Master of Theology in New Testament

Academic Year: 2020-21

Programme Specification[1]

| Programme Title: New Testament | Final Award:  Master of Theology (MTh) |
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Programme Distinctives

- This MTh is a specialised, advanced study master's degree that is designed to enhance prior exegetical and theological training/study by providing a rigorous grounding in all core aspects of New Testament Studies.[2]
- Intentional development and nurture of critical research and writing skills providing a strong foundation for postgraduate research in the field.
- Flexible and innovative distance education that prioritises accessibility and enables students to benefit from structured learning resources in their own time and at their own pace.
- Students' personal and professional development takes place in interaction with a diverse group of students from around the world through a dedicated virtual learning environment.
- Digital learning is enhanced by a combination of video lectures, discussion boards, and Cerego (a tool which builds on the latest in cognitive science to help students learn faster and remember longer).

Vocational Opportunities

- This postgraduate programme provides students with those skills required for undertaking doctoral research in the field of New Testament studies.[3]
- The course is particularly tailored to provide further training and ongoing development for ministers.[4]

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[1] All programmes of the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland (PTFI) are subject to Union Theological College's Quality Assurance processes.

[2] This is in line with section 1.2 of the QAA's Characteristics Statement for Master's Degrees, which identifies a first likely aim as that of 'enabling students to focus on a particular aspect of a broader subject area in which they have prior knowledge or experience through previous study or employment'. The MTh in NT programme corresponds to a Category 2 master's degree, as described in the QAA TRS Benchmark Statement (Dec 2019), Appendix 1, A2.3, and is categorised as a specialised master's offering, "typically focusing on a single field of study within theology, **biblical studies**, and applied theology." The MTh in NT thus has, at its core, "[t]he reading, analysis and interpretation of texts, sometimes in the original languages, particularly texts that have been sacred or significant to one or more practising communities" (p.9).

[3] This degree corresponds to what the QAA TRS Benchmark Statement, Appendix 1, A1.1, refers to as master's degrees that "encourage the development of research skills, and may be particularly attractive to students who are considering subsequent doctoral work."

[4] The advanced knowledge, understanding and skills acquired or enhanced while undertaking an MTh in New Testament are of particular relevance for preaching and teaching in Christian ministry.

- Enhanced skills of analytical thinking or the ability to express oneself clearly and cogently in writing are highly sought after by a diverse range of employers.
- The nature of this digital offering enhances a spectrum of digital capabilities especially relevant for contemporary employment.

Criteria for Admissions

Typically, admission requires a 2.1 honours degree or above or equivalent qualification acceptable to PTFI, where Theology and/or Divinity is the main subject area OR where it is one of the joint subjects in an honours degree. In the case of the latter, the modules in Theology and/or Divinity must be of 2.1 level or above, OR a 2.1 honours degree or equivalent qualification acceptable to PTFI in a subject other than Theology/Divinity, and a Graduate Diploma in Theology with normally at least 5 out of the 6 modules with a mark of 60% or above.

Notes:

For overseas students, a 2.1 honours degree is normally equivalent to a Cumulative Grade Point Average of 3.3 or higher from an accredited institution.

Applicants should normally have completed at least one full year of academic study of Koine Greek at the undergraduate level for entry into the MTh.

An entrant in possession of PTFI's PG Certificate in Biblical Greek may be integrated into the MTh in NT and exempted some components of the programme by equivalence.

Union College requires all applicants whose first language is not English to have one of the following qualifications as evidence of their English language ability:

- An undergraduate or master's degree that was taught and assessed in English in a majority English-speaking country as defined by UK Visas and Immigration.[5]
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic module (not General Training): overall score of 7.0 with at least 6.5 in each category.[6]
- Pearson Test of English, Academic: PTE(A) total 67 (at least 61 in each of the 'communicative skills' sections).
- Cambridge Proficiency (CPE) or Cambridge Advanced (CAE): total 186 (at least 176 in each module).

Degrees taught and assessed in English must be no more than three years old at the beginning of the MTh programme. Language tests must be no more than two years old at the beginning of the degree programme.

Successful applicants are enrolled as members of Union Theological College, Belfast.

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[5] For the list of recognised countries visit https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/knowledge-of-english
[6] The IELTS (International English Language Testing System) Academic test is our preferred test. Details can be obtained from local British Council Offices.

