



St. Stephen's
College

MASTER'S THESIS GUIDELINES

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ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE MASTER'S THESIS GUIDELINES

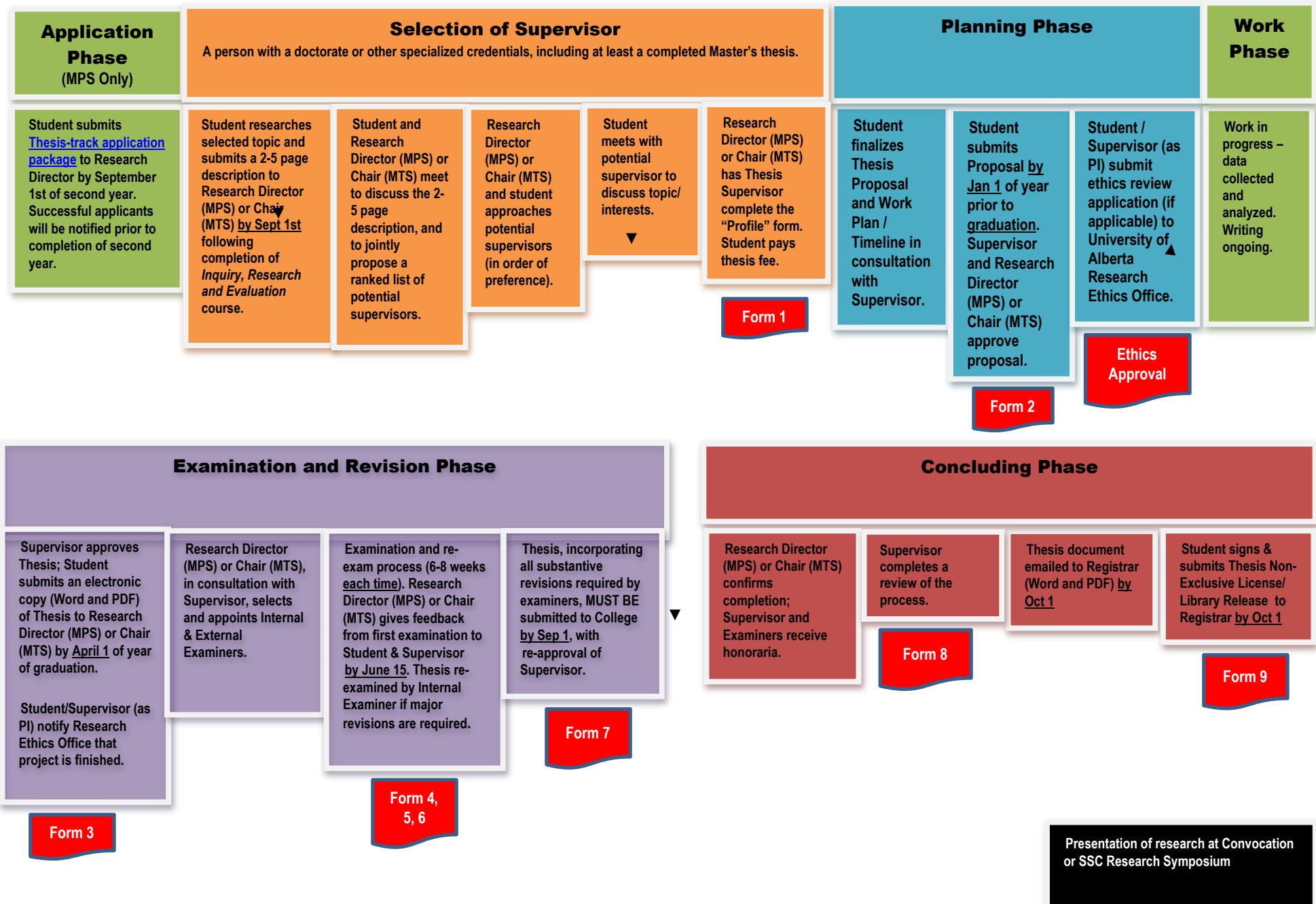
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Thesis Forms (located in '[Current Students/Program Files and Forms/MPS or MTS](#)'):

1. Thesis Supervisor Profile
2. Approval of Thesis Proposal: Supervisor and Research Director (MPS) or Department Chair (MTS)
3. Approval of Completed Thesis: Supervisor (thesis ready for examination)
4. Feedback for Thesis: Internal Examiner
5. Feedback for Thesis: External Examiner
6. Approval of Revised Thesis for Re-Examination: Supervisor (used as applicable)
7. Final Approval of Completed Thesis with Revisions: Supervisor
8. Thesis Process Evaluation: Supervisor
9. Thesis Non-Exclusive License/Library Release

MASTER'S THESIS FLOW CHART



THESIS PROCESS SUMMARY

The thesis is an option for students who can demonstrate their readiness and ability to work independently after advisement. The thesis is an extended piece of scholarly research, largely conducted independently, along with an appropriately credentialed supervisor. It is usually between 100-150 pages in length, and summarizes a student's research of a stated question. The thesis integrates an introduction, a thorough literature review, explication of methodology, data presentation and analysis, and a summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations. It is intended to address not only the candidate's research interest, but to make a contribution to the body of knowledge in that field. Research must be within the field of a student's professional interest. Upon appointment of the supervisor, students will pay the thesis fee [equivalent to a 9-credit course fee].

