



**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
HANDBOOK**

Doctoral Office

5001 N. Oak Trafficway, Kansas City, Missouri 64118

Phone: 816.414.3755

Email: [docstudies@mbts.edu](mailto:docstudies@mbts.edu)

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*This manual is a digest of current policies and procedures for the Doctor of Philosophy program at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The Doctoral Studies Committee has established the policies and procedures for this program. They are subject to change at any time. For answers to questions not directly addressed in this manual, please contact the Doctoral Studies Office (816-414-3755; email [docstudies@mbts.edu](mailto:docstudies@mbts.edu)).*

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## Welcome!

The Doctor of Philosophy in Biblical Studies degree offered through Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (MBTS) prepares students both professionally and personally to serve the church as teachers, pastors, and leaders at the highest level. It results in superior research, writing, and ministry skill, with special emphasis upon theological knowledge. As per the vision of Midwestern, recipients of this degree will become competent and dedicated leaders who are faithful to the teachings of Scripture as they pursue the Great Commission.

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is recognized by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) as a research theological degree. As such, it supports vocations of teaching and research in theological schools, colleges, and universities, as well as the scholarly enhancement of ministerial practice.

Christian theology itself, plus the effort to explore its implications, must begin with Holy Scripture, rightly understood. Therefore, all PhDs offered at MBTS fall under the larger heading of Biblical Studies, regardless of the graduate's emphasis. Specialists in Old and New Testament, Historical Theology, Theology, Ethics, Apologetics, Preaching, Ministry, and Missiology share the common goal of correctly interpreting and applying the Word of God.

To be admitted to the PhD program at MBTS, applicants must demonstrate noteworthy academic and/or ministerial achievement, the latter being evidenced by the completion of a Master of Divinity, Master of Arts, or equivalent degree program, coupled with exceptional ministry skill. The required balance of these factors is determined by the applicant's anticipated emphasis.

This handbook outlines the PhD program with sufficient detail to answer the majority of questions raised at each stage of the program, from admission to thesis defense; however, as this document cannot address every question or concern, the student is invited to seek particular help from the Doctoral Studies Office (DSO) as needed. A Doctoral Program e-Newsletter will also be sent from time to time with important announcements. Finally, the MBTS website answers many FAQs and offers a regularly updated seminar calendar for planning purposes.

On a personal level, from the DSO to you, we say: keep the lines of communication open, making us aware changes in your life—both positive and negative—which may affect you personally and the progress of your study. We are committed to your success; we pray for you and your family; and we consider it a privilege to assist you on your doctoral journey.

## **1. Admission and Student Status**

### **1.1. Introduction**

Midwestern offers a research doctorate (PhD) in Biblical Studies with available emphases in Old Testament, New Testament, Preaching, Theology, Historical Theology, Ethics, Apologetics, Ministry, and Missiology. These programs compliment the institution's substantial history of professional doctoral education, as recognized by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS).

#### **1.1.1. Southern Baptist Convention Seminaries Purpose Statement**

Southern Baptist theological seminaries exist to prepare God-called men and women for vocational service in Baptist churches and in other Christian ministries throughout the world through programs of spiritual development, theological studies, and practical preparation in ministry.

#### **1.1.2. MBTS Mission Statement**

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary serves the church by biblically educating God-called men and women to be and make disciples of Jesus Christ.

### **1.2. Purpose and Objectives of the PhD Program**

#### **1.2.1. Purpose**

The PhD is intended primarily (a) to equip persons for vocations of teaching and research in theological schools, colleges, and universities, and (b) to enhance the practice of ministry through advanced, biblically defined scholarship.

#### **1.2.2. Doctoral Program Objectives:**

Upon the successful completion of their degree, graduates of the MBTS PhD program will be able to do the following:

1. Evaluate current scholarship in their chosen field of expertise with independent critical awareness.
2. Develop appropriate methods to resolve identified deficiencies in the current state of scholarly research.
3. Synthesize research results in the form of sustained, written arguments.

#### **1.2.3. PhD Program Outcomes:**

In addition to the Doctoral Program Outcomes, students in the PhD program will be able to:

1. Contribute to theological inquiry within their chosen field of study.

### **1.3. Admission**

#### 1.3.1. Requirements for Admission

Applicants seeking admission to the PhD program at MBTS must meet the general criteria for admission to the school as well as the requirements listed below.

1. Applicants must hold an earned 52+ hour master's degree or equivalent from an accredited institution recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation ([www.chea.org](http://www.chea.org)).
2. Applicants must have a 3.0 grade point average or above, on a 4.0 scale, for all graduate level studies
3. Applicants must demonstrate a working knowledge of Greek, Hebrew, and one modern research language, normally satisfied prior to beginning doctoral studies (see below 2.4 Language Requirements). The degree of competence required in Greek and/or Hebrew is determined by the student's anticipated area of research emphasis.

#### 1.3.2. Admission Procedures for US Citizens

United States citizens seeking admission to the PhD program must:

1. Submit an online application in the MBTS website ([www.mbts.edu](http://www.mbts.edu); click "Apply Now")
2. Request and submit to the Doctoral Studies Office official transcripts from all academic institutions previously attended
3. Provide (a) two academic references (b) one personal and/or professional reference and (c) one pastoral reference.
4. Submit a well-organized, ten-page, double-spaced essay which has the following three elements. It must (a) summarize the student's understanding of salvation and Christian ministry, (b) identify the student's personal and professional goals, and (c) explain how research doctoral study would serve the ends identified in part (b) above. This essay is to fall between 2800 and 3200 words in Times New Roman, 12-point font. Finally, it must demonstrate superior ability in English grammar, style, and composition, as it will be used by the Doctoral Admissions Committee as partial evidence of the student's readiness for doctoral studies.
5. Provide a completed *Church Endorsement Form* or letter of endorsement from your governing ministry body.

### 1.3.3. Admission Procedures for International Students

In addition to items 1 to 5, specified above, international students must complete the following steps:

1. Submit TOFEL scores to the Doctoral Studies Committee (The minimum score for admission is 550 on the paper test. For the internet-based test [iBT] a minimum total score of 80 is required with a minimum of 20 on each of the Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing sub-sections)
2. Submit a completed International Student Certification of Finances form and supporting documents required
3. Provide evidence of full compliance with all legal issues set forth in US law as applicable to degree-granting institutions
4. Provide copies of passports for all immediate family members.

### 1.3.4. Admission Notification

Applicants to the PhD program are admitted under one of three categories: unconditional, provisional, and non-degree seeking. Once admitted, students are enrolled in the DR00000 Doctoral Orientation (0 hrs) that calls for careful study of essential PhD documents and other requirements. Billing for the program starts the semester in which the first seminar meets on campus. At this time, unless (a) the student makes prior arrangements in writing with the Doctoral Studies office and (b) such arrangements have been approved by the Doctoral Studies Committee at no time will a student be allowed to postpone enrollment in a subsequent doctoral seminar more than 12 months.

#### 1.3.4.1. Unconditional Admission

Unconditional admission is granted when the applicant meets all requirements set forth in the catalog.

#### 1.3.4.2. Provisional Admission

A student who lacks one or more requirements needed for unconditional admission may be admitted with provisional status, which does not imply a negative evaluation of the student himself or his work. However, a student who is admitted on provisional status will normally be required to satisfy any deficiencies within the first year of study and will be evaluated for satisfactory academic progress by the Doctoral Studies Committee.

A student admitted to the PhD program with provisional status must earn a 3.0 GPA in the first two seminars taken. Students who earn less than a B in either of these first two seminars are placed on academic probation for the following semester.

Students lacking the required level of competency in Greek or Hebrew may be admitted provisionally, with the understanding that such deficiency will be remedied as soon as possible no later than the end of the first year of PhD studies. Until such deficiencies are

resolved, students admitted provisionally may be restricted in the range of seminars and courses of study that they are allowed to pursue.

An international student admitted to the program with a low TOEFL score may also be admitted with provisional status. A minimum TOEFL score of 550 on the written version, 213 on the computer version, or 80 on the online version is required. However, an international student admitted to the PhD program with a low TOEFL score must retake the TOEFL test and pass with an acceptable score before he is able to enroll in DR30020.<sup>1</sup> Failure to meet this standard will place the student on probationary status the following semester. International students are expected to speak and write English well enough to compose academic papers, engage in learned dialogue, and to articulate theological ideas with doctoral level sophistication.

#### 1.3.4.3. Non-Degree Seeking Status

Qualified individuals may apply as Non-Degree Seeking (NDS) students in the PhD program. Admission as a NDS student must be approved by the Doctoral Studies Committee. Completion of an NDS application, accompanied by a non-refundable application fee, will be required. With formal approval of the PhD Director, NDS students may enroll in one research doctoral seminar per semester, with space-available priority given to doctoral students who have been fully admitted.

NDS students may not complete more than 12 hours of seminars without obtaining approval from the Doctoral Studies Committee prior to taking each additional seminar, beyond this 12 hour threshold. Students seeking credit for seminars taken on an NDS basis will pay tuition by credit-hour. Students desiring to receive credit for any seminar must complete all of the latter's requirements as outlined in the course syllabus.

Completion of courses as an NDS student does not guarantee admission to the ThM or PhD programs, nor does success in this regard obviate standard admissions requirements. Seminars taken for credit on an NDS basis may be applied toward the PhD degree, provided that each seminar completed satisfies specific program requirements. The doctoral program fee at the time of final admission will be pro-rated, according to a formula set by the Finance Office.

#### 1.3.5. Denial of Admission

Applicants who are denied admission, and who wish to reapply, must wait at least one year before doing so. All requirements not previously met must be satisfied before admission is possible. Decisions to accept or deny an applicant are made by the DSC on a confidential basis. It is not the policy of the DSC to discuss the precise reasons why any applicant has been denied or accepted. This procedure is followed out of respect for the applicant's referees and to protect the members of the DSC from possible unwarranted pressure coming from a denied applicant.

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<sup>1</sup> For the sake of clarity and economy, the masculine pronouns in this Handbook are to be understood in the gender-inclusive sense where it is contextually appropriate to do so.

## **1.4. Tuition and Financial Aid**

### **1.4.1. Tuition and Fees**

Current tuition prices and fee schedules may be viewed on the institution's website at [www.mbts.edu](http://www.mbts.edu). Students changing denominational status from SBC to non-SBC, or vice versa, will be subject to the relevant increase or discount effective the semester following the change.

### **1.4.2. Financial Aid**

The primary purpose of the financial aid program at Midwestern is to assist students who demonstrate financial need. PhD students with financial needs are encouraged to visit with the Financial Aid Coordinator in the Finance Office in order to determine what financial options may be available.

Midwestern will make a limited, one-time financial match for any student whose church contributes to his education, subject to restrictions and regulations available from the Financial Aid Office. To receive these matching funds, the church must send a letter to the attention of the Financial Aid Office that (a) identifies the student to receive the award and (b) encloses a check payable to MBTS (with the student's name and student ID on the memo line). Further questions regarding scholarships should be directed to the Financial Aid Office.

## **1.5. Enrollment**

### **1.5.1. Matriculation**

After admission to the program, students must enroll in their first seminar following DR00000 Doctoral Orientation within one year. A student who registers for a seminar or colloquium satisfies this requirement. Once the student matriculates, he is expected to complete two seminars per academic year until the dissertation has been submitted and successfully defended. The Doctor of Philosophy degree is a 52 hour program that usually demands at least four years (eight semesters) of academic study.

Students must maintain enrollment until all degree requirements are satisfied. Failure to maintain enrollment as such, or to apply for Interrupted Status, is cause for probationary status or dismissal from the program. All students, regardless of status, must maintain contact with the Doctoral Studies Office by letter or email confirming their current status and contact information.

The Doctoral Studies Committee will consider for mandatory withdrawal any student who fails to communicate responsibly and in a timely manner with the Doctoral Studies Office. Minimum contact is considered to be once a semester. Students enrolled in DR 40980 Dissertation – Ongoing Research will be expected to file a Research Phase Project

Report each semester (due June 15 and December 15). Failure to submit this report in a timely manner constitutes grounds for probationary status or mandatory withdrawal from the program.

#### 1.5.2. Enrollment Policies and Procedures

To enroll in a seminar, the student must register by Student Portal or Doctoral Registration Form prior to the published enrollment deadline. Casual or merely verbal arrangements are not acceptable forms of registration. Registration after the first scheduled day of a seminar (the class start date for pre-seminar work, not the first day of the on-campus week), and during the next thirteen days following the start date, will occasion a late-registration fee. Registration on the fifteenth day following the start-date, or at any later time, will not be permitted.

#### 1.5.3. Interrupted Status

All PhD students must successfully complete at least two courses/seminars per academic year. If a student cannot maintain this standard, written notification including an explanation must be submitted to the Doctoral Studies Committee. Students not meeting this standard will be considered for Interrupted Status (first year) or Inactive Status (subsequent times) only for reasons of health, relocation, IMB/Missionary service or military service.

The maximum duration for interrupted status is one year. A per-semester fee will be charged for each semester spent on interrupted status. Requests for interrupted status must be made in advance of each term. The deadlines to request interrupted status during any semester are November 1 (for fall term) and May 1 (for spring term). Requests submitted after these deadlines for a current term will not be permitted.

Formal PhD requirements may not be satisfied while the student is on interrupted status, and the student must not submit work to his First and Second Readers during this period. Once a student is granted interrupted status, it is assumed that the student will return the following semester. It is the student's responsibility to request additional semesters of interrupted status. Failure to maintain enrollment without approval for interrupted status or inactive status will be interpreted as *de facto* withdrawal from the program.

#### 1.5.4. Inactive Status

Inactive status may be granted each year for up to three years. The fees for inactive status match that of interrupted status. Formal PhD requirements may not be completed while the student is on inactive status, e.g., through directed studies or other arrangements, and the student must not submit work to his First and Second Readers during this period.

Time spent on interrupted or inactive status does not count toward the 8 years (16 semesters) maximum for the PhD program. Failure to maintain enrollment when the student has not been approved for interrupted status or inactive status will be interpreted

as *de facto* withdrawal from the program. A student may not serve as a Resident, Fellow, or Adjunct Instructor while on interrupted status.

#### 1.5.5. Reactivation Process

A student must return from interrupted status or inactive status by enrolling in a seminar/research course for the semester of return.

All students, regardless of status, must remain in regular contact with the Doctoral Studies Office. This contact may be established by (a) matriculating in a seminar or (b) submitting a letter or email confirming the student's current status and mailing address. Failure to maintain the required degree of contact with the Doctoral Studies Office will be interpreted as *de facto* withdrawal from the program.

#### 1.5.6. Academic Probation

Students are placed on academic probation immediately following a seminar in which they earn less than a B as a final grade. Students receiving less than a B in any seminar or directed study will not receive credit for that course or directed study. To satisfy this requirement, such students must retake the relevant seminar or directed study, as determined by the DSO.

During the time of probation, the student's academic work must be unusually strong, thus allaying concerns about his ability to do doctoral work. Normally, academic probation will not extend beyond two semesters. The PhD Director may request an interview with students placed on probation and seek evaluative comments from other faculty members as to the student's prospects for further doctoral study. Based on these findings submitted to the Doctoral Studies Committee, the latter will determine whether probationary status should be lifted and if the student should be allowed to continue in the program.

A second case of earning less than a B in any seminar will normally result in the student's being terminated from the program. If the student receives two substandard grades (B- or lower) in one semester, his program may be terminated immediately.

#### 1.5.7. Transfer of Credits

Students may transfer doctoral level credit-hours from other accredited institutions. Arrangements to transfer hours from another doctoral program must be made within six months of initial application and before the first seminar. Requests for transfer must be submitted in writing to the PhD Director, and official transcripts from the 'donor' institution must be sent to the Doctoral Studies Office in support of this request. All requests for transfer of credit will be evaluated individually by the PhD Director and confirmed by the Doctoral Studies Committee.

The hours transferred from another accredited institution are subject to the following ATS-mandated stipulations:

- (1) No more than 50% of the total hours required for a degree program at Midwestern may be satisfied on the basis of transfer credit.
- (2) No more than 50% of the total hours transferred from an awarded degree, earned at another institution, may be used to satisfy degree requirements at Midwestern.
- (3) Courses transferred must be substantively equivalent to postgraduate courses in the Midwestern catalog.
- (4) Only courses used to meet Midwestern degree requirements will be transferred and recorded on the student's permanent record/transcript.
- (5) Only courses in which the student has received a grade of B or higher will transfer.
- (6) Requests for transfer credit involving non-ATS institutions will be considered by the DSC and registrar on a case-by-case basis.

#### 1.5.8. Withdrawal

The following stipulations govern the withdrawal of any student from (a) the PhD program itself or (b) any particular seminar.

##### 1.5.8.1. Withdrawal from the PhD Program

If a student must withdraw from the program, a letter stating intent to withdraw is to be submitted to the PhD Director or the Doctoral Studies Office. The letter of intent to withdraw is essential if a student is to be given a withdrawal "without prejudice," which outcome allows for the possibility of subsequent readmission. Students should seek counsel from the PhD Director and the Doctoral Studies Committee before submitting an intent-to-withdraw letter. A withdrawal form will be supplied to the student at that time from the Doctoral Studies Office.

Students who are allowed to withdraw "without prejudice" may submit a request for reinstatement at a later date, should their life-circumstances significantly change in a favorable way. This request must be sent to the PhD Director and the DSC. Failure to maintain registration when the student has not been approved for interrupted or inactive status will be interpreted as *de facto* withdrawal from the program.

##### 1.5.8.2. Withdrawal from a Seminar

Students seeking to withdraw from a seminar (e.g., following a decision to change emphasis) must request to do so by submitting a Doctoral Drop Form to the Doctoral Office. Requests submitted at least 60 days before the on-campus date of the seminar may be approved without additional charges. Requests submitted less than 60 days prior to the on-campus date start-date, but before the second day of on-campus instruction, will occasion additional charges, according to a fee schedule established by the Finance

Office. Withdrawal after the first day of on-campus instruction will not be permitted. Students who withdraw from two seminars once the seminar has begun will be placed on academic probation. Withdrawal from three seminars will result in their being dropped from the program. Fees will be automatically billed to the student's Finance Office account upon notification of withdrawal from a seminar.

#### 1.5.9. Termination

The following events are common grounds for a student's being terminated from the PhD program:

- Failing to notify the Doctoral Studies Committee of any significant change in status or location
- Failing to meet financial obligations to the Seminary
- Maintaining less than a 3.0 GPA in doctoral studies
- Earning less than a B in any two seminars
- Earning a C+ or less in any one seminar or directed study
- Failing to complete at least two seminars per academic year
- Falling two or more seminars behind the pace of satisfactory progress
- Failing to reactivate at the end of interrupted or inactive status
- Conduct unbecoming of a minister of the Gospel
- Withdrawing from three seminars once enrolled
- Plagiarism or other forms of academic fraud

### **1.6. Student Portal, LMS, Email, and Internet**

#### 1.6.1. MBTS Student Portal and Canvas Learning Management System (LMS)

PhD students will be issued an ID for access to their MBTS Student Portal and to the Canvas LMS. The student's login ID will be formatted as follows: the first initial of the student's first name, last name, and the last five (5) digits of the student ID number (found on the back of a student ID). For example, student John Doe with a student ID of 1001 602 15394 would have a login ID of `jd15394`.

Student will use their login ID to access their accounts on the Student Portal and also provide access to the LMS. The student's password for the Student Portal account will be the same for the account in the LMS.

Upon enrollment in their first course, students will be granted access to the MBTS student portal. Students must pay close attention in order to login to the correct semester. After login, follow the link at the lower left of the menu titled "My Courses." The course should show. Please note that the system defaults to the current term, so to find a January course, the viewer will need to change the parameters to the spring term of the correct year. Questions about the student portal may be directed to the MBTS IT department at 816-414-3763 or [helpdesk@mbts.edu](mailto:helpdesk@mbts.edu). The course syllabus and other resources will be located in Canvas LMS as posted by the professor.

### 1.6.2. Student Email Account

A student email account will be created for each Midwestern student. The account will use the same convention as the login ID for the Student Portal. Using the John Doe example, the e-mail account would be jdoe15394@mbts.edu. Student email accounts can be accessed on the Current Students page on our website ([www.mbts.edu](http://www.mbts.edu)).

**ALL college, seminary, and course related email correspondence will use the student's MBTS email account, not any private account that he may also possess (e.g., Yahoo, Gmail, or Hotmail).**

Students may arrange to forward their MBTS student email to a private account, provided (a) that they assume full responsibility for the technological success of this arrangement and (b) that email sent to MBTS offices and personnel bear their student email addresses, not any private email address (e.g., Gmail or Hotmail).

Many vendors and retailers offer benefits to students with a valid educational institution email address (.edu) including the following:

1. Microsoft Office Professional Academic 2010 and Windows 7 Professional
2. Amazon Student
3. Sam's Club Collegiate Membership

### 1.6.3. Student/Campus Wireless Internet Access (Wi-Fi)

MBTS has modified the wireless connectivity on campus to provide a simpler, consistent way to connect to the internet. Access is provided via a WPA-secured network that allows users to save their settings, allowing access each time students are on-campus without providing credentials. The login information for the new student wireless is:

<b>SSID:</b>	<b>StudentWireless</b>
<b>Password/key:</b>	<b>mbtswireless</b>

Placards are located throughout the campus with this information. Additional information regarding all these services can be found in the Student Technology Services Guide available for viewing and download on the Current Students section of the MBTS website.

## 1.7. Doctoral Study Carrel Policy

Study Carrels are assigned to doctoral students as follows:

1. PhD students may reserve a study carrel by the semester. PhD students may request carrel space by contacting the Research Librarian in the MBTS library.

2. DMin and DEdMin students may reserve study carrels for two weeks at a time. Professional Doctorate students may request carrel space, if available, two weeks in advance.
3. A reservation list will be maintained by the Research Librarian.
4. Masters and Undergraduate students may use unassigned carrels with permission, but may not reserve use of the carrels nor will storage keys be provided for these students.
5. Lost keys will be replaced at a cost set by the Finance Office.

## **1.8. Candidacy**

The PhD student becomes a ‘candidate’ through the following, three-stage process:

1. At the conclusion of DR30090 Dissertation Seminar, the student is assigned a First and Second Reader, who will nearly always be identical to his eventual Dissertation Committee.
2. During the semester following the Dissertation Seminar, the student’s First and Second Readers supervise his efforts to produce the first two chapters of the dissertation, while the student is enrolled in DR39090 Comprehensive Examination.
3. When the student has completed chapters 1 and 2 to the satisfaction of his First and Second Readers, the latter will send a written notice to the Doctoral Studies Office certifying that the student has identified a course of advanced research that is likely to result in a defensible dissertation and has produced written evidence of his readiness to complete the entire dissertation process, as defined by the Comprehensive Examination Rubric.

Once these three steps have been taken, the student becomes a PhD ‘candidate.’

## **1.9. Residents, Fellows, and Adjunctive Instruction**

PhD Residents are doctoral students in good standing who live in the greater Kansas City area and who have assumed a greater responsibility to attend specialized meetings, assist with campus events, and serve particular faculty members as research assistants and graders. Residents are also PhD students who are pursuing the Graduate Certificate of Theological Studies, a 12 credit-hour program that (a) provides additional training in pedagogy and (b) introduces the students to the inner workings of academic administration.

Doctoral Fellows are PhD Residents who have been nominated by a faculty member to serve more extensively in the same roles as PhD Residents, but with added responsibilities in the area of academic administrative support (e.g., the Library, Institutional Relations, Doctoral Studies). Doctoral Fellows are eligible to serve on a one-year renewable basis, provided that they remain in good standing academically and

otherwise; but as opportunities to serve in this capacity are limited, renewals are not automatic. Fellows must be approved by the Provost.

Some Residents and Fellows may be asked to serve as on-campus adjunct instructors (at the undergraduate level) or as online course facilitators. Qualified instructors will possess an appropriate Master's degree, have essential experience, and otherwise meet all the teaching requirements of the Seminary (So, e.g., the ability to sign BFM (2000) and the Chicago and Danvers Statements). Students interested in teaching in these capacities should contact the Dean of Online Studies and/or the Provost to secure the appropriate documentation. Hours and remuneration related to service as a fellow are set by the Provost.

## 2. Program Prior to Dissertation

### 2.1. Grading and Student Records

To pass any seminar or directed study, the student must receive at least a B for that course. Any grade lower than a B will be seen as equivalent to failure. Students given less than a B for a course will be placed on academic probation, which continues through the following semester

In order to rectify deficiencies calling for probation, students must either (a) retake the failed seminar and/or (b) supplement their work with additional research and writing assignments, as determined by the PhD Director. The retaking of a failed seminar, according to option (a) above, is to be seen as normative in these cases. Students receiving two B- grades (or lower grades) in succession may face termination from the program (see section 1.5.6. Academic Probation). In general, students must maintain an overall 3.0 GPA in the program.

#### 2.1.1. Grade Scale

Where the student's work is marked on a points-system, the following grading scale is applied:

<b>Grading Scale</b>	A 97-100	A- 94-96
B+ 90-93	B 87-89	B- 85-86
C+ 82-84	C 78-81	C- 76-77
D+ 73-75	D 69-72	D- 65-68

As noted above, grades from B to A are required for doctoral work. Failure to receive at least a B for any course of study is unacceptable at the postgraduate level.

### 2.1.2. Doctoral Studies Unofficial Audit

An updated list of the student's completed work is available via the Student Portal. Students may also request an unofficial audit from the Doctoral Studies Office, by email or phone (816-414-3755). Five business days must be allowed for a response.

## 2.2. Seminar Structure

The standards of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) mandate that all doctoral studies programs:

*... shall provide for substantial periods of interaction on a campus of the member institution to assure sufficient opportunity for disciplined reflection on one's experience and needs for educational growth; sustained involvement with regular full time faculty; extended involvement in peer learning; and access to the resources of the institution, especially the library (Association of Theological Schools, p. 53).*

Therefore, all PhD students are required to take the majority of their seminars on campus. Seminars will provide no less than thirty-two hours of classroom time for a 4 credit-hour course. Professors may schedule class time during the day, over meal times, or in the evenings of the days scheduled for seminars; and doctoral students must clear their schedules to accommodate these instructional hours.

All PhD seminars involve pre-seminar and post-seminar work, in addition to the 32 contact-hours of the on-campus seminar week. Accordingly, each seminar presupposes the following checkpoints:

1. The syllabus and assignment materials are posted to Canvas at least 60 days prior to the on-campus seminar week.
2. Each seminar begins 60 days before the on-campus seminar week. During this 60-day period, students will be given assignments to be completed and submitted on the Canvas portal.
3. Each seminar ends 30 days after the on-campus seminar week. Students will complete all exit assignments and submit them on the Canvas portal.

## 2.3. Emphases of the PhD, Biblical Studies Program

The PhD program at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary currently offers a research doctorate in Biblical Studies with specialized emphases in Apologetics, Ethics, Historical Theology, Ministry, Missiology, Preaching, Theology, New Testament, Old Testament, and Biblical Studies proper, this last emphasis combining elements of New and Old Testament specialization with intensive study of Biblical Hebrew and NT Greek.

The student chooses an appropriate emphasis in which to study during the application process, and he must not attempt to mix and match the seminars from different emphases in ways that defeat the purpose of each specialization or chart an easier course than

would otherwise be involved. That is, other than the seminars within the Doctoral Core, all of the seminars taken by the student are tailored to his chosen area of emphasis. For further description of these emphases and corresponding requirements, see below.

## 2.4. Student Advisement

Prior to the Comprehensive Examination phase of the PhD program, students will be advised in the program by the PhD Director and the Doctoral Studies Office. Students are encouraged to consult with faculty concerning their interests and prospects for dissertation research. In the Comprehensive Examination and Dissertation Research phases of the program, students will work with appointed First and Second Readers to meet all required standards.

## 2.5. Language Requirements

Students in the PhD program must demonstrate a working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. Demonstration of competency in these two languages is required prior to admission to the program, unless otherwise approved by the Doctoral Studies Committee. Students lacking the required level of competency in either language may be admitted provisionally, on the understanding that such deficiency should be remedied as soon as possible and by the end of the first year of PhD studies. Competency in all required languages must be confirmed prior to taking comprehensive exams.

The following table indicates the credit-hour requirements needed for each emphasis in the PhD program, with variations being determined by the degree of exegetical sophistication demanded in each case:

<b>PhD Emphasis</b>	<b>Greek</b>	<b>Hebrew</b>
Biblical Studies	12 hours	12 hours
Old Testament	6 hours	12 hours
New Testament	12 hours	6 hours
Theology	6 hours	6 hours
Historical Theology	6 hours	6 hours
Apologetics	6 hours	6 hours
Ethics	6 hours	6 hours
Preaching	6 hours	6 hours
Missiology <sup>2</sup>	6 hours	6 hours
Ministry	6 hours	6 hours

The basis for judging competency in all PhD language requirements is determined by a set number of credit-hours earned in study at the Master's level or higher. As an example, the combined Biblical Studies emphasis requires the degree of competency

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<sup>2</sup> Applicants who earned the Midwestern MDiv ICP (2 plus 2 or 2 plus 3) may qualify without additional language study.

which would normally be gained from 12 credit-hours of Greek and 12 credit-hours of Hebrew, earned on the Master's level.

Students are also required to demonstrate a reading knowledge of one modern research language. This modern language will be German or French in most (but not all) cases. Students who desire to substitute another modern language—including statistics in some instances—for German or French may direct their requests to the PhD Director.

The determination of the language to be required will consider the student's area of specialization, particular needs, and future ministry goals. For example, students enrolling in the Biblical Missiology emphasis may demonstrate proficiency in the language requirement of their chosen area of missional engagement. Other than German or French, the DSO must approve the language requested by the student.

Evidence that the student has acquired a working knowledge of an appropriate research language must be produced before taking DR30090 Dissertation Seminar. Failure to satisfy this requirement will result in the student's being placed on interrupted status for one semester, during which time he must remedy this language deficiency. Failure to acquire modern language competency in a timely manner will place the student on probationary status and may result in his termination from the program.

Competency in a language may be demonstrated in any one of the following ways:

1. By attending and passing a Master's level course in the language at MBTS (Greek, Hebrew, Theological German, or Theological French). Tuition for these courses is the responsibility of the student and is not included in the PhD program tuition.
2. By attending and passing a comparable course on a Master's level at an accredited educational institution (see [www.chea.org](http://www.chea.org)). The student must confirm the completion of the course by submitting an official transcript showing a passing grade. The student may also be requested to furnish an official syllabus for the course.
3. By passing an approved examination proctored by an authorized faculty or staff member of MBTS. A fee will be charged for the examination. Applicants may contact the Doctoral Studies Office ([docstudies@mbts.edu](mailto:docstudies@mbts.edu)) for more details.
4. By providing acceptable evidence to the Doctoral Study Committee substantiating the required level of proficiency.

This requirement is not to be seen as a mere formality having no intrinsic connection to the process of dissertation research. On the contrary, the latter process presupposes an effort to understand and evaluate scholarship produced by experts in languages other than English; and the doctoral candidate will be expected—in nearly all cases—to interact with such sources.

## 2.6. PhD Seminar Requirements

### 2.6.1. Core Seminars (16 hrs)

DR00000	Doctoral Orientation	0 hrs
DR30020	Doctoral Studies Colloquium	4 hrs
DR30060	Integrating Christian Faith & Practice (OR)	
DR35090	Advanced Biblical Hermeneutics	4 hrs
DR34080	Teaching Principles and Methods in Higher Education	4 hrs
DR30090	Dissertation Seminar	4 hrs

### 2.6.2. PhD Emphasis Seminars (24 hours)

#### 2.6.2.1. Biblical Studies (NT & OT)

DR35110	Advanced Hebrew Grammar (OR)	
DR35150	Advanced Greek Grammar	4 hrs
Two or three seminars from the OT emphasis & Two or three seminars from the NT emphasis		20 hrs

#### 2.6.2.2. Ethics

DR38405	Worldview and Ethical Theory	4 hrs
DR38440	Contemporary Issues in Ethics	4 hrs
DR38441	Marriage & Sexuality	4 hrs
DR38442	Bioethics	4 hrs
DR38301	Ethics	4 hrs

One Elective from Theology 4 hrs

#### 2.6.2.3. Ministry Emphasis

DR31280	The Bible and Pastoral Care	4 hrs
DR36220	Preaching and Ministry Practice	4 hrs
DR37305	Theology and Culture	4 hrs
DR37337	Ecclesiology	4 hrs

Two Electives from Ministry, Leadership/Pastoral, or Preaching 8 hrs

#### 2.6.2.4. Missiology Emphasis

DR33330	Missiology	4 hrs
DR37305	Theology and Culture	4 hrs
DR37337	Ecclesiology	4 hrs
DR38405	Worldview and Ethical Theory	4 hrs

Two Electives from Church Planting/Mission/Revitalization 8 hrs

2.6.2.5. Preaching Emphasis

DR36220	Preaching & Ministry Practice	4 hrs
DR36250	Preaching from the Old Testament	4 hrs
DR36260	Preaching from the New Testament	4 hrs
DR36271	Expository Preaching	4 hrs
DR36272	Style & Application in Expository Preaching	4 hrs
DR36273	Doctrinal & Topical Exposition	4 hrs

2.6.2.6. Theology Emphasis

DR37305	Theology and Culture	4 hrs
DR37337	Ecclesiology	4 hrs
DR37350	Old Testament Theology	4 hrs
DR37360	New Testament Theology	4 hrs
DR36395	Adv. Systematic Theology	4 hrs

One Elective from Ethics, Historical Theology, NT, OT, or Apologetics

2.6.2.7. Historical Theology Emphasis

DR37305	Theology and Culture	4 hrs
DR37337	Ecclesiology	4 hrs
DR37370	The Early Church	4 hrs
DR37375	The Reformation	4 hrs
DR37380	The Modern Era	4 hrs
DR37385	The Baptist Tradition	4 hrs

2.6.2.8. New Testament Emphasis

DR35150	Advanced Greek Grammar	4 hrs
DR35610	Synoptic Gospels and Acts	4 hrs
DR35620	Johannine Literature	4 hrs
DR35630	Pauline Epistles	4 hrs
DR35640	General Epistles	4 hrs

One Elective from DR35155, DR36260, DR37360, or DR38460 4 hrs

2.6.2.9. Old Testament Emphasis

DR35110	Advanced Hebrew Grammar	4 hrs
DR35510	Pentateuch	4 hrs
DR35520	Historical Books	4 hrs
DR35530	Prophetic Books	4 hrs

DR35540	Poetic & Wisdom Books	4 hrs
	One Elective from DR35115, DR36250, DR37350, or DR38450	4 hrs

#### 2.6.2.10. Apologetics Emphasis

DR33330	Missiology	4 hrs
DR37001	Science and Origins	4 hrs
DR37002	World Religions	4 hrs
DR38405	Worldview & Ethical Theory	4 hrs
DR37391	Philosophical Theology	4 hrs

Select One: DR37002 World Religions; 373600 New Testament Theology; or 37350 Old Testament Theology (4 hrs)

## 2.7. Sequence of Study

Upon admission, the student will be enrolled in DR00000, Doctoral Orientation, for 0 credit-hours, during which time he is called upon to become thoroughly familiar with the mechanics of doctoral study at MBTS. Subsequent to DR00000 Doctoral Orientation, students are expected to take DR30020 Doctoral Studies Colloquium. Then, after DR30020 Doctoral Studies Colloquium, and subject to availability, they should take either (a) DR35090 Advanced Biblical Hermeneutics or (b) DR30060 Integrating Christian Faith & Practice, depending on their particular emphasis, as described below.

PhD students in the Biblical Studies (OT & NT), Old Testament, New Testament, Apologetics, Ethics, Historical Theology, or Theology emphases must take DR35090 Advanced Biblical Hermeneutics. Students in the Preaching, Missiology, and Ministry emphases may take either DR30060 Integrating Christian Faith & Practice or DR35090 Advanced Biblical Hermeneutics. Students in the language emphases—i.e., NT, OT, and Biblical Studies proper—are advised to take the relevant Advanced Grammar course (DR351110, DR35150, or both) early in their specialized studies, given that later seminars will presuppose substantial language expertise.

Following DR00000 Doctoral Orientation, DR30020 Doctoral Studies Colloquium, and either DR30060 or DR35090 (as appropriate), students may take (a) DR34080 Teaching Principles and Methods in Higher Education or (b) any specialized seminar within their chosen emphasis. When all other seminars are completed, the student must take DR39090 Dissertation Seminar, to be followed by DR30090 Comprehensive Examination and, last of all, DR40991 Dissertation.

## 2.8. Course Rotation

The Doctoral Studies Colloquium and subsequent seminars will normally be offered on a two-year or three-year rotation. This schedule is, however, subject to change.

## 2.9. Directed Study and Audits

Directed Studies, audits, and alternative study arrangements are to be seen as privileges, not as entitlements, as they impose additional costs on the institution and are less conducive to the community of learning that the institution seeks to foster. Nevertheless, as a service to the student, they are sometimes accepted under the following stipulations.

### 2.9.1. Directed Study

Students may petition the PhD Director for permission to take up to eight hours (two seminars) by Directed Study. **Foundational Core Seminars may not be taken by directed study.** Two types of directed study are considered:

1. **Specialized Studies:** A student with specialized skills or interest in a specific area may submit a request for specialized study to the PhD Director and the Director of Doctoral studies. The request should include a syllabus (learning contract) with a course description, objectives, assignments, and the credentials of the seminar leader(s). A sample syllabus is available upon request.
2. **Alternative Studies:** When scheduling or logistic concerns arise, a student may submit a letter requesting permission to enroll in an alternative study, provided by an outside institution. The request should include a syllabus with a course description, objectives, assignments, and the credentials of the seminar leader(s), and the name of the institution offering the course.

The PhD Director will assess each petition by the following criteria:

1. The directed study must be conducted at a doctoral level.
2. Requirements (contact hours and work load) must be commensurate with those of Midwestern's seminars, including a minimum of 500 pages per credit hour and a significant exit paper of no less than 20 pages.
3. That a full description of the directed study and its requirements has been submitted to the PhD Director and the Director of Doctoral Studies by the student, in consultation with his proposed Directed Study supervisor.

The student is responsible for any costs incurred in completing the seminar/study, including the latest applicable directed study fee, which will be billed to the student's account, in addition to normal tuition expenses.

The seminar/study must be completed within a three month time-frame, or a within a time-frame stipulated by the Director of Doctoral Studies. The student will be working closely with his assigned supervisor through the duration of the directed study.

A copy of all work related to the study must be sent to the Directed Study Supervisor and to the Doctoral Studies Office for the student's electronic file, where it can be reviewed by the Director of Doctoral Studies upon completion.

## 2.9.2. Auditing Research Doctoral Seminars

If not already admitted, students seeking to audit a research doctoral course must first apply as a NDS student (see above section 1.3.4.3). Auditing students will pay a per-credit-hour fee, as set by the institution's Finance Office. Written permission to audit by the professor is required, and class discussions and activities of auditing students are at the discretion of the professor. On occasion, advanced master's students are permitted to audit doctoral courses or to take them for credit, at the discretion of the seminar instructor. Students completing the course for credit are given priority in enrollment, therefore, if the course is filled and a credit seeking student enrolls the student auditing the course will be "bumped" from the course to make room for the credit seeking student.

## 2.10. Comprehensive Examination

### 2.10.1 Overview and Purpose

DR39090 PhD Comprehensive Examination is an evaluative process that is designed to establish that the prospective candidate is ready to conduct independent doctoral research under supervision, having demonstrated the knowledge and skill needed to identify an area within his emphasis to which he may be able to make a substantial and distinctive contribution. This knowledge and skill would be evidenced by the ability (a) to evaluate prevailing scholarship in his area with advanced, critical awareness, (b) to see points at which this scholarship is incomplete, sub-optimal, and/or defective, and (c) to formulate a plan of investigation that is likely to result in a defensible dissertation that advances the discussion in his chosen field.

### 2.10.2. Comprehensive Examination Goals and Objectives:

In light of its general purpose, as specified in section 2.10.1 (above), the Comprehensive examination will be informed by the following performance indicators.

Upon successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination process, the student will be able to do the following:

1. Collect, analyze, and synthesize exegetical, historical, and theological evidence related to a chosen field of doctoral study.
2. Identify an area within his chosen field of study that calls for additional investigation.
3. Formulate a research question, related to the identified area of need, that is answerable within the structure of supervised doctoral studies.
4. Plan and initiate a course of research designed to answer his research question.

From the description and goals indicated above, it will be clear that the evidence produced to pass the Comprehensive Examination constitutes a direct basis for the student's subsequent dissertation research and writing. For more details regarding the

standards to be met through the Comprehensive Examination, see the related rubric at the end of this document (5.3, Comprehensive Examination Rubric).

### 2.10.3. Supervision of the Comprehensive Examination

Once students have completed DR30090 Dissertation Seminar, two events occur simultaneously. They are (a) enrolled directly in DR39090 Comprehensive Examination and (b) assigned First and Second Readers. The latter two supervise the student's work during the Comprehensive Examination process and determine whether he or she has met its requirements. In nearly all cases, the same two scholars serve as the candidate's First and Second Readers for the actual dissertation and oral defense.

### 2.10.4. Duration

The student's efforts to complete the Comprehensive Examination process will continue for at least one semester, and arrangements can be made for this work to continue through additional semesters, at the discretion of the student's First and Second Readers. Extensions of this process beyond two semesters must be sought in writing through the Doctoral Studies Office and will be accepted or rejected by the PhD Director in consultation with the student's First and Second Readers. Failure to complete the examination process in a timely manner, as determined by the PhD Director, may result in the student's being terminated from the PhD program by the Doctoral Studies Committee, with possible award of a ThM for work completed to date.

### 2.10.5. Evaluation

The student's First and Second Readers are the sole evaluators of his work both for the Comprehensive Examination and also for the entire dissertation. The standards applied in both instances are specified in the Comprehensive Examination Rubric and Dissertation Rubric, respectively, both of which appear at the end of this document.

## **3. Dissertation Research and Writing**

### **3.1. Overview**

Under faculty supervision, each student must complete and defend a dissertation related to a specific area within his chosen emphasis. The student must demonstrate the ability to investigate and present original research in writing that makes a substantial and distinctive contribution to theoretical knowledge.

The candidate is not required to defend ideas that fully align with the views of his First or Second Reader or with the wider institution; however, all conclusions must be carefully and competently defended at an advanced level, as specified in the Dissertation Rubric appearing at the end of this document.

### **3.2. From 30090 Dissertation Seminar to DR40991 Dissertation**

After the successful completion of DR30090 Dissertation Seminar, students will enroll in DR39090 Comprehensive Examination, which entails a period of intensive reading and writing that produces the first two chapters of his dissertation, to the satisfaction of his First and Second Reader.

The two-chapter standard intends to require enough written work to satisfy the First and Second Reader that (a) the student possesses the knowledge and skill needed to conduct a substantial and independent research project and that (b) the student has identified a research question which can be answered with a defensible dissertation. A rubric that defines satisfactory completion of DR39090 Comprehensive Examination appears as Appendix 5.3. In some instances, therefore, the requirements of the Comprehensive Examination may be satisfied through the completion of a first, highly-substantive chapter, especially if the student intends to work in an unexamined area which, for that reason, involves relatively little secondary literature.

Once the student has completed DR39090 Comprehensive Examination, he becomes a doctoral ‘candidate’ and is automatically enrolled in DR40991 Dissertation and, as the semesters unfold, DR40980 PhD Dissertation—Ongoing Research. The candidate is re-enrolled in this latter course until the dissertation is completed and defended, to the satisfaction of his First and Second Readers.

#### **3.2.1. DR30090 Dissertation Seminar and Prior Steps of Research**

During the DR 30090 Dissertation Seminar, the student receives instruction as to the design and implementation of a PhD research project. This instruction prepares seminar participants to engage in the subsequent Comprehensive Examination process. Nevertheless, students are encouraged to begin their search for a viable dissertation topic well before this time and to discuss their ideas with members of the MBTS faculty.

For the same reason, even during DR30020 Doctoral Studies Colloquium—their first seminar—students are pressed to move toward a possible area of dissertation research. The operative principle here is that even the shortest, halting steps in any direction are better than steps left untaken until the Comprehensive Examination phase begins. It is not advisable for the student to wait until the DR30090 Dissertation Seminar to begin thinking about a dissertation topic and subsequent course of research.

Nevertheless, the student’s investment of time and effort prior to the Dissertation Seminar and Comprehensive Examination does not guarantee approval of his work by the First and Second Reader. However, early efforts greatly increase the likelihood that the student’s doctoral work will have a satisfactory, final outcome. Furthermore, if the student finds a probable area of dissertation research early in his studies, he may (in special cases) be permitted to tailor seminar assignments to complement his dissertation work.

### 3.2.2. Modifications in the Course of Doctoral Research

In the course of dissertation research, the candidate may find that his original research plan requires changes, so that the final shape of the dissertation is significantly different from what has, thus far, been anticipated. Developments of this kind are a normal part of the dissertation process and often occur as the student's expertise matures. In such cases, the First and Second Readers must decide whether or not to endorse the changes and to notify the PhD Director accordingly.

The PhD Director will determine if the requested changes are significant enough to do irreparable harm to the candidate's satisfactory academic progress and, in any case, to affirm any necessary changes recommended by the First and Second Readers. In all cases, substantial changes to the dissertation's basic structure and purpose are not to be implemented lightly, without due consideration as to their impact on the candidate's ability to complete his dissertation in a timely manner.

### 3.3. Appointment of the Dissertation Committee

The candidate's dissertation research and writing is supervised by a First and Second Reader, the former serving as the primary resource and advisor during the early stages of the candidate's work.

Students may request to work with a particular First and/or Second reader well before or during DR30900 Dissertation Seminar, and these requests are taken seriously by the Doctoral Studies Committee. In the nature of the case, however, no guarantees can be made as to the identity of a candidate's First and Second Reader, given variations in faculty workloads, sabbatical requests, and other contingencies.

As noted above, the student's First and Second Readers are the sole authorities as to his success or failure in satisfying the criteria specified in the Comprehensive Examination and Dissertation Rubrics. In other words, the default position of the DSC is to honor their judgment as subject-matter experts, unless compelled to do otherwise by extraordinary evidence. Nevertheless, appeals may be directed to the Doctoral Studies Office, in writing, for consideration during the next scheduled Doctoral Studies Committee meeting.

### 3.4. Satisfactory Academic Progress

Once the student becomes a PhD candidate, having passed the Comprehensive Examination phase of study, his research will continue under supervision by the First and Second Readers until his dissertation has been completed and successfully defended. Failure to defend the dissertation within eight years following the completion of DR30020 Doctoral Studies Colloquium may result in termination from the program.

During the dissertation research process, the student is required to keep his committee apprised of his progress through monthly dissertation progress reports. Failure to report

on a monthly basis is grounds for dismissal from the PhD program, as it constitutes *prima facie* evidence of unsatisfactory academic progress.

### **3.5. External Readers**

As the student's particular research proposal warrants, he may request an external or outside reader for the dissertation; and external readers are frequently engaged by the Doctoral Studies Office for this purpose. External readers will possess demonstrated research expertise in the specific area of the dissertation, and they may also be invited to serve as third readers of the candidate's dissertation in some circumstances.

Nevertheless, in all cases, the Doctoral Studies Committee must approve each outside reader; and students must refrain from making formal requests of external readers to serve as Readers, since such requests must come from Doctoral Studies Office, after an appropriate vetting process. If the student initiates a request to engage a third reader—one whose services are not seen as essential by the DSC—he is responsible for negotiating and providing any fee or payment required by the outside reader.

If an external reader is a First or Second Reader, he has the same authority as a full-time MBTS faculty member to judge the merits of a student's work. If the external reader is a Third Reader, he has 'voice' but not a 'vote,' as to the merits of the candidate's work. If the First and Second Readers reject the recommendations of an outside Third Reader—i.e., where these recommendations differ from their own—the First Reader will submit in writing to the PhD Director the reasons for doing so. On appeal, the final authority regarding acceptability of the student's dissertation remains with the Dissertation Committee.

### **3.6. Style of the Dissertation**

Unless otherwise established by the Doctoral Studies Committee, the parts of the dissertation will follow the style delineated in the latest edition of the MBTS Style Handbook that was available when the student completed DR30090 Dissertation Seminar. The dissertation will also contain the elements required by the PhD Dissertation Rubric, the latter appearing as an appendix to this Handbook.

Immediately after the title page, the dissertation shall include a signature page on which, following the successful defense of the dissertation, the First and Second Readers will place their signatures of approval. This approval page will be provided by the Doctoral Studies Office. The student is also required to include a dissertation abstract, of no more than 100 words, that is suitable for publication in research databases.

### **3.7. Length of the Dissertation**

The body of the dissertation should not exceed 300 double-spaced pages (approximately 90,000 words), excluding footnotes and bibliography. Only under unusual circumstances will a dissertation be less than 200 pages (= 60,000 words).

Candidates must, however, avoid the practice of ‘loading’ their footnotes with extensive supplementary arguments, asides, and qualifications. The emphasis falls, therefore, on quality and not quantity, on exactitude of expression, not verbosity. In rare instances, permission may be given by the First and Second Readers to fall short of the minimum or exceed the maximum page and/or word count.

### **3.8. Writing the Dissertation**

Students will submit chapters to their First and Second Readers as they are written. When the First Reader is satisfied with each chapter, he will instruct the candidate to submit the chapter or chapters to the Second Reader. In all cases, the sequence and timing of work submitted is to be determined in consultation with the student’s First and Second Readers.

Second Readers must be kept apprised by the First Reader as to the nature and progress of the candidate’s dissertation research, if only to avoid last-minute demands for changes to the dissertation’s structure or basic direction. In most cases, this necessity will entail contemporaneous submission of written materials to the First and Second Readers, on a schedule to be determined by all parties in advance.

### **3.9. Submission of the Dissertation Draft**

After the student has written and revised all of the chapters of the dissertation, he will submit the full Dissertation Draft to (a) the First Reader, (b) the Second Reader, and (c) any External Reader who has been engaged in the supervisory process. With their agreement—under conditions specified above—the candidate may then petition to defend the dissertation, having submitted two hard copies and one electronic PDF file of the Dissertation Draft to the Doctoral Studies Office.

Drafts submitted by mail to the members of the Dissertation Committee must be postmarked no later than February 15, for May graduation, and no later than September 15, for December graduation. Under extenuating circumstances, the Committee Chairman may request brief extension, submitted to the PhD Director.

## **4. Dissertation Defense**

### **4.1 Overview**

The purpose of the dissertation defense is primarily to ensure that the candidate is himself the sole author of the submitted work and that no part of it has been completed by or in collaboration with any other scholar. It also provides an opportunity for the candidate to clarify and defend controversial points that may not have been fully covered in the dissertation itself.

## **4.2. Participants**

Once the Doctoral Studies Office has received the dissertation, the First Reader will schedule the oral defense in consultation with the Second Reader. The candidate will defend the dissertation in front of the First and Second Reader and possibly other MBTS faculty members, as requested by the First Reader. The PhD Director, the Dean of Postgraduate Studies, the Provost, and the President have standing invitations to attend all oral defenses of PhD dissertations.

## **4.3. Format**

In this interview, the committee members will ask questions which, as indicated above, intend to verify that the candidate has personally done the work in question and he understands the overall significance of his own dissertation. The student will also be asked to defend any controversial points of the work—e.g., the thesis statement, the methodology, or the conclusions—and also show that the candidate's dissertation has involved significant research and reflection.

## **4.4. Duration of the Oral Defense**

The candidate should plan to be in the defense session for approximately two hours and should bring to this meeting a copy of the dissertation and any supporting documents that may be helpful to the defense, provided that those documents do not encumber the defense process or serve as reminders of basic information that the dissertation's sole author would naturally possess. Since this examination is a formal occasion, business attire is essential.

## **4.5. Evaluation and Response**

Upon the completion of the oral defense, the candidate will be dismissed from the conference room and his Readers will determine the outcome of the interview, as defined by the PhD Dissertation Rubric and the Oral Defense Rubric, both of which appear at the end of this document. Four options are available to the Committee:

1. The candidate receives passing marks for the Oral Defense and Dissertation. Minor revisions may be required. Any revisions should be reflected in the final copies submitted for binding, but do not require final review by the Second Reader.
2. The candidate receives passing marks for the Oral Defense and Dissertation, subject to more substantial revisions of the Dissertation. Graduation will be contingent upon the completion of these revisions and review by the committee prior to submission for binding. The First Reader will notify the doctoral office when revisions have been approved.

3. The candidate receives failing marks for the Oral Defense and/or Dissertation, but with an invitation to revise the Dissertation substantially and to re-defend it at a later date.
4. The candidate fails the Oral Defense and/or Dissertation, with no invitation given to revise and re-defend the dissertation. This recommendation will be submitted to the Doctoral Studies Committee. Such a response is rare and is usually made where there is evidence that the candidate is unwilling to take the steps needed to improve the dissertation substantially.

After the oral defense has been completed, the First Reader will notify the Doctoral Studies Office of the outcome by submitting a completed Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation Rubric and a completed Doctor of Philosophy Oral Defense Rubric. The First Reader will also discuss with the student the collective verdict of the Readers and what further steps may be necessary.

#### **4.6. Submitting the Final Copies of the Dissertation**

Once the oral defense has been completed and the dissertation has been approved, the student must submit four (4) hard copies and one electronic PDF file to the Doctoral Studies office. These must be postmarked by May 1 or December 1 of the semester the student plans to graduate. These copies must contain any corrections or revisions required by the Dissertation Committee following the defense. The First Reader must approve the final copy before copies of the final draft are submitted to the Doctoral Studies Office for binding.

The four hard copies must be printed on water-marked, 20 pound, 100% cotton rag, acid-free paper. All copies must be of a high quality, clean, consistent, and free of smudges, having a 1.5 inch margin on the left side for purposes of binding.

The student will be billed and must pay the costs of binding by May 1 or December 1 respectively. Copies of the dissertation will be placed in the MBTS library and the Doctoral Studies Office and made available through the *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Database* or other acceptable venues.

#### **4.7. Copyright and Database Submission**

##### **4.7.1. Dissertation Copyright**

The copyright to the dissertation belongs to the PhD graduate. However, at the conclusion of the Oral Defense, the graduate will be asked to sign a release which allows the institution to post his dissertation to various databases maintained by the library.

#### 4.7.2. Database Submission

PhD graduates are expected to submit an electronic copy of their dissertations to the Doctoral Studies Office, for later posting to an appropriate electronic database chosen by the institution's Director of Library Services.

## **5. Appendices and Forms**

- 5.1. Book Review Rubric
- 5.2. Argumentative Essay Rubric
- 5.3. Comprehensive Exam Rubric
- 5.4. Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation Standards Rubric
- 5.5. Doctor of Philosophy Oral Defense Standards Rubrics

## 5.1 Book Review Rubric

In order to score well in reviewing any book assigned in the PhD program, the student must score “Satisfactory” or higher on every element of this rubric.

	1 Unsatisfactory	2 Developing	3 Satisfactory	4 Exemplary
<b>1.0 Exposition</b>				
1.1 Accuracy	The student does not accurately summarize the argument(s) of the assigned work.	The student summarizes the argument(s) of the assigned work, with some inaccuracies.	The student accurately summarizes the argument(s) of the assigned work.	The student accurately summarizes the argument(s) of the assigned work with noticeable care and efficiency.
1.3 Selection	The student does not emphasize the main points of the work but treats all points as equally important.	The student emphasizes the main points of the work with some errors of emphasis and/or diminution.	The student emphasizes the main points of the work with no obvious errors of emphasis or diminution.	The student emphasizes the main points of the work with noticeable insight and/or clarity.
<b>2.0 Evaluation (Degree Outcomes 1, 3)</b>				
2.1 Analysis	Student does not examine the book in appropriate detail.	Student often examines his sources in appropriate detail BUT with some instances of cursory analysis.	Student examines the book in appropriate detail.	
2.2 Synthesis	Student does not classify the views taken in the book and/or identify basic structure of the author’s arguments.	Student classifies the views taken in the book and/or identifies the basic structure of the author’s arguments BUT with some errors in these two areas.	Student classifies the views taken in the book and identifies the basic structure of the author’s arguments.	Student classifies the views taken in the book and identifies the basic structure of the author’s arguments with noticeable clarity/insight.
2.3 Evaluation	Student does not treat the author’s work fairly. Arguments/views are described uncharitably and/or illogically, and criticized with improper degrees of stringency.	Student usually treats the author’s work fairly BUT some arguments/views are described uncharitably and/or illogically, and they may be criticized with improper degrees of stringency.	Student treats the author’s work fairly. Arguments/views are described charitably, logically, and criticized with proper degrees of stringency.	Student treats the author’s work fairly. Arguments/views are described charitably, logically, and criticized with proper degrees of stringency. The reviewer does this work with noticeable insight.
<b>3.0 Form (Degree Outcome 3)</b>				
5.1 Grammar	There are some errors in spelling in grammar (more than 4 per page, on average).	There are some errors in spelling in grammar (no more than 4 per page, on average).	There are few errors in spelling and grammar (1 per page, or less, on average).	There are very few errors in spelling and grammar (less than 1 per page, on average).
5.2 Eloquence	The student’s prose is unclear, wordy, and poorly organized. Reader has difficulty following the student’s argument because of these errors.	The student’s prose is somewhat clear, concise, and well-organized. Student needs to improve on appropriate transitional statements, paragraph divisions, or other elements as identified by the reader.	The student’s prose is clear, concise, and well-organized. Student uses appropriate transitional statements and paragraph divisions.	The student’s prose is extraordinarily clear, concise, and well-organized. Minimal effort is needed to read the work and follow its arguments. Student writes in a creative manner while maintaining an appropriate academic tone.

5.3 Reviewer's Voice	Student only paraphrases the author's work and does not adopt the stance of a critical reviewer. The book author's name consistently disappears from the student's review of it.	Student writes as an independent critic, not as a mere paraphraser. It is usually clear, from paragraph to paragraph, that the student is writing about someone else's work.	Student writes as an independent critic, not as a mere paraphraser. It is always clear, from paragraph to paragraph, that the student is writing about someone else's work.	
5.3 MBTS Style General Guidelines	Student consistently deviates from the MBTS Style Manual.		Student consistently conforms to the MBTS Style Manual. Any deviations are approved by Committee chair.	

## 5.2 Argumentative Essay Rubric

Most papers assigned in the MBTS Doctoral Program are *argumentative*: they are supposed to take a clear position on a theoretical and/or practical issue and give reasons why this position is to be accepted in preference to its alternatives. Accordingly, the following rubric sets the standards used in evaluating papers that are assigned with expectation. **If in doubt, the student should presuppose that his papers are to meet the following standards.** If the seminar professors expect any assigned paper to take a different form (e.g., for book reviews), they will say so expressly. Ignorance of these standards, therefore, is no excuse.

### I. Use of Primary and Secondary Sources

Doctoral work stands apart from master’s level work both in (a) the extent of interaction with primary and secondary sources and (b) its comparative emphasis on the former. So then, if the student is writing about Augustine of Hippo, the *City of God* would be a primary source, whereas Henry Chadwick’s, *Augustine: A Very Short Introduction*, would be secondary. Books by Karl Barth, for an essay on Karl Barth, would be primary, whereas studies of Barth—e.g., Mark Galli, *Karl Barth: An Introductory Biography for Evangelicals*—would be secondary. Doctoral work also rises above master’s level work in its care to use the most advanced and reputable sources, which means peer-reviewed academic journals, critical commentaries (with substantial interaction with the original languages and contemporary scholarship), and books from reputable publishers (e.g., Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, B&H, Baker, Crossway, Eerdmans, etc.). With these caveats in mind, the following rubric will be applied to the use of primary and secondary sources.

	1 Unsatisfactory	2 Developing	3 Satisfactory	4 Exemplary
<b>1.0 Use of Primary and Secondary Sources (Degree Outcome 1)</b>				
1.1 Scope of Research Bibliography	Research bibliography contains few appropriate sources AND the sources do not represent a sufficient range of critical perspectives. There are many, glaring omissions.	Research bibliography contains some appropriate sources BUT the sources do not represent a sufficient range of critical perspectives. There are some glaring omissions.	Research bibliography contains a sufficient number of appropriate sources which represent a wide range of critical perspectives.	Research bibliography contains an extraordinary number of sophisticated secondary sources which represent the fullest range of critical perspectives. Student makes substantial use of sources in one or more research languages.
1.3 Relevance	Research bibliography is unfocused and off-topic AND the student relies primarily on tertiary, non-academic, outdated, or inexpert secondary sources.	Research bibliography is focused and on-topic BUT the student relies too often on tertiary, non-academic, outdated, or inexpert secondary sources.	Research bibliography is focused and on-topic. The student relies mostly on primary and secondary sources that are academic, current, and expert.	Research bibliography is focused and on-topic, with extensive use of primary and secondary sources that are academic, current, and expert.

## II. Evaluation of Secondary Sources

A second important feature of doctoral work is the effort taken not simply to read the most reputable works on any subject, but also to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate those works as a basis for his own contribution. Therefore, the doctoral student is satisfied only when he has (a) understood fully what others have said, (b) classified those viewpoints according to some useful taxonomical scheme, and (c) subjected those viewpoints to intensive scrutiny and evaluation. Not every paper will do this sort of work in great detail, as there are word-count limitations involved; nevertheless, we acknowledge the ideal here to make a more general point: the best argumentative essays at the doctoral level will proceed through steps (a), (b), and (c) to some extent. There will be evidence in the paper that the student has thought carefully about the issues in ways suggested by this rubric. So, then, the evaluation of secondary sources will be judged by the following standards.

2.0 Evaluation of Secondary Sources (Degree Outcomes 1, 3)				
2.1 Analysis of Source Material	Student does not examine his sources in appropriate detail and relies mostly on secondary summaries of positions taken therein. His summaries of viewpoints are cursory and often inaccurate.	Student often examines his sources in appropriate detail and often relies on primary sources to arrive at his conclusions, BUT with some instances of inaccuracy and undue reliance on secondary summaries.	Student examines his sources in appropriate detail and relies mostly on primary sources to arrive at his conclusions. His summaries of viewpoints are adequately detailed and consistently accurate.	Student examines his sources in extraordinary detail and relies consistently on primary sources to arrive at his conclusions. His summaries of viewpoints are adequately detailed and consistently accurate.
2.2 Synthesis of Source Material	Student does not demonstrate the ability to classify positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics.	Student demonstrates some ability to classify positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics, with some erroneous or confusing categories.	Student demonstrates the ability to classify positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics. Categories are well-defined and defensible.	Student demonstrates the ability to classify the positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics, doing so with special insight. Defense of categories is creative and convincing.
2.3 Evaluation of Source Material	Student does not treat his sources fairly. Sources are described uncharitably and/or illogically, and they are subjected to excessive criticism, while others receive unduly favorable treatment.	Student treats most sources fairly. Sources are usually described with charity and logical rigor. Most are subjected to appropriate criticism. There are, nevertheless, some instances of failure in these areas.	Student treats his sources fairly. Positions taken therein are described with charity and logical rigor, and all sides are subjected to appropriate criticism.	Student treats his sources fairly. Positions taken therein are described with extraordinary charity and logical rigor, and all sides are consistently subjected to appropriate and insightful criticism.

### III. Hypothesis/Thesis

The most important part of any argumentative essay is the *hypothesis* (the factual statement that one hopes to establish) or *thesis* (the factual statement that one will eventually present as having been demonstrated). In an essay having an **inductive** structure, the hypothesis comes first and describes—in so many words—the question that the paper will explore. So, then, one might see a paper in which the author says, “This paper will entertain the question as to whether Thomas Aquinas’s ‘Five Ways’ of proving that God exists are consistent with Reformed anthropology.” Or he might say, “This paper will seek to determine whether John MacArthur’s expositional model is applicable to the preaching of OT historical narratives.” Then, somewhere in the paper’s concluding section, the author will come back to his hypothesis and answer it one way or the other. In this paper we have/have not seen that Aquinas’s Five Ways are consistent with Reformed anthropology. Or we have/have not seen the applicability of John MacArthur’s expositional model to the preaching of historical narratives. However, some papers proceed on a fully **deductive** structure, so that the author says, “I shall prove X in this paper,” and then says at the end, “I have shown/proved X in this paper.” Either way is acceptable in doctoral work. The point, in any case, is to be clear, so that the reader has no trouble finding the paper’s central conclusion(s).

3.0 Hypothesis/Thesis (Degree Outcome 2)				
3.1 Clarity/Resolution	Student does not have a clearly defined thesis.	Student has a thesis that is partially clear.	Student’s thesis clear and well-defined.	
3.2 Viability	The thesis is not provable. It does not lend itself readily to empirical and/or rational demonstration.	The thesis is somewhat provable, with elements that are not available to empirical and/or rational demonstration.	The thesis is provable given the evidence and rational proofs that are likely to be available.	

## IV. Research Design and Implementation

Doctoral students are expected to see that different kinds of theoretical problems require different kinds of methods used to solve them. One cannot do medieval church history by looking only at early church authors. One cannot address questions of philosophical theology while ignoring the methods of modern analytic philosophy. Generalizations about modern, congregational behavior require field studies and not just exegesis. Exegesis must be done with reference to the original languages of scripture, rather than being confined to English translations. The documents of the OT and NT must be set against their ANE and first century backgrounds, respectively. Therefore, the argumentative essay will always pause, if only briefly, to say how the author intends to approach his chosen problem or answer the essay's controlling, research question. So then, a paragraph will appear in which the author may say something like this:

In this essay, we shall begin by identifying the five most important exegetical challenges in Romans 6:1-14. Next, the views of James Dunn, Leon Morris, C. E. B. Cranfield, and Douglas Moo will be considered, these five being the most ably defended and also the most highly representative of the wider debate. Our own analysis will then follow, with special emphasis placed on matters X, Y, and Z, which may have been given insufficient treatment in the debate thus far. We shall then conclude with some remarks about the five main challenges identified previously and a subsequent evaluation of the major views treated in our second section.

From this example, one can see that the methodological paragraph/statement provides a road-map of the forthcoming study and gives some idea of why the paper proceeds as it does. Notice, then, the following standards of the methodological statement.

4.0 Research Design and Implementation (Degree Outcomes 2, 3)				
4.1 Identification of Method	The student does not state how he intends to approach the problem or question addressed in his essay AND/OR his approach, while being expressed, is patently indefensible.	The student states how he intends to approach the problem or question addressed in his essay BUT his approach is unclear and/or only partially defensible.	The student states how he intends to approach the problem or question addressed in his essay, and his approach is defensible.	The student states how he intends to approach the problem or question addressed in his essay, and his approach is both creative and defensible.
4.2 Consistency of Application	The approach forecasted in the methodological statement was not followed.	The approach forecasted in the methodological statement was followed BUT inconsistently.	The approach forecasted in the methodological statement was followed consistently.	
4.2 Effectiveness of Method	Student's methodological approach is inappropriate for his research question. It guarantees that an indefensible answer will be reached.	Student's methodological approach is partially appropriate for his research question. If followed, the resulting answer will be relatively weak.	Student's approach is appropriate for his thesis and would, if followed, produce a defensible answer to his research question.	

## V. Logic and Reasoning

Doctoral students are expected to function as advanced, critical thinkers. They take special pains to express their ideas precisely and in readable fashion. They make important distinctions, and they are rationally 'self-aware.' They know what they do and do not know. They know what they have and have not proved. They know the difference between 'probable' and 'certain,' and they treat other scholars with respect, even when the latter seem not to deserve that respect. In short, they know how to argue a case and to argue for it well. Their papers are never mere discussions of views, but rather attempts to find the best answers to any question. So, then, the logic and reasoning of an argumentative essay will be judged by the following standards.

5.0 Logic and Reasoning				
5.1 Precision	The student ignores or overlooks obvious and important distinctions.	The student misses some obvious and important distinctions.	The student makes the obvious and important distinctions.	The student makes both obvious AND subtle distinctions that are important for his essay.
5.2 Moderation	The student overstates the strength of his argument. His claims are extravagant and careless.	The student argues with an overall sense of proportion BUT with some lack of care in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of his argument.	The student expresses the strengths and weaknesses of his argument with appropriate moderation.	
5.3 Cogency	The student does not produce a well-structured argument AND his argument is marred by frequent errors of logic.	The student produces an argument that mostly without errors of structure and/or logic, BUT there remain some difficulties in this area.	The student produces a well-structured argument AND his argument is free of errors in structure and logic.	The student argues his case with extraordinary facility in structure and logic. The argument is always engaging and insightful.

## VI. Form and Appearance

The doctoral student's papers are expected to manifest an advanced degree of professionalism and polish. The student's prose must be consistently smooth and readable, with minimal errors of style, syntax, and other grammatical difficulties. It is intensely irritating to the student's readers when faced with papers that take a slipshod approach to these basic elements; and papers that fail often in this category will not be accepted.

6.0 Form/Appearance (Program Outcome 3)				
5.1 Grammar	There are numerous errors in spelling and grammar (approximately, more than 4 per page, on average).	There are some errors in spelling and grammar (approximately, less than 4 per page, on average).	There are few errors in spelling and grammar (approximately, one or less per page, on average).	There are very few errors in spelling and grammar (approximately, less than one per page, on average).
5.2 Eloquence	The student's prose is unclear, wordy, and poorly organized. Reader faces needless difficulty in following the student's argument.	The student's prose is sometimes clear, concise, and well-organized. Student needs to improve on transitional statements, paragraph divisions, and other elements as identified by the Essay Committee.	The student's prose is clear, concise, and well-organized. Student uses appropriate transitional statements and paragraph divisions to create a consistently readable document.	The student's prose is extraordinarily clear, concise, and well-organized. Minimal effort is needed to read the work and follow its arguments. Student writes in a creative manner while maintaining an appropriate academic tone.
5.3 MBTS Style Guidelines	Student consistently deviates from the MBTS Style Manual.		Student consistently conforms to the MBTS Style Manual. Any deviations are approved by Committee chair.	

## 5.3 Comprehensive Examination Rubric

In order to pass the comprehensive examination phase of his research, a student must score “Satisfactory” or higher on every element of this rubric. This rubric is not meant to be exhaustive. The student may receive other feedback from his Comprehensive Examination Supervisor.

	<b>1 Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>2 Developing</b>	<b>3 Satisfactory</b>	<b>4 Exemplary</b>
<b>1.0 Use of Secondary Sources (Degree Outcome 1)</b>				
1.1 Scope of Research Bibliography	The research bibliography contains few appropriate sources AND the sources do not represent a wide range of critical perspectives.	The research bibliography contains some appropriate sources AND/OR the sources do not represent a wide range of critical perspectives.	The research bibliography contains a sufficient number of appropriate sources which represent a wide range of critical perspectives. Student incorporates some sources in a research language.	The research bibliography contains an extraordinary number of appropriate sources which represent the fullest range of critical perspectives. Student makes substantial use of sources in one or more research languages.
1.3 Relevance	Research bibliography is unfocused and off-topic. AND Student relies primarily on tertiary, non-academic, outdated, or inexperienced secondary sources.	Research bibliography is focused and on-topic BUT student relies too often on tertiary, non-academic, outdated, or inexperienced secondary sources.	Research bibliography is focused and on-topic. Student relies mostly on primary and secondary sources that are academic, current, and expert.	Research bibliography is focused and on-topic AND relies on primary and secondary sources that are academic, current, and expert.
<b>2.0 Evaluation of Secondary Sources (Degree Outcomes 1, 3)</b>				
2.1 Analysis of Source Material	Student does not examine his sources in appropriate detail and relies mostly on secondary summaries of positions taken therein. His summaries of viewpoints are cursory and often inaccurate.	Student often examines his sources in appropriate detail and often relies on primary sources to arrive at his conclusions, but with some instances of inaccuracy and undue reliance on secondary summaries.	Student examines his sources in appropriate detail and relies mostly on primary sources to arrive at his conclusions. His summaries of viewpoints are adequately detailed and consistently accurate.	Student examines his sources in extraordinary detail and relies consistently on primary sources to arrive at his conclusions. His summaries of viewpoints are adequately detailed and consistently accurate.
2.2 Synthesis of Source Material	Student does not demonstrate the ability to classify positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics.	Student demonstrates some ability to classify positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics, with some erroneous or confusing choices in this area.	Student demonstrates the ability to classify positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics.	Student demonstrates the ability to classify the positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics, doing so with special insight.
2.3 Evaluation of Source Material	Student does not treat his sources fairly. Sources are described uncharitably and/or illogically, and they are subjected to excessive criticism, while others receive unduly favorable treatment.	Student treats most sources fairly. Sources are usually described with charity and logical rigor. Most are subjected to appropriate criticism. There are, nevertheless, some instances of failure in these areas.	Student treats his sources fairly. Positions taken therein are described with charity and logical rigor, and all sides are subjected to appropriate criticism.	Student treats his sources fairly. Positions taken therein are described with extraordinary charity and logical rigor, and all sides are consistently subjected to appropriate and insightful criticism.
2.4 Content Footnotes	Student uses footnotes only to cite source material. Footnotes do not engage sources and otherwise function strategically to advance the argument.	Student uses content footnotes strategically to advance the argument and engage appropriate sources, while some are wordy, irrelevant, or best for main text.	Student uses content footnotes strategically to advance the argument and engage appropriate sources. They are appropriate in length and relevance.	

<b>3.0 Hypothesis (Degree Outcome 2)</b>				
3.1 Clarity	Student does not have a clearly defined proposed thesis.	Student has an identifiable, proposed thesis, BUT it is unclear and/or too general.	Student's proposed thesis is clear, concise, and well-defined in its scope.	
3.2 Plausibility	The proposed thesis lacks <i>prima facie</i> viability. It is highly unlikely to be provable.	The proposed thesis is likely to be provable, but the student's initial research does not support this impression.	The proposed thesis is likely to be provable, the student's initial research supports this impression.	
3.3 Significance	The student has not demonstrated the relevance and need for his proposed inquiry within his chosen field.	The student has partially demonstrated the relevance and/or need for his proposed inquiry within his chosen field.	The student has demonstrated both the relevance and need for his proposed inquiry within his chosen field.	
<b>4.0 Research Design and Implementation (Degree Outcome 2)</b>				
4.1 Justification of Proposed Method	Proposed methodology will not likely produce the evidence or argument needed to support the proposed thesis. Student has not demonstrated the relevance of his methods to the proposed thesis.	Proposed methodology will likely produce the evidence and argument needed to support the proposed thesis.	Proposed methodology will likely produce the evidence and argument needed to support the proposed thesis.	Student has demonstrated a creative approach to supporting his proposed thesis. The proposed methodology is advanced and nuanced, and will likely produce the evidence and argument needed to support the proposed thesis.
4.2 Feasibility of Proposed Methodology	The student will not be able to access the resources needed to apply the proposed methodology.		The student will be able to access the resources needed to apply the proposed methodology.	
<b>5.0 Form (Degree Outcome 3)</b>				
5.1 Grammar	There are some errors in spelling in grammar (more than 4 per page, on average).	There are some errors in spelling in grammar (no more than 4 per page, on average).	There are few errors in spelling and grammar (1 per page, or less, on average).	There are very few errors in spelling and grammar (less than 1 per page, on average).
5.2 Eloquence	The student's prose is unclear, wordy, and poorly organized. Reader has difficulty following the student's argument because of these errors.	The student's prose is somewhat clear, concise, and well-organized. Student needs to improve on appropriate transitional statements, paragraph divisions, or other elements as identified by the reader.	The student's prose is clear, concise, and well-organized. Student uses appropriate transitional statements and paragraph divisions.	The student's prose is extraordinarily clear, concise, and well-organized. Minimal effort is needed to read the work and follow its arguments. Student writes in a creative manner while maintaining an appropriate academic tone.
5.3 MBTS Style Guidelines	Student consistently deviates from the MBTS Style Manual.		Student consistently conforms to the MBTS Style Manual. Any deviations are approved by Committee chair.	

## 5.4 Dissertation Rubric

In order to receive a passing score on his dissertation, the candidate must score “Satisfactory” or higher on every element of this rubric. This rubric is not meant to be exhaustive. The Dissertation Committee reserves the right to add supplemental criteria and/or qualifications.

	<b>1 Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>2 Developing</b>	<b>3 Satisfactory</b>	<b>4 Exemplary</b>
<b>1.0 Use of Secondary Sources (Degree Outcome 1)</b>				
1.1 Scope of Research Bibliography	Research bibliography contains few appropriate sources AND the sources do not represent a wide range of critical perspectives.	Research bibliography contains some appropriate sources AND/OR the sources do not represent a wide range of critical perspectives.	Research bibliography contains a sufficient number of appropriate sources which represent a wide range of critical perspectives. Student incorporates some sources in a research language.	Research bibliography contains an extraordinary number of appropriate sources which represent the fullest range of critical perspectives. Student makes substantial use of sources in one or more research languages.
1.3 Relevance	Research bibliography is unfocused and off-topic. AND the student relies primarily on tertiary, non-academic, outdated, or inexperienced secondary sources.	Research bibliography is focused and on-topic BUT the student relies too often on tertiary, non-academic, outdated, or inexperienced secondary sources.	Research bibliography is focused and on-topic. The student relies mostly on primary and secondary sources that are academic, current, and expert.	Research bibliography is focused and on-topic, with extensive use of primary and secondary sources that are academic, current, and expert.
<b>2.0 Evaluation of Secondary Sources (Degree Outcomes 1, 3)</b>				
2.1 Analysis of Source Material	Student does not examine his sources in appropriate detail and relies mostly on secondary summaries of positions taken therein. His summaries of viewpoints are cursory and often inaccurate.	Student often examines his sources in appropriate detail and often relies on primary sources to arrive at his conclusions, but with some instances of inaccuracy and undue reliance on secondary summaries.	Student examines his sources in appropriate detail and relies mostly on primary sources to arrive at his conclusions. His summaries of viewpoints are adequately detailed and consistently accurate.	Student examines his sources in extraordinary detail and relies consistently on primary sources to arrive at his conclusions. His summaries of viewpoints are adequately detailed and consistently accurate.
2.2 Synthesis of Source Material	Student does not demonstrate the ability to classify positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics.	Student demonstrates some ability to classify positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics, with some erroneous or confusing choices in this area.	Student demonstrates the ability to classify positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics.	Student demonstrates the ability to classify the positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics, doing so with special insight.
2.3 Evaluation of Source Material	Student does not treat his sources fairly. Sources are described uncharitably and/or illogically, and they are subjected to excessive criticism, while others receive unduly favorable treatment.	Student treats most sources fairly. Sources are usually described with charity and logical rigor. Most are subjected to appropriate criticism. There are, nevertheless, some instances of failure in these areas.	Student treats his sources fairly. Positions taken therein are described with charity and logical rigor, and all sides are subjected to appropriate criticism.	Student treats his sources fairly. Positions taken therein are described with extraordinary charity and logical rigor, and all sides are consistently subjected to appropriate and insightful criticism.

<b>3.0 Hypothesis/Thesis (Degree Outcome 2)</b>				
3.1 Clarity/Resolution	Student does not have a clearly defined thesis.	Student has a thesis that is partially clear.	Student's thesis is clear and well-defined.	
3.2 Viability	The thesis is not provable. It does not lend itself readily to any sort of demonstration.	The thesis is somewhat provable BUT with some aspects that are not available to <i>a priori</i> and/or empirical demonstration.	The thesis lends itself easily to <i>a priori</i> and/or empirical forms of demonstration.	
<b>4.0 Research Design and Implementation (Degree Outcomes 2, 3)</b>				
4.1 Justification of Chosen Method	The student does not effectively defend his methodology, with alternative approaches ignored and/or overlooked.	The student defends his methodology BUT with inadequate attention given to alternative approaches.	The student defends his methodology, giving sufficient attention to alternative approaches.	The student defends his methodology with strong and detailed attention given to likely objections and alternative approaches.
4.2 Consistency of Application	Methods differed substantially from ones adopted in the introductory chapter, and this change invalidated the larger thesis.	Methods differed somewhat from the ones adopted in the introductory chapter, and this change compromised the larger argument.	Methods were the same as the ones adopted in the introductory chapter.	
4.3 Effectiveness of Method	Student's methodology did not produce a sustained argument in support of his thesis. The resulting argument has obvious deficiencies of structure and logic.	Student's methodology produced a partial argument in support of his thesis. There are some gaps in the argument and deficiencies of logic.	Student's methodology produced a sustained argument in support of his thesis. The resulting argument is cogent.	Student's methodology produced a sustained argument in support of his thesis. The resulting argument is uniquely persuasive and creative.
<b>5.0 Logic and Reasoning (Degree Outcomes 1, 2, 3)</b>				
5.1 Precision	The student ignores or overlooks obvious and important distinctions.	The student misses some obvious and important distinctions.	The student makes the obvious and important distinctions.	The student makes both obvious AND subtle distinctions that are important for his essay.
5.2 Moderation	The student overstates the strength of his argument. His claims are extravagant and careless.	The student argues with an overall sense of proportion BUT with some lack of care in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of his argument.	The student expresses the strengths and weaknesses of his argument with appropriate moderation.	
5.3 Cogency	The student does not produce a well-structured argument AND his argument is marred by frequent errors of logic.	The student produces an argument that mostly without errors of structure and/or logic, BUT there remain some difficulties in this area.	The student produces a well-structured argument AND his argument is free of errors in structure and logic.	The student argues his case with extraordinary facility in structure and logic. The argument is always engaging and insightful.
5.4 Eloquence	The student's prose is unclear, wordy, and poorly organized. Reader faces needless difficulty in following the student's argument.	The student's prose is sometimes clear, concise, and well-organized. Student needs to improve on transitional statements, paragraph divisions, and other elements as identified by the Dissertation Committee.	The student's prose is clear, concise, and well-organized. Student uses appropriate transitional statements and paragraph divisions to create a consistently readable document.	The student's prose is extraordinarily clear, concise, and well-organized. Minimal effort is needed to read the work and follow its arguments. Student writes engagingly, yet academically.

<b>6.0 Form/Appearance (Degree Outcome 3)</b>				
5.1 Grammar	There are numerous errors in spelling and grammar (approximately, more than 4 per page, on average).	There are some errors in spelling and grammar (approximately, less than 4 per page, on average).	There are few errors in spelling and grammar (approximately, one or less per page, on average).	There are very few errors in spelling and grammar (approximately, less than one per page, on average).
5.2 Eloquence	The student's prose is unclear, wordy, and poorly organized. Reader faces needless difficulty in following the student's argument.	The student's prose is sometimes clear, concise, and well-organized. Student needs to improve on transitional statements, paragraph divisions, and other elements as identified by the Essay Committee.	The student's prose is clear, concise, and well-organized. Student uses appropriate transitional statements and paragraph divisions to create a consistently readable document.	The student's prose is extraordinarily clear, concise, and well-organized. Minimal effort is needed to read the work and follow its arguments. Student writes in a creative manner while maintaining an appropriate academic tone.
5.3 MBTS Style Guidelines	Student consistently deviates from the MBTS Style Manual.		Student consistently conforms to the MBTS Style Manual. Any deviations are approved by Committee chair.	
<b>7.0 Contribution to Field of Study (Degree Outcome 1)</b>				
7.1 Relevance to Field of Study	The dissertation falls outside the scope of student's chosen field of expertise.		The dissertation falls inside the scope of student's chosen field of expertise.	
7.2 Significance of Results	The dissertation's results do not address an important question in his chosen field of study.		The dissertation's results address an important and unresolved question or deficiency in his chosen field of study.	
7.3 Uniqueness of the Research	The dissertation's methods, arguments, and/or results are not at all unique. The candidate has merely done what others have done.	The dissertation's methods, arguments, and/or results are partially unique. To a certain extent, the candidate has merely done what others have done.	The dissertation's methods, arguments, and/or results are sufficiently unique to be informative within the field.	The dissertation's methods, arguments, and/or results are obviously unique and highly informative within the field.

## 5.5 Oral Defense Rubric

In order to receive a passing score on his oral defense, the candidate must (a) score “Satisfactory” or higher on every element of Dissertation rubric, then (b) score “Satisfactory” or higher on every element of the following rubric.

	1 Unsatisfactory	2 Developing	3 Satisfactory	4 Exemplary
<b>1.0 Discussion of Secondary Sources (Degree Outcome 1)</b>				
1.1 Recall of Secondary Sources	Candidate cannot usually recall the arguments and evidence found in his secondary sources.	Candidate usually recalls the arguments and evidence found in his secondary sources BUT needs more prompting or review than is ideal.	Candidate recalls the arguments and evidence found in his secondary sources without undue prompting or pauses.	Candidate recalls entirely the arguments and evidence found in his secondary sources.
1.3 Summary	Candidate is not able to explain what his sources say in a clear, efficient way.	Candidate is usually, but not always, able to explain what his sources say in a clear, efficient way.	Candidate is able to explain what his sources say in a clear, efficient way.	Candidate is readily able to explain what his sources say in a clear, efficient, and insightful way.
<b>2.0 Evaluation of Secondary Sources (Degree Outcomes 1, 3)</b>				
2.1 Analysis of Source Material	Candidate does not examine his sources in appropriate detail and relies mostly on secondary summaries of positions taken therein. His summaries of viewpoints are cursory and often inaccurate.	Candidate often examines his sources in appropriate detail and often relies on primary sources to arrive at his conclusions, BUT with some instances of inaccuracy and undue reliance on secondary summaries.	Candidate examines his sources in appropriate detail and relies mostly on primary sources to arrive at his conclusions. His summaries of viewpoints are adequately detailed and consistently accurate.	Candidate examines his sources in extraordinary detail and relies consistently on primary sources to arrive at his conclusions. His summaries of viewpoints are adequately detailed and consistently accurate.
2.2 Synthesis of Source Material	Candidate does not demonstrate the ability to classify positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics.	Candidate demonstrates some ability to classify positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics, with some erroneous or confusing categories	Candidate demonstrates the ability to classify positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics. Categories are well-defined and defensible.	Candidate demonstrates the ability to classify the positions taken in his source material and to identify their essential characteristics, doing so with special insight. Defense of categories is creative and convincing.
2.3 Evaluation of Source Material	Candidate does not treat his sources fairly. Sources are described uncharitably and/or illogically, and they are subjected to excessive criticism, while others receive unduly favorable treatment.	Candidate treats most sources fairly. Sources are usually described with charity and logical rigor. Most are subjected to appropriate criticism. There are, nevertheless, some instances of failure in these areas.	Candidate treats his sources fairly. Positions taken therein are described with charity and logical rigor, and all sides are subjected to appropriate criticism.	Candidate treats his sources fairly. Positions taken therein are described with extraordinary charity and logical rigor, and all sides are consistently subjected to appropriate and insightful criticism.
<b>3.0 Hypothesis (Degree Outcome 2)</b>				
3.1 Clarity	Candidate is not able to summarize his thesis in a succinct and clear way.	Candidate is able to summarize his thesis, with some lack of clarity and economy.	Candidate is able to express his thesis in a clear, concise, and well-manner.	
3.2 Plausibility	The candidate is not able to defend the <i>a priori</i> plausibility of his hypothesis.	The candidate is partly able to defend the <i>a priori</i> plausibility of his hypothesis.	The candidate is able to defend the <i>a priori</i> plausibility of his hypothesis.	The candidate is able to defend the <i>a priori</i> plausibility of his hypothesis with unique

				persuasiveness and insight.
<b>4.0 Methodology (Degree Outcomes 2, 3)</b>				
4.1 Justification of Chosen Method	The candidate does not effectively defend his methodology, with alternative approaches ignored and/or overlooked.	The candidate defends his methodology BUT with inadequate attention given to alternative approaches.	The candidate defends his methodology, giving sufficient attention to alternative approaches.	The candidate defends his methodology with strong and detailed attention given to likely objections and alternative approaches.
4.2 Consistency of Application	Methods differed substantially from ones adopted in the introductory chapter, and the candidate cannot defend these changes.	Methods differed somewhat from the ones adopted in the introductory chapter, and the candidate is mostly able to defend these changes.	Methods were virtually identical to the ones adopted in the introductory chapter and, where they differed, the candidate can defend these changes.	
4.2 Effectiveness of Method	Candidate's methodology did not produce a sustained argument in support of his thesis. The resulting argument has substantial deficiencies of structure and logic which the candidate cannot defend.	Candidate's methodology produced a partial argument in support of his thesis. There are some gaps in the argument and deficiencies of logic which the candidate is less able to defend.	Candidate's methodology produced a sustained argument in support of his thesis. The resulting argument is cogent, and the candidate can demonstrate this cogency.	Candidate's methodology produced a sustained argument in support of his thesis. The resulting argument is uniquely persuasive and creative, and these characteristics are apparent in the candidate's defense.
<b>5.0 Logic and Reasoning (Degree Outcomes 1, 2, 3)</b>				
5.1 Precision	The candidate ignores or overlooks obvious and important distinctions.	The candidate misses some obvious and important distinctions.	The candidate makes the obvious and important distinctions.	The candidate makes both obvious AND subtle distinctions that are important for his defense.
5.2 Moderation	The candidate overstates the strength of his arguments. His claims are extravagant and careless.	The candidate argues with an overall sense of proportion BUT with some lack of care in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of his arguments.	The candidate expresses the strengths and weaknesses of his arguments with appropriate moderation.	
5.3 Cogency	The candidate does not offer well-structured arguments AND they argument are marred by frequent errors of logic.	The candidate offers arguments that are mostly without errors of structure and/or logic, BUT there remain some difficulties in this area.	The candidate offers a well-structured argument AND his arguments are free of errors in structure and logic.	The candidate argues his case with extraordinary facility in structure and logic. His spoken arguments are always engaging and insightful.
<b>5.0 Form (Program Outcome 3)</b>				
5.1 Grammar	As the candidate speaks, he make numerous grammatical errors that are distracting.	As the candidate speaks, he makes some errors of grammar which are distracting.	The candidate speaks smoothly and grammatically on a consistent basis.	
5.2 Eloquence	The candidate's word choice is erroneous and unhelpful. Listeners face needless difficulty in following his arguments.	The candidate's word choice is usually clear, concise, and helpful BUT with some distracting errors in this category.	The candidate's speech is clear, concise, and well-organized.	The candidate's speech is extraordinarily clear, concise, well-organized, and eloquent.

6.0 Contribution to Field of Study (PhD Program Outcome 1)				
6.1 Relevance to Field of Study	The dissertation falls outside the scope of candidate's chosen field of expertise, and the candidate cannot defend himself against this charge.		The dissertation falls inside the scope of candidate's chosen field of expertise, and the candidate can demonstrate its relevance to his field of study.	
6.2 Significance of Results	The dissertation's results do not address an important question in his chosen field of study, and the candidate is not able to show otherwise.		The dissertation's results address an important and unresolved question or deficiency in his chosen field of study, and the candidate is able to show that it does.	The dissertation's results address an important and unresolved question or deficiency in his chosen field of study, doing so with obvious creativity, and the candidate is able to demonstrate this fact about his work extemporaneously.

## **A Statement of Integrity in Seminary Studies**

The fundamental purpose of the Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary is to assist the development of Christian ministers who are equipped to make responsible and relevant witness to the redeeming gospel of Jesus Christ in the context of the vastly complex and rapidly changing modern culture in which God has granted us the grace of life. In accordance with this purpose, therefore, the Seminary dearly cherishes and earnestly seeks to foster among all its students the qualities of spiritual dedication, creative imagination, and personal integrity.

Consequently, the administration and faculty of the Seminary expect, as a minimum requirement, that each student shall do his *own work*. That is to say, the student is to let every test and examination reflect *only* the best results of his own disciplined study. Likewise, every term paper and written report must represent the student's own original approach to the task assigned; and it should not contain either direct quotations or paraphrases of any part of any other writer's book or paper, published or unpublished, for which due credit is not given to the original author. *Such credit should be acknowledged by proper citation (in text, footnotes, and bibliography) of the sources employed.*

It cannot be exaggerated how strongly the Seminary deprecates plagiarism in all its forms. Dishonesty is incompatible with the very purpose for which a student avails himself of its ministries. It is to be desired that one remain without a degree rather than to obtain it by dishonest means, for Christianity cannot countenance conduct that contradicts its basic tenets.

It is further to be hoped that each individual will recognize a responsibility for his brother as well as for himself in all such matters.

Adopted by the Faculty  
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary  
October 5, 1961

*\*The Doctoral Studies committee adopted the following addendum on September 29, 2003 for inclusion in the Manual for Doctoral Studies.*

*Due to the fact that plagiarism runs counter to the purpose of higher learning, due to the increased temptation to plagiarize presented by the Internet, and due to an increase in cases of plagiarism, proven intentional plagiarism on the part of any doctoral student will result in a failing grade for the course and automatic dismissal from the program.*