2.3 ADVANCED STUDIES PROGRAMS

Concordia Seminary offers several programs of advanced study to prepare individuals for theological leadership in the Church and the World. The Doctor of Ministry program allows pastors to continue their education and expand their knowledge and skills for use in their various ministry contexts. The Master of Arts offers a first theological degree for students interested in expanding their theological expertise. The Master of Sacred Theology and the Doctor of Philosophy provide students with the opportunity to pursue advanced research degrees in preparation for particular leadership and scholarship within the Church and World.

2.3.1 DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROGRAM

Purpose
The DMin degree provides an advanced understanding of the nature and purposes of ministry, enhanced competencies in pastoral analysis and ministerial skills, the integration of these dimensions into the theologically reflective practice of ministry, new knowledge about the practice of ministry, and continued growth in spiritual maturity.

The program is designed to advance the general practice of ministry in its many forms for persons who hold the M.Div. degree and have engaged in ministerial leadership or to advance expertise in a specialized area of ministerial practice through one of three concentrations.

Goals
The program seeks to advanced understanding of the nature and purposes of ministry, enhanced competencies in pastoral analysis and ministerial skills, the integration of these dimensions into the theologically reflective practice of ministry, new knowledge about the practice of ministry, and continued growth in spiritual maturity.

Student learning outcomes
1. The student exhibits the capacity for both critical and analytical theological thinking in the practice of ministry.
2. The student exhibits skill in the application of contextually sensitive, valid, and useful research.
3. The student exhibits an exemplary ability to communicate effectively the meaningful results of responsible research.
4. The student exhibits biblical and confessional values, ethics, and best practices in the practice of ministry.

PREREQUISITES AND ADMISSION

For admission to the program the applicant ordinarily will have an M.Div. degree (ordinarily with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale) from an accredited theological institution equivalent to that offered by Concordia Seminary. The applicant ordinarily should have three years of experience in the parish or related ministry following reception of the M.Div. degree. He is to exhibit professional competence that is above average, as attested by evaluations from his peers.

A completed application form must be sent to the director of the D.Min. program. It is available from the D.Min. office or from the Seminary web site at www.csl.edu/apply. The student will prepare a five-page statement covering his professional experience and his personal goals in the D.Min. program and also will provide a statement from his congregation or agency approving his enrollment in the D.Min. program. He will secure professional references from four evaluators (identified on the application form). Official transcripts from each seminary previously attended and a $50 application fee are to be submitted before the application can be acted on.

Students whose first language is not English must obtain an official report of TOEFL scores with a minimum score of 213 (CBT), 79-80 (IBT) or 550 (paperbased).

REQUIREMENTS

I. Guidance for the student’s course of study is offered through a required five session orientation, normally taken during one of his first sessions on campus. No academic credit is granted for this orientation.

II. The student must earn a total of 54 credit hours, which includes the 6 hours for a major applied project. 48 hours are
selected from a schedule of seminars (6 credit hours each) and courses (3 credit hours each). Seminars and courses, taught in intensive terms, require the student to be absent from his parish or other ministry for short periods of time. Seminars and courses have three parts:

A. The Pre-residency Period. During this time period the student completes reading assignments (approximately 3,000 pages for a seminar and 1,500 pages for a course) and written reaction/reflection papers which are due at the beginning of the classroom session.

B. The Residency Period. This is a two week classroom experience on campus. Seminars meet for 3.5 hours ordinarily in the morning and courses for 1.75 hours ordinarily in the afternoon.

C. The Post-residency Period. This covers the 10 weeks following the residency period and provides time for the completion of an assigned term paper or project which draws upon the readings and classroom interaction as these apply to the student’s context of ministry.

III. The student must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Individual seminars and courses will be credited toward degree requirements only with a grade of B- or better.

IV. No more than 18 hours may be earned in a year (September through August), except by special permission from the Doctor of Ministry Committee.

V. A maximum of 24 hours of a student’s program may be gained through a combination of independent study, transfer credit, and extension or wrap-around courses of Concordia Seminary. Of the 24 hours, a maximum of 3 hours may be earned through independent study, a maximum of 9 hours may be transferred from other graduate programs approved by the director of the D.Min. program, a maximum of 18 hours may be transferred from the Joint Military Education program (JPME Phase 1) into the Military Chaplaincy concentration only, and a maximum of 18 hours may be earned through seminary extension/wrap-around courses.

VI. Candidates must take DM995 Project Research and Writing before submitting a proposal for the major applied project.

VII. The topic for the major applied project, approved by the project advisor using a form obtained from the director of the D.Min. program, must be submitted to the director at least six months before the degree is to be awarded. The candidate registers for the project following the approval of the topic by the D.Min. Committee.

VIII. The semi-final draft of the major applied project must be submitted to the advisor and reader by the following deadlines: March 1 for May graduation, June 1 for August graduation, September 1 for November graduation, December 1 for February graduation.

IX. The candidate must defend his major applied project at an oral examination before final approval.

X. The final approved version of the major applied project must be submitted to the advisor and director by the following deadlines: May 1 for May graduation, August 1 for August graduation, November 1 for November graduation, February 1 for February graduation.

XI. All requirements ordinarily must be completed in six years. Extension of this time limit may be requested, utilizing the appropriate form, but is not automatically granted by the Doctor of Ministry Committee.

CURRICULUM
The Doctor of Ministry curriculum entails core courses, concentration classes, free electives, and work on the major applied project.

Students are required to take three core courses, totaling nine credit hours. These are in the disciplines of exegetical, systematic, and historical theology, which provide students with a review of the state of each discipline and an analysis of contemporary issues relevant to the discipline.
Students have four curriculum options: the general pastoral ministry concentration, the homiletics concentration, the missional leadership concentration, and the military chaplaincy concentration. Each concentration requires 24 credit hours selected from class offerings approved for that area of concentration.

The student is allowed up to 12 credit hours of free electives. Any course or seminar offered (except for those that are required for the student’s program of study) may qualify as a free elective.

Students must also complete a major applied project, which is the final step in the curriculum process. Having successfully completed the orientation, two seminars, and two courses, a student may seek degree candidacy status by applying to the D.Min. Committee. Upon approval of candidacy, the student is eligible to work on his major applied project. He is required to take a course in research methodology and project design before submitting a proposal for the major applied project to the D.Min. Committee. With the committee’s approval he may begin to undertake writing his project. The project is designed to incorporate meaningful research, reading, and insights from class work, and to build a bridge between the doctrinal and practical aspects of the ministry under consideration. The congregation or agency participates in the process.

CREDITS
Credits for D.Min. seminars and courses are not equivalent to credits for courses in the graduate school. Thus credits are not transferable from the D.Min. program to the S.T.M. or Ph.D. programs.

FINANCIAL AID
Significant financial assistance for tuition is available for all D.Min. students. A description of anticipated expenses is available from the D.Min. office to assist in planning one’s academic program.

Additional financial aid may be available to RFE supervisors enrolled in the D.Min. program. Please contact the Director of Resident Field Education for further details.