MINISTRY (D.MIN.)

This hybrid program offers both on-campus and online coursework.

The goal of the Doctor of Ministry degree offered at Fordham University is to provide advanced understanding of the nature and purposes of religious ministry, increased competencies in pastoral analysis and ministry skills, sustained theological reflection on the practice of ministry, and new knowledge about the practice of ministry.

The program, combining theory and pastoral practice, strives for the integration of theological and social science knowledge to advance excellence in religious ministry. The purpose of the program is to enhance the general practice of ministry in its many forms as well as provide expertise in specialized areas of ministerial practice. In keeping with Fordham University’s Jesuit tradition, the program gives special, though not exclusive, attention to the Christian and Catholic religious tradition. A major concern of the program, in keeping with the mission of Jesuit education, is to explore the social role that religious ministry can play in dealing with cultural and theological issues.

The D.Min. degree is designed to prepare reflective and competent professionals for positions of leadership in religious ministry. The program strives to discover and nurture sound scholarship, meaningful research, and the interdependence of theory and practice. The D.Min. is conferred on the basis of scholarship, research skills, and practical application demonstrated by the student’s coursework, examinations, doctoral thesis or project, and ministerial experience.

Admissions

Admission to the D.Min. program requires the possession of a Master of Divinity degree or its educational equivalent. Generally, equivalency is assessed as tantamount to 36 graduate credits in theological or religious studies (typically 15 credits in Scripture, 15 credits in doctrinal or systematic theology, and six credits in other areas of theology or religious studies). Students who do not have this background are advised to take such courses in the GRE, the Department of Theology of Fordham University, or other graduate theological programs. The practice of ministry is not considered an equivalent substitute for the Master of Divinity degree.

To be admitted to the program, applicants should normally have had three years of experience in ministry after their first theological degree. They should also manifest the capacity for an advanced level of competence in and reflection on religious ministry.

Admission of candidates to the D.Min. is determined by the D.Min. committee, which is comprised of the dean, director, and D.Min. faculty members. Admission to the D.Min. is selective and offered only to those students who have demonstrated the requisite intellectual ability, academic, and ministerial preparation, and motivation.

Those applying for admissions are expected to have a B+ average in their master's program. They must supply a copy of their college, seminary, and graduate school transcripts, as well as three letters of recommendation, two from professors with whom they have studied and one from a ministerial supervisor. Applicants must also submit a statement of purpose for seeking the degree. Applications are available on the graduate school website: fordham.edu/gre. Paper applications will not be accepted.

Please see our admissions pages on the web for admission deadlines: fordham.edu/info/20383/admissions/2350/application_deadlines

Each student accepted into the program is assigned an adviser who guides the student in academic and career matters. Students are expected to maintain a B+ grade point average during the entire period of their doctoral studies. Mentors and readers for doctor of ministry theses or projects are decided upon by students in consultation with prospective mentors and readers. The mentor must be chosen from the D.Min. faculty. Readers may be chosen from within or outside of the D.Min. faculty.

Requirements

The D.Min. program offers an advanced level of study in pastoral and practical theology and involves their integration with religious ministry. The curriculum also focuses on the acquisition of skills and competencies in pastoral practice and research. A doctoral-level thesis or project serves as the capstone for the student’s program.

Various kinds of learning comprise the program of studies: lectures, readings, community discussions, self-directed learning, peer learning, library research, workshops, experiential learning, and e-learning. Close attention is also given to the various contexts in which students exercise their religious ministries.

The D.Min. program includes the designing, writing, and presentation of a doctoral-level thesis or project that deals in a significant manner with theory and practice of ministry. This work should reach the level where it contributes to the practice of ministry and is applicable to other ministerial situations. To complete this work, each student identifies a ministerial issue, conducts the necessary research using appropriate methodology, and presents a practical proposal for dealing with the issue. Doctoral theses and projects are evaluated by a committee, presented orally, and placed in the University library, as well as in thesis abstracts.

The D.Min. program requires that students take a minimum of 36 advanced credits beyond the Master of Divinity or its equivalent, as well as complete a doctoral thesis or project. Twenty-one credits are taken in a required core of courses; 15 credits are in either additional required courses or electives. Normally, the degree requires not less than two and no more than six years to complete.

