

Thesis Guidelines

This is the definitive document in guiding Regent College students through the thesis writing process. All thesis students should be familiar with its contents, and refer to it regularly regarding the standards and process for thesis writing. Below, there are requirements for writing a thesis, the process for getting a thesis approved, formatting and style standards, and what students need to do in order to submit your thesis for graduation.

Checklist for Thesis Completion

- ☐ Admission to MA (Theological Studies) or ThM with 3.5 GPA
- ☐ Develop a research topic
- ☐ Approach and confirm a supervisor (fall term)
- ☐ Enroll in INDS 725: Advanced Research Methods & Writing (winter term)
 - ☐ Write thesis proposal under guidance of INDS 725 instructor and supervisor
 - ☐ Proposal approval by INDS 725 instructor, supervisor, and second reviewer
- ☐ Register thesis credits in the term following approval (summer or fall terms)
- ☐ Create plan for writing thesis and supervisor meetings. Write thesis. (summer and fall terms)
- ☐ Submit thesis for grading (January 31)
- ☐ Hire thesis proofreader (if thesis grade is a B+ or higher)
- ☐ Get supervisor and second reader signatures on title page
- ☐ Arrange thesis binding with Rasmussen (3 copies)
- ☐ Submit final bound thesis copies to Reception/Student Services (April)
- ☐ Register thesis with TREN (if thesis grade is an A- or higher)

Introduction to the Thesis

1. Defining a Thesis

A thesis is an extended written study that provides critical analysis of and theological reflection on a specific issue, while making a valuable contribution to written scholarship. One purpose of a thesis is to enable a student to hone their independent research skills over the course of a long-form academic writing.

Theses may be written from various perspectives and use various methods depending on the research topic and purpose of the study. For example, a thesis can address an issue from the perspective of a particular theological discipline (e.g., New Testament studies, doctrinal theology, the history of Christianity, spiritual theology) or through an interdisciplinary approach. Theses may also take the form of a case study in an area of applied theology, which must include theological reflection on the implications of the study. They 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.

2. Thesis Length and Credit Hours

The credit hours, length, and academic expectations are different between the MA (Theological Studies) thesis and the ThM thesis.

The MATS thesis is 9 credit hours, including INDS 725. It should comprise 15,000 to 20,000 words, inclusive of footnotes but exclusive of bibliography. It should demonstrate strong knowledge of the field of research and make a compelling argument within that field.

The ThM thesis is 12 credit hours, including INDS 725. It should comprise 30,000 to 45,000 words, inclusive of footnotes but exclusive of bibliography. It should demonstrate a strong knowledge of the field of research and make a new contribution to that field.

3. Assessment of Student Ability

In order to write a thesis, students must first be admitted to either the MA (Theological Studies) program or the Master of Theology program, and they must have a Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 3.5. The minimum passing grade for the thesis is a B.

Before committing to writing a thesis, students should understand that thesis writing requires a good deal of personal initiative, discipline, and research and writing skills in order to persevere and to produce quality work. They will need to convince a potential supervisor that they have the ability to take on and complete such a task. Faculty are not required to supervise students whom they do not believe are adequately prepared for the task.

4. Pathway for Completing a Thesis

To write a thesis, students must take INDS 725: Advanced Research Methods and Writing and have an approved thesis proposal. INDS 725 is offered every winter term, meaning proposals can only be written that term. The following, then, is the typical pathway for thesis completion.

- **Fall Term:** Approach a supervisor and decide on a topic. There is also an optional thesis orientation, if you are discerning whether to do a thesis or not.
- **Winter Term:** Enroll in INDS 725, write proposal, and have proposal approved.
- **Summer:** Begin working on thesis.
- **Fall Term:** Enroll in thesis credits and continue thesis work.
- **Winter Term:** Submit thesis and graduate.

It is not possible to complete a thesis in the same term as taking INDS 725.

Initial Stages of the Thesis Project

1. Admission to the MA (Theological Studies) or Master of Theology Program

Students must be admitted to the MA Theo Studies or ThM program before submitting a thesis proposal. Admission and program requirements are described on the [College's website](#). To write a thesis, a student must have a Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 3.5. The minimum passing grade for a thesis is a B.

