

THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Office of Professional Doctoral Studies

PDS Research Thesis Option **Office of Professional Doctoral Studies**

The PDS Research Thesis is an option for Professional Doctoral students with exceptional writing and research skills. Students must apply for permission to present a PDS Research Thesis in place of the Ministry Research Project. Students must apply for permission during their first semester, while enrolled in 80710 Contextualized Writing Seminar.

The *PDS Research Thesis Request* should include:

- 1) Completed PDS Research Thesis Request Form (see below).
- 2) A 10-15 page sample research paper including footnotes and a bibliography. This should be an exemplary paper that displays evidence of the following: (1) a clear thesis statement supported throughout the paper; (2) exceptional writing; and (3) superb research skills.

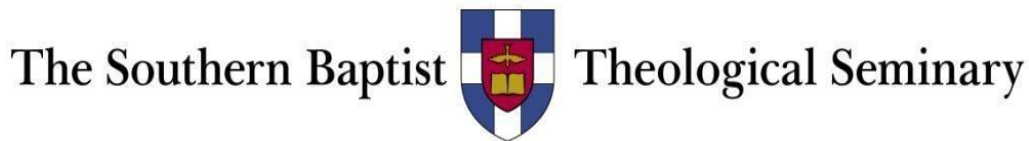
(Note: This research paper is for the purpose of demonstrating strong research and writing skills. It is not part of your thesis writing and can therefore be a paper written during your master's level work.)

- 3) A 3-4 page PDS Research Thesis Outline (see below). For the Thesis Request, the student only need to submit a 3-4 page outline that provides an initial answer to each section of the proposal (see example).

The PDS office and an SBTS faculty member from the student's area of study will review the submitted Thesis Request. Following their review, the PDS Office will inform the student whether the thesis request has been approved or denied.

If approved, the student will continue research as instructed. If denied, the PDS Office will assist the student in developing plans toward completing a Ministry Research Project.

The submission and approval of these documents do not constitute approval of a Research Thesis Proposal. Approval of the Thesis Request permits the student to write and submit a Research Thesis Proposal in Project Methodology (80600).



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PDS Research Thesis Request Form

Office of Professional Doctoral Studies

Student's Name: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____ **Phone Number:** _____

Degree & Concentration: _____

Requested Supervisor: _____ **Anticipated Graduation Date:** _____

Proposed Thesis Title: _____

Student Signature

Your signature indicates that the work you have submitted is your own.

For office use only

Approved: _____ **Denied:** _____

Comments:

Area Professor

Director of Professional Doctoral Studies

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary



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Outline for PDS Research Thesis Request

This document is intended to be a guide for the Research Thesis Request process completed during Contextualized Writing Seminar (80710). If approved, you will expand this document into a full thesis proposal in Project Methodology (80600). This outline should be at a minimum of 3-4 pages, but it can be longer if the topic demands.

I. ***Working Title***

The title must clearly and concisely describe the proposed thesis; e.g., “A Biblical Understanding of Genuine Conversion and Its Implications for the Church.” Follow the formatting guidelines in [*The Southern Seminary Manual of Style*](#)

II. ***Reason for Study***

Provide a brief introduction to your work. This should be no more than 1-2 pages.

III. ***Observations from Primary and Secondary Sources***

Since a thesis is research driven, your proposal should display a general familiarity with 8-10 major resources on your topic. This should be done by summarizing, in your own words, each resource and then noting their contribution to the discussion. You should mainly consider books and monographs for this section. If these types of resources are sparse, you may want to write on a different topic.

IV. ***Statement of the Problem***

After displaying a familiarity with the relevant literature, you must now identify a problem not addressed by the literature, which your thesis would aim to address. This problem is sometimes called a void, or gap in the literature. Isolating a void in the relevant sources should then help you focus your thesis statement on this area.

V. ***Thesis Statement***

Subsequent to identifying a problem, you must write your thesis statement. Your thesis statement is the *central claim* that you will attempt *to prove* in your work—which should fill the identified void in the literature. Besides being the central focus of your work, your thesis statement will also identify your proposed contribution to the relevant field of research.

VI. ***Methodology***

After you have written your thesis statement, you must then provide a methodology statement. This statement outlines how you plan to go about proving your thesis statement. A good methodology statement will explain how you will interact with primary and secondary sources, as well as the overall structure of your argument.

2825 Lexington Road • Louisville, Kentucky 40280
(502) 897-4113 • www.sbts.edu • dmin@sbts.edu

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VII. ***Working Bibliography***

Provide a working list of resources that you intend to use to substantiate your thesis. These should be organized by primary and secondary sources. Furthermore, you will want to make sure you have resources representative of differing views to support and contrast your claim.

VIII. ***Outline of Chapters***

The thesis should be 100-125 pages in length. Unless otherwise agreed upon, the chapter content should be:

- Chapter 1: Introduction (points II–V in your proposal)
- Chapters 2-4: The development and validation of your thesis
- Chapter 5: Implications for the church

Chapters 2-4: In chapters 2-4, you will validate your thesis statement. You will do so through a consistent line of argumentation throughout these chapters. In light of this, each chapter outline must have a title, a main point of argument, and 4-5 major resources that will be employed in validating your thesis statement. Remember to keep the information in these chapters centered on your thesis statement.

Chapter 5: After validating your thesis statement, this chapter will discuss the implications of your thesis for the broader (not just local) church. In your outline, list and briefly discuss (in 1-2 paragraphs) each major implication. Be sure that your implications are directly tied to your thesis statement.