



Doctor of Ministry Handbook

Revised January 2019

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

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Welcome to the Doctor of Ministry Program Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Welcome to the Doctor of Ministry Program at Louisville Seminary. As your professors and administrators, we see ourselves as your partners in this structured continuing education program for experienced pastors and church leaders.

INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed to serve as a resource as you complete your Doctor of Ministry degree at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (LPTS). It includes information on academic policies and procedures, tuition and other costs, curriculum, and more.

This manual supplements the LPTS Catalog which is available from the LPTS web site. Doctor of Ministry students are also advised to familiarize themselves with the LPTS Governance Manual and the LPTS Student Handbook. Both of these are also available on the LPTS web site.

If you have further questions about your degree program, the following persons are available to help you:

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PURPOSE

For more than 30 years, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary has offered a world-class Doctor of Ministry (DMin) degree to strengthen the connection between theology and ministry practice either in the church or in fields closely related to the mission and witness of the church.

A world-class program at considerably lower cost than DMin programs elsewhere, our low tuition and block scheduling offer the financial and personal flexibility that busy practitioners need. Under the guidance of our outstanding faculty, candidates study cutting-edge theological, biblical and practical bases of ministry, and complete a Project Report that strengthens their current ministry even as they earn their degree.

An advanced, professional degree, the DMin is designed for experienced practitioners who have a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent from an ATS-accredited school, along with a minimum GPA of 3.0 and at least 3 years of experience.

The program is fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Association of Theological Schools (ATS).

MISSION

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary is called by God through the church to educate men and women to participate in the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ in the world.

Commitments

The Seminary is a community that affirms and trusts the ever-faithful presence and activity of the triune God. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we confess the Scriptures to be the unique and authoritative witness to God's redemptive love for the world. As an institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Seminary has a particular responsibility to preserve and develop the values and insights of the Reformed tradition.

Relationships

Consistent with the Reformed tradition, we are committed to an ecumenical vision of the ultimate unity of the Body of Christ. This vision recognizes the wholeness of the church's mission, respects the global and cross-cultural character of Christian ministry in the world and motivates continuing efforts at interfaith dialogue and practice. The faculty, staff, student body, administration and Board of Trustees of the Seminary represent a broad range of Christian confession. The United Methodist, the African Methodist Episcopal, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion and the Christian Methodist Episcopal communions officially recognize the Seminary as an appropriate school for their candidates to receive their theological education.

Educational Vision

The Seminary strives to provide an educational context in which students and teachers may explore and nurture their vocational commitments while becoming biblically, theologically and historically informed and competent in the diverse skills necessary for ministry. In the Seminary's integrated curriculum, the historical and contemporary resources of the church's thought and practice are in continual interaction with the contributions of our wider culture and with first-hand experiences of the practices of ministry. Through our commitment to scholarly research and teaching, the Seminary provides theological resources for the church by striving to interpret the gospel in an ever-changing world, by extending the horizons of theological inquiry and by shaping the church's intellectual foundation for its faith and ministry.

In all these activities, our aim is to nurture the convictions, character, vision, wisdom and forms of life vital to leadership in the Christian community and the wider culture.

Strategies

The majority of students are preparing for ministries of the Word and Sacrament through the Master of Divinity degree. A significant number are preparing for other types of ministry and scholarship related to the Doctor of Ministry, Master of Marriage and Family Therapy, and Master of Arts (Religion) degree programs.

The Seminary serves the wider church community by generating scholarship, educational opportunities, programming and research through the Louisville Institute, continuing and lay education, field education, and the Louisville Seminary Counseling Ministry.

In our life of worship, spiritual development, learning and mutual Christian care, the Seminary community is led by the Holy Spirit to respond to God in Jesus Christ. In our planning and stewardship, and through engagement with significant social struggles and ethical issues, the Seminary community seeks to model faithful Christian discipleship.

GOVERNANCE

Community Governance

Of particular importance to all students is our "Bill of Rights and Responsibilities for Faculty, Students, Administrators, Staff and Directors of the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary," which outlines our responsibilities to one another as persons living and learning to be in community together. In addition, all DMin students, as do all Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary masters students, must comply with the "Code of Student Conduct" policy. Both policies may be located online in the [Governance Manual](#).