2. Choosing a Topic and Approaching a Supervisor

Choosing a thesis topic is often difficult and always subjective. No one can tell a student exactly how to choose their topic. Yet, good theses often emerge out of questions raised by course lectures, course readings, term-paper topics, and special lectures. For students who have not yet chosen a topic, it is advisable to write down questions and possible topics while engaging in course work and other parts of Regent's academic life, as well as discussing them with instructors. The end goal is to arrive not at a topic, but a research question.

It is best to determine a provisional thesis topic and question as early as possible. The mind's ability to synthesize and integrate new information means that the material in one course can complement the material in another course even if they are in divergent subject areas. Thus, the sooner a student determines a topic or question, the more time they have to meditate on and connect it to other ideas while learning.

At the beginning of the thesis process, students must approach a full-time faculty member within the appropriate discipline to discuss the suitability of the topic and request supervision. In this meeting, students should share their transcript in order to show (i) courses taken, (ii) admission to the MATS or ThM program, and (iii) at least a 3.5 GPA. If a thesis combines two different fields, two co-supervisors may be appointed.

Due to the limited number of theses that professors can supervise at any one time, Regent cannot guarantee that every student will get their first choice. This is another reason to begin thinking about a thesis topic and question as early as possible.

3. Thesis Orientation Session

In order to help students discern whether the thesis is the right project for them, the INDS 725 instructor will host an informal thesis orientation session in each fall term. This is to serve as an introduction to the entire thesis process, talk about how to decide on a research question, how to find a supervisor, and what the INDS 725 course entails.

This session is no cost and does not require registration. Its timing is announced at the beginning of each fall term.

4. INDS 725: Advanced Research and Writing Methods and Elements of a Thesis Proposal

All thesis students must take INDS 725 in order to write their thesis proposal, whether in the MA (Theological Studies) or the ThM. This course brings together a cohort of students who are preparing to write a thesis and provides space and structure for this work. The course also covers academic style and writing standards and library resources for research.

The course assignments are focused on bringing together the elements of a thesis proposal:

- Prospective Title
- Research Question and Thesis Statement
- Why is this important to you and why does it matter to other people?
- Brief overview of the state of the scholarly discussion (secondary literature)
- Needed primary sources, reasons for using them, and potential access issues
- Methodological considerations and key definitions
- Outline with rationale
- Bibliography

5. Thesis Proposal Approval

At the conclusion of INDS 725, enrolled thesis students should have a complete proposal that they will submit to the INDS 725 instructor and their supervisor. The instructor, supervisor, and a second reviewer will evaluate the proposal.

Proposals may be approved, require substantial revision, or be rejected as an untenable project. If a proposal requires revisions, students will have the summer to revise and resubmit their proposal by the beginning of the fall term. At that point, the INDS 725 instructor, supervisor, and second reviewer will re-evaluate the proposal and either approve or reject it. Proposal rejections are final, and students will be directed to either a comprehensive exam (MATS students) or a major paper (ThM students).

Students who drop a thesis project and then start on a new research topic will need to seek re-approval from the INDS 725 instructor, supervisor, and a second reviewer. Students must have an overall GPA of 3.5 in order to submit a thesis proposal.

6. Registration for a Thesis

The MA (Theological Studies) thesis is 9 credit and the ThM thesis is 12 credits. 3 credits of each is allocated to the INDS 725 course and the thesis proposal.

After the thesis proposal is approved, MA (Theological Studies) should register for the thesis in the following fall and winter. They may register for the 6 remaining credits altogether in the fall or split 3 credits each in consecutive fall and winter terms.

ThM students should register for the thesis in the following fall and winter as well. They may register for the 9 remaining credits altogether in the fall or split 6 credits in the fall and 3 credits in the winter in consecutive fall and winter terms.

To register and pay for the thesis, students must submit a Thesis Registration Form (signed by their supervisor) and a regular Course Registration Form or a Course Change Form to reception. Students must pay tuition for these credits by the Payment Deadline for the term (i.e. the Friday before classes start) OR at the time of registration, whichever is later.

NOTE: If a student registers for the thesis in the Fall term (whether in full or part), they will receive a tax receipt (T2202A: Tuition, Education, and Textbook Amounts Certificate) by the end of February for one quarter of the tuition amount paid in the Fall term. A T2202A for the balance of the tuition amount will be provided by the end of the following February. However, if the student registers for the thesis in the Winter term, they will receive a T2202A for the full tuition amount by the end of February of the following year.

