

Wycliffe College
Master of Theological Studies
Summative Exercise Information

The final requirement for the MTS is a summative exercise worth either two or three credits. The following five options are available. Each is summarised here, then described in greater detail.

- a) An integration paper
- b) A survey of literature
- c) A field-based project
- d) An extended research paper
- e) A thesis (N.B. this is the only of the five options that is worth three credits. An A- average in previous course work is required in order to write a thesis).

The first four options should be approximately 40 pages (10,000 words) long; the thesis option should be approximately 60 pages (15,000 words) long.

General principles

Note: The following principles apply broadly to all five summative exercise options. Where a particular option has slightly different requirements, that will be noted in the fuller description.

- a. Early in the year in which you hope to graduate, if not sooner, you should decide which summative exercise (SE) option you wish to pursue, a topic, and a suitable supervisor. By the middle of the first semester of this same year, you should have had at least one discussion with your supervisor, and be working on a proposal (see d. below).
- b. There is some advantage to deciding the topic earlier in the program, because then you can choose elective courses which will help prepare you for the SE. In the case of the MTS thesis option, this is particularly important, especially if you are thinking of it as preparation for a doctoral program.
- c. Guidelines about your SE adviser:
 - i. In most cases the supervisor will be a member of the Wycliffe faculty.
 - ii. If there are weighty reasons for asking a person outside Wycliffe or TST to serve as the supervisor, the student must first obtain the permission of his or her Wycliffe faculty adviser and the Director of Basic Degree studies.
 - iii. The student is entirely responsible for the paper, and the role of the faculty supervisor is to offer guidance and comment. However, it is unwise for the student to embark in a direction against the advice of the faculty supervisor.

- iv. Should you, in the course of research, think it advisable to change your topic or the direction of the SE, you should first consult with your supervisor.
 - v. If either of you feels the need to change supervisor during the course of the thesis, this should be discussed with your MTS faculty advisor or the Basic Degree Director.
- d. With the guidance of your supervisor, you will fill out a “Basic Degree Summative Exercise/Thesis Registration” form, available on the website under “Forms & Documents” or from the Registrar’s Office. It will be counter-signed by the supervisor and the registrar. A TST course designator will be assigned, and the course title will include the phrase “MTS Summative Exercise”.
- d.
- e. By the middle of January, with the guidance of your supervisor, you should have prepared a formal written proposal for the SE, including a statement of the topic, a thesis statement (if appropriate), an outline of the SE, and a bibliography. In the case of the Thesis, this proposal should be five pages long; in the case of other SE’s, it should be two or three pages. (More specific details about the form of proposal required for each SE are given below.)
 - f. The proposal will be either approved by the supervisor (sometimes with suggestions), or returned for changes. There is no limit to the number of times that a proposal may be revised and re-submitted.
 - g. You are free to proceed with work on the SE before receiving notification as to whether the proposal has been approved, but assume the risk that the supervisor will direct changes in the proposal.
 - h. You should meet with your faculty supervisor as often as needed thereafter until the SE is ready for submission. The supervisor may direct you to specific sources, and make suggestions as to method, content, and style. At the same time, a high degree of independent work is assumed.
 - i. The completed SE should normally be submitted to the supervisor four weeks before marks are due at TST. (This date can be ascertained from the TST website.) However, a later date may be negotiated with the supervisor.
 - j. For most SE’s, the supervisor is the only reader and examiner; in the case of the Thesis, there are two readers (see details of thesis option below).
 - k. The supervisor will provide you with written comments and a grade; the latter will then be submitted to the Registrar.
 - l. The SE must be written in proper English style and must be free of mistakes in grammar, syntax, spelling, and typography. Footnoting, bibliography, and other matters of format must follow a recognized form (e.g. Turabian, Chicago). Sources

for quotations, close paraphrases, and distinctive ideas must be acknowledged. Inclusive language for humanity should be used as a matter of course.

- m. The SE must be typed, double spaced, in a 12-point font, on 8 ½ by 11 inch white paper. Margins should be 1 inch or a little more per side. It should be left justified. Pages should be numbered. A title page should be supplied.
- n. Normally, the SE will be completed during the second semester of the year in which the student hopes to graduate. However, if an extension is necessary, the time limits for the completion of an SE are as follows:
 - 2-credit summative exercises: 2 semesters
 - 3-credit thesis: 3 semestersUnder exceptional circumstances, an extension of one semester may be given beyond these limits. The student must, as with any other course, complete an SDF form (available from the registrar's office) in order to have the extension approved.

