

Master of Theology

2023-2024 Program Handbook



CENTRAL BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Disclaimer

This handbook is prepared to provide our students with information and guidelines. Central Baptist Theological Seminary of Minneapolis can change or amend policies and practices described in this handbook at any time, with or without advance notice.

If you have any questions regarding this disclaimer or the contents of this handbook, please discuss them with the director of Th.M. studies.

Notice of Revision

This handbook is a revised version of any previous Th.M. handbook issued by Central Baptist Theological Seminary of Minneapolis.

This handbook supersedes and revokes all prior versions of a handbook or any memo, bulletin, policy or procedure, on any subject discussed in this handbook that has been issued prior to the date occurring below.

This revised Th.M handbook is effective beginning July 1, 2023.

Central Baptist
Theological Seminary

Master of Theology

2023-2024
Program Handbook

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GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

On behalf of the faculty of Central Seminary, thank you for your interest in our Master of Theology degree. The Th.M. is a post-graduate graduate program designed to introduce students to scholarly research and writing.

This is an ideal program for pastors and seminary graduates who desire to deepen their understanding of theology and Scripture, improve their writing skills, teach at the undergrad or graduate level or pursue a terminal degree such as the Doctor of Philosophy.

Students will be academically challenged and encouraged to master categories by reading broadly and thinking critically. They will also engage in advanced research under the guidance of a professor and participate in peer and faculty critiques/reviews. Courses within the program represent areas of specific faculty expertise.

Additionally, students are able to become members of international academic societies and take part in scholarly discussions by submitting paper proposals to be read at society meetings.

We look forward to you enrolling in the program and joining the myriad of theologians and Christian scholars who have gone before. Please let me know if I can assist you in any way.



Brett Williams, Ph.D.
Acting Director of Th.M. Studies
bwilliams@centralseminary.edu

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Appeals

Appeals on any matter of academic policy may be submitted in writing to the director of the Th.M. program, who will present the appeal to the Th.M. committee.

Absences and Tardies

The Th.M. program is a community of learning. The face-to-face interaction of students and professors with each other is at the heart of the program. Therefore, students are expected to attend class regularly, participate in class discussion, and complete course requirements. For a normal three-semester-hour course, each student will be excused for six hours of classroom absence. Each absence beyond this limit will lower the student's final grade average by four percentage points.

A student who arrives in class less than 15 minutes late, leaves class less than 15 minutes early, or absents himself during class time for less than 15 minutes will be considered tardy. Three tardies will be treated as an absence. A student who is tardy is responsible to notify the professor before class is dismissed.

Any nonattendance of greater than 15 minutes duration will be treated as an absence.

Any exceptions to the above attendance policy can be granted only by faculty action. Students should submit typewritten requests for exceptions to the director of the Th.M. program. Requests must list all absences and state the reason or reasons for each absence. See Withdrawal from Courses for more information.

Academic Status

Every new student is automatically placed on provisional status. As the degree goal is scholarly engagement, writing is an important part of this program. Therefore, during the fall term of his first and second years, each student will write a paper under the guidance of his advisor. The student will present and defend the paper before the entire faculty and his peers.

The student will earn a grade which will result in one of the following:

- Passing which results in the removal of the provisional status
- Passing which results in the student remaining on provisional status for a second term
- Failing which results in the student being placed on probation or possibly dismissed

Appealing Academic Status

Every student has the right to appeal his academic status. The appeal should take the

following steps:

1. The student should discuss his status with his advisor.
2. If the student is not satisfied, he may write an appeal to the director of the Th.M. program.
3. If the student is not satisfied, he may write an appeal to the vice president of academic affairs.
4. If the student is not satisfied, he may write an appeal to the full faculty.

Approval: At whichever stage of appeal, the student will be notified of his status in the program, and he will be advised accordingly.

Denial: If the appeal is denied, the student will be notified as soon as possible, so he may appeal to the next step, or be advised accordingly. The faculty's decision is final.

Academic Probation and Dismissal

Three scenarios determine whether a student may continue in the Th.M. program:

- The major paper during his first term
- His cumulative grade point average
- Doctrinal or moral deviation

If a student is unable to produce a satisfactory paper during his first term, the Th.M. committee may place the student on academic probation or dismiss him from the Th.M. program. If the student is placed on academic probation, he must enroll in one class for the following term, and receive a B or better in the class to remain in the program. Otherwise, the Th.M. committee may dismiss a student from the program.

