Boston University
School of Theology

Doctor of Ministry in Transformational Leadership Handbook

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1 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 The Doctor of Ministry Degree

The Doctor of Ministry degree (D.Min.) is designed to assist religious professionals to deepen their understanding of and commitment to ministry by providing a context in which to update and refine their theological knowledge, sharpen existing skills, and learn new ones. The aim is to help students bring together their experience with additional academic studies to create a fresh synthesis of theory and practice.

The primary learning outcomes of the D.Min. include:

1.1.1 an advanced understanding of the nature and purposes of transformational religious leadership;
1.1.2 enhanced competencies in contextual analysis and leadership skills;
1.1.3 growth in one’s capacity for a robust embrace of and engagement with social and theological diversity and one’s capacity to relate across difference;
1.1.4 the integration of knowledge, contextual analysis, and leadership skills into a theologically reflective vocational praxis;
1.1.5 new knowledge about religious leadership in global contexts;
1.1.6 continued growth in spiritual maturity, and development and appropriation of a personal and professional ethic.

1.2 Admissions Procedures

Applicants must possess an MDiv degree (or equivalent) with a minimum GPA of 3.3 from an institution of higher education accredited by a US agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or approved by a Canadian provincial quality assurance agency. Degrees from institutions outside of North America may also be accepted (subject to review by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs). Applicants also must have completed a minimum of three years of full-time professional ministry or its equivalent.

Admission to the D.Min. program will be determined by the D.Min. Committee or by procedures and policies superintended by the committee and implemented by the Director of Admissions and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Admission also requires the appointment of an advisor by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and the consent of that faculty advisor to thus serve and to guide coursework selection and, contingent upon the advisor’s judgment that the student has advanced successfully through coursework, to supervise the student’s D.Min. project. Students may change faculty advisor with written permission of the new advisor and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Transfers from the STH PhD program into the Doctor of Ministry degree require that all four intensive cohort seminars be taken at STH.

1.3 Time to Completion

Students enter the program on a part-time basis as a cohort and can expect to complete the program in three years. Courses are taken with one’s cohort. All students must complete the program in no more than five years.

1.4 The D.Min. Committee
The D.Min. Committee provides oversight for the operation of all second-level masters and doctoral degrees. Specifically, it serves as the admission committee for these degrees, reviews project proposals, makes recommendations to the faculty regarding degree program policies, and monitors student academic progress.

The daily operation of the D.Min. program is under the oversight of the Director of the Doctor of Ministry program.

Decisions of the D.Min. Committee may be appealed to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the School of Theology.

1.5 The Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program

The Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program works closely with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, who stands in a supervisory role, and the Director collaborates with the D.Min. Committee and faculty to design details of the D.Min. program, initiate and administer all aspects of the D.Min. program (including intensives and online components), and serve as the primary advisor for D.Min. students. As noted in section 1.2, each student also has a faculty advisor who helps guide coursework selections in light of intended specialization and research and who works along with the D.Min. director to facilitate the student's development of a D.Min. project and supervises the writing of the project thesis.

1.6 Academic Review Procedures for D.Min. Candidates

A minimum grade of B is required in all courses taken to fulfill D.Min. requirements. The D.Min. Committee shall undertake an academic review of a student when report of an unsatisfactory course grade of B- or lower or other unsatisfactory outcome such as required withdrawal from a course reaches the committee, either through a professor or through the Registrar.

If a student has failed to meet degree deadlines without approved petition for an extension, the D.Min. Committee may undertake an academic review.

Any faculty member may request an academic review of a D.Min. student's standing by submitting to the D.Min. Committee a memorandum detailing the grounds for such a request.

In carrying out the academic review of a D.Min. student, the D.Min. Committee shall

- Solicit the perspectives of the advisors, course instructor, and other faculty directly involved.
- Inform the student of the review process and provide him or her with an opportunity to submit to the D.Min. Committee any factors or circumstances which he or she believes should be considered by the committee. The student may solicit faculty to write in his or her support as well.

After discussion, the D.Min. Committee shall decide whether to recommend formal academic probation to the Registrar, to terminate the student from the program, or to continue the student in the program. A memo shall be sent to the candidate, with copies to the professor and the advisors, informing all parties of the D.Min. Committee’s response and decision.

