



# United Lutheran Seminary

**United Lutheran Seminary**

**Master of Sacred Theology Manual**

**Policies and Procedures**

Unifying, Learning, Serving: United Lutheran Seminary is a welcoming and diverse learning community equipping people to proclaim the living Gospel for a changing church and world.

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Accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS)  
In the United States and Canada  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTODUCTORY MATERIALS .....</b>	<b>.....</b>
PROGRAM GOALS .....	5
ADMINISTRATION.....	7
STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT.....	8
PROGRAM ASSESSMENT.....	8
ULS MISSION STATEMENT AND EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES .....	9
<b>ADMISSION TO THE STM PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>10</b>
ADMISSION .....	10
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTS.....	10
<b>THE PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>.....</b>
AN OVERVIEW.....	11
THE MAJOR FIELD.....	11
STM FOLLOWED BY DMIN.....	12
THE ADVISOR AND EVALUATION PANEL .....	13
<b>COURSEWORK.....</b>	<b>13</b>
SEMESTER-LONG COURSES.....	14
GRADUATE INTENSIVES .....	14
DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES.....	15
INDEPENDENT STUDIES .....	15
UPGRADE GUIDELINES .....	16
COURSE TRANSFER POLICY .....	17
SUPERVISED INSTRUCTIONS AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS .....	17
CREDIT FOR CONFERRED DEGREES.....	18
STM AND THE “LUTHERAN YEAR” .....	18
<b>DETAILED GUIDE TO THE PREPARATION OF THE THESIS.....</b>	<b>20</b>
NATURE, PURPOSE, AND SCOPE .....	20
SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION .....	20
SEQUENCE AND CALENDAR.....	20
STEPS IN THE PROCESS.....	21
<i>Selection of Subject</i> .....	21
<i>The Proposal</i> .....	21
<i>The Draft</i> .....	23
<i>Review Copy</i> .....	23
<i>Review and Defense</i> .....	24
<i>Revisions</i> .....	24
<i>Final Submission (Archival Copies)</i> .....	24
<i>Abstract</i> .....	24

<i>Precis</i> .....	24
<i>Criteria for Evaluations</i> .....	26
<i>Style</i> .....	27
<b>ULS PROTOCOLS REGARDING HUMAN SUBJECTS</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES</b> .....	<b>38</b>
COMPUTER LITERACY AND OWNERSHIP .....	38
COURSE DATES.....	38
COURSES TAKEN PRIOR TO ADMISSION.....	38
EXTENSIONS FOR COURSEWORK.....	38
FAILING GRADE.....	39
GRADE REQUIREMENTS.....	39
LEAVE OF ABSENCE.....	39
ULS EMAIL, HENRY STUDENT DATABASE, AND CANVAS.....	39
POLICIES FOR COURSE PAPERS .....	39
PLAGIARISM POLICY.....	40
PROGRAM EXTENSIONS .....	42
REGISTRATION CHANGES AND LATE REGISTRATION.....	42
STUDENT COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE.....	42
<b>FINANCES</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>CHARGEES AND FEES</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>FINANCIAL HOLD</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>FINANCIAL AID DURING WRITING STATUS</b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>FULL-TIME STATUS</b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>45</b>
<b>THESIS REGISTRATION FORM</b>	
<b>STM COURSE PLANNING GUIDE</b>	

## PROGRAM GOALS

### STM Mission Statement:

*The STM program of United Lutheran Seminary offers those with a first professional theological degree the opportunity to engage in advanced work in an aspect of, or an area within, theological inquiry in service of the church and the world.*

The Master of Sacred Theology (STM) is an advanced academic degree that enables men and women to continue their studies beyond a basic level degree in divinity (MDiv or other first graduate theological degree that provides equivalent theological background and evidence of aptitude for advanced theological study). It presupposes both the completion of a first professional degree and willingness to attend to serious theological study at an advanced level.

The **purpose of the degree** is to provide a more advanced mastery of one area or discipline of theological study than is normally provided at the basic degree level. Candidates for the STM degree are to:

- 1) Develop an advanced understanding of a focused area or discipline in the context of general theological study
- 2) Use research methods and resources in the discipline
- 3) Develop the ability to formulate productive questions
- 4) Express their learnings in clearly articulated written and oral forms of expression
- 5) Engage in scholarly conversation with peers in advanced programs<sup>1</sup>

Persons pursue the degree for a variety of reasons: as a preparation for further study at the PhD level; as a preparation for some forms of teaching; for the scholarly enhancement of ministerial practice; or for disciplined reflection on a specialized function of ministry.

Admission to the program of studies requires the completion of the MDiv, MA, MAML, MAPL, or their educational equivalents, or may be entered into many years later. The degree may be pursued on a full-time residential basis or on a part-time basis.

This Manual describes policies and procedures currently in effect\* in the Master of Sacred Theology program sponsored by United Lutheran Seminary.

\*Later revisions of the Manual may affect your program so be sure to check with the Director of Graduate Studies if any changes have been made since you entered the program. When used, the title “Dean” refers to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean.

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<sup>1</sup> The ULS STM Goals align with the ATS STM Program Standards (ATS I.1.2.1).

In addition to this Manual, please check the *ULS Catalogue* for all other seminary policies and procedures.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Authorization to confer the Master of Sacred Theology degree is granted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Higher Education. Periodic evaluation and accreditation is the province of the Association of Theological Schools and the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

The Dean and the Director of Graduate Studies exercise administrative responsibility.

Registration and management of student files are handled by the Office of the Registrar. The business office is responsible for the administration of fiscal matters.

## **STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT**

ULS is committed to providing opportunities to assess the effectiveness of its teaching and student learning. Student learning in the STM Program will be measured against the ULS Mission Statement, the STM Program Goals and the Learning Outcomes (MSCHE 14) with three artifacts collected throughout the duration of in the program:

- 1) A Thesis Proposal undertaken with the Advisor
- 2) An Oral Defense Report of the Thesis
- 3) A student final self-evaluation undertaken after successful submission of the Archival Copies of the STM Thesis or Oral Integrative Examination

Records of these reports will be kept in the student's official file. Upon graduation, these documents shall be utilized for the annual program assessment.

## **STM PROGRAM ASSESSMENT**

At the end of each academic year, the Director of Graduate Studies, in partnership with the Office of Student Learning Assessment, will utilize the following data (which includes both direct and indirect evaluation) for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of the STM Program based upon the stated ULS Master of Sacred Theology Program Goals (ATS E.1.4; MSCHE 11)

- 1) STM Intake Questionnaires
- 2) STM Graduating Questionnaires
- 3) Course Assessments
- 4) Oral Integrative Examination Report
- 5) Thesis Proposal Report
- 6) Thesis Evaluations Report
- 7) ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire

A report will be made to the Faculty to suggest any necessary adjustments, corrections or additions related to courses offerings, pedagogy, methodology, advising, evaluation procedures, as well as institutional and student services.

## ULS MISSION STATEMENT AND PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES<sup>2</sup>

With the above program goals in mind, ULS expects that graduates of the STM program will have the following Learning Outcomes, which are based upon the ULS Mission Statement:

**Unifying, Learning, Serving:** United Lutheran Seminary is a welcoming and diverse learning community equipping people to proclaim the living Gospel for a changing church and world.

