

# **Louisville Presbyterian Seminary**

## **Doctor of Ministry LEARNERS HANDBOOK**

**Office of Lifelong Learning  
And Advanced Degrees  
David R. Sawyer, Director**

**January, 2007**

**Welcome to the Doctor of Ministry  
Learning Community  
Louisville Presbyterian Seminary**

Welcome to the members of the Doctor of Ministry Learning Community of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary. Along with your teaching members and administrators, you are partners in this structured continuing education program for experienced pastors and church leaders.

**PURPOSE AND MISSION**

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary began offering the Doctor of Ministry when it was first established more than 30 years ago. It has evolved with the needs of the seminary and the church. LPTS is committed to leadership in nurturing the spiritual and intellectual growth of those persons who have accepted the challenging call to vocational commitment either in the church or in fields closely related to the mission and witness of the church. The D.Min. at LPTS is intended to set the standard for a formal program of study in the early or middle stages of a life of ministerial service.

**PLAN OF STUDY**

The Louisville Seminary Doctor of Ministry degree is a 36 credit (semester hour) program designed to be completed in three years. The following chart illustrates how the program can be achieved in a three year period of time.

**Year One**

Seminar I (June or Jan.)	2 Weeks	6 Credits
Seminar II (Jan. or June)	1 Weeks	4 Credits

**Year Two**

Seminar III (June or Jan.)	1 Week	4 Credits
Advanced Professional Course	1 Week Or equivalent	3 Credits
Seminar IV (Jan. or June)	2 Weeks	6 Credits
And Complete Prospectus		
Advanced Professional Course	1 Week Or equivalent (in any # hours sequence)	3 Credit hours

**Year Three**

Advanced Professional Course	1 Week Or equivalent (or in other sequences)	3 Credit hours
Project In Ministry (Completed by Mar. 1 or Oct. 1)		7 Credit Hours

**Graduation** (December or May)

**ATTENDANCE**

Attendance of all seminar or class sessions is expected, except in case of emergencies. Requirements for making up work must be negotiated with individual professors.

## **REGISTRATION AND FEES**

The learner is responsible to register no later than the first class session of each seminar or course taken at Louisville Seminary with the Office of the Registrar.

LPTS has a flat fee for D.Min. tuition: \$8,000 for General and Interim Ministry Tracks and \$9,000 for the Pastoral Care and Counseling Track. The tuition is paid in installments of equal payments billed in December and due in January beginning with the first seminar. Additional costs in addition to tuition include books, travel, lodging and meals for the seminars and classes. D.Min. students ordinarily finance their degree expenses through a combination of congregational study-leave allowances, denominational or foundation grants, tax-free educational savings accounts, and personal budgeting.

No learners may register for any seminar or class if he or she has not made satisfactory arrangements with the Business Office for payment of financial obligations from the previous session. Payment for rooms and other expenses incurred while on campus is due before leaving the campus.

## **TIME LIMITS**

The Seminary's accrediting agency, the Association of Theological Schools limits the time of active degree status to six years.

## **LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

When unusual situations arise, such as a change in position or prolonged illness, learners may request a leave of absence for a year at a time from the Director of Advanced Degrees. Each case will be treated individually. Ordinarily courses which have been completed will be valid for five years from the registration date.

## **PROJECT IN MINISTRY**

The entire Doctor of Ministry program circles around the Project in Ministry. From the beginning of Seminar I, learners are encouraged to begin preparing a "shadow prospectus," in consultation with the advisor, that begins to shape ideas for the project. After the completion of Seminar IV the Prospectus for the Project in Ministry is written. After the Prospectus is accepted by the Advisor and the Director of Advanced Degrees, and after completion of the Advanced Professional Courses, the learner is admitted to candidacy for the Doctor of Ministry and may begin work on the Project for Ministry itself.

The Project in Ministry draws on the traditions and values of the church, utilizes the methods and insights of the social sciences and other disciplines where appropriate, and applied theological reflection to an actual experience or activity in a setting for ministry. The project is intended to achieve conclusions that have potential value both to the ministry setting involved and to the larger church. The Project Report is 75 pages in length of text, plus appendices, footnotes and bibliography. It must conform to the style sheet "Format Requirements for the Doctor of Ministry Project Report" current at the time the

report is completed. The current style sheet is available online from the Library Resources section of the seminary website, [www.lpts.edu](http://www.lpts.edu).

### **ADULT LEARNING MODEL**

The Doctor of Ministry program at Louisville is intended for the competent minister or church leader who has had at least three years of active ministry beyond the Master of Divinity degree. Adult learners are those who follow their own call and take their own initiative for learning and growing in ministerial and vocational competency. Doctor of Ministry participants expect a collaborative learning style in classrooms by which their ideas and reflections are encouraged and honored. The Doctor of Ministry learner is in charge of the progress of her or his own program, and is urged to keep track of the requirements and the timing of the program. The role of faculty and administration is to provide a stimulating learning environment with adequate resources for the adult learner to complete the program.

### **ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL COURSES (APC)**

After the second seminar is completed, learners in consultation with their advisors begin to identify courses related to the topic which will be developed in the Project in Ministry. Other areas of interest may also be chosen for elective courses. Courses may be taken at the M.Div. Level at LPTS with additional doctoral level requirements, in continuing educational programs, workshops, or consultations at LPTS or elsewhere, with added doctoral level extra work, at other ATS accredited seminaries, or as independent studies.