All D.Min. students are required to register for the doctoral mentoring seminar each semester after course work is completed up to and including the semester in which the student graduates.

Students may complete as few as four courses on campus, offered in an intensive format during January intersession.

Course Requirements

Core Course Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>PMGR 7510</td>
<td>Theology of Ministry</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMGR 8628</td>
<td>Pastoral and Practical Theology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMGR 8632</td>
<td>Research Seminar: Pastoral Theology and Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMGR 7650</td>
<td>Ethics in Pastoral Ministry</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPGR 7902</td>
<td>Ignatian Spirituality for Ministry</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>ZZGR 8060</td>
<td>DMin Mentoring Seminar</td>
<td>6</td>
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Theses and Projects

Purposes
The D.Min. thesis or project is the cornerstone of the program. Students create a work that enriches their practice of ministry, that meets academic and professional standards of quality, and that is related to broader questions bearing on the practice of ministry. It may contribute to ministry in other contexts. The thesis or project should reflect integration of the student’s learning in the program, should be grounded in contemporary research in theological and allied fields, should aid and express the student’s maturing practice and vocation, and should be geared toward ministerial impact. It should display well the student’s capacity for making theological sense of ministry.

Types or Forms

Thesis
This work, closer to the traditional dissertation format, investigates a matter of significance for ministry that is intended as a contribution to academic and/or professional discourse concerning ministry as well as serving the student’s practice of ministry.

Project
Projects may be either “in-ministry” or “for-ministry.” In-ministry projects are creative works that serve the practice of ministry in which the student is currently situated. The project will take place within the current ministry and be concluded by the end of the degree program. For-ministry projects are creative works that serve the practice of ministry to be carried out after the conclusion of the degree program.

The Doctor of Ministry thesis or project is the distinguishing characteristic of the doctoral degree, and its quality is a hallmark of the quality of a doctoral program. Fordham libraries and GRE retain copies of all theses and projects.

1. PROPOSAL

Mentors and Reader
In consultation with potential mentors, students will make arrangements for a mentor to guide them in their thesis/project, as well as at least one reader. The reader should be chosen after, and in consultation with, the mentor.

If the reader is from outside Fordham University, and after mentors have approved the request of a student to have an outside reader, the mentor will circulate to the D.Min. faculty the CV of the proposed outside reader and a brief rationale written by the student for his or her request for the outside reader. In this way the doctoral faculty will be informed of outside readers working with the School, as well as have the opportunity to offer feedback about the qualifications of those outside readers within a week’s time, sent directly to the mentors.

Once the thesis or project committee has been established and the proposal is accepted, the student works out a schedule for submission of materials in collaboration with the mentor and reader(s). (Professors are typically not available for mentoring or consultation during the summer, holidays, or leaves.)

Topic
The thesis/project topic must receive formal approval before being undertaken. Formal approval must be given to the proposal by the student’s committee. When the thesis or project is completed and approved by the committee, an oral defense is conducted with the committee.

Students typically submit proposals after completing 24 credits of coursework. The proposal may not be accepted until all grades of Incomplete are satisfied, and all financial obligations have been met.

Proposal Format
A good DMin proposal should provide a framework that clearly and succinctly describes who students are in ministry and what preparation they have undergone for this thesis/project; what ministry matter they...
are addressing and why; how they plan to do so and why; and what they intend to happen through the thesis/project and why. It should also include a plan for the work (what will be generated according to what sort of timeline), and a bibliography of the essential works that will inform the thesis/project.

The proposal should generally be structured as follows:

- **Authorship:** Who am I and what do I do in ministry?
- **Focus:** What is the focus of my thesis/project, and how is it related to my ministry?
- **Service:** Whom does this thesis/project serve? How are the voices of those whom this work is “about” and “for” to be accounted?
- **Change:** What do I want to happen as a result of this work, how, and why? How is the work intrinsically related to that action/impact/intervention?
- **Sources:** What are the essential sources that will inform the work?
- **Research Process:** What is the step-by-step process by which the research will unfold? Where will the research take place, and with whom?
- **Thesis/Project Outline:** What is the content and format of the work (chapters, appendices), etc.?
- **Calendar:** On what timeline will I create the thesis/project?

