

# REGENT COLLEGE

## Guidelines for Theses in the MCS and ThM Programs 2007 - 2008

*(Revised February 25, 2008)*

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### **A. Purpose of These Guidelines**

The purpose of these guidelines is to outline for both students and faculty the aims, purposes and normal procedures for the writing and supervision of theses at Regent College.

#### **B. Defining a Thesis**

A thesis at Regent College is an extended written study that involves critical analysis and theological reflection upon a specific issue or concern. Such a study may address the issue from the perspective of a particular theological discipline (e.g., biblical theology, systematic theology, historical theology, church history, spiritual theology) or through an interdisciplinary approach.

Theses may consist of a case study in an area of applied theology, but in such instances they must offer considered theological reflection upon the implications of the study.

Theses may also include a publishable book or novel, or some other non-traditional form, provided that a reasonable apparatus is submitted reflecting in a scholarly way on the work.

#### **C. Assessment of Student Ability**

The minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) required for MCS and ThM students to have a thesis proposal approved is 3.5. For the MCS, the minimum thesis passing grade is B and the minimum GPA required for graduation is 3.0; for the ThM, the minimum thesis passing grade is B and the minimum GPA required for graduation is 3.3.

It is important for students to understand that thesis writing requires a good deal of personal initiative and good writing skills. Students need to convince a potential supervisor that he/she has the ability to take on and complete such a task. While a student may have the required grade point average to have a proposal approved, he or she may not have the writing skills needed to produce a good quality thesis, or the personal discipline to see it through to the end.

Students also need to be aware that faculty members are not required to supervise students who they do not feel are adequately prepared for the task. A student's previous academic record regarding completion of assignments on time and evidence of good writing and research skills should be taken into consideration by the student when deciding whether or not to take on the task of writing a thesis.

## **D. Length and Language of Theses**

MCS and ThM theses are worth 12 credit hours and should normally be between 30,000 and 45,000 words in length (inclusive of footnotes/endnotes, but exclusive of bibliography).

Theses may be presented in languages other than English if: (1) a supervisor and a second reader are available; (2) the proposal and subsequent correspondence are in English; and (3) a summary of the thesis is prepared in English.

Where foreign words are used in a thesis, students are expected to have enough competence in the foreign language(s) in order to spell and use the words correctly. Students should also be aware that extensive use of foreign language words may increase their cost of proofreading.

## **E. Stated Objectives in Thesis Writing**

The MCS program assumes a high level of commitment to independent study and possession of good research skills. With regard to the ThM program, it requires a high level of academic achievement with particular emphasis on independent research and thesis writing skills.

The aim of both programs is that the student will produce a valuable contribution to learning that will be evaluated by two or more faculty members (one of whom will be the supervisor of the thesis). Theses receiving a grade of **B+** or higher will be placed in the Library. Theses receiving a grade of **A-** or higher will also be made available to the wider academic community in micro-form through the Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN).

# **II. FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **A. Number of Students**

A faculty member is expected to supervise up to five theses at any given time; beyond this the faculty member may decline to take on any further thesis supervision in order to offer his or her students good quality supervision.

## **B. Responsibilities in Supervising**

In agreeing to supervise a student's thesis, a professor is agreeing to the following:

1. To discuss with the student his or her initial ideas about a thesis topic, suggesting possible readings to introduce the student to the specialized literature in the field;
2. To meet with the student regularly (normally at least once a month during the academic term) to oversee the formulation of a thesis proposal;
3. To require the student to take the non-credit "Academic Writing" course (GENR 311) if the student requires assistance in research and writing skills;
4. To approve the thesis proposal by initialling the title page once it satisfies the supervisor;

5. To read and comment on portions of the thesis as it is being written in order that the student might have on-going feedback on his/her work, including suggestions regarding style; normally faculty should return material submitted to them for review within a week of receiving it;
6. To ensure that students' theses conform to the accepted academic writing style of Regent College, which is found in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) and summarized in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), and
7. To give final approval of the thesis. At this stage the thesis is to be evaluated by the second reader and a grade determined by the supervisor in consultation with the second reader. In a case where first and second readers disagree on a thesis grade after consultation, the matter shall be referred to the Dean for adjudication.

