

Boston University School of Theology

Doctor of Philosophy Handbook 2016



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1 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 The Ph.D. Degree

The PhD degree program is offered to students wishing to enhance their knowledge and competence in teaching and research and to contribute to scholarship in a specialized area of theological studies. The PhD is a research doctorate, and requires students to give evidence of the highest standards of scholarship at every stage of the degree program. STH PhD degrees are to be distinguished from other PhD degrees by their focus on theological approaches to the histories, communities, practices, beliefs, and ethical values of Christian institutions and traditions (and the institutions and traditions of other faiths, resources permitting); and by their intention to prepare students for scholarship and teaching in a broad range of institutions, including seminaries, schools of theology, divinity schools, and religiously affiliated colleges.

The primary learning outcomes of the PhD include:

1. a breadth of knowledge in theological and religious studies and in other cognate disciplines with mastery of knowledge in a particular academic discipline;
2. capacity to conduct advanced scholarly research and writing that makes an original contribution to the discipline that is significant for religious communities, academy, and society;
3. growth in one's identity as a researcher, including:
 - the ability to access appropriate resources in the study of one's discipline, to analyze and assess critically the findings of others, and to synthesize existing knowledge with one's own findings;
 - the ability to employ primary doctoral-level research methods appropriate to the study of one's chosen discipline; and
 - the ability to communicate one's research appropriately to scholars within one's discipline and to other scholars, professionals, or publics beyond one's discipline;
4. growth in one's identity as a teacher, including:
 - the ability to design a course with appropriate, achievable, and measurable learning outcomes;
 - the ability to facilitate and evaluate learning within a course through a variety of methods;
5. growth in one's professional identity as a scholar within the academy, including:
 - familiarity with the teaching profession and the academy; the responsibilities and expectations of a faculty member; and the ethical standards of one's discipline;
 - a commitment to collaborative inquiry, mentoring, publication and other modes of transferring knowledge;
 - growth in one's capacity for a robust embrace of and engagement with social and theological diversity and one's capacity to relate across difference.

1.2 The Advanced Studies Committee (ASC)

According to the Faculty Bylaws of the School of Theology, the Advanced Studies Committee (ASC) is a faculty committee providing oversight for the operation of the S.T.M., Ph.D., and D.Min. degrees. With regard to the Ph.D., the ASC reviews and approves dissertation prospectuses, considers some student degree program petitions, makes recommendations to the faculty regarding degree program policies, and monitors student academic progress.

The daily operations of the programs under the oversight of the ASC are facilitated by the Advanced Studies Program Coordinator, whose office is in STH 108.

All prospectuses and other material submitted for approval and all petitions for extensions or exceptions arising out of the stipulations in this handbook should be directed in writing to the Advanced Studies Committee through the Advanced Studies Program Coordinator.

Decisions of the ASC may be appealed to the Academic Dean of the School of Theology.

1.3 Concentrations

Ph.D. admissions are made not only to the degree program in a general sense, but also to the specific track and concentration noted on the application. The following disciplines are offered as concentrations, depending upon availability of faculty:

(1) Track 1: History and Hermeneutics

In this area, students can specialize in the following concentrations:

- Biblical Studies (with a hermeneutical and Christian canonical focus)
- Church History (including Denominational History and History of Doctrine)
- Liturgical Studies (including Sacred Music and Hymnology)
- Mission Studies.

[Note: Students interested in other approaches to Hebrew Bible, ancient Christianity and Christian origins, and the history of Christianity are encouraged to apply to the Boston University Graduate Division of Religious Studies (GDRS), Track 1.]

(2) Track 2: Constructive Theology and Theological Ethics

In this area, students can specialize in the following concentrations:

- Constructive Theology (including Systematic Theology and Comparative Theology)
- Theological Ethics (including Environmental Ethics).

[Note: Students interested in philosophy of religion or religious ethics are encouraged to apply to the GDRS Track 2; students interested in social ethics are encouraged to apply to the GDRS Track 3; students interested in religion and science are encouraged to apply to the GDRS Track 4.]

(3) Track 3: Practical Theology

In this area, students can specialize in the following concentrations:

- Congregation and Community
- Evangelism and Missiology
- Homiletics
- Leadership and Administration
- Pastoral Theology and Psychology
- Religious Education
- Spirituality Studies
- Worship

Each track faculty is responsible for determining the nature and structure of the qualifying exams and for specifying any distinctive requirements of that track (or of any concentration within that track) such as required proseminars, additional colloquia, etc. Each track faculty will publish and update those requirements along with any helpful bibliographies or suggested advising instructions regularly through the Advanced Studies website.