### **STM Learning Outcomes:**

- A. **Unifying** – Developing advanced skills in academically rigorous research that contributes to bringing people together in the diverse unity enabled by the Triune God
  - 1. Actively articulates diverse perspectives, including from biblical and theological disciplines, and scientific, ecumenical, and interfaith points of view
  - 2. Clearly documents awareness of perspectives of marginalized in research, writing, and application
  - 3. Advocates consistently for the development of a shared vision in groups of diverse learners
- B. **Learning** – Developing advanced skills in lifelong critical thinking, research, and application through the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit
  - 1. Demonstrates excellent problem-solving abilities within a concentration and general competence across theological disciplines
  - 2. Clearly articulates critical and constructive engagement with a living theological tradition, and capacity to engage that tradition with academic integrity
  - 3. Evidences advanced abilities to interpret historic religious traditions, including their sacred scriptures, historical development, and cultural forms, engaging contextual analysis
  - 4. Shows capacity to complete an extensive thesis on a topic of significance
- C. **Serving** – Developing advanced skills and confidence in participating in academic communities, with teaching and leading as appropriate for an advanced degree graduate
  - 1. Presents a clear and consistent message in public leadership, grounded in the risen Christ, across contexts
  - 2. Shows high level abilities to use tools necessary for academic inquiry in one's fields
  - 3. Evidences advanced skills to address the systems that cause and perpetuate marginalization and division, including drawing upon biblical, theological and other academic disciplines

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<sup>2</sup> ATS I.1.3; MSCHE 11.

## ADMISSION TO THE STM PROGRAM

Admission to the STM program, according to ATS standards, “shall require the MDiv, or first graduate theological degree providing equivalent theological background, or its educational equivalent, and evidence of aptitude for advanced theological study.” Specific admission requirements (policy and procedures) are outlined below.

Admission is on a “rolling admissions” basis. Applicants may apply at [unitedlutheranseminary.edu/apply](http://unitedlutheranseminary.edu/apply). Requirements for the admission file will include the application, an application fee (\$50.00), transcripts, references, and a “statement of ministry.” Applicants should be as specific as possible regarding the theological discipline they wish to engage.

Upon receipt of the electronic application an active file will be opened. Once the file is completed, the Admissions Committee will review the file and make a decision.

### Admission Requirements

Prerequisites for admission into the program shall include the following:

- 1) The completion of the first professional degree (MDiv or other first graduate theological degree) from an accredited theological school
- 2) Normally, graduation with a grade point average of 3.0 (B) or better in the MDiv or other first graduate theological degree
- 3) Normally, the completion of a bachelor’s degree or equivalent from a fully accredited college

Upon acceptance, the applicant will receive notice of acceptance and a commitment form via email. Successful applicants will have 30 days to return the commitment form. Following this, students will receive a “Welcome letter” and be assigned an Advisor. Candidates are expected to contact their Advisor as soon as possible to discuss their expected program and proposed courses.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTS

Those applicants whose original language is not English and/or whose previous instruction is not in English must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), including the Test of Written English (TWE), administered by the Educational Testing Service (<http://www.ets.org/toefl>). The student should also submit a letter of recommendation from a professor (or other person who knows the student’s academic writing) that vouches for the quality of the student’s ability to read technical material and to write in English at a level suited for study in advanced level degrees. Note: TOEFL and TWE tests must have been taken within two years of the student’s application to ULS.

## **THE STM PROGRAM: AN OVERVIEW**

The STM consists of seven (7) course units\* in advanced program courses (at ULS these would be STM/DMin or STM/PhD courses) plus a thesis. At least four (4) of the course units and the thesis must be in the Major area of study.

Guidelines for the Thesis are below (See **“Detailed Guide to Preparation of the Thesis”**).

\* A course unit means one full-course (3 or more hours). “Course units” includes independent studies (See **“Independent Studies”**). For full listing of course offerings in any year, consult the ULS catalogue and Advanced Level Degrees brochure.

### **Duration of the Program**

The duration of the program will vary with each candidate, depending on whether study is full-time or part-time, the scope of the candidate’s professional responsibilities (if any), and the pace of progress toward the stated goals of the program. However, the program shall be completed in no less than one (1) year and no more than six (6).

Students can rarely expect to complete the degree in a nine-month academic year. Full-time students who hope to complete the work in one calendar year should expect to use at least the summer to complete course work or write the thesis.

## **THE MAJOR FIELD**

Major fields include:

Anglican Studies, Bible, Black Church Studies, Christian Education, Church History, Church and Society, Congregational Studies, Homiletics, Inter-faith Studies, Liturgy/Worship, Lutheran Studies, Pastoral Care, Theology, and World Christianity

## **STM FOLLOWED IMMEDIATELY BY DMIN**

Students who know from the beginning or early in their program that they want to do both an STM and a DMin at ULS should bear in mind the following so that they can proceed as smoothly as possible from one degree to the next.

- 1) A student who wishes to pursue both DMin and STM degrees at ULS should indicate this desire to the Director of Graduate Studies and to the Registrar, so that they may work with the student to ensure that the requirements for both degrees are met as expeditiously as possible. While the student can be matriculated in only one degree program, nevertheless guidance can be given that will help in planning the second degree while working on the first. (The degrees will be done sequentially, not concurrently, so that the student can take advantage of the 6-year limit on each degree.)
- 2) The student will be required to submit the requisite DMin application (including one academic, one peer, and one ecclesiastical reference). No application fee will be required, however. It is important that in the “statement of purpose” the student articulate why the student wishes to pursue an advanced academic degree, in addition to the previous advanced professional degree.
- 3) Students may begin a second advanced level Professional degree (DMin) at ULS as soon as all requirements are met for the first advanced level Academic degree (STM) at ULS. That is, they may begin work towards the second degree even if graduation and the conferring of the first advanced degree have not yet formally taken place.
- 4) Up to three courses of a conferred STM degree (from ULS) will count towards a DMin, provided that the three courses have been taken at least three years after completion of the MDiv degree (or equivalent).

The number of courses from a previously conferred degree STM degree at ULS, and/or from transfer credits, and/or from advanced standing can total no more than three units. This means that a student who first completes the STM must take five courses at ULS, two colloquia, an on-site visit, achieve Candidacy, and complete the Project in Ministry in order to complete the DMin degree.

- 5) Normally, courses taken during the STM and transferred over to the DMin program will be considered as “electives” and will not count toward the DMin Focus.

## **THE ADVISOR AND EVALUATION PANEL**

The Advisor shall be assigned by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee.

If a student is unsure about choice Major, an interim Advisor will be appointed who will guide the student on selection of courses until a Major is clearly designated. Then the student will inform the Director of Graduate Studies of the chosen Major area and, if necessary, the Director of Graduate Studies will recommend to the faculty a change of Advisor.

If an Advisor is “on leave,” “on sabbatical leave,” or leaves the faculty of the school, the need for replacement should be discussed by the candidate with the Director of Graduate Studies.

The Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the Dean will appoint one more faculty member who, together with the Advisor, will form a committee or panel before which the student will defend the thesis. (A third faculty member may be added to the panel at the request of the Advisor to the Director of Graduate Studies.) The panel will be chaired by the Advisor. The panel, after examining the candidate and his/her academic record, as well as the quality of the thesis, will recommend to the faculty whether the candidate shall be approved for the degree.

The panel’s meeting with the candidate for oral evaluation of the candidate’s work will be held no later than three weeks prior to the date when the faculty meets to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees for the awarding of the degree in any given year. (Normally this would mean the oral evaluation would be before mid-March, but may be as early as mid-February in some years. Contact the Director of Graduate Studies for the date in any given year.) A recommendation from the panel will go before the faculty for consideration, approval, and recommendation to the Board of Trustees for awarding of the degree.

## COURSEWORK

A candidate should expect to enroll in seven (7) courses of instruction. A prospective applicant may register as a non-matriculant and complete up to two courses for credit before being admitted to the graduate school. The number of courses taken by a student who has not matriculated will be limited to two, except in the case of persons who have been admitted to advanced level degree programs in other accredited institutions.

“Course units” are defined as three credit hours and include the following:

- Semester long courses (either day, evening or weekend)
- Graduate Intensives
- Distance Education courses
- Independent Studies
- Upgrades (from full-unit courses at the First Theological Level)

For full listing of Advanced Degree course offerings in any year, consult the ULS catalogue on the Registrar's webpage.