7. Continuation Fees

Students have three years to complete the thesis, from September 1st after registration. A \$100 continuation fee (in addition to registration fee) will be charged at the beginning in the first September after the student registers for their thesis, and again in subsequent Septembers. This will continue until the students completes and submits their thesis or until their three-year time limit has expired.

If students have not completed within three years (dating from the first September after initial registration), they will need to request an extension from the Academic Standards Committee at least four months before the end of the three-year completion period. The appeal must include (i) a description of progress made; (ii) an explanation of why the thesis could not be completed within the time limit; (iii) a schedule and proposed date for completion; and (iv) a letter of support from their supervisor. Extensions are not guaranteed. Students who receive an extension will be assessed a \$500 per year extended continuation fee (in addition to the registration fee).

If a student has not completed the MATS program within the six-year time limit, or the ThM program within the five-year time limit, they will need to appeal to the Academic Standards Committee for a program extension, even if they are still within your three-year time limit for completing the thesis. If granted, students will be charged a \$100 per year program extension fee in addition to any other fees.

The refund policy for students who withdraw from the thesis is on the Regent website (Current Students/Pay your tuition and fees/Refunds and account adjustments).

Writing Your Thesis

It is the student's responsibility to arrange a work schedule with their supervisor. Best practice is to map out a plan for the entire research project, including meetings with one's supervisor, and set goals for submitting drafts of each chapter. The student should submit a first draft of each chapter as they are being written to their supervisor and revise drafts after receiving comments from their supervisor. This may require the student to write several drafts until the supervisor approves the chapter.

If approved by the supervisor, students may adapt work done in other courses for their thesis as long as this does not exceed 20% of the thesis.

In the rare case that the supervisor believes a student is not able to complete a thesis to an acceptable standard, the supervisor may recommend that the student choose an alternative final project to complete their degree (e.g., a comprehensive exam for the MATS, or a major paper for the ThM). In this situation, work already completed for the thesis project may be granted credit as a guided study.

Students must conform their thesis first to the Regent College guidelines (see below) and secondarily to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017). In most cases, Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018) may be used. Alternative formats may be used with the permission of the thesis supervisor. Students should read the Regent College guidelines before beginning their written work in order to avoid excessive editing before submission.

1. Components of the Thesis

An MA (Theological Studies) thesis must be 15,000-20,000 words and a ThM thesis must be 30,000-45,000 words in length (inclusive of footnotes/endnotes, but exclusive of bibliography). The parts of the thesis should be presented in the following order, although not every item is always required:

a) Preliminary Pages

Title Page: Follow the format of the sample title page provided at the end of these guidelines (p.12). Give the title, your full name, your previous degree(s), the statement indicating the degree expected (and concentration for MA Theo Studies students), your supervisor's name, and "REGENT COLLEGE // Vancouver, BC // [month and year of your graduation]."

Rights, Declaration, and Disclaimer: On this page the student must (i) give the Regent College Librarian certain rights; (ii) declare that the thesis is the student's work; and (iii) make clear that the views expressed are the student's and not necessarily those of Regent College. The wording for this page must follow the sample provided at the end of these guidelines. Each copy must be signed by the student and bound with each copy of the thesis submitted to the College.

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 exceed 350 words.

Table of Contents: Each thesis must have a table of contents setting forth all the principal chapters and subsections (including bibliography, appendix/appendices, and index, if any).

List of Tables: Tables must be numbered consecutively with upper case roman numerals. Each table must include the number of the table, its exact caption or title, and the number of the page on which it appears.

List of Figures or Illustrations: If illustrations or graphs are used, they must be numbered with Arabic numerals and listed separately. If there are several illustrations of any one kind (e.g., maps) they should appear in a distinct series, numbered and listed separately.

List of Abbreviations: Abbreviations not recognized by a wide audience should be listed and defined. For common abbreviations that do not need to be defined, please see Turabian. The *SBL Handbook of Style* is a useful resource for abbreviations in theological research.

Acknowledgements: This section includes a brief acknowledgement of assistance received by the student when research and writing.

b) Text

Introduction: The introduction should present the purpose, methods, and scope of investigation.

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", submitted flat. Small illustrations may be placed in the text. Do not use tape for mounting.

Footnotes: Footnote numbering must restart at the beginning of each chapter, be indented, single-spaced within each entry, and single- or double-spaced between entries. They should follow the format in Turabian, as each entry requires specific punctuation, capitalization, and ordering of information.

c) Reference Materials

Appendix: Any needed appendices should immediately precede the bibliography.