To further assist us into living into community with one another, we have also adopted the following procedures for all students during the academic year:

- 1) **Annually**, all DMin students must take the following mandatory online workshops offered by Workplace Answers:
 - a. *Preventing Sexual Harassment* which is accessible via the seminary Intranet (the last link); and

- b. *Preventing Discrimination and Sexual Violence: Title IX, VAWA and Clery Act for Undergrads and Graduate Students*

The Dean of Students will send links to these workshops during the spring of each year. Failure to complete the workshop will result in the inability to be able to register for the next semester of the DMin program.

- 2) **All** DMin students must abide by the policies of the institution and acknowledge the receipt of the following documents via signature on the Receipt of Policies form:
 - a. Doctor of Ministry Handbook
 - b. Governance Manual
 - c. Student Handbook
 - d. Course Catalog

Seeking to Be Faithful Together: Guidelines for Louisville Seminary during Times of Disagreement

Though living and learning together in a richly diverse community has many rewards, there can be challenges. In an effort to live into our vision of being a diverse, inclusive community, and also in an effort to heal from the effects of and prevent hurtful conflicts that can arise in the midst of such diversity, Louisville Seminary has adopted the following peacemaking covenant:

In a spirit of trust and love, we promise we will...

1. Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus the Christ;
 - we will keep our conversations and communications open for candid and forthright exchange; and
 - we will not ask questions or make statements in a way that will intimidate or judge others.
2. Learn about various positions on the topic about which there is disagreement.
3. State what we think we heard and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to be sure we understand each other.
4. Share our concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom we have disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus' teaching.
5. Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people's intelligence or integrity;
 - we will not engage in name-calling or labeling of others prior to, during, or following the discussion.
6. Share our experiences about the subject of disagreement so that others may more fully understand our concerns.
7. Indicate where we agree with those of other viewpoints as well as where we disagree.
8. Seek to stay in community with each other though the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension;
 - we will be ready to forgive and be forgiven.
9. Follow these additional guidelines when we meet in decision-making bodies:
 - urge persons of various points of view to speak and promise to listen to these positions seriously;
 - seek conclusions informed by our points of agreement;

- be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of those who do not agree with the majority and respect their rights of conscience;
- agree to call the question only after the issue has been adequately discussed;
- abide by the decision of the majority, and if we disagree with it and wish to change it, work for that change in ways that are consistent with these Guidelines.

10. Include our disagreements in our prayers, not praying for the triumph of our viewpoints, but seeking God's grace to listen attentively, to speak clearly, and to remain open to the vision God holds for us all.

PROGRAM GOALS AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

Louisville Seminary intends that students in this program:

demonstrate an advanced understanding and integration of ministry in relationship to several theological disciplines and a focused area of study or track (Advanced Practice of Ministry, Pastoral Care and Counseling, Black Church Studies)

(1) demonstrate an ability to articulate their comprehensive understanding of ministry, grounded in theory and practice in appreciative and critical correlation

SLO1: Students will demonstrate an advanced (comprehensive, appreciative, and critical) understanding and integration of ministry in relationship to several theological disciplines, including practical theology (Goals 1 and 2).

(2) develop and acquire skills and competencies in advanced theological reflection on the practice of ministry and in methods of research in practical theology that are required for pastoral leadership at its most mature and effective levels

(3) contribute to the understanding and practice of ministry through the completion of the Doctor of Ministry project, conducted in a particular context, and the writing of a formal Project Report

(4) identify areas of personal growth in spiritual awareness and theological and ethical sensitivity, informed by their vocational commitments as people of faith and church leaders to a life in the Spirit, nurtured by participation with others in Christian practices and the work and life of ministry

PLAN OF STUDY

The Louisville Seminary Doctor of Ministry degree is a 36-credit hour program consisting of a series of four foundational Seminars (20 credit hours), other elective credit (9 credit hours), and a final Integrating Project that addresses a significant issue in ministry (7 credit hours). The program is designed to be completed in three years.