Other courses may include advanced-level courses (STM, DMin, ThD, or PhD) at other fully accredited seminaries, colleges, or universities;

**NOTE:** For courses to count toward the STM degree, they may not have been used for another degree, and only courses taken within ten years of completion of the degree are eligible.

## SEMESTER-LONG COURSES

The Graduate School offers several semester long courses each term. These courses normally meet in one three-hour block one day a week over 13-weeks. Courses are scheduled during the morning, afternoon, evening, or Saturdays. The Advanced Level Courses open to DMin students are also open to STM students, except for the *DMin Colloquia* and the *DMin Collegial Seminar*.

## GRADUATE INTENSIVES

The Graduate School offers a number of Graduate Intensives throughout the year (October, January, April, and June). These courses normally meet five days consecutively. Students should plan to apply for Intensive Housing on campus for the week or have suitable nearby accommodations. Requests are due one month prior to the start of your course. Room requests submitted later than this cannot be guaranteed.

Graduate Intensives include both pre-intensive week and post-intensive week requirements. Please see the particular Intensive Course Prospectus for preparations. It is a student's responsibility to follow all instructions and be fully prepared for the intensive week. On rare occasions where students attend all sessions during the Intensive Course but fail to complete the final course requirements, students may be granted a Retroactive Audit for the course. There will be no refund of tuition or other fees in such cases.

## DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES

The Graduate School aims to offer 2-3 Distance Education courses each year. Students who wish to register for these courses must have access to the appropriate electronic tools and computer literacy. Please see the **Computer Literacy and Ownership** policy below. Please note that ULS does not currently offer the STM degree as an online degree.

## INDEPENDENT STUDIES

The STM program provides opportunity for the student to negotiate an occasional independent study through ULS in the course of his/her program.

Several rubrics are important.

1] The student shall consult with his/her Advisor prior to negotiating an Independent Study. All Independent Studies require the same registration procedures as other courses, and all rules and deadlines concerning registration, fees, withdrawals, and extensions shall pertain.

2] In addition to registration, the student should consult with the faculty member the student hopes will be the Advisor of the study. (Normally, Independent Studies will be supervised by faculty members from ULS.)

3] The Following procedures should be followed:

- The student will complete an Independent Study form, which is available from the Registrar ([jritter@uls.edu](mailto:jritter@uls.edu)).
- The student should follow the directions on the form and attach a proposal for the study. A proposal for independent study shall include a statement rationale, objectives, strategies, means of assessment (normally a total of 30-35 double-spaced typed pages) and bibliography (normally no fewer than 10 books).
- These forms should be submitted to the Registrar at ULS who, in turn, will submit them to the Director of Graduate Studies and the faculty member concerned for their approval and signatures. The student will receive a copy of the signed form from the Graduate Studies Office.

4] Fees for independent studies shall be remitted as required to ULS.

5] Independent Studies may occasionally involve certain continuing education programs or other forms of instruction. (Negotiate in advance with the Independent Study Advisor in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies.) Any additional fees or expenses will be responsibility of the student and will be paid directly to the continuing education program or institution responsible for the form of instruction.

6] Should the Director of Graduate Studies assign a supervisor for the study who is not a full-time ULS faculty member, then reimbursement will be governed by accepted school policies and will be negotiated by the Dean's Office with the instructor concerned. Such an instructor will be considered as ULS adjunct faculty for the purpose of the independent study.

7] Normally no more than two courses should be independent studies.

## **UPGRADE GUIDELINES**

Criteria for upgrades of first theological courses for credit for Advanced Level degrees such as STM and DMin are as follows:

1] Courses for graduate upgrades should normally be electives.

2] A graduate student should normally not take more than two such courses in a graduate degree program. (In special circumstances, more may be allowed provided that "at least one-half of the work required shall be in courses designed for students in advanced programs" [ATS I.2.2].)

3] Upgraded courses may not have been used for credit towards another degree.

4] It is the responsibility of the student to request a faculty member to provide upgrade requirements prior to taking a course; normally at least ten sources in the bibliography and the equivalent of a 30-35 page paper. Faculty members have the right to refuse if they consider a particular course to be unsuitable for this purpose. Therefore, it is important to make the request before or at the very beginning of the course.

## **COURSE TRANSFER POLICY**

To be eligible for transfer toward the STM degree, a course completed at another school shall meet the following requirements:

- 1] The course was taken for credit at a fully accredited institution.
- 2] The course was taken in an Advanced Level degree program.
- 3] The student had completed the appropriate basic-level theological degree requirement of his/her advanced-level program before taking the course (i.e., MDiv or equivalent).
- 4] The course is clearly relevant to the student's STM degree and is approved by the student's advisor.
- 5] The course was taken no more than seven within ten years prior to the student's admission to the advanced-level ULS degree program. All courses expire when they are 10 year old.
- 6] The course was not previously credited toward another degree, either received or anticipated.
- 7] The student received a grade of B or better (or a grade of "pass" in the case of a pass/fail course).
- 8] Transfer courses will normally be considered "electives" and not as part of the STM Focus.

**Note:** Not more than three units toward an Advanced Level degree may be fulfilled through transfer credits.

## **SUPERVISED INSTRUCTION AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS**

The student shall initiate all proposals for coursework at institutions other than ULS. The Advisor should approve the course work. The student shall be responsible for having the grade transferred to the ULS registrar.

## **CREDIT FOR CONFERRED DEGREES**

Up to three courses of a conferred DMin (or equivalent advanced level) degree count towards an STM. No further transfer of courses or advanced standing credit will be granted towards the STM degree.

In other words, the number of courses from a previously conferred degree, and/or from transfer credits all together can total no more than three units. Courses from a conferred DMin (or equivalent advanced level) degree will normally be considered as “electives” and not as part of the STM Major.

## **STM AND THE “LUTHERAN YEAR”**

- ELCA candidacy committees often require that candidates for the ordained ministry who complete their MDiv degree at a non-ELCA seminary also complete a period of study at an ELCA seminary
- The following guidelines are for students whose circumstances will enable them to work toward an STM degree as they complete their Lutheran “Year of Residency” at ULS
  - It is possible that students may wish to allot more than one academic calendar year for completion of the STM
- It is important that Lutheran Year students read and become familiar with:
  - The goals and directives for the year of residency in an ELCA seminary, which are printed in the ELCA Candidacy Manual
  - The STM program description in the ULS catalogue and the STM Policy Manual

### **1. Guidelines**

- The MDiv degree is required for entrance into the STM program during one’s Lutheran Year at ULS
- No advanced standing in ULS’s STM program will be granted for Lutheran Year students.
- The fulfillment of the ELCA’s Lutheran Year goals takes precedence during the year of residence.
  - Students enrolled in the STM during this time are required to complete a statement describing how they intend to achieve the ELCA goals as part of their program of study
  - The seminary’s standard format for course syllabi is suggested for such a statement.
- One’s chosen area of focus for a Lutheran Year STM student shall include some component of Lutheranism

## **2. STM Degree**

A suggested course of study for an STM student as part of completing an ELCA Lutheran Year is as follows:

- Complete the seven (7) courses required for the STM degree during the year of residency.
- Plan to complete the thesis after the Lutheran year requirements are fulfilled.
- Choose three (3) courses from the M.Div. curriculum (upgraded to STM level through individual independent study arrangements with the professor (see “Course Upgrades”), and four (4) courses from the STM curriculum.
  - This will give opportunity to gain a realistic understanding of ministry in a Lutheran context, and will foster the establishment of relationships with peers and future colleagues in ministry, both of which are ELCA goals for the year of residency.
- Course selection should include courses in Lutheran worship, theology/confessions, and preaching.
  - This also helps to fulfill ELCA goals for the residency year.

## DETAILED GUIDE TO THE PREPARATION OF THE THESIS

### I. Nature, Purpose, and Scope

The STM thesis is a major research paper through which the student demonstrates the ability to engage in significant scholarship. It is to embody the results of original research and to substantiate a specific view.