In addition to academic dismissal, the seminary reserves the right to dismiss students whose public or private behavior violates the standards located in the Code of Ethics, or whose development of professional skills is not satisfactory. Under any of these circumstances, the student is ineligible for readmission.

Academic Load

Six hours of coursework per term or twelve hours per year is considered full time in the Th.M. program.

Registration

The registration process is online at www.centralseminary.edu. under Populi, the seminary's student management software. The registration process is two-fold. First, students complete and submit the online registration form. Second, they pay the registration fee either online through Populi, by mailing in a check, or calling the seminary with a credit card number. Both steps must be completed or the registration is

not valid. Open registration generally occurs three months before each seminar. Course syllabi are available to students upon registration. Late registrations will incur a late registration fee.

Independent Study

Students may take a maximum of six credits independent study. Students will register for independent study courses at registration, but must have their advisor sign off on the request. The advisor and the student will agree on the requirements for the course. Because an independent study course does not meet, the requirements should amount to 135 hours of work.

Course Extensions

In the case of research seminars, course extensions will not be granted.

Grading

Postgrad students are doing postgraduate work. Therefore, student assignments will be graded more rigorously than assignments completed as part of basic seminary education. No grade lower than B- will be credited to the student's work toward graduation.

Central Seminary uses the following grading criteria in assigning letter grades:

Letter	Percentage	Grade Points
A	96-100	4.0
A-	94-95	3.7
B+	92-93	3.3
B	89-91	3.0
B-	87-88	2.7
C+	85-86	2.3
C	81-84	2.0
C-	79-80	1.7
D+	77-78	1.3
D	72-76	1.0

D-	70-71	0.7
F	0-69	0.0
INC	Student Missing Work*	
NG	Professor Missing Grade*	
WP	Withdraw Pass*	
WF	Withdraw Fail*	
P/F-P	Pass* (of a pass/fail course)	
P/F-F	Fail* (of a pass/fail course)	
AU-S	Audit Satisfactory*	
AU-U	Audit Unsatisfactory*	

* Does not factor into GPA

When a student repeats a course, all grades will appear on the permanent record and will be calculated in the cumulative GPA, excluding WP and WF. See *Repetition of Courses* in the catalog.

Withdrawal from Courses

In order to withdraw from a course, students must notify the seminary office in writing. Students who cancel their registration at least eight weeks prior to the beginning of a postgraduate seminar will not be charged tuition for the course (though the registration fee is non-refundable). Students who withdraw after that will be charged according to the refund schedule and will receive a WF as a grade. Once the seminar has begun, all students who withdraw from the course will receive a WF. After the seminar, all students who withdraw from the course will receive an F.

Continuation in the Program

The Th.M. program is structured around three terms: Spring (January-May), Summer (June-July), and Fall (September-December). After beginning work in the Th.M. program, the student must continue to take at least one course or seminar (4 hours credit) during two of the three terms in any given year, until work on the degree has been completed. Under no circumstance may a student fail to enroll in and complete a course two terms in a row. Failure to meet this continuation requirement will result in the charge of a continuation fee for the second term during which the student fails to

enroll in and complete a course. If a student fails to register for and complete a course for a third successive term, he will be reviewed for removal from the program. Students who find it necessary to miss more than a single term of classes should consider appealing for a leave of absence. See *Leave of Absence* for more information.

Statute of Limitations

Although it is designed to be completed within three years, the Th.M. program must be completed within five years after formal acceptance into the program.

Extensions to this limit will be granted only in exceptional cases, upon recommendation of the director of the Th.M. program, and upon a favorable vote of the Th.M. committee. If the faculty votes to grant an extension, the student must pay a continuation fee for each term until he completes his degree or withdraws from the program.

Leave of Absence

Students who must interrupt their Th.M. studies may apply for a leave of absence by addressing an explanatory letter to the director of the Th.M. program. The leave of absence allows the student to take a year away from the program without financial penalty. The student, however, remains under the statute of limitations. Leaves of absence must be granted by the Th.M. committee and are intended for exceptional circumstances only.