Each of the foundational Seminars is taught by a Louisville Seminary faculty member and an adjunct professor who has experience in ministry and skills in teaching, and who holds at least a DMin degree.

During the first year of study, students will be assigned a Track Leader with whom they can consult to determine the best ways to complete the required 9 credit hours of elective work and begin to craft research question and the broad contours of the Project Report. Students typically complete these hours through a combination of:

1. Advanced Practice Courses (APCs): week-long intensive courses offered at times when students will be on campus for Seminars II-IV (generally held the week after Seminars, in January and June). On rare occasion, APCs may be offered at times other than the months when the Seminars are held.
2. Independent Studies: special projects overseen by Louisville Seminary faculty. Students may register for these activities during any term in the academic year. In special circumstances, a student may engage in learning activities at other institutions as a part of an independent study over which a Louisville Seminary faculty member has final instructional and assessment responsibility.
3. Louisville Seminary master's-level courses offered throughout the academic year that have been adapted and augmented collaboratively by students and instructors to meet DMin program goals, with DMin-specific syllabi and assignments appropriate to the doctoral level.
4. Under special circumstances, a student may take an approved DMin-level course at another seminary to transfer to the LPTS degree.

The sequence of the three other courses (9 credit hours) that must be completed before a student formally registers for the Research Project in Ministry can follow various paths. The sequence suggested below should be considered only one possibility. Ideally, the student's particular sequence and combination of elective courses should contribute to his or her work on the Project.

January - Begin Year 1

DMin Seminar I (6 credit hours)

June - Middle of Year 1

DMin Seminar II (4 credit hours)

Advanced Practice Course or Independent Study (3 credit hours)

Note: Students can register for Independent Studies during Fall and Spring terms after Seminar II. During these terms they can also participate in campus-based courses that enroll mostly master's-level students but that have been adapted and augmented for DMin purposes.

January - Begin Year 2

DMin Sem III (4 credit hours)

Advanced Practice Course or Independent Study (3 credit hours)

June - Middle of Year 2

DMIN Seminar IV (6 credit hours)

Advance Practice Course or Independent Study (3 credit hours)

October 1 of Year 2

Final Research Project Prospectus is approved by the Associate Dean; your Track Leader, (First Reader); and your 2nd reader; then a grade is assigned for DMin Seminar IV.

January - Begin Year 3

Complete registration for the Research Project Report in Ministry (If not already complete) and make appropriate progress towards completion.

For a December graduation, the Research Project Report must be submitted and defended no later than **October 1** and for May graduation, no later than **March 1**. Submissions beyond those dates will delay graduation until the following May or December. All graduates in an academic year are recognized and presented with diplomas at the May Commencement ceremony.

Note: Program Continuation Fees will be charged each half year if the student has not completed all non-Project credit hours and degree requirements and registered for the Project Report by end of December of Year 3.

TRACKS

Pastoral Care and Counseling

The DMin in Pastoral Care and Counseling (PCC) is designed to offer a flexible, advanced program of training that leads to doctoral- level competence in the practice of pastoral care or counseling.

Student goals may include, but are not limited to:

1. Improving skills in parish counseling or pastoral care;
2. Completing requirements for certification as a chaplain (Association of Professional Chaplains);
3. Expanding theological and spiritual reflection skills as an already licensed marriage and family therapist, professional counselor, social worker or psychologist; and
4. Completing requirements as an ACPE supervisor, AAMFT Approved Supervisor, or other professional credential.

* Please note that the DMin in Pastoral Care and Counseling offers no guarantee of eligibility for licensure, although there are some states (including currently Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Arkansas) that have specific licenses or certifications in pastoral counseling, to which this degree can contribute. (Courses taken above and beyond the 36 credit hours required for the LPTS DMin degree will entail additional tuition charges; see "Tuition, Fees, and Finances" in this Handbook). For more information about licensure or about the PCC track, please contact the Director of the program and Track Leader, Dr. Loren Townsend, at ltownsend@lpts.edu.

** Please note that one APC for this track must have a clinical component that includes supervision or professional consultation and that is approved by a member of the PCC faculty. This requirement may be fulfilled by a unit of CPE, training in a pastoral care specialist program, or an independent study. Note that, depending on circumstances, these options may entail additional costs to the student.