Two unsatisfactory course grades result in termination of candidacy, except by approved petition to the D.Min. Committee. In such cases, no academic review is necessary. The D.Min. Committee, upon being informed of the relevant events, shall notify the student of termination from the program, and unless the D.Min. Committee, within six weeks of the notification or at its next scheduled meeting, whichever is later, receives and approves a petition from the student to continue in the program, the Registrar shall be informed of the D.Min. Committee’s action and the student’s candidacy terminated.
2 COURSEWORK

2.1 Plan of Study

In keeping with the School of Theology’s mission “to cultivate leaders for communities of faith” and “to equip women and men for ministries and vocations that foster personal and social transformation,” the D.Min. program is oriented around Transformational Leadership as its central theme. Students may, with the advice of the D.Min. director and their faculty advisor, develop a specialization within this track (for example, liturgical studies, mission, constructive theology, pastoral care and counseling, or spirituality, to name only a few).

The degree is composed of 4 seminars that meet on site at STH for one week of intensive work (with preparatory assignments and follow-up work), one in August and one in January in each of the first two years of the program. The intensive seminars provide a rigorous academic foundation in the study of religious leadership, community transformation, and contextual theological analysis, as well as grounding in research methods and opportunities to discuss and shape research projects with faculty and peers. Other cohort and elective courses for the program are offered online, though a student might petition to take an elective course on site at the School of Theology. All courses contribute to the research and professional goals of doctoral students by including reflection opportunities that are directly or indirectly preparatory for the D.Min. project.

Online courses will supply the three cohort courses and the free elective for the D.Min. All of the courses will contribute to the research and professional goals of the doctoral students by including reflection opportunities that are directly or indirectly preparatory for the D.Min. project. Instructors will be encouraged to design major assignments for their courses in such a way as to enable students to pursue their specialization interests within their shared coursework. The number of options will be limited in order to maximize the strength of the courses and the cohorts, but the flexibility comes for the students in the research-driven nature of the D.Min. and the potential of each course to support that research. Transfers from the STH PhD degree program into the Doctor of Ministry degree program require that at least the four intensive cohort seminars be taken at STH.

2.2 Coursework Guidelines

Students are required to register for courses at the 800 or 900-level. Undergraduate and 700-level courses will not count toward the required coursework for the D.Min. program. No more than 4 credits may be taken outside of Boston University through the Boston Theological Institute (BTI). Students may not register for a BTI course unless registered for an equal number of credits at Boston University.

The following 32 credits of coursework is required for the Doctor of Ministry degree:

1. 4 DMin one-week Intensive Seminars in the first two years (offered on-site at the School of Theology, in August and January):
   - Transformational Leadership (4)
   - Contextual-Theological Analysis (4)
   - Research Methods (2)
   - DMin Project Colloquium (2)

2. Three 4-credit Cohort Courses offered online and taken together with other DMin students as a cohort. All Cohort courses must be taken at STH.

3. One 4-credit Elective Course from any area. This course will normally be taken online or, in special circumstances, on-campus at STH. The Elective Course can be taken through the BTI by petition to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
(4) 2 Directed Study Courses after the completion of the above coursework to conduct DMin Project research and thesis writing. These are 2 credits each, for a total of 4 credits. Students must register for additional 2-credit directed studies in order to maintain a continuing status if they remain in the program beyond the three-years.

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<td>- Contextual Analysis</td>
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3 PROJECT THESIS PROPOSAL

3.1 Elements of a D.Min. Project Thesis Proposal

The following guidelines are meant to serve as a framework for students and faculty in the School of Theology to meet the requirement of a Project Thesis, to help students clarify the nature and significance of their writing project, and to allow the faculty of the School of Theology to give constructive criticism, advice, and approval. Students should remember that they are trying to communicate not only to the experts in a field but also to knowledgeable non-specialists in the study of religion. Avoid jargon or technical language as much as possible.

3.1.1 Statement of the Problem and Thesis

The Project Thesis Proposal should begin with a simple and concise statement of the problem that the thesis is meant to address. It can usually be done in one sentence followed by a few explanatory sentences. Use this section of the Proposal to circumscribe your topic and to state the thesis you intend to defend.