Withdrawal from the Program

Once a student has been accepted into the Th.M. program, he is regarded as a student of the seminary and is bound by all of its policies. If at any time after acceptance the student desires to withdraw from the program, he must notify the director of the Th.M. program in writing of his decision. Until written notice is received, the student is still under the seminary's policies, statute of limitations, and fees. The student is required to settle all financial accounts with the seminary upon withdrawal.

Graduation Requirements

- The program must be completed within five years.
- A cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B) must be achieved.
- A written masters thesis must be defended before the faculty.

The Master of Theology program is designed to enhance the research abilities of students through the seminar approach. The degree may be completed in three years.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Nature of the Program

The Master of Theology degree is not simply a teaching degree, though those who desire to teach at the college level will want to pursue it. The Th.M. program emphasizes intensified study of the Bible, theology, and related subjects. Those who complete the Th.M. degree can expect a broader and richer ministry in the Word of God wherever they may serve. The program initiates students into the scholarly disciplines of research and writing, though at a less sustained level than they would encounter in an academic doctoral program. The Th.M. is the ideal program for students who desire more intense study beyond the standard ministerial degree, but who are not attracted to the more sustained rigors of the Th.D. or Ph.D.

Purpose of the Program

The purpose of the Master of Theology program is to initiate students into the scholarly disciplines of research and writing.

Objectives of the Program

Each student who completes the Th.M. program at Central Seminary will be able to:

- Demonstrate competent research and writing skills
- Demonstrate an expanded knowledge of the fields of biblical and theological studies
- Demonstrate mastery of a particular area of academic specialization

Faculty Organization and Responsibilities

The Th.M. program has several divisions within the faculty. The following is a “User’s Guide” to explain how the faculty divides responsibility for the Th.M. students.

Master of Theology Committee

The Th.M. committee functions as a subset of the faculty. The members of the committee are comprised of all members of the Central Seminary faculty with an earned academic doctorate. The vice president of academic affairs will also sit on this committee as a voting member. The registrar will sit on the committee as an ex-officio member of the committee and will serve as secretary. The purpose of the Th.M. committee is to streamline Th.M. issues in order to make the program run smoothly. The committee is the first line of consultation and support for the director of the Th.M. program.

The following faculty members comprise the Th.M. committee:

Dr. Brett Williams, Acting Director

Dr. Jon Pratt, Vice President of Academic Affairs
Dr. Matt Shrader
Dr. Mark Bruffey, Registrar

The Th.M. committee will meet as needed to oversee the program. It will approve each student's abstract and proposal for the thesis. When necessary, the committee will make recommendations to the faculty.

Director of Th.M. Program

The director of the Th.M. program is appointed by the vice president of academic affairs in conjunction with the Th.M. committee. He is charged with the day-to-day operations of the program, including administration of every aspect of the program.

Thesis Committee

The committee is made up of the advisor and one or two other professors appointed as readers by the director of the program in consultation with the student and his advisor. An outside reader, chosen by the director in consultation with the student and his advisor, may also be contacted. Both the advisor and the readers will ordinarily be members of the Central Seminary faculty—full-time, part-time, or adjunct. The outside reader will ordinarily be someone not connected with Central Seminary but a member of the academic or professional community in which the student is writing who is deemed to be suitably equipped to evaluate the project for content, argumentation, and conclusions.

Advisor

The advisor will guide the student in the selection of the thesis topic and supervise the preparation of the prospectus. Once the advisor is satisfied that the student has a valid topic and has written a well thought-out prospectus, then he will advise the student that the prospectus is ready for submission to the committee.

Reader

It will be the duty of the readers to read and advise on the prospectus once it has been approved by the advisor. In every case, the committee is reading for content, argumentation, and conclusions, not necessarily for grammatical details.

Non-Degree Students

A student in the non-degree program may take up to 25 percent of the coursework required for a degree program either for credit or audit. In the Th.M. program, 25 percent equals two courses or six credits. Auditors follow the audit policies in the catalog. Credits earned can be transferred into the Th.M. program at a later date, assuming the successful completion of the standard application process. Once a

non-degree application is accepted, the student may take courses for up to three years. Non-degree students are not eligible for Central Seminary's scholarships or awards.