A) An Integration Paper

Background and purpose

Students choosing this option will identify an important topic of manageable scope, and address it in an essay of approximately forty pages, using Biblical, theological, historical, and pastoral perspectives, methods, and resources.

The integration paper is thus an opportunity for you to make use of the basic skills of the four theological disciplines in a connected way, to the extent that you have learned these skills through the M.T.S. coursework. This is what makes it a “summative exercise”.

Specific guidelines

1. The integration paper addresses a topic of importance to the life and thought of the Christian community. The topic will usually be much broader than that of a research thesis, but it should not be so broad as to be unmanageable. For instance, the topic “prayer” is appropriate for an integration paper (but not for a research essay), while the topic “our relationship with God” would likely be too broad.
2. The written proposal, to be submitted by mid-December of the year of intended graduation should include the following information:
 - a. The topic of the paper, together with its importance and implications. A specific title should be proposed.
 - b. A statement of the purpose of the paper. The paper will be expository in genre and will be either thesis-like or dissertation-like. A thesis states a concise major point to be proven. In this case, the statement of the purpose of the paper will be

- the thesis statement itself. A dissertation is a more general discussion and may develop a series of points not formally subordinated to a major thesis. Nevertheless, it still has a unified purpose and direction, and the proposal should indicate what these will be.
- c. An indication of the contributions of each of the four theological disciplines to an understanding of the topic. The disciplines are Biblical (Old and New Testaments), theology in the disciplinary sense (including dogmatic theology, systematic theology, historical theology, philosophical theology, and theological ethics), historical, and pastoral (which may include ministry, liturgics, homiletics, pastoral counselling, and evangelism). While each discipline must be represented, it will be unwise and indeed impossible to try to represent every sub-discipline.
 - d. A statement of how the paper is to be organised. It is acceptable simply to divide the paper into four parts, each representing the contribution of a discipline. For instance, for the topic “prayer”, the integration essay might examine the Biblical witness, some of the issues raised by theologians, the history of Christian prayer, and the implications of these things for the worship of the Christian congregation today. It is also possible, and in most cases will probably be better, to find ways to integrate the disciplines. For instance, a narrative survey of how Christians have understood and applied the Biblical teaching on prayer would itself be Biblical, theological, historical, and pastoral. The organisational plan may take the form of an analytical table of contents, with rationale.
 - e. Any necessary or helpful background. Sometimes you may want to offer personal reasons for selecting the proposed topic.
 - f. A full bibliography. By the time the proposal is submitted, you should already be aware of most of the relevant materials, and the bibliography in the proposal ought not to be very different from the bibliography that will appear in the integration paper itself.
 - g. The proposal is usually two or three pages in length, plus bibliography.
3. The supervisor will often want to suggest to you some models of integrative theological writing. Calvin’s *Institutes* and Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* are excellent examples in the Reformed tradition. Many classical Anglican sermons, such as some of the homilies of Edward VI and the sermons of the Caroline divines and John Henry Newman, are also fine models of the genre.
4. The integration paper is expected to reflect your understanding of the basic methods of the modern theological disciplines, but it will not be held to the standard of proof expected of a research thesis. You may short-cut the formal demonstration of points in favour of qualifying words such as “probably” or “apparently”. You will not be expected to have a thorough

knowledge of the relevant literature. It will not be possible for you to investigate every dimension of the chosen topic. Wisdom, rather than the learning of many things, should be the guidepost.

B) A Survey of Literature

*[The following draws on a fuller introduction to literature surveys, written by Dr. Tom Power. If you decide you are interested in this form of summative exercise, you should consult the full paper, which can be found online at:
<http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library/Theology/survlit.html>.]*

Background and purpose

In a literature survey, the student will choose a specific topic in the area of theological studies and identify, discuss, evaluate, and relate significant books, articles, and other resources. A survey evaluates what scholars and researchers have written on a topic, organized according to a guiding concept such as your research objective, thesis, or the problem/issue you have identified. You may need to include studies contrary to your own perspective. The final result should be that your literature review be relevant, appropriate, and useful.