A typical STM thesis is around 100 pages in length (exclusive of bibliography), but the number of pages alone is not a sufficient measure of adequate scope. It needs to be long enough to provide the specificity and depth appropriate to the study, and short enough to maintain the requisite focus.

### II. Supervision and Evaluation

Each candidate is guided in this phase of the program by a faculty Advisor appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies. The Advisor chairs the panel that will evaluate the thesis.

The student is to take the initiative in arranging conferences with the Advisor. Conferences may be arranged at any time, and ordinarily should be requested at least once monthly. This will assure that the student has prepared for and been engaged in adequate consultation at those stages which are especially important in the development of the thesis.

The final draft (also known as the **Review Copy**) is presented in two copies to the Registrar; in turn, the Registrar distributes the copies to the faculty panel. The panel reads the document and meets with the candidate for formal discussion and final adjudication of the thesis. Electronic copies may be accepted by the Supervisory Committee if they desire.

Note that the Advisor may request the Director of Graduate Studies to add a third faculty member to the panel. In this case, the student must provide a third copy of the final draft (**Review Copy**) to the Registrar for distribution.

### III. Sequence and Calendar

The sequence of steps in the thesis preparation is set forth in section IV below; the timing (calendar) of the steps will vary according to the candidate's circumstances. It is helpful in planning for a thesis to begin with the end date and consider the steps in reverse order to establish a candidate's individual calendar.

The awarding of degrees occurs at the annual Commencement in May. For award of the STM degree in a given May, the complete review copy of the thesis (see IV D) must be submitted to the Registrar by the February 1 at the latest, prior to the expected May graduation. The timing of the preceding steps will vary according to the time available for study, research, and writing. In all cases, the limit is six years from inception of the program until award of the degree; program extensions are available only with faculty approval, one year at a time.

## IV. Steps in the Process

### A. Selection of Subject

The candidate for the degree is expected to take the initiative in selecting the subject area for the Thesis. The subject is delineated by the student in consultation with the Advisor, with consideration given to the following queries:

- 1] Is the subject significant? This is a judgment in which the Advisor and the student must concur since the subject should be meaningful to the student.
- 2] Is the scope of the subject sufficiently limited to allow adequate treatment within the allotted time and with the facilities at the student's command?

### B. The Proposal

Once the student and Advisor have agreed concerning the subject and provisional title, the student prepares a Thesis Proposal according to the guidelines below. Consultation with the Advisor in this stage is crucial. It will be helpful to consult the criteria for evaluation of a Thesis.

#### 1] Writing the proposal

- State the title. Keep the title short and descriptive of the Thesis.
- Describe the rationale of the Thesis. This involves setting forth the origin and background of the study, its implications, the reason for interest in it, and the need for it.
- Give a general statement of the Thesis. It is from this general statement that the specific formulation of the Thesis will be derived. Define the area and scope of the study, and indicate the basic proposition, situation, question, or technique that the Thesis will examine.
- The formulation and limitation of the Thesis. This involves a precise statement of what the student proposes to do. State clearly the desired goal or outcome of the Thesis. In some instances, it will be helpful for the student to clarify the intentions by adding to the positive statement an explanation of matters that lie beyond the limits of the study.
- Indicate in a preliminary way the theological/biblical issues/foundations that are relevant and will be developed in the Thesis.
- Indicate previous studies relating to the Thesis. This is often called a "literature review." The student shall present a brief description of earlier studies that have bearing on the proposed investigation. This description should contain a statement of what earlier studies have revealed and should carry reference to areas of the general problem, which remain unexplored or which have been inadequately explored. In the event the student finds no studies relating to the investigation proposed, note shall be made of that fact.

The findings in this step ought to indicate why the student feels justified in carrying out the investigation.

- Identify sources and prepare a preliminary bibliography. When sources are contemporaneous with the investigator, a relatively full description is required. The student shall indicate how source materials are to be handled. With the proposal, include the bibliography compiled to this point.
- State the procedures or method of investigation. This would be the Methodology. Describe fully the procedure(s) to be followed in making the study. This should include a clear explanation of the steps one expects to follow in carrying out the investigation. This is not a preview of conclusions, but a statement of the processes to be used in the various phases of the Thesis. If there are procedures of questionnaire or experimentation type, the greatest care must be observed to shape the instrument for obtaining data. It is particularly important to work out such matters with the Advisor in advance of presenting the proposal to the committee.
- Include a tentative outline of the document. This should show at least the larger sections, such as chapters and major subdivisions. It should indicate how one intends to articulate the work and should reflect careful preliminary investigation and planning.

Expect to revise the draft proposal several times under the guidance of your Advisor/Supervisory committee before it is developed into the final form. The time spent is worthwhile because the proposal will be used as the yardstick by which you develop the Thesis and by which the committee will eventually evaluate the final product.

## 2] Submitting the proposal

The Advisor will review the Proposal and may request a meeting(s) with the student as part of this review.

If the proposal is accepted, the Advisor will sign the registration form to indicate acceptance and present the form to the Graduate Studies Office. The Graduate Studies Office will forward the original on to the Registrar. The Registrar will assess the Thesis fee.

- If not accepted, the proposal will be returned with the registration form to the student for revision and resubmission. When the proposal is accepted, the steps of the above paragraph above will apply.

Only after your Advisor has agreed that the Thesis Proposal may move forward, submit one copy of the completed proposal to the Advisor along with a **Thesis Registration Form** (see APPENDICES). There is no deadline for the Thesis Proposal. It is only governed by the February 1 deadline for submission of the complete review copy in the year in which the candidate hopes to graduate. In general, students are well-advised to submit a proposal **one year** in advance of the expected date of graduation.

### **C. Drafts**

The number and nature of preliminary drafts will depend upon a combination of advisorial expectations, student capacities and the nature of the topic. In some cases, submission of material chapter by chapter may be requested; in others, it may be appropriate to develop a series of complete drafts at varying levels of refinement. Follow the direction of your Advisor.

It will be helpful at this stage to have previewed the requirements of style and presentation which apply to the final version of the Thesis document.

### **D. The Review Copy**

This is the complete Thesis document, including abstract, precis, title page, table of contents, chapters, headings, and bibliography. It is prepared according to the style and formatting requirements of the final archival copies (see below), except that it is submitted to the Graduate Studies Office in three copies on plain photocopier paper. Students may print on both sides of the paper for the Review Copies, but not the Archival copies. Electronic copies may be utilized if requested or agreed by the Committee.

The following considerations regarding the Review Copy should be kept in mind:

1] Write so that the reader can readily gather your ideas about the subject. Write for the reader.

2] Pay special attention to accuracy in the choice of words and to variety in both vocabulary and sentence structure. The student is responsible for typographical corrections; copy read meticulously. Use a spell-check and grammar check. Copy editing is not the responsibility of your advisor.

3] The Introduction should contain:

- a statement of the specific issue to be studied
- a review of previous studies of the subject (“literature review”)
- a brief description of the sources, the materials, and the methods employed in the investigation
- the limitations of the present study (geographical, chronological, topical, institutional, and the like)
- background information to assist the reader's understanding; and
- an indication of the order in which the main divisions of the subject are to be treated in the body of the document

4] Pay special attention to logical development and to connections between the divisions. The divisions, subdivisions and subordinate heads must be so chosen and stated that each will lead to an exhaustive treatment of its part of the subject and at the same time contribute to the progress of thought. Special care must be taken to indicate the relations of each part by means of topical and transitional sentences. Each division and subdivision should begin with a paragraph, which will link it to the preceding paragraph and introduce the next stage of the argument, and it should close with a paragraph which will summarize its contents and indicate its bearing on the report thus far.

5] After the data of the document have been presented clearly and logically, the conclusion of the whole should be stated succinctly. The final interpretation, solution, or statement of findings is the culmination of the study.