It is not expected or desired that a thesis supervisor should be directly involved in any re-writing of a thesis. Minor stylistic changes may be suggested, but if the supervisor determines that the quality of writing in the thesis is not up to standard the supervisor may:

- (i) advise the student to have the thesis edited before it is graded. In this case the student is to be instructed to come to the Registrar's Office where he/she will be given a list of possible editors. It is the student's responsibility to cover the cost of the editing. The supervisor must ensure that the editing has been done to his/her satisfaction before grading and signing the thesis; or,
- (ii) in the case of an MCS student, advise and encourage the student to pursue a different course (the work done to date might, upon approval, be applied toward a guided study rather than a thesis).

### **C. Oral Exam**

A faculty member may request a *viva voce* -- an oral defence of the thesis. Such a defence may be held before the two examiners only, or be opened up to all faculty members, students and the general public and advertised as such. The normal format of such a defence will be: the student will recapitulate the central points of his/her thesis, the examiners will question and comment on specific points in question, and (at the discretion of the chair) the members of the audience may also be allowed to question the candidate. An oral exam taken by a student in conjunction with a thesis may not lower but only raise the final grade of the thesis.

## **III. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. Application to the MCS or the ThM Program**

The student must first apply and be accepted into the MCS or ThM program. For those students not been admitted to the MCS or ThM, application forms are available in the Student Services Office and on the Schedules & Forms page of the Regent website. Applications should be submitted to the Admissions Office for processing and are decided upon by the Admissions

Committee. Program requirements are outlined in the current Regent College *Prospectus* and *Academic Catalogue*.

### **B. Deciding Topic and Approaching Supervisor**

A student desiring to initiate a thesis project should decide on his/her general area of interest and then approach a faculty member within the appropriate discipline to discuss the suitability of the topic and whether or not the faculty member would be willing and able to supervise a thesis on such a topic. As part of this topic narrowing phase students are allowed to complete up to 20 % of a thesis through course work and guided study. As part of the discussion with the faculty member, students should share a recent copy of their transcript to show (i) what courses they have taken, (ii) that they have been admitted to the MCS or ThM program, and (iii) that they have at least a 3.5 grade point average. Note that only full-time Regent faculty may supervise theses. Also, where a thesis combines two distinct areas of investigation, two co-advisors may be appointed.

### **C. MCS Program Students: Thesis Orientation (GENR 301)**

Students planning to write an MCS thesis are required to register, pay for (see section on fees) and attend the non-credit “Thesis Orientation” (GENR 301) which is offered at the beginning of each Fall and Winter term. This seminar covers the regulations governing the style, format and other regulations concerning the submission of Regent College theses. It also deals with research skills, the steps in formulating a thesis proposal and the resources of libraries on campus (e.g., the Reference Sections of libraries; the John Richard Allison Library (Allison Library) and the UBC Library for databases, etc.) .

### **D. ThM Program Students: Theological Research and Writing Seminar (INDS 725)**

ThM students are required to take the ThM Seminar, INDS 725, which introduces them to the perspectives, tools, and methods required for research and writing in the various theological disciplines and is intended to prepare them to design, research, and write a ThM level thesis. This is normally offered every Fall term. ThM students are not required to attend the non-credit “Thesis Orientation” (GENR 301).

### **E. Preparation and Submission of Thesis Proposal**

Once a faculty member has agreed to supervise the thesis, the student will prepare a formal written thesis proposal according to the guidelines in Gay and Stackhouse, “Elements of a Thesis Proposal.”

The faculty member may require the student to revise the thesis proposal several times before it is ready to be submitted to the Thesis Proposal Approval Committee. When it is acceptable to the supervisor, he/she will sign the title page and return it to the student.

The student will submit the proposal to the Thesis Proposal Approval Committee for approval through the Student Services Office clearly marked to the attention of the Registrar’s Office. Students are required to enclose a total of five copies of the proposal for each committee member’s perusal. Signed thesis proposals must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the meeting of the committee. There is a limited number of thesis proposals which can be considered at each meeting. Deadlines for submission are posted on the Registrar’s Notice Board outside the Student Services Office.

In addition to assessing the thesis proposal, the Thesis Proposal Approval Committee will ensure the students' grade point average is at least 3.5, and will appoint a second reader at its own discretion. Students are *not* to indicate their preference for a second reader on the proposal.

The Thesis Proposal Approval Committee Chair will notify the Registrar's Office when a student's thesis proposal has been approved. A copy of the proposal will be kept on file in the Library for future consultation by students.

