

**ASSESSMENT PLAN  
PH.D. THEOLOGY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY  
ORAL ROBERTS UNIVERSITY**

The Ph.D. Committee has made significant progress in the development of an assessment plan for the Ph.D. in Contextual Theology at Oral Roberts University. This document represents a progress report.

Academic, professional and personal assessment plays an integral role in the educational program of the ORU Graduate School of Theology and Ministry (GSTM). Assessment is a multi-layered process that involves students, the seminary program, and outside entities, including accrediting agencies and the federal government. Accreditation is also the gateway to millions of dollars in federal financial aid. ORU's regional accrediting agency is the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The programs of the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry are accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). ATS requires its member schools to abide by its standards of assessment.

The general outline of the ATS standard for assessment is stated in ATS Educational Standard ES.6: "Assessment of student learning requires schools to be able to demonstrate the extent to which students have achieved the various goals of the degree programs they have completed as well as indicators of program effectiveness, such as the percentage of students who complete the program and the percentage of graduates who find placement appropriate to their vocational intention and theological education." See Appendix A for the chart with the overall assessment regime of GSTM. The chart contains the full array of assessments in the seminary, describing the relevant program, each type of instrument, frequency, the responsible party, outcomes measured, and the review process.

The plan for assessment in the PhD in Contextual Theology will comply with the ATS Educational Standard, ES.6.1: "The school shall maintain an ongoing process for assessing student learning outcomes and degree program goals. An effective plan of assessment should be as simple and sustainable as possible while adequate to answer fundamental questions about educational effectiveness. This plan should include (1) a process for evaluating components of the full degree program in an ongoing manner; (2) the identification of appropriate direct and indirect indicators of student learning; (3) the routine involvement of faculty in the review and evaluation of the results of the assessment; and (4) linking assessment results to curriculum and educational planning, institutional strategic planning, and resource allocation."

See Appendix B for the overall assessment regime of the PhD in Contextual Theology. The chart contains the full array of assessments in the PhD program, describing each type of instrument, frequency, the responsible party, outcomes measured, and the review process.

As stated in ATS ES.6, the assessment plan of the PhD in Contextual Theology will maintain a continuing process for assessing student learning outcomes and the degree to which students are meeting program goals. The Ph.D. Committee has designed an assessment cycle that encompasses the full degree program, employs direct and indirect indicators of learning, involves faculty in the review and evaluation of results, and links assessment results to curriculum, planning, and resource allocation.

The graphic below illustrates the steps in the assessment cycle (ATS 6.2.4):



The assessment cycle begins with a plan, which consists of the following components: (1) the GSTM mission statement, (2) the PhD program goals and student learning outcomes, (3) curriculum, (4) course syllabi containing objectives and learning outcomes, assignments, (5) the overall levels of assessment, with rubrics and artifacts.

### **1. MISSION (ATS ES.6.2.1)**

The purpose of assessment is to help a school to achieve its mission. The mission statement of the GSTM is to educate and equip men and women biblically, theologically, and professionally to serve as Spirit-empowered leaders in the church, society, and the global community. The ORU mission is emblazoned at the head of the overall GSTM Assessment Regime. The assessment cycle answers three questions: (1) What do we want our students to learn in light of our mission? (2) How do we know whether they are learning it? (3) And how can we use that information to improve their learning? To answer these questions, in collaboration with ATS, we administer ATS surveys to entering and graduating students. See Appendix C for the ATS Entering Student Questionnaire and Appendix D for the ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire. The data collected helps to gauge success in the accomplishment of the GSTM mission, student learning, and indicates areas for improvement.

### **2. DEGREE PROGRAM GOALS AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The PhD in Contextual Theology is primarily aimed at theological research and writing. The program goals and student learning outcomes of the PhD in Contextual Theology are as follows:

**GOAL 1:** To enable students to acquire comprehensive knowledge of the disciplines of theological study with specialization in a particular area of study.

Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge in and a general mastery of the major area of specialization.
2. Demonstrate expertise in the specific area of contextual theology by means of dissertation research.

**GOAL 2:** To provide students with the skills needed to engage in original research at the university and seminary level in their area of theological expertise and to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field through actionable research and publications.

Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate a capacity to produce publication-worthy research and writing that contributes to the knowledge and advancement of the field.
2. Disseminate the findings of research through traditional and digital means.

**GOAL 3:** To engage students in a sustained exploration of the connections and interactions between the academic disciplines of theological studies and the practices of Christian ministry, mission, spirituality, and social engagement.

Outcomes:

1. Articulate knowledge of the interrelationships between the subject matter of Christian theology and the practices of Christian ministry and mission.
2. Engage critically in theological reflection on Christian spirituality and social engagement.

**GOAL 4:** To equip students with pedagogical competencies that prepare them to teach and lead in their area of theological expertise in diverse academic and vocational contexts in local and global constituencies.

Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of learning theories and methods of assessment in order to help learners to think critically.
2. Demonstrate an ability to teach and lead effectively in their area of concentration and in their chosen vocational context.

**GOAL 5:** To equip students to interpret and communicate knowledge with sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate an ability to interpret and to communicate knowledge from a charismatic perspective.
2. Demonstrate an awareness of the distinctive characteristics of ORU's constituency, the Spirit-empowered movement.

The program goals above are broad statements of expectations of what will happen as a result of the Ph.D. program. They serve as the foundation for developing particular student learning outcomes. Two learning outcomes are specified for each program goal. The outcomes focus on what students will know or will be able to do as a result of the Ph.D. program. The goals and outcomes will be measured by means of assessment of particular assignments in the courses that constitute the curriculum, as listed in the next section.

### 3. CURRICULUM

TOTAL: 50.5 credits

Components: 1 Research Methods course, 7 core courses, 5 track courses, 2 HPE courses, 3 assessment proficiencies, and dissertation

PRFT 949 Research Methods – online module (3)	
HPE online modules (1.5)	
PRFT 910 Entry Level Assessment: end of year one (0.5)	
(Core) (21 credits)	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GTHE 951 History of Christian Doctrine</li> <li>2. GTHE 962 Theologization in the Changing Context of Christianity</li> <li>3. GTHE 965 History of Global Spirit Empowered Movements</li> <li>4. GTHE 967 Contemporary Issues in Spirit Empowered Christianity</li> <li>5. GTHE 931 Spirit Hermeneutics</li> <li>6. GTHE 911 Seminar in Old Testament Theology</li> <li>7. GTHE 921 Seminar in New Testament Theology</li> </ol>	
Contextual Theology Track (15 credits)	Potential Future Track (15 credits)
(Required) (12 credits)	(Required credits) (12)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. GTHE 961 History and Methods of Contextual Theology</li> <li>9. GTHE 972 Theology of Spirit-Empowered Mission</li> <li>10. GTHE 981 Integrated Seminar on Contextual Theology 1</li> <li>11. GTHE 982 Integrated Seminar on Contextual Theology 2</li> </ol>	(Elective) (3)
(Elective: One of the following) (3 credits)	
<input type="checkbox"/> GTHE 971 History and Theology of Missions	
<input type="checkbox"/> GTHE 974 Christian Theology and Other Religions	

<input type="checkbox"/> GTHE 978 Global Pentecostalism and Social Engagement <input type="checkbox"/> GTHE 976 Contextualized Leadership Development <input type="checkbox"/> Independent Study	
PRFT 920 Mid-Level Assessment: Comprehensive Exam (0.5)	
GTHE 990- Dissertation (9 credits)	
PRFT 930 Candidacy Level Assessment: Dissertation Defense (0)	

#### 4. COURSE SYLLABI (ATS ES.6.2.2)

The professors of record in each course will set the instructional objectives and learning outcomes in the syllabi that are correlated with the mission of GSTM and the goals and outcomes of the PhD program. Professors will link assignments with the course learning outcomes and create rubrics for evaluation. The last page of the syllabus will contain a chart on which professors will calibrate the extent to which the course contributes to the program goals and student learning outcomes of the PhD degree. See Appendix E: Sample Syllabus; GTHE 951.

