Major Project

In addition to the completion of twenty-four semester hours of doctoral-level seminars, each student must either complete a ministry project, or a research project, which is counted as six semester-hours of credit. The time span for the major project is normally four to twelve months.

Option A. Ministry Project

The Developing of the Prospectus

The idea for the project takes shape in the context of consultation with the assigned advisor and other faculty members. (The advisor will be assigned at the beginning of the program no later than after the first seminar.)

Step 1. The project idea develops from self-examination, analysis of ministry needs, and consultation with the student’s advisor.

Step 2. An eight to ten page rough draft of the prospectus is then presented during the final seminar for challenge and evaluation by his advisor. This prospectus should include the following:

1. A rationale for the project, which identifies specific ministry needs to which the project relates, as well as the doctor of ministry course work on which the project is based;

2. A description of the ministry site in which the project will take place (i.e., geographical location, cultural setting, church or ministry setting, the student’s position or role, etc.);
3. A design for the project, including the strategy and time schedule for implementation (ordinarily from three months to one year in length);

4. An explicit strategy for congregational involvement in the project; and

5. Criteria for evaluation of the project after its completion.

**Step 3.** After input from his advisor, the student refines his prospectus and submits it to the DMin office for submission to the DMin committee for approval. The student should consult the faculty advisor for guidance and clarification during the entire process. The student should submit one copy of the prospectus (with synopsis, bibliography and table of contents) to the office of the doctor of ministry program for processing by August 1 in the year the student finishes their final seminar. Written approval by the committee should follow within thirty days.

The committee will (a) approve the prospectus, (b) suggest changes, or (c) reject it and call for another prospectus. The student may be invited to meet with the committee to defend or discuss his prospectus.

**The Content of the Prospectus**

*Introduction and subject.* The prospectus should begin with a brief introduction to the project and should include the following information: how the student became interested in the idea; the academic and ministry background which prepared the student for the project; and a synopsis of the project, including a definition of terms.

*The rationale for the project.* The prospectus must describe the specific need(s) within the area of ministry with which the student will deal. The need should be significant, one which requires a creative approach in ministry. The causes and reasons
for the need should be explained. What is the need to be met? What causes the need to exist? What is the problem?

_Ministry focus._ The prospectus should give a description of the setting, the needs, and the specific ministry situation which determines the nature of the project. Examples would be: a church growth project; training of the laity for ministry; renewal of the church; evangelism; discipling new Christians; youth outreach; a program of pastoral care; marriage and family enrichment, etc.

_Objectives._ The prospectus should determine objectives based upon the results expected at the conclusion of the project. The objectives should be defined in terms of the work which must be done to meet the need or resolve the problem. Include objectives regarding the development of personal skills in ministry. Objectives must be specific, measurable, and feasible. A prospectus that does not state specific, measurable, and feasible objectives will lead to a project which cannot be evaluated.

_A creative plan of ministry._ Describe the methods that will be employed to achieve objectives. Include a step-by-step chronological procedure and samples of surveys, report forms, tests and measurements, and other materials which will be used in the project. Describe the resources which are available for the performance of the project, such as special consultants, agencies, facilities, financial resources, institutions, and the like. Indicate expected obstacles of difficulties and how you propose to deal with them. What plan of ministry can achieve the objectives. What resources are available and how will they be used.

_Evaluation._ The prospectus must discuss the means by which the student will critically evaluate the extent to which he has achieved his objectives. Include samples of tests, measurements, survey forms, or questionnaires the student intends to use. How is the achievement of the objectives to be evaluated?
Sources. The prospectus should list the books and resources the student plans to use. The final project report must contain a minimum of one hundred resources (books, journal articles, interviews, unpublished materials, etc.). The prospectus should contain at least fifty to sixty resources.

The Form of the Prospectus

The prospectus should demonstrate the student’s competence to communicate clearly, concisely, and in acceptable form. The style guide is *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate L. Turabian, 8th Edition, and the Seminary-approved supplement.

