



BRISBANE COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY

Application for Approval of Specialised Study Unit

Application for approval of study proposal when completed should be lodged at the office of a member school and recorded by the Academic Dean who will forward it to the BCT Dean no later than week 1 of the semester of enrolment.

ENROLMENTS IN SPECIALISED STUDY UNITS FOR WHICH A SATISFACTORY APPLICATION HAS NOT BEEN RECEIVED BY THE END OF WEEK 1 WILL BE CANCELLED.

ELIGIBILITY: Before submitting this application, please check with your Academic Dean to ensure that eligibility requirements have been satisfied.

STUDENT NO. _____ SEMESTER _____ / 200 (enter details)

SURNAME _____ Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Revd/Other (please circle)
Please indicate previous name if any

OTHER NAMES _____ PREFERRED FIRST NAME _____

UNIT CODE: _____ SPECIFIC TITLE IF CHOSEN: _____

(25 characters including spaces)

STUDY PROPOSAL IS TO BE COMPLETED – SEE PAGE 2 OF THIS FORM for Details of the proposed Specialised Study.

Supervisor: _____ (Print name)

I agree to act as supervisor for this unit as outlined on the following page(s).

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE Date / /200

THIS FORM MUST BE SIGNED BY THE APPLICANT AND THE ACADEMIC DEAN.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____./_____/200

MEMBER SCHOOL St Francis' St Paul's Trinity

Member School Record:

I have noted the application for a Specialised Study Unit and will monitor the receipt of the completed proposal.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Academic Dean)

DETAIL OF THE PROPOSED SPECIALISED STUDY

(Attach separately)

Two Important Notes to Students:

- Please ensure that you have referred to the accompanying *Guide to Completing an SSU Application* before submitting this form.
- Putting together a viable SSU application (as per below) will itself require some *preliminary research* before the semester begins. Therefore, you will need to *start early* and liaise with your Academic Dean **AND** your Proposed Supervisor *within the timeframe for enrolments for the relevant semester*. Last minute inadequate proposals will not be accepted. The onus is therefore on the applicant to demonstrate in a timely manner that the proposed study is viable before approval by the Dean will be granted.
- It is expected that the student will arrange to meet with the Supervisor at least twice in the semester following the approval of the Application.

1/ Unit code for the Proposed Study

- The unit code for a specialised study unit is made up by the Field Indicator (A = Old Testament Studies; B = New Testament Studies; A/B = Biblical Studies; C = Systematic & Moral Theology; D = Church History; E = Ministry & Mission; H = Philosophy & Humanities) followed by 52555/74555. The last digit will vary if more than one specialised study is completed in the same Field. An example of the code and the normal unit title is “B74555 Specialised Study: New Testament Studies”. A student may opt on this form for a more specific title than the Field name. In this case the title must be no more than 25 characters long, not including the words “Specialised Study:” An example for a student wishing to undertake a specialised study in A/B Field with a specific title is “B74555 Specialised Study: Paul’s Prayers”.

2/ Title of the Proposed Study

- The title of the study is normally expressed in one sentence or phrase.

3/ Outline of the Proposed Study

Please provide:-

- A one (1) paragraph overview of the area to be covered in the essay, along with a brief indication of the *specific research question* to be addressed.
- Postgraduate students only: You are also asked to provide:
 - A single brief integrated *literature review*, that discusses approximately four (4) works noted in the bibliography (*no fewer than three*),
 - which will identify the *major schools of thought* on the topic to be addressed,
 - and provide some indication of *how the proposed research question fits in* with this existing body of work.

4/ Outline of the Proposed Methodology

Please provide:-

- An outline of the methodology you intend to use in going about your research.
- An outline of the methodology you intend to use in the essay structure.

5/ Starting Bibliography: Please provide:-

- A list of no fewer than fifteen (15) resources you have consulted in putting together this application.



BRISBANE COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY

Guide to Completing an SSU Application

(a) The Concept of the BCT Specialised Study Unit (SSU)

The BCT's SSUs aim to allow students to pursue in depth a topic of particular interest that has arisen in the course of studies, but is not specifically addressed in a set syllabus unit. It involves a limited independent research project, under the supervision of a designated lecturer, culminating in a single piece of written assessment of 5,000-6,000 words (Undergraduate students) and 6500-7500 words (Postgraduate students).

A SSU is neither a soft option nor an automatic right. Before confirmation of enrolment, the student needs to have the in-principle acceptance of a BCT faculty member to supervise such a project, as well as having been able to demonstrate a capacity to work at the required level (see previous satisfactory completion of units within the Field of the proposed SSU), and to have a viable research project ready to go. Further (and consequently), the SSU is *not* a 'back door' route by which a student might simply undertake a unit that is not otherwise available within his/her course of studies.

