

I. THE MASTER'S THESIS

The thesis demonstrates the student's ability to do independent research and study, to organize and analyze material critically, to draw conclusions, and to make pertinent recommendations.

A. Requirements

M.A. students who intend to write a thesis must have completed all the courses required by the Institute and by the Commission on Higher Education.

The student has to acquire grades of not less than 2.0 in all the courses in order to continue with the MA Thesis Program.

B. Choosing a Thesis Adviser

The student suggests to the Dean one or two names for thesis adviser from the IFRS faculty whose field of specialization is related to the student's proposed topic. If necessary, the student may suggest a non-IFRS faculty. The Dean makes the appointment.

The adviser guides the student in the preparation of the thesis proposal.

The Dean, in consultation with the student and the adviser, selects and appoints the members of the panel of readers, who may come from other schools or institutes.

C. Thesis Proposal

In consultation with a thesis adviser, a student writes a thesis proposal as part of the course on Thesis Writing A. The thesis proposal contains the following:

- **Title** (*or topic or focus of the research*)
- **Background of the Study** (*project context*)
- **Statement of the Problem**
- **Objectives of the Study**
- **Scope and Limitation**
- **Significance of the Study** (*reasons why the topic was chosen, e.g., experience, involvement, or reality that has made the subject of inquiry a matter of concern*)
- **Theoretical Framework**
- **Methodology** (*approach to the study and how it is to be carried out*)

- **Definition of Terms**
- **Review of Related Literature**
- **General Outline of the Study** (*general divisions, such as proposed chapters, etc.*)
- **Timeline/Schedule**
- **Partial List of Resources** (*at least ten bibliographic entries of resources and/or informed persons consulted in preparing for this topic*)

It is recommended that the thesis proposal pass through an editor for English grammar and style before it is submitted to the adviser for approval to defend

Three copies of the approved thesis proposal are due at the Dean's Office two weeks before the defense. The schedule of the proposal defense is set by the Dean after consultation with the adviser, the student, and the readers.

C. The Writing of the Thesis

The student submits to the Dean an Application Form for Thesis Writing, duly signed by the adviser. The student writes the thesis in coordination with the thesis adviser.

Ideal length of the thesis is 80 - 100 pages and has to conform to the format contained in Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* (9th ed.).

The thesis is normally written in English and uses inclusive/non-sexist language. Standard English usage is expected.

D. Thesis Adviser's Meetings with the Student

It is important for the adviser to understand the nature of the thesis as explained in the proposal.

It is recommended that the meetings between the student and the adviser be personal meetings rather than by phone or email. The schedule of meetings is arranged by the student and the adviser.

The student and the thesis adviser meet for at least 20 hours. The thesis adviser receives a stipend of P550 per hour.

The adviser is expected to monitor the thesis writing in terms of both its method and content. In order to facilitate

the progress, the adviser and student need to agree mutually when specific portions of the work are to be submitted.

It is expected that the adviser read and critique the text as soon as possible to avoid delay in the process of writing. Unsatisfactory work needs to be redone and/or rewritten before the student can proceed to the next step. If successive drafts continue to be unsatisfactory, the Dean should be notified. The student may be asked to take more time to finish the thesis or to discontinue in the MA Thesis Program. If a student cannot comply with the Institute's requirements, the student may be advised to apply for the MA Non-thesis Program instead.

E. The Evaluation of the Thesis for Defense

Once the writing of the thesis is completed, the student secures the Form for Evaluation of the Thesis from either the Registrar's Office or may download it from the IFRS' website. The student gives this evaluation form to the adviser.

The adviser fills out Part I of the evaluation form and signs the Form for Approval for Thesis Defense, which is submitted to the Dean's Office. The student then submits three copies of the thesis to the Dean's Office. The Dean provides each reader with a copy of the thesis, together with a Form for Evaluation of the Thesis. Part I of the evaluation form has to be accomplished by each of the readers and submitted to the Dean's Office at least a week before the public defense so that the student and the adviser can be alerted in case that any of the readers find a major revision to be necessary.