From time to time, the doctoral faculty of the School of Theology may wish to invite other faculty members whose primary appointments lie elsewhere in the University to serve as affiliated doctoral faculty. Affiliated doctoral faculty are faculty across the University who are willing to help STH faculty members recruit, admit, evaluate, and train STH doctoral students. Affiliated faculty members have no formal responsibilities regarding the governance of STH beyond planning within the track. They are not required to attend STH faculty meetings nor do they have a vote in such meetings. Affiliated faculty members do not serve on STH faculty committees. Affiliated doctoral faculty will be listed on the STH website so as to advertise to current and prospective students the faculty with expertise in areas of interest to the STH who are potentially willing to serve STH students in advisory capacities, and as readers of dissertations (usually as Second or Third Reader).

Track faculty, by majority vote, may nominate an affiliated doctoral faculty member to the Dean of the School of Theology, who will then decide whether to extend an invitation to that faculty member.

1.3.1 Change of Concentrations

A request to change concentration within the Ph.D. after admission to the program is tantamount to a new application and requires:

- a detailed petition from the student justifying the request;
- a signed statement from the potential new major advisor consenting to take the student as an advisee.

Such requests will be evaluated by the ASC after reviewing the student's record in graduate work undertaken to date.

1.4 Advisors

In the admissions process, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs assigns each student to a faculty advisor. Ordinarily, students work with their assigned advisor through their qualifying exams and that advisor becomes the student's first reader on the prospectus and dissertation. In some instances, however, a different first reader may be arranged. Students may request a change of advisor with the approval of the new advisor and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, who may consult with the original advisor before granting approval. Students may secure a secondary advisor if they choose and in some cases a second advisor will be suggested or assigned from the outset. Inevitably, the student will need to secure two readers, so working with one's advisor to secure that second reader is advisable prior to the beginning of qualification exams.

1.5 Transfers to and from the Ph.D.

Transfers within Boston University are **not** regarded by the Advanced Studies Committee as being a matter of course or of right. Should a student in the Ph.D. degree program wish to change to another degree program, that student must complete a full, regular application to the other program. The same policy applies to anyone who wishes to enter the Ph.D. program from any other degree program within the University.

In the case of transfer into the Ph.D., course equivalents for transferred credit are determined on an individual basis, by petition to the ASC. A course may only be transferred when the work done in that course is of doctoral standing.

1.6 Orientation and the First Semester

Prior to or during the orientation and registration period, entering students should be in communication with their advisor for an initial discussion of their program, focused on selecting courses for the first semester. Entering students should meet with their advisor at least once during the first few weeks of the first semester in order to discuss their research language examinations, the first of which must ordinarily be completed by the end of the second semester (see below).

1.7 Degree Deadlines (Summary)

1.7.1 Language Examinations (see § 2.3)

The first language exam must be passed **before** the student begins their third full time semester or seventh course, whichever comes later. The second exam or its equivalent must be taken by the end of the fourth semester. Both language examinations must be completed before the student may take the first Qualifying Examination.

1.7.2 Qualifying Examinations (see §2.4)

The written qualifying examinations must be taken after completion of both language examinations and completed no later than the end of the sixth semester after matriculation, or within one year following the completion of coursework, whichever is later. Please note that “coursework” here refers to the ten courses required for the degree and not to the doctoral colloquia, internships, or any courses taken to meet the two language requirements.

Both language requirements must be fulfilled before the student is eligible to sit for the qualifying examinations. All qualifying examinations are to be taken within one year. Normally, at least the first qualifying exam is taken in the first semester following the completion of coursework.

1.7.3 Dissertation Prospectus (see §3)

The dissertation prospectus should be submitted to the ASC within one year of the completion of the qualifying examinations. A student must have an approved prospectus no later than eighteen months of the completion of qualifying exams.

1.7.4 First Draft of Dissertation

The first complete draft of the dissertation is due to the readers on or before the last Monday in January to qualify for graduation in May of the same year. At the same time, the draft must be submitted to the Advanced Studies Program Coordinator for the first format review.

1.7.5 Draft of Dissertation for Defense

The penultimate draft, with the approval of all readers, must be submitted to the defense committee three weeks prior to the defense of the dissertation.

1.7.6 Final Oral Examination/Defense of Dissertation

The final oral examination and defense must be held no later than the fourth Friday before commencement.

1.7.7 Submission of Final Draft of Dissertation

Following a successful defense, the candidate submits the completed dissertation, incorporating changes required at the defense. See the thesis guide for instructions regarding submission of the final dissertation.