Black Church Studies

Building on the traditions of the Black Church, the primary purpose of the Black Church Studies program at Louisville Seminary is to educate, equip, and prepare leaders for African American churches and communities in ways that enable them to effectively navigate issues affecting Black

and other minoritized communities. Equally important is our commitment to facilitating power, dialogue and mutual understanding and respect, between the Black Church and the wider Church in the world.

The DMin in Black Church Studies is designed to offer a flexible advanced program of training that leads to doctoral level competence in a wide variety of areas: preaching, pastoral care, Christian education, evangelism and congregational development and redevelopment, and community engagement, with an eye toward how these issues affect or are affected by Black Churches and Black Communities. The program is designed to enhance critical theological thinking and reflection skills that can be used to inform current or proposed ministry practice.

Advanced Practice of Ministry

The DMin in Advanced Practice of Ministry is designed to offer a flexible advanced program of training that leads to doctoral level competence in a wide variety of areas: preaching, Christian education, evangelism, mission, worship, congregational development and redevelopment, and community engagement. The program is designed to enhance critical theological thinking, action and reflection skills that can be used to inform current or proposed ministry practice.

REGISTRATION ACTIVITIES

The Doctor of Ministry program at LPTS is a 36-credit hour program. Registration for the Doctor of Ministry Program at LPTS is done primarily through the Office of the Registrar.

Registration for Seminars and Advanced Professional Courses does not include reservations for overnight accommodations at Laws Lodge. Students coordinate their own reservations for overnight accommodations.

Seminars I-IV (20 credit hours)

DMin students complete a Registration Form for each foundational Seminar prior to attendance. Completion of the Registration Form updates LPTS offices about key student contact information and confirms student intention to attend. Registration for Seminar I is coordinated by the Admissions Office. Registration for all other Seminars is coordinated by the Registrar.

Advanced Professional Courses and Independent Studies (9 credit hours)

After completing Seminar II students can begin to take elective courses – Advanced Professional Courses (APCs) – that match the students’ goals for the degree and that enhance their preparedness for the Research Project. At least two of the three APCs must be taken with Louisville Seminary faculty. A student may also choose to do one or more APC as an Independent Study supervised by Louisville Seminary faculty, in which case the student is responsible for proposing and designing the course in consultation with the Track Leader who, along with the Associate Dean of the Doctor of Ministry Program, must approve it. Guidelines for creating an Independent Study course are available on the LPTS web site – accessible with a link in an appendix to this document.

Registration for Advanced Professional Courses and Independent Studies is coordinated by the Registrar.

With approval from their Track Leader and the Associate Dean of the Doctor of Ministry Program, students also may take doctoral-level courses at other ATS-accredited institutions. Students should be aware that courses taken at other institutions may entail additional tuition costs, which the

student will be required to pay (above and beyond LPTS tuition costs).

DMin Elective Credit for MDiv Courses

For Doctor of Ministry students taking courses primarily offered to master's-level students at LPTS, student learning outcomes must be related to the Doctor of Ministry program goals and student learning outcomes described in this handbook and in the LPTS Catalog, and assignments must be adjusted as appropriate for doctoral-level work.

A DMin student wishing to register for a course primarily offered to master's-level students must meet with the course instructor either by phone, email, or in person, and, in collaboration with the instructor, the course syllabus must be amended to identify DMin student learning outcomes for the course, reading and writing assignments that evidence advanced-level expectations related to those outcomes, and appropriate means of assessment. The amended syllabus will serve as the syllabus for an Advanced Professional Course in the DMin program, identified by "DM" as the department code in the course number.

The DMin course syllabus must be submitted to the Registrar along with the student's Registration Form.

Research Project (7 credit hours)

A DMin student registers for the Research Project by completing a Research Project Registration Form. This form is meant to ensure that the student has completed all other degree requirements prior to beginning the project. It also certifies that a student's research project prospectus has been approved and that the student has secured a Project Advisor (First Reader) and a Second Reader.