Part I of the Form for Evaluation of the Thesis uses the following criteria:

1. The thesis conforms to the approved thesis proposal.
2. The method is clearly specified and applied.
3. The thesis contains a solid theological component.
4. The topic is adequately researched and its arguments are presented in a coherent manner.
5. The style, format, and English usage are according to the prescribed standards.
6. The thesis shows evidence of the integration of the vision-mission of IFRS.

It is recommended that the final draft of the thesis pass through an editor for English grammar and style before it is submitted to the adviser for approval to defend.

II. THE PUBLIC DEFENSE

After consultation with the adviser, the student, and the readers, the Dean sets the schedule of the public defense.

A soft copy of the thesis and an abstract of the thesis are sent the Dean's Office one month (4 weeks) before the defense.

Preferably, the abstract is not more than 250 words. It has to be approved by the adviser.

The Dean forwards to the readers a soft copy of the following: thesis, abstract, letter of invitation. Upon request, the reader/s can be provided a hard copy of the thesis and abstract.

It is recommended that the student consult the adviser regarding the content and the manner of the presentation before the actual oral defense.

A. The Members of the Panel

The panel is composed of the chairperson, three readers, and the adviser. The chairperson, who may be the Dean or any IFRS faculty appointed for the occasion, moderates the defense.

B. The Defense Proper

The adviser and the three panelists are to accomplish Part 2 of the Form for Evaluation of the Thesis.

The oral defense starts with an opening prayer prepared by the student. The chairperson then welcomes the audience and introduces the candidate.

The candidate is given 20-25 minutes to present the summary of the thesis. Each reader will then be given 15 minutes to comment on the thesis and to ask their questions.

A 15-minute break is provided, where the panel leaves the room to discuss their assessment of the thesis and the defense.

After the break, the chairperson announces the result of the assessment. The adviser then is given 10 minutes to provide her or his own assessment of the process that the writing of the thesis underwent, its strengths and weaknesses if any, and the attitude that the student showed in writing the thesis.

The oral defense ends with an acceptance and a message of thanks from the student-candidate.

The thesis adviser and each of the three readers receive stipends.

III. FINAL DRAFT AND FINAL COPY OF THE THESIS

After the public defense, the student and the adviser sit together to discuss about the comments and suggestions that were made by the readers during the defense. They have to agree on the kind of revision/s that will be made when necessary.

Upon doing all the necessary modification and/or revision, the student submits the final copy to an editor for final editing. (The editor is recommended by either the Adviser or the Dean).

The copy of the revised and edited thesis is submitted to the adviser, who checks if the revisions and editing are satisfactory. The adviser then signs the Approval Sheet for Revisions.

Consequently, a soft copy of the approved revised thesis is sent to the readers. Each of them signs an Approval Sheet for Revisions. The readers may be provided with a hard copy of the revised thesis upon request.

Upon approval by the Dean, the student will have two (2) hardbound copies made (an additional copy is provided when the student's funding agency requires a copy) and one (1) electronic copy (CD-ROM) of the thesis. These are submitted to the Registrar.

IV. SOME REMINDERS IN WRITING ACADEMIC PAPERS

- 1) Use simple and direct language.
- 2) Avoid jargon and high sounding words.
- 3) Try to keep sentences and paragraphs short.
- 4) Provide a translation of all non-English words and phrases, unless they are commonly used.
- 5) Spell out acronyms when using them for the first time in your text.
- 6) Acknowledge all quotations and borrowed ideas in the footnotes. It is your responsibility to get permission from sources.
- 7) Draw your conclusions at the completion of the writing of the paper.
- 8) Do not introduce new information in the conclusion.

INSTITUTE OF FORMATION AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

A GUIDE

for M.A.

THESIS WRITERS

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