Structure of the Program

Courses in the Master of Theology program are primarily research seminars in structure. The requirements for each course are divided into three areas: pre-seminar requirements, seminar requirements, and post-seminar requirements. Students may also teach a graduate-level course under the supervision of a full-time faculty member.

Required Courses (14 hours)

NT 800	4	NT Core Seminar
OT 800	4	OT Core Seminar
RS 800	2	Guided Research Paper
ST 800	4	Seminar in Hermeneutics & Historiography

Elective Courses (12 hours)

_____	4	Chosen Discipline
_____	4	Chosen Discipline
_____	4	Chosen Discipline

Thesis (4 hours)

Total 30 hours

Distance Education

Every Th.M. course is offered through distance education in addition to the residential classes. The distance education medium is synchronous, meaning that students participate live in classroom lectures and discussions without being physically present on campus. Each classroom is equipped with advanced software and hardware, high-definition cameras, monitors, and microphones to allow full integration and interaction. At times, everyone in the course will participate remotely. If this is the case, the professor will usually lead the class from his office. Because the classes are synchronous, coursework, attendance policies, and other class stipulations remain the same as in the residential program.

Thesis

The thesis demonstrates the student's ability to sustain a full-length line of research and argument. It is to make an original contribution by significantly advancing the academic conversation. The thesis will be evaluated on the basis of its breadth of research, precision of thought, intellectual content, literary excellence, and compositional structure. The thesis must be written in conformity with the current edition of Kate L. Turabian, *Guidelines for Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. The thesis must also conform to any in-house formal requirements.

The student should begin planning the thesis very early in the Th.M. program. If possible, courses should be selected that will prepare the student for the thesis. Before submitting an application for approval of a thesis topic, the student should seek counsel from the director of the Th.M. program and a faculty advisor. The advisor will guide the student through the entire process involved in completing the thesis. The advisor becomes the student's advocate in all matters relating to the thesis committee or the faculty. The process includes the following steps.

Approval of Topic

Application forms for approval of the Th.M. thesis topic are available online. The form should be completed under the guidance of a faculty advisor and submitted to the seminary office for faculty approval no later than August 15 of the year the student intends to graduate. A committee of the faculty will be assigned to the thesis after the topic is approved.

Prospectus

The prospectus takes the form of a section-by-section summary of the anticipated thesis. Its structure should reflect that of the thesis, including chapter divisions and major sections. The prospectus should also include a comprehensive bibliography of the sources that the student has consulted in preparation for the thesis. The prospectus should include less than 20 pages of text and should be written in strict academic form. The prospectus must be submitted to the registrar's office for committee approval no later than October 31 of the year the student intends to graduate.

Front Matter and Chapter

The first draft of the front matter and first chapter must be submitted to the registrar's office no later than December 12 of the year the student intends to graduate. The draft should be in good form and should reflect the precise use of the English language. From the student's point of view, it should be a finished draft, even though the faculty is likely to require changes. An updated bibliography should be submitted.

First Draft

A completed first draft of the thesis must be submitted to the registrar's office no later than January 16 of the year the student intends to graduate. A first draft is a completed paper or chapter, edited for grammar, spelling, and form. It is submitted to the student's advisor for the first reading. The advisor will read for content and argument, noting minor grammar, spelling, or form issues. If the advisor notes an egregious lack of editing on the student's part, the advisor need not read the entire draft but may return it to the student to be cleaned up.

Defense Draft

A defense draft must be submitted to the seminary office no later than March 6. A defense draft is a completed thesis edited for grammar, spelling, and form, which in the opinion of the advisor is ready for submission to the student's thesis committee. The paper may contain a few minor spelling, grammatical, or format errors, but is in essentially a correct and completed form. If all the members of the committee are satisfied that the paper has no major flaws in structure, argument, documentation, or form, the student is ready for his oral defense. If major flaws exist in the paper, the readers may ask the student's advisor to have the student address the problems noted. Once the whole committee is satisfied that the significant issues have been addressed and that the paper is in a suitable form for defense, the corrected defense draft is turned in to the program director, and an oral defense is scheduled.

Defense

Once the committee has approved the completed or corrected draft of the thesis, the student is required to defend it verbally before the faculty. Defenses will normally be scheduled during March. Students who miss the deadline for defending their theses may not be permitted to graduate until the following year.