Transfer Credit

With approval from the Associate Dean of the Doctor of Ministry Program, a student may receive up to three (3) hours of transfer credit from another ATS accredited institution. Each course must be at the advanced degree level and the grade must be at least a B (3.0 on a scale of 4.0). A course submitted for transfer credit must have been taken no more than five years before entrance into the program. Students may not receive credit for academic work applied toward a degree that has already been awarded. Independent studies and enhanced basic degree courses will not be considered for transfer credit.

In order to transfer credit into Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, please send all supporting documents (transcripts and relevant certificates) to the Registrar to bring them before the Associate Dean of the Doctor of Ministry Program for formal, final consideration.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Attendance

Full attendance of all seminar and week-long APC class sessions is expected, except in case of emergencies. Requirements for making up work must be negotiated with individual professors. For other courses taken for DMin elective credit, students abide by the attendance policies stated in course syllabi.

Grades

Seminars I-IV are graded Pass/Fail. APCs and other elective courses receive letter grades whose GPA values are those in LPTS Catalog. A grade of B or above in an APC or other elective course is

necessary for that course to count toward DMin graduation requirements. A GPA of 3.0 or above, therefore, must be maintained to graduate. Grading scales for courses are identified in course syllabi. The Research Project is graded Pass/Fail. In exceptional cases, the project can be graded as “with distinction” – with such recognition being noted on the student’s transcript.

If a student wishes to appeal a grading decision, the student should consult the Grade Appeal process outlined in section 1.2 of “The Code of Student Conduct” (found in the [LPTS Governance Manual](#)).

Incompletes

Students are expected to finish all course work by dates set forth by instructors in course syllabi. In extraordinary circumstances (death in one’s family, serious illness, accident or disability) a student may file a written petition for an extension to complete the course work with the relevant instructor, a copy of which should be submitted to the Registrar. An incomplete is a temporary grade and is changed to the appropriate grade at the end of the extension period, mutually agreed upon by instructor and student, which shall be no later than eight weeks after the last day of classes of the term of registration or eight weeks after the due date given in the course syllabus.

For lengthy illnesses or similar reasons, another extension may be granted with the approval of the Associate Dean of Black Church Studies and Advanced Learning.

Leaves of Absence

When extraordinary situations arise, students may request in writing a leave of absence for one year. The written request, addressed to the Dean of the Seminary and copied to the Associate Dean of the Doctor of Ministry Program must include:

1. Reason for requesting the leave of absence;
2. Plan to resume studies appropriately in one year;
3. Contact information for the upcoming year (mailing address, phone number, and email address).

The letter of request and documentation of the Dean’s formal approval will be maintained by both the Office of Black Church Studies and Advanced Learning and the Office of the Registrar. If the student’s contact information changes at any time during the leave period, the student must inform both offices.

A student granted a leave of absence cannot register for or formally satisfy any degree requirements, including the Research Project, for the duration of the leave.

A student granted a leave by the Dean does not have to make the flat-rate tuition payments for the DMin degree program during the leave period. And, the period of approved absence will not count against the three years in which the student must complete all non-Research Project credit hours and degree requirements and register for the Project. However, a leave of absence cannot provide for more “in program” time to complete requirements because a student on leave cannot register for or formally satisfy any degree requirements.

Leaves of absence should be considered exceptional. They will be approved only for the most compelling of reasons, normally medical. Inability to pay the flat-rate tuition in a timely fashion or failure to make progress in the program will not be considered compelling reasons.

Time Limits

Louisville Seminary requires that the Doctor of Ministry be completed within six (6) years (January 2019 – January 2025) of a student’s matriculation in order to comply with the degree program standards of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). If a student has not completed the DMin in compliance with the policies and procedures of the DMin program, the student will be administratively removed from the program.

Inclusive Language

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible’s images for God. More discussion about inclusive language can be accessed from the Academic Support Center and from the section of the LPTS web site with information for current students.

Resources for working with the Seminary’s Inclusive language policy may be found at <http://www.lpts.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-forms/guides-policies-and-handbooks/inclusive-and-expansive-language>.

Academic Honesty

Students are to abide by the Seminary’s policy on Academic Honesty found in the LPTS Student Handbook.

