

Ashland Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry Program - Contracted Study Requirements

Definition:

A contracted study is an opportunity to explore a specialized topic or material not included in the DMin curriculum and to advance the student toward completion of the doctoral project. The faculty designs the study and prepares a syllabus in collaboration with the student so that it will be beneficial to the student's doctoral study. A contracted study is different from a directed study, which is for courses in the catalog.

Limit:

No more than two contracted studies per student are permitted in the DMin program.

Scope:

Each contracted study is four semester hours and consists of a reading and a writing component that serve as foundation for the course and a record of the learning. Contracted studies include:

- Approximately 175 hours of work distributed among reading, instruction, seminars, assignments, and writing
- Approximately 2,000 pages of reading with 35 to 40 pages of written work
- Completion within a 90-day period (that does not bridge semesters).

Types:

Areas for contracted studies include:

Literature Review. *A contracted study for a review of literature is designed to contribute directly to Chapter Three, "Review of the Literature," of the doctoral dissertation. The student will identify and interact with the key authors, ideas, and examples on a given topic. A review of literature seeks an answer to a specific question—a research question.*

The following assignments are required for a review of literature:

- *Compile and submit a list of the 35-40 key publications (books and articles from scholarly journals) related to the topic of your doctoral project. The list of publications should include at least 6-7 journal articles because these represent the most recently published research. In addition to your faculty, you may use one or more faculty members in your field of study as resource persons.*
- *Write a 35-40 page paper that is a review and critical evaluation of the literature that impacts the focus of your project. Your review will encompass the theories, data, models, and programs that others have presented and will provide a theoretical framework and a contemporary setting for your project.*
- *Write the assignment in Literature Review style found in the DMin Writing Handbook on the Ashland Theological Seminary website*
https://seminary.ashland.edu/upload/documents/DMin_20152016%20Writing_Handbook_09.29.2015.pdf

Experiential. *This study involves preparation for and involvement in attending a seminar/series of seminars, retreat(s), study-related travel, or interviews of experts and noted authorities in a particular field. Experiential contracted studies will include foundational reading and a reflective writing component.*

Examples:

- *Attend a church planting seminar with appropriate reading and writing*

- Attend three seminars on small group ministry, comparing and contrasting the underlying theologies and philosophies
- Engage in a cross-cultural experience that informs the doctoral project
- Engage in a Christian education or teaching process that informs the doctoral project
- Attend a chaplaincy training program that informs the doctoral project.

The following assignments are required for an Experiential.

- Attend the seminar/series of seminars, retreat(s), study-related travel, or interviews of experts and noted authorities in a particular field.
- Write a 35-40 page paper about the experience
- Include the following: 4-5 page description of the program attended; focusing the rest of the paper on how the experience and subject informs the student's project.
- Include a bibliography of 35-40 sources that support the experience and the subject.

Knowledge Mastery. This is a study under the direction of a master faculty or expert in the field. It involves reading, reporting, reflecting, writing, and other appropriate pedagogical experiences for gaining mastery over a specific knowledge/skill base under the direction of an expert in the field. It may include biblical, library, and/or social science research. It may also include extensive interviews with other knowledgeable persons.

Examples:

- A study of the work of John Wesley
- The role of lay pastors in the Wesleyan movement
- Kinship in the early church
- The teaching process of Christian education

The following assignments are required for Knowledge Mastery.

- Write a 5-6 page paper that defines the subject, the master faculty or expert in the field, and how it supports your project.
- Create a bibliography of 30-35 sources that are to be explored.
- Write a 30-35 page research paper using the bibliography to support.
- Write a 3-4 page reflection about the process of working with the master faculty or expert in the field.

Process and Cost:

1. Faculty prepares the contracted study material in collaboration with the student. A contracted study agreement form is available online <https://seminary.ashland.edu/upload/documents/Contracted%20Study%20Agreement.pdf> and must be signed by the student and the faculty of record. The faculty will submit syllabus along with the form.
2. Faculty submits the signed form and syllabus to the Director of Advanced Degree Programs for approval.
3. A billing statement for four semester hours of tuition plus a contracted study fee of \$480 is issued at the beginning of the contracted study period, payable by the first day of the semester of the contracted study
4. Before a contracted study begins, a copy of the Contracted Study Agreement MUST be officially approved by the Director of Advanced Degree Programs and filed in the Registrar's office.