



The purpose of this document is to provide a basic understanding of the options for additional theological education following completion of the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program.

Definitions are provided at the end of the document.

Options for theological education

1. I plan to be an SMP pastor in this place and do not desire more credentials.

Please consider participating in Concordia Seminary's continuing education events. These events provide opportunities for growth without the requirements of academic courses.

2. I plan to continue as an SMP pastor, but would like to have a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree.

The M.A. degree does not affect your credentials as an SMP pastor, but it does provide public recognition of your academic achievements.

After acceptance into the M.A. program, you will need to complete four courses and pass a comprehensive examination.

3. I want to be credentialed as a General Pastor (GP), but do not want an M.A. degree.

When you complete the General Pastor Certification (GPC) program, the Seminary will notify your district president and he will change your status on the LCMS roster from SMP to GP. This will qualify you to take a call to any LCMS ministry.

After acceptance into the GPC program, you will complete five (5) three semester-hour courses and six (6) one-and-a-half semester-hour courses.

Because the GPC program requires Greek, you will need to study and pass the Greek examination early in the program.

4. I want to be credentialed as a General Pastor and also want an M.A. degree.

When you complete the GPC program, the Seminary will notify your district president and he will change your status on the LCMS roster from SMP to GP. This will qualify you to take a call to any LCMS ministry.

After acceptance into the GPC program **and** the M.A. program, you will complete five (5) three semester-hour courses and six (6) one-and-a-half semester-hour courses. After completing the first four courses and passing the M.A. comprehensive examination, the M.A. will be awarded.

Because the GPC program requires Greek, you will need to study and pass the Greek examination early in the program.

Definitions

- **Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP):** A Specific Ministry Pastor is qualified and certified for service based on the needs of his ministry context.
- **General Pastor (GP):** A General Pastor is ordained for service everywhere in the LCMS, in any type of ministry.
- **SMP program:** The SMP program is a condensed preparation for ordained ministry for those qualified on the basis of an existing ministry context.
- **GP program:** Any program that prepares the student for numerous types of ministry as a General Pastor.
 - **Master of Divinity (M.Div.):** The M.Div. is the standard program of pastoral preparation, three years on campus plus vicarage and requiring use of Hebrew and Greek.
 - **Residential Alternate Route (RAR):** The RAR is a program for qualifying students that requires two years of study on campus plus vicarage and requires the use of Greek.
 - **General Pastor Certification (GPC):** The GPC is a distance education version of the RAR program designed for SMP graduates. The RAR and GPC programs lead to status as a General Pastor but graduates do not receive an academic degree. Greek is required.
 - **Master of Arts (M.A.):** The M.A. is an academic degree. After application and acceptance to the M.A. program, an SMP graduate needs to complete four courses and an examination. The M.A. courses are part of the larger GPC program. Greek is not required for the M.A., but Greek is required for the GPC program.