

**MASTER OF DIVINITY
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION
PROPOSAL FORM**

Please refer to the M.Div. Comprehensive Regulations when completing this sheet. Choose a mentor and discuss how you will address the learning objectives put forward in the guidelines. Choose an area of specialization and then select either Option A or Option B to structure your written submission. Please note that the written submission acts as the starting point for the oral interview with the examiners. You remain responsible for the broader learning objectives on which you will be examined.

Complete the relevant section of this proposal planning form and submit it to the M.Div. Director for approval **three months** prior to your anticipated exam date. Completed written work is approved by the student's mentor and circulated to the examiners at least **two weeks** prior to the examination date. Failure to meet these due dates may result in the postponement of your exam. Examination schedule and boards will be announced **one month** prior to the exam date.

Student Name: _____

Mentor Name: _____

Option A: Six Papers

Area of Specialized Interest: _____

Doctrinal Area 1: _____

Doctrinal Area 2: _____

Doctrinal Area 3: _____

Doctrinal Area 4: _____

Ecumenical Topic: _____

Ethical Topic: _____

Option B: Extended Essay

Please attach a one-page outline of your topic, sources and methodology

Essay Title: _____

Doctrinal Area 1: _____

Doctrinal Area 2: _____

Ecumenical/Interfaith Topic: _____

Ethical Topic: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mentor Signature: _____ Date: _____

M. Div. Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

Copy to: Student ☐ Mentor ☐ M.Div. Director ☐ Registrar ☐

MASTER OF DIVINITY COMPREHENSIVE EXAM REGULATIONS

The Master of Divinity Comprehensive Examination is the final academic requirement for students seeking both the civil Master of Divinity degree and the ecclesiastical Bachelor of Sacred Theology degree. It is intended to help students integrate their course of studies and to bring them into contact with their own area of focus. Students should read the following instructions carefully.

GENERAL REGULATIONS

1. All Master of Divinity students should receive a copy of these regulations upon entering the second year of the program. At least one year before students plan to take the examination, they should discuss the regulations with the Master of Divinity Director.
 - What broad area of specialization – biblical, historical, moral, pastoral or systematic – they wish to choose for the comprehensive;
 - Whether they wish to choose Option A or Option B (see attached)
 - The selection of a mentor who will direct them in their preparation for the comprehensive.

Please note: the area of specialization the student chooses, the option chosen for the examination and the student's selection of a mentor must be approved by the Master of Divinity Director. The mentor must be a member of the Regis College faculty, and has to agree to be the student's mentor *prior* to approval from the M.Div. Director. The mentor must be either a member of the Theology department or of the department within which the student has chosen his/her area of specialization.

2. The examinee must have completed all Master of Divinity program requirements, including:
 - Residency requirement;
 - 28 units of credit according to the academic curriculum;
 - 1 unit of credit in theological Field Education;
 - 1 unit of credit in Theological Reflection Seminar
 - Philosophy requirements.

The student's status must be duly certified in the above requirements by the Registrar ***one month*** prior to the proposed date for the exam.

3. Examination Boards are composed of two members of the Regis College Theology department and one faculty member selected in accordance with the area of specialization the student has chosen. Under special circumstances the student may request that a member of the examination board be from outside Regis College. It is understood that the student's mentor will be a member of the examination board. The Master of Divinity Director selects and posts the examination boards at least one month prior to the examinations
4. The Oral examination will be of one hour's duration. Each board member will examine the student for 20 minutes but will evaluate the student on the entire examination
5. The comprehensive exam can be taken no later than six years following the student's initial registration in the Master of Divinity program. Examining sessions are scheduled three times a year, usually one month following the end of the Spring semester, in the last week of September and in the last week of January. If for some reason the examination does not take place as scheduled, it will be at the discretion of the Master of Divinity Director, after consultation with the student involved, to reschedule the examination. Ordinarily rescheduled examinations are set for the next regular session for comprehensive examinations.

Please Note: For students moving into the Th.M/S.T.L. programme after their Master of Divinity degree, the comprehensive exam must be completed before July 31st, otherwise special written permission must be obtained from the Advanced Degree Director at the Toronto School of Theology.