### **F. Registration for Thesis**

Students may register for a thesis only after they have completed the Thesis Orientation and have had their thesis proposal approved by the Thesis Proposal Approval Committee. Students who need to register for their thesis project prior to having their proposal approved should consult with the Registrar. Students may register for a thesis in the Fall, Winter or Summer term, but they must register either before the end of the same term in which their proposal is approved, or by the registration deadline of the subsequent term. Students may choose to split their registration and payment over two consecutive terms (e.g., 6 credits in Fall, 6 in Winter). If they choose this option, they do not need to submit a registration form for their final 6 credits; they will automatically be registered and charged for the final 6 credits at the beginning of the subsequent term (including Summer), and must pay the fees by the tuition payment due date of that term in order to avoid late payment charges. A \$300 deposit towards the binding, proofreading, microfilming and handling of the thesis will also be charged at the time of registration. Students should use a regular Registration Form (or a Course Change Form if registered for something else in the same term) plus the Thesis Registration Form (these forms are available in the Student Services Office and on the Schedules & Forms page of the Regent website). Except when pre-registering for a term, tuition and fees must be paid at the time of registration; otherwise late payment fees will result. Students on academic probation are not permitted to register for a thesis.

Students have three years to complete a thesis, dating from the first September after the registration. Students who have not completed by the first September after their registration will be required to pay a continuation fee (in addition to the regular registration fee). For example, a student who registers for 12 credits in January or May will begin paying continuation fees in September of the same year; a student who splits their registration and payment over the Summer and Fall terms or registers for 12 credits in September will begin paying continuation fees the following September. As long as the thesis is not complete, continuation fees will be charged automatically (i.e., no registration is required) at the beginning of Fall Term, up to the third September following the registration of the thesis. With regard to continuation fees, the thesis is considered to be complete when the student has submitted a final copy of the thesis to their supervisor to be graded. However, graduation certificates and transcripts will not be issued to students who have not submitted a minimum of three final copies of their thesis for binding to the Registrar's Office. Students having any questions concerning this or any other thesis policy should contact the Registrar for clarification.

### **G. Writing the Thesis**

Thesis students are strongly advised to complete their thesis at Regent College. Experience has demonstrated that innumerable problems arise when students attempt to write their thesis from a distance. Students are given three years to complete from the beginning of the Fall term following their registration for their thesis; any extensions to this time must be approved by the Academic Standards Committee, but students are warned that the Committee does not grant every appeal it

receives. Thus, every effort should be made to complete within the three-year time limit. And, in order for there to be adequate supervision, access to resources, less distraction from competing responsibilities, students are strongly advised to plan on staying at Regent while writing their thesis.

## IV. THESIS WRITING GUIDELINES

It is important that all thesis students follow these guidelines. Failure to do so may result in a thesis being returned to the candidate for re-writing before the degree can be granted.

### **A. Format**

The various parts of the thesis should be presented in the order given below, although not every thesis includes all the items below:

#### ***1. Preliminary Pages***

(a) *Title Page:* The form of the title page must follow the sample provided at the end of these notes. It must give the title, the date of submission, the degree expected, concentration, the date of graduation, and the candidate's name in full; and it must provide space for a signature of approval by the examiners. When the thesis has been approved and proofread, each copy must be signed by the two examiners.

(b) *Rights of Publication and Loan:* The following statement must immediately follow the title page, be signed by the student, and be bound with each copy of the thesis submitted to the College:

“In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirement for an advanced degree at Regent College, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be permitted by the Librarian. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.”

(c) *Abstract:* Each copy of the thesis must include an abstract as part of the “preliminary pages.” The abstract is a summary or condensation of the thesis; it states the problem, the methods of investigation followed, and the general conclusions. It should not normally exceed 350 words.

(d) *Table of Contents:* Each thesis must have a table of contents setting forth all the principal topics or subdivisions (including bibliography, appendix(es), and index, if any).

(e) *List of Tables:* The next separate section is the list of tables. The tables are numbered consecutively with large (or upper case) Roman numerals. For each table, the number of the table, its exact caption or title, and the number of the manuscript page on which it appears, are given.

(f) *List of Figures or Illustrations:* If any illustrations or graphs are used, they are numbered with Arabic numerals and listed separately. If there are several illustrations of any one kind--for example, maps--it is proper to have a distinct series for them, numbered and listed separately.

(g) *Acknowledgements:* This section should be a brief acknowledgement of assistance given to the candidate in his/her research and writing.

