



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

Instructions: Students in the PhD (Christian Theology) program should create their dissertation proposal based on the following template. The proposal must be 6,000–8,000 words in length (including bibliography) to support a dissertation of 80,000–100,000 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.

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 dissertation 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 PhD DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

A. Student Information

1. Student Name and ID number
2. Degree Program PhD (Christian Theology), year of entry into program
3. Date of submission
4. Date of projected submission of dissertation

B. Program Progress

1. Courses (name of course, semester taken, grade)
 - a. Research Methods:
 - b. Interdisciplinary Seminar #1:
 - c. Interdisciplinary Seminar #2:
 - d. Courses in area of emphasis:
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
2. Language requirements (name of language, exam/course, date, pass/fail)
 - a. Ancient Language(s):
 - b. Modern Language(s):
3. Comprehensive exams:
 - a. Reading Area #1 (name of area, date of exam, pass/fail):
 - b. Reading Area #2 (name of area, date of exam, pass/fail):
 - c. Reading Area #3 (name of area, date of exam, pass/fail):
 - d. Oral Exam (date of exam, pass/fail):
(if you have further Reading Areas add these after c.)

C. Supervisory Committee

1. Primary Supervisor:
2. Secondary Supervisor:

D. Dissertation Proposal

1. Proposed title:
2. Thesis statement:
3. Proposal wordcount

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

Description of Topic and Its Importance

This section will describe the proposed research field and its importance, set in the context of the history of research. This section must end with a clear thesis statement which sets out in brief form the precise proposition or hypothesis that your project will seek to demonstrate and the original contribution your project will make to the research field.

Research Methodology and Procedure

This section will provide the research methodology, investigative model, and/or theoretical framework for the dissertation, describing the past development of this methodology/ model/framework, its importance to the particular research field, its usefulness for generating and verifying the conclusions reached in the dissertation, and the specific manner of its implementation.

Outline/Structure of the Dissertation

This section will provide an account of the projected organization of the dissertation and include a description of each chapter. The relationship between chapters should also be indicated, so as to explain the logical development of the argument as a whole.

Work Plan/Timeline

This section will provide a concise description of the proposed procedure for the development of your dissertation with a preliminary schedule for research and writing. This may not follow the outline of the dissertation, but rather the proposed order of research.

Preliminary Bibliography

This section comprises 30–50 sources directly relevant to the dissertation. MDC Style Guide should be observed throughout.