THE CORE SYLLABUS

1. Students are expected to demonstrate a basic grasp of Roman Catholic doctrine. They should know the biblical and historical foundations, and also be able to discuss the systematic interrelation, and the pastoral implications of the major areas of systematic theology. This is in accord with the Ecclesiastical Statutes of Regis College, 7.3.2.2, and with Goal 1 of the Master of Divinity Programme.
2. With this goal in mind, the professors of systematic theology at Regis have constructed the attached syllabus Guidelines. The eight areas of the syllabus are:
 1. The Nature of Theology
 2. Revelation and Faith
 3. God One and Triune
 4. Christology
 5. Creation and Eschatology
 6. Sin and Grace
 7. Ecclesiology
 8. Sacramental Theology

Students will be expected to answer questions on the following four topics as they relate to each of these eight areas listed above:

- Sources in Scripture and Tradition;
- Doctrinal Exposition;
- Systematic Interrelations; and
- Pastoral Implications.

The student will also be expected to choose two of the eight core areas of the syllabus and note their:

- Ecumenical/Interfaith dimension
- Ethical dimension

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION OPTIONS

Students are offered two options: Option A and Option B. Although both options are meant to ascertain whether the student has achieved the objectives stated earlier, each approaches this task from a different starting point and with a different methodology. Both options are discussed in detail below.

Option A: (Core syllabus plus Six short papers, 6-8 pages)

Students choosing Option A can expect to be examined on the core syllabus plus one topic in ecumenism and one in ethics.

In preparing for Option A the following should be considered:

- A concentration on four major areas of the core syllabus and one on a related ecumenical dimension and one on a related ethical dimension;
- Chosen topics are to be formulated by the student in his or her area of specialization or intended area of ministry;
- Topics must be approved by the Master of Divinity Director at least *three months* prior to the examination;
- Short papers on each of these topics are usually prepared in consultation with an appropriate faculty member, usually the student's mentor;
- Examiners may ask the student to integrate the topics of the core syllabus with the chosen area of specialization and/or intended area of ministry. Examiners will pose questions taking into consideration not only the student's area of specialization and ministry, but also their own;
- Approximately one third of the examination will incorporate the student's area of specialization; two thirds will cover the core syllabus.

Option B: (Core Syllabus plus a major paper, 50 pages, including notes and bibliography)

The student choosing Option B agrees to produce an extended paper that reflects the area of specialization or ministry in which the student is interested.

- The essay will address at least two of the first eight areas of the core syllabus in an explicit way, and the ecumenical and ethical implications of their topic.
- A brief, one-page description of the theme and methodology of this extended paper should be prepared and submitted for approval to the Master of Divinity Director at least *three months* before the exam is to take place.

- The methodology of the essay will depend on the particular theme or area of specialization of the essay. It could, for instance, be written as a minor thesis in a more academic vein, or it could be written as an extended case study of a pastoral problem, bringing to bear the resources of theology upon its resolution.
- The essay itself is to consist of about 50 double-spaced pages, including notes (either as footnotes or endnotes).
- The essay must be approved by the student's mentor and in the hands of the student's examination board *two weeks* before the examination is scheduled to take place. If any of these deadlines are not met, the Master of Divinity Director may reschedule the examination or direct the student to the exam according to Option A.
- The student will also be responsible for the topics of the core syllabus. The examination will begin from the extended essay written by the student. One examiner will examine the essay on its own terms. Two examiners will raise theological questions pertinent to the syllabus which they consider to be related to the extended essay.

GRADING THE MASTER OF DIVINITY COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

The members of the examining board will discuss the performance of each examinee following the examination session; each will communicate to the Registrar his or her grade on the *Instructions for Examiners'* form. (Attached)

The grade provided will be one of the following letter grades: A+ or A (Outstanding), A- (Excellent), B+ (Very Good), B or B- (Good).

The Registrar will rank the three grades in order from the highest to the lowest. The grade assigned to the student will be the middle grade. (eg. A- B+ B+ = B+, A- A- B+ = A-, B+ B B- = B, etc).