**Circulation of the Proposal**

After a student has developed a proposal and had it approved by both the mentor and reader, (but before it is sent to the dean for approval) the mentor will circulate an abstract of the proposal to the members of the pastoral studies area. The abstract will consist of a one-page summary of the student’s proposal, an outline of the chapters the student will develop, and a bibliography. In this way, the pastoral studies area faculty will be informed of theses and projects moving forward in the School as well as have the opportunity to request the full proposal and make suggestions within a week’s time. Observations, if any, by the pastoral studies area faculty will be sent directly to the mentors.

**Thesis/Project Format Review**

Before a candidate can officially graduate and receive a diploma, the thesis must be reviewed for format. **Format reviews are to be completed before oral defense of the written thesis/project.** Format review assures that the document meets all formatting and stylistic requirements of the GRE and is ready for publication. During the Format Review, every page of the manuscript, including the introductory material and reference section, is reviewed thoroughly.

**Follow the steps outlined below for completion of the Thesis Format Review process:**

- Submit one hard copy and one electronic pdf of the thesis/project with signed approval forms to the director.
- Register for Format Review as you do for a course and pay the fee.
- The director will submit the pdf copy of the thesis/project to the dean’s staff for the format review editor. The dean’s staff will submit the thesis/project to SafeAssign (or a similar program) to detect plagiarism. If any matters of concern are uncovered, the report from the program will be sent to the director. When the thesis is returned from the format review editor, the director will notify the student by email. The student is responsible to retrieve the thesis and complete all of the indicated corrections. The format review typically takes three to four weeks.

Because of the number of theses and projects submitted each semester and the significant amount of time it takes to review each one, deadlines for submission and approval of theses and projects by mentors and readers will be strictly adhered to; these deadlines are posted in the academic calendar each semester.

Theses and projects are reviewed in the order in which they are received. The earlier it is submitted for review, the more likely a student will be approved for graduation in a given semester. If a thesis or project does not meet the standards of the GRE in the semester in which the oral defense was conducted, the candidate will incur additional charges to register for the next semester and will also need to register for the following graduation date.

**Defense**

Each student must defend the completed thesis or project orally before an examination committee, consisting of the mentor and a reader. The program director (or mentor) is responsible for ensuring that the examination committee is professionally appropriate, and the dean reserves the right to appoint a representative. Public notification of the examination—including the time, place, and examiners—must be made at least two weeks in advance. Thus, certification of degree completion cannot be done until after the presentation of the thesis. Please review the GRE calendar for the final date on which defenses may be scheduled each semester.

A draft of the completed thesis or project should be submitted to each reader in sufficient time to allow for revisions before the defense.

**Style Requirements**

To ensure consistency of GRE theses and projects, students must prepare them to conform to the guidelines outlined here.

1. **Style Manual**
   - The Chicago Manual of Style (most recent edition)

2. **Format**
   - **TITLE PAGE:** See sample in the Resources section.
   - **ABSTRACT:** The abstract cannot exceed 350 words and should be listed on the table of contents without a page number.
   - **VITA:** See sample in the Resources section. NOTE: The vita cannot exceed one page and should be listed on the table of contents without a page number.
   - **PAPER:** The paper must be a minimum of 20 lb. weight.
   - **MARGINS:** The top, right, and bottom margins should be one inch; the left margin should be 1½ inch to allow for binding. Any printing in the margins will count as a mistake. If the margin is exceeded by more than five characters, the thesis will be rejected.
   - **PAGINATION:** Number the first page of any chapter in the center of the page a double space below the last line of text, approximately 5/8 to ¾ inch above the bottom. All other numbers are placed two lines (a double space) above the first line of printing and just inside the right margin; that is, approximately 5/8 to 3/4 inch from the top and one inch from the right side.
Leaves of Absence

Students who encounter circumstances that prevent their continuous enrollment may request a leave of absence through the program director and dean. A leave of absence is normally granted only for extraordinary personal reasons outside the student’s control that prevent involvement in graduate studies (e.g., serious medical problems). In other situations, such as employment opportunities, students are expected to register for dissertation mentoring. The request for a leave should specify the reason for the leave and the time period involved, and include related documentation. The D.Min. committee will forward the request and its recommendation to the dean, who will grant, deny, or modify the recommendation. The dean will inform the individual, the program adviser, and enrollment services. The student will be administratively registered for Leave of Absence. There is no charge for this registration.