Prior approval by the faculty advisor and the Director of Advanced Degrees is required for off campus or independent study opportunities. With prior approval, up to three APC credits may be taken outside of Louisville Seminary. Up to three credits of post-M.Div. work may be applied to the Doctor of Ministry degree. See the brochure for requirements. See the Appendix for Independent Study Guidelines.

### **LANGUAGE**

Learning is fundamentally concerned with communication, self-expression, and personal and social transformation. Learning respects individuals, their feelings, their value and worth, and their particular potential for contribution to common knowledge and community virtue. Learning is fundamentally and intentionally inclusive.

At the same time, learning has an ethical and political foundation. Since theological discourse has traditionally been patriarchal, gender exclusive, and racially biased and culturally provincial, the Seminary has established a policy that the language (symbols, metaphors) used in class discussions and written work shall be gender inclusive and respectful of all persons and groups as valued human creatures of God. Not only language about human beings need be inclusive, but also language (pronouns, metaphors, synonyms) about God should be varied so that God is recognized as Spirit, not identified exclusively as male.

## **FACULTY ADVISOR**

As the learner begins to identify areas of special interest, a faculty advisor is chosen in collaboration between the learner, the faculty member and the Director of Advanced Degrees. Ordinarily the advisor is appointed by the end of Seminar II. Since the Learning Project is envisioned as an interpretive learning experience, faculty from any of the three areas of the faculty are eligible to serve as advisors. A second faculty member is also identified as a second reader for the project. The Faculty Advisor guides the learner in the selection of Advanced Professional Courses and in the development of the Project Prospectus. Ordinarily the Advisor and the Second Reader are members of the Louisville Seminary Faculty. When it seems advantageous to select a second reader from outside the seminary, it is expected that person will have expertise and advanced degree in the area of the learner's interest.

## **WHAT IS DOCTORAL (D.Min.) LEVEL WORK?**

The D.Min. is an advanced professional degree designed to integrate theological reflection with the practice of ministry. The oral and written work need to reflect a depth of theological thinking that goes beyond the M.Div. expectation, and demonstrate a positive and suitably complex synthesis of thought and praxis. Further the D.Min. should provide new insights or findings that are of broad enough application to be useful to others in the practice of ministry, beyond the benefit of personal growth of the student and to the benefit of a particular ministry setting. Seminary Guidelines for Course Work indicate that one credit hour for work for a Th.M. or D.Min. course requires 45 working hours, two credits require 90 working hours, three credits require 135 working hours, four credits require 180 hours, and five credits require 225 hours. These hours may be earned through a combination of supervisory/instructional contact hours, assigned reading, and written work. Seminary standards for these are: reading of 20 pages equal one hour of work excluding endnotes, bibliography, other scholarly apparatus; one page of a finished written draft counts as approximately one working hour.

## **BUILDING YOUR LIFELONG LEARNING SUPPORT SYSTEM**

Learners will be helped by having early and thorough conversations with those most directly involved with the learner's Doctor of Ministry program. Family members are the first to be brought on board with information about time away and "homework" expectations. It sometimes helps to say that the expectation is about ten hours a week for three years. Then members and leaders of congregations, colleagues and supervisors in the ministry setting, and denominational leaders also can be supporters and encouragers along the way. We often have heard D.Min. graduates report gratefully that their families and congregations not only encouraged them, but held them accountable to keep to their timelines and complete the program. Be sure to discuss both the time and the financial needs with those involved. Both family and the "At Home Learning Group" are important components to success in the program with their encouragement and support when the going gets rough, and for mutual accountability for those times when the learner is tempted to give up.

## **THE AT-HOME LEARNING GROUP**

The At-Home Learning Group is a select group of lay persons associated with the Candidate's ministry context (for Advanced Practice Track Candidates), or peer colleagues (for Interim Ministry or Pastoral Care and Counseling Track Candidates) who are chosen by the candidate to work with her or him as a team to plan, execute, and evaluate all aspects of the professional project.

The Learning Project is intended to be a well-defined and disciplined ministry of the whole church. To succeed, the project must have the support of the church or other ministry context in which it is undertaken. The work, guidance, feedback, and evaluation done by the At-Home Learning Group are not only a program requirement, but also an essential ingredient in the success of the project. Candidates are expected to have an At-Home Learning Group in place before Seminar I.

## **GROUP MEMBERSHIP**

Persons chosen for membership should be those of good character, committed faith, and sound judgment who have had experience in the church's ministry. They should have a variety of gifts and skills which will contribute to the success of the project. They will be called upon to exercise mature judgment and to hold each other and the candidate accountable for their assigned tasks. The committee should consist of the candidate, 3-4 church members and/or officials, and any consultants, trainers, or resource persons who may be enlisted. The committee is selected and organized by the candidate. A Chair for the group (not the candidate, but chosen by the candidate) will convene subsequent meetings and the candidate will be a guide to the process.

## **TASKS OF THE AT-HOME LEARNING GROUP**

- Group members are expected to work supportively and collaboratively with the candidate and the rest of the group to reflect with the candidate on the D.Min. learnings in the seminars and on the project through all of its phases in accordance with the approved prospectus.
- They will objectively evaluate the project and the candidate's leadership of it from its inception, through all of its development and execution.
- They will work with the candidate to identify concerns, plan research, locate documents, recruit participants, design training models or curricula, disseminate information, construct or adapt evaluation instruments, interpret the project to the ministry context, handle legal and logistical matters, etc., and prayerfully support the project.
- As needed, they will work with the candidate to secure financial resources for the project, and arrange appropriate accounting procedures for handling funds.
- They will submit a written report of their work to the candidate's advisor at the time of submission of the final project report for oral defense.