The thesis work is meant to build on course work and practicum experiences (where applicable). therefore, it is strongly recommended that the majority of practicum work (if applicable) be completed before the proposal is fully developed.

For MTS students, the following courses are required as prerequisites for submission of the thesis proposal:

- The *Academic Writing* or *Graduate Academic Skills* course
- a research methods course (either *Research Methods and Methodologies* or *Inquiry, Research and Evaluation*)
- permission of Department Chair

For MPS students, the following courses/seminars are required as prerequisites for submission of the thesis proposal:

- The *Academic Writing* or *Graduate Academic Skills* course
- a research methods course (either *Research Methods and Methodologies* or *Inquiry, Research and Evaluation*)
- *Introduction to Psychotherapy and Spirituality*
- *Basic Psychotherapy Skills*
- *Theories of Counselling and Psychotherapy*
- *Thesis or Capstone Seminar*
- [permission of Research Director](#)

Any exceptions to these guidelines must be discussed with the Department Chair.

Summary of Important Dates:

Thesis Documents	Deadlines
Thesis preliminary proposal	September 1st after completion of <i>Research Methods</i> or <i>Inquiry, Research and Evaluation</i> course
Thesis proposal	January 1st prior to intended year of graduation
Final draft of thesis	April 1st of intended year of graduation
Final copy of thesis to Research Director or MTS Chair	September 1st of intended year of graduation
Publishable thesis emailed to Registrar	October 1st of intended year of graduation

1. Overture

- a. Student researches selected topic and submits a 2-5 page preliminary proposal to Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) (by Sept 1st following the completion of the *Research Methods and Methodologies* or *Inquiry, Research and Evaluation* course).
- b. Student and Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) meet to discuss the 2-5 page description, and to jointly compile a ranked list of potential supervisors.
- c. The Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) approaches the potential supervisors (in order of preference).

- d. Student meets with potential supervisor to discuss topic/interests.
- e. When both student and supervisor are in agreement, the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) invites the thesis supervisor to complete the "Profile" form and contract (form 1).
- f. Upon Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) signing *Supervisor Profile* form (form 1), students are financially committed to completing the thesis, aside from any unforeseen circumstances.

2. Thesis Proposal

Student will prepare a formal thesis proposal for their supervisor. The proposal will include (a) introduction, including the research question, (b) literature review; and (c) outline of methodology.

3. Thesis Proposal Approval

- a. The supervisor, after discussion with the student, approves the proposal and forwards the proposal and approval form to the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) for final approval prior to Jan 1 of the year prior to graduation (form 2).
- b. The Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) will review the proposal within one month of receipt. Any major revisions must be completed and returned to the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS)

4. Ethics Review

It is **required** that both MPS and MTS students participate in the TCPS 2 Tutorial Course on Research Ethics, offered by the Canadian Panel on Research Ethics, prior to submitting an ethics review application to the University of Alberta. Upon completion of the training, students are required to submit their completion certificate to the Research Director. The free training program (approximately 4 hours in length) can be accessed here: <https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>

If the research involves humans, the student shall submit their ethics review application according to the guidelines posted on the SSC website <https://www.ualberta.ca/st-stephens/st-stephens-programs/files-cabinet/ethics-review>. The Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) will give final approval to proceed. The ethics review takes place prior to commencing data collection. In case of an Ethics Review Application the Thesis Supervisor functions as the Principal Investigator (PI) who is responsible for the ethical conduct of the research. Though the student does the majority of the work regarding the application, the initial submission of the Ethics Review application is done through the PI. Support for navigating the online ethics application is available through the St. Stephen's College website (<https://www.ualberta.ca/st-stephens/st-stephens-programs/files-cabinet/ethics-review.html>), the Research Ethics Office, and through the student's supervisors and/or Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) .

5. Thesis Design, Development and Completion

The student will carry out the study detailed in the proposal in frequent consultation with the supervisor. The Research Director represents the College as a support to the student if concerns or clarifications arise for the student or supervisor throughout the thesis project.

The PI (i.e., thesis supervisor) must submit a Closing Report to the REO through the ARISE system when data collection has ended and the PI and/or study team will no longer be using animals or have any direct or indirect contact with the research participants for the study. (<https://www.ualberta.ca/research/research-support/research-ethics-office/research-ethics/lifecycle-of-a-research-project/closing-a-project.html>).