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| Mode of Study | Part Time / Full Time |
| Type of Programme | Postgraduate Taught (PGT) |
| Total Credits for Programme | 180 CATS[7] |
| Length of Programme | Full time (12 months) or part time (2-4 years) |
| Exit Award | Master of Theology (MTh) |
| Awarding Institution/Body | The Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland (PTFI) |
| Teaching Institution | Union Theological College, Belfast |
| Programme Coordinator | Rev'd Dr Zachary Cole |
| Framework for Higher Education Qualification | Level 7 |
| QAA Benchmark Group | Theology and Religious Studies (2014) http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements |
| External Examiner Name: | The Rev'd Dr Andrew Clarke (University of Aberdeen and Scottish Baptist College, Paisley) |

PROGRAMME REGULATIONS

**MTh**

1.1 The MTh comprises 180 CATS points at FHEQ Master's level 7.  Each CATS point equates to 10 hours of study shared between class time, pre-class reading, private study and assessment.
1.2 There are five taught modules, two of 30 CATS and three of 20 CATS which are assessed by coursework.
1.3 There is a 60 CATS point capstone dissertation module which is assessed by a 15,000 words dissertation.
1.4 The pass mark for all modules is 50%.

**PG Diploma**

1.5 The PG Diploma is an exit award available to those students who complete all taught modules successfully but do not complete the dissertation module successfully or choose not to take the dissertation module.
1.6 The PG Diploma comprises 120 CATS.

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[7] The College's programmes have been benchmarked against the QAA Quality Code (Part A) such that 1 academic credit equates to 10 hours of study (shared between class time, pre-class reading, private study and assessment): thus, a 20-credit module should provide you with approximately 200 hours of study.

**Taught Modules**

1.7 A re-sit will be available for any taught module. The re-sit will be capped at the pass mark of 50% for classification purposes.

1.8 Examiners may, at their discretion, request an oral examination in any aspect of the work submitted by the student.

1.9 Full-time students will complete all taught modules within one academic year of enrolment.

1.10  Part-time students will complete all taught modules within three years of enrolment.

**Dissertation Module**

1.11  Students may not commence the dissertation module until written approval is received from the Head of the Department of Biblical Studies.

1.12 A dissertation supervisor will provide each student who undertakes the dissertation module with advice, guidance and support for the module.

1.13 Full-time students must submit the dissertation no later than 12 months after enrolment.

1.14 Part-time students must complete the dissertation module in no more than a twelve-month period.

1.15 Part-time students may not submit the dissertation earlier than 24 months after enrolment or later than 48 months after enrolment.

1.16 The submission date must always be approved by the PTFI.

1.17 In exceptional circumstances, PTFI may grant an extension to the dissertation period. This will be subject to extended programme fees.

1.18 The regulations governing the presentation of the dissertation shall be the Regulations for Theses.

**Degree Classification**

1.19 The award of MTh normally requires all modules to be passed. However, compensation may be made in the following instance:

A student who does not pass all modules will nonetheless be considered to have met the award requirements if they meet all the following criteria:

- Demonstrate all programme-level learning outcomes, AND

- fail no more than 30 credits, AND

- pass the remaining credits, AND

- achieve a credit-weighted mean of at least 50% across all modules.

1.20 The degree of Master of Theology may be awarded as follows:

70% +    pass with distinction*

60% +    pass with commendation

50% +    pass

*For a pass with distinction students must achieve an overall average mark of 70% or over, together with a mark of 70% or over in the dissertation element, and an average of 65% or more across the other modules.

AIMS OF PROGRAMME

- To enable students to build upon prior theological study through a programme focused on advanced engagement with the New Testament, particularly as competent and confident interpreters of Biblical texts for the contemporary context.
- To provide opportunity for students to reflect upon and integrate their prior theological study (and usually their experience of Christian ministry) with new learning that is informed by research-led and research-focused scholarship.
- To foster a community of immersive digital engagement in which students may conduct informed and respectful dialogue, recognising the strengths and weaknesses of other points of view.
- To provide the knowledge and skills necessary to produce original research through sustained interaction with New Testament texts and their interpreters and reflection on their reception and impact both within and beyond the Church.
- To develop an appreciation of the vocation of a Christian exegete and theologian and to strengthen and sharpen the intellectual habits and practical skills necessary for such a calling.

