2.3.2.2 THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS

2.3.2.2.1 MASTER OF SACRED THEOLOGY

PURPOSE

The purpose of studying for the degree of Master of Sacred Theology (S.T.M.) is to acquire a special competence in some field of theological learning, and to gain skill in effectively using the tools and presenting the results of theological research. The Master of Sacred Theology degree is appropriate for clergy who hold a Master of Divinity degree and seek to do further work. It is more general than the Ph.D. A student who completes the S.T.M. program may apply for admission to the Ph.D. program. After completing 18 hrs. of coursework and demonstrating a modern foreign research language proficiency, the S.T.M. student may request of the Advanced Studies Committee in written form a rollover into the Ph.D.

GOALS

This program strives to achieve an advanced understanding of a focused area or discipline in the context of general theological study, capacity to use research methods and resources in the discipline, and the ability to formulate productive questions.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. The student exhibits a significant capacity for critical and analytical theological inquiry
2. The student exhibits substantial skill in the application of responsible methods of scholarly research
3. The student exhibits the considerable ability to articulate the results of scholarly research in ways beneficial to the people of God
4. The student exhibits an increasing, commendable sense of responsibility for faithfully retaining and transmitting the heritage of truth that has been entrusted to the church

ADMISSION ELIGIBILITY

An applicant must have earned a Master of Divinity degree, or a first graduate theological degree providing comparable theological background, or its educational equivalent, from an accredited theological seminary, with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher (on a 4.0 scale).

APPLICATION

Application forms are available from the Seminary website at www.csl.edu/apply. The application deadline is January 7. An application is not complete until it includes all of the following:

- Completed application form.
- Application fee of $50.
- Applicants who have not received a prior degree from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, must submit three letters of recommendation, including one from the educational institution most recently attended. Current students or graduates of Concordia Seminary need only present two letters of recommendation.
- Official report of GRE scores (scores older than five years will not be accepted) NOTE: Students whose analytical writing score is less than 5.5, and who intend to write a thesis, may be required to complete a remedial writing course. Credit for the course is not applicable to the degree.
- Official transcripts from each college or university and seminary attended.
- 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 (paper-based).
- All applicants must submit a brief theological essay in English. Those failing to demonstrate a sufficient competency in English composition may be required to do entry-level work in this area.

MATRICULATION

The customary entrance requirements of Concordia Seminary’s Master of Divinity Program must be met as a condition of admission. Therefore, demonstrated proficiencies in Greek and Hebrew are required for this degree. Proficiency in such languages may be demonstrated by examination. Arrangement is made to take an examination through the Office of the Graduate School. On an individual
basis and upon petition to the director of the Graduate School, proficiency may also be deemed to have been demonstrated on the basis of transcript credit.

CURRICULUM
GENERAL REQUIREMENTS
Normally, the full-time student takes either two courses (at the 800 level) or three courses (one at the 800 level and two at the 400 level) per quarter.

I. The student must complete a minimum of 36 quarter hours of credit [omission] with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher (on a 4.0 scale). Individual courses will be credited toward degree requirements only when completed with a grade of “B-” or better. A student whose cumulative grade point average falls below a 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. The probationary status serves as a warning that the student is not making satisfactory progress and that, unless the quality of work improves, will be subject to dismissal from the Graduate School. Ordinarily, a student whose cumulative grade point average remains below a 3.0 for two consecutive quarters will be dismissed.

II. Each student must declare a major and a minor, choosing from exegetical, systematic, historical, and practical theology. The student may not fail more than two courses in either the major or the minor and still successfully complete the major or the minor. A. If the major or minor is exegetical theology, the student must earn at least three quarter hours of credit in Old Testament and three quarter hours of credit in New Testament. B. If the major is practical theology and the student’s preference is the exam route (see below), the student shall choose and in part be tested in one of the following subject areas: Pastoral Theology, Pastoral Care and Counseling, Christian Education, Preaching, Worship, and World Missions. For this reason, representative course work toward the major in the area of the student’s choosing always should be done by the student in preparation for the exam.

III. Each student must complete at least half the work in the major and half the work in the minor in courses numbered 800-899.

IV. Before completing 18 credits in the S.T.M., the student shall give satisfactory evidence of a reading knowledge of at least one modern foreign research language relevant to the secondary literature in the student’s field of study. Ordinarily this language shall be German, or if the department of the major approves, Latin. A five year statute of limitations will inform all requests for transfer of previously established language proficiencies (the director of the Graduate School must approve the transfer of the established proficiency and is to report this to the registrar at the time of matriculation). Arrangements for demonstrating language proficiency are made with the Office of the Graduate School. Students who fail to demonstrate this language proficiency within the time frame allowed will register for a Preparation Fee and will not be allowed to continue regular coursework until the proficiency has been demonstrated.