TUITION, FEES, AND FINANCES

Tuition and Other Costs

The flat-rate tuition for the DMin degree program covers the cost of 36 credit hours required to complete the degree. Students are billed in six (6) equal installments over three years.

In addition to tuition, costs for the program include books, travel, and lodging and meals during on-campus coursework. The chart below suggests the approximate cost of the program for each student.

\$ 11,500	Total tuition for the program
\$ 2,000	Books and incidental costs for 4 seminars and 3 elective courses
\$ 2,100	Housing at Laws Lodge for 6 weeks of seminars @ \$70 per night
\$ 800	Food, with 2 meals per day on campus
\$ 16,400	Total tuition and estimated costs, minus travel costs

Program Continuation Fee (per term after six terms).....\$ 750.00

With respect to the flat-rate tuition, the following items are to be noted:

- If the student needs or wants to earn more than 36 credit hours through Louisville Seminary-offered coursework (seminars, other elective courses, and independent studies), the student must pay for those hours at the current, per-credit-hour rate charged for the Seminary's master's-level courses. This rate is published in the LPTS Catalog.
- If a student needs or wants to earn credit hours through another institution or outside program (including CPE), the student must pay for those hours in addition to the flat-rate tuition for the DMin degree program. Payment to another institution does not change the student's flat-rate tuition payments to LPTS.
- The flat-rate tuition for the DMin degree program does not allow for multiple attempts of Louisville Seminary-offered coursework without the student bearing increased financial responsibility. When a student earns a failing grade or does not earn credit for Louisville Seminary-offered coursework, the student must pay the current, per-credit-hour rate charged for the Seminary's master's-level courses when the student registers to replace the credit-bearing activity. This additional tuition payment must be fulfilled before the student begins the replacement activity.
- Louisville Seminary tuition and cross-registration agreements with other schools and through other organizations (e.g., Kentuckiana Metroversity) are effective only for master's-level courses.

Financing the DMin Program

DMin 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 funds.

DMin students at LPTS do not participate in Title IV-related federal student loan programs. If making appropriate progress in the degree program, they may be verified as such to defer prior educational loans.

Registration and Account Balances

Students cannot complete registration and will not be permitted to begin a Seminar or other elective course unless account balances have been paid or arrangements for payment have been made with the Seminary business office. Payment of account balances is the responsibility of each student, even if a church or other institution may be making payment. Any difficulties a student may have complying with this policy may be discussed at the student's initiative with the Associate Dean of Doctor of Ministry Program. Payment for rooms and other expenses incurred while on campus is due before leaving campus.

The Research Project

The Doctor of Ministry is the terminal degree for practicing theologians, intended to enhance the ministry skills and practices of those already working in ministry. The degree is awarded after the successful completion of all seminars and course work, and a culminating Research Project. Since the degree is focused on the practice of ministry, DMin students submit a written comprehensive report on a ministry project they have designed and implemented in their ministry setting. The project design emerges from the minister's recognition, in collaboration with others, of an issue, a question, problem or situation in the life of a congregation or in the practice of ministry more generally that poses important questions for the life of faith and the practice of faith.

Such life situations require critical reflection on reason, tradition, Scripture, and contemporary circumstances in order to understand them; and creative, imaginative response in the light of the Christian Gospel to address them. The Research Project Report describes the issue the project addresses; the theological, biblical, cultural and social perspectives used to understand it; and a detailed account of the implementation and the findings of the project designed to address it. The Research Project is intended to provide an opportunity for the student to do original research on a topic or ministry practice important to the development of the student's ability as a practical theologian and practitioner and important to the practice of faith in the individual ministry context. While addressing a local issue or need, the Research Project should also have broader implications and application and prove instructive or useful for those addressing similar concerns in various other ministry contexts.

In short, the Research Project (referring here both to the research itself and to the written report) represents a creative and imaginative demonstration of practical theological reflection, original research and design, and the ability to write an extended report that is clear, coherent, original in thought, and persuasive in argument.