Given this, please carefully note the following guidelines that are set out on the SSU application form:

- "Putting together a viable SSU application will itself require some *preliminary research* before the semester begins. Therefore, you will need to *start early* and liaise with your Academic Dean and proposed supervisor *before the end of the previous semester*. Last minute inadequate proposals will not be accepted. The onus is therefore on the applicant to demonstrate in a timely manner that the proposed study is viable before approval by the Dean will be granted."
- "The SSU form must be lodged with the BCT Dean by the end of the first week of semester at the very latest. Applications received after this date will not normally be considered, and all enrolments in Specialised Study units for which a satisfactory Application has not been received by the end of Week 1 will be cancelled."

(b) Completing the Form

Please ensure that before the SSU form is submitted to the BCT office, that you sign the form, and have the proposed supervisor and your Academic Dean sign as well.

The reverse of the form then sets out the required items you need to address. You should complete this statement on separate paper and attach it to the application form itself.

1/ Title of the Proposed Study

- This title should be no longer than a short sentence.
- It should indicate the topic area of the study, perhaps also giving an idea of the particular research question it will be concerned with.

2/ Outline of the Proposed Study

This section asks you to specify exactly what your essay will be concerned with.

- The one (1) paragraph overview of the area to be covered in the essay and the indication of the specific research question to be addressed:
 - This should first provide a clarification of the general area of research you are concerned with. *For example:* “The essay will focus on the figure of Nicodemus in John 3: 1-21 ...”
 - You should then indicate clearly what you want to know about this topic, ie the specific research question. *For example:* “The major focus will be on discerning the place of the figure Nicodemus in the development of the theme of discipleship in John’s Gospel. In this context, it will consider the motif of rebirth found in this chapter, the symbolic elements of this scene (eg darkness, secrecy and being “Israel’s teacher”), and the relationship between this scene and the mention towards the end of the Gospel of Nicodemus’ involvement in Jesus’ burial (Jn 19:39).”
- Postgraduate students only: The brief literature review is where you need to identify the *major schools of thought* on the topic and indicate *how the proposed research question fits in* with this existing work.
 - A literature review is simply (as the name implies) a discussion or review of what has already been written and published on the topic.
 - Now it is likely that you will already be familiar with some relevant material on the topic even before considering enrolling in a SSU in the area (hence your interest in it), and in getting this application together you will need to re-read some of this material and look a little more broadly as well.
 - You have been asked to discuss approximately four such works and you should spend around *a paragraph on each* in which you outline their major angles of investigation of the topic and indicate how the author represents a particular school of thought on this topic. You should also indicate how your own proposed study relates to these various possible positions (not that you have to commit yourself to any particular position at this early stage of your research).
 - It is strongly suggested that you discuss both available literature and your project’s relationship to it with your proposed supervisor in the course of putting together this literature review.

3/ Outline of the Proposed Research Method

The previous section deals with *WHAT* you are going to write about. This section deals with *HOW* you are going to go about finding out about this topic, and *HOW* you will set out the results of your research.

- The outline of the method you intend to use in going about your research (1-2 paragraphs only).
 - There are many ways of researching *any* given topic.
 - Some of these research methods have technical sounding names like “post-colonial feminist hermeneutic” or “phenomenological method”, etc. Generally speaking you find out about these methods in your coursework units, and you may find one of these particularly appropriate for what you wish to study.
 - But your research method need not have such a label with a history of development and refinement. In this case, all you need to do is to clearly explain how you intend to go about finding some answers to the question you have set yourself. *For example:* “I intend to investigate Augustine’s understanding of salvation history in his *City of God* with several important statements on this theme in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, with a view to identifying and assessing any significant differences”. *OR:* “I intend to explore the relationship between the diocesan guidelines on shared rural

ministry and some recent theological reflections on this area of contemporary Christian praxis.”

- The outline of the method you intend to use in the essay structure (one paragraph):
 - Note that this section does not need to be extensive, and nor are you bound to follow it. It is simply meant to provide an indication of how you might go about practically turning this research into a coherent essay.
 - The idea is to indicate something of the logical flow of ideas that you anticipate. *For example*: “Having considered the way that Aristotle uses the idea of *phusis*, I will consider how early modern natural philosophers and mathematicians thought about the idea of the *physical* cosmos, focusing first on Descartes and then on Kepler. I will then suggest and discuss two or so important consequences of this shift in understanding.”

4/ Starting Bibliography

Please provide:-

- A list of no fewer than fifteen (15) resources you have consulted in putting together this application.
- These resources should include (and for postgraduate students *must* include):
 - Published books
 - Scholarly journal articles
 - On-line resources (if available and relevant)
 - Other relevant reliable primary or secondary resources