1.7.8 Maximum Time Allowable for Ph.D. Degree

Boston University expects students in the PhD degree program to complete the degree within five years. There is a seven-year limit for completion of the Ph. D. degree, from matriculation to graduation. In

extraordinary situations, extensions beyond seven years may be granted by petition to the ASC. No petition for extension beyond ten years will be granted.

1.7.9 Leaves of Absence

Time included in a leave of absence requested in writing from the Registrar and approved according to the procedure in the STH Academic Bulletin shall not count against deadlines for the degree.

1.7.10 Failure to Meet Deadlines

A student failing to meet degree deadlines without approved petition for an extension will be subject to academic review by the ASC and possible termination from the program.

2 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Coursework

2.1.1 Course Distribution

The Ph.D. requires a minimum of ten courses (of 3 or 4 credits) plus 8 credits that are fulfilled by the first-year doctoral colloquia (TF 901 and TF902, 1 credit each, see 2.2.3) and the three required internships (TZ 911, TZ 912, and TZ 913, 2 credits each, see 2.2.1).

Policies regarding the ten courses:

- Students must take three of the ten courses in each of the first two semesters and then take two more of the ten in each of the third and fourth semesters.
- Eight of the ten courses are to be taken within the student's concentration (or track, when required by that track) or in cognate fields bearing directly upon that concentration and two courses may be taken as elective courses, chosen strategically with the advice and authorization of the advisor, given the student's methodological approach.
- Coursework for the degree must contain at least three 900-level courses. (These requirements may not be satisfied by directed study courses except by approved petition to the ASC.)
- A maximum of three of the ten full courses may be taken at institutions other than Boston University.
- Courses taken to meet language requirements do not count toward the ten required courses for the Ph.D.
- Coursework older than ten years may not be applied towards the degree.

2.1.2 Unsatisfactory Grades

A course grade of B- or lower is unsatisfactory for doctoral work and may not be counted for credit toward the Ph.D. Any unsatisfactory course grade may result in academic review by the ASC. Two unsatisfactory course grades result in termination of candidacy, except by approved petition to the ASC.

2.1.3 Directed Studies

Permission to take any directed study is at the discretion of the student's advisor and any other faculty involved. Directed studies do not satisfy the 900-level course requirement; except by approved petition to the ASC.

2.1.4 Continuing Registration

Students must register every semester of their program until graduation. Students who have completed coursework must register with their advisor for a two-credit continuing directed study each term.

Continuing directed studies are graded on a pass/fail basis, based on the student's continuing progress in doctoral work. A student who receives a failing grade for a directed study will be subject to academic review by the ASC (§2.5).

2.2 Teaching and Research Training

Central to the purposes of the Doctor of Philosophy degree at Boston University School of Theology is mentoring and preparation for the teaching profession. All PhD students are required to fulfill 20-hour/week service assignments during each of their second through fifth years (eight semesters) of their program as a condition of their annual fellowship. The first three of these semester-long assignments are considered credit-bearing "internships." Students with an approved prospectus by the end of their fourth year may apply to have

their fifth year fellowship considered a “dissertation fellowship,” in which case the service requirement will be waived during that entire year.

2.2.1 The Internships

All three Research and Teaching Internships (TZ911, TZ912, and TZ913) require registration during the semester in which they are fulfilled. The internships are 2-credit courses required for graduation from the PhD program but do not count toward the ten-course requirement of the program or the timeline considerations regarding finishing qualifying exams or the submission of the prospectus.

An internship may be either a research internship or a teaching internship, assigned at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, who shall attempt to provide students a combination of opportunities to the greatest extent possible. Research internships and assistantships afford the student a close mentoring relationship with a faculty member where the student is expected to provide research assistance to the faculty member in a variety of forms while becoming apprenticed into the life and work of a teacher/researcher. Teaching internships and assistantships involve assisting a faculty member in the design and teaching of a course, including the possibility of leading discussion sections, grading, or even giving a lecture/presentation. In some cases, advanced teaching internships/assistantships involve greater responsibility for course design and teaching and may come closer to a co-teaching model.

At the conclusion of each internship, students are required to respond to an online self-evaluation and faculty mentors likewise provide an evaluation. The faculty member indicates whether time and effort expended was appropriate to the assignment, and thus whether the internship has been fulfilled. The faculty member also makes comments about the competence of the doctoral intern to be included in the student’s teaching portfolio. This type of evaluation is based on the principle that an educational program warrants formal assessment of those it is supposed to benefit. This information will be used by the ASC and the Dean’s Office in refining efforts to help each student become competent in teaching and research. In addition, the portfolios may be accessed by students who wish to provide the portfolios to future prospective employers.