V. The S.T.M. is conducted according to two options—the exam route and the thesis route (see “Requirements for Options” below). While the S.T.M. degree does require a certain number of credit hours, there is not a specific configuration of courses that must be taken. S.T.M. students should seek graduate advising through the director of the Graduate School. It is important to note that the S.T.M. program carries no residency requirement, as does the Ph.D. Approved in advance by the director of the Graduate School only, S.T.M. and dual credit students (see the paragraph that follows) may take certain departmentally predesigned as available 100 level courses with an appropriate upgrade either for regular S.T.M. credit or for dual credit (equivalent to 400 level credit not 800 level credit).
VI. With the guidance and approval of the director of the Graduate School, students in Concordia Seminary's M.Div. program may seek dual credit toward both the M.Div. and an S.T.M. for as many as 6 of their 400-level courses. (dual credit students may include as many as two appropriately configured 400 level independent studies in the work that they are doing for dual credit) When three 400-level courses have been completed for dual credit, students may then also apply for permission from the Adv.

STUDENT STATUS
International students must maintain full-time status as a condition of their class F-1 visa. Students in the S.T.M. program maintain full-time status if they satisfy one of the following conditions:

- Are registered for at least two courses (six credit hours) per quarter (excluding summer); or
- Are registered for and engaged in full-time research and writing of the master's thesis; or
- Are engaged in full-time preparation for an S.T.M. comprehensive exam and registered for and paid the S.T.M. examination fee.

A student may pursue an overload only by permission of the director of the Graduate School.

REQUIREMENTS FOR OPTIONS
Subject to departmental approval, the student selects one of the following options:

THEESIS OPTION
I. The thesis option involves the student in less course work but more writing. The student may register for the thesis at any time, but it must be submitted on a specific schedule to ensure graduation and participation in commencement. A total of 27 hours must be earned in a major (nine of these by writing an acceptable thesis), and nine hours must be earned in a minor. NOTE: Students whose GRE analytical writing score is less than 5.5 may be required to take a remedial writing course before registering for the thesis. Credit for the course is not applicable to the degree.

II. The work of the thesis proceeds according to the guidelines specified in the S.T.M. Thesis Procedures document on the Graduate School’s Portal site.

EXAMINATION OPTION
I. A total of 24 hours must be earned in a major, and 12 hours must be earned in a minor.

II. The student may take one 800-level course outside the major and minor and count the hours toward the major or minor (this opportunity is not allowed in the thesis option).

III. Ordinarily, the student’s program may include, approved in advance by the director of the Graduate School, up to 6 credits hours transferred from another accredited graduate program or earned either by completing approved research (895) or extensive readings (899) projects. When an independent study is desired, the student shall approach first not the desired supervisor of the independent study but the director of the Graduate School; the director shall then consider approaching the appropriate department chair; the chair would then establish whether or not an appropriate departmental professor is available to supervise the independent study. Alternatively, again approved in advance by the director, up to 12 credit hours may be transferred from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. None of the prior options are allowed in the thesis option.
IV. In the exceptional circumstance of studying under Concordia Seminary professors in a country outside North America, the student’s program may include up to 12 credit hours earned by research (895) or extensive readings (899) projects.

V. The student must pass an examination in the major, with the department of the major developing the examination and determining its form. There is no examination in the minor field.

VI. In order to participate in commencement, the examination must be taken and passed by April 1.

A request to take an examination must be submitted to the Graduate School via a request form at least two weeks before a given examination date in order to allow sufficient time to prepare the examination. Special arrangements for off-campus testing, with appropriate supervision, can be made upon approval of the director of the Graduate School. Comprehensive exams are normally taken during the last quarter of course work or after all course work has been completed.

MODULAR COURSES
In both the thesis option and the examination option, courses may be taken in the non-standard, extended term that includes course work done in a distance education mode surrounding a two-week intensive residential component. Information regarding the Graduate School’s “Modular Option” in both the S.T.M. and the Ph.D. is available upon request from the Office of the Graduate School.

TIME LIMIT AND REINSTATMENT
All options require the equivalent of one calendar year of full-time study in theology beyond the M.Div. degree, although S.T.M. students are not required to be full-time students. Students are expected to complete all requirements within six years of the completion of the first course credited to the S.T.M. degree. The files of students who are unable to complete the work in this time period will be retired. Those wishing to be reinstated may request this of the Advanced Studies Committee. Reinstatement, if granted, is valid for two calendar years and may be made only once.