Bibliography: A full bibliography must follow Turabian carefully and be single-spaced, with double-spacing between the entries. Pagination is continuous with the rest of the thesis.

Vita: Each copy of the thesis must have a vita, or brief (1-2 paragraphs) biography of the author. It is not paginated and should be the last page of the thesis.

2. Thesis Format

a) Typing

Printing: Theses must be printed on one side only of good quality (20 lb), white, 8.5 x 11 inch paper. The entire thesis should be printed on the same printer (with the same font), and care should be taken to ensure evenness of impression and colour.

Font: Use Times New Roman font throughout, 12-point size for main text and 10-point size for footnotes.

Spacing: Use double-spacing throughout the main text, except for block quotations, footnotes, and tables, all of which should be single-spaced. Also double-space the Rights, Declaration, and Disclaimer page, Abstract, and Vita. Use single-spacing for the Bibliography, with double-spacing between entries. Any quotation exceeding the length of four lines should appear as a block quotation (set in on the left margin but not on right, single spaced, same font and font size as the rest of the text, with no quotation marks).

Margins: Keep a margin of 1.5 inches on the left of each page (the binding edge) and 1 inch on the other edges.

b) Punctuation

Students must use proper English punctuation (see Turabian). Students often make mistakes regarding periods, ellipses, and dashes. Please note the following proper usage:

Period: Use one space, not two, following the final punctuation of a sentence.

Ellipsis: Ellipses may be created either with automatic spacing from a word processor (“...”), or by manually typing three periods and with spaces in between (“. . .”). In each case, there is a space before and a space after the ellipsis. Whichever you choose, be consistent throughout your thesis.

Dash: There are three types of dashes, each with a specific purpose:

Hyphen (-): used in compound words and names (cross-cultural) and in adjectival phrases (face-to-face learning)

En dash (–): signifies “up to and including” or “through,” most often used with numbers, but sometimes with words as well (e.g., 2005–2006; chapters 16–18; Genesis 2:13–22; 10:30 a.m.–2:15 p.m.; London–Paris train)

Em dash (—): primarily sets off an amplifying or explanatory element (commas, parentheses, or a colon may perform a similar function). Like parentheses, if you have an opening em dash, you need a closing one (unless it leads to the end of the sentence). To avoid confusion, no sentence should contain more than two em dashes; if more than two elements need to be set off, use parentheses.

c) Pagination

Typewritten consecutive numbers should be used for each page. Small Roman numerals should be used for the “preliminary pages,” and Arabic numerals for the remainder of the thesis, including text, appendices, and bibliography. Page numbers can be either centred at the bottom or placed in the top right corner of the page. For pages with major headings, page numbers should always be bottom centre.

d) Headings

All major headings (such as Abstract, Preface, chapter titles, Bibliography, etc.), *except* Table of Contents, begin 2 inches from the top of the page. The Table of Contents begins 1 inch from the top of the page. All major headings should be in capitals. Text should consistently begin 2 double-spaced lines beneath the heading.

e) Language

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

If using foreign words in a thesis, the student must have enough competence to spell and use the words correctly. Extensive use of foreign language words may increase the cost of proofreading.

Completion of the Thesis

A thesis is considered complete once the student submits a final draft approved by the supervisor as well as three bound copies to the College (Reception). Students are strongly advised to complete their thesis while at Regent. 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.

For students finishing the thesis and graduating in the Winter term, please note the following deadlines:

- Apply for graduation by January 31. This can be done online.
- Submit thesis to supervisor by January 31 for grading.

The following steps are required to complete the thesis:

1. Grading

When the supervisor is satisfied with the thesis, the supervisor will send it to the second reader and together they will assign a grade. They may also require the student to make further revisions. If the supervisor and second reader cannot agree on a grade, the matter will be referred to the Academic Dean for resolution.

A supervisor may request a *viva voce* (i.e., oral defence) of a thesis, which may be held before the two examiners only or opened to all faculty members, students, and the general public. In the defence, the student will recapitulate the central points of their thesis, the examiners will question and comment on specific points, and members of the audience may be allowed to question the candidate at the discretion of the chair. An oral defence taken by a student in conjunction with a thesis cannot lower but only raise the final grade of the thesis.