2.2.2 Assignment of Internships

The Associate Dean of the School of Theology will make Research and Teaching Internship assignments based on student qualifications, faculty requests, class needs, and other such criteria as the Dean deems relevant. Ordinarily applications are e-mailed to students and faculty in the early Spring with assignments made by the first of April for the following academic year.

2.2.3 Teacher-Training Colloquia

To better accomplish the aims of the PhD program, all entering students are required to participate in a year-long series of colloquia during the first year of their program. Students register for TF901 in the fall and TF902 in the spring, and the colloquia cover research methods, teacher training, and professional identity. The colloquia are graded on a pass/fail basis each semester on the basis of the student’s active participation, reading, and any writing or research assignments required from time to time throughout the colloquia. By completing this two-semester colloquia sequence, doctoral students:

(1) will become familiar with primary doctoral-level research methods in the study of scripture, theology, history, and the social sciences with special attention to library research strategies and digital resources appropriate to those primary methods;

(2) will become familiar with various information discovery tools provided by libraries, crafting a bibliography and resources for bibliographic management, use of research collections and archives (especially Boston University’s own distinctive holdings), the social construction of information, and intellectual rights;

(3) will be able to construct a syllabus with appropriate, achievable, and measurable learning goals; methods of evaluation; course policies; and resources;

(4) will be able to design and deliver an effective class lecture and to facilitate effective classroom discussion;

(5) will be introduced to the world of academe, or as it was called long ago, The Republic of Letters, including gaining familiarity with the teaching profession and the sometimes arcane world of the academy; the responsibilities and expectations of a faculty member in relation to research and publication, faculty governance and School service, intra-school politics, and tenure and promotion procedures;

(6) will learn the importance of professional learned societies and how to submit papers to conferences and professional meetings;

(7) will become familiar with the world of academic publishing.

One or more faculty persons take turns coordinating the colloquia each year and securing the involvement of various faculty and staff with particular expertise, depending on the topic to be covered. Additional colloquia may be required by any discipline, though these will not require registration.

2.3 Language Requirements

Normally, Ph.D. students must prove competence by examination in a minimum of two languages other than English, chosen in consultation with their advisor, which are pertinent to their disciplines or envisioned program of research. (Provisions for replacing one language examination with appropriate coursework in research methods are described below.)

The first language exam must be passed **before** the student begins their third semester, or seventh course, whichever comes later. The second exam or its equivalent must be taken by the end of the fourth semester. Both examinations must be completed before the student may take the first Qualifying Examination.

Because English proficiency is a prerequisite of admission, English may not be used to fulfill the Ph.D. language requirement. A student's native competence in a language other than English may fulfill part of the language requirement if the advisors judge that the language is pertinent to the student's disciplines or envisioned program of research.

The faculty of the Biblical Studies concentration allows for additional language examinations so that those competencies appear on student transcripts.

2.3.1 Procedure

Language proficiency must be determined by an exam given and graded under the auspices of Boston University.

The standard procedure for completing a language exam is as follows: The examiner (normally the advisor) chooses two passages (about half a page each in length) from two different works. The student selects a text from which the examiner will choose one passage and the examiner selects the second passage from material they have chosen themselves. In situations where the advisor is not familiar with the particular language of the exam, the appropriate B.U. language department may be contacted for assistance with passage selected. The student will have two hours to complete the translation of both passages. At the discretion of the advisor, students for whom English is a second language may be allowed up to one additional hour. A dictionary is the only reference material that may be used. Individual disciplines may set more restrictive standards for language examinations.

Language examinations must be proctored, either by the examiner (or someone chosen by the advisor) or under the administration of the Advanced Studies Program coordinator according to the schedule posted on the STH website. Students who wish to take an exam on one of the ASC proctored exam dates must sign up with the Advanced Studies Program Coordinator no later than two weeks in advance of the exam date.

At the examiner's option, the Advanced Studies Program Coordinator may forward the examination texts, the student's translation, and the appropriate form to the Department of Modern Languages and Comparative Literature, the Department of Romance Studies, or another appropriate department in the University. In cases where the language is not taught at the University, the examiner must make appropriate alternative arrangements for an academic evaluation of the student's translation. Exams are graded solely on a pass/fail basis.

