

School of Graduate
Research



Preparing for a Minor Thesis

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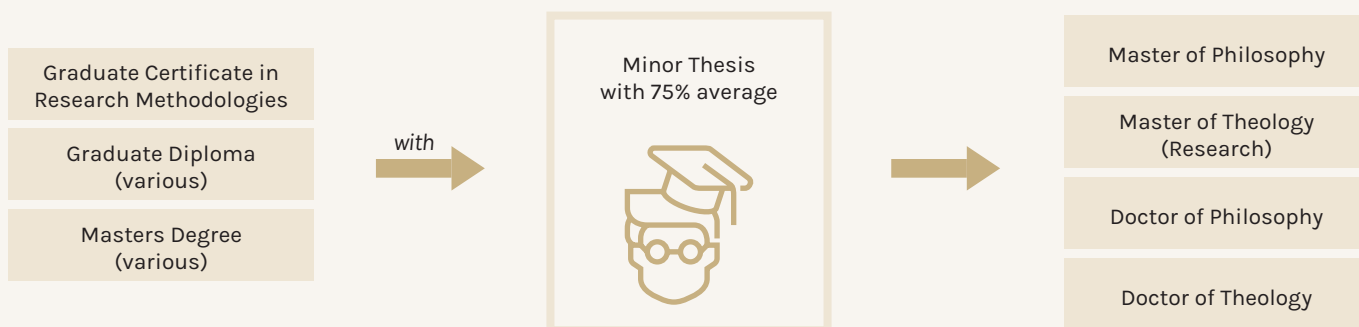
What is the Minor Thesis?

The Minor Thesis (MT) is a substantial piece of writing (16,000 words) that can be taken as a component of a number of postgraduate awards, including a Masters by coursework degree (for example, Master of Theological Studies or Master of Divinity) and some Graduate Diplomas, and is the core component of the Graduate Certificate in Research Methodology.

The MT is an important entry point into a Higher Degree by Research award (Masters or Doctorate). To meet the admission requirements for a research degree you need to achieve a mark of 75% or above for the MT.

The MT is examined by two people who have not been your supervisors for the project. This means that there is an independent evaluation of the quality of the research conducted. Achieving 75% or above demonstrates that you have the necessary skills for a more sustained research project.

To get the most out of the MT experience you should be preparing well in advance, and it is recommended that you speak to the Academic Dean or Research Coordinator in your home College at least a semester ahead of time to make sure you have planned for this in your schedule.



What should I do to prepare?

Ideally, completing a unit in research methodologies is a helpful preparation for the MT and will be compulsory for all students commencing awards from 2021. If you haven't completed this unit, talk to your Research Coordinator, Postgraduate Coordinator, or Academic Dean.

Speak to a potential supervisor. A supervisor should have the expertise in your subject areas and might be from another College. You need their guidance, and you need someone willing to work with you. Talk to College academic staff in the semester before you are due to commence. This gives you and the supervisor time to prepare for the semester ahead.

Think about your area of research, research topic and research question. This is important. By week 3 of semester you are required to submit a Minor Thesis Approval form.

On that form you need to provide:

- i. The topic
- ii. The question
- iii. An outline of your methodology
- iv. An indicative bibliography
- v. An outline of the structure of the proposed thesis.

Refer to the [glossary of terms](#) available on the website.

All this takes time, so the more reading, thinking, and preparation you do before semester starts the better. Ideally, you should be almost ready to fill in the approval form before semester starts.

You might like to learn how to use a bibliographic manager such as Endnote (available through the Library Hub) to help you manage your referencing.

What can I expect during the MT?

This is likely to be the first time you will do such a lengthy piece of writing and may even be the first time you have set your own topic. The MT will stretch you academically and give you an idea of whether you are suited for a Higher Degree by Research.

You will need to be self-directed in your learning. You will meet with your supervisor regularly (on average about six times over the course of your enrolment) and your supervisor will read your work and give you feedback, but much of the time you will be working on your project on your own. Set aside time for reading, writing, thinking and revision.

Expect to have your preconceived ideas challenged. Good research does not know the answers at the beginning of the project but is a genuine and open search for an answer to question.

Expect to revise and edit your work. No one writes the perfect thesis first time through. Leave plenty of time to get feedback from your supervisor, to think through that feedback, and to make any changes.

Can I do human-based research?

Yes—but you must enrol in the MT over two semesters.

To do human-based research you must get approval from the Human Research Ethic Committee (HREC). This means that the approval process will be longer than a thesis which does not require ethics approval. If you are interested in further human-based research for a higher degree, it is good to do this kind of work in the MT.

Who can I go to for advice?

College Research Coordinator, College Postgraduate Coordinator, College Academic Dean or the School of Graduate Research