## 2. Text

- (a) *Introduction*: The introduction should present the purpose, methods, and scope of investigation.
- (b) *Text, Illustrations and Plates*: Illustrations (including maps and plates) should either be of standard size (with allowance for margins), or (if larger than 6" x 9.5") must be submitted flat. Small illustrations may be placed in the text. Tape must not be used in mounting photographs or illustrations.
- (c) *Notes*: Notes may be numbered throughout the thesis or throughout each chapter. The supervisor can advise whether footnotes or endnotes listed at the end of each chapter (or at the end of the text) is most appropriate for a particular thesis. The notes should be single spaced, with double spacing between the entries. For a layout of notes, consult Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

## 3. Reference Materials

- (a) *Appendix*: If an appendix is needed, it normally immediately precedes the bibliography.
- (b) *Bibliography*: The bibliography is a very important part of the thesis, and care should be given to its preparation. It should also be single spaced, with double spacing between the entries. The candidate should consult the style manual cited above for the form to be used. Journal titles should be spelled out in full. The bibliography is paged continuously with the text in Arabic numerals.
- (c) *Index*: If an index is included, it follows the appendix or appendices.
- (d) *Vita*: (unpaged) Each copy of the thesis should be accompanied by a brief biographical note concerning the author.

## **B. Typing**

1. Theses must be typewritten or computer printed using one side of the paper only. The entire thesis must be typed on the same machine or printer (with the same font), and care should be taken to ensure evenness of impression and colour.
2. Theses must be typed or printed using a standard font and a standard size. For computer printing, a standard font would be Times New Roman and a standard size would be 12-point. The standard for typewritten theses would be 10 characters per inch. **Footnotes must be typed in a minimum of 10-point in a standard font.** Theses which vary significantly from these may need to be re-printed or re-typed.
3. All typing must be double spaced, except for quotations of more than four typed lines, footnotes, endnotes, tables and bibliography, all of which should be single spaced.
4. No interlineations, crossing out of letters or words, strikeouts, or extensive erasures are permissible. Characters not available on standard typewriters or word processors/computers, such as Greek and Hebrew letters, may, at the discretion of the supervisor, be neatly executed by hand with black India ink.

5. Copies should be made on a good photocopier. Each page must be clear enough and dark enough to be reproduced in microfilm. (Theses have been returned by TREN and deemed unsatisfactory for filming because the dot-matrix text was too light).

### **C. Paper**

1. The original and copies can be on standard photocopy paper.
2. Paper with holes punched is not acceptable.
3. Paper size *must* be 8.5 x 11 inches.

### **D. Margins**

There should be a margin of not less than 1.5 inches on the left of each sheet and of not less than 1 inch at the other edges.

### **E. Pagination**

Typewritten consecutive numbers should be used for each page. Small Roman numeral should be used for the “preliminary pages.” Arabic numerals should be used for the remainder of the thesis, including text, appendices, and bibliography. The “Vita” should *not* be paginated.

### **F. Style**

In the interest of uniformity, students should study and follow carefully the style requirements of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). In most cases, the following summary of *The Chicago Manual of Style* will suffice: Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). Alternative formats may be used with the permission of the thesis supervisor.

### **G. Writing Schedule**

It is the student’s responsibility to arrange a schedule with the supervisor. The normal practice is for the student to submit the first draft to the supervisor chapter by chapter as they are being written. After the supervisor has read and commented on the first draft, and discussed it with the student, the student should prepare a new draft. The student may need to prepare several drafts of a thesis (or portions thereof) before they are acceptable to the supervisor.

## **V. GRADING, PROOFREADING, BINDING, AND MICROFILMING OF THE THESIS**

Once the thesis has been approved, the supervisor will send a copy to the second reader. The second reader will read the thesis and collaborate with the supervisor to arrive at a grade for the thesis. The grade will be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by the supervisor. If no further revisions are required the student will then submit the graded copy to the Registrar’s Office for

proofreading to ensure that the thesis meets standard academic requirements (arrangement, grammar, spelling, proper reference and bibliography format, etc.).

Theses which are not prepared according to the guidelines given in this manual and in the Thesis Orientation may be returned to the student by the proofreader until the proofreader is satisfied that the work is in accord with the academic standards and procedures established by the College. The Academic Dean may, in exceptional circumstances, require a candidate to revise a thesis that he/she and the proofreader deem unacceptable because of stylistic difficulties or failure to follow College procedures in the final preparation of the thesis.

When the proofreading is complete the student will be contacted by the Registrar's Office to pick up the thesis (theses will be mailed to out-of-town students). The student will then make any changes required by the proofreader.