Graduate language courses offered by the B.U. Graduate School of Arts and Sciences may be helpful to Ph.D. students. (For example, GRS LG621 *German for Reading*, GRS LF621 *French for Reading*, and GRS LS621 *Spanish for Reading* courses are regularly offered, as well as reading courses in classical Latin and Greek.) With the approval of their advisor, Ph.D. students may register in these courses and use their final examination in the course as a Ph.D. language examination, if students arrange with their advisors to send examination texts to the instructors of these courses in advance.

Students may take BU undergraduate language courses to fulfil language requirements as long as no corresponding graduate reading language course is available, they arrange with their advisors to send examination texts to the instructors of these courses in advance, the final exam is comparable to a graduate level course exam, and they receive approval from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs beforehand.

Students may elect, with the approval of their advisor, to take only one language examination, and in lieu of the second to take two four-credit courses in quantitative or qualitative research methods, or another research methods course approved by petition to the ASC. A list of eligible courses can be found in the Advanced Studies Program Coordinator's office.

2.3.2 Failure of Examination

If a student fails any language examination, the Advanced Studies Committee is to be notified and the student's standing may be reviewed. A second failure of the same examination leads to termination of candidacy, except by approved petition to the ASC.

2.4 Qualifying Examinations

The Ph.D. degree program requires three written qualifying examinations and a single oral follow-up examination. The structure and format of these exams and the nature of the material on which the student is to be examined is set by the faculty of the student's track and concentration.

The second language examination must be completed before the student is eligible to sit for the Qualifying Examinations. All written qualifying examinations must be completed no later than the end of the sixth semester after matriculation, or one year following the completion of coursework, whichever is later. All qualifying examinations are to be taken within one year. Normally, at least the first qualifying exam is taken in the first semester following the completion of coursework. Please note that "coursework" here refers to the ten courses required for the degree and not to the doctoral colloquia or internships.

In preparation for each examination, the advisor and the student should meet to tailor a bibliography (founded upon and including the core coursework of their discipline) to suit the special interests of the student.

Written qualifying examinations must be proctored, either by the student's advisor (or someone chosen by the student's advisor) or under the administration of the Advanced Studies Program coordinator according to the schedule posted on the STH website. Students who wish to take their exam on one of the ASC proctored exam dates must sign up with the Advanced Studies Program coordinator no later than 2 weeks in advance of the exam date. If students are unable to take their qualifying exams on the monthly proctored exam date, the student must arrange a date and time for their exam with their advisor.

Each examination shall be graded on a pass/fail basis. A grade of pass requires the approval of at least two readers. Exam readers must have an earned doctorate. In each case, the student's advisor will report the result of the exam to the Advanced Studies Program Coordinator. The Advanced Studies Program Coordinator will then notify the student, the Registrar, and the ASC.

2.4.1 Failure of Examination

If a student fails any qualifying examination, the Advanced Studies Committee is to be notified and the student's standing may be reviewed. A second failure of the same qualifying examination leads to termination of candidacy, except in extraordinary circumstances by approved petition to the ASC.

2.5 Academic Review Procedures for Ph.D. Students

The ASC shall undertake an academic review of a student when report of an unsatisfactory course grade of B- or lower or other unsatisfactory outcome such as required withdrawal from a course reaches the committee, either through a professor, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, or the Registrar.

If a student has failed to meet degree deadlines without approved petition for an extension, the ASC will undertake an academic review.

In the case of a student's first failure of a particular language examination or qualifying examination, the ASC may initiate an academic review, especially if concerns are raised by advisors or the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, who will attempt to insure that the student and advisor have a reasonable plan for making progress toward the passing of that exam.

Any faculty member may request an academic review of a Ph.D. student's standing by submitting to the ASC a memorandum detailing the grounds for such a request.

In carrying out the academic review of a Ph.D. student, the ASC shall

- Solicit the perspectives of the advisor, course instructor, and other faculty directly involved.
Questions to consider include the following:
 - How important is this course within the student's Plan of Study?
 - Based on the student's work in the course, is the student capable of successfully fulfilling the requirements of a Ph.D. degree?
 - Is the student capable of fulfilling the Ph.D. requirements within the allowed timeframe?
 - Should the student be continued in the Ph.D. program?
- Inform the student of the review process and provide them with an opportunity to submit to the ASC any factors or circumstances which they believe should be considered by the committee. The student may solicit faculty to write in their support as well.

After discussion, the ASC shall decide whether to place the student on formal academic probation, to terminate the student from the Ph.D. program, or to continue the student in the program without probation. A memo shall be sent to the student, with copies to the professor, the advisor, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, informing all parties of the ASC's response and decision.

