

**DOMINICAN SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY**  
**MASTER OF ARTS**  
**THESIS PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**

There are two basic goals for a master's thesis:

- (1) to demonstrate academic research and writing skills, and
- (2) to argue coherently and conclusively for a thesis.

In a most general sense, the student is expected to demonstrate the following skills:

1. a knowledge of (a) the major works published on the subject matter central to the thesis, and (b) appropriate primary and secondary source materials, including (c) relevant current discussions; and
2. the proper application of this knowledge, with some original thinking, to argue clearly and convincingly for the thesis.

The thesis **proposal** must be 400-600 words in length (not including bibliography). The student must work closely with the proposed director to develop their thesis proposal. Furthermore, the student is expected to seek input from the other proposed members of their committee. The written proposal must include the following elements, which must be listed as subtitles in the actual proposal:

1. **Information:** including **Student Name, Title of the Thesis**, and the **Date**.
2. **Scope and nature:** Define the project, including the background or antecedents of the problem which led to the proposal.
3. **Thesis statement:** one or two sentences that describing briefly what the work will demonstrate or accomplish, using words such as *demonstrate, show, or argue*.
4. **Description:**
  - a. *A description of methodology to be used:* If your sub-discipline customarily names its preferred methods, include such a description of the method(s) you intend to employ. This is not a chapter outline.
  - b. *Description of the project to be done:* an explanation of how the research will be organized presented in such a manner that a “non-expert” can clearly understand the nature of the project.
5. **Significance:** An indication of the likely significance of the work within the discipline, and its potential contribution to the field, and/or more broadly to the public forum.
6. **Bibliography:** a list of 15-25 sources, including books and journal articles, germane to the investigation.

**The entire proposal, including bibliography must be formatted according to the latest edition of *A Manual for the Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate Turabian.**

The proposal must include as a **cover sheet** the “[Thesis Proposal Petition](#),” signed by all proposed committee members.

Sample proposals are available through the DSPT Office of the Registrar.

N.B. All DSPT MA students are required to attend the workshop on the MA thesis proposal at least one time before the proposal will be considered by the Faculty.