### **E. Review and Defense**

When the Committee has read the Review copy, a meeting will be scheduled for student and Committee. This is the occasion for a sharing of the Committee's analysis and the student's defense of the Thesis. The Oral Defense of the Thesis will normally be no more than two hours.

After the Oral Defense, the Committee may:

- approve the Thesis document as submitted, without changes
- approve with minor typographical corrections required
- approve with substantive revisions
- fail

The Thesis can be submitted and reviewed at any time throughout the academic year.

### **F. Revisions**

1] If required revisions are minor, the student will make the corrections and move directly to the final submission copies (see below). The Advisor will make a final inspection before ratification.

2] If revisions are to be substantive (matters of organization or argument, or even a large number of typographical errors), the student will be asked to submit a second (revised) review copy, and step (1) above then applies.

#### **Note about timing:**

Review Copies may be submitted at any time throughout the year, with approval of the student's Advisor. However, **February 1** is the last possible date for submission for those students wishing to graduate the following May. In addition, students must submit the "Application to Graduate" by **January 3** to the Registrar's Office.

Consult with your Advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies so that you are clear on dates.

## H. Final Submission (Archival Copies)

Prepare two unbound copies of the thesis document and submit them to the Graduate Studies Office by May 1 preceding graduation.

1. Before submitting your final, printed copies to the graduate studies office, email your final draft to the library staff so they can confirm your formatting conforms to institutional requirements (listed below).
2. To ensure the long-term preservation and access to your work, the seminary requires your thesis be printed single-sided on high-quality, white, acid-free, 8 ½ x 11-inch paper. This paper should consist of at least 25% cotton.
3. The quality of print needs to be clear and dark. Color images, charts, and photographs may be included, but only if they are of a high enough quality to be legible. We recommend you utilize a print shop to print the document, such as Staples or FedEx Office.
4. Two copies of the final submission must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office by May 1 of the year you plan on graduating.
  - a. Do not punch holes in the pages
  - b. Do not bind the document in any way
  - c. Print on one side of the page, only
  - d. Additional copies for yourself can be submitted to be bound, upon payment of any library fees for binding.
5. With each copy of the thesis, provide the following separate documents:
  - a. **The Precis**  
This is an even briefer summary of not more than 150 words. Single space on separate sheet headed simply "Precis." No page numbering.
  - b. **The Abstract**  
This is a summary document of not more than one-thousand words. It should enable one who does not have time to read the whole thesis to take in at a glance the specific issue to be studied, the method, the principal facts and the solution or findings. Single space on separate sheets numbered in Arabic numerals. Numbering is separate from the thesis itself, since the Abstract is not considered a part of the thesis.
6. Assemble in the following order: Precis, Abstracts, thesis (Title page, TOC, Chapters, Bibliography, Appendices)
  - a. **Appendices**  
If you have one or two short appendices, continue page numbering to the end. If the Appendix/ces are more than a few pages, number separately starting with

Appendix A. If you have more than three appendices, include a Table of Appendices before Appendix A, formatted as you would a table of contents.

## V. Criteria for Evaluation of the Thesis Document

- 1] Accuracy. Have the data, quotations, and references been checked, and are the facts on which the conclusion is based stated clearly and accurately?
- 2] Objectivity. Do the conclusions largely depend on the writer's own opinions or opinions quoted from others? Where opinions are given, are they supported by factual data? Are the opinions of reputed authorities accepted as fact without further investigation or criticism? Is the significance of the findings judiciously discerned and stated?
- 3] Impartiality. Is there a sincere search for the truth regardless of whether or not it may require the revision or even the abandonment of a hypothesis? Is any evidence omitted which speaks against the conclusion drawn by the writer? Is any evidence omitted which speaks in favor of it? Are the data fairly interpreted, so that merely possible fact is distinguished from probable or certain fact?
- 4] Logic. Is the document developed logically, and is it free from fallacies? Does it avoid ambiguous and shifting terms, reasoning from analogy, reasoning from silence, begging the question and all forms of irrational evidence?
- 5] Literary Style. Is it written in language that is accurate, suited to the theme, interesting and cultured?
- 6] Length. Normally around 100 pages of text (excluding appendices if any and bibliography). There is no virtue in "padding." Quotations from secondary sources should be kept to a minimum, and all extraneous and repetitious matter should be rigorously excluded.
- 7] Clarity. Can the reader understand exactly what the writer has done and said?
- 8] Creativity. While the Thesis document is not required to be a new contribution to knowledge, it should show imagination in the various steps of selecting and defining the subject, assembling the material for the body of the report and drawing conclusions. Such things as a fresh approach to the subject, new interpretation of data, raising questions that arise in the course of the study, and suggestions for further investigation add to the value.
- 9] Theological Integrity. Has the author accurately and thoughtfully engaged the Scriptures and the theological tradition of the church (either historical or contemporary)?
- 10] Integration. Theology and Practice of ministry must be clearly integrated. Theological insights should inform ministerial approach and practice. The reader should be able to perceive this integration.

## VI. Style

### 1. General layout, format, and style

- a. Leave a one and one-half inch margin at the left on each page and at least three quarters of an inch on the other three sides. The same margins apply to charts, graphs, tables, and maps.
- b. Use a ½” indentation for paragraphing.
- c. Double space the body of the manuscript.
  - i. Long quotations, footnotes, and other similar material should be single-spaced and indented ½ inch
- d. The Title Page should follow the template included in the Appendices
- e. The thesis should otherwise follow the standard style-manual: *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)—the 7<sup>th</sup> (2007) or newer edition.
  - i. Newer editions of Turabian contain a section composed of Booth et al.’s *The Craft of Research*.
  - ii. For issues of style and rhetoric, see *The Elements of Style*, by Strunk and White (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000 edition or newer) or *The Elements of Style Illustrated*, by Strunk, White, and Kalman (2007).
  - iii. A convenient online abridgement of Turabian is available at [https://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian\\_citationguide.html%20](https://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html%20)

### 2. Citation of sources

Students are expected to conform to one of two styles of referencing sources and must use the chosen method consistently

#### a. **Notes and Bibliography Style**

See Turabian, chapters 15, 16, and 17.

Note format:

Rebecca Smith, *Lifelong Education: Reflections of a Teacher* (Philadelphia, Bell Press, 2009), 54.

Bibliographic format:

Smith, Rebecca. *Lifelong Education: Reflections of a Teacher*. Philadelphia: Bell Press, 2009.

#### b. **Parenthetical Citations – Reference**

See Turabian, chapters 15, 18, and 19.

Parenthetical Citation:

(Smith 2009, 54)

Reference list format:

Smith, Rebecca. 2009. *Lifelong Education: Reflections of a Teacher*. Philadelphia: Bell Press.

### 3. **Bibliography/reference list**

The bibliography or reference list at the end should include all (but only) books and articles that have been used by the writer in preparing the thesis. If the thesis is dependent on a major author, the bibliography may be divided into two sections, one for the primary (the major author's) works, the other for the secondary works. Most theses will not require this distinction in the bibliography. If there are any important works on the subject which were not available to the writer, they may be listed separately and the fact that they were not consulted should be mentioned.

Every item in the bibliography or reference list should contain the following information: (a) the full name of the author and/or editor; (b) the exact title of the work as it appears on its title page; (c) the name of the translator, if there is one; and, (d) publication information (books would include place, publisher, and date; journals would include journal title, volume, issue, year, and pages).

The order of these items will vary according to the choice between bibliography and reference list for citations.

Bibliographic citations for electronic media should include the same information as the print version, but also: name of site found on, URL, and date accessed. It may look like these:

Paine, Thomas, *Rights of Man: Being an Answer to Mr. Burke's Attack on the French Revolution, Part I*, ed. Moncure Daniel Conway (London: G.P. Putnam, 1894), Google Books, <http://books.google.com/books?id=GrYBAAAAYAAJ> (accessed November 16, 2009).