The prospectus should be no more than eight to ten pages in length, exclusive of appendixes and sources consulted. The order of the page arrangement is:

a. First page: title page (the number does not appear on this page; see supplement)

b. Second page: table of contents (see supplement)

c. Third page: text (the first page of the text should be headed by Introduction, centered on line thirteen, which is two inches from the top of the page, with the page number at the top right corner)

The Performance and Report of the Ministry Project.

The ministry project may be started only after committee approval has been received. When this occurs, the student is advanced to candidacy status.

*The usual time for the entire project is four months to one year.* The final written report of the ministry project must be submitted according to the dates listed on the Submission Dates Calendar (see page 34).
When the performance of the project is completed, the written report of the project will be submitted to the doctor of ministry committee. Both the performance and the report must demonstrate a high level of professional competence.

1. The content of the project report.

The report should be written in close consultation with the faculty advisor. His approval is necessary before the typing of the final draft of the report is begun. Prior to the first submission date, the faculty advisor will work with the student on a chapter-by-chapter basis.

The report should contain:

a. An introduction: a resume of the project idea as developed in the prospectus and a report of any preparation for the performance of the project which was made after writing the prospectus but before the beginning of the performance;

b. A perceptive and competent reporting of the project performance in chronological sequence;

c. A critical evaluation of the performance in relation to the objectives set forth in the prospectus. This should include: (a) theological reflection i.e., a restatement of the theological themes which form the project in light of new insight which has come through critical reflection on the practice of ministry; and (b) discussion of the extent to which the objectives were reached and of the project as experienced in ministry.

d. A bibliography of sources consulted (a minimum of one hundred resources are required, and the report must interact with at least one-third this number in footnotes);
The report should be written in such a way that the nature of the project may be understood without reading the prospectus.

2. The form of the project report:
   a. The report should display competence in communication, including correct grammar, spelling, form, clear organization, and understandable sentences. The student should use the third person singular in writing his report.
   b. The report should be between one hundred and one hundred and fifty pages in length, excluding the appendixes and sources consulted.
   c. The type for printing should be Times New Roman or Cambria 12 point font or a type approved by the committee. This includes the appendixes.
   d. The left-hand margin (binding side) should be one and one-half inches; the other three margins should be one inch. The preliminary pages of the report should be numbered with small Roman numerals; the pages of the text should be numbered with Arabic numerals (see Supplement).
   e. The typist should be experienced in typing graduate dissertations and reports for the Seminary.
   f. The order of the page arrangement for the report is: blank page title page blank page table of contents list of tables (if any) text appendix
sources consulted (bibliography)
blank page

The blank pages are to be added after the report is printed.

g. The report will be evaluated by the faculty advisor and two other readers; one reader is a member of the doctor of ministry committee and the other reader is a seminary faculty member.

h. A major project is acceptable in form if it contains 150 or fewer errors in form, style, grammar, and spelling. If errors number more than 150, advisors may return projects to students for correction. Students may then resubmit their project after correcting these errors. If advisors find more than one hundred new errors or uncorrected errors in the second edition, student will be notified that they cannot resubmit until the next graduation date.

i. After the report has been approved, the student will deliver five copies of the project to the doctor of ministry office. Four copies must be produced on at least twenty-pound white 100% cotton paper, and one copy should be printed on regular bond paper.

It is the responsibility of the student to insure that the pages of the report are in proper order.

The library will retain one copy for reference, one copy will be on file in the doctor of ministry office, one copy is for the student and one copy is for the student’s advisor. There will also be a copy on file in the New York branch library.
The final copies of the report must be submitted to the doctor of ministry office prior to the oral examination. Any exception to this policy must have the approval of the dean.

j. The report is the property of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. No report may be reproduced or substantially quoted except by specific permission from the faculty.

Option B: Research Project

Doctor of ministry students who wish to write a research project as the final project for their program of study may elect this option by submitting a research project prospectus to the doctor of ministry committee.

