

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROGRAM

Strengthening Ministry in the Kingdom of God



PROGRAM HANDBOOK
2020



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PROGRAM PURPOSE AND GOALS

The Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program, ***Strengthening Ministry in the Kingdom of God***, is a professional degree designed to strengthen ministry in the Kingdom of God by providing advanced training for pastors and others who minister to God's people, especially in the field of biblical counseling. It is a program of study and research intended for ministry renewal, reinvigoration in biblical and theological studies, integration of theological convictions with societal issues, and enhancement of the skills needed for effective biblical ministry. It integrates advanced academic research in the various fields of theological study with the practice of ministry.

CHOICE OF TWO PROGRAM CONCENTRATIONS

Strengthening Pastoral Ministry* is designed for ordained pastors who perform the full range of pastoral duties. If your pastoral ministry needs to be revived; if you long to pursue a set of issues and problems affecting the life of the church; if you desire advanced study in matters related to the doctrine, worship, and the overall life and ministry of the church, then this concentration is for you.

Strengthening Counseling Ministry is designed for pastors and others in the church whose ministry has a significant focus on counseling. If in your ministry you face the challenge of counseling people with broken lives and broken relationships; if you desire to more adequately understand and apply the Word of the Lord to the needs of people; if you desire advanced study in biblical counseling rooted in a thorough knowledge of Scripture and the faith of the Church, then this concentration is for you.

* Because of the biblical convictions of the sponsoring denomination of the Seminary regarding the qualifications of those serving as ordained pastors, this concentration is restricted to men.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

The ***Strengthening Ministry in the Kingdom of God*** program is for those who minister to the people of God and have earned a Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree or its equivalent. This equivalency must include study in the theological disciplines, such as an MTS degree, plus additional coursework, which when combined would equal or exceed 72 graduate semester hours or 108 graduate quarter hours, usually encompassing three years of post-graduate study. For those requesting admission based upon MDiv equivalency, all transcripts will be reviewed by the Registrar and the Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program (Director) to determine if the applicant has the knowledge, competence, and skills that would ordinarily be provided as part of an MDiv degree.

Normally, applicants should also have at least three years of ministry experience after earning the MDiv degree or its equivalent. A limited number students may be enrolled without the requisite experience upon the approval of the Director, who has responsibility to assess the applicant's other ministry experience which has prepared the student for advanced, professional studies.

These are the only requirements for the ***Strengthening Counseling Ministry*** concentration. For an individual to be admitted to the ***Strengthening Pastoral Ministry*** concentration, the applicant must be an ordained minister in addition to the above requirements.* Prior study of the biblical languages is also strongly recommended.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The Application for Admission is available at www.rpts.edu. For both credit and audit students, the following must be received at the Seminary before you can be considered for admission:

1. The completed application, including the following:
 - A brief, two-to-four page, typewritten autobiographical statement describing the following:
 - How you came to know Christ and how you are walking with Him today
 - Who has influenced your life and in what ways
 - Your service in the local church and other ministries
 - Why you want to pursue a DMin (or audit DMin classes) at RPTS
 - A description of your plan for your doctoral project (not required for auditors)
 - A previously-submitted paper from your masters degree work of approximately 10 pages.
2. Your official academic transcript(s) of your complete academic record, indicating that you have earned a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent. If your graduate school is not accredited, you may be admitted on probation upon demonstration of the ability to perform work at the doctoral level. Include transcripts from all post-high school institutions attended.
3. Two character references, including a minister or other church officer, and a non-related friend.
4. A nonrefundable application fee of \$50.00.

We recommend that applicants submit these requirements prior to January 10 for a February 1-14 enrollment in the same year, in order to allow time for acceptance and for the student to have adequate preparation prior to on-campus course attendance in August. Applications received after January 10 will incur a \$50 late application fee.

You may be requested to meet (typically by an online video call) with a representative of the Seminary for a personal interview.

Once the application and its supporting documentation have been received, the Seminary promptly decides to accept or reject it, and the Registrar notifies you of the result in writing.

REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLETION

The Doctor of Ministry program includes the completion of eight required courses and the submission and approval of a doctoral project combining academic study with practical application to ministry. Both concentrations share four required courses in common. These courses cover the range of theological study. The ***Strengthening Pastoral Ministry*** concentration has four additional courses oriented toward the pastoral work of preaching and leading the worship of the people of God. The ***Strengthening Counseling Ministry*** concentration has four additional courses focused on counseling ministry in the church.

The Doctor of Ministry program is designed for pastors and other church workers who are engaged in full-time ministry. It is, by its design, a part-time program to be completed while engaged in the ministry, with all coursework and the submission of the project designed to be completed within six years, beginning with the first on-campus course taken. The eight DMin classes are each five days. Two classes are offered each August and require the student to be in residence for those two weeks.

The classes are offered in a fixed rotation, so once students begin the program, they are expected to complete the eight classes over the next four Augusts. Because each class is offered only once every four years, students are encouraged not to miss a course, and they must register for at least one course each summer until they have completed their course requirements. If students are unable to take at least one course, they should consult with the Director and

petition the Registrar for a leave of absence (LoA), which may be approved for only one summer.

If a student does not register, does not request a leave of absence, and does not withdraw from the Seminary, he or she will be placed on an administrative leave of absence (aLoA) for only one summer. Students who do not intend to continue their coursework at RPTS should request to be withdrawn. After the period for a LoA or an aLoA expires, students who have not registered will be administratively withdrawn from RPTS.

A typical schedule would be as follows:

	February 15	August (first two full weeks of the month)	February 15 (following year)
Year 1	Pre-course work begins	Attend two (2) classes	Assignments due
Year 2	Pre-course work begins	Attend two (2) classes	Assignments due
Year 3	Pre-course work begins	Attend two (2) classes	Assignments due
Year 4	Pre-course work begins	Attend two (2) classes	Assignments due
Year 5	Work on Project		
Year 6	Work on Project - August 1 is the final date to submit project (Graduation is the following May)		

After the project proposal has been approved by the Director, it may be started at any time after the completion of the fifth course; however, the project may not be submitted prior to the completion of all coursework. Students must submit a first draft of the project by August 1 in order to graduate in May of the following year.

Project submissions later than August 1 must have special approval from the Director.

Courses require significant pre-classroom work to prepare for the five-day intensive classes and significant post-classroom work to complete the assignments. Students should expect to expend four hours a week for the six months before the class and four hours a week for the six months after the class to adequately do the work.

COURSEWORK GRADING CRITERIA FOR RETENTION AND COMPLETION

For students in the Doctor of Ministry program to continue in the program, they must meet the following requirements.

A student must complete the entire coursework with at least an overall average grade of a B (3.0) before the student can submit the doctoral project for degree completion. Courses for which a grade of at least a C (2.0) has been attained will count for credit, as long as the final overall grade average is at least a B (3.0).

If a student, upon completion of a course, receives a grade of less than a C (2.0), the student must appeal to the Faculty for permission to revise and resubmit the required coursework for the purpose of improving the grade. If permission is granted, the student shall have three months from the time of the Faculty approval to make such a resubmission. Failure to revise and resubmit the work or failure to attain at least a C (2.0) will result in the student needing to retake the course. Only one course in the DMin program may be retaken, and that only once.

If a student, after the completion of two courses, is not maintaining at least an overall average of a B (3.0), the student shall be placed on academic probation. If, after the completion of two additional courses, the student's overall grade average has not risen to a B (3.0), the student shall be dismissed from the program.

Students have 6 months of pre-course work and 6 months of post-course work (due by February 15). Work not submitted by February 15 is reduced one letter grade. Sixty days later, on April 15, if the work is still not submitted, students incur a \$200 late fee. After August 1, the course is recorded as an “F.” If the student wishes to continue in the program, with the consent of the professor and the Director, the student must re-register for the course, pay for the tuition, and submit the required work within six months.