Paine, Thomas, *Common Sense, Rights of Man and Other Essential Writings of Thomas Paine* (New York: Signet Classics, 2007), Kindle edition  
 Petranovic, Danilo, "The Great Debate: Edmund Burke, Thomas Paine, and the Birth of Right and Left." *First Things* 241, 53-54. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials* (accessed August 16, 2009).

### 4. **Font**

If possible, use Times New Roman, 12 pt throughout the thesis, and 10 pt for footnotes. Similar, acceptable, serifed fonts include Cambria, which is a commonly-available font.

### 5. **Pagination**

Pages should have the page number centered at the bottom of the page. The title page is not numbered, nor is the table of contents if it is a single page. If the table of contents is more than one page, number in small Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.)

### 6. Do not justify the right margin. Only the left margin should be justified.

7. We strongly recommend hiring a proofreader as well as utilizing the spell-check and grammar-check programs in your computer to ensure accuracy and consistency throughout the document.
8. **Boldface** and *italics* should be used rarely and are not necessary. Boldface may be used in headings only. Italics are to be used only for foreign words, book titles, and journal titles.
9. To emphasize words or phrases within the text, underline the word or phrase only.
10. This is an objective piece of research. However, the use of the first person to refer to yourself is acceptable, if used sparingly and in consultation with your advisor.
11. All research subjects should be protected and their identities held in confidence. All names should be changed, utilizing pseudonyms or, for example, “Mr. A” and “Ms. B.” For the full policy, please see the institutional policy on Research on Human Subjects.
12. The student is responsible for obtaining written permission to include any materials, artwork, maps, music, etc. from published or unpublished sources, including verbal material from interviews, questionnaires, surveys, sermons, etc. cited in the thesis. The advisor will help in deciding when permissions are necessary. The student is responsible for paying any permission fees that may be incurred.

As the author of the manuscript, you will be asked to certify that any previously copyrighted material used in your work, beyond acceptable fair use, is with the written permission of the copyright owner.

## STM Thesis Format

**Typical Length: around 100 pages (exclusive of bibliography)**

### Font

Times New Roman, Cambria, or similar serified font at 12 pt. size

Times New Roman, Cambria, or similar serified font at 10 pt. size for footnotes

### Paper

High-quality, white, acid free, 8 ½ x 11 inch paper containing 25% or more cotton

Print only on one side of paper

### Margins

Left: 1.5 inches

Right, Top, Bottom: 0.75 to 1 inch on all 3 sides

Same margins for charts and appendices

### Page numbering

Except for the Table of Contents, all numbered pages must have their page number centered on the bottom of the page

### Paragraph Style

Double-spaced body of the manuscript

Single-space long, indented quotations, footnotes, and special material

Paragraphs should be indented ½ inch

Left-justified (right margin should not be justified)

### Headings

For the ease of the reader, utilize only one level of headings.

Headings should be sentence-cased and bold.

Triple-space before a heading

Headings should be left-justified

### **Bold**, *Italics*, and Underline

**Bold** should only be used for headings

*Italics* can only be used for foreign words, book titles, and journal articles

Underline only for emphasis of a word or phrase

### Order of sections

Precis (unnumbered)

Abstract (unnumbered)

Title page (unnumbered)

Copyright or blank page (unnumbered)

Front Matter (continuously numbered in Roman numerals)

Table of contents (1<sup>st</sup> page is page "i" but not placed on page, 2<sup>nd</sup> page numbered "ii")

List of tables

List of illustrations

Abbreviations

Glossary

Text (numbered in Arabic numerals)

Endnotes (only can be used if not using footnotes or parenthetical references)

Bibliography (continuously numbered from previous section)

Appendix (continuously numbered *or* numbered independently in Arabic numerals)

1-2 appendices continuously numbered from text

3 or more appendices should be numbered continuously, beginning at "1"

3 or more appendices require a Table of Appendices.

[4-5 blank lines]

[TITLE HERE IN CAPS]

[7-9 single lines]

A THESIS SUBMITTED BY

[6 single lines]

[YOUR NAME]

[4 single lines]

TO THE FACULTY OF

UNITED LUTHERAN SEMINARY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

[3 blank lines]

MASTER OF SACRED THEOLOGY

[5 blank lines]

[DATE OF FINAL APPROVAL (NOT GRADUATION): USE MONTH AND YEAR ONLY]

## ULS Protocols Regarding Human Subjects in Research

### Introduction

United Lutheran Seminary, in conformity with "The Common Rule" guidelines established by the U.S. government Office of Human Research Protections and general practice in academic research, requires all research<sup>3</sup> that is formally conducted under Seminary auspices be reviewed to protect human subjects and minimize potential risks or harm.<sup>4</sup> In order to do so the Faculty has established an Institutional Review Board ("IRB") and an institutional review process.

### Research Requiring Review

Research requiring review includes the following:

Research involving human subjects in which there is a potential for more than minimal risk of harm to the subject. As defined in the Common Rule, minimal risk "means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are *not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.*"<sup>5</sup> It is up to the IRB to determine whether risks involved exceed this definition, and if so, whether sufficient procedures are in place concerning informed consent and referrals in case of harm.

Research that falls within the content and methods of the social sciences (including pastoral care, psychology, sociology, anthropology), and research investigating human subjects' subjective experiences or feelings about issues normally considered private or confidential, such as sexuality, addiction, boundary violations, conflict, or violence requires review.

Research involving subjects who are not competent to evaluate the risks and benefits of participation themselves, including minors or people with cognitive disabilities, must be reviewed. All legal requirements for working with such persons, including directives by the Department of Corrections, must be followed.

Research in which dual roles may be present between the researcher and the subject(s), such as using students, employees, or counseling clients as research participants, must be reviewed.

Examples of research requiring review include:

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<sup>3</sup> "Research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge," (Code of Federal Regulations, 45 CFR 46.102[d]).

<sup>4</sup> The Common Rule, formally titled "Protection of Human Subjects" is part 46 of Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations ("45 CFR 46"). See also American Association of University Professors, "Protecting Human Beings: Institutional Review Boards and Social Science Research," <http://www.aaup.org/statements/Redbook/repirb.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> 45 CFR 46.102.h.i, cited in AAUP.

- Faculty assigning a research project to students that requires the students to have interactions (interviews, small group projects in congregations, etc.) involving human subjects' subjective experiences or feelings, as described above, especially when it entails feeding back or incorporating the information gathered into papers, presentations or class discussion.
- Research involving small group discussion formats for learning in a congregational context that entail disclosure of private information of a sensitive nature, where the subjects could easily or readily be identified
- Research on specific issues of recent conflict in congregational life or in other organizations, when the actors are readily identified or identifiable
- Research that has the potential for causing harm or inciting further conflict in congregations or in the wider community

### **Research Not Requiring Review**

Research not requiring review includes the following:

- Research solely for internal institutional use (e.g., course evaluations or institutional self-study)
- Research for a classroom project that does not involve outside participants and is not disseminated publicly or part of a permanent data base
- Archival or historical research
- Research in education settings on instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom-management methods
- Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, unless the subject can be identified and disclosure of the subjects' responses could put the individual at risk of criminal or civil liability or could damage the subject's financial standing, employability, or reputation
- Research involving elected or appointed officials or candidates for public office
- Research using existing data, documents, or records, as long as these resources are publicly available or the human subject cannot be identified
- Research conducted by students under the direction of a certified ACPE (Association of Clinical Pastoral Education) supervisor at an accredited ACPE site
- Research that does not place participants in a criminal or civil liability or damage their financial standing, employability, or reputation
- Research related to organization effectiveness in organizational settings for which there is no risk to participants' employability
- Scholarly review of literature, including other published social scientific research and social scientific data that is made available to researchers
- Archival historical research such as church records or public archives. Most archives restrict access to certain materials, and many require permission to cite or use material from persons who have died within the last 50 years. Research must conform to the rules of the particular archive or institutional body.