Specific guidelines

1. The written proposal, to be submitted by mid-December of the year of intended graduation should include the following information:
 - h. The topic of the paper, together with its importance and implications. A specific title should be proposed.
 - i. A statement of how the paper is to be organised. This may take the form of an analytical table of contents, with rationale.
 - j. Any necessary or helpful background. In some cases, you may want to offer personal reasons for selecting the proposed topic.
 - k. A bibliography. By the time the proposal is submitted, you should already be aware of some of the major works and authors to be reviewed, but the nature of the Literature Survey is that you will add to the bibliography as you proceed. Your supervisor will be able to make further suggestions.
1. The proposal is usually two or three pages in length, plus the first draft of the bibliography.

2. Your purpose in writing is to demonstrate reading, understanding and a thoughtful evaluation of the resources you are using. Below are some guidelines for composing a survey of literature.

Introduction

The most important part of your literature survey is the Introduction. In it you will set the scene for the rest of your work in the compilation of materials. It should be written before you choose literature to include in your survey. Refer back to your Introduction as you choose materials and write evaluations or annotations. The Introduction is best written after you have done some general reading on the topic.

The Introduction should define your topic and should include the following:

- One sentence summarising the topic
- Statement of how the topic fits into the larger context of the subject area
- Definitions of any terms used
- Statement as to how selective or comprehensive your survey and accompanying bibliography is.

II Methods

In order to write an informed evaluation of literature relevant to your topic, two methodological skills are required:

1. *Information Literacy*: the ability to locate relevant literature (books, articles, essays, theses, or electronic resources) using efficient information seeking skills.
2. *Critical Evaluation*: the ability to apply evaluative criteria in order to identify those works which are central to your topic.

III Evaluation of Books/Articles/Essays

As you read, you will need to bear in mind questions such as the following:

- Why was the book/article written? What theological tradition is the publisher in? Catholic, liberal, evangelical, reformed, or broad academic?
- Examine the table of contents and/or headings to determine if the book is organised in a logical and understandable manner.
- Date of Publication
- Who is the author? What are the author's sources of information? Perspective? Bias?
- How relevant is this work to the topic?
- For what type of reader is the author writing?

IV Writing Annotations

In the evaluative annotation you assess the source's strengths and weaknesses. You should evaluate the source's usefulness, critically stating its place in the field in relation to the topic you have chosen. Most annotations will combine one or two sentences summarising or describing content, and one or two sentences providing an evaluation.

Sample annotation on the topic of New Testament theology:

Goppelt, L. *A Theology of the New Testament*. 2 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981, 1982.

The first volume includes a great deal of material on the history of and methods of the discipline of biblical theology. Goppelt is especially insightful when he treats salvation history. Not as conservative as Ladd or Guthrie, Goppelt nevertheless is a thoughtful and careful student of Scripture, and his work deserves wide circulation, even if many will find his approach to history unduly cautious and sceptical.

C) Field-based project

Background and purpose

The intention of the field-based project is to integrate the student's learning in the MTS program around a question or situation arising in ministry. The heart of the paper therefore will be a description and analysis of a specific ministry situation, set in a context of relevant theological, biblical, historical and pastoral considerations.

The ministry may be parish or extra-parochial and should be one with which the student is familiar. Students should look particularly at the history, theology, and pastoral underpinnings (whether explicit or implied) of the ministry, and (where appropriate) propose strategies for the future health and growth of this ministry.

The ministry will normally be something specific in the student's congregation, diocese or denomination, not something generic, e.g. not "Healing Ministry" but "Healing Ministry in the Diocese of Algoma, 1990-2005."

Suitable topics would include:

- training of small group leaders
- church planting
- church-based social agencies
- youth ministry
- healing ministry in the parish
- welcoming and integration of new members.

In most cases, field research, both quantitative and qualitative, should be a part of the student's research.