Characteristics of the Research Project:

1. The research project aims at producing a manuscript in the area of applied theology, ministry theory, and ministry practice which makes a contribution to the literature in the field, rather than focusing on a strategy and objectives for ministry in a more specific ministry setting. A doctor of ministry research project shall be an original product of research and writing which is undertaken for the purpose of the major project requirement of the doctor of ministry degree. It is directed by a faculty advisor who is assigned by the doctor of ministry committee.

2. There are three components that are required in a research project. They are biblical/theological study, survey of related literature, and research of other churches.

3. The advisor will provide evaluation and criticism on a work-in-progress basis. The student is responsible for following the direction of the advisor in the process.
4. The research project is written in a style and content appropriate to an audience of pastors, missionaries, or other ministry professionals while maintaining doctoral level scholarship through the use of extensive research in relevant literature, field sources, and critical thinking. The research project shall be produced in strict adherence to the Seminary’s form and style standards. It is expected that the research project will make a contribution to the literature in the field of practical theology, ministry, or applied missiology.

5. As an exercise in advanced study in ministry, the research project will require significant research and an adequate bibliography beyond those books read for the DMin seminars.

6. The typical length of a research project is 125–150 pages. The student should secure permission from the DMin committee if the project exceeds 200 pages.

7. Helpful information can be gleaned in chapters 14–18 of *Quality Research Papers* by Nancy Vyhmeister.

**Research Project Process**

1. The project idea develops from self-examination, analysis of ministry needs, and consultation with the faculty advisor. The student should consult the faculty advisor for guidance and clarification during the entire process.

2. The student then submits one copy of the prospectus (with synopsis, bibliography, table of contents, and project enrollment form, to the office of the doctor of ministry program for processing by August 1, 2014. Written approval by the committee should follow within thirty (30) days.

3. The committee will (a) approve the prospectus, (b) suggest changes, or (c) reject it and call for another prospectus. The
student may be invited to meet with the committee to defend or discuss his prospectus.

The Content of the Prospectus:

1. *Title Page and Table of Contents*. A prospectus has a title page and a table of contents.

2. *Rationale*. Begin with the rationale for the project. This should explain how the student became interested in the idea, the academic and ministry background which prepared the student for the project, and a synopsis of the research project including a definition of terms.

3. *Synopsis*. The synopsis should show the background for the study, a brief survey of other contributions to the subject, the statement of the problem, issue, description of research, or program development. The method of research to be used should be explained. The question of what additional information will be added to the field of inquiry should be answered.

4. *Outline*. A detailed tentative outline must be presented. This outline should be prepared in close cooperation with the advisor. The tentative outline is an essential part of the prospectus.

5. *Bibliography*. Finally, a working bibliography must reveal sources already consulted. This will not be all the sources eventually used. It is tentative and subject to change.

6. Upon approval of the prospectus by the DMin committee, the student shall continue working closely with the faculty advisor throughout the process. Prior to the first submission date, the faculty advisor has the option to work with the student on a chapter-by-chapter basis.
7. The student shall submit his research project to the faculty advisor on or before the date stipulated by the doctor of ministry program submission process guidelines.

8. The faculty advisor will determine whether the research project meets academic standards. If the work is deemed adequate, the advisor will return a corrected copy to the student. The student will make corrections and resubmit the research project to the DMin committee, who will forward it to two readers.

9. The readers will assess the research project as to its content, form, and style. At any point, the work may be returned to the student for revisions or corrections, or the readers may recommend that the research project is not acceptable.

10. If the readers and the dean of the program all concur that the research project is acceptable in content, it will be returned to the student for final corrections and revisions.

11. After the report has been approved, the student will deliver five copies of the project to the doctor of ministry office. Four copies must be produced on at least twenty-pound white 100% cotton paper, and one copy should be printed on regular bond paper.

   **It is the responsibility of the student to insure that the pages of the report are in proper order.**

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**Comprehensive Examinations**

After the satisfactory completion of all seminars, students will participate in written comprehensive examinations. They will