2. Proofreading

After the thesis has been graded and the student completes all revisions required by their supervisor, students who receive a grade of B+ or higher must have their thesis proofread by an editor approved by Regent College. For contact information email the Student Services Office at theses@regent-college.edu. Proofreaders set their own rates. Students must submit the marked-up copy and the corrected copy to the editor for approval.

3. Signatures

Students must have their supervisor and second reader sign the title page. This can be done by emailing a pdf version of the title page to supervisor and second reader or the student can make arrangements can be made for them to sign in person. Students should be sure to sign the rights, declaration, and disclaimer page as well.

4. Printing & Binding

Students should have their thesis bound by Rasmussen Bindery & Centennial Book Binders by submitting an online order form (<https://www.rasmussenbindery.com/thesis-binding/>) and then either delivering paper copies or uploading a pdf file of the thesis for Rasmussen to print and bind.

- Number of copies: Students must give three bound copies to the College—two for the Library and one for the supervisor.
- Binding Colour: Royal Blue 550
- Spine Lettering: (i) Title: leave blank; (ii) Name: LAST NAME, FIRST NAME (uppercase); (iii) Degree: “MA Theo Studies,” or “ThM”; and (iv) year of graduation.
- Front Cover Stamping: Write the full title of the thesis. The Regent logo will not appear on the cover.
- Printing: Single-sided, on 20 lb paper
 - Courier: Contact the binders directly by phone or email to have them ship thesis copies by courier to multiple addresses. Copies sent to Regent College should be addressed to the Student Services Office.

Note the estimated time required for processing in order to meet the final submission deadline for graduation.

5. Final Submission

Submit three bound copies of the thesis—either in person to Reception or by courier/mail to the Student Services Office—by the Thesis Submission Deadline in April (see Important Dates on Regent’s website).

6. TREN

Students who receive a grade of A- or higher can submit their thesis for archiving with the Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN). TREN is an online database of theses and dissertations. Students who submit their theses to TREN grant them the right to display, copy, and sell that work. The student, however, remains the copyright holder.

- Complete and scan a “Distribution Agreement for TREN” form (attached below). Save the pdf file as “[*last name*] TREN Form.”
- Save a pdf version of the entire thesis (one file) in a file named “[*last name*] Thesis for TREN.”
- Send these two files as attachments in one email to theses@regent-college.edu and indicate whether or not TREN should register copyright with the US Copyright Office (see below).

TREN also offers a service (for a fee) of registering a student’s copyright with the US Copyright Office. The author remains the copyright holder. The benefits of registering one’s copyright are (i) it creates a public record so that other people have a means of contacting the author to ask for permission to use part of the author’s work, and (ii) it is required if the author ever needed to bring suit against someone for violating their copyright. It is the student’s choice whether to register their copyright or not. To do so, students must: (i) get a certified cheque, bank draft, or money order for USD \$85 made payable to TREN (i.e., NOT to Regent College) and send it to Regent College, attn.: Student Services; and (ii) notify Student Services about the sent cheque when sending the pdf copy of the thesis to theses@regent-college.edu.

Occasionally, in the rush of the end of Winter term some thesis students will have submitted their work and received a grade but be unable to submit their bound copies to the College by the submission deadline. In these cases, students are permitted to process in the Convocation ceremony, but they will not technically graduate until they submit their bound copies to the College; at that time they may collect their graduation certificate from the Student Services Office.

JESUS' CONCERN FOR THE POOR:
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL DYNAMICS
IN THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

by

ELLEN INNES CORMACK

BA, University of British Columbia, 2006

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS (THEOLOGICAL STUDIES)

with a concentration in
NEW TESTAMENT

Supervisor: *[typed name]*

Second Reader: *[typed name]*

REGENT COLLEGE
Vancouver, BC
April 2015

RIGHTS OF PUBLICATION AND LOAN

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment 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.

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

This is to certify that:

- the content of this work is my own;
- any assistance I have received in preparing this work has been explicitly acknowledged within this work;
- this work has not been submitted for any other course, degree, or other academic purpose without the permission of the supervisor; and
- I have read the College's policy on plagiarism and confirm that I have properly cited, by the use of quotation marks, block indents, footnotes, and bibliography, all sources that I have used.

Furthermore, I declare that while it is acceptable for students to seek editorial help, all of the research, analysis, argument, and conclusions are my own.

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

The views expressed in this work are those of the student and do not necessarily reflect the views of the supervisor(s) or of Regent College.

By signing below I agree to all of the above.

[signature]
[typed student name]