



## Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at The Catholic University of America

### Doctorate in Sacred Theology with a Specialization in Marriage and Family (S.T.D.) Program Overview

#### Introduction

The S.T.D. is a post-S.T.L. degree completing academic formation in conformity with the mission statement of the Institute; it qualifies the graduate for teaching posts in Roman Catholic seminaries, colleges, and universities. As an ecclesiastical degree, the S.T.D. is granted by the authority of and in the name of the Holy See.

The S.T.D. conforms in its specifications to the requirements set forth in *Veritatis gaudium*.

#### Admissions Requirements

Admission to the S.T.D. program requires the S.T.L. degree (*magna cum laude* or higher) from a session of the John Paul II Institute. Other requirements are enumerated in the application for the program. While receiving a *magna cum laude* or higher for the S.T.L. degree is a prerequisite for consideration for admission into the S.T.D. program, possession of this degree with a *magna cum laude* does not guarantee admission.

#### Degree Requirements

S.T.D. students are required to complete four doctoral seminars (two per semester) maintaining a grade-point average of at least 3.5 on a 4.0-point scale. Competency in four languages must be demonstrated by S.T.D. students before the second year of the program, in preparation for the dissertation research. The dissertation must be defended within five years of the student's entry into the program.

#### Languages

Reading proficiency in scholastic Latin is presupposed at admission and must be demonstrated by successful completion of a written examination. This requirement must be fulfilled during the first semester of residency.

Students are required to demonstrate reading proficiency in biblical Greek by successful completion of a written examination. This requirement must be fulfilled during the first year of residency. Students must demonstrate reading proficiency in two modern languages from the following list: French, Spanish, Italian, or German. Proficiency may be demonstrated by successful completion of a written examination. To satisfy the language requirement in German or French, the following CUA language courses may be substituted for the proficiency exam: TRS 501 Theological German; GER 500 Reading for Comprehension; or FREN 500 Reading for Comprehension. These courses must be completed with a grade of at least B+ (in a course with letter grades) or Pass (in a Pass/Fail course). Students wishing to register for a language course at CUA should follow the usual cross-

registration procedures. This requirement must be fulfilled by the end of the third semester, but students are urged to fulfill it by the end of the first year.

## S.T.D. Dissertation

The dissertation should demonstrate maturity of theological judgment based on advanced graduate study. It should give evidence of research skills commensurate with doctoral level study, the ability to perform independent scientific work, and mastery of the candidate's chosen field of study. The dissertation should be of sufficient quality to constitute a genuine contribution to that field of study and to warrant publication. The dissertation should be at least 175 and no more than 300 pages in length, exclusive of bibliography.

## Schedule of Production of S.T.D. Dissertation

By the end of the first semester, and in consultation with the S.T.D. Program Advisor, the student asks a faculty member to direct his or her dissertation. The Program Advisor, in consultation with the dissertation director, appoints two other faculty members to a board under the chairmanship of the dissertation director.

By midterm of the second semester, and in consultation with the dissertation director, the student prepares and submits to the Program Advisor a ten-page dissertation proposal, including the title; a brief presentation of the background of the topic and the current state of relevant research; a concise statement of the proposed thesis of the dissertation; a statement of the contribution and originality of the thesis; a detailed statement describing the methodology and argument of the dissertation; and a proposed table of contents. A preliminary bibliography containing the most important primary and secondary sources must be submitted with the proposal.

Once the thesis director deems the proposal acceptable, it is circulated among the entire faculty. Every member of the faculty is expected to submit his or her approval, comments, objections, and questions to the thesis director and Program Advisor within two weeks of receiving the proposal. Within two weeks of the end of this review, the student meets with the board, comprised of the director and two readers, for a formal evaluation of the proposal. The dissertation director, the other board members, and the Program Advisor may accept or reject the proposal, or they may specify required modifications to it (acceptance *sub conditione*). If substantial revision is required, the board and Program Advisor meet again with the student, either accepting or rejecting the proposal or requiring further modifications.

The proposal is deemed to be finally approved when it has been signed by the dissertation director, the first and second readers, and the Program Advisor. The proposal, with original signatures, is held in the student's official file.

Once the proposal has been finally approved, the student may begin to write his or her dissertation.

## Preparation for the Defense of S.T.D. Dissertation

At least eight weeks prior to the expected date of defense, and on or before the due date listed in the academic calendar, the student must submit six copies of the completed dissertation and six copies of an abstract of 350 words to the Program Advisor. The dissertation copies must be bound with a

black plastic comb or spiral binding, a black vinyl back cover, and a clear plastic front cover. The dissertation should be prepared according to *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Details regarding formatting and print layout may be requested from the Assistant to the Program Advisors in Room 313. At this time the S.T.D. Program Advisor, in consultation with the dissertation director, selects a reader who is not a member of the Institute faculty to participate at the defense. The Assistant to the S.T.D. Program Advisor distributes the copies of the dissertation to the dissertation director and the other board members.

The date for defense cannot be confirmed prior to approval by the dissertation director and the board members who are Institute faculty; approval must be given at least 4 weeks before the expected date of the defense. Also, the defense of the dissertation cannot be scheduled until all language and course-work requirements have been met.

The completed dissertation must be defended within five years of the date the student enters the S.T.D. program at the Institute. If the student is not able to defend the thesis within five years, the student may petition the Dean for a one-year extension. If a student fails to defend the thesis within this period, he or she ceases to be a candidate for the S.T.D.

## Defense of the Dissertation

After acceptance of the dissertation by the dissertation director and readers, the student must defend the dissertation in an oral examination of two hours. The student will begin with a fifteen-minute presentation of his dissertation. (The student may speak from notes of no more than one page but should not read a prepared text.) At the end of the defense, both the written dissertation and the oral examination will be graded. A vote will be taken in secret and supervised by the chairman of the examining committee. The final grade is the average of the grades submitted by each board member. If a candidate fails the oral examination, he must obtain permission from the Dean to repeat the examination. A candidate will not be permitted to retake the examination until at least one semester, or an equivalent period of time, has elapsed since the date of the failure. If the student fails a second time, he or she ceases to be a candidate for the S.T.D. degree.

## Dissertation Publication

A portion of the approved dissertation selected by the board at the time of the defense must be published through the Rome Session of the Institute in order for the diploma to be issued. The publication form, approval form, and cost details can be obtained from the Assistant to the Program Advisors in Room 313.

## Residency

This degree program requires two semesters of full-time study in residence. The completed dissertation must be defended within five years of the date the student enters the S.T.D. program at the Institute. If a student is unable to defend the dissertation within five years, the student may petition the Dean for a one-year extension. If a student fails to defend the dissertation within this period, he or she ceases to be a candidate for the S.T.D. In all cases, total tuition payments for the

degree must equal at least the cost of two full-time semesters and at least one semester of dissertation direction.