

INSTITUTE OF FORMATION AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

122 N. Domingo Street, corner St. John Street, 1111 Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines
Tel.: 8721-99-32; 8724-71-73 Email: ifrs1963.edu@gmail.com

Guide for Master of Arts in Religious Studies Thesis Writers

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

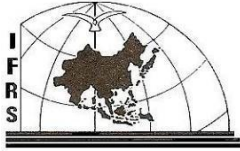
The Masters of Arts in Religious Studies (MARS) students who intend to write a thesis must have completed all the courses required by the Institute of Formation and Religious Studies (IFRS) and by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

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

B. Thesis Proposal

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

1. Title (or topic or focus of the research)
2. Background of the Study (project context)
3. Statement of the Problem
4. Objectives of the Study
5. Scope and Limitation
6. 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)
7. Theoretical Framework
8. Methodology (approach to the study and how it is to be carried out)
9. Definition of Terms
10. Review of Related Literature
11. General Outline of the Study (general divisions, such as proposed chapters, etc.)



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12. Timeline/Schedule

13. Partial List of Resources (at least ten bibliographic entries of resources and/or informed persons consulted in preparing for this topic)

Three copies of the 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.

Three copies of the thesis are due at the Dean's Office one month (4 weeks) before the defense

C. Ethical Review and Monitoring

Before beginning any study, researchers must submit their research proposal to the IFRS Research Program and Ethics Committee (RPEC) for approval. The researcher completes the IFRS-QA-RP-15.01- Research Proposal Review Form. The committee will evaluate the proposal based on ethical considerations, including participant safety, informed consent procedures, and data protection measures. The RPEC furnishes the research with an accomplished IFRS-QA-RP-15.02 – Certificate of Compliance.

Once the study is underway, researchers are required to:

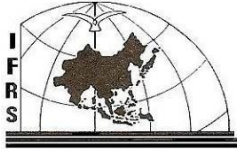
- Notify the committee of any changes to the research protocol that may affect ethical considerations.
- Report any adverse events or ethical issues that arise during the study.

The RPEC reserves the right to suspend or terminate a study if it finds that ethical guidelines are not being followed (See Research Manual for a more comprehensive discussion of Ethics in Research).

D. The Writing of the Thesis

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

The 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 (9thed.).



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The thesis is normally written in English and uses inclusive/non-sexist language. Standard English usage is expected. It is recommended that the proposal and the final draft pass through an editor for English grammar and style before it is submitted to the adviser for approval.

E. Evaluation of the Thesis

The thesis will be evaluated by a panel of three readers, together with the adviser, with 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.

II. THE ROLE OF THE ADVISER

A. Choosing an Adviser and the Panel of Readers

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. The student may also suggest a non-IFRS faculty. The Dean makes the appointment.

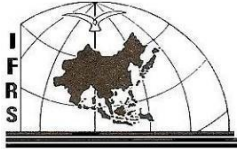
Once the faculty accepts the appointment, she or he signs the Application Form for Thesis Writing.

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.

B. Adviser's Meetings with the Student

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

The Adviser meets the student during the course of the writing of the thesis proposal and the thesis itself. It is recommended that the meetings be personal meetings rather than by phone or email. The schedule of meetings is arranged by the student and the adviser.



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

The adviser needs to understand the nature of the thesis as explained in the proposal.

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

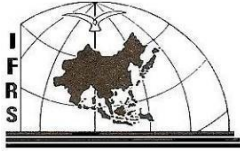
In order to facilitate the progress, the adviser and student need to agree mutually when specific portions of the work are to be submitted.

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 the MARS Thesis Program. If a student cannot comply with the Institute's requirements, the student may be advised to apply for the MARS Non-thesis Program instead.

C. The Approval of the Thesis

Once the writing of the thesis is completed, the student secures the Evaluation Form from either the Registrar's Office or may download it from the IFRS website. The adviser fills out the first phase of the evaluation and signs the Form for Approval for Thesis Defense, manifesting the approval of the thesis for public defense. The accomplished form is submitted to the Dean. The student is then asked to submit to the Dean three copies of the thesis. The Dean provides each reader with a copy of the thesis, together with an Evaluation Form. The first phase of the evaluation has to be accomplished by the readers and submitted to the Dean's Office at least a sy before the public defense so that the student and the adviser can be alerted in case any of the readers find a major revision to be necessary.

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



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III. THE ORAL DEFENSE

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

The student writes the abstract of the thesis (soft copy), preferably not more than 250 words.

Once the abstract is approved by the adviser, the student submits it to the Dean's Office. The abstract is attached to the letter of invitation which is sent to the readers.

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 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.

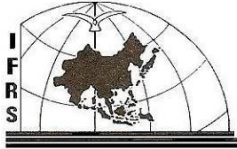
After the break, the chairperson announces the result of the assessment. The adviser then is given 10 minutes to provide her or his own assessment of the process that the writing of the thesis underwent, its strengths and weaknesses if any, and the attitude that the student showed in writing the thesis.

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.

IV. FINAL DRAFT AND FINAL COPY OF THE THESIS

After the public defense, the student and the adviser sit together to discuss 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. The research completes the IFRS-QA-RP15.03 Form - Oral Defense Summary of Comments and Revisions.



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Upon doing all the necessary modifications and/or revisions, 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 with the completed IFRS-QA-RP15.03 form is sent to the readers. Each of them signs the IFRS-QA-RP-15.03 Form and 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 (USB) of the thesis. These are submitted to the Registrar.

V. SUBMISSION OF REVISED THESIS

A student is given at most a semester to submit a revised thesis. Non-submission within the given period results in a Failing grade. The student will not be granted an MA degree.

VI. RETAKE

In case a student gets a Failing grade in the thesis defense, the student can apply for a retake. This application needs the recommendation of the thesis adviser and the approval of the dean. A retake can be allowed only once.

VII. 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.