## **Parameters for Research**

Potential risks that must be considered in a review include those of a physical, psychological, social, economic, or legal nature.

The review process must seek to evaluate risks and benefits that result to participants and the wider community from the immediate research.

Confidentiality is presumed and must be maintained in all research unless the investigator obtains the express permission of the subject to do otherwise. Risks from breach of confidentiality include invasion of privacy, as well as the social, economic and legal risks outlined above. Loss of confidentiality is the most common type of risk encountered in social and behavioral science research.

Deception is generally to be avoided in research and may only be used if there is no other way to reasonably obtain the data, the risk of harm is minimal, the knowledge sought is important enough to justify deception, and an appropriate procedure is proposed for debriefing of subjects after the conclusion of the research.

Student conducting the research will be responsible for maintaining all supporting documentation related to the research, including:

- Documented approval of the research proposal
- Signed consent forms
- Any further documentation related to the research of human subjects, including field notes or other reports
- In the case where oral interviews are included as a component of research, consent forms must be used

Researchers are expected to maintain supporting documentation for seven years following completion of their research projects.

## **Procedure and Criteria for Review**

Any Faculty, staff or student who proposes to conduct or oversee research on human subjects under the auspices of the Seminary, for a Seminary-approved grant, or for Seminary course credit, must submit her or his research designs for approval.

An individual student should apply for review after having sought and received approval for his or her research proposal with the Faculty advisor involved in overseeing the project, and before actually beginning the research project. Students must receive approval as part of the overall proposal approval process, prior to beginning the demonstration project.

A Faculty member should submit a proposal on behalf of her or his students in the case of a class assignment or project before distributing the syllabus if the assignment is identical for each student. In the case of such class assignments, the Faculty person monitors and maintains

responsibility for the potential risks to research subjects. Approval applies to subsequent years of the course assignment, as long as no significant changes were made.

Any substantive changes in project design or research instruments that are made after initial approval has been granted must be submitted for re-approval

Approval is made in light of the following criteria:

- The value of the research project for the overall advancement of knowledge. Validity of research design, methodology, and sampling is determined by weighing the value of the proposed research against any possible risk to participants.
- Credentials of the investigator or plan for student supervision
- Selection of subjects and competency to consent
- Voluntary informed consent/assent and confidentiality
- Plans for dissemination of the data

Risk/Benefit assessment should include weighing of potential harm, use of deception if any, and steps to be taken to minimize risk and care for subjects.

### **Expedited Review**

Expedited review may be used for certain kinds of research involving no more than minimal risk, and for minor changes in approved research per 45 CFR §46.110. In case of an expedited review, the chair of the IRB or his/her delegate(s) may review the research activity, applying the standards of this policy, granting approval when warranted. The review may, at his/her option, refer the item under review to an IRB meeting. Revisions may be requested in an expedited review, but a motion to disapprove the research must be referred to an IRB meeting.

A researcher may request certification that a particular research activity is either exempt from review or not human subjects' research. Upon such a request, the IRB chair shall make a determination on the basis of the Common Rule, sending notification of the determination to the researcher and placing a copy of the determination in the IRB record.

### **The Institutional Review Board**

The ULS IRB, in a properly constituted meeting with quorum present, shall review all research activities covered by this policy except where this policy provides for expedited review or exemption from review.

The IRB will be constituted annually as one of the regular standing committees of the Faculty, with members of the committee being permitted to serve continuously. The IRB normally will consist of three representatives from the tenured and non-tenured Faculty, two from the community-at-large who are members of a congregation of the ELCA or a full-communion church partner, and one advisory member from the student body. At least one shall have documented training and/or documented expertise in research methods involving human subjects.

The IRB will meet as needed to review proposals. Proposals may be submitted in writing or by email in a timely fashion to allow adequate consideration by the IRB.

The IRB may approve by majority vote any proposal as submitted, require revision and re-submission of the proposal, or reject the proposal. Approval must be in writing, and delivered in a timely fashion to the individual proposing to undertake the research. In the case of revisions or rejections, the IRB will provide a written statement to the Faculty member or student detailing the reasons for rejection.

The IRB will maintain records of all its deliberations and will report these to the full Faculty at its regular meetings.

## GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

### Computer Literacy and Ownership

In order to ensure that all students are capable of utilizing the enhanced technologies that are incorporated into all of the seminary's courses, as well as to facilitate communications with students through email communications, the Student Henry Database and Moodle course sites, it is a requirement of students matriculating at ULS that they have regular access to appropriately equipped computers and that they utilize their ULS email account. (See the Student Handbook, available at [my.uls.edu](http://my.uls.edu) )

### Course Dates: Beginning and Concluding

Each course within the seven (7) course units of coursework shall have designated beginning and concluding dates. The date for final submission of required work is six (6) weeks after the last class session. In the case of independent study courses such dates shall normally coincide with ULS semester dates and will be designated by the student in a proposal to the Director of Graduate Studies, submitted in advance of undertaking the course. (See **Independent Studies.**) After approval of the course as proposed the dates provided shall constitute boundaries for the calculation of fee refunds in the case of early withdrawal as outlined in the ULS Catalogue.

### Courses Taken Prior to Admission

Courses taken for credit in the ULS graduate school prior to admission to the STM program may be credited toward the degree. The student must designate the particular courses for which credit is sought and initiate the request in writing to the Registrar. Such courses may not have been used for another degree.

Only courses taken in the last ten years are considered acceptable in the program, whether taken prior to or during the program. If a student wishes to count for credit any course older than ten years, a petition must be made for that purpose to the ULS faculty through the Director of Graduate Studies.

### Extensions for Coursework

At ULS, each instructor is entitled to formulate his/her own policy regarding whether or not extensions will be granted, under what conditions, and for how long (see the Student Handbook, p. 17). In no event should the extended deadline for completion of coursework be more than six months beyond the end of the term or semester for which the course is registered. After six months, approval to complete the course must be submitted in writing to the Dean and will be approved in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies only in extreme circumstances where clear need is demonstrated.

**NOTE:** Other institutions will have their own policies on extensions. Students who take courses for transfer should check policies at each institution.

## **Failing Grade**

In the advanced level programs (STM, DMin, PhD) F designates failure, which requires the taking of equivalent course work. However, any F continues to remain part of the transcript and will be counted in the GPA.

## **Grade Requirements for the Degree**

For successful completion of the STM degree students shall maintain a cumulative grade average of not less than 2.75 in all supervised instruction, with at least an average of B (3.0) or above in all coursework.

## **Leave of Absence**

Students may petition for a Leave of Absence for a full academic year and is renewable for a second year. The Leave of Absence year will not count toward the six-year limit for the degree. The petition must be in writing and submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies. The Faculty has the right to grant or refuse such petitions.

## **ULS Email Account, Henry Student Database, and Canvas**

Upon matriculation into the STM Program, students will be given a username and password for their ULS email, Henry Student Database and course Canvas Site. These interfaces will be the primary method of communication between the seminary and the student, which will include notification of seminary policies, news, student registration information, course grades, and course modules. It is the student's responsibility to maintain these accounts. (To route the ULS email account into an already existing email server please go to: <http://my.uls.edu/information-technology/emailuls/>)

## **Policies for Course Papers**

### **Seminary policy for persons who live off-campus or are part-time and do not have a seminary mailbox:**

If you want your paper returned with comments and grade on it, then you will need to submit with the paper a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Otherwise, the instructor will submit the grade to the registrar, but is not required to return the paper to you. (Instructors do not keep papers after the grades are submitted.)

### **Seminary policy for all students:**

It is the responsibility of the student to keep a hard copy of all course papers.

### **Seminary policy for submitting papers online:**

The following policy applies to electronically submitted papers at ULS: Each faculty member may decide whether or not to accept on-line or electronic submissions of course assignments. Students who submit papers by email may receive comments from the instructor by email. It is not the Seminary's responsibility to print hard copies of papers. It is the student's responsibility to submit work on time and in a form readable by the instructor. A paper that arrives late or in unreadable form will be considered late for grading purposes. (Consult the instructor to ensure that you use a platform that will be readable by the instructor.)

