



**FOR RECOMMENDATION**

**PUBLIC**

**OPEN SESSION**

**TO:** Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

**SPONSOR:** Susan McCahan, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs  
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**PRESENTER:** Same as above  
**CONTACT INFO:**

**DATE:** December 6, 2019 for January 14, 2020

**AGENDA ITEM:** 7

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:**

Proposal for the closure of the conjoint Doctor of Theology, Toronto School of Theology

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs recommends to the Academic Board approval of proposals for the closure of existing degree and graduate programs. (*AP&P Terms of Reference, Section 4.4.a.iii*)

**GOVERNANCE PATH:**

1. **Committee on Academic Policy and Programs [for Recommendation] (January 14, 2020)**
2. Academic Board [for approval] (January 30, 2020)
3. Executive Committee [for confirmation] (February 12, 2020)

**PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

The proposal to close the Doctor of Theology was approved at the Toronto School of Theology Academic Council on September 23, 2019.

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

This is a proposal to close the Doctor of Theology (ThD) degree program. The ThD is offered through the Graduate Centre for Theological Studies with the degree conferred conjointly by the University of Toronto (U of T) and the Toronto School of Theology (TST) and its member colleges. Admissions to the ThD were administratively suspended as of November 20, 2014. The proposed effective date of the closure is December 31, 2024.

This degree program closure proposal is the last step in implementing the major recommendation of the 2011-12 UTQAP review of the conjoint programs, which went to AP&P as part of the Report on Reviews of Academic Programs and Units on October 29, 2012. The review recommended that U of T and TST take steps to establish a conjoint PhD in Theological Studies to respond to student demand for a PhD. This conjoint PhD would then replace the conjoint ThD program. The proposal outlines the steps and consultation involved in the development of the conjoint PhD in Theological Studies. The reviewers also indicated there was the need for a reform of the TST corporate and academic governance. This reform was completed along with the creation of an administrative unit for graduate program oversight and administration, the Graduate Centre for Theological Studies. The conjoint PhD was approved at U of T on October 23, 2013. It was approved externally by the Quality Council on December 13, 2013 and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities on November 5, 2014. The conjoint PhD commenced in September 2015.

When the conjoint PhD was created, all were aware of the plan to close the conjoint ThD program to new admissions when the conjoint PhD program began. The last students admitted to the conjoint ThD began their studies in September 2014 and TST suspended admissions to the ThD on November 20, 2014. The closure of the conjoint ThD has no impact on other programs (either conjoint or non-conjoint) in terms of course offerings, student supervision or other program elements. Qualified faculty who were active in the conjoint ThD are now contributing to the conjoint PhD and MA in Theological Studies programs. No faculty terms of employment are affected by the proposed closure and no jobs will be lost because of it. There may have been a slight increase to faculty workload around assessing next steps for lapsed and active students, in order to support given advice to students on next steps during the fall of 2019.

There has been extensive planning and consultation on how to best accommodate and communicate with students who are currently registered in the conjoint ThD, or who have lapsed. In planning communications with students, TST has followed U of T best practices. Conjoint ThD students were part of the consultation around developing the conjoint PhD. In July and August of 2019, the Director of the Graduate Centre for Theological Studies sent an email and a hard-copy letter to all registered and lapsed conjoint ThD students to inform them that a proposal to close the conjoint ThD was in development, identify the options available to them and describe the processes for each. Accommodation for active students and lapsed students is outlined in detail in the proposal. There are 40 active students: five at the comprehensive examination stage, 13 at the thesis proposal stage and 30 who have completed everything save the thesis. There are 39 lapsed students eligible to register and complete the conjoint ThD.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no negative implications to the degree proposal closure. As noted in the proposal, closure of the ThD has no impact on other programs (either conjoint or non-conjoint) in terms of course offerings, student supervision, or other program elements

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Be it Recommended

THAT the proposed closure of the conjoint Doctor of Theology (ThD), Toronto School of Theology dated August 29, 2019, to which admissions were administratively suspended in November 20, 2014, be approved with an anticipated program closure date of December 31, 2024.

