

LICENTIATE IN SACRED THEOLOGY DEGREE

The Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception offers an advanced and specialized research degree, the Licentiate in Sacred Theology (S.T.L.). Lectures, seminars, research projects, and personal study are designed to promote theological competency in a particular area of scientific investigation. The Licentiate degree is granted by the authority of and in the name of the Holy See.

Degree Requirements

Admission

The S.T.L. program is open to qualified clerical and lay students. The following prerequisites for admission will be evaluated by the Committee on Admissions which may, in individual cases, allow the student to remedy particular deficiencies during the first year of the program:

1. The Baccalaureate of Sacred Theology. Holders of a Masters of Divinity or other, similar first professional degree in theology will have their previous academic record evaluated to determine what further work is required to establish equivalence to the S.T.B. degree, and before beginning the S.T.L. program. In the case of those who hold only a Master of Arts degree in theology, this will typically involve at least one and a half additional years of full time study of theology before beginning the S.T.L. program.
2. Superior achievement and the ability to pursue graduate work as indicated by the transcript of previous studies (with a minimum GPA of 3.25).
3. Three letters of recommendation by persons who are in a position to judge the applicant's ability in academic study, along with a current photo and a completed application form.
4. A reading knowledge of Latin and Greek.

Course Work

A minimum of 36 semester hours of credit is required in twelve special courses of theological or allied studies, including courses in Sacred Scripture (3), Historical Theology (3), Systematic Theology (6), Thomistic Seminar I and II (6), and Teaching and Learning (3) for those who have not taught.

The Faculty requires a comprehensive **two-semester Pro-Seminar for the first S.T.L. year**. This Seminar ensures that all students who fulfill all of the other requirements for the degree are adequately imbued with the theological understanding of Saint Thomas. The Seminar meets two hours per session once a week over two semesters, and offers three credits per semester. The Seminar satisfies six elective credits in the S.T.L. program, the Academic Dean granting exemptions on an individual basis.

Language Requirements

Reading proficiency in Latin, New Testament Greek, and a modern foreign language, e.g. French, German or Spanish is to be demonstrated by written examination or six credits of graduate coursework. Since Latin and Greek are required for the S.T.B. degree, those S.T.L. candidates must have satisfied the Pontifical Faculty's requirements for these languages within the first year of matriculation in the S.T.L. program. The modern foreign language requirement is normally demonstrated within the first year of study as well. Language proficiency exams are offered twice per semester.

Grade Point Average

The student must maintain a grade point average of 3.25 or above throughout the S.T.L. program.

Successfully present a *lectio coram* (magisterial lecture) In early March of the Candidate's second year, he or she must present to the Academic Dean ten theses for the *lectio coram*. These will be reviewed and corrected by the Faculty. If necessary, they will be returned to the candidate to be redone. Each thesis should contain a bibliography of seven to ten items, generally as current as possible and clearly related to the point of the *lectio*. This indicates the candidate's ability to pinpoint the relevant literature for the topic and guide those who will be following (and judging) the *lectio*. The *lectio coram* consists of a presentation of forty-five minutes before a board of four examiners followed by a ten minute period of questioning by each examiner. Follow up questions may be permitted after each examiner has completed his or her period of questioning. A minimum average grade of 3.25 is required for successful completion of the *lectio coram*.

Completion of a *tesina* (thesis). Candidates are required to complete a successful *tesina* (thesis). The student manifests competence in methods of scientific research by completing a *tesina* under the direction of a member of the faculty on an approved topic relating to the student's specialization. The *tesina* must represent a substantial and sustained intellectual endeavour in the student's chosen area. Following the agreement of a faculty member to direct the *tesina* and the approval of the Academic Dean, the student submits an initial *tesina* proposal to the Academic Dean's office. The initial proposal includes a statement and brief synopsis of the topic, reasons for the choice of the topic, and a statement of methodology. The initial proposal must be signed by the director and the candidate. The Academic Dean sends the proposal to the Faculty for approval and comment by the end of the first year of full-time study. The student and director receive from the Academic Dean any feedback offered by the faculty.

A more definitive *prospectus* of the *tesina* is due at the beginning of the second year of study. Along with a more detailed proposal, the *prospectus* also includes an anticipated outline of the *tesina* and preliminary bibliography.

The *tesina* should be no less than 75, nor more than 100, pages of text in length. The *tesina* grade will consist of the average of the grades submitted by the *tesina* director, and a second reader appointed by the Academic Dean. The *tesina* grade will be determined by satisfactory completion of the approved *tesina* proposal, thorough exploration of the state of the question within contemporary research, innovative reflections or approaches to the question, adherence to standards of graduate level scholarship and approved Faculty style regulations. Students who successfully complete a *tesina* receive three credits, which may be counted as part of the thirty-six required credits for the S.T.L. degree. The candidate is to submit three unbound copies of the *tesina* to the Academic Dean by 1 April before anticipated graduation. The requirements outlined in Appendix D of this handbook in submitting the *tesina* must be followed exactly. No *lectio coram* will be scheduled before the completed *tesina* is submitted. In order to complete the *tesina* portion of the degree requirements, the student must receive an average of 3.25 or higher..

Residency

The residency requirement for the S.T.L. degree is four semesters.

Timeline for S.T.L. Tesina and Lectio Coram

I S.T.L. Candidates (1st Year)

September I S.T.L. candidates should begin discussing possible areas and topics for the S.T.L. *tesina*.

15 April Deadline for I S.T.L. candidates' submission of an initial proposal to the Academic Dean, signed by the candidate and his or her advisor.

II S.T.L. Candidates (2nd Year)

15 October Deadline for II S.T.L. candidates' submission of the S.T.L. *tesina* prospectus (a formal proposal and outline) to the Academic Dean. This includes a concrete description of the *tesina*, an outline, and a selected bibliography. At this time the Academic Dean will appoint a second reader.

early March Presentation to the Academic Dean of ten theses for the *lectio coram*. These will be reviewed and corrected by the Faculty. If necessary, they will be returned to the candidate to be redone. Each thesis should contain a bibliography of 7 to 10 items, generally as current as possible and clearly related to the point of the *lectio*. This indicates the candidate's ability to pinpoint the relevant literature for the topic and guide those who will be following (and judging) the *lectio*.

1 April Last day for submitting the S.T.L. *tesina* to the Academic Dean.

N.B. For students intending to complete their S.T.L. during the fall semester, the deadline for submitting the *tesina* prospectus is April 15. The ten theses for the *lectio coram* must be submitted to the Academic Dean by October 15, and the *tesina* must be submitted to the Academic Dean by November 1.