### **Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism comprises both intellectual theft as well as intellectual fraud or deception. It is stealing and presenting the ideas or words of someone else as one's own. It is literary theft in presenting as new or original, an idea or material that is derived from an already existing source. The use of the words or ideas of another without acknowledgement of their source or the absence of due attribution of credit may be committed unintentionally as well as intentionally. Plagiarism is [also] the undue quoting of material without the indication of quotation, whether it be merely a sentence or two or a significant portion of the work of another.

Plagiarism injures the community by inhibiting the recognition and cultivation of gifts. Clearly the unattributed use of the words and/or ideas of others fails to give appreciative recognition of their gifts. But this illegitimate appropriation of the gifts of others also blocks the recognition and cultivation of the actual gifts of the person engaged in plagiarism.

Traditionally, plagiarism referred to the selection, preparation, and distribution of printed matter (e.g., books, newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets). However, with advent of the digital age, plagiarism has been expanded to include material beyond the medium of print.

Plagiarism is considered a violation of the Seminary's policy on appropriate conduct of Seminary students. See the relevant section in this Handbook for disciplinary procedures related to conduct. The Seminary adheres to the following general requirements for the acknowledgement of sources of academic work. These requirements apply to both print and electronic media.

- Quotations—Any sentence or phrase that a student uses from another source must be placed in quotation marks or, in the case of longer quotations, clearly indented beyond the regular margin. Any quotation must be accompanied (either within the text or in a note) by a precise indication of the source.
- Paraphrasing—Any material that is paraphrased or summarized must also be specifically acknowledged in a note or in the text.
- Ideas—Specific ideas that are borrowed should be acknowledged in a note or in the text, even if the idea has been further elaborated by the student.
- Bibliography—All the sources consulted in the preparation of an essay or report should be listed in a bibliography.

- Citation of e-Book Sources—There are a number of electronic book sources now available for general use and some materials only exist in that format. When citing an electronic book of e-Book, the reference must contain the actual type or model of e-Book being used (Amazon Kindle, Microsoft, Sony, etc.) and the location number of the quote (since actual page numbers are not created). For example:  
     D. Brent Laytham, ed., *God Does Not...: Entertain, Play Matchmaker, Hurry, Demand Blood, Cure Every Illness* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008), Kindle e-book, locations 552–53.

In addition, students must be aware that a professor may request to see the device and examine the quotation and that the student must be able to comply with this request.

In addition to plagiarism, the following related practices are also unacceptable compromises of the truth requisite to a free community.

- Multiple submission: Failure to obtain prior written permission of the relevant instructors to submit work which has been submitted in identical or similar form in fulfillment of any other academic requirement at any institution.
- False citation: The deliberate attribution to, or citation of, a source from which the material in question was not, in fact, obtained.
- Submission of work done by someone else, either with or without that person's knowledge.

*Neither ignorance of the regulations concerning academic violations nor personal extenuating circumstances are an adequate defense against charges of plagiarism.*

Should an instructor ascertain that plagiarism has been committed, the instructor will first consult with the student and the Dean before making a determination of the penalty. The first offense of plagiarism will be penalized either by the failure of the assignment (in the case of a minor assignment) or by the failure of the course (in the case of a major assignment). In addition, in the case of plagiarism on a major assignment, the failure of the course will also lead to the student being placed on academic probation for the next semester of study. A second offense will normally be penalized by dismissal from the Seminary.

[Significant portions of the above descriptions of aspects of plagiarism and related offenses against the community are taken from Princeton University Rights, Rules, Responsibilities, 1990 Edition ULS Student Handbook 2017/2018, p. 22 (Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey). The final paragraph is taken from the Wartburg Theological Seminary Student Handbook. Acknowledgment is gratefully made to Princeton University and Wartburg Theological Seminary for permission to use this material.]

### **Program Extensions**

The maximum period within which the degree may be earned is six (6) years from inception of study. The semester in which the first course is taken in the STM degree program will start the six-year clock for the program. Requests for extension of the six-year limit are addressed to the faculty through the Director of Graduate Studies. Extensions must be requested annually, and if granted, require payment of the annual Program Extension Fee. The seminary will assume that a student wishes to remain in the program until the sixth year.

### **Registration Changes, Late Registration and Course Withdrawals**

Information about registration changes following the start of a semester can be found in the Student Handbook on page 14 or by following this link: <http://my.uls.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ULS-Student-Handbook-2017.08.30.pdf>

### **Student Complaint and Grievance Procedure**

The ULS policies concerning grievances are given beginning on page 26 of the Student Handbook and can be found by following this link: <http://my.uls.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ULS-Student-Handbook-2017.08.30.pdf>

## FINANCES

### Charges and Fees

See the current ULS Seminary Catalogue for the fees applicable to the following items:

Application Fee (non-refundable)

Fee per course unit

Graduation Fee (applied regardless of whether the student attends commencements)

Thesis Registration Fee (applied upon submission of the Thesis Proposal)

**NOTE:** Fees for courses taken at other institutions for transfer credit or as part of an independent study are the responsibility of the student and are paid directly to the institutions at which the courses are taken.

### Financial Hold

STM students on financial hold who have not taken courses or otherwise been active in the program for two full academic years will be removed from the roll. They may reapply for admission after clearing their student account.

## **FINANCIAL AID STATUS DURING THE WRITING PHASE**

Advanced-level students engaged in the writing of projects, theses, and dissertations may elect to declare themselves as either part-time or full-time for purposes of deferring loans or obtaining loans, grants or scholarships while not enrolled in course units. Students are eligible to declare themselves as active part-time or full-time based on the following criteria:

- a) Students must have completed all their program-required course units.
- b) Students must have registered with the Registrar their project, thesis, or dissertation
- c) Students must be in academic good standing and may not be on financial hold.
- d) Students must submit this form during each academic year of eligibility.
- e) Forms must be filed before the end of the Add/Drop period of the semester.
- g) Students may not have reached the maximum time limit on eligibility for part-time or full-time writing status (see limits below).

### **Maximum time limits for active writing status:**

STM Thesis ..... One full academic year, listed as full time, OR

.....Two full academic years, listed as half-time.

Contact the Graduate Studies Office for a request form.

## **FULL-TIME STATUS**

Full-time Status for the STM program will be construed as registration for at least 3 course units in one semester (Fall, Spring [including January intensives], and Summer).

## **APPENDICES**

Thesis Registration Form

STM Course Planning Guide



Office of Graduate Studies

STM Thesis Registration Form

For the degree of Master of Sacred Theology (STM)

[To be submitted after proposal has been approved by the advisor]

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

Tentative Project Title:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

STATEMENT AND ATTACHMENTS

*I attest that I have prepared a proposal for the above-mentioned project in conversation with my Faculty Advisor and according to the guidelines in the STM Manual. I further attest that my Advisor Fully approves of and has agreed to supervise my project proposed.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Required Attachments:

\_\_\_\_\_ Copy of Project Proposal

\_\_\_\_\_ Letter or email from Advisor stating approval of Project Proposal

Return with all required attachments to the Graduate Studies Office, Attn: Graduate Studies Director, Dr. Allison deForest, 7301 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19119. Submit Project Registration at least one year prior to anticipated graduation date.

The Project Registration Fee (\$600) will be assessed to your student account upon receipt of this form in the Graduate Studies Office.



Office of Graduate Studies

STM Program Guide

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Enrollment: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Courses:

Term:

**Major Field:**

1). \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2). \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3). \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4). \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Electives:

5). \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6). \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7). \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Thesis Track:**

**Proposed Thesis Title:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Project Registration Form:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Defense Copy:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Submission to Registrar:** \_\_\_\_\_