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**DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:**

- *Cover*
- *Proposal for the closure of the Doctor of Theology*



## University of Toronto Proposal for the Closure of an Existing Program (Graduate or Undergraduate)

*(This template has been developed in line with the University of Toronto’s Quality Assurance Process.)*

*The process followed for the closure of any program is the same as that required for the approval of any new such program.*

<p><b>Closure Proposed:</b></p> <p><b>Please specify precisely what is being closed:</b></p> <p>i.e., Graduate diploma, field, certificate, option within a program (e.g., specialist, major, or minor), entire program, or degree (graduate or undergraduate)</p>	<p>Doctor of Theology (ThD) offered conjointly between the University of Toronto and the Toronto School of Theology, through its member colleges. The entire degree will be closed.</p>
<p><b>Department / Unit (if applicable):</b></p>	<p>Graduate Centre for Theological Studies</p>
<p><b>Faculty / Academic Division:</b></p>	<p>Toronto School of Theology (TST)</p>
<p><b>Faculty / Academic Division contact:</b></p>	<p>Director, Toronto School of Theology</p>
<p><b>Department / Unit contact:</b></p>	<p>Colleen Shantz, Director, Graduate Centre for Theological Studies</p>
<p><b>Effective date program was closed to new admissions:</b></p>	<p>November 20, 2014</p>
<p><b>Effective date of full closure of program:</b></p> <p>(date by which students currently in the program will be expected to graduate)</p>	<p>December 31, 2024, or when all registered students have graduated.</p>
<p><b>Version Date:</b></p>	<p>August 29, 2019</p>

## 1 Brief Summary

This proposal is to close the Doctor of Theology (ThD) degree program. The ThD is offered through the Graduate Centre for Theological Studies with the degree conferred jointly by University of Toronto (U of T) and the Toronto School of Theology (TST) and its member colleges. Admissions to the ThD were administratively suspended as of November 20, 2014.

This degree program closure proposal is the last step in implementing the major recommendation of the 2011-12 UTQAP review of the conjoint programs, which was that U of T and TST take steps to establish a conjoint PhD in Theological Studies to respond to student demand for a PhD. This conjoint PhD would then replace the conjoint ThD program.

## 2 Rationale

This degree program closure proposal is the last step in implementing the major recommendations of the 2011-12 UTQAP review of the conjoint programs, which was that U of T and TST take steps to establish a conjoint PhD in Theological Studies to respond to student demand for a PhD. This conjoint PhD would then replace the conjoint ThD program.

The reviewers recommended developing a conjoint PhD program that would include the following features: (a) a strong central authority in the administration of the new doctoral program; (b) collaboration among the member colleges of the consortium in enrolment planning, faculty complement planning, and planning for faculty renewal; (c) a clear allocation of faculty resources from the member colleges to the doctoral program; (d) a programmatic emphasis on faculty supervision and mentoring; (e) faculty collegiality and student cohort identity, so that the new program might have a more collaborative character than the conjoint Th.D. program; (f) a TST-wide faculty research culture; and (g) a coordinated structure of course requirements and comprehensive examinations, in lieu of the complicated sets and sub-sets of requirements in the conjoint Th.D. program

Development of the conjoint PhD in Theological Studies involved considerable consultation with TST faculty members in "Town Hall," departmental, and member college settings; with the heads of the member colleges; with TST's academic administrators and Academic Council; with students; with representatives of several cognate disciplines at the University of Toronto; and with academic administrators in the Office of the Vice-President and Provost, the School of Graduate Studies, and the Faculty of Arts and Science. Several of the recommendations of the external review pointed to the need for a reform of the TST corporate and academic governance, which had remained substantially unchanged since TST's founding in 1969. This reform was completed along with the creation of administrative unit for graduate program oversight and administration, i.e., the Graduate Centre for Theological Studies (GCTS).

The conjoint PhD was approved at U of T on October 23, 2013. It was approved externally by the Quality Council on December 13, 2013 and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities on November 5, 2014. The PhD commenced in September 2015.

When the conjoint PhD was created, all were aware of the plan to close the conjoint ThD program to new admissions when the conjoint PhD program began. The last students admitted to ThD began their studies in September 2014 and TST suspended admissions to the ThD on November 20, 2014.

### 3 Impact on other programs/units of the proposed closure

The relationship between the ThD and the conjoint PhD, including the extensive process of consultation, has been clarified in the preceding section. The closure of the ThD has no impact on other programs (either conjoint or non-conjoint) in terms of course offerings, student supervision, or other program elements. Qualified faculty who were active in the ThD are now contributing to conjoint PhD and MA in Theological Studies programs.