No credit for a specific course will be granted unless the student has attained at least a C (2.0) grade for that specific course. The standards for student evaluation for each class shall be at the discretion of the professor who teaches that class.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

August 4-8, 2020 August 10-14, 2020	DM103 Leadership Communication DM201 The Renewal of Preaching (Pastoral only)
August, 2020 Non-resident course	DM304 Counseling Practicum (Counseling only)
August 2-6, 2021 August 9-13, 2021	DM102 Reformed Distinctives in Ministry DM202 Issues in Theology (Pastoral only) DM301 What is Man? (Counseling only)
August 1-5, 2022 August 8-12, 2022	DM101 Revitalization of Ministry DM204 Advancing in Biblical Exegesis (Pastoral only) DM303 Contemporary Issues in Counseling (Counseling only)
August 7-11, 2023 August 14-18, 2023	DM104 Counseling the Flock DM203 Pastoral Theology in the Reformed Tradition (Pastoral only) DM302 Medical and Legal Issues in Biblical Counseling (Counseling only)

Please note that the courses are listed on the program schedule in numeric order; they are not necessarily listed in the order they will be offered in a given year.

RESIDENCY

As the program is designed to foster full involvement, students need to be present on campus during the weeks of intensive classes each August. The one exception is DM304, which is a non-resident counseling practicum course.

COURSES & PROFESSORS

The classes required for the Doctor of Ministry degree cover the range of ministry skills, including biblical interpretation, doctrinal studies, counseling, and worship. Instructors for this program include full-time and adjunct professors selected because of their particular expertise.

There are four required courses common to both the *Strengthening Pastoral Ministry* and *Strengthening Counseling Ministry* concentrations:

DM101 Revitalization of Ministry

Whether a congregation is going through a season of struggle or strength, every church leader needs to be knowledgeable of, and infusing into the congregations they serve, principles of church vitality. This course will encourage students in a workshop format to grow in and apply such principles as unconditional dependence upon the Holy Spirit through practicing prayer; clarifying the understanding of the role of ordained leadership; putting into clear focus the church’s mission; and, defining carefully the plan to seek

to fulfill the mission. A special emphasis is given on renewal in pastoral leadership.

- *Dr. Barry J. York*

DM102 Reformed Distinctives in Ministry

In our culture, there is no end to new and innovative ministry models. What is more, pragmatism seems to be the only way in which many want to evaluate existing models. This course will explore what it means to establish a Reformed approach to ministry that uses the Bible rather than pragmatics as a compass. This course will also seek to instill habits of thinking and doing that will naturally cultivate a distinctively Reformed ministry. This course will also evaluate theological, historical, and pragmatic trends that encroach upon and distract from a Reformed approach to ministry.

- *Dr. Jeffrey A. Stivason*

DM103 Leadership Communication

This course seeks to answer this question, “What guides and informs communicative practices within the pastoral roles of service and leadership?” The faithful conduct of pastoral ministry depends on sound communication principles and practices. Twenty-first century pastors work within a world saturated with electronic technology, yet lacking in communication knowledge and skill. Nevertheless, church members expect pastoral leadership and care, anticipating that a pastor should be omni-competent in every form of communicative practice. This course explores principles that inform basic communicative practices across the spectrum of pastoral ministry — from within the pastor’s own marriage and household; to the conduct of various kinds of church meetings; to teaching and preaching; to engaging electronic communication in personal and mass media forms.

- *Dr. Joel S. Ward*

DM104 Counseling the Flock

In this course, students will sharpen their skills of listening, analyzing, and guiding members through the variety of problems commonly encountered by pastors seeking to counsel, advise, and aid the members of the church to live their faith with integrity and consistency.

- *Professor Keith A. Evans*

Four additional courses are required for the ***Strengthening Pastoral Ministry*** concentration:

DM201 The Renewal of Preaching

In this course, students have the opportunity to review and evaluate the quality, competency, and effectiveness of their pulpit oratory, learn advanced techniques for rhetorical construction, and study effective methods of sermon construction.

- *Dr. Barry J. York*

DM202 Issues in Theology

In this course, students will survey and analyze current trends and directions in theological studies, their impact on Reformed confessional integrity, on the beliefs and practices of the members of the Church, and on the future directions of theological development.