6. Thesis - Final Draft

Upon completion, the supervisor will complete Form 3 *Approval of Completed Thesis*. The student will submit an electronic copy of the final draft (Word and PDF), including prefatory pages, along with the signed approval form to the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) **prior to April 1** of the year of graduation. **This is a firm deadline.**

The internal and external examiners will examine the thesis and may request revisions or recommend approval within 6-8 weeks of receipt of the thesis. The communication will occur between the examiners and the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS).

7. Final Revisions and Copy Ready Thesis

The student must complete all substantive revisions by **September 1** of the year of graduation. A publishable PDF of the thesis must be submitted to St. Stephen's College Registrar by **October 1**.

8. Policy on Public Access to Thesis

An electronic copy of the thesis will be made freely available to the public as soon as possible after a student's convocation and will be published electronically through the University of Alberta Research Archives (<https://era.library.ualberta.ca/collections/xq94hs495>), and at the Library and Archives Canada:
<https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/services/services-libraries/theses/Pages/theses-canada.aspx>

DETAILED INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

I. Introduction

The thesis is a significant component of the Master of Psychotherapy and Spirituality (MPS) and Master of Theological Studies (MTS) programs at St. Stephen's College. Its purpose is to provide candidates with the opportunity to further the generation of professional and/or academic knowledge in their field, through the design and implementation of a substantial piece of research. In this regard, the candidate is required to pursue a thesis topic of interest—using formal research methods including design, data collection, analysis, and a presentation and discussion of results.

Completing the thesis requirement is the equivalent of taking nine academic credits. The self-designed thesis will be of sufficient size and depth to warrant these credits.

This major learning project builds on four core elements:

- Formal linkage with course work and practicum experiences (where applicable),
- For MPS candidates: The implementation of spirituality and psychotherapy with their individual personal growth into effective clinical practice.
- Identification of a meaningful project/research topic
- Establishment of a supervisory relationship with a qualified person.

The outcome of the project will be a written thesis in the approximate range of 100-150 pages, not including bibliography and appendices. The thesis shall illustrate learning integration that reflects the project's core elements.

II. Designing the Thesis Proposal and Negotiating a Work Plan

The initial stage in the thesis is to negotiate a work plan in consultation with the person who has agreed to serve as your supervisor. Each of the work plan's components is described in detail in this document. The work plan becomes part of the thesis proposal.

A. Introduction

First, consider how your proposed thesis is linked with course work and (if applicable) practicum experiences in your studies.

Second, articulate your understanding as well as recognition of 'psychotherapy and spirituality' (MPS students), or 'theology' (MTS students) as the overarching discipline within which you are working on your topic. In this regard, you will need to discuss ways in which you plan to demonstrate knowledgeable integration of both your discipline and your particular topic.

Third, in light of the first two considerations, identify a meaningful thesis topic area. That is, given your theoretical and experiential learning, what topic(s) are you particularly interested in exploring more deeply?

Fourth, specify your understanding of how your question can be pursued through research processes. Further to this, specify in general terms what research design/method you envision following.

B. Detailed Outline

The thesis design must adhere to *Master's Thesis Proposal* guidelines (Appendix A). Your work plan must include detailed consideration of these guidelines and their implications for your thesis research development.

Students are to consider the ethical implications of conducting their proposed thesis research.

1. All thesis research must demonstrate that attention has been given to research ethics guiding work with human and/or animal participants. Projects with research involving humans and/or animals will require an ethics review; ethics approval must be received prior to recruitment of human research participants and prior to conducting the research. If it is deemed that ethics approval is not necessary for the research project, a statement of the rationale for this conclusion needs to be included in the student's research proposal.
2. Information regarding the research ethics process can be found online at the St. Stephen's College website: <https://www.ualberta.ca/st-stephens/st-stephens-programs/files-cabinet/ethics-review>
3. All ethics review for St. Stephen's College research is conducted through the Research Ethics Office (REO) of the University of Alberta. For projects requiring ethics approval, students must ensure that they have allotted adequate time for the ethics review process to be completed. Once the thesis proposal is approved, the student shall submit their ethics review application to the REO of the University of Alberta. If the REO requires revisions to the proposal, the student must complete those revisions within a reasonable time. Ethics approval is awarded for a period of 12 months, after which time the student will need to apply for ethics renewal if the research is still ongoing.
4. Students working with human participants (or co-researchers) in the vulnerable sector will be required to produce a Security Clearance/Vulnerable Sector check prior to conducting the research.

