

## Accelerated MDiv Research Paper Submission

**Rationale:** Because the Accelerated MDiv program provides advanced standing for qualified students, these students must be able to demonstrate competency in research and writing—skills that would traditionally be taught and/or refined in introductory level seminary courses.

**Requirements:** The research paper submitted should demonstrate a firm grasp of grammatical and stylistic issues in writing as well as the proper use of reliable, credible sources that are appropriate for an academic research paper.

*Is there a length requirement for the research paper submission?*

No, there is no minimum length requirement. HOWEVER, the research paper submitted must reflect quality research from credible sources. This means that something like a word study could demonstrate quality research from credible sources in 4 to 6 double-spaced pages, whereas a topical research paper may require a minimum of 8 to 10 double-spaced pages to fully engage the topic.

*Does the research paper have to be written according to a particular style guide?*

While NOBTS primarily uses Turabian 8<sup>th</sup> edition, we recognize that not all students use Turabian at the undergraduate level. Consequently, you may submit papers that follow any standard style guide (SBL, MLA, APA, etc.) but your paper must reflect a firm grasp of, and adherence to, that particular guide.

*Are there a minimum number of sources required for the research paper?*

A good rule of thumb is one source per page of a double-spaced research paper, meaning that an 8-10 page research paper should have a minimum of 8-10 quality sources. This is not a hard and fast rule and a 10 page research paper can certainly be a quality paper with 8 sources, but students should keep this rule of thumb in mind when submitting their research paper.

*What is a "quality" source?*

While it is tricky to nail down exactly what qualifies as a "quality" (credible) source, students should be able to distinguish between academic research and devotional content. Peer-reviewed journals, academic encyclopedias, and critical commentaries are excellent examples of quality sources for biblical studies. Wikipedia articles, Matthew Henry's commentary, and devotional books are not. Part of the rationale for having students submit a research paper is to determine whether students have learned not just *how* to research but also *what* and *where* to research.