For the complete GRE Leave of Absence policy, refer to the Policies and Procedures section of the GRE Bulletin.

Failure to Register

Matriculated students who are neither registered nor on approved leave of absence for two continuous semesters are automatically dropped from the GRE rolls. If they desire to continue their education at Fordham, they must apply for readmission through the assistant dean for admission in consultation with the D.Min. committee and receive the approval of the dean. Such readmission is not automatic.

January Core Session Registration

Doctor of Ministry students are required to attend the two-week January session in each of their first two years in the program. Four core courses are only offered in this session, two in Year 1 and two in Year 2. Missing any courses offered in the January session will extend the time to degree completion by at least a year. Students who need to miss courses in the January session must follow the waiver process (form available from the assistant dean).

Registration at Other Universities

Students who wish to register for courses at other universities must be matriculated in the doctoral program. Only one course at another university may be taken each semester after consultation with the student’s adviser and the approval of the dean. Registration for such courses follows the procedures and fee schedules of the host university. Students are liable for tuition and payments to the other school. Upon completion of the course, students will request a transfer of the credits to their Fordham permanent record. A grade of B+ or better is required for transfer courses.

Satisfactory Academic Performance and Progress

The dean reserves the right of review and dismissal regarding students’ performance and progress in the program. Students who do not meet the standards for satisfactory academic performance and progress will be placed on academic probation. Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher to remain in the program. Students who do not maintain a 3.5 GPA or continuous enrollment will no longer receive financial aid and may be dismissed from the program. If the deficiency is not corrected, the dean, in consultation with the program director and the D.Min. committee, will make a decision about dismissal.

Satisfactory academic progress is defined as completing at least one of the dissertation/thesis requirements each year after the semester in which course work is completed. Requirements include the dissertation proposal, and the dissertation defense. Notwithstanding their academic performance or the time remaining for completion of degree requirements, students who do not make satisfactory progress toward the degree may be dropped from the rolls. Unsatisfactory progress may include an excessive number of withdrawals, incompletes, leaves of absence, or other delays in meeting the requirements for the degree.

Students who do not complete one requirement each year are on academic probation. Such students have the next semester to complete the requirement and to file a mandatory timetable for completing all
remaining requirements. The timetable must include at least one deadline per semester (e.g. “Complete Chapter 1 to 3 of the dissertation in the fall semester”). If the requirement is unmet by the end of the semester, or if the timetable deadlines are missed, the dean, in consultation with the D.Min. committee, will make a decision about dismissal.

In addition, doctoral students who have not secured approval of their dissertation proposal five semesters before the expiration of their time limit are subject to academic probation. Such students have one semester to secure approval of the dissertation proposal and a timetable for completion of the dissertation. If they do not secure approval of the proposal and the timetable, the dean, in consultation with the D.Min. committee, will make a decision about dismissal. Note that an individual student’s requirements for academic progress may be affected by the time remaining until the student reaches the time limit for degree completion.

Academic Advisement Procedure and Sequence

Upon acceptance, each student is assigned an academic adviser. The adviser is to be consulted at each registration period (October for spring semester, March for summer and fall semesters).

Each student is required to take a minimum of six credits per semester.

Advanced standing will be determined at or shortly after admission to the D.Min. program. Students applying for advanced standing will be expected to provide all relevant documentation, including syllabi and transcripts. International students must provide certification (and translation) of the authenticity of materials presented. Transfer and/or advanced standing credits will be added to a student’s academic record after the student completes 12 credits if the student is in good academic standing and has no incomplete grades.

Advanced standing can be applied to meet core or elective requirements.

All courses accepted for advanced standing credit must meet the following criteria:

1. The student must have received a grade of B+ or better.
2. The courses were completed within five years of admission to the D.Min. program.

A maximum of six credits advanced standing can be awarded.

The adviser is assigned by the dean’s office and is not the same thing as a mentor. A mentor is chosen by a student, with faculty consultation, to guide research.

Resources

Sample Documents

Sample of Dissertation Title Page

Sample Form of Mentor’s Approval

Sample of Vita

Forms

Approval of D.Min Dissertation/Project Proposal Form

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