Scofield Biblical Institute and Theological Seminary

P.O. Box 48
Hart, MI 49420

Dissertation / Thesis Handbook

Masters **Th.M.** **Th.D.** **Ph.D.**

Dissertation Handbook

General Requirements

- The dissertation will be not more than 300 pages and a Master's Thesis not more than 200, including footnotes but excluding bibliography. The word limit should be strictly adhered to unless approved by the Mentor and Dean.
- The dissertation will be the result of the student's own research, and is expected to provide evidence of a person's independent analytical, evaluative and creative abilities.
- All candidates must have an approved degree from an acceptable institution in order to pursue the dissertation/and or the Dissertation only degree track (Not presently offered).
- Students will normally receive initial guidance on the nature and methods of writing the dissertation in the respective field of theological study by the Dissertation and Thesis guide (available in a download).
- A student may only proceed formally to the dissertation once the following conditions have been met:
    - The Board of Examiners has indicated that the student has sufficient academic background to pursue such a program and be successful.
    - The Department Dean and the Academic Dean have approved the title of the dissertation.
    - A supervisor for the dissertation has been appointed.

- A dissertation proposal must be submitted on the form supplied by Scofield for approval by the Mentor and the Academic Dean. In approving a title, the following criteria will be borne in mind:

- The subject matter must fall within the parameters of the title of the degree.

- The proposal should demonstrate a student's ability to analyze and evaluate critically a chosen topic. Although students are welcome to seek advice on whether their proposed topic is appropriate, the topic must be chosen by them and they must carry the full ownership of the choice.

- The proposal should provide evidence of the student's independent judgment and creative abilities in synthesizing and developing his or her thinking.

- The subject for study should be based upon an adequate body of knowledge, which will enable the student to engage with the material at the appropriate level.

- Upon the approval of the dissertation proposal, a Mentor will be allocated to each student. The Mentor will normally be appointed from the staff of Scofield Seminary, though a secondary Mentor may also be approved at the student's request.

Supervision of the Dissertation

- Producing a dissertation is a marathon rather than a sprint, and demands determination and organization. An important element within this process is developing a good working relationship with the Mentor. The latter will have particular concern for the subject matter, bibliography, structure, style and academic level of the dissertation. Once the student has contacted the Mentor, they should work out a plan for the supervision process. It is important to note that the Mentor is not expected to keep checking up on the student, but that it is the student's responsibility to keep in contact with his or her mentor.

- The student can expect the mentor to read a draft of the dissertation (in parts or as a whole) before it is submitted, and to give suggestions about how the work could be improved. However, the mentor will not normally look at repeated drafts. The student is also responsible for making sure that adequate time is allowed for submitting work to their mentor before the submission takes place. Students are encouraged to inform the mentor as far in advance as possible when they hope to submit a draft, and to agree a date for the supervisor to read and comment upon it.

- The mentor can provide the student, on request, with advice relating to strategy for the student's research and writing work. However, the responsibility for designing that strategy rests with the student, since part of the purpose of the dissertation exercise is to test the research skills. Therefore the mentor's role is limited to providing advice in response to the student's own suggestions.

- The final form of the dissertation remains the responsibility of the candidate.

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Preparing the dissertation for submission

- The student must secure a confirmation from the Academic Registrar that all of his or her financial obligations to Scofield have been met. No dissertation may be examined until these obligations have been met.

- Dissertations must be presented in permanent and legible form. It is recommended that the characters employed in the main text should be 12pt. Double or one-and-a-half spacing should be used in the main text; but single spacing should be used in the Abstract and in any extended quotations and footnotes. All pages must be consecutively numbered. Margins should be no less than 40mm on the binding edge and not less than 20 mm elsewhere. Drawings, diagrams, maps and similar items should be submitted in reasonable size.

- Candidates may submit visual or non-book (audio or video) material with their dissertation if such material forms a useful addition to, or explanation of, work contained in the written submission and if such material constitutes the most appropriate method of presenting the

- information concerned. Any material of this type should be enclosed in a container which is suitable for storage on a library shelf. Students considering the submission of audio or video materials as adjuncts to their dissertation should consult their mentor. They must also ensure that they do not infringe copyright regulations.

- The Chicago Manual Style of Footnotes and Quotations should be followed (see Research Manual). The argumentation, use of qualitative and quantitative research methods and the format of academic writing should be designed following the patterns outlined in the Scofield Research Manual. Before handing in the dissertation, the student should check for errors in terms of grammar and spelling. It is advised that another person proof-reads the dissertation. However, this is not the role of the mentor, even if he or she may point out errors that they see.

- One of each of the following pages must be bound into the dissertation. The order of the introductory pages should be:

    - **Title page.**

    - **Abstract.**

      The abstract should be typed in single spacing. When writing the abstract the student should bear in mind that this may be the only part of the dissertation that is read by other research workers. It should be written in such a way as to help researchers in the same field decide whether to read this dissertation and to give readers who are only marginally concerned in the subject enough information. The abstract should consist of a piece of connected prose and should not be more than 300 words in length. Abbreviations should be avoided.

    - **Declaration/Statements**

    - **Contents**

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Submission and examination of the dissertation

- The final electronic copy should be sent for submission to the Seminary (copy to Mentor).
- The student will arrange for the dissertation to be sent to the Board of Examiners.
- The examining process may require the student to make some minor corrections, and in the case of dissertations to be deposited in libraries, to be permanently bound. The examining process is not complete until these procedures are completed as necessary.
- Three (3) hard bound copies of the Dissertation/Thesis are to be made. One copy is to be deposited in the Scofield Seminary Library. One copy of the dissertation will go to the Mentor. The last copy will be returned to the student.

Declaration and Statements:

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any other degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any other degree.

Signed_____

Date_____

STATEMENT 1

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of _____.

Signed_____

Date_____

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STATEMENT 2

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed_____Date_____
_____

STATEMENT 3

I hereby give my consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organizations. Scofield Seminary will also have the right to post the work online in the Scofield Online Library.

Signed_____

Date_____

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