Specific guidelines

1. The written proposal, to be submitted by mid-December of the year of intended graduation should include the following information:
 - m. The topic of the paper, including a specific title.
 - n. A statement of the purpose of the paper. This will include the reason for the choice of topic, its importance and implications for ministry.
 - o. A statement of how the paper is to be organised. For example, it may begin with a theological overview of the topic, together with relevant Biblical material. It may then move into a description of the particular ministry under consideration—its history, theology (implicit or explicit), and practice, and a discussion of current literature on the topic. This might be followed by an analysis of the present state of the ministry (including your field research), and conclude with recommendations for the future. The organisational plan may take the form of an analytical table of contents, with rationale.
 - p. Any necessary or helpful background. Sometimes you may want to offer personal reasons for selecting the proposed topic.
 - q. A full bibliography. By the time the proposal is submitted, you should already be aware of most of the relevant materials, and the bibliography in the proposal ought not to be very different from the bibliography that will appear in the integration paper itself.
 - r. The proposal is usually two or three pages in length, plus bibliography.
2. *Research* is the means by which one gains access to the relevant material.
 - a. This content is divided into *secondary* source material (what others say or write about a topic) and *primary* source material (what the original author[s] or group says or writes about a topic). A primary source may be such written materials as books, journals, etc., or data retrieved through surveys, personal interviews or focus groups. The latter category is often called “field-based” data, because it is primary material gathered from a living individual or group. In this case, for instance, you may wish to explore the beliefs, attitudes or practices of a particular person or group (e.g., congregation, age- or activity-specific group, or para-church organization).

- b. Field-based *data* refers to the nature of the primary source material used in the writing of a thesis, essay or project: it is information gathered from the study of living individuals or groups of people. Field-based *research* requires particular methods for data gathering, generally methods used in the social sciences.
- c. The two basic methods are *quantitative* and *qualitative* research.
 - Quantitative research involves specific measurements and numerical data (e.g. “57% of the group agrees with the following statement”). The survey is a popular example of quantitative research. Conclusions or generalizations are often but not necessarily drawn from the results.
 - Qualitative research, on the other hand, relies more on direct contact with the “human document.” Approaches include case study, direct observation, personal interview, focus group and ethnography, rather than the quantitative use of statistical or numerical “hard data.” The researcher will draw conclusions from the results about the group being studied, but will be more cautious about making broader generalizations, although some findings may be transferable.
A combination of the two methods is employed.

D) An Extended Research Paper

Background and purpose

Like the MTS Thesis option, this paper should demonstrate appropriate academic skills in the use of primary sources and a sound critical appreciation of the secondary literature on the chosen topic. It should demonstrate familiarity with the significant issues raised by the topic, and the range of possible differences in interpretation in dealing with those issues. It should reflect a capacity for independent judgment, scholarly argument, and good expository writing. It need not make an original contribution to knowledge.

While the Thesis is worth three credits, this Extended Research Paper is worth two credits. Unlike the Thesis, the Extended Research Paper requires only an academic supervisor, and no second reader.

Specific guidelines

1. The most common error in this kind of paper is defining a thesis topic too broadly. The topic must be specific enough to enable the student to engage in a thorough, systematic and intensive study of the relevant sources, and, in principle, to be able to provide persuasive evidence for every statement that the thesis makes.
2. The Extended Research Paper proposal, to be submitted by mid-December of the student’s final year, should include the following information:

- a. The title of the proposed paper.
 - b. A brief statement (typically one sentence in length) representing the thesis to be demonstrated. It is understood that the thesis may well undergo revision in the course of research and writing, but it is important to have a goal in view as a way of focusing the investigation.
 - c. An indication of the primary literature that will be used, why this literature is deemed relevant, and the method or methods which will be used to interpret and make use of the primary source material.
 - d. The proposal should indicate the *status quaestionis*, that is, the current state of scholarly enquiry concerning the topic, including areas of general agreement and areas of specific disagreement. The student should indicate how the proposed paper would be related to the *status quaestionis*.
 - e. Any necessary background, such as methodological considerations, the historical context of the proposed topic, or the wider implications of the proposed study. Occasionally a student may want to offer more personal reasons for selecting the proposed topic.
 - f. A full bibliography. In principle, the student should already at this point be aware of all the relevant materials, and the bibliography in the proposal ought not to be very different from the bibliography that will appear in the final paper.
 - g. The thesis proposal is usually from two to three pages in length, plus bibliography.
3. The student should be aware that a thesis is a very specific kind of writing, which requires, in principle, the proof of every assertion, and which therefore must avoid generalizations, speculation, special pleading, and personal value judgments. Rhetorical devices designed to impress, bully, or shame the reader into agreement should be avoided. However, it is appropriate for you to explore briefly the wider implications of their findings in a concluding chapter; here one is given latitude to adopt a more expansive tone.
 4. The paper should be clearly organized. All parts of the paper should contribute directly or indirectly to demonstrating, clarifying, illustrating, or contextualizing the thesis statement. The demonstration of the thesis should proceed coherently. There should be an introduction, an exposition, and a conclusion. Chapter divisions are optional.