Two unsatisfactory course grades, or two failures of the same examination, result in termination of candidacy, except in extraordinary circumstances by approved petition to the ASC. In such cases, no academic

review is necessary. The ASC, upon being informed of the relevant events, shall notify the student of termination from the program, and unless the ASC, within 30 days of the notification or a week prior to its next scheduled meeting, whichever is later, receives an approved petition from the student to continue in the program, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Registrar shall be informed of the ASC's action and the student's candidacy terminated. The student will be informed of their right to appeal that termination to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

2.6 Childbirth and Adoption Accommodation for Full-time PhD Students

The University's childbirth and adoption accommodation policy for full-time or certified full-time PhD students in good academic standing provides for extensions for academic coursework and other requirements to the primary caregiver of an infant or adopted child. It also provides for a continuation of stipend support for funded students during the accommodation period. That policy may be found at:

<http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/childbirth-and-adoption-accommodation/>. Any student electing to take the accommodation must complete the Childbirth and Adoption Accommodation for Full-Time PhD Students form: <http://www.bu.edu/sth/academics/advanced-studies/>

3 THE DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS

A PhD dissertation should include original research and be based on firsthand investigation, with clearly developed theoretical foundations, of a problem related to the student's academic discipline. In special instances, research involving the laying of theoretical foundations may be accepted as fulfilling the requirement.

3.1 Administrative Guidelines

3.1.1 Securing a Reader

Normally, the First Reader of the dissertation will be the student's advisor. Students are responsible for finding a member of the STH faculty to serve as Second Reader for their dissertation. The Second Reader (and Third Reader, if desired) may be either School of Theology or University faculty members. Note that if the subject of the dissertation will focus on analysis of the work of the advisor or reader, the prospectus should be accompanied by a notice acknowledging this factor in the advising relationship and detailing how the student and the advisor or reader will deal with it. If necessary, an additional outside reader, not tied to the work being analyzed, may be included.

3.1.2 Preparing the Prospectus

Before beginning to prepare a prospectus, students should review their academic transcripts with their advisors to determine that all necessary requirements have been satisfied and recorded. When all such requirements have been successfully completed and two Readers have been secured, the student should work with the Readers to shape the thesis project and draft a prospectus. Students must submit a prospectus to the Advanced Studies Committee within one year after completing qualifying exams. Failure to do so will result in an Academic Review by the ASC.

3.1.3 Submitting the Prospectus to the ASC

When the student's First and Second Readers are satisfied that the prospectus is ready for approval and are willing to commit to the direction of a dissertation based on the prospectus, the student should submit an electronic, MS Word copy of the Prospectus to the Advanced Studies Program Coordinator by email. The student's First and Second Readers must be copied on the submission email to allow the readers to communicate their approval to the Advanced Studies Program Coordinator. Every prospectus submitted to the ASC thereby becomes a public document within the school.

A Prospectus will be accepted for review no less than ten business days prior to the next scheduled ASC prospectus review meeting. A schedule of meetings is available on the STH website. The First and Second Readers are invited, if they wish, to submit their written comments on the prospectus for the consideration of the ASC. Students and their Readers are also invited to attend the Review for the purpose of joining the discussion. Attendance is not required. The Committee may accept the prospectus, accept with revisions to be made under the supervision of advisors, ask for a resubmission with revisions, or reject the prospectus. *Students are allowed a maximum of 3 submissions. Failure to gain approval by the third submission, or by the end of the third year after completion of coursework, whichever comes first, will result in academic review by the ASC.*

3.1.4 Candidacy for the Degree

A candidate for the PhD is a student who has successfully completed all academic requirements (coursework, language and qualifying examinations, prospectus) except for the dissertation. Only after students have an approved prospectus in hand may they refer to themselves as candidates for the degree.

3.2 Content and Format Guidelines for the Dissertation Prospectus

The following guidelines are meant to serve as a framework for students and faculty.

3.2.1 Elements of a Dissertation Prospectus

3.2.1.1 Statement of the Problem

The prospectus should begin with a simple and concise statement of the problem or question that the dissertation is meant to address. It can usually be done in one sentence followed by a few explanatory sentences. Use this section of the Prospectus to circumscribe your topic and to state, in a preliminary way, the thesis you intend to defend. Remember that you are trying to communicate not only to the experts in your field but also to knowledgeable non-specialists. Avoid jargon or technical language as much as possible.