#### 5. LEVELS OF ASSESSMENT

In the overall scheme of the PhD in Contextual Theology, there will be three levels of assessment—entry level, mid-level, and candidacy level. At each level of assessment, an Assessment Committee consisting of the PhD director, Director of Assessment, and faculty members will evaluate the student’s aptitude and ability to proceed to the next phase of the program (ATS ES.6.4.1). A standard rubric for student evaluation will be developed for each level of assessment.

#### ORIENTATION

The Associate Ph.D. Director or Director of Assessment will conduct an orientation session in which he/she introduces students to the assessment program of the PhD program. See Appendix F: Assessment Orientation PowerPoint Presentation

#### PRFT 910 ENTRY LEVEL ASSESSMENT (Appendix G)

The first assessment will be conducted by the PhD Assessment Committee at the end of the first academic year. The committee audits the student’s progress according to a specified rubric to determine whether sufficient progress has been made to warrant the student’s continuation in the PhD program. Criteria include the achievement of at least a ‘B’ in all courses, review of the designated artifacts below, and approval of a research proposal for the PhD dissertation. Students at this level will be required to complete the ATS Entering Student Questionnaire (ESQ).

### **PRFT 920 MID LEVEL ASSESSMENT (Appendix H)**

The second assessment is the comprehensive examination, administered by the PhD Assessment Committee. A comprehensive exam rubric has been developed to evaluate the degree to which students demonstrate a broad knowledge of their subject area and preparation to begin research and writing of the dissertation. Students will be provided with guidelines for the comprehensive examination, including sample questions.

### **PRFT 930 CANDIDACY ASSESSMENT (Appendix I)**

The third level of assessment is the oral defense of the dissertation, administered by the PhD Assessment Committee. A Dissertation Defense Rubric will be developed to determine the extent to which the student has demonstrated a mastery of the field of his/her thesis research, made an original contribution to knowledge, and exhibited the requisite research and writing skills by the completion of a thesis draft and successfully defended his/her dissertation through an oral exam. Students will be provided with a Dissertation Manual with guidelines for dissertation research, steps in the writing process, and the oral defense. In the final juncture of the program, students will complete the Candidacy Level Assessment Total Seminary Experience Survey (Appendix J), the Candidacy Level Assessment Degree Plan Survey (Appendix K), and the ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire (Appendix L).

### **ANALYSIS OF THE PLAN**

The results of the assessment regimen demonstrate whether and to what extent students are meeting the goals and outcomes of the PhD program. The PhD Committee will analyze the results to determine from them how to improve and adjust the overall program. Based upon this review and evaluation, changes are made to improve teaching and learning, thus closing the assessment loop, and beginning a new cycle of the assessment process.

### **APPENDICES**

(Click on links below to access)

[Appendix A: Assessment Regime of the ORU Graduate School of Theology and Ministry](#)

[Appendix B: Assessment Regime for the ORU PhD in Contextual Theology](#)

Appendix C: ATS Entering Student Questionnaire

Appendix D: ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire

[Appendix E: Sample Syllabus GTHE 951](#)

Appendix F: Assessment Orientation PowerPoint Presentation

[Appendix G: PRFT 910 Entry Level Assessment Student Evaluation Form](#)

[Appendix H: PRFT 920 Mid-Level Assessment Student Evaluation Form](#)

[Appendix I: PRFT 930 Candidacy Level Assessment Student Evaluation Form](#)

Appendix J: Candidacy Level Assessment Total Seminary Experience Survey

Appendix K: Candidacy Level Assessment Degree Plan Survey

Appendix L: ATS Graduating Student Questionnaire Report (GSQ)

(NEWBERG 6-1-19)