- *Dr. Richard C. Gamble*

DM203 Pastoral Theology in the Reformed Tradition

The practice of pastoral theology in the Presbyterian tradition has its roots in Reformation and post-Reformation Scotland, as the shepherds of Christ’s flock endeavored to return to a biblically faithful administration of the Word, sacraments and discipline. In an age that cries out for fresh reformation in the churches, this course invites students to an encounter with the pioneers of the Scottish Presbyterian tradition to examine the practice and

reception of pastoral care from the past in order to draw practical lessons for contemporary ministry contexts.

- *Dr. David G. Whitla*

DM204 Advancing in Biblical Exegesis

Ministry of the Word begins with sound exegesis. The purpose of this course is to refresh and sharpen the exegetical skills that bring vitality to the preaching and teaching of the Scriptures. Basic principles will be revisited, and more advanced techniques will be introduced, all with the goal of bringing forth sound exposition and application. This course will also examine and apply the tools that are currently available to help students grow in the proficient handling of the original biblical languages.

- *Dr. C. J. Williams*

Four additional courses are required for the *Strengthening Counseling Ministry* concentration:

DM301 What is Man?

In this course, students will examine the exegetical data related to man, his problems, and how the counseling/discipleship process addresses these issues. A systematic theology of discipleship will be developed as the framework from which a robust discipleship ministry can and must develop.

- *Professor Keith A. Evans*

DM302 Medical and Legal Issues in Biblical Counseling

In this course, students will be exposed to the many physiological issues that can impact the counseling/discipleship process. Direction for dealing with these issues within a pastoral context will be mapped out. Also, the same will be done for the legal issues that face the pastor/counselor. Special attention will be given to proper protection from and preparation for possible prosecution in

the court systems, both criminal and civil. Special emphasis will be given to principles of peacemaking in a litigious society.

- *Dr. Kevin M. Backus and Dr. John R. Bower*

DM303 Contemporary Issues in Counseling

This course seeks to survey and analyze current trends in the Biblical Counseling Movement as well as directions in the landscape of modern culture. As such, a biblical analysis/perspective will be offered, practical implications considered, and the significance to the church and church-based counseling will be proposed. Students will further grasp how the timeless truths of Scripture sufficiently interface with modern trajectories and developments.

- *Professor Keith A. Evans*

DM304 Counseling Practicum

In this non-resident course, students will be mentored in the counseling/training process. Regardless of the student's past experience in counseling, this course will involve both a significant practical component (50 hours of counseling or its equivalency) supervised by the professor and a significant writing component tailored to the student's circumstances. Students entering into the program previously certified through a national certifying body will be prepared to pursue the next highest level of certification (such as a supervising fellow or as a publisher/trainer in the field of Biblical Counseling). If the student has not been certified through such an organization, students will be prepared to achieve such a status through this course.

- *Professor Keith A. Evans (Non-resident course)*

Students, with the approval of the Director, may substitute one directed research course (DM401) for one required course to accommodate their circumstances.

Students are required to complete evaluations for each course taken prior to enrolling in subsequent courses.

DOCTORAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

The capstone of the Doctor of Ministry program is the final project. Since the DMin is a professional degree designed to strengthen ministry in a practical way, the final project often focuses on a subject or problem arising out of the student's own ministerial or counseling experience. Like the DMin program itself, the final project will follow one of two tracks: ***Strengthening Pastoral Ministry*** or ***Strengthening Counseling Ministry***. The realm of possible topics is endless, and each project will be unique, but the common denominator of all DMin projects is the goal to enhance and strengthen the pastoral or counseling ministry of each student, and be a benefit to others engaged in the same realm of ministry. The ultimate goal of each project is to glorify God through strengthening our ministry to His people.

Each project includes a theoretical component and a practical component. The theoretical component defines and explores the chosen topic, demonstrating academic research and writing skills at the doctoral level. Biblical and theological fields of study, including exegesis of biblical texts, historical research, and review of relevant secondary-source academic literature that includes contemporary research on the topic, will ordinarily be part of this component of the project.

The practical component applies the conclusions to ministry in a well-defined way. This portion of the project may include interviews, counseling case studies, surveys, and reviews of cultural

trends or related matters that have a bearing on the research topic. It may include the production of materials for the spiritual growth and education of the congregation, or the development of programs or policies relating to pastoral work, the worship or government of the church, or other forms of ministry.