### 4 Student Accommodation

**Table 1: Graduate Breakdown**

	Comprehensive Examinations	Proposal	Writing dissertation		
			Active: registered or Leave of absence (LOA)	Lapsed and Eligible to Apply for Reinstatement (LEAR) student - proposal 8 yrs or older	LEAR student – proposal less than 8 years
<b>Enrolment ThD as of August 31, 2019</b>	5	10	24	19	20

### Overview

There has been extensive planning and consultation on how to best accommodate and communicate with students who are currently registered in the ThD, or who have lapsed. In planning communications with students, TST has followed University of Toronto best practices.

As described in preceding sections, students were part of the extensive consultation surrounding the development of the conjoint PhD which implied the closure of the conjoint ThD. In July and August, 2019, the Director of the Graduate Centre for Theological Studies sent an email and a hard-copy letter to every affected student, both those in progress and those who are currently lapsed from registration, to inform them of the closure, identify the options available to them, and describe the processes for each. The options for students are: 1) to complete the ThD, 2) to transfer to the Master of Theology (ThM), or 3) to formally withdraw from study. Students have been informed that the deadline to submit all materials required for graduation and to apply for Terminal Reinstatement is August 31, 2023, 16:30 (EDT). This date was calculated by starting with the last date of admission and adding the normal program length plus the maximum allowable number of extensions. Final Oral Examinations will be scheduled for all students who submit their Thesis, with the pre-approval of their supervisor, and apply successfully for reinstatement by this deadline.

A detailed summary of the options for students follows.

### Accommodation for Active Students

There are 40 active students (5 at the stage of comprehensive examinations, 13 at the dissertation proposal stage, and 20 ABD either registered or on a leave of absence). All students currently active in the ThD have completed their course requirements. The other program elements required for the completion of the degree remain in place.

### Accommodation for “Lapsed” (LEAR) Students

Students admitted to the Th.D. before the Fall of 2012 were permitted, under specific conditions, to lapse from registration and later apply to be reinstated to the program. Lapsing was permitted for those who had successfully completed all their course work, language requirements, comprehensive examinations, and had submitted an approved thesis proposal. We refer to this category of students as LEAR: Lapsed and Eligible to Apply for Reinstatement.

There are 39 LEAR students (19 with dissertation proposals approved within the last 8 years; 20 with older proposals). All LEAR students have completed their course requirements. The other program elements required for the completion of the degree remain in place.

We have developed a special set of procedures for students who are not actively registered. The most important accommodation outlined in the letter is that while lapsed students do not normally draw on institutional resources and are not able to meet with their supervisors, in this case, LEAR students have been permitted a one-time exemption in order to verify the composition of their supervisory committees and discuss plans for completion of their work.

In addition, students whose thesis proposals were approved 8 or more years ago are required to formally review their proposals with their supervisory committees. This step will help to ensure that

their work has the best possible chance to meet the standard of making an original scholarly contribution. If the committee deems the existing proposal to reflect the current state of the question, the supervisor will notify the GCTS Office in writing of their approval. In other cases, students will be permitted to append updates to the existing proposal. Updates may include additions to the review of literature and bibliography, summaries of changes to the field of research, and a brief explanation of how the proposal can still make an original contribution to scholarship.

Those students who have lapsed within the last few years are governed by the existing policies and procedures.

## 5 Faculty / Staff Accommodation

No terms of employment are affected by the proposed closure and no jobs will be lost because of it. The requirement to review older thesis proposals by October 31, 2019, may cause a small bump in workload this fall for faculty who have several supervisees with old proposals. However, these LEAR students are already assigned to faculty and, hence, part of their existing workload. There may also be a small number of cases in which LEAR students who have lost their original supervisors are reassigned to someone new. All such cases are negotiated with faculty and adjustments in workload are made at the college that holds their tenure/permanent status.

## 6 Governance Process

	Levels of Approval Required
<b>Decanal / Provostial Sign-Off</b>	August 29, 2019
<b>Academic Council</b>	September 23, 2019
<b>Submission to Provost's Office</b>	September 25, 2019
<b>Committee on Academic Policy &amp; Programs</b>	January 14, 2020
<b>Academic Board</b>	January 30, 2020
<b>Executive Committee of Governing Council</b>	February 12, 2020
<b>Inclusion in Annual report to Quality Council</b>	July 2020
<b>Inclusion in Annual report to MTCU (in case of closure of degree)</b>	July 2020