specific segment.

Proposed Timeline

Provide a proposed timeline for when you plan to complete each chapter and bring the dissertation project to defence. Include sufficient time to obtain REB approval, if necessary.

Preliminary Bibliography

This section comprises 20–30 sources directly relevant to the dissertation. MDC Style Guide should be observed throughout.