C. Involvement of the Thesis Supervisor

For the work on the thesis to be conducted efficiently and effectively, students must enter into a supervisory relationship with a thesis supervisor who can oversee their work. The Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) with the student will work together to seek out potential supervisors for the student's thesis work. Normally the thesis supervisor will have a doctoral degree in the field in which the candidate proposes to work. In certain circumstances, other advanced credentials may be deemed acceptable (e.g. a thesis-based Master's degree with demonstrated experience in the field). The Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) will ensure this person qualifies as a thesis supervisor for Master's level work and that they indicate their willingness to take up the task by completing the "Thesis Supervisor's Profile".

At the completion of the "Thesis Supervisor's Profile", and by mutual agreement, the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) will issue a formal invitation to the proposed supervisor, stipulating the terms of agreement. The supervisor confirms acceptance in writing. The student is then required to pay the required thesis fee and is financially committed to the thesis project. The Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) remains available to both student and supervisor throughout the period of their work together.

The thesis is a highly individualized component within the Program and, as such, it is difficult to describe in detail the various tasks that a supervisor might be called upon to perform. It is therefore important for the candidate and supervisor to negotiate a work plan that allows both parties to spell out, in detail, the candidate's needs and the supervisor's contributions.

Essential elements to be included in this section of the plan are:

1. articulation of the candidate's supervisory needs and learning objectives

2. mutual understanding regarding the professional nature of this relationship and of all supervisory communication
3. establishment of procedures by which feedback will be provided
4. understanding that, in the event a problem should arise in their work on the thesis or structure of the thesis proposal, both student and supervisor shall have recourse to the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS). If this step is unsatisfactory, appeal can be made to the Dean.

Clarity with regard to supervisory accessibility and availability are important components in a candidate's successful completion of their thesis. Most supervisory tasks revolve around reviewing material shared by the candidate, suggesting ideas and resources, stimulating creative practical thinking, and evaluating progress (though note, it is not expected that the supervisor will function as an editor/formatter of the thesis). Supervisors are counted on to share their expertise freely and call forth "master's level" work from the candidate. In an adult learning model, the supervisory task is highly personal and will rely on a mutual commitment of both supervisor and candidate to shape its optimal value in the thesis' completion.

III. Duration and Schedule

The student will carry out the study detailed in the proposal in frequent consultation with the supervisor (at a minimum, the student and supervisor should meet once every three months). This includes submission of completed portions of the thesis for critique on content, methodology, format and style.

Students should expect the thesis process to take approximately 12 - 18 months from the time of thesis proposal approval, in keeping with research objectives, design, and the requirements for convocation (see pg. 3 **THESIS PROCESS SUMMARY**). It is important, therefore, for both candidate and supervisor to be alert to prolonged periods of inactivity related to completion of the thesis. This may indicate need for refinement in expectations and/or design, further learning related with appropriate timeframes, and/or encouragement at a low point in the research process.

IV. Confidentiality

St. Stephen's College has defined the circle of confidentiality for the academic, professional, and ethical considerations arising within the thesis to include:

- Candidate,
- Supervisor,
- Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS),
- Degree Program Committee,
- Research Ethics Board of the Research Ethics Office, University of Alberta,
- Examiners,
- Subjects/co-researchers in the candidate's research as required by the candidate's thesis or other work, and as authorized by the candidate.

V. General Thesis Expectations

It is expected that all theses at St. Stephen's College will comply with the following general thesis expectations:

- A manuscript written in academic prose, in good English
- A manuscript of 25,000–37,500 words (approx. 100–150 pages), not including bibliography and/or appendices.
- A manuscript that is typewritten and formatted according to the accepted style of your discipline (APA, Turabian, etc.). All formatting and referencing must follow the style guide. Students are to use the most recent version of their required style, or a version not older than two years.
- A manuscript that is in compliance with the academic policies of the College

VI. The Thesis - Final Draft

The supervisor will read the final draft and complete the *Approval of Completed Thesis* Form. The student will submit an electronic copy (Word and PDF) of the final draft, including prefatory pages and accurate formatting and referencing (APA for MPS, APA or Turabian for MTS) along with the signed approval form to the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) **prior to April 1** of the year of graduation. This is a firm deadline. Final drafts submitted after this date will be put forward to the next year's Convocation.

The Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS), in consultation with the supervisor, will select and appoint the internal and external examiners. The internal and external examiners will examine the thesis and may request revisions or recommend approval within 6-8 weeks of receipt of the thesis. The communication will occur between the examiners and the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS). The Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) will then communicate the results of the examinations to the student and a copy will be sent to the supervisor. If the examiners determine that the thesis requires re-writing and/or re-examination, this may affect graduation timelines.

