



Graduate Theological Foundation
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THE DOCTORAL THESIS Guidelines, Supervision, and the Oral Defense

In conformity with the basis commitment of the Graduate Theological Foundation to serve advanced professional education, the doctoral thesis, as the culminating work of the highest academic degree, must make an original contribution to the field of knowledge of a specific discipline or area of inquiry. The thesis is shaped as a written work of original systematic research, which includes the substantive exposition of the theoretical basis and rationale of the subject, together with a demonstration of familiarity with the appropriate scholarly and professional literature in the field of inquiry.

GUIDELINES

The written form of the thesis is to be in the style of actual scholarly publications; that is, the thesis as finally submitted is to be capable of publication without being rewritten. Given the international composition of the Foundation's student body, no one style of thesis preparation or writing is required. However, consistency of presentation is expected. The Foundation's standard text for the traditional structuring of the doctoral thesis is *From Beginning to End: Internet Research and the Writing Process* by John Morgan and Russell Neitzke. The fundamental components of a traditionally-constructed doctoral thesis include (1) the statement of the problem, (2) review of the relevant literature, (3) articulation of the research methodology to be used, (4) presentation of materials and their analysis, (5) summary and relevance of the findings to the thesis with emphasis upon the "original" nature of the findings, and (6) a statement of the work yet to be done in the field of inquiry relevant to the thesis. A comprehensive bibliography of works cited within the body of the thesis is required.

SUPERVISION

The Thesis Supervisor, in this style of learning, is specifically mandated to work closely with the candidate in the development of the thesis topic and through its evolving refinements leading to the finished product. The Thesis Supervisor is nominated by the candidate and approved by the faculty on the basis of academic qualifications at the doctoral level of training and experience. Though candidates are encouraged to look within the Foundation's own faculty for thesis supervision, the Foundation honors the request of candidates who wish to select a Thesis Supervisor from outside our institution, with due justification. After the research thesis has finally reached a state of completion to the mutual satisfaction of the Thesis Supervisor and the candidate, the candidate must submit four physical copies of the thesis with one CD-Rom or electronic copy (email attachment) along with the Thesis Supervisor's written affirmation of approval of the thesis.

ORAL DEFENSE

Upon receipt of the thesis by the Foundation, the candidate is required to schedule an oral defense with the Foundation's faculty. The defense date is arranged through the Office of Student Services. Defenses may be hosted in a variety of venues including the Foundation (Indiana), Chicago, New York, Rome, Hong Kong, and, in the case of Spanish-speaking students, San Juan, Puerto Rico.