

## **GLOBAL UNIVERSITY** **Undergraduate School of Bible and Theology**

Before writing a thesis, a research proposal must be developed and approved by the dean of the Undergraduate School of Bible and Theology. You should choose a thesis topic that is relevant to your major area of study. Possible areas may include Bible and theology, Christian education, intercultural studies, church ministries, missions, and general education. You should submit your thesis proposal within six credits of completing all coursework required by your degree program.

### **GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**

A thesis is an extensive paper presented as an answer to a question or solution to a problem (often referred to as the thesis question or problem statement). A thesis is NOT simply a “really long essay,” as some students think. A thesis starts with a question or problem, researches what has been written on that question or problem, does original research on the problem, presents the results of the research, draws conclusions from that research, and makes recommendations for further research. A thesis can be written on any topic, but it follows a prescribed format:

1. Thesis statement, or problem statement: a clear statement of the thesis problem, along with an explanation of the question’s importance, interest, or relevance
2. Literature review: a review of what has been written about the subject
3. Research: a description of the thesis writer’s research and observations on the subject
4. Findings: a discussion of the thesis writer’s findings
5. Conclusions and recommendations: a list and description of the conclusions that the thesis writer comes to and recommendations for further research on the subject
6. Bibliography: a list of all cited references (books, journal articles, online sources, interviews, etc.)

### **STEPS IN THE PROCESS OF WRITING A THESIS PROPOSAL**

The first step is to develop a thesis proposal and submit it for approval by the dean of the Undergraduate School of Bible and Theology at Global University. This must be accompanied by the Subject Enrollment Form (SEF) validating your enrollment in the *\*4956 Thesis* course.

The thesis proposal should be approximately 2,500–3,000 words (which usually comes to about 10–12 typewritten, double-spaced pages). It should contain the following information:

- a) Problem statement, or thesis statement—this is a statement of the problem or question that you want to research in the thesis. The problem or question may also give rise to sub-problems or sub-questions (related to the major problem or question). It should also include a statement and explanation of the importance and relevance of the problem or question to you and to the wider educational community. In other words, why should this problem or question be researched? What importance does it have to scholarship? What information will it add to the body of literature on the subject and related subjects?
- b) A literature review—this does not need to be exhaustive, because that will be done once the student gets into the actual thesis itself. But you need to find out if sufficient research materials will be available as original sources. What books deal with the subject? What journal articles deal with the subject? What internet resources are available? What libraries and archives will be used? What museums might be helpful? Are there any people that you will interview or who would help point you in the right direction to discover resources on the subject? The point of the literature review (in the thesis proposal) is to convince you and Global University that there are sufficient materials available to conduct the research into your thesis question or problem.
- c) Methodology—this is an explanation of the methods you intend to use to research this question or problem. Methodologies include surveys/questionnaires, interviews, experiments, and literary research (historical documents, legal documents, journal articles on the subject, etc).
- d) Bibliography—this can be divided into two parts: resources that you have already reviewed, and resources you plan to read during the actual thesis research.

Once you complete the gathering of data through the methodology, you “mine the data” (analyze the data) to discover patterns, correlations, and any other relevant information. All this is done with your thesis question or thesis problem in mind—how does the data help answer the thesis question or problem?

After you write your thesis proposal addressing the three points (a, b, and c) above in about 2,500–3,000 words, it must be presented to the dean of the Undergraduate School of Bible and Theology. The dean, or designated professor, will review the thesis proposal and either approve or disapprove the proposal. If approved, you may begin working on the thesis. You have 12 months before the final copy of the thesis must be submitted.

### **ADVICE FOR WRITING A THESIS PROPOSAL**

1. Select a good subject or research area for your thesis—this should be something that you are personally interested in as well as something that would be of interest to the wider educational community. It should also be a subject that will be challenging.
2. Research the subject or research area thoroughly—find as much information as you can about your subject or research area, filtering out anything that is not truly relevant to your particular subject.

3. Get professionals to help you—ask for help from your mentor or the dean assigned to you. They can make suggestions regarding the subject, the research, and the writing of the thesis, and can read drafts of your thesis and make suggestions. Find other professionals who at least have an interest in your research area and ask them for suggestions. Reread and edit your thesis numerous times.

### **STEPS IN THE PROCESS OF WRITING A THESIS**

After receiving approval of your thesis proposal, you can begin the research and work of writing the thesis. The thesis entails a lot of research, reading, possibly the use of questionnaires or interviews, looking through archives, visiting museums, and so forth, depending on the nature of your thesis. As you read and research, make notes on every source you use. Many people use index cards to keep notes on, including the reference information for the source. Others use note paper.

Theses always follow a prescribed format, although this may vary from university to university. Format usually counts for a significant part of the grade. For Global University, your thesis should include the following:

- Title page
- Acknowledgements (if any)
- Table of contents
- List of abbreviations used in the thesis (if any)
- List of tables, graphs, charts, or other graphics used in the thesis (if any)
- Thesis abstract (brief summary of the thesis)
- Introduction—background information, etc. Much of this comes from the thesis proposal
- Problem statement
- Literature review—what has already been written about the subject
- Methodology—the methods of research you used
- Results and discussion—what did you learn from the research?
- Conclusions—based on the results, what is the importance of this research?
- Bibliography—list of works cited

The Global University thesis must be about 7,500–10,000 words (approximately 30–40 pages) in length. The student must use the Global University Form and Style Guide in the writing of the thesis. This is available for download from the Global University website or can be purchased from Global University in printed form. The student has 12 months to finish the thesis and submit it to the dean of the Undergraduate School of Bible and Theology at Global University.