VII. Evaluative Criteria and Methods

The thesis document will need to be evaluated in keeping with validity/reliability criteria appropriate to the thesis design. Thus, specific evaluative criteria and methods pertinent to the outcome expectations of the thesis will be followed. It will be important for the candidate and supervisor to negotiate appropriate evaluative criteria and methods to ensure learning of both knowledge and skills. Further to this, the candidate's degree of research knowledge and competence in the application of research skills will be important factors to evaluate. Once the candidate and supervisor have agreed the thesis is ready for examination, the supervisor submits the form *Approval of Completed Thesis – Supervisor* and forwards it to the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS). The thesis is examined by internal and external examiners, who can recommend one of the following four grades:

Clear Pass	Requires no changes. Note: very few theses attain this grade.
Pass with Minor Revisions	Requires that student complete the minor revisions in consultation with their supervisor. When supervisor is satisfied that the revisions are complete, thesis is re-submitted to College with <i>Final Approval of Completed Thesis with Revisions</i> form.
Pass with Major Revisions	Requires that student complete the major revisions in consultation with their supervisor. When supervisor is satisfied that the revisions are complete, thesis is re-submitted to the College with <i>Approval of Revised Thesis for Re-Examination</i> form, and College sends to internal examiner for a <u>second</u> reading. The internal examiner can recommend a Pass, Pass with Minor Revisions, or Pass with Major Revisions (for a second time). In the majority of cases, internal examiners ask for minor changes which are completed in consultation with the thesis supervisor; thesis is then submitted to College with <i>Final Approval of Completed Thesis with Revisions</i> form.
Clear Failure	Indicates the student did not meet the requirements for a Master's thesis, and a re-write is required. Suggestions for re-writing may be included. The new thesis must be resubmitted prior to April 1 of the following year; therefore, potential graduation will be delayed. New thesis will be assessed by internal and external examiners. A thesis re-write fee applies.

VIII. Final Revisions and Copy Ready Thesis

The student must complete all substantive revisions by **September 1** of the year of graduation. A final publishable thesis (Word and PDF-A) must be emailed to St. Stephen's College Registrar's Office by **October 1**. These are firm deadlines. Submissions after these dates will be put forward to the next year's Convocation. A PDF copy will be sent to the National Library of Canada, and the

Education and Research Archive (an open access digital archive administered by the University of Alberta). Students may independently reach out to a binding company if they wish to have a bound copy of their thesis.

IX. Policy on Public Access to Thesis

The thesis will be made freely available to the public as soon as possible after a student's graduation, in PDF format. To this end, the candidate will complete and submit to the Registrar's Office the "Thesis/Dissertation Non-Exclusive License (Library and Archives Canada)" form. This form is located in '[St. Stephen's Programs/Files Cabinet/MPS or MTS](#)' on the College website.

X. Conclusion

This document has been developed as a guide to enable candidates to pursue their research in the knowledge of what is expected of them and what resources are available to them. In the supervisory relationship, candidates may be assured of the Program's support of their need for consultation and/or appeal. Students are encouraged to contact the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) as necessary.

THE MASTER'S THESIS PROPOSAL

Introduction

The proposal is an important document preparatory to writing the thesis. It is often subject to several revisions, even after students have worked with it through several versions before bringing it to their supervisor. This is normal and not meant to discourage the student. The fact is, the proposal becomes the skeleton of the thesis. Its architecture provides a pathway from start to finish, guiding the student through all the steps of the thesis to a successful conclusion. Much of what is written in the proposal will reappear, with appropriate editing, in the thesis itself.

The proposal must include the following items in the order given below. Keeping to this structure for the proposal will aid clear feedback. Feedback from the supervisor and the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) will help remove conceptual and practical pitfalls that may not be obvious to the student. Constructive criticism and critical analysis from both the supervisor and the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) should be viewed as it is intended: as a means to strengthen and clarify your work.

The proposal should be approximately **20 pages in length**, excluding bibliography/references, work plan, and appendices.

1. Tentative Title of the Thesis

2. Area to be Studied

- a) a general statement of the problem area
- b) the research question (and sub-questions if applicable)
- c) student's personal interest in the subject
- d) identification of methodology to be used

3. Preliminary Literature Review

- a) brief discussion of key literature relating to the subject matter of the study, including theological or spiritual themes
- b) indication of the location of the project in the body of research to date
- c) brief discussion of key literature relating to the chosen methodology(ies) demonstrating working knowledge of relevant resources
- d) MPS students: ensure the literature contextualizes the proposed work in both the psychological and theological/spiritual areas of study

4. Methodology

- a) outline of proposed methodology and a brief explanation of this choice
- b) outline of planned steps in researching the question
- c) discussion of ethical issues involved and how the student plans to manage these issues (including matters of data collection and confidentiality)

5. Validations

Describe how validity and reliability (trustworthiness) will be built into the study throughout.

6. Tentative Chapter Outline (see 'Sample Chapter outline of a Thesis', Appendix B)

7. Timelines

A practical and achievable outline of student's proposed pacing in the light of personal factors, logistics, supervisor's schedule and College deadlines.

