

STUDENT HANDBOOK

For

Doctoral Program

Vineyard Harvester Bible School and Seminary

DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY IN BIBLICAL STUDIES (Th. D)

STUDENT HANDBOOK

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The purpose of the degree of Doctor of Theology is to prepare persons for the ministry by combining rigorous academics and theological training.

REQUIREMENT FOR ADMISSION TO DOCTORAL PROGRAM

A Master's Degree in Theology is required for admission into the Doctoral Program. The degree must be from Apostolic School of Ministry (ASM) or from another school that meets the requirements of ASM. An official transcript of the Master's Degree must be submitted to ASM for consideration of acceptance into the doctoral program. An application form for admittance must be submitted with the appropriate application fee of \$25.00.

REGISTRATION

Participation in the Th.D. program begins with registration for the first courses to be taken. Registration for these courses as well as for each succeeding component of the program is the responsibility of the student, and it must be accomplished according to instructions issued by the school in which the student is registered.

Normally, course registration follows consultation with the student's advisor, who is assigned upon admission from the faculty of the school in which the student is enrolled.

All Th.D. students registered for Dissertation credit must be continuously registered in each semester of the academic year until completion of the Dissertation. For any term in which students are not registered for continuous registration must be fulfill requirement through the payment of the current fee.

THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum for the Th.D. program is dispensed through the internet with online video courses which were taken from live teaching by qualified professors. Each course requires the completion of the viewing of the classes, with submission of written assignments, as well as a final examination. Each graduate class requires a research paper. All instructions are given with each course presented on the online resources.

PROGRAM PROCEDURES

(a) Advising

When a student is admitted to the Th.D. program, a faculty member of the school will be assigned as the student's initial academic adviser. The adviser will assist the student in planning his/her program of studies. The student's primary link with the school is the adviser. The student is required to consult the adviser at least once each semester for approval of course selection and to discuss progress in the program, any questions or difficulties the student has with the program and his/her anticipations and plans for continuation and completion of the program.

The adviser will serve in a consultative manner throughout the student's time in the program, giving help regarding course selection and progress along the way – normally in response to the student's initiative. The adviser is not expected to seek the student out to check on progress or to initiate meetings or conferences. Rather, the student is expected to initiate conferences with the adviser or Th.D. Director, as such conferences may be needed.

Following completion of the first two semesters of study, but before the student makes plans for the dissertation, the student will secure a final academic adviser. The final adviser should be one whose interests and competencies are in the area of the student's intended dissertation research. This person, who may or may not be the same person as the initial, temporary adviser will assume all advisory functions for the student. In selecting his/her final adviser, the student should consult with the Th.D. Program.

The student's adviser serves as chair of the student's advisory committee and presides over the process of formulating, administering, and the writing of the dissertation.

(b) The Advisory Committee

The advisory committee consists of three persons. The student's adviser serves as the committee chairperson. In addition to these regular committee members, with the approval of the chair of the advisory committee, the student may invite other persons to serve as consultants to the student's research in order to give attention to certain perspectives not well represented by the expertise of the regular committee members. Consultants must agree to serve without financial remuneration, except in instances where the student is able and willing to provide such remuneration. The advisory committee continues to function in an advisory capacity throughout the execution of the doctoral research and dissertation, and the final approval shall be by the advisory committee.

(c) Grading

Students must complete the overall program of study with an average grade of "B" or better. A grade below B- in any of the core courses of the program will be a signal to the Th.D. committee to review and take action with respect to the student's continuance in the program. When assigned work is not completed during the prescribed period, a grade of "incomplete" may be given by the professor. The grades of "S" for satisfactory and "U" for unsatisfactory work are used in evaluating the concluding doctoral dissertation.

(d) Guidelines for Progress in the Program

There is a time limit of seven years for completion of the Th.D. program. It is theoretically possible to complete the program (beyond the Master's degree) within two years if a student can devote full-time to it. This is in addition to the completion of the dissertation. Due to other demands upon their time, however, most students complete the program in four to six years. During the first two years the minimum registration for each term is for one core course unless granted an exception by the Th.D. Committee.

An extension of one year for completion of the program may be granted when, in the judgment of the student's adviser and the Th.D. committee, unavoidable circumstances have impeded the student's progress and there is a realistic and likely prospect of completing the degree within the additional year.

Students whose progress in the degree program is reviewed by the Th.D. committee and found to be unsatisfactory according to the minimum expectations noted above, with the concurrence of the student's adviser and the Th.D. director, may be recommended for termination to the advanced studies committee of the

school. That committee will make the final decision on the termination of any student. When progress is not satisfactory, but termination is not immediately recommended, the student must upon recommendation of the adviser secure from the Th.D. committee approval of a plan for remedial work sufficient to meet the minimum expectations stipulated for the following year.

COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

Sixty (60) semester hours of academic work beyond the Master Degree program are required for the Doctor of Theology degree. There are four (5) basic components to the program:

1. Thirty-five credit hours in Biblical Studies
2. Ten credit hours in Ministry.
3. A three-hour credit Research class.
4. A Doctoral Dissertation of 12 hours of credit.

PROGRAM OF STUDIES

The program of studies is intended to assist the student:

- To gain an advanced understanding of theological and theoretical concepts appropriate to the ministry;
- To learn under qualified supervision the practice of these concepts in ministry.
- To promote professional integration of theory and practice;
- To design and execute a research project appropriate to his/her professional practice, which will give evidence of his/her creative ability to contribute to his/her practice of ministry.

The Research Project and Dissertation

The Proposal

After a year of courses (30 credit) has been successfully completed, a student may present a dissertation proposal to the Th.D. Committee. The student is responsible

for getting the dissertation proposal which should already have been approved by his/her advisory committee to members of the Th.D. committee.

Each dissertation proposal is to be approved first by the student's advisory committee and, second, by the Th.D. committee or a subcommittee appointed by them. The purpose of the review of each dissertation proposal by the Th.D. committee is to assure both the relevance of the research project and dissertation to the Th.D. degree program and the adequacy of the proposal.

The content of the proposal shall include the following – usually in this order:

1. Statement of the problem.
2. The significance of the problem and why the author is concerned with it.
3. A brief survey of previous research and relevant literature.
4. Limitations of the research, what is ruled out and why.
5. Thesis or major contention.
6. Definition of principal or problematic terms.
7. The method and structure of the dissertation, including rationale for the method, what is specifically going to be done and why, and the method and criteria for evaluating any empirical or practical hypotheses.
8. Conclusions and implications of the dissertation
9. The time line for completion of the research and dissertation – what is going to be done and when.
10. Proposals must be succinctly written and to the point, and may be no longer than 20 double-spaced 12-point typed pages plus a bibliography not to exceed 3 pages.

The Dissertation

The research project and dissertation constitute the concluding and most comprehensive component of the student's Th.D. program. It should grow out of a concern within a ministry area which directly affects the student's particular ministry. It is designed to demonstrate the student's ability to engage in

professionally-oriented research and to utilize his/her ability in bringing theological and other theoretical knowledge to bear upon the work of the ministry.

The dissertation is expected, moreover, to contribute useful findings and insight to this particular form of ministry. The dissertation should reflect mature theological insight, painstaking inquiry, logical and coherent thought, imagination, careful execution, and relevance to the ministry of the student and the mission of the church.

The research project and dissertation should be carried out in close cooperation with the student's adviser and with the consultation of his/her advisory committee. The student is strongly encouraged to consult with his/her adviser when needed.

While dissertations may vary greatly in subject matter and organization, the following elements will be expected in all of them:

1. The research issue – the problem, or area of inquiry. A detailed exposition of the issues addressed by the dissertation. The problems, questions, hypotheses and goals which that issue entails in the ministry of the student.
2. The design of the dissertation and of the various methods involved in its execution.
3. Perspectives – descriptions of the manner in which theological, empirical, and operational disciplines are involved in the dissertation.
4. The results and conclusions resulting from the research, including appropriate and adequate means of evaluating any empirical or practical hypotheses.
5. Implications of the student's work for the student's future ministry and for the field of pastoral care and counseling.
6. Bibliography of written material and other resources employed in the dissertation.

Criteria for the Evaluation of the Dissertation

The doctoral dissertation will be evaluated in terms of its demonstration of:

1. The ability to generate and explore an interesting and useful thesis in the field of ministry;

2. An adequate understanding of the contextual factors which are directly or indirectly related to that thesis;
3. Scholarly competence in the academic disciplines relevant for the research and dissertation;
4. The ability to integrate the theory and practice of ministry;

These criteria allow for a broad range of dissertation projects. The student is encouraged to explore a topic which has personal importance for his or her ministry but which can also contribute more generally to the understanding of a dimension of the church's ministry.

Final Procedures

1. An abstract of the dissertation, not to exceed 300 words, shall be provided according to the guidelines of the school. It should include the student's name, title of the dissertation and the date.
2. All copies (a copy for each of 3 committee members) of the dissertation must be on high quality bond paper of twenty-pound weight. It is to be typewritten or printed on a letter quality or laser printer.
3. In all other respects, students shall follow the style and format rules for dissertations of the school.
4. When each member of the student's advisory committee has approved the final draft, the chairperson of the advisory committee will write a letter to the Program Director indicating that the dissertation has been satisfactorily completed.
5. The student's adviser will sign all final copies of the dissertation to indicate approval of the advisory committee.