3.2.1.2 Significance of the Problem.

In this section you should explain how your dissertation will contribute to and advance the scholarship in the field. Be prepared to answer the question, “So what?” As part of your explanation of the project’s significance, you should describe the body of literature and theory that will serve as its foundation. What other scholars have wrestled with the problem before you, and how will your research and analysis move beyond theirs? In addition, you should note why and how your project might be significant for religious communities and their leaders.

3.2.1.3 Method of Investigation.

This section of the prospectus should describe the scholarly activity you will pursue to accomplish your task. It should describe the primary and secondary sources that will form the basis for your analysis and reflection. What is the body of information (texts, observations, interviews, historical events, set of ideas) that will form the focus of your work? And, what are the primary critical and analytical strategies you anticipate bringing to the topic. That is, describe the methods (e.g., theological, historical, critical, sociological, reflective, practical, etc.) by which you will pursue your study. Make sure that the critical and normative dimension of your work is clear. On what grounds will you evaluate what you have learned?

3.2.1.4 Sources of the Study.

What sources of information will be necessary for pursuing this topic in the way you have proposed? Do you have access to the literature, archives, persons, and/or observation sites you will need? In this section, outline what resources you will need and identify how you will gain access to them. If you intend to gather primary data (e.g., through interviews, questionnaires, systematic observation), you should briefly describe the method and foci of your research. A full copy of your research instruments or guides should be supplied in an appendix.

3.2.1.5 Human Subjects Review.

Note that if your research will involve human subjects, review by the BU Institutional Review Board will be necessary, and you will need to have an informed consent statement. Note that fact in your prospectus, and append your draft informed consent document. At the same time that you are submitting your prospectus, complete an IRB application so that it may be submitted as soon as your Prospectus has been approved by the ASC. When IRB approval has been granted, a copy of the IRB letter should be submitted to the ASC office to remain on file with your approved prospectus. Note that you may not begin any research that involves human subjects until this letter is received.

3.2.1.6 Limitations and Plans for Completion.

Make clear any limitations that are inherent to the nature of the project or that have been deliberately set in order to limit the scope of the undertaking. Explain the reasons for the limitations. Provide an estimated timeline for completing your work.

3.2.1.7 Working Outline.

Provide an outline of the proposed chapters and a brief (2-3 sentence) description of the points to be covered in each.

3.2.1.8 Working Bibliography.

List and comment, where appropriate, on the sources you plan to use for your study and on secondary work relevant to your subject. Organize the bibliography by categories and provide an introductory paragraph. A complete and thorough bibliography is likely to be at least ten pages in length

3.2.1.9 Appendices.

As noted above, all research instruments should be included in an appendix, along with your draft informed consent document (if needed). Other essential background documents may be included as needed.

3.2.1.10 Definitions.

Throughout the document, the student should be clear about the manner in which key words and concepts are being used. If there is extensive special vocabulary, an appendix of definitions may be used.

3.2.1.11 Length of the Prospectus.

Normally the body of the prospectus should be limited to 15 pages of typewritten, double-spaced text; the bibliography and appendices are not counted within those pages.

3.2.1.12 Format of the Prospectus

The prospectus should be submitted with a title page formatted according to the sample page shown in the thesis guide. Footnotes should be done according to Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, currently in its seventh edition (2007). See the thesis guide for more information.

4 THE DISSERTATION

4.1 Administrative Guidelines for the Dissertation

Each student should work out an acceptable *modus operandi* with her or his readers. Most find it very useful to submit chapters as they are completed. Some will wish to do a whole draft before submitting it, though the latter process entails certain obvious risks.

Ph.D. candidates for May graduation must be registered for both the semester in which the defense is held and the semester before. Students planning to receive their degree in January must have fully registered both for the second semester of the previous year and the first semester of the academic year in which they hope to have the degree awarded. Otherwise, students must be registered each semester or be on an official leave of absence.

The student must consult the thesis guide regarding guidelines governing the form in which the final dissertation shall be submitted.

4.2 Drafts of the Dissertation

4.2.1 Preliminary Draft

The initial draft of the dissertation, or parts of the dissertation, is submitted to the first reader for guidance and suggestions on revision. These drafts should be fully legible, footnoted, and in proper English, but they need not meet the stylistic form requirements of a completed dissertation. Approval of such drafts is always subject to further revision when the reader sees the whole dissertation.

4.2.2 Official First Draft

This is the first formal draft of the complete dissertation, incorporating revisions and modifications recommended following the reading of the preliminary draft. This should be formatted, and include the title page, table of contents, and bibliography. This draft should be submitted by the last Monday in January (for a May graduation) to both readers and to the Advanced Studies Program Coordinator (for format review).