3.1.2 Significance of the Study

In this section you should explain how your Project will contribute to the advance of scholarship in the field. Be prepared to answer the question, “So what?” As part of your explanation of the Project's significance, you should describe the body of literature and theory that will serve as its foundation. What other scholars have wrestled with the problem before you, and how will your research and analysis move beyond theirs?

3.1.3 Sources of the Study

It is important to consider the question, “What is the information or data base on which this study rests?” For some, this will be a body of written materials; for others, it will be the results of certain tests and/or questionnaires; for yet others, it will be the results of a series of interviews or experiments from some other sources. You must make clear what the sources of your study will be.

3.1.4 Method of Investigation
This section of the Thesis Proposal should contain a statement of the methods you plan to use in the study and a chapter-by-chapter analysis of its contents. This usually means working to the second or third levels. Be sure that the critical/evaluative dimension of your work is clear in the method statement. You should show not only how you are going to proceed but that you are sufficiently familiar with the difficulties of your project to complete it in a reasonable period of time. Explain any theoretical problems that you anticipate in the course of your research and comment on the ways these problems will be addressed.

3.1.5 Definitions

Not infrequently a project leads a student to a very precise or specific definition of certain key words or concepts. If such definitions are important to the understanding of this project, they should appear in the Proposal. Be certain all key words in the title or statement of the problem are either self-evident or appropriately defined.

3.1.6 Limitations

Make clear any limitations that are inherent to the nature of the project or that have been deliberately set in order to limit the size of the undertaking. Explain the reasons for the limitations.

3.1.7 Working Bibliography

List and comment, where appropriate, on the sources you plan to use for your study. Organize the bibliography by categories and provide an introductory paragraph. A complete and thorough bibliography is likely to be at least ten pages in length.

3.1.8 Appendices

If the project involves research on human subjects, include in an Appendix the Institutional Review Board Proposal that will be submitted.

3.2 Length of the Project Thesis Proposal

Normally, the body of the proposal should be limited to 12-15 pages of typewritten, double-spaced text; the bibliography is not counted within those pages. Having completed the above, the student will be in good position for the writing of the thesis. In general, the aspects of a written thesis are:

- The Problem and its Setting
- The Literature Review
- The Methodology
- Presentation of the Findings
- Analysis, Interpretation, Evaluation
- Discussion, Implications, Recommendations
- Conclusion

3.3 Elements of an Institutional Review Board Proposal

All research with human subjects must be evaluated by the Boston University Charles River Campus Institutional Review Board (IRB) to minimize personal risk to participants. Even if you believe your research poses no significant risks to the participants, you still must submit a proposal to the IRB to safeguard the well being of your research subjects. Your IRB Proposal should be finished concurrently with your Project Proposal.
After your Project Director approves the proposal, you must submit it to the IRB Reviewer for the School of Theology; all IRB proposals must be submitted to and approved by that Reviewer prior to submission to the IRB. The Board will review your proposal, indicating revisions that need to be made to insure that all subjects are treated according to professionally and academically appropriate guidelines. The IRB proposal should be submitted with the final copy of your Project proposal. You must not begin your field research without IRB approval. Submit a copy of the final, approved IRB proposal to the Advanced Studies Programs coordinator, Suite 108. Information and application forms for the Boston University Institutional Review Board – Charles River Campus can be found here: http://www.bu.edu/irb/.

4 DEFENSE OF THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Submitting the Project Thesis Proposal to the D.Min. Committee

When the candidate’s faculty advisor (project director) is satisfied that the proposal is ready for approval and is willing to commit to the direction of a D.Min. thesis based on the proposal, the candidate should submit a signed Project Thesis Proposal Approval form signed by the advisor to the Advanced Studies Programs Coordinator. A Project Thesis proposal will be accepted for review no less than ten academic/business days prior to the next scheduled D.Min. Committee meeting. A schedule of meetings is available on the STH website. Proposals submitted by a stated deadline will be reviewed within two meetings. Every effort will be made to review the proposal at the next meeting, but it will be reviewed no later than the second meeting after the deadline.

The Faculty Advisor is invited, if he or she wishes, to submit written comments on the proposal for the consideration of the D.Min. Committee. Students and their advisor are also invited to attend the Review for the purpose of joining the discussion. Attendance is not required. The Committee may accept the proposal, ask for a resubmission with revisions, or reject the proposