

**Department of Theology & Religion
University of Otago**

Foreword by the Head of Department

Greetings from the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Otago!

In recent years the Department has had a very significant number of postgraduate students and they have added to the life of the Department in so many ways. It has been particularly encouraging to see postgraduates write excellent theses and then go on to establish academic careers. We hope that you will find your time as a postgraduate student satisfying and enriching.

This booklet is designed to give you much of the information that you will need as a postgraduate, or as someone who is considering postgraduate study in the Department. It also contains some guidance about the thesis-writing process. We hope that you find it helpful. Do let us know if there are matters that are not dealt with here and that you would like to see covered in future editions of this booklet.

Please don't hesitate to come and see me (or make contact via phone or email), as Convenor of the Department's Postgraduate Committee, if there are matters that you would like to discuss.

With very best wishes for your work as a postgraduate student.

Associate Professor Murray Rae
Head of Department

February 2010

N.B. This document has been updated in September 2010 to reflect changes for students enrolling for the first year of Postgraduate Study in Religion from 2011.

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This document is also available on the Department's web pages: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology>
<http://www.otago.ac.nz/religion>

Programmes

The Department of Theology and Religion offers the following postgraduate programmes:

- A programme at 400-level which can be the final year of an Honours degree, the first year of a two-year Master's degree (MA or MTheol) or a one-year Postgraduate Diploma in Arts Subjects (PGDip Arts) or in Theology (PGDip Theol)
- A one-year Postgraduate Diploma in Ministry (PGDip Min) and a two-year Master of Ministry (MMin) degree.
- A two-year MA or MTheol degree, of which the first year consists of course work at 400-level and the second of a thesis.
- A one-year MA or MTheol by thesis only, which is open to those who have already completed a BA (Hons), BTheol (Hons) or equivalent.
- A PhD by thesis.

400-level Papers

All 400-level papers are listed in the Department's Course Information Booklet.

Research Essays

1. A **380** Research Essay is an option at 300-level for a BTheol or B.A. student. A research essay needs initiative, organization, and a capacity for independent work on the part of the student, and is therefore not an option which should be lightly chosen. In some cases a further course-work paper may be a more appropriate choice. Students are unlikely to be accepted for a research essay without a B average in the 200-level papers in the subject area in which they wish to write the research essay.

The **380** Research Essay can be submitted for BIBS 380, CHTH 380, PAST 380 (6 points). It is not normally longer than 6,500-8,500 words (excluding notes and

bibliography); it is the equivalent of one 300-level paper. The essay should show an awareness of some of the problems posed by critical study of an issue and an ability to use the methods of scholarship in resolving these. It is a well-structured account of a clearly defined issue or problem with some indication of how it may be resolved. It should be limited in scope and disciplined in methodology.

2. A **480** Research Essay is a requirement for the fourth year of study in Theology. It is taken both for Honours and the Postgraduate Diploma.

The **480** Research Essay can be submitted for BIBS 480, CHTH 480, PAST 480 (10 points). It is not normally longer than 15,000 words (excluding notes and bibliography); it is the equivalent of one 400-level paper.

3. A **490** Research Essay is a requirement for the fourth year of study in Religion. It is taken both for Honours and the Postgraduate Diploma.

The **490** Research Essay (48 points) is not normally longer than 15,000 words (excluding notes and bibliography); it is the equivalent of two 400-level RELS papers (which are 24 points).

A fourth-year Research Essay should show a greater ability to deal with the available literature and to think independently than a 300-level research essay. The essay needs to be a well-defined work, probably limited in its aims but with a strong awareness of critical methods of research.

NOTE:

- (a) **Sometimes a student wishes to begin a Research Essay (a 380) or a Dissertation (a 480 or 490) in Semester 2, rather than beginning in Semester 1.**

This is quite acceptable, but note that the code becomes **381, 481 or 491**. Hence the student enrolls in Year 1 for (say) BIBS 481, starting at the beginning of Semester 2. This will be 15 points in that Semester (rather than 30 points for the year), and 0.125 EFTS. They will be charged half the prescribed fee for BIBS 480. In Year 2, they must enrol again in Semester 1 for BIBS 481, which will again be 15 points (giving a full total of 30 points) in that Semester, and 0.125 EFTS, and again, half the prescribed fee for BIBS 480. The **deadline** for submission will be **31 May**.

- (b) **Distance students** who are undertaking a Research Essay (ie BIBS 380), a Dissertation (ie BIBS 480), or the MMin Research Project (ie MINS 590) **must** enrol as a BIBX, CHTX, MINX or PASX paper – ie BIBX 380, 381, 480 481, CHTX 380, 381, 480, 481, PASX 380, 381, 480, 481, or MINX 590, 591, 592.

Preparing for a Research Essay

3. All students who intend to do a 380, 480 or 490 Research Essay should think well in advance about a suitable topic and a supervisor. It is helpful if the student can nominate a general area of interest, but we cannot guarantee supervision in every field or that a given supervisor will be available. Here are four ways to help you decide on a topic:
 - talk with current or recent Research Essay students about what they have done;
 - consult the collection of completed Research Essays held by the Department, or at the Hewitson Library, Knox College;
 - consult the information given at the end of this booklet on staff supervision interests and Research Essays we have supervised in the past;
 - contact staff to discuss your interests.

Initial discussions about the topic and supervision should be held with the Head of the Department or another staff member before the end of the examination period of the preceding year. Detailed discussion will follow with the potential supervisor and it is helpful if a general outline of the topic can be established at this stage. Candidates for the PGDip will need to make formal application for admission to the course by the beginning of December.

4. Final decisions about the topic and supervisor for research essays need to be made in February or the beginning of March at the very latest. If you have not made progress by this time, contact the Head of the Department. The topic and title should be finalised in consultation with the supervisor, and approved by the Head of the Department at the latest by the end of March.

Workload

5. The third- and fourth-year research essays should occupy about a quarter of the student's full-time course. The topic will need to be tailored to these dimensions. The term 'research' is interpreted broadly: the essay may not uncover brand-new facts or ideas, or put forward a new interpretation, but it must represent a competent independent survey of the chosen area.

Supervision

6. Regular meetings will be held between the student and supervisor during the course of the year for advice and discussion. Fortnightly meetings, perhaps at a fixed time, are likely to be appropriate in the initial stages, though the frequency of meetings can be varied by mutual consent. At initial meetings, the topic

should be fine-tuned, the frequency of meetings discussed, and a study timetable drawn up. The contract contained at the end of this booklet may be used. It is **the responsibility of the student** to see that regular progress on the essay is maintained throughout the year.

Submission

7. The **deadline** for a **380, 480 and 490** Research Essay is **30 September**. Note that a **381** Research Essay or **481/491** Dissertation can be begun in Semester 2 of one academic year and completed in Semester 1 of the following academic year. In this case the deadline for submission in Semester 1 is **31 May**.
8. It is the student's responsibility to meet these important deadlines. Extensions will only be granted in very exceptional circumstances by the Head of Department. If students are unable to complete the work by the deadline and there are no genuine reasons for an extension, they will be required to re-enrol for the paper (and pay fees again) in the following year.
9. Essays should be word-processed in 12-point type, with one- and-a-half line spacing, and printed on one side of the page. They need not be formally bound in hard covers, but must be spiral-bound. Any illustrations included must be of high quality. Two copies of the essay are required, of which one will be returned to the student and the other retained in the Departmental Library.
Note: All essays should conform to the conventions for academic writing set out in the Department's Study and Style Guide.
10. Permission needs to be granted by the University Ethics committee for any research that involves living human subjects. If you are involved in this form of research, you will need to go through the process of gaining Ethics Committee approval. Discuss this with your supervisor.

The MA and MTheol

Both the MA and the MTheol can be completed in one or two years. If they are completed in two years, then the first year is the equivalent of the fourth-year Hons programme, or the Postgraduate Diploma. The second year is then a thesis-only year. If the MA or MTheol is taken over one year, then the student must have a four-year Honours degree, or a Postgraduate Diploma as a prerequisite. The MA or MTheol are then by thesis only.

Progression to the second year of a Master's programme is conditional on obtaining suitable grades in the first year – usually a B average.

The regulations for Master's students and much other helpful information are contained in the University's *Handbook for Research Masters' Degrees*, which is

available electronically at www.otago.ac.nz/study/masters. The student should be thoroughly familiar with this Handbook.

MA and MTheol Theses

Application and Admission

1. The minimum length of time for completion of an MA or MTheol thesis is one year (and hence 120 points), with the maximum length of time from the date of admission being four years. Both theses can be written part-time. The formal prerequisite is a BA(Hons), BTheol(Hons), PGDipArts or PGDip Theol, or equivalent. Candidates will usually be expected to have obtained First or Upper Second Class Honours (or equivalent) at fourthyear level before proceeding to the thesis, though each application will be judged on its merits. Information on fees and allowances should be sought from the Registry: the University hopes to give a scholarship or award to all Master's thesis students who have achieved at least an A average at fourthyear level.
2. The thesis should represent one year's full-time work. Full-time study normally means at least 40 hours per week. It is important that a topic can be found of suitable dimensions. A Master's thesis need not make an original contribution to knowledge, but must demonstrate that the student has mastered research skills, such as the ability to treat a particular topic comprehensively, find out and master the primary sources and the significant secondary discussions on that topic, show evidence of an ability to comprehend at depth the major issues involved in a topic, sustain an argument at length and present the thesis according to the conventions and professional standards required for publication. Candidates will need to identify an area where
 - they can build on their previous knowledge,
 - there is a supervisor available with the relevant expertise, and
 - the University Library has adequate resources.

We cannot offer supervision in every field or guarantee that a given supervisor will be available. The areas of supervisors' interests listed in this booklet are indicative only. In some areas a reading knowledge of ancient and/or modern languages may be necessary.

3. The Master's thesis can be begun at any time in the academic year, although enrolment is generally by semester. Initial discussions should be held with any member of staff and then with the Convenor of the Postgraduate Committee. Students are invited to discuss with the Convenor of the Postgraduate

Committee the staff member who might be appointed as the supervisor. Detailed discussion should follow with the potential supervisor in order to establish a viable topic. Candidates are required to make formal application for admission to the course before they begin study. The application form is available from the Departmental office and needs to be accompanied by a detailed outline of the proposed research. This must indicate the focus of the research, key questions upon which the research will centre, the “thesis” that will be argued and the methods that will be used. It is accepted that the focus of research often alters as work progresses; however, it is important that the initial proposal be focussed, even if at a later stage it is considerably modified.

Applications are considered by the Department’s Postgraduate Admissions committees. Often the committee will ask for further clarification of a proposal or for a more focussed proposal. After a proposal has been accepted, a supervisor will be appointed, and the student will be informed of who the supervisor will be. The Department will not support applications unless a topic and a supervisor have already been agreed. The application is then forwarded to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Division of Humanities for approval.

4. Graduates from non-university tertiary institutions or overseas universities will need to apply to Otago for admission *ad eundem statum*, which requires certified copies of their academic transcripts from previous tertiary studies.

Graduates from another New Zealand university do not need to apply for admission to Otago, but must provide certified copies of their academic transcripts when registering.

5. **Overseas candidates** must apply for admission through the International Office:

International Admissions
 University of Otago
 P.O. Box 56
 Dunedin 9054
 Telephone 03 479 8344
 Email international.admissions@otago.ac.nz
www.otago.ac.nz/international/postgraduate

6. Permission needs to be granted by the University Ethics committee for any research that involves living human subjects. If you are involved in this form of research, you will need to go through the process of gaining Ethics Committee approval. Discuss this with your first supervisor.

7. Once admitted, students must also enrol each year with the University. First-year students should note that this is a separate process from application for admission: once notified of admission it is the student's responsibility to enrol with the University.

Supervision

8. Regular meetings will be held between the student and supervisor over the whole course of the thesis. The frequency of meetings can be varied by mutual consent. Weekly or fortnightly meetings are likely to be appropriate at critical stages; at other times a monthly meeting may suffice, but meetings should not normally be less than once a month. At initial meetings, the topic should be fine-tuned, the frequency of meetings discussed, and a study timetable drawn up. The contract contained at the end of this booklet may be used. The writing and completion of the thesis are ultimately the student's responsibility. The supervisor's role is to provide support, guidance and critical feedback on the work.

At meetings, the student will report on what research has been undertaken since the last meeting and any problems which may have arisen should be discussed. The overall focus, shape and structure of the thesis should be discussed regularly, as should the timetable by which individual parts should be written and the thesis completed. If either the student or the supervisor wishes, a formal agreement of the responsibilities may be drawn up and signed by both parties.

Progress Reports

9. A written report on research progress must be given to the supervisor by 15 November each year. The report should give an outline of work done during the year and of plans for the completion of the thesis. The student is also asked to give a date by which he or she hopes to submit the thesis.
10. If difficulties emerge during the course of work on the thesis, with respect to supervision or in any other way, these should be discussed with the Head of Department or with the Convenor of the Postgraduate Committee.

Deferral

11. A student is required to be enrolled continuously for the entire period of his or her candidacy. However, a student may apply to withdraw, or defer temporarily from study for a short period due to personal reasons beyond his or her control. If a student wishes to do this, then s/he should discuss the matter with the first supervisor to seek advice. Approval for temporary withdrawal of enrolment

should then be sought in advance through the Head of Department and a “Request for a Temporary or Permanent Withdrawal from Master’s Study” form must be completed –

available on www.otago.ac.nz/study/masters/index.html#4.

Deferral has to be approved by the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in the Humanities Division. As a period of temporary withdrawal stops the clock in terms of time and tuition fees, Student Records will be notified.

Please note: When the approved period of withdrawal has expired, *it is the responsibility of the student* either to re-enrol, or to seek approval from the Head of Department for a further deferral.

Examination Process

12. The maximum length for a Master’s thesis is 40,000 words, excluding appendices, footnotes and bibliography. There is no stipulated minimum length, but theses of fewer than 30,000 words are unlikely to be adequate. The thesis should demonstrate the candidate’s ability to carry out research and to report the results of such work clearly, accurately and succinctly.
13. Theses should follow the format prescribed in the University Calendar under ‘Presentation of Theses’ and amplified in the booklet ‘Notes on the Preparation of Theses’ available from the University Library and in the Handbook for Research Masters’ Degree. This policy is also available electronically at www.library.otago.ac.nz/research/theses.html. Candidates should familiarise themselves with these requirements before they begin.
14. Prior to submission, the primary supervisor will normally state in writing to the Head of the Department that he or she has no formal objection to the thesis being submitted. This is not an assurance that the thesis will pass, but an acknowledgement that it is at an appropriate stage to proceed to examination. The student is entitled to submit the thesis even without this declaration, but is strongly advised not to do so.
15. Three soft-bound copies of the thesis are required, and the student must hand these in to the Departmental Administrator, who will complete a form to notify Student Records in the Registry that the thesis has been submitted. The Department will then send the theses to the examiners.
16. The thesis will be assessed by at least two examiners, at least one of whom will be external to the University. The candidate’s supervisor will not be an examiner, but may make a report on the work of the candidate for the examiners to consider. The identity of the examiners will not be made known to the candidate. If the thesis is assessed as unsatisfactory, the examiners may

recommend to the Head of the Department that it be revised and resubmitted by a specified date (normally not later than six months after notification of the result), or rejected. Where examiners cannot agree on a result the Head of the Department will report to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Humanities, who will arrive at a decision after consulting a referee.

17. The degree may be awarded with distinction or credit.
18. The Department will return the three soft-bound copies of the thesis to the student, along with copies of examiners' reports (after removing the names of the examiners and any sections in the reports that are specifically confidential).
19. Should the result be to award the degree, the student will need to submit two hard-bound copies of the thesis to the Student Records Office, and complete a standard Library Declaration Form concerning the thesis. Copies of this form are available from Student Administration. It is also available electronically at www.library.otago.ac.nz/research/theses.html. One copy of the thesis will be placed in the University Library and the Department will receive the second copy.
20. Candidates who wish to use their result to support an application for a University of Otago Scholarship must submit their thesis by the end of lectures in October at the very latest. Otherwise there is no fixed date for submission, though further fees will be payable if the thesis is not completed within twelve months. Candidates wishing to graduate in December or the following May should be aware that Master's theses are externally assessed and that examination process may take up to two months.

The PhD Thesis

The regulations for PhD students and much other helpful information are contained in the University's *Handbook for PhD Study*, which is available electronically at www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd. The student should be thoroughly familiar with this Handbook.

Application and Admission

1. The PhD is a thesis degree. The thesis must be completed in a minimum of two and a half years and a maximum of six from the date of admission, though parttime candidates are permitted up to eight years. Full-time study normally means at least 40 hours per week. The normal prerequisite is a BA(Hons) or BTheol (Hons), or a PGDip Arts or PGDip Theol with at least Upper SecondClass Honours, or equivalent, or an MA or MTheol at a similar level. Information on

scholarships, fees, and allowances should be sought from the Registry; it is also available at www.otago.ac.nz/study. The University hopes to be able to award a scholarship to all PhD students who have achieved at least an A average at fourthyear or Master's level. Division of Humanities scholarships are also available.

2. It is important that a suitable topic is found for research. A PhD thesis should not exceed 100,000 words in length (excluding appendices, footnotes, and bibliography) and must be a thorough, comprehensive and original study of a topic or issue. It should be a piece of independent research into a defined area which shows a command of scholarly techniques and methods of argumentation, displays an exhaustive grasp of the primary sources and of the significant secondary literature, including relevant foreign-language material where appropriate, and result in an original contribution to knowledge. The work must display originality in its contribution to the topic or in its use of a particular method of research. It should be worthy of publication, in whole or in part, as a contribution to the continuing scholarly discussion of an issue. Candidates will need to identify an area where
 - they can build on their previous knowledge,
 - there is a primary supervisor available with the relevant expertise, and
 - the University Library has adequate resources.

We cannot offer supervision in every field or guarantee that a given supervisor will be available.

3. In Biblical Studies a reading knowledge of Hebrew and/or New Testament Greek is necessary. In many areas of research the student must have a reading knowledge of German and/or French prior to enrolment, or must acquire a reading knowledge of these languages early in their period of study. Students must be aware that in many areas of research examiners will be very unlikely to pass a thesis if the student has not interacted with the appropriate foreign-language publications. On some occasions students may be admitted to the programme but be required to enrol for a 100 level paper in a relevant language.
4. The thesis can be begun at any time in the academic year, although enrolment is generally by semester. Initially ideas for a topic may be discussed informally with any staff member. At an early stage, discussions should be held with the Convenor of the Postgraduate Committee. Students are invited to discuss with the Convenor of the Postgraduate Committee the staff member or members who might be appointed as supervisor(s). This may be followed by detailed discussions with the potential supervisors in order to establish a viable and focussed topic. Candidates must then make a formal application for admission on the prescribed form ("Application for Admission as a candidate for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy”), which is available from the Departmental office or electronically at www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd/#applying.

The application involves providing a detailed outline of the research proposal, normally of at least five A4 pages. This must indicate the focus of the research, key questions upon which the research will centre, the “thesis” that will be argued, the methods that will be used and a brief bibliography. The thesis to be argued will normally be able to be formulated as a formal one-sentence proposition (eg. “That the Gospel of John is dependent upon the Synoptic Gospels.”). A body of data or literature to be investigated should be specified and it needs to be shown how these data will be used to sustain the proposition.

It is accepted that the focus of research often alters as work progresses; however, it is important that the initial proposal be focussed, even if at a later stage it is considerably modified. A focussed proposal is needed so that supervisors can be allocated, so that the Department can determine whether Library facilities are adequate, and so that it is clear that the research can be achieved within three years. Students often conceive of a topic that is broad in scope, and needs to be whittled down to a realistically limited subject. This should be done in close consultation with a supervisor.

5. Applications are considered by the Department’s Postgraduate Committee. Often the committee will ask for further clarification of a proposal or for a more focussed proposal. The acceptance process involves considering whether the student has the appropriate qualifications to be accepted as a candidate for the degree, whether the topic is acceptable and focussed, and whether the Department can offer appropriate supervision. After a student has been accepted, he or she will be informed of who the supervisors will be. All students are allocated at least two supervisors, and in some instances an advisory committee may be recommended. Secondary supervisors may sometimes be provided from outside the Department or the University, but in all cases primary supervision must come from a member of the Department’s staff. The Department will not support applications unless a topic and a primary supervisor have already been agreed. The application is then forwarded to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Division of Humanities for their support. The final decision is made by the University’s PhD Advisory Committee.
6. Graduates from non-university tertiary institutions or overseas universities will need to apply to Otago for admission *ad eundem statum*, which requires certified copies of their academic transcripts from previous tertiary studies.

Graduates from another New Zealand university do not need to apply for admission to Otago, but must provide certified copies of their academic transcripts when registering.

7. **Overseas candidates** must apply for admission through the International Office:

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 University of Otago
 P.O. Box 56
 Dunedin 9054
 Telephone 03 479 8344
 Email international.admissions@otago.ac.nz
www.otago.ac.nz/international/postgraduate

8. Permission needs to be granted by the University Ethics Committee for any research that involves interaction with living human subjects. If you are involved in this form of research, you will need to go through the process of gaining Ethics Committee approval. Discuss this with your first supervisor.
9. Once admitted as a candidate for a PhD, students are granted *provisional* status. This means that they must demonstrate during the first (equivalent full-time) year of their candidature that they have made sufficient progress to have their admission *confirmed*. Confirmation, which is granted on the basis of satisfactory progress, must not be considered as automatic. The University retains the right to terminate candidature where sufficient progress has not been achieved.
10. Once admitted, students must also enrol each year with the University.

Upgrading from Master's to PhD

11. Students who have enrolled for a Master's by thesis may apply to have their status upgraded to PhD work and the date of their commencement of the PhD backdated to the date at which they began their Master's (or some other date if appropriate). In these cases the student must demonstrate that he or she has the necessary abilities for PhD study, a carefully focussed thesis topic, and has already completed, to the satisfaction of the supervisor(s), a significant body of work.

Residence

12. PhD students are normally required to be resident in Dunedin. However, provided acceptable arrangements for study and supervision can be made in the student's location, exceptions to residency requirements can be made. When the

student applies for admission and intends to be resident outside Dunedin, he or she needs to write a statement to the Convenor of the Postgraduate Committee (to be attached to the admission form) explaining where he or she will be based and agreeing that he or she will maintain regular contact with his or her supervisor(s) via phone, email, and regular trips to Dunedin.

The Department defines “regular contact” in the following way:

- the student needs to make contact with his or her Dunedin supervisor, whether by letter, phone, email or in person, at least once a month, in order to discuss progress.
- for a student admitted as a candidate for a PhD from January 2000, the Department reserves the right to require the student to come to Dunedin up to three times per year. Sometimes this may be at a particularly important part of the research, where important decisions about the shape of the thesis, or the future direction of research need to be made. For students admitted as candidate for a PhD prior to January 2000, the Department recommends that students may need to come to Dunedin up to three times a year. The duration of such visits to Dunedin may vary, but will not normally be for less than two days. Sometimes a more prolonged visit, during which contact with the supervisor(s) is extended over some days or more, may be desirable.

Supervision

13. A contract will generally be drawn up between the student and the supervisors in order to clarify the expectations of all parties. This should be discussed at initial meetings. The contract contained at the end of this booklet may be used. The contract may be altered as supervision proceeds.
14. A student normally has two or three supervisors; no PhD student will have only one supervisor. In the case of interdisciplinary study, or of the student being resident outside of Dunedin, at least one of the supervisors must come from the Department of Theology and Religion. The exact responsibilities of each of the supervisors will vary from student to student and will need to be agreed on the contract signed by each supervisor and the student. However, as a guide, generally there is a first supervisor, with whom the student interacts on a very regular basis and who is the first point of contact for the student in all matters. The first supervisor has primary responsibility for the supervision of the student and will be competent to advise on current literature and debate on the student’s topic.

The second and third supervisors may be chosen for their expertise in particular areas of the student’s research, or expertise in a wider area of relevance to the work. The second and third supervisors need not be

thoroughly conversant with the literature and debate on the student's topic. All supervisors will advise the student on matters of internal consistency, coherency, structure and flow of argument and cogency. Normally when the student has completed a significant piece of work (for example a chapter), this will be given to the second and third supervisors for comment. At times, the student may work more intensively with the second or third supervisor, for example when the student is working on a part of the thesis that relates directly to that supervisor's area of research expertise. In some cases, supervisors are in different locations. In these cases, all parties must discuss in advance how each supervisor will function.

The two or three supervisors will be in regular contact. All supervisors will participate in writing the annual report on the student's progress, and will be involved in any other reports or decisions involving confirmation of enrolment, upgrading from a Master's to a PhD, and so on.

15. Contingency plans will be made for any period when one of the supervisors is absent on leave. Where appropriate, a temporary supervisor may be appointed.
16. Regular meetings will be held between the student and the first supervisor over the whole course of the thesis. Less regular meetings will occur with other supervisors. The frequency of meetings can be varied by mutual consent. Fortnightly meetings with the first supervisor are likely to be appropriate at critical stages; at other times a monthly meeting may suffice, but meetings should not normally be less than once a month. At meetings, the student will report on what research has been undertaken since the last meeting and any problems that may have arisen should be discussed. The overall focus, shape and structure of the thesis should be discussed regularly, as should the timetable by which individual parts should be written and the thesis completed. The writing and completion of the thesis are ultimately the student's responsibility. The supervisor's role is to provide support, guidance and critical feedback on the work.
17. It is advisable to start writing the thesis as early as possible. This can seem very difficult to do, since there always appears to be more research to be done and as a result beginning the actual writing can be postponed endlessly. However, the student should not succumb to this temptation. Of course, beginning the writing of the thesis does not mean an end to research, and the writing process will lead to the discovery of new avenues of research. From this point on writing and reading should proceed in tandem. The student should begin the bibliography as soon as possible, and up-date it throughout. Footnotes should be written as writing proceeds; this will save much time later on.

Progress Reports

18. The student is required to make a full written report to the first supervisor after six months from enrolment, after one year from enrolment, and then annually on the anniversary of enrolment. The reports written after six months and after one year's work must show that the student has a clearly defined research topic and has done the preliminary work, including literature searching, to a satisfactory standard. A timetable for future work should also be given, against which subsequent reports can be measured. Later annual reports should give an outline of work done during the year, of progress made in terms of chapters written and of plans for the next year. Changes of emphasis, scope, methodology etc should be described and justified and a new timetable drawn up if necessary. A revised outline of the thesis should also be supplied if this has changed during the year. The student is also asked to give a date by which he or she hopes to complete the thesis. The supervisors then prepare a written report on the student's work, which will be shown to the student for comment and their signature and then submitted to the Head of the Department, who forwards it to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in the Division of Humanities, and on to the PhD Advisory Committee of the University.
19. It is important that problems are identified and tackled at an early stage. If difficulties emerge with respect to supervision or in any other way, then these should be discussed with the Head of Department or with the Convenor of the Postgraduate Committee.

Deferral

20. A student is required to be enrolled continuously for the entire period of his or her candidacy. However, a student may apply to withdraw or defer temporarily from study for a short period due to personal reasons beyond his or her control. If a student wishes to do this, then s/he should discuss the matter with the first supervisor. Approval should then be sought in advance through the Head of Department. A form needs to be completed for deferral or withdrawal; this can be obtained from the University's Research, Higher Degrees and Scholarships Office, or electronically at www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd/forms. Deferral has to be approved by the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in the Humanities Division. As a period of temporary withdrawal stops the clock in terms of time and tuition fees, Students Records will be notified. **Please note:** when the approved period of withdrawal has expired, *it is the responsibility of the student* either to re-enrol, or to seek approval from the Head of Department for a further deferral.

21. Theses should follow the format prescribed in the University Calendar under 'Presentation of Theses' and amplified in the booklet 'Notes on the Preparation of Theses' available from the University Library. This is also available electronically at www.library.otago.ac.nz/research/theses.html. Candidates should familiarise themselves with these requirements before they begin. Four bound copies of the thesis will be required. It is wise to submit these in soft binding initially, as any revisions which may be required can then be more easily made. The two copies which are retained by the University must be hard-bound before being placed in the Library.
22. Prior to submission, the primary supervisor will normally state in writing to the Head of the Department that he or she has no formal objection to the thesis being submitted. This is not an assurance that the thesis will pass, but an acknowledgement that it is at an appropriate stage to proceed to examination. The student is entitled to submit the thesis even without this declaration, but is strongly advised not to do so.
23. The thesis will be assessed by at least three examiners. Normally one of the three examiners will be a staff member of the University, one will be from within New Zealand and the third from overseas. The candidate's supervisor will not be an examiner, but may make a report on the work of the candidate for the examiners to consider. The examining process will be covered by an independent member of the University's academic staff, who may come from the Department or from another part of the University.

In their reports, examiners are asked to comment on the thesis and in particular to answer the following questions:

- Does the thesis comprise a coherent investigation of the chosen topic?
- Does the thesis deal with a topic of sufficient range and depth to meet the requirements of the degree?
- Does the thesis make an original contribution to knowledge in its field and contain material suitable for publication in an appropriate academic journal?
- Does the thesis meet internationally recognized standards for the conduct and presentation of research in the field?
- Does the thesis demonstrate both a thorough knowledge of the literature relevant to its subject and general field and the candidate's ability to exercise critical and analytical judgement of that literature?
- Does the thesis display mastery of appropriate methodology and/or theoretical material?

An oral examination can be held at the request of the student or any of the examiners. At present an oral examination is not a mandatory requirement.

24. The examiners may make one of the following recommendations:

- That the thesis should be accepted
- That the thesis should be accepted with minor editorial corrections
- That the thesis be accepted after amendments have been made to the satisfaction of the Convenor of Examiners in consultation with the Internal Examiner
- That the thesis be revised and resubmitted for examination
- That the thesis be recommended for another degree (e.g. MA or MTheol) and referred to the appropriate authority within the University
- That the thesis be rejected with no right of resubmission.

The recommendation is conveyed to the Research, Enterprise and International Office by the Convenor of Examiners, and the candidate is informed by the PhD administration of the Research, Enterprise and International Office.

Examination may take several weeks to complete, even where the examiners' verdict is that a thesis should pass without any further work.

25. Should the result be to award the PhD degree, the candidate will be required to forward two permanently-bound copies of the final version of the thesis to the Research, Enterprise and International Division, and complete a standard Library Declaration Form concerning the thesis. Copies of this form are available from the Research, Enterprise and International Division. This is also available electronically at www.library.otago.ac.nz/research/theses.html. One copy will be placed in the University Library and the Department will receive the second copy.

General Information

Master of Ministry and Doctor of Ministry Studies

For details of these programmes, please see the separate department booklet entitled *Master of Ministry and Postgraduate Diploma in Ministry*.

Handbooks

Students should be thoroughly familiar with the appropriate University Handbook:

Handbook for Research Masters' Degrees is available electronically at www.otago.ac.nz/study/masters/index.html

Handbook for PhD Study, is available electronically at www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd/handbook/index.html (as a downloadable PDF version or to read in conventional web-page format section by section)

Please also see the statement in this booklet (later in this section) *Essential Resources for Research Higher Degree Students*.

Academic Policies

The University's academic policies are available at <http://policy01.otago.ac.nz/policies/index.html>

These include:

- Senate Policy on Assessment of Student Performance: Principles and Guidelines
- Intellectual Property Rights of Graduate Students
- Academic Grievance Procedure For Students
- Guidelines For Responsible Practice In Research And Procedures For Dealing With Allegations Of Misconduct In Research (covers plagiarism)
- Regulations and Notes for the University of Otago Postgraduate Scholarships, Awards and Divisional Awards
- Policy on Externally Funded Research - Applications for External Funds - Grants and Contracts

Responsibilities of Students

- To be familiar with the regulations of the specific degree as printed in the University Calendar
- To consider any ethical issues which may need to be taken into account in the research project
- To inform the Postgraduate Committee if you are not happy with the supervision of your thesis
- To attend regularly the relevant Departmental seminar
- To present seminars on work in progress.
- To provide an annual written report on progress to your supervisor
- To follow the principles of the Supervision Agreement

Services and Support

Students and staff at the University of Otago are well supported by a range of academic, electronic, recreational and welfare services. These can be found at www.otago.ac.nz/services

Student Learning Centre

The Student Learning Centre, which is part of the Higher Education Development Centre, provides learning support, free of charge, to ALL enrolled students. Its services include:

- a workshop program designed to help students to improve their learning strategies and their generic skills;

- individual assistance with learning issues;
- on-line study skills advice;
- a student led mentoring programme for new students.

The website also has an information and resource page for students:
www.otago.ac.nz/services

Contact 479 5786 or email student-learning-centre@otago.ac.nz

PhD Workshops

Two different workshops for PhD candidates are presented regularly (about five times each year) by Dr Charles Tustin, Director, Research Higher Degrees and Scholarships:

Cracking the Start-Up Code

A two-hour orientation workshop for new PhD candidates. Issues covered include:

- progress-reporting
- setting goals
- working with supervisors
- support mechanisms
- PhD administration

Cracking the Finishing Code

A one-hour workshop for PhD candidates in the final stages of their PhD. Issues covered include:

- the examination process (just exactly how does it work?)
- submission requirements
- bridging grants
- graduation ceremony

Details are available from the Student Learning Centre (see above).

Remote Library Services

Any student studying through the University of Otago and living outside of Dunedin is eligible to use the services of the Remote Library Staff. A handbook is available from the Remote Library Services, Reference Department, Central Library, University of Otago, P.O. Box 56, Dunedin, telephone 0800 347 826, or email remote.services@otago.ac.nz. The web site is at www.library.otago.ac.nz/services/remote/index.html

ATLA (American Theological Library Association)

ATLAS Full Text Plus is produced by the American Theological Library Association's Center for Electronic Resources in Theology and Religion.

The ATLAS (American Theological Library Association Serials) project was created for religion scholars by religion scholars. It provides online versions of the entire runs of a core collection of more than fifty significant scholarly periodicals in the field of religion, most of which go back to 1949.

ATLAS journals represent a wide selection of Christian traditions (including Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Evangelical, and Pentecostal), Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Shinto, Taoism, Confucianism, and other religious traditions.

This database can be accessed via www.library.otago.ac.nz/databases/results.php?lcode=theo&dept=Theology

It is absolutely essential for research students to make full use of this resource.

Resource Library

There are copies of 300- and 400-level Research Essays, Master's and PhD theses. There are two files with lists: one for 300- and 400-level research essays and one for Master's and doctoral theses. Please feel free to look through these to get ideas on format, style etc. You may be able to borrow material, but please speak to the Departmental Administrator first.

Departmental Seminar

The Department holds regular research seminars in Biblical Studies, Religious Studies and Christian Thought and History / Pastoral Theology. **It is compulsory that postgraduate students resident in Dunedin attend and actively participate in these seminars.** At some point during their research, **students are expected to conduct a seminar** in which they present the findings of some of their research. Such a presentation is a very helpful way of gaining feedback and constructive comment on one's work. Please discuss this with your supervisor(s).

Scholarships and Grants

The following sources of financial aid are provided by the University:

- Postgraduate scholarships. Contact the University Scholarships Officer for information. For most postgraduate awards the closing date is 2 November. Prospective students should enquire at the Registry during September for information concerning these awards. Information is also available at www.otago.ac.nz/study/scholarships/#postgrad. Applicants are automatically considered for both University scholarships and Humanities Divisional scholarships.

- Part-time tutoring in the Department. Students who are interested in supplementing their income by this means should discuss this with their supervisors before the end of the preceding year. Unfortunately there is no guarantee that such work will be available.
- In compliance with the Senate agreement of October 1996, support for research-only Master's (i.e. students working on a thesis only) and PhD students is available from the Department in the form of reimbursement of approved research costs. Support is limited to \$500 per annum for one year's equivalent full-time study for a research Master's student and three years' equivalent full-time study for a PhD student. This means that if a Master's student is enrolled as a half-time student s/he would be entitled to expenses of up to \$250 for the year. The grants are reimbursements of approved costs for the following activities: library interloans, database searching, photocopying, thesis printing, binding and colour copying, postage and stationery, travel associated with research, miscellaneous consumables. Costs must have been incurred in activity related strictly to a student's research. *Original receipts must be provided in all cases; photocopies are not acceptable.* Claim forms will be sent to students who are eligible for this grant in or around March each year. All claims must be with the Department by mid-November in order for them to be processed by the Registry. Because we are funded on a year-by-year basis we cannot usually carry over unspent balances from one year to the next. If you are uncertain about of the balance of your funds, please contact the Departmental Administrator.
- Photocopying that is an academic requirement (that is, material for presentation at seminars) can be done on the departmental photocopier at no cost to you. For other photocopying, you are entitled to use the Library photocopiers; you can request that funds are placed on your ID card for use in the Library. The amount will be deducted from your \$500 allocation. Contact the Departmental Administrator.
- On completion of their degree PhD candidates may be eligible for a Postgraduate Publishing Award of up to \$5,000 for a maximum of three months. Please discuss this with your supervisor. There is no guarantee that such an application will be successful, but if you have reason for a grant it is always worth applying. The application goes to the University of Otago Research Committee.

Conference Funding

The Associate Dean of Graduate Studies has some funding to enable attendance at a conference either in New Zealand or overseas for a PhD student who is giving a

paper at a conference. Evidence must be provided that the paper has been accepted by the conference organisers. The deadlines for applications are **1 March, 1 July or 1 November**. Please contact the Head of Department in the first instance. Forms are available from www.otago.ac.nz/humanities/policies/index.html#postgrad

Accommodation

The Department has a postgraduate area on the first floor in the Humanities annexe at 97 Albany Street and also an office on the second floor of the Arts Building. All rooms are no-smoking areas. Priority for space will be given to PhD students, particularly those who are nearing submission. Students who are no longer enrolled must return keys to the Department.

Safety

The University has a duty of care towards staff and students. If you have any concerns about safety in the postgraduate annexe, you should inform the Departmental Safety Officer (DSO), currently the Departmental Administrator. Please ensure that you read the fire and emergency evacuation instructions on the noticeboard in 97 Albany Street. You are obliged to report any accidents or near-misses to the DSO. The Departmental First Aid Officer is currently the Administrative Assistant.

Computers

The Department is committed to providing networked computers in the communal area of the postgraduate annexe, and has a rolling programme to keep these up-to-date. However, the Department is not obliged, or committed to provide a computer for every graduate student. It will occasionally pass on to the graduate annexe older computers which have been used formerly by members of staff in the Department. This allows some students to have computers on their desks, but this is a privilege and not a right. If such computers cease to function, the Department is not committed to replacing them.

ITS holds numerous training courses throughout the year and postgraduate students may attend these. Details can be found at www.otago.ac.nz/its/training

Telephone

There is a telephone in 97 Albany Street. It is possible to make local calls. Students should note that we are charged at business rates, so please restrict telephone calls, or ask people to return the call. (Please remember that there are other postgraduates in Albany Street, and that whilst the telephone is engaged other people are not able

to get through.) If this facility is abused, the Department may restrict the telephone to incoming calls only.

Receiving Mail

Mail and any other notices will be put in the pigeon-hole allocated to postgraduates in the Department. Please make a habit of checking the pigeon-hole for mail and notices.

Please note that students who suspend their enrolment lose their departmental privileges regarding study space, computing facilities and photocopying. Please discuss this in advance with your supervisor.

disAbility

The Department encourages students to seek support if they find that they are having difficulty with their studies due to disability, temporary or permanent impairment, an injury, chronic illness or deafness.

Contact: Disability Information and Support
 Tel: 03 479 8235
 Email: disabilities@otago.ac.nz
 Website: www.otago.ac.nz/disabilities

Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, in the Division of Humanities

The Division has an Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, who oversees admissions, and gives advice to departments and also direct to students. Please contact the Humanities Division: www.otago.ac.nz/humanities, or email: adgs.humanities@otago.ac.nz

Graduate Research Student Liaison Committee (GRSLC)

This Committee comprises PhD and Masters students from all of the academic divisions, two international representatives and two Maori representatives. It is chaired by Dr Charles Tustin, Director, Research Higher Degrees and Scholarships, and has various University representatives in attendance. It meets six times a year. The main objective is to provide an official forum for students to discuss issues relating to graduate research at Otago, and members of the GRSLC may make recommendations for change to any appropriate processes or regulations, which would then be considered by the PhD Advisory Committee. Meeting dates, agendas, minutes and Committee members can be viewed at www.otago.ac.nz/administration/committees/grslc

If you have any issues that you would like the Committee to discuss please contact the appropriate representative.

Maori Student Support Officer

The Humanities Divisional Office has a Maori Student Support Officer. The main objectives of the post are to act as a point of contact for Maori students in the Division, to liaise between students, academic departments and student service providers, to gain knowledge about services available to Maori Humanities students inside and outside of the University, and to advise and support the Divisional Office on issues relating to Maori students, and on policy and strategic planning relating to Maori. Please contact the Humanities Division: www.otago.ac.nz/humanities

Pacific Islands Student Support Officer

The Humanities Divisional Office has a Pacific Islands Student Support Officer. The main objectives of the post are to act as a point of contact for Pacific Islands students in the Division, to liaise between students, academic departments and student service providers, to gain knowledge about services available to Pacific Islands Humanities students inside and outside of the University, and to advise and support the Divisional Office on issues relating to Pacific Islands students, and on policy and strategic planning relating to the Pacific Islands. Please contact the Humanities Division: www.otago.ac.nz/humanities

Humanities Common Room

There is a kitchen in the postgraduate annexe with tea and coffee-making facilities. However, the Humanities Common Room is also open to graduate students as well as staff, and there is tea, coffee, hot chocolate etc (some options incur a small cost). This is located on the first floor of the Arts Building, Room 1W9.

Happy Hours

The Department holds a Happy Hour twice a semester. Details are posted on noticeboards in the Department each time.

International Students

The University of Otago is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students, and the University's International Office is responsible for ensuring that university practice is compliant with the code. (This can be found at www.minedu.govt.nz) Information on International Student Advisors can be found at www.otago.ac.nz/international/otago005494.html

Finally...

Postgraduate study is very different from undergraduate study. Students work much more on their own, setting their own goals and timeframes in consultation with the supervisor. This can be a rewarding experience, but at times students may also find it isolating. If you need help, ask. Don't leave small problems to grow into larger ones. The following contacts are available:

- Other postgraduate students
- Your supervisor(s)
- The Head of Department or the Convenor of the Postgraduate Committee.

These people may be useful intermediaries if you are experiencing difficulties with supervision:

- Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Division of Humanities
- Director, Graduate Research Student Liaison

Further information

Further information on postgraduate study is available from:

Associate Professor Murray Rae
email: murray.rae@otago.ac.nz

Department of Theology and Religion
University of Otago
Box 56, Dunedin 9054
New Zealand

Tel: (64) 3 479 8901
Fax: (64) 3 479 5158

www.otago.ac.nz/theology
www.otago.ac.nz/religion

and on application procedures and financial matters from:

www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd

Further information on the PGDipMin and MMin is available from:

Professor Paul Trebilco
email: paul.trebilco@otago.ac.nz

Essential Resources for Research Higher Degree Students
[Approved by Senate, 23 October 1996, re-confirmed 10 July 2001]

APPROVED

The following recommendations:

- (i) that the University affirm that it recognizes the importance of enhancing the quality of the postgraduate training provided to its PhD and research Masters candidates;
- (ii) that, as part of the process of improving the quality of the research teaching of the University, the following be provided for all research degree candidates:

1. by the University –

Physical Resources

An appropriately equipped working and study / writing space, including secure storage; every endeavour is to be made to provide a quiet working space suitable for thesis writing when students are in the final write-up stage of their studies;

2. by the Pro-Vice-Chancellors and Heads of Departments –

Physical Resources

After-hours access to department facilities, provided both personal and physical safety requirements are met;

Support

- Access to appropriate computing resources
- Services such as access to email and appropriate internet (world wide web) communications, access to library facilities including interloans and database searching and access to a telephone and a facsimile machine, to the value of \$500 per annum for one year's equivalent full-time study for a research Master's student and 3 year's equivalent full-time study for a PhD student.

- (iii) that the following statements of policy be adopted:

1. The acceptance of a research degree candidate represents the commitment to provide the essential resources specified above. Students should be advised, in writing, at the time of acceptance, of any additional support that is offered;

2. Comments by candidates and their supervisors on the adequacy and level of support received by students shall be included in PhD students' annual progress reports.

**Preferred Areas of Supervision and Main Research Interests of
Theology and Religion Staff**

See the departmental web pages for further details on staff:

www.otago.ac.nz/theology

www.otago.ac.nz/religion

Lynne Baab

lynne.baab@otago.ac.nz

03 479 5358

Preferred areas of supervision:

Congregational Life and Leadership; Christian Spiritual Disciplines; Spiritual Formation

Main research interests:

The Future of the Church; Teamwork in Congregations; The Arts in Congregations; Congregational Websites

Erica Baffelli

erica.baffelli@otago.ac.nz

03 479 8795

Preferred areas of supervision:

Asian religions; New religious movements; Religion and media

Main research interests:

New Japanese religious movements; Religion and mass-media communication; Religion and popular culture; New Japanese religious movements and *nihonjinron*; New religious movements in Europe

Andrew Bradstock

andrew.bradstock@otago.ac.nz

03 479 8450

Preferred areas of supervision:

The relationship between faith and politics in contemporary contexts; Public theology; Religious and political thought from the Reformation to the present day; Christian socialism; Liberation and other 'developing world' theologies

Main research interests:

Public theology, particularly in an Aotearoa-New Zealand context; Theological responses to 'global' issues; Radical religion and politics; The use of the Bible in political discourse

Tim Cooper

tim.cooper@otago.ac.nz

03 479 5760

Preferred areas of supervision:

Seventeenth-century English religious history and the Reformation

Main research interests:

Richard Baxter, Puritanism and radical religion in seventeenth-century England

Greg Dawes

gregory.dawes@otago.ac.nz

03 479 8408

Preferred areas of supervision:

18th- and 19th-century biblical criticism; 18th-to 19th-century theories of religion; History and faith in the study of religion; The historical Jesus question; 20th century philosophical hermeneutics

Main research interests:

Philosophy of religion; Darwinism and Christianity; the methodological naturalism (or methodological atheism) of the modern sciences

James Harding

james.harding@otago.ac.nz

03 479 5392

Preferred areas of supervision:

History and religion of ancient Israel and Judah; The Deuteronomistic History; Israelite Wisdom; Second Temple Judaism; Postcolonial biblical criticism

Main research interests:

Israelite Wisdom; Jewish Apocalyptic Literature; Dead Sea Scrolls; Postcolonial Biblical Criticism

Chris Holmes

christopher.holmes@otago.ac.nz
03 479 5394

Preferred areas of supervision:

The doctrine of God; Christology; theological anthropology; Barth; Bonhoeffer; Christian doctrine.

Main research interests:

The Christian doctrine of God and the theology of Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Murray Rae

murray.rae@otago.ac.nz
03 479 5393

Preferred areas of supervision:

The work of Søren Kierkegaard; History and Biblical Hermeneutics; Theological Ethics; Theology and the Built Environment - especially Architecture; All areas of Christian Doctrine.

Main research interests:

The work of Søren Kierkegaard; History and Biblical Hermeneutics; Theology and the Built Environment-especially Architecture; Christian Doctrine.

Will Sweetman

will.sweetman@otago.ac.nz
03 479 8793

Preferred areas of supervision:

Asian religions, historical and theoretical questions in the study of religion, inter-religious encounters in colonial contexts, Christian mission in Africa and Asia.

Main research interests:

History of the study of religion, eighteen-century orientalism, religion in South India, environmentalist rhetoric in Asian religions, contemporary south Asian Buddhism.