4.2.3 Examination Draft

Prior to the oral examination, a complete and formatted draft of the dissertation must be submitted to the defense committee three weeks before the oral defense.

4.2.4 Final Draft, Content and Format Guidelines

Students preparing for graduation must consult the School of Theology website here (<http://www.bu.edu/sth/academics/advanced-studies/graduation-deadlines-for-stm-thd-phd-and-dmin/>) for important information on guidelines for format, format review, and dissertation submission.

With the permission of the first reader, the dissertation may be formatted in APA style if appropriate to the discipline.

One model (not the only one!) for organization of a written thesis is as follows:

1. The Problem and its Setting
2. The Literature Review
3. The Methodology
4. Presentation of the Findings
5. Analysis, Interpretation, Evaluation
6. Discussion, Implications, Recommendations
7. Conclusion

5 THE DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

5.1 Role of the Abstract

When the first full draft of the thesis is completed and the structure of the thesis begins to appear, the student begins to develop the Abstract. This document summarizes the thesis and will eventually be published in Dissertation Abstracts. After approval from the readers, the Abstract is submitted to the ASC Chair and the Dean for approval. When this approval is obtained, the student may apply for the Oral Examination.

5.2 Abstract Guidelines

The Abstract is a statement summarizing the major or important points of the dissertation in 350 words. The Abstract must be approved by: the readers, the ASC Chair, and the Dean. A form is available for these approvals. The approval must be obtained no later than three weeks prior to the Dissertation Defense.

Final revisions to the abstract may be made after the oral defense, but students should not view this first version as only a “rough draft.” This is the only version circulated to the examining committee, the ASC Chair, and the Dean. The final version will be submitted to the Library with the final version of the dissertation, and will be published in Dissertation Abstracts.

Although abstracts may vary in format, the approach generally taken at STH is as follows: Provide a succinct statement of the thesis in the opening paragraph. Then briefly describe the history and present state of the topic. End the paragraph with a statement of how the current thesis advances the topic. Subsequent paragraphs should summarize central arguments supporting the thesis including methodology and results. The final paragraph encapsulates the dissertation and what the thesis has accomplished. Implications for further study are also stated.

5.3 Approval of the Abstract by Readers, ASC Chair, and Dean

When the first draft of the Abstract has been reviewed by the readers, the student should obtain their signatures on the Abstract Approval Form (readers can also approve via email). The abstract can then be forwarded to the Advanced Studies Programs Coordinator who will then circulate it to the ASC Chair and the Dean.

6 THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE

6.1 Dates and Scheduling of Dissertation Defense

The First Reader is responsible for constituting the examining committee, for scheduling the examination, and for seeing that the proper forms are filed. The final oral examination and defense must be held no later than the fourth Friday before commencement. The penultimate draft, with the approval of all readers, must be submitted to the defense committee three weeks prior to the defense of the dissertation.

Note that the student should also have applied for graduation to the School of Theology Registrar by the stated deadline.

6.2 Examination Committee Structure

The First Reader is responsible for selecting the Examination Committee and choosing the chairperson, who must be a member of the STH faculty, though the student may express input to the First Reader. The examination committee consists of no fewer than five members: the readers, the chairperson (who must not be one of the readers), and one or two additional members (depending on the number of readers). The defense committee must

include at least one person in addition to the first reader who has expertise in the discipline of the student's doctorate (broadly construed) and at least one who has expertise outside that discipline. Readers and members of the examination committee must have faculty status at Boston University or at another accredited institution and hold at least a degree comparable to the doctorate. It is the responsibility of the First Reader to invite the preferred members of the committee. Permission to add readers and members of the examination committee from outside of Boston University is granted by request to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

6.3 Final Oral Examination

The examination itself is a public event and is announced on the STH website. Any members of the faculty or academic community, plus any friends of the candidate, are permitted to attend, as space allows. However, after the Defense proper, the committee must have privacy for their discussions and vote on the examination.

Following the completion of the committee deliberations, the results will be announced to the candidate. The Chair of the Examining Committee will complete the Report of the Dissertation Defense, obtaining the signatures of the committee members, and file this form with the Advanced Studies Programs Coordinator.

6.4 Follow-up

Following the successful completion of the defense, the student is required to make any changes or corrections to the dissertation or abstract that have been requested by the examination committee. These changes normally require the approval of the First Reader. Students preparing for graduation must consult the School of Theology website here (<http://www.bu.edu/sth/academics/advanced-studies/graduation-deadlines-for-stm-thd-phd-and-dmin/>) for important information on guidelines for format, format review, and dissertation submission.