8. Bibliography/References

Be as comprehensive as possible at this stage, evidencing familiarity with available resources. Use proper bibliographical form (APA for MPS students, APA or Turabian for MTS students).

9. Due Date

The preliminary proposal can be submitted at any point in the year for review and approval by the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS), but no later than **September 1st** following the completion of *Research Methods or Inquiry* course. After the supervisor is appointed, the final thesis proposal (approved by supervisor) is submitted to Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) by **January 1st** of the year prior to the desired graduation year.

10. Formatting

- The proposal should be formatted according to the chosen style guidelines (see point 8)
- Future tense should be used: "I will be ..."

Sample Chapter Outline of a Thesis

(approx. Length guidelines)

Prefatory pages (title, abstract, table of contents etc.)

Chapter 1: Introduction 3,750 words

A general statement of the problem/area of interest
The research question
Personal interest
Theological themes
Choice of methodology
Optional: summary of results

Chapter 2: Literature Review 6,000 words

Pertinent literature relating to the subject
Pertinent theological literature
Pertinent literature relating to the methodology
Integration of literature

Chapter 3: Methodology 4,000 words

Methodology discussed
Method outlined
Ethical issues

Chapter 4: Findings/Discussion 7,500 words

Discuss findings of research: data presentation and analysis (if applicable)
Connect research back to psychological and theological literature (MPS)
Discuss the ideas developing from your work
Creative Synthesis (required in some methodologies)
Reflections and integration of theories

Chapter 5: Conclusion 3,750 words

Summary of the findings in full text
Revisiting the literature
Further topics of inquiry
Areas of potential application
A personal statement

Total 25,000–37,500 words

Bibliography, reference list, and/or works cited (dependent on thesis style)
Appendices (i.e. artwork if applicable)
Project (if applicable)
Consents and other documents

St. Stephen's College Formatting Instructions for Theses and Dissertations

These specifications ensure that St. Stephen's College theses are compatible with standards established by Library and Archives Canada (National Library). MPS students will use APA guidelines; DMin and MTS students will normally use Turabian (Chicago) but may use APA upon consultation with the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS). It is expected that students will use the most recent version of their required style, or a version not older than two years.

Style

- Readability (literate, smooth, clear); logical organization; use of inclusive language. Use appropriate style guidelines (APA or Turabian), and hire an editor, if necessary, to ensure proper grammar, spelling and sentence structure.
- Double-spaced with some exceptions. Single spacing may be used for Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures, and indented quotations (Turabian).
- Art Therapy theses may include an appendix with the corresponding figures clearly titled and identified in the thesis document (i.e. [fig.1], [fig.2], etc).
- **Times New Roman 12**, with its italic and bold variants, used through entire thesis, including headings. (Exceptions: footnotes, subscripts, superscripts, and tables, figures or illustrations imported from other sources.) Characters must be black and clear.
- Produced on a computer using Microsoft Word. Final thesis must be **a single document** and is to be submitted to the College in both Word and PDF-A (PDF Archive format). e.g. *Smith_Mark_2026_MPS.pdf*
- Over-sized charts, graphs, artwork, maps, and tables which are larger than the standard page size must be reduced in a way that the material remains clearly legible.
- Theses Canada (part of Library and Archives Canada) prohibits the inclusion of personal information, such as signatures, student numbers, home addresses, email addresses and phone numbers.

Page Numbers

Every page of a thesis (with the exception of the title page) must have consecutive and sequential page numbers visible on the page.

Preliminary Pages are numbered in lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii...), in this order:

- Title page (number "i" is not displayed)
- Abstract (will be page ii)
- Dedication (*optional*)
- Acknowledgements (*optional but advisable*)
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables (if applicable)
- List of Figures or Illustrations (if applicable)
- List of Symbols or Abbreviations (if applicable) (*optional*)
- Glossary of Terms (*optional*)

Body of Thesis is numbered with Arabic numerals (1,2,3...) starting with the number "1".

This includes pages containing tables, figures, illustrations, the Bibliography and Appendices. The body of the thesis will be in this order:

- Introduction
- Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.
- Bibliography or References (depending whether you are using Turabian or APA)
- Appendices

The position of all page numbers must be consistent throughout the thesis, either at the top centre, top right, bottom centre or bottom right position, no less than 3/4" from the edge of the page. No 'running head' or footer containing thesis title.

Margins

Left margin 1.5 inches. Top, bottom and right margins 1.0". Use unjustified text, without end of line hyphenation and with ragged right-hand margins. Avoid having 'widow' and 'orphan' lines of text (respectively, a paragraph-ending line appearing alone at the top of the page and the single opening line of a paragraph at the bottom of the page).