Paul Trebilco

paul.trebilco@otago.ac.nz

03 479 8798

Preferred areas of supervision:

The Historical Jesus; The Johannine Literature (John's Gospel, 1-3 John and Revelation); Acts of the Apostles; Pauline Theology; The Pastoral Epistles; Unity and Diversity in the New Testament

Main research interests:

The Early Christians in Ephesus; The Pastoral Epistles; The Johannine Literature; Diaspora Judaism.

Appendix 1

Guidelines on Research Essays (380's, 480's and 490's)

Some guidance on method and presentation:

1. You and Your Supervisor

Keep in touch with your Supervisor regularly. Use your Supervisor as a sounding board for your ideas. Often, for example, early visions of the piece of work will have to be revised. At each meeting arrange a subsequent one. Do not avoid contact as a delaying tactic. Sometimes a meeting is just what is needed to get motivation and new ideas flowing again. Remember that your supervisor is there to guide you, to direct you to important reading, help you to avoid traps and so on, but that the final responsibility for the research essay is yours.

2. Time

Time is your main enemy. Your outline in detail should be ready by the middle of March. Do not do all your reading, and then begin writing. Try to read on one section or theme at a time. You should give your supervisor drafts of sections of the work from quite early in the year. Your supervisor will not be able to give you much help unless you submit most of your work in draft form by mid-August. Remember that the final copy of all research essays and dissertations has to be submitted by **30 September**. Please work back from that date.

3. Reading

Keep accurate notes of your reading, but not too full ones. If you use ordinary paper for notes, have a system of crossreferences, and keep careful note of titles and page numbers. Many people have found file cards are best for notes and cross referencing, with one card for each significant area of your research. If you are using a computer, don't just let material lie on your disks. Keep bringing it up, comparing it, seeing where it fits into the larger pattern.

4. Word Limits

Remember that your **380** Research Essay is only 6,500-8,500 words long, and your **480 or 490** Research Essay, 15,000 words long. These may seem long at the start, but it will soon seem very constricting. So don't try to cover too much territory, and don't make too high demands of yourself. In the nature of things, this cannot be a final or exhaustive treatment of your subject.

5. Focus

After initial reading, the most difficult exercise is to discover the main thrust of your work, what theme interests you most, what it is that you really want to discover for **yourself**. So it is very important to focus your topic and to work out clear chapter headings, and an idea of the content of each chapter at an early stage. One of your aims in the first few weeks should be to write a one page outline to discuss with your supervisor, and a concise contents page. You also should start writing fairly soon. This is always difficult, because it means coming down from your lofty dreams to the reality of what you know and what you do not know, but the challenge of writing it up will point out the gaps in your research and thinking. Recall here what D.F. Strauss wrote: "We are apt to combine many things half-dreamily in our own minds which, when called upon to give them distinct outlines in the forms of words and sentences, we discover to be wholly incoherent."

The other key point is to determine what your main source material is to be, the body of writings or clinical data which will anchor your research essay. Some Research Essays are untidy and sprawling because they hesitate between too many areas. On the whole, a more limited focus is likely to be the best one.

6. **Presentation and Acknowledgments**

Lay out the main divisions and subdivisions of the chapters in a way which is helpful for the reader. Unless you can do that, you will probably not be clear in your own mind. Presentation is important. Begin with a statement of intention, and provide a conclusion to sum up your findings. ANY quotation must be acknowledged, but students should also acknowledge the sources of any ideas which are not their own. It is unethical to present an argument as your own if in fact you got it from someone else (plagiarism). Give a full bibliography, listing both primary and secondary sources. Reference books should not normally be included, unless you quote them. After you have written the final draft it is often a good idea to get someone else to read it to pick up typing mistakes etc.

7. **Bibliography and Style**

For a guide to how to present a Bibliography and other details of style, see the Department's Study and Style Guide booklet and the booklet, "Notes on the Preparation of Theses" available from the University Library (www.library.otago.ac.nz/pdf/2008_preparation_of_theses.pdf).

8. **Copies**

Two copies of the Research Essay should be handed in to the Departmental Office, one of which will be returned to you. Soft or spiral binding is fine, and this can be done at the University Library or at the University Printery.

Enjoy your research essay! It may well be the piece of work you get most out of from your whole course.

Appendix 2

Department of Theology and Religion Postgraduate Supervision Agreement 380, 480, 490, Master's and PhD Theses

This document is also available on the Department's web page: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/theology>

Student's Name:

Responsible Supervisor/s:

Degree:

Full or Part Time:

Commencement date:

Expected completion date:

We agree on the following:

1. How many hours per week is the student expected to spend on the thesis?
(This is particularly important for part-time students)
2. Is an application for Ethical Approval necessary for the research?
(The supervisor must submit the final application. No work involving interaction with living human subjects can begin until approval is obtained.)
3. Meetings will enable:
 - the student to seek guidance and report on progress;
 - the supervisor/s to monitor progress and provide feedback on research activities;
 - both student and supervisor/s will record notes on research guidance, progress and feedback.
4. Meetings between student and supervisor will be held on:
 - (a) during teaching semesters:
 - (b) at other times, meetings by following arrangement:

5. Contact between the student and the second supervisor will occur:

The student will inform the first supervisor about the meetings.

6. Contact between the student and the third supervisor will occur:

The student will inform the first supervisor about the meetings.

7. Is the student to be resident outside of Dunedin? Yes/No

- If the student is resident outside Dunedin, then what arrangements for study and supervision have been made in the student's location.
- The student agrees to maintain regular contact with their supervisors. "Regular contact" is defined as making contact with their Dunedin supervisor, whether by letter, phone, email or in person at least once a month. This should be to discuss progress.
- For students admitted as candidate for a PhD from January 2000, the Department reserves the right to require the student to come to Dunedin up to three times a year. Sometimes this may be at a particularly important part of the research, where important decisions about the shape of the thesis, or the future direction of research need to be made. For students admitted as candidate for a PhD prior to January 2000, the Department recommends that students may need to come to Dunedin up to three times a year.

8. When any agreed meetings and deadlines cannot be met, student or supervisor will contact the other person as soon as possible (including using home telephone numbers if appropriate).

9. Communication between meetings will occur by:

10. Written work will be submitted by the student in advance of meetings to discuss the work. How many days prior to the meeting will the student hand in work?

11. Drafts will be read for content. Drafts must be computer generated, fully proofed for grammar, punctuation, spelling and referencing to a reasonable standard. They should be in 12-point type, one-and-a-half spacing, and printed on one side of the page.

12. Feedback on student's work will be provided by writing on the students work and orally by the supervisor within _____ of its submission.

13. Progress reports:

For PhD students - written progress reports are required six months after enrolment, and generally then at twelve months, and annually thereafter. You will be contacted by the Department and asked to write these reports.

14. Department seminars will be used as a medium for students to broaden their knowledge and present a paper to the seminar at least once during their time of study.

When will the student present a paper to the Departmental seminar?

15. Phases of research activity will be identified and reviewed.

16. Outline any other issues that are relevant to this project.

This agreement was negotiated and accepted on:

Date:

We agree to revisit the terms of this agreement at the latest by:

Date:

Signed:

Student

First Supervisor