Standing

The following provisions for determining standing for the M.Div. degree and S.T.B. degree are in effect:

- To obtain the S.T.B. and M.Div. degrees, the student must receive a mark of 70% or higher in twenty-eight TST approved courses, one in the Regis College Theological Reflection Seminar, a pass in one Field Education unit, and a pass in the Master of Divinity Comprehensive Examination. The minimal requirements to obtain the M.Div. and the S.T.B. degrees with mention are as follows:

Standing	Course Average	Comprehensive Exam Grade
<i>Master of Divinity</i>		
Second-Class Standing	Either 77% and	B+ standing
	Or 80% and	B standing
First-Class Standing	Either 80% and	A- standing
	Or 85% and	B+ standing
<i>Bachelor of Sacred Theology</i>		
Cum Laude	Either 80% and	B+ standing
	Or 85% and	B+ standing
Magna Cum Laude	Either 80% and	A- standing
	Or 85% and	A- standing
Summa Cum Laude	85% and	A standing

MASTER OF DIVINITY COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION PREPARATION

TOPICS

Preparation should include the following eight major areas of systematic theology:

1. The nature and method of theology
2. Revelation and Faith
3. God One and Triune
4. Christology
5. Creation and Eschatology
6. Sin and Grace
7. Ecclesiology
8. Sacramental Theology

The following topics regarding the above eight areas are offered as an aid in preparing for this preparation.

The Nature of Theology

- The nature and methods of theology
- Its construction on the basis of scripture, tradition, experience, reason the culture to which it is addressed, the pastoral challenges it meets
- Its specializations and their interrelations

Revelation and Faith

- The nature of revelation; its relation to mystery and faith; its occurrence in word and event
- Its occurrence within and outside of the Judaeo-Christian community; the relation of faith to beliefs
- The role of scripture and tradition in revelation; the development of doctrine; infallibility and reception in the Roman Catholic understanding of *magisterium*

God One and Triune

- God as mystery, as personal, as loving, as immanent/transcendent
- The basic elements of the doctrine of the Triune God; the One Nature, the Three Persons, the Relations, the Processions
- Models for speaking about the Trinity; their description, advantages pitfalls

Christology

- Jesus Christ at the centre of the Christian faith, and the resurrection as the starting point of Christological doctrine
- Ascending and descending Christology; the divinity, humanity, and personal unity of Jesus Christ
- Jesus as liberator, saviour, redeemer

Creation and Eschatology

- The doctrines of creation and eschatology in their basic features and relation to contemporary science
- The relation of history and eschatology, of resurrection and eschatology
- The Christian understanding of death, particular judgement, general judgement, purgatory, heaven, hell

Sin and Grace

- The doctrines of original sin, personal sin, venial sin, mortal sin, concupiscence
- The doctrines of grace, justification, sanctification, salvation
- Nature and grace; grace and experience

Ecclesiology

- The relation of the Church to Christ, Spirit, mission, and culture
- Fundamental structures of the Church and their development; membership in the Church
- The mystery of the Church; dimensions and models

Sacramental Theology

- The definition of sacrament in general and of each of the sacraments; their institution by Christ
- The relation of the sacraments to eschatological grace; their symbolic reality
- Eucharist as sacrament and sacrifice

The following topics will be applied to each of the eight major areas of systematic theology outlined above and recorded in the following Preparation Sheet.

- ***Sources in Scripture and Tradition***

Name several classic passages of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures which you consider important as sources for this area of Christian doctrine, and explain why they are so. Do the same for several key council documents or original theological texts.

- ***Exposition of Doctrine***

Explain the essential points of what you consider an authentic Roman Catholic understanding of this area, with reference to significant recent magisterial statements (especially Vatican II).

- ***Systematic Interrelations***

Show this area is related to the other eight major areas, and how your theological approach to it is related to the way you would approach other areas.

- ***Pastoral Implications***

Comment on the ways in which this doctrinal area and pastoral practice have an impact on each other, and account for key challenges (cultural, social, experiential) to the contemporary articulation of the doctrinal area.

- ***Ecumenical Dimension/Interfaith Dimension***

Prepare to discuss the major doctrinal areas as to their ecumenical significance, the problems involved, and documents prepared by various contemporary ecumenical discussions.

- ***Ethical Dimension***

Prepare to discuss the major doctrinal area as to their significance for Christian Ethics.