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

St. Stephen's College

Full Title of Thesis
(centred, using as many lines as necessary)

by

Jane Marie Doe

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of St. Stephen's College in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

or

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY (SUPERVISORY EDUCATION)

or

MASTER OF PSYCHOTHERAPY AND SPIRITUALITY
(COUNSELLING)

or

MASTER OF PSYCHOTHERAPY AND SPIRITUALITY
(ART THERAPY)

or

MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES
(DIACONAL MINISTRY)
(CONTEMPLATION, THE ARTS, AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT)
(FAITH AND CULTURE)
(SPIRITUAL CARE)

© Jane Marie Doe, 2026
Edmonton, Alberta

SAMPLE DEDICATION PAGE *(one page, centred, no heading)*

I dedicate this thesis to my partner, Jim, who has travelled with me on this journey every step of the way.

SAMPLE ABSTRACT PAGE *(one page)*

Abstract

A thesis must have an abstract. The abstract comes after the title page and is marked page “ii”. The abstract is a concise and accurate summary of the thesis. The abstract should provide a brief summary (no more than one page, double spaced) of each of the main sections of the thesis: Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion. A well-prepared abstract enables readers to identify the basic content of a document quickly and accurately, to determine its relevance to their interest, and thus to decide whether they need to read the document in its entirety. The abstract should not exceed 250 words and clearly outlines the contents of the thesis. It is typed as a single paragraph. The abstract should: (1) state the principal objectives and scope of the examinations and explorations, (2) describe the methods employed, (3) summarize the findings, and (4) state the principal conclusions. The importance of the conclusions is evidenced in that they are often acknowledged in three sections of the thesis: the abstract, the introduction, and, in more detail, the discussion. The abstract should be written in the past tense, as it refers to completed work. The abstract does not include information or conclusions that are not stated in the thesis. There are no literature references cited in the abstract (with rare exceptions, such as modification of a previously published method). The language should be familiar to the potential reader. Omit obscure abbreviations and acronyms. Unless a long term is used several times within an abstract, do not abbreviate the term. Introduce the appropriate abbreviation at the first use in the body of the thesis.

Key words: (include some words you think people will
use when searching for research like yours)

SAMPLE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PAGE *(one page)*

Acknowledgements

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SAMPLE TABLE OF CONTENTS PAGE

Table of Contents

A detailed table of contents is a required component of a thesis. The components of the thesis must appear in the table of contents in the same order as in the body of the thesis.

There are usually at least two, and often three (or four) levels of headings.

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EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR THESIS SUPERVISORS

I. Introduction

Thank you for accepting the responsibility of thesis supervisor. This document has been developed as a guide to supervisors in undertaking their role on behalf of the Master's Programs of St. Stephen's College. We hope that you will find the following information helpful as you go through the thesis process with your student. Please note that this document is a supplement to the "Master's Thesis Guidelines" and should be read in conjunction with that document.

The thesis is a significant component of the Master of Psychotherapy and Spirituality (MPS) and Master of Theological Studies (MTS) programs at St. Stephen's College. Its purpose is to provide candidates with the opportunity to further the generation of professional knowledge in their field, through the design and implementation of a substantial piece of research. In this regard, the candidate is required to pursue a thesis topic of interest - using formal research methods including design, data collection, analysis, and the write-up of results. The following are hints to guide you in your role as a supervisor

II. Authority and Accountability

The supervisor is considered contracted associate faculty of the College during the thesis development. For academic purposes the supervisor serves with the delegated authority of St. Stephen's College Academic Senate. It must therefore be understood that the supervisor has a dual accountability: to the candidate for the terms negotiated in the work plan, and to the College through the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) of the degree program.

In the sensitive matter of evaluation of the quality of the candidate's work, the primary accountability of the supervisor must be recognized as being to the College and its published standards. Such primary accountability is meant to enhance the supervisory relationship, not detract from it, though potential for difficulty always exists. It must be remembered that the candidate has voluntarily entered into a contract with the College for academic purposes and it is this contract which takes precedence over that between candidate and supervisor in the matter of evaluation.

III. Confidentiality

St. Stephen's College has defined the circle of confidentiality for the academic, professional, and ethical considerations arising within the thesis to include:

- Candidate,
- Supervisor,
- Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS)
- Degree Program Committee,
- Research Ethics Board of the Research Ethics Office, University of Alberta,
- Examiners,
- Subjects/co-researchers in the candidate's research as required by the candidate's thesis or other work, and as authorized by the candidate.

Annotated Description of Thesis Process: Helpful Hints

Having accepted the invitation to supervise the student through the Master's thesis process, it is highly recommended that you meet with the candidate and formulate a feasible work plan that is manageable for both parties. This work plan may include setting up regular meetings and/or due dates for writing submissions. You may find it helpful to review with the student the information presented in this document.