Once the required changes have been made, the student must submit a minimum of three copies of the thesis (along with the completed thesis order form, TREN form and any additional fees) for binding and microfilming. At this point, the student must ensure that the cover page of each thesis copy has been signed by the thesis supervisor and second reader. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all pages are in order and that none are missing. Further, each copy of the thesis must be individually wrapped in paper to ensure the thesis is not damaged during shipping. The student's name, title of thesis, and total number of pages being bound, should be written on the outside of each wrapped thesis. The student must also submit the copy of the thesis that was proofread so that the Registrar's Office can check to ensure that the corrections required by the proofreader have been made. This copy will not be returned unless the student specifically asks for it.

Of the three copies submitted for binding and microfilming, one bound copy will be returned to the student, one unbound copy will be submitted to TREN (Theological Research Exchange Network) in Portland, Oregon for microfilming. This copy, when returned, together with the third copy, will be bound and will go to the Allison Library. Though not mandatory, it is customary for a student to give a bound copy of his/her thesis to the Thesis Supervisor for his/her personal library. The student is responsible for paying the cost of binding any extra copies.

***Please Note:*** Theses receiving the passing grade of **B+** or higher will be placed in the Library. Theses receiving a grade of **A-** or higher will also be made available to the wider academic community in micro-form through the Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN).

## **VI. THESIS SUBMISSION DEADLINES AND TIME LIMITS**

### **A. Submission Deadlines**

The deadline for submitting thesis work to the supervisor for grading will be January 31. This will give some time before graduation in case any revisions are required.

Deadlines are set from year to year for submitting theses to the Registrar's Office for proof-reading (mid-March) and for binding (mid-April). Exact dates are available at the Student Services Lobby or from the current *Academic Catalogue*.

Note: Students who have received a grade for their thesis but who have not yet submitted the final copies of their thesis to the Registrar's Office will be permitted to process at Graduation, but they

may not claim to be graduates of Regent until these copies have been submitted; transcripts and graduation certificates will be withheld until that time.

## **B. Thesis Completion Time Limits**

Beginning from September 1 following the registration of the thesis, students have three years to complete their thesis. Students who do not complete within these three years must appeal in writing to the Academic Standards Committee to request permission to continue. This appeal should include a description of the progress made, an explanation of why the thesis is incomplete, a proposed date of completion, and a note from the thesis supervisor supporting the appeal. The student should be aware, however, that extensions are given only in exceptional circumstances and should not be assumed, regardless of the supervisor's support.

Students are strongly advised to complete their thesis while at Regent. Experience has shown that students who plan to complete their thesis after leaving Regent often face serious challenges in terms of time and availability of resources which prevent them from finishing.

## **VII. THESIS FEES FOR 2007 - 2008**

(Note: All fees are subject to change without notice)

- 1. Tuition:** \$446 per credit hour of thesis (\$5352 for 12 credit hour MCS/ThM thesis). Tuition can be registered and paid for in two consecutive and equal instalments.
- 2. Thesis Orientation Fee:** \$35.
- 3. Proofreading, Binding (three copies), Microfilming and Handling Deposit:** \$300 (or \$150 per term if registering for the thesis over two consecutive terms). Note: If costs increase before the thesis is handed in for binding, an adjustment will be made which the student will be required to pay.
- 4. Additional Bound Copies of Thesis:** \$25 per copy plus any shipping & handling charges.
- 5. Continuation Fees:** Students who have not completed their thesis by the first September after their registration will be required to pay a \$100 continuation fee, plus a \$35 registration fee, per year, up to the third September after the registration. Beyond the continuation period, students will be required to pay a \$500 extended continuation fee, plus a \$35 registration fee, per year, provided that permission has been granted by the Academic Standards Committee for them to continue working on their thesis.

In order to simplify the thesis continuation process for students and the College, the Registrar's Office will automatically register students for thesis continuation and will notify students of when their fees are due. Hence, students do not need to register for thesis continuation, but they must pay the continuation fee by the beginning of the term in which their fees are due. Failure to pay in full by the payment deadline will result in late payment charges.

**Please note:** Continuation fees are charged up to the point at which the student submits a final copy of their thesis to the supervisor to be graded.

**6. Copyright Cost:** If a student wishes to have TREN secure a U.S. copyright for the thesis, they must attach to their TREN form a certified cheque, back draft or money order made out to TREN, **NOT TO REGENT COLLEGE**, for \$60.00 in *U.S.* funds.

*NOTE: Since the thesis is often the last assignment for a student's program, and since thesis students are often not very involved in the Regent community, do not forget to apply for graduation by February 15 in the year you expect to graduate. Application forms may be picked up in the Student Services Office or printed from the College website ([www.regent-college.edu](http://www.regent-college.edu)).*