MASTER OF DIVINITY COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION PREPARATION SHEET

Major Area of Systematic Theology: _____

Sources in Scripture and Doctrine

List several scriptural passages and explain their significance:

Exposition of Doctrine

Explain essential points of doctrinal development in this area with specific reference to recent magisterial statements, especially Vatican II:

Systematic Interrelations

How is this major area of theology related to other eight major areas?

Pastoral Implications

How does this doctrinal area and pastoral practice impact each other? How would you account for key challenges, cultural, social, experiential, to the contemporary articulation of this doctrinal area?

Ecumenical/Interfaith Dimensions

What is the major ecumenical and inter-faith significance/challenge of this doctrinal area?

Ethical dimensions

What is that significance of this major doctrinal area for Christian Ethics?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

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SECONDARY SOURCES

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- Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding*. Michigan: Eerdmans, 1991.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*. 5 vols. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980.

- Note: Volumes cover: *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*; *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)*; *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)*; *Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700)*; and *Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture (since 1700)*

Rahner, Karl, and Herbert Vorgrimler. *Dictionary of Theology*. New York: Crossroad, 1985.

Rahner, Karl, ed. *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*. New York: Seabury Press, 1975.

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Schussler Fiorenza, Francis, and John P. Gavin, eds. *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*. 2 vols. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991.

Tanner, Kathryn. *Jesus, Humanity, and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology*. Fortress: Minneapolis, MN: 200.

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Webster, John, and George Schner, eds. *Theology after Liberalism: A Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXAMINERS

According to the Master of Divinity Comprehensive Examination Guidelines, the written work of the student serves as the basis for an interview in which the student should address the following integrally related areas of doctrine:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. The Nature of Theology | 5. Creation and Eschatology |
| 2. Revelation and Faith | 6. Sin and Grace |
| 3. God One and Triune | 7. Ecclesiology |
| 4. Christology | 8. Sacramental Theology |

The oral examination is to be of one hour's duration. Each board member will examine the student for 20 minutes, but will evaluate the student on the entire examination. The examination begins from the student's written work; however only one-third of the time should be spent on the student's area of specialization. The rest of the exam should range more broadly to include the integration of the core syllabus.

The Master of Divinity Outcomes Assessment Map's learning outcomes are also to be evaluated in this examination. Examiners are asked to evaluate the student on a scale from 'good' to 'outstanding' (with 'failure' representing lack of competence) for each learning outcome. Please use the following rubric to assess each of the seven areas:

Good – Student accurately reports information and can apply it constructively to particular pastoral situations

Very Good – Student demonstrates the ability to situate information in its cultural/historical horizon and can draw analogies to the present as a context for pastoral application.

Excellent – Student adopts an evaluative stance, speaking in his or her own voice and making pastoral applications that show critical ability.

Outstanding – Student exhibits critical self-awareness with a broad knowledge base as she or he makes synthetic and creative intellectual and pastoral applications.

Comprehensive Examination in Systematic Theology (M.Div./STB)

Student Name: _____

Examiner: _____

Office use only:

Year started: _____

Graduating year: _____

Data entered: _____

Learning Outcomes:

I believe that this student (circle the appropriate term for each learning outcome; explanation of the assessment rubric is on the back of this form):

Demonstrates a basic grasp of the dialogue between a theological method and Roman Catholic Doctrine.

Failure	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Outstanding
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Identifies key achievements of the development of Roman Catholic Doctrine.

Failure	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Outstanding
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Identifies and interprets the biblical and historical sources of doctrine.

Failure	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Outstanding
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Discusses the systematic interrelations and pastoral implications of doctrine.

Failure	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Outstanding
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Demonstrates the ethical and ecumenical/interfaith implications of doctrine

Failure	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Outstanding
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Has an appropriate understanding of the relationship between religious experience and culture.

Failure	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Outstanding
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Employs appropriate categories from the Tradition to articulate their lived experience of ministry.

Failure	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Outstanding
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Final Grade

Therefore, as a member of the board for the comprehensive examination in systematic theology, I hereby submit the following judgement on the overall performance of _____:

Grade: _____

Further comments (optional, except in the case of failing grade):

Signed: _____

Dated: _____