I. The Thesis: Content, Methodology, and Writing Style:

As a supervisor, you will be looking for depth in the content of the thesis. Here are some key pieces to look for:

- The research question is stated in the introduction chapter and is clear and concise.
- The literature review chapter contains a thorough discussion of research and study on the chosen topic, and theological literature pertinent to the research topic.
- The methodology chapter includes a discussion of literature on the chosen methodology, and a detailed description of the process that has been undertaken. These should be written in a way that allows for duplication of the research methodology if a reader should choose to do so.
- Ethical considerations must be reviewed for research with human subjects
- For MPS students, the thesis maintains the APA writing style; MTS students usually write their thesis in the Turabian writing style but may use APA with The Research Director (MPS) or Chair's (MTS) permission. Students should use the current published edition of their manual (APA or Turabian) and should not depend on online citation resources.

If you are unfamiliar with any of these areas, do not hesitate to contact the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) for explanation and guidance. We, at the College, are here to support you and the student in this process.

II. Theological Integration:

As a theological college, we have been granted the authority to confer theological degrees. While the MPS is closely identified with counselling, the spiritual component in both the MPS and MTS distinguishes our degrees from degrees in Arts and Education faculties. As such, it is an integral component to our degrees, and you are asked to ensure the existence and integration of the theological/spiritual element throughout the thesis. All St. Stephen's students writing theses will have taken theological courses and it is their responsibility to include this aspect in their writings. Your responsibility is only to ensure that the theological thread is present.

III. Length of the Thesis:

The length of a Master's thesis must be 100-150 pages. The preliminary pages, bibliography and appendices are over and above the requisite 100 pages. If a particular story or discussion is relevant to the content but does not require inclusion in the body of the thesis, it may be added as an appendix.

IV. Deadlines:

As a supervisor, your first task is to review the thesis proposal. The proposal may be submitted to the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) for approval at any time throughout the year; however, the deadline for proposal submission in order to graduate the following year is January 1st annually. Thesis writing is a staged process, so these deadlines are to ensure that the student completes all necessary pieces of the thesis in a timely manner.

Once the proposal is approved by the Research Director, students are normally required to submit an Ethics Review. You must review this prior to the student submitting the document to the Research Ethics Office of the University of Alberta <https://www.ualberta.ca/st-stephens/st-stephens-programs/files-cabinet/ethics-review>. Once approved, the student is free to begin the research.

As the supervisor, you will work closely with your student throughout the writing process. It is suggested that the student submit each chapter for you to review as it is completed. This is suggested so that you may recognize errors early in the writing process, preventing any major revisions of the end product. If required, you may recommend the student work with a thesis editor/formatter/proof-reader.

When you have approved the final draft of the thesis, it is submitted to the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) **no later than April 1st of the intended year of graduation**. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they plan their work with enough time to allow you to review the work adequately prior to submission of the final draft. The Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS) then sends it out to internal and external examiners. The examiners will recommend a grade of clear pass, pass with minor revisions, pass with major revisions, or fail/rewrite. If minor revisions are required, you and your student incorporate these changes and submit the revised thesis to the College. If major revisions are necessary, changes are made, and the revised thesis is sent to the internal examiner once again for approval. All revisions must be completed and approved by you no later than **September 1st of the intended year of graduation**. In the case of a Fail, you may consult with the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS); the re-written thesis will be examined by internal/external examiners.

Summary of Important Dates:

Thesis Documents	Deadlines
Thesis preliminary proposal	September 1st after completion of <i>Research Methods or Inquiry, Research and Evaluation</i> course
Thesis proposal	January 1st prior to intended year of graduation
Final draft of thesis	April 1st of intended year of graduation
Final copy of thesis to Research Director or MTS Chair	September 1st of intended year of graduation
Publishable thesis emailed to Registrar	October 1st of intended year of graduation

V. Convocation:

St. Stephen's College Convocation day is typically scheduled for late October or early November. St. Stephen's has a tradition of showcasing student research as part of the Convocation Day, which may involve students presenting their Capstone and thesis research. Details are shared with students closer to the event. The evening is the formal Convocation (hood and gown) ceremony. As the supervisor, you are welcome to take part in any or all aspects of Convocation Day. A formal invitation will be sent to you; however, if you do not receive an invitation, please do not hesitate to contact the College. Invitations are sent out in the middle of September.

VI. Honorarium

After receipt of the final evaluation materials, and the confirmation letter sent to the supervisor and candidate by the Research Director (MPS) or Chair (MTS), the academic office will forward an appropriate conclusion letter and the stipulated honorarium fee to the supervisor. In the event the supervisory relationship is terminated, the honorarium will be prorated. [Thesis examiners also receive honoraria.]

VII. Conclusion

We hope this information is helpful and answers some of the more basic questions. The research process is a rewarding and enriching process for students, and on behalf of St. Stephen's College we thank you for your dedication and contribution.