Given the importance of the Research Project for realizing the full potential of the program and for receipt of the degree, students are urged to begin considering possible questions, topics, issues, and/or situations in ministry on which they may wish to focus at the outset of their DMin studies. What issue a Project is to address will become clearer, ordinarily, over the course of the first three seminars. Your Track Leader (First Reader) will work with you to develop the research project prospectus and the Research Project Report. By the end of the fourth seminar or very shortly thereafter, the student is expected to present to the Track Leader, the Second Reader and the Associate Dean of the Doctor of Ministry Program a well-developed draft of the Research Project Prospectus offering a clear research question and working hypothesis, description of the ministry situation the project will address, the research methods needed to understand and interpret it, and the ministry intervention the student intends to carry out to address it. (See the document [Guidelines for Completing the Project Prospectus](#).) After all seminars and other credit hours (APCs and independent studies) have been completed and the final version of the Prospectus has been formally approved, the student must submit a separate document, the Project Registration form.

Once the project has been completed, a Project Report is submitted to the candidate's Track Leader (First Reader), Second Reader, and the DMin Associate Dean for approval. The Project Report should be approximately 75-100 pages in length, exclusive of 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. See also the document [Guidelines for completing the Project Report](#).

The student will have a culminating conversation ("Oral Defense") with the Track Leader (First Reader), Second Reader and the DMin Associate Dean to evaluate whether the requirements for the Research Project have been satisfied. This conversation will be scheduled by the readers only after determining that the student has made appropriate progress on all aspects of the Project Report.

URLs for Documents Linked Above:

[Guidelines for completing the Research Project Prospectus:](#)

<http://lptsstor.blob.core.windows.net/documents-library/docs/default-source/lifelonglearning/a-guide-to-writing-the-dmin-prospectus-121813.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

Guidelines for completing the Research Project: <http://lptsstor.blob.core.windows.net/documents-library/docs/default-source/lifelonglearning/aguidetowritingdminprojectreport10214.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

Guidelines for formatting the Research Project: <http://lptsstor.blob.core.windows.net/documents-library/docs/default-source/lifelonglearning/aguidetowritingdminprojectreport10214.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH AND INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW (IRB)

Research projects that touch the lives of human subjects in personal, sensitive, or potentially traumatic ways require review and approval by the Seminary's Institutional Review Board. Please read the [Human Subjects Research](#) policy for further clarification of the kinds of research that do or do not require IRB review and approval.

As part of preparation of the Prospectus, a student proposing any type of research with human subjects must submit their proposal for preliminary determination of whether a full IRB review is required. Any Projects that include minors in the research process must be submitted for review. The Project Advisor (First Reader) and Second Reader will help the student determine whether a project requires IRB review. If further expertise is needed, the IRB Chair may consult with others as appropriate. The leader of the Project Proposal Workshop and the Associate Dean, Black Church Studies and Advanced Learning will also provide preliminary screening for projects that may require IRB review. The appropriate form for approval can be found [here](#).

PARTNERS IN LEARNING

Adult Learner Model

The Doctor of Ministry program at LPTS 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. While the program includes resources to help students along the way, the Doctor of Ministry student is ultimately 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.

Upon matriculation each student will receive a Track Leader. The Track Leader is available as a guiding resource for a student throughout the life span of the DMin Program.

The Track Leader will provide assistance to the student in the development of the Research Project, consult with the student regarding any remaining elective credits to be earned (through Advanced Professional Courses or Independent Studies), and serve as First Reader for final Research Report.

The Track Leader will also help the student identify a suitable Second Reader. Together, the Track Leader (First Reader), Second Reader, DMin Associate Dean, serve as a faculty team to read the Research Report, arrange for and preside at an oral defense of the Project by the candidate for the

degree, and approve the Project following a successful defense.

APPENDIX A: OUTLINE OF STEPS FOR COMPLETING THE DMIN PROGRAM

Prior to Seminar I,

- Register for the seminar using the form supplied by the Office of Admissions (all other registrations are coordinated by the Office of the Registrar).
- Pay first tuition installment.
- Make travel and housing arrangements; if you are staying at Laws Lodge, make your reservation **at least 6 weeks before** the seminar.
- Complete the works required by seminar instructors, and, if so directed, submit it electronically to the instructors.