Depending on the topic, the theoretical and practical components will not always be equally weighted, but each must be present.

The DMin project is completed through four stages: Proposal, Research and Writing, Evaluation and Revision, and finally, the Oral Exam.

PROPOSAL

Students should be active in thinking about possible project topics throughout their time in the program, as coursework brings to light different avenues for research. Informal discussion with professors and the Director is very helpful at this stage. However, the earliest point at which a student may submit a formal proposal is after five courses have been completed. Once a student has settled on a topic, the student may submit a project proposal to the Director which includes the following components:

- A clear description of the problem or topic to be addressed.
- An explanation of the need for this study and what positive contribution it will make.
- The research methodology that will be used.
- Avenues of practical implementation of the project.
- A tentative outline.
- A timeline for progress and completion.
- Twenty preliminary resources with which the student's research will begin.

The project proposal should be clear and concise, not exceeding ten pages. Once the proposal is received by the Director, he will interact with the student on the topic and suggest modifications to the proposal, if necessary, within thirty days. The Director may serve as the advisor of the project, or assign another Faculty member to be the advisor, especially if he has particular expertise that relates to the research topic. Once the Director approves the proposal, the student may begin the research and writing stage.

RESEARCH AND WRITING

Students are encouraged to interact mainly with their advisor or other Faculty members as the need for guidance may arise, during the research and writing stage. Students are also encouraged to submit samples of their project to their advisor for informal feedback, although there is no requirement to do so.

On August 15, one year after the final August course enrollment, the student will be automatically registered and billed for DM199, which is the formal project writing stage of the DMin program. Students should plan to complete their projects in less than two years after being registered for DM199. The project is ordinarily to be submitted within six years of beginning the program. In order to allow time for evaluation and revision, the deadline to submit the completed project is August 1, if the student wishes to graduate in May of the following calendar year.

A student with extenuating circumstances who is unable to submit the project within the required timeframe, may petition for a one-year extension by submitting an extension request to the Director with details describing the reasons for the request. If, after consideration, permission is granted for an extension, the student will be notified in writing and will incur a \$500 fee for a one-year

extension. Students who do not submit a project or request an extension within the required timeframe will be withdrawn from DM199 and from the DMin program. In no circumstances will extensions be granted beyond ten years after the student's first on-campus course attendance.

The project will be submitted in the written form required by the "Standards for Papers" section included in the *RPTS Student Handbook*, which can be found in Moodle. Students should consult the latest edition of Kate L. Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* and use "Chicago Style" citation (footnotes and bibliography). Student projects must be professionally copyedited before submission on August 1. The project is to be a minimum of 150 pages, double-spaced. An electronic copy in PDF format should be submitted to the Director using the submission link in Moodle.

EVALUATION AND REVISION

Once the project has been submitted, the advisor will provide an initial evaluation by September 15. He may judge the project to be acceptable as submitted, but ordinarily, a student may expect to go through at least one round of revisions, which are due back to the Director by November 1. Once initial revisions have been made, the project will be assigned to a Faculty reader. Both the advisor and reader will complete a comprehensive review by December 31, and the student will have opportunity to make further revisions, if necessary. This comprehensive review will be an assessment of how the project exceeds, meets, or does not meet the project standards. When both the advisor and the reader judge the project to be acceptable (approved or approved with minor revisions), an oral exam will be scheduled.

However, the advisor and reader may judge a project to be unacceptable. It may be delayed for major revisions or rejected. In such cases, the student will be dismissed from the program unless that student, upon notification of the judgment of the Faculty readers, requests a one-year extension to rewrite and resubmit the project. For projects delayed for major revisions, there will be a \$500 fee for the extension and resubmission. If a project has been rejected, the student will receive an “F” grade and must begin again with a new proposal. In this circumstance, the student must register and pay for DM199 a second time in order to have the new project evaluated. A resubmitted project judged by the Faculty readers to be unacceptable will result in the student being dismissed from the program.