E) Thesis

Background and purpose

The M.T.S. thesis should demonstrate appropriate academic skills in the use of primary sources and a sound critical appreciation of the secondary literature on the chosen topic. It should demonstrate familiarity with the significant issues raised by the topic, and the range of possible differences in interpretation in dealing with those issues. It should reflect a capacity for independent judgment, scholarly argument, and good expository writing. It need not make an original contribution to knowledge.

Please note: Students are required to have an A- average in their course work in order to choose the thesis option.

Specific guidelines

1. The most common error in defining a thesis topic is defining it too broadly. The topic must be specific enough to enable the student to engage in a thorough, systematic and intensive study of the relevant sources, and, in principle, to be able to provide persuasive evidence for every statement that the thesis makes.
2. The thesis proposal, to be submitted by mid-December of the student's final year, should include the following information:
 - h. The title of the proposed thesis.
 - i. A brief statement (usually about three sentences in length) representing the thesis to be demonstrated. It is understood that the thesis may well undergo revision in the course of research and writing, but it is important to have a goal in view as a way of focusing the investigation.
 - j. An indication of the primary literature that will be used, and why this literature is deemed relevant.
 - k. A statement of the *status quaestionis*, that is, the current state of scholarly discussion in the chosen area, demonstrating an appreciation of the relevant issues, themes, and differences of interpretation. The student should indicate how the proposed thesis would be related to the *status quaestionis*.
 - l. Any necessary background, such as methodological considerations, the historical context of the proposed topic, or the wider implications of the proposed study. Occasionally a student may want to offer more personal reasons for selecting the proposed topic.
 - m. Analytical table of contents, with a rationale.

- n. A full bibliography. In principle, the student should already at this point be aware of all the relevant materials, and the bibliography in the thesis proposal ought not to be very different from the bibliography that will appear in the thesis itself.
 - o. The thesis proposal is usually from five to ten pages in length, plus bibliography.
3. The student must submit two copies of the proposal to the supervisor. The proposal will be discussed by the supervisor and a designated second reader to be agreed on by the supervisor and the student. It will be either approved (sometimes with suggestions), or returned for changes. Soon after this, the student and the supervisor should meet to discuss the status of the proposal. There is no limit to the number of times that a thesis proposal may be revised and re-submitted.
 4. The thesis proposal serves as a kind of contract. The student is undertaking to write a thesis that conforms to the terms of the proposal. The readers are agreeing that if the thesis is successful at achieving what the proposal describes, it will be acceptable. However, the student is fully responsible for the academic quality of the thesis.
 5. The student should work reasonably closely with the supervisor. The supervisor may direct the student to specific sources, and/or make suggestions as to method, content, and style. The thesis should not be submitted until the supervisor has approved it.
 6. The student should be aware that a thesis is a very specific kind of writing, which requires, in principle, the proof of every assertion, and which therefore must avoid generalizations, speculation, special pleading, and personal value judgments. However, it is appropriate for authors to explore briefly the wider implications of their findings in a concluding chapter; here one is given latitude to adopt a more expansive tone.
 7. Two copies must be presented (one to the supervisor and one to the second reader) by the agreed submission date.
 8. As outlined above, the thesis is evaluated by two readers, the primary of whom will be the supervisor of the thesis. Each shall provide a written evaluation as well as a grade to the Registrar. If the two grades are reasonably congruent, the Registrar will average them and submit the result to the TST as the final evaluation (rounding off fractions in favour of the primary reader's evaluation). If the two evaluations are unusually discrepant, a third reader may be appointed.