Grading of the Thesis

The student's committee will assign a grade to the thesis based upon the written work in the corrected draft and the oral defense. The grade will assume that necessary alterations will be made before the final draft is submitted. If these changes are lacking, the grade may be altered or the student may be denied graduation. The grade will appear on the student's transcript, but not on the thesis itself.

Final Draft

After satisfactorily completing the oral examination, the candidate will complete any required changes to the thesis. The changes may include matters of content, style, or form. The final draft must receive approval from the director of library services.

Library Submission

After the final draft has been approved, the student must submit at least three copies to the registrar's office no later than May 1. These will include two paper copies for Central Seminary's library, one of which will be bound. A third copy is to be burned onto a compact disc or loaded onto a portable memory stick in pdf format. All paper copies should be printed in non-water soluble type on acid-free paper with at least a 20 percent rag content. For a fee, students may also submit an additional copy (or copies) of the thesis to be bound for their own use. The additional copy must meet the same print and paper requirements as the other copies.

Course Descriptions

All courses are four (4) credit hours (with the exception of RS 800 which is 2 credit hours). Consult the Program Structure for the Th.M. program in the Academic Programs section of the catalog for course requirements.

HT 801 Protestant Thought in 19th-Century America

This seminar will introduce students to leading Protestant theologians and theological movements of the 19th century. Special attention will be given to primary text interaction. European and American contexts will both be considered and compared with a primary focus on the American scene.

HT 802 Baptist Theologians

An investigation into representative Baptist theologians with special attention to the peculiarities which characterize each and to outstanding contributions that each has made to Baptist theology as a whole.

NT 800 NT Core Seminar

An advanced survey of the field of New Testament studies. This course will include an examination of the historical backgrounds to the New Testament, a review of the history of the interpretation of the New Testament, and an overview of the methods and conclusions of New Testament biblical theology.

NT 801 Biblical Theology of Jesus

An examination of the theology of Jesus with an emphasis upon the content, history, and construction of this theology.

NT 802 Seminar on Paul and the Law

An examination of the Pauline theology of the law with an emphasis upon current approaches to the subject and with the goal of formulating a coherent understanding of this vital subject.

NT 803 Biblical Theology of Sanctification

A biblical-theological study of the doctrine of sanctification with an emphasis upon the history, current models, and content of this doctrine.

OT 800 OT Core Seminar

An advanced survey of the field of Old Testament studies. This course will include an examination of the historical backgrounds of the Old Testament, a review of the history of the interpretation of the Old Testament, and an overview of the foundational theology of the Old Testament with special focus on the Pentateuch.

OT 801 Advanced Hebrew Reading and Grammar

Intensified reading in a variety of Old Testament literary genres and special studies in the historic development of the Hebrew language with a detailed analysis of both Hebrew linguistics and the Masoretic system of accents.

OT 802 Exegesis and Exposition of Narrative

A study of exegetical methods and homiletical structure for narrative giving special attention to elements of a narrative plot, characterization, and dialogue using 1 and 2 Samuel as sample texts. Additional attention is given to drawing situationally and dispensationally appropriate applications to the New Testament believer.

OT 803 Exegesis and Exposition of Poetry

A study of exegetical methods and homiletical structure for Psalms giving special emphasis to poetic structure and content of the various subgenres of Psalms. Additional attention is given to drawing situationally and dispensationally appropriate applications to the New Testament believer.

RS 800 Guided Research Paper

In consultation with their advisor, students will write a paper approximately 20–25 pages in length. Students may use this paper to explore potential thesis topics or areas of interest within their discipline.

RS 899 Th.M. Thesis

Th.M. Thesis

ST 800 Seminar in Hermeneutics and Historiography

Traces the development of modern and postmodern hermeneutics from F. D. E. Schleiermacher onwards, utilizing the writing of history as a lens through which to view the impact of the hermeneutical debate upon the Geisteswissenschaften. Includes a focus upon the present state of the hermeneutical problem as it applies to the fields of

historical and systematic theology.

ST 801 Seminar in Theological Method

Investigates critically the sources from which theology has been developed within the Christian tradition and evaluates their bearing upon the work of theology today.

ST 802 Seminar in Faith and Reason

This course will survey Western religious philosophy to compare and contrast theories and works of various thinkers in regards to the connection and discord between theology and philosophy with a particular focus on faith and rationality.