ORAL EXAM

The oral exam is the formal step of evaluation of the DMin project. A student whose project is judged acceptable will be expected to schedule an on-campus visit before February 28 for the oral exam. In some circumstances, this exam may take place through an electronic medium. The oral exam will be a more comprehensive look at the whole project by the advisor and reader, and could result in additional revisions to the project before official approval.

The student will be asked to make a brief presentation of the project before the advisor, reader, and any other Faculty or students desiring to be present. The advisor and reader will ask clarifying questions, make further corrections, and encourage discussion. Following the oral exam, the student will be dismissed and the readers will vote to sustain the project, sustain with minor revisions, or delay sustaining until major revisions have been made. In order to graduate in May, any revisions must be completed by April 1 to be approved by April 15. Upon final project approval,

the candidate will have successfully completed the program and be eligible to receive the degree of Doctor of Ministry. The procedure for the oral defense and the oral defense evaluation form used by the readers can be found in Moodle.

Upon final approval, the revised and completed project, including a 350-word abstract and a signature page, must be submitted to the Director via Moodle by April 15. The completed and approved project will be catalogued by the Library of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary into the OCLC database and, if requested by the student, will be made available through the Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN) for the benefit of future pastors and scholars. A final hardcopy will be printed and bound by the Seminary for inclusion in the RPTS Library.

After a sigh of relief and graduation, the final and ongoing stage of your project now begins: the prayerful and diligent application of it to the people of God, for their good and His glory.

PROJECT STANDARDS

The standards for projects shall be as follows:

- The project must exhibit dependence on the authority of Scripture as well as love for God, His Word, and His people in a humble and pastoral tone of communication.
- The project must be at least 150 pages in length, written in thoughtful prose, with proper formatting of citations and bibliography, and sufficiently edited to be free of grammatical errors.
- The project must clearly include both a theoretical component and a practical component, each with a logical progression of thought, and a well-defined integration of theory and practice.

- The theoretical component of the project must demonstrate a broad familiarity with the topic and a competent understanding of original source material, either original language biblical texts or original source theological texts. The project must also demonstrate adequate and competent research on the subject matter that results in doctoral level theological reflection on the issues raised in the project.
- The practical component of the project must contribute to the understanding and practice of ministry in the church at large, and must include applicable material that may be used by others in the context of pastoral or counseling ministry.

TUITION COSTS AND ADDITIONAL FEES

The current tuition cost is \$1290 per course, due on May 1, although students may request a payment plan, whereby 50% of the tuition payment is due on May 1, and the remaining 50% is due by August 1. Payment plans must be requested by April 15.

The project fee is equal to twice the cost of the course tuition at the time the students are registered for their projects. Students will be registered and billed for their project on August 15 one year after the final August course enrollment. Payment will be due on September 1. The payment plan option is also available for the project, with 50% due on September 1, and the remaining 50% due by December 1. This payment plan must be requested by August 15.

Payments not received by the due date will be assessed a late payment fee of \$45. Students with payment plans will be assessed a \$22.50 late fee for each payment not received by the payment due date.

Refund schedule for withdrawal from courses:

- 100% by May 1; 50% until August 1; 0% after August 1

Refund schedule for withdrawal from DM199 DMin Project:

- 100% by September 1 (in the year the student is registered for DM199); 50% until August 1 (the year after the student is registered for DM199); 0% thereafter. Please note that no refund is given for withdrawing from DM199 once a project has been submitted to the Seminary.

Students will also be responsible for a graduation fee of \$200, which will cover their hood, diploma, and invitations. Additional regalia fees will vary based upon the selection made at the time of graduation.

As a service to the church, qualified applicants who desire educational enrichment without pursuing a DMin degree may audit courses at half the regular tuition cost. Such individuals must still apply and be accepted into the program as an auditor. Graduates of the DMin program may audit additional DMin courses for \$99 per course.

REGISTRATION AND COURSE INFORMATION

Course registration is open each year from February 1-14 through our student web portal (<https://rpts.empower-xl.com/>). Course syllabi and other materials will be available through Moodle (<https://moodle.rpts.edu/>) on February 15 for each course in which a student is registered.



REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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STUDY UNDER PASTORS