

Thesis Proposal

The student must be thoroughly acquainted with the basic requirements of the STL thesis and be familiar with the current list of authorized directors (posted on the SHMS website).

1. The student should undertake discussions regarding possible thesis topics as early as practicable in graduate studies, but normally not later than the half-way point of one's course work. These discussions are informal and may take place with a number of potential directors, professors, and advisors simultaneously.
2. Eventually the student and the potential director must meet to formulate a statement of thesis topic ("thesis statement") for submission to the STL Committee. The thesis statement must be accompanied by a basic bibliography and a general outline of the proposed thesis.
3. The director must present these materials to the STL Committee in a timely fashion and communicate its decisions to the student.
4. The STL Committee can:
 - a. reject the thesis proposal, in which case the student must abandon the topic or at least completely reformulate the proposal;
 - b. approve the proposal with significant reservations, in which case the proposal and subsequent modifications must be resubmitted to the STL Committee for approval;
 - c. approve the proposal outright, or with only minor reservations, in which latter case the STL chair will verify the sufficiency of such modifications and will communicate final approval, or not, to the director.
5. The director (personally or by proxy) will submit the approved thesis statement only (not the bibliography and outline) to the Theology Faculty for confirmation.
6. The director will communicate the decision of the Theology Faculty to the student. If the Theology Faculty does not confirm the thesis topic statement, the director will arrange to meet with the STL chair or the STL Committee for guidance.
7. Upon confirmation of the thesis topic, a reader shall be appointed. While a student may suggest a reader to the director, only the director may approach a potential reader and, if he or she is willing to serve, nominate the reader to the dean. If the dean approves of the selection, he formally appoints the reader, or asks the director to propose another name.

Thesis approval

1. After a thesis topic statement is confirmed by the Theology Faculty, the director and student interact as mutually convenient. Full or partial drafts of the thesis may be exchanged, or not, as the director indicates.

2. At some point, the student delivers what he or she designates as a “complete draft” of the thesis to the director. The director has six weeks to assess this draft and to seek the reader’s evaluation. . The reader has up to three weeks to convey a formal evaluation to the director.
3. **Approval:** If the director, after consultation with the reader, approves the “complete draft”, he or she will return the “complete draft” to the student for minor revisions (those aimed at bringing the thesis up to library-ready quality). The student is responsible for returning the revised draft in a timely manner. The director has one week to recognize these revisions or to return the revised draft to the student for further minor improvements. When the director certifies the thesis as being library-ready, he or she immediately notifies the dean and the STL chair in writing, and promptly delivers an unbound, hardcopy of the thesis to the dean.
4. **Rejection:** If the director rejects the “complete draft”, he or she will return it to the student, who is responsible for reworking it and resubmitting it to the director. The director has four weeks to assess successive “complete drafts”, as above, consulting with the reader as may be useful.