ST 803 Seminar in Modern Theological Thought

Surveys and compares the principal theological developments from the emergence of religious liberalism onward. This seminar emphasizes non-conservative theologies and offers evaluation from the perspective of biblical orthodoxy.

ST 804 Seminar in Contemporary Theological Problems

Selects and focuses upon a particular problem in current theology, exploring its foundations in and implications for exegetical, systematic, historical, biblical, and philosophical theology and related fields.

ST 805 Seminar in Advanced Trinitarianism

This course will examine the development of the doctrine of the Trinity, including its elucidation through the ecumenical creeds. It will also give attention to its relationship with systematic theology in the twentieth century as well as contemporary Trinitarian debates.

Distance Education

Technology Requirements

- PC, laptop, or tablet
- 4 GB of RAM – video streaming
- Zoom Application
- An internet connection – broadband wired or wireless (3G or 4G/LTE)
- Hardwired via Ethernet cable or no more than 25' from modem
- Headset (ear and microphone) (e.g. Apple headphones)
- Speakers and a microphone – built-in or USB plug-in or wireless Bluetooth
- A webcam or HD webcam – built-in or USB plug-in, or HD cam or HD camcorder with video capture card
- See the Zoom website for further information

Etiquette

While technology is able to bring the classroom discussion to the personal computer, there are several things to remember that will ensure that the distance and residential students have a good academic and professional experience.

- Room with a closed door – Distance students must remember that they are on camera and their face is showing on a monitor in the classroom. The student must be in a room with a closed door to ensure no unwanted interruptions such as children, spouses, pets, etc.
- Mute microphone until you speak – The software picks up on sound and will automatically bring the student's screen to the forefront of the classroom monitor. It is best to mute the microphone until you are ready to speak.
- Well-lit room – Any dark or blurry figure is a distraction to other students. Make sure you are in a well-lit room with the camera appropriately placed.
- Dress – A student should not be distracting in his/her attire and should be dressed modestly.

Meeting with Professors

With the Zoom platform, there can be one-on-one meetings (chat) between a student and a faculty/cabinet member. These meetings will be arranged via email or phone as needed by either the instructor/cabinet or student. In effect, this is the same as a personal meeting. This will ensure that a distance student has the same ability to contact and/or meet with a member of the faculty/cabinet as a residential student.

Technology Troubleshooting

If there is an issue with the technology, the student is to contact it@centralseminary.edu or troubleshoot at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206175806-Top-Questions>.

Distance students should not contact professors for technology help.

Précis Approval

Student Name: _____

Title: _____

Committee Signatures:

Supervisor _____ Date _____

Second Reader _____ Date _____

Director of Th.M. Studies _____ Date _____

Approved by the faculty (signature and date)

signature and date

signature and date

signature and date

signature and date

Comments: (for office use)

Prospectus Approval

Student Name: _____

Title: _____

Committee Signatures:

Supervisor _____ Date _____

Second Reader _____ Date _____

Director of Th.M. Studies _____ Date _____

Approved by the faculty (signature and date)

signature and date

signature and date

signature and date

signature and date

Comments: (for office use)

Defense Approval

Student Name: _____

Program: Th.M.

Title: _____

My signature below indicates that I believe that the above-named student's thesis is ready to be submitted for defense and given to an external reader or style reader as necessary.

Supervisor _____ Date _____

Time Extension Request

Submit this request for permission to extend your degree program beyond the allotted three years for the Th.M. If approved, the extension will be limited to two additional years in one-year increments with no further extensions.

Date of Request _____ Date Extension Will Begin _____

Student Name _____

Reason for Requested Extension: (Be specific and detailed)

List degree requirements yet to be fulfilled:

When do you plan to finish these requirements? _____

When do you plan to graduate? _____

I understand that the absolute limit for completing my degree program is five years for the Th.M.

Student's signature _____ Date _____

As the supervising professor, I am in agreement with the student's extension request and will continue to assist him in the completion of his degree program.

Professor's signature _____ Date _____

For office use:

Extension granted? Yes No

Fees Waived? Yes No

Director of Th.M. Studies _____
(signed and dated)

Academic Dean _____
(signed and dated)