Seminar I (2 weeks; 6 credits)

The focus of the seminar is on your pastoral identity and the nature of the context where you serve.

- If at all possible, arrange for pulpit supply for the Sunday between the two weeks of the seminar so that all your time can be focused on your seminar participation.
- Between seminars, begin to shape more specifically the research question that you will address in your project.

Prior to Seminar II

- Register for Seminar II using the registration form supplied by the Registrar (this may occur while attending Seminar I).
- Pay second tuition installment.
- Make travel and lodging arrangements early, at least 6 weeks before the seminar.

Seminar II (1 week; 4 credits)

The focus of the seminar is biblical interpretation and ministry.

At the conclusion of Seminar II, students should begin taking Advanced Professional Courses and pursuing independent studies that can contribute meaningfully to the Project in Ministry. The degree requires students to complete 9 credit hours apart from the credit hours earned for Seminars and the Project in Ministry.

Prior to Seminar III

Register for Seminar III using the registration form supplied by the Registrar (this may occur while attending Seminar II).

Pay third tuition installment.

Make travel and room reservations at least 6 week before start of Seminar III Complete required assignments for the seminar and submit to instructors.

Seminar III (1 week; 4 credits)

The focus of the seminar is on theology and theological reflection in relationship to ministry practice, with implication for the developing project in ministry. Seminars II and III together provide resources for interpreting the ministry situation your project is addressing.

Sometime between Seminars II and IV, depending on the clarity of your project proposal, in consultation with the Associate Dean of Black Church Studies and Advanced Learning and your Faculty Advisor you will choose a Project Advisor (First Reader) with whom you wish to work. A Second Reader may also be chosen once the Project Advisor (First Reader) has been identified.

Prior to Seminar IV

Register for Seminar IV using the registration form supplied by the Registrar (this may occur while attending Seminar III).

Pay fourth tuition installment.

Make travel and lodging arrangements at least 6 weeks in advance.

Complete assigned work for the seminar and submit as directed.

Seminar IV (2 weeks; 6 credits)

The focus of the Seminar is on The Minister as Practical Theologian and on forming the Prospectus for the Ministry Project. By the end of the seminar, you should have completed a working draft of the Prospectus, your Project Advisor (First Reader) should have been named, and a Second Reader should have been identified.

Arrange to meet with your Project Advisor (First Reader) either prior to the seminar or during the time you are on campus.

Following Completion of Seminar IV

Complete any remaining non-Seminar elective courses hours (9 credit hours required) through appropriate Advanced Placement Courses and independent studies.

- Obtain final approval of your Prospectus from your Project Advisor (First Reader) and Second Reader.
- Submit your Project Registration Form to the Registrar.
- Complete tuition payments (year three of program).
- Conduct the work of the Project in Ministry and draft the Project Report.
- Meet with Angela Morris in the Library to discuss formatting of the Project Report
- When the Project has been completed, submit a final draft of your Project Report to your Project Advisor (First Reader) and your Second Reader and schedule your oral examination. A draft should also be submitted to Angela Morris.

NOTE: For December graduation, the Project Report must be submitted and defended no later than October 1 and for May graduation, no later than March 1. Submissions beyond those dates will delay graduation until the following May or December.

- Make any revisions required and submit final copies to Angela Morris in the Library.
- Make plans to participate in commencement ceremonies, following the detailed directions that will be sent you by either the Office of the Registrar or the Office of the President.

APPENDIX B: LINKS TO CATALOG, GUIDELINES, POLICIES, AND FORMS

[Course Catalogs](#)

[DMIN Guides and Forms](#)

- MDiv Equivalency Requirements
- DMin Student Handbook
- Prospectus Writing Guide
- Guidelines for Proposed Human Research
- Institutional Review of Proposed Human Research Form
- DMin Project Report Writing Guide
- Guide to Formatting the DMin Project

[Academic Forms](#)

- Registration Forms
- Change of Registration
- Project Registration Form
- Incomplete Form
- Independent Study Form

[Guidelines for Independent Studies](#)

[Guides, Policies, and Handbooks](#)

- LPTS Student Handbook
- Doctor of Ministry Handbook
- Governance Manual