TEACHING METHODS

A wide variety of teaching and learning methods are employed and include the following:

- Video introductions, overviews and lectures provide orientation and information for each module's core curricular content and help set the parameters of the syllabus.
- Technology-based learning through a platform utilises study sets with the innovative educational tool Cerego, quizzes for self-assessment and class discussion boards.
- Interactive discussion boards create a dynamic learning interface for direct collegial engagement, by students, with primary and secondary sources.
- Students receive instruction and guidance on the development of research skills.
- Members of Union Theological College Faculty support and guide students through the final three-month phase, each student having an assigned dissertation tutor.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Across the five taught modules (at 30 or 20 CATS), a suite of varied assessment elements targets the attainments associated with the learning outcomes set out below and reflects the core skills of advanced New Testament interpretation. The remaining component is the

capstone dissertation of 15,000 words (60 CATS).[8] This enables the student summatively to consolidate high-level academic skills, as well as to demonstrate evidence of original independent research and analytical thought.

Calibrated to digital learning, and variously weighted, the range of assessments is as follows:[9]

- Assessing mastery of the parsing, analysis and translation of Koine Greek, through vocabulary, syntax and grammar exercises and a translation journal
- Self-assessing mastery of specialist threshold subject-specific knowledge via the Cerego cognitive learning app
- Assessing the ability to engage with complex interpretative literature through a focused 1,000-word journal article review
- Assessing critical awareness and thinking via reflective responses to core texts
- Assessing competency in exegetical or theological interpretation, through written assignments ranging from 1,500 to 2,500 words
- Summative assessment of a range of high-level academic skills, including independent research and analytical thought in the capstone dissertation of 15,000 words

PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Learning Outcomes: Knowledge and Understanding

By completion of this MTh programme a successful student should have demonstrated:

1. an advanced understanding of the Biblical texts, with higher-level knowledge appropriate for interpreting them competently and confidently, including in their original language;
2. an advanced and systematic understanding of hermeneutical methodologies and their relevance and application to the interpretation of Biblical texts;
3. an advanced understanding of the New Testament Canon in its unity and diversity and of its place within the Biblical Canon;
4. an advanced understanding of the methodological and hermeneutical models and assumptions used in the application of Biblical texts to contemporary contexts, including ministry and mission.

Teaching/Learning Methods and Strategies

In coordination with their tutor, students will gain knowledge and understanding through:

- video introductions, overviews and lectures that provide orientation and information for each module's core curricular content and that exemplify scholarly discussion on the

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[8] This is in line with the QAA description of a Category 2 master's, where at least a third of the programme is devoted to a research project.
[9] See 'Assessment' in the QAA's Subject Benchmark Statement, 4.20 and 4.21, together with the Union Theological College Assessment Policy.

topics in question, especially by considering and assessing different methods within the discipline and differing readings of primary texts;

- instruction in the nature of the module assessment;
- guided independent study designed to provide breadth and depth in their expanding understanding of exegetical-theological methodologies;
- engaging with others in the digital discussion boards in order to discuss and consolidate knowledge;
- completing interpretative exercises that promote and enable sustained engagement with relevant primary and secondary texts;
- mastering core subject-specific material through the responsive application Cerego which provides instant formative feedback and allows students to chart their own progress towards the desired goal;
- the formative nature of all other written assessment tasks;
- individual written (and at times oral) feedback on written submissions;
- dissertation supervision to help students develop and assess their progress.

Methods of Assessment

Student knowledge and understanding are assessed by effective and appropriate assessment that combines the following assessment elements in a timely way:

- testing proficiency in Koine Greek through a range of linguistic exercises;
- testing of a level of mastery in module-specific subjects by a process of spaced rehearsal within the responsive application Cerego;
- requiring students to post to discussion boards on a certain number of occasions (this requirement is on a pass/fail basis and does not contribute to the summative grade);
- testing breadth of knowledge and understanding of primary texts or secondary literature through shorter pieces of writing;
- testing depth of knowledge and understanding of primary texts or secondary literature through longer pieces of writing; and
- ascertaining whether a student displays most, if not all, the programme-level learning outcomes for knowledge and understanding through a 15,000-word capstone dissertation.

2. Learning Outcomes: Skills

By completion of this MTh programme a successful student should have demonstrated:

5. an advanced ability to interpret Biblical texts, especially New Testament texts, rigorously applying appropriate scholarly resources and critical tools from across the methodological spectrum (author-, text-, and reader-centred), with regard to the history of their reception and study and their social, theological or pastoral ramifications for contemporary contexts, including mission and ministry;
6. an advanced capacity for adopting a critical distance from both primary sources and from secondary literature and for their evaluation;

7. a high level of critical awareness and currency in exegetical and theological research, with competence for making original applications of knowledge and the potential for original thinking in the subject;
8. high-level mastery of the range of techniques of research and enquiry necessary to access, organise, create and interpret knowledge within the discipline and deal systematically and creatively with interpretative issues arising;
9. a high level of presentational and communication skills in the construction and articulation of cogent, well-informed, critically-engaged, and sustained arguments as practised within Biblical Studies;
10. advanced competency in postgraduate research skills, including self-direction, initiative, independence, and originality in the planning and production of a substantial dissertation
11. a strong capacity to articulate, and reflect critically upon, one's own theological tradition, notably its view of Scripture, as well as to engage in informed and respectful dialogue, concerning controversial interpretative issues, with other points of view.

Teaching/Learning Methods and Strategies

In coordination with their tutor, students develop these skills through the following:

- exposure to self-conscious modelling of these skills in the video introductions, overviews and lectures provided on the VLE, as well as by tutor participation in discussion boards, detailed tutor feedback on assessed work and dissertation supervision;
- exposure to on-going debate and to authors whose research and writing model requisite interpretative skills through guided independent reading on primary and secondary texts;
- various assessment tasks on Biblical texts – in the original language and in English – and on secondary literature that enable students to demonstrate these skills;
- shorter assignments that offer *breadth* to the learning experience;
- longer assignments that insure *depth* to the learning experience;
- the posting of shorter pieces to discussion boards that enables students to observe how other students are developing these skills;
- dialogue with other students, designed to enhance a student's ability to communicate views and discuss controversial issues in a sensitive and effective manner;
- one-to-one dissertation supervision, from those with subject-specific expertise in New Testament interpretation, prioritises training in research and writing skills.

Methods of Assessment

Written assignments provide a vehicle for demonstrating these skills:

- Various vocabulary, syntax and grammar exercises, plus a translation journal, permit students to demonstrate mastery of the parsing, analysis and translation of the original language of the New Testament, Koine Greek.
- Student posts to interactive discussion boards, on a set number of occasions, allow them to demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively.

- Various shorter pieces of interpretative writing permit students to manifest the breadth of their skills.
- Various longer pieces of exegetical or theological writing allow students to demonstrate the depth of their skills.

Programme Requirements

A full-time student will take a total of 180 CATS of modules as outlined below.

| Module Title | Level/ stage | CATS | Availability in 2020-21 | | | Duration of teaching or supervision | Core | Assessment | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Autumn | Spring | Summer | | | Coursework % | Practical % | Exam % |
| Greek Texts | 7 | 30 | ● | | | 12 weeks | ● | 100 | | |
| Synoptic Gospels and Acts | 7 | 30 | ● | | | 12 weeks | ● | 100 | | |
| Pauline Theology | 7 | 20 | | ● | | 12 weeks | ● | 100 | | |
| New Testament Texts | 7 | 20 | | ● | | 12 weeks | ● | 100 | | |
| New Testament Theology | 7 | 20 | | ● | | 12 weeks | ● | 100 | | |
| Dissertation (15,000 words) | 7 | 60 | | | ● | 12 weeks | ● | 100 | | |

Students may enter the programme in September or January. Students may also study full-time or part-time. For <u>one</u> example of a potential part-time pathway of study, a student might choose to proceed the following way (spread over two years):

| Module Title | CATS | 2020-21 | | | 2021-22 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Autumn 2020 | Spring 2021 | Summer 2021 | Autumn 2021 | Spring 2022 | Summer 2022 |
| Greek Texts | 30 | ● | | | | | |
| Synoptic Gospels and Acts | 30 | | | | ● | | |
| Pauline Theology | 20 | | ● | | | | |
| New Testament Texts | 20 | | | | | ● | |
| New Testament Theology | 20 | | | | | ● | |
| Dissertation (15,000 words) | 60 | | | | | | ● |