

Vancouver School of Theology ThM Programme Guidelines

Languages

For admission to the ThM programme, competency in a language is defined as successful completion of 1 year (6 credits) of language study at the university level. The school reserves the right to require students to demonstrate language competency by examination.

Coursework

The Research Methods course is normally undertaken in the first or second semester of a student's program and shall be completed before the thesis or project is undertaken.

Courses for the ThM must be taken at the 600 or 700 level. This includes regular Advanced Degree courses, augmented Basic Degree 300 and 400 courses that are offered with an Advanced Degree component at the 600 level, and reading courses set up with the permission of the instructor. No more than half of a student's full course load can be 300/600 or 400/600 courses.

All written work for the ThM programme must conform to the VST Style Guide.

All work undertaken for any course as a part of the ThM program must be completed by the last day to submit work in the term following the one in which the student registered for the course. VST operates on a three term year [Fall, Spring and Summer].

Normally, language courses are not counted as part of the 6 elective courses required for the ThM.

Leave of Absence: A student may request in writing a leave of absence for up to one year, renewable upon written request for another year, up to a total of two years.

All course work (and any required languages) must be completed and approved before a ThM thesis proposal can be approved by the Research Degrees Committee.

Thesis and Project

If the thesis option for the ThM programme is chosen by the student, this requires that the student successfully complete a thesis demonstrating scholarly competence, including the formulation of a research topic or question relevant to the field of study, critical understanding of primary and secondary sources in the field, demonstration of appropriate research methods, and the ability to make a sustained and critical scholarly contribution to the field. The ThM thesis should be 22,500 – 30,000 words (90 – 120 pages). The ThM project option will likewise show scholarly competence in a more delimited area of study in a paper of 11250 – 12500 words (45 – 50 pages). The project may include alternate media (performance, video, etc) in addition to a paper of 7500 – 8750 words (30 – 35 pages). The student must make a satisfactory oral defense of the thesis/project before a committee of examiners appointed by the Advanced Degree Committee and confirmed by the Faculty Council.

In the semester before the ThM thesis or the ThM project is to be undertaken, the student shall work with the ThM Director and appropriate Faculty member(s) to select a Faculty Advisor for the thesis or project, who shall be approved by the Research Degrees Committee.

The ThM thesis reading course [first of two course thesis], or the ThM project course, must be authorized by the ThM Director and the appointed Faculty Thesis/Project Advisor no later than the registration deadline of the term in which the thesis/project is undertaken.

The ThM thesis proposal, or the ThM project proposal, must be submitted in hard copy to the ThM Director no later than the second week of the term in which the thesis/project will be defended. Proposals must be submitted at least 7 days before any meeting of the Advanced Degree Committee. At the time that the proposal is submitted, an abstract of 300 words must also be sent to the ThM Director in electronic form.

The Research Degrees Committee will evaluate all ThM thesis and project proposals, and submit the approval of any proposal to the Faculty Council for confirmation.

In order to give the Research Degrees Committee sufficient time to locate an acceptable outside reader for a ThM thesis or project, the Faculty Advisor shall notify the ThM Director in writing (email) by the Monday after Reading Week that the thesis/project will in his or her estimation be ready for examination by the due date [as specified below].

At the time when the thesis/project is deemed ready by the student and the Faculty Advisor, and in no case later than three weeks before the last day for graduating students to submit work in the semester in which the thesis or project is completed, the Faculty Advisor will communicate in writing (email) to the ThM Director that the thesis/project is ready for examination. The student will submit three hard copies of the thesis or three hard copies of the project to the ThM Director. [Email submissions of theses/projects are not normally allowed.] At the time that the thesis is submitted, an abstract of 300 words in must also be sent to the ThM Director in electronic form.

For a ThM thesis: The examination of a ThM thesis requires a panel of two examiners, one of whom must be a person who is not a faculty member of the School. The second examiner is appointed at the time when the thesis is ready for examination. The second reader normally does not participate in the actual direction of the thesis/project and is expected only to read the completed thesis and participate in the oral examination of the thesis.

For a ThM project: The examination of a ThM project requires a panel of two examiners, one of whom may be a person who is not a faculty member of the School. The second examiner is appointed at the time when the project is ready for examination. The second reader normally does not participate in the actual direction of the project and is expected only to read the completed project and participate in the oral examination of the project.

The ThM Director will set a time for the examination acceptable to all concerned within three weeks of the submission of the thesis/project, and before the date for graduating students to submit work.

At the thesis or project examination, the ThM Director [or his/her appointee] will be chair of the proceedings and will record the decision of the examiners.

The examination normally will take 1 - 2 hours. It will begin with the student making a brief presentation of their work, then the examiners will proceed to ask questions that require the student to explain and defend their thesis or project.

In the case in which a performance is part of a project, a tape or an electronic recording of sufficient quality to permit examination must be submitted at or immediately after the examination. The technical arrangements for electronic recording shall be accomplished by the student.

At the end of the examination, the examiners will confer one of the following evaluations to the thesis/project on the basis of the oral examination: Approved, Approved with Minor Corrections, Not Approved.

In the case of an evaluation of Approved with Minor Corrections, the student will work with the Faculty Advisor to make the corrections needed. When this has been done, normally no later than the last day to submit work in the semester the student expects to graduate, the student will submit the corrected thesis/project.

In the case of an evaluation of Not Approved, the student will work with the Faculty Advisor to re-write the thesis. The student may need to register and pay for another semester of registration in order to finish the thesis/project. The re-written thesis/project will be re-submitted for examination under the above guidelines, normally before the same examination committee when possible. According to VST policy, only one re-submission of NAPP is allowed.

Two clear copies of the final approved version thesis/project must be submitted to the Librarian before the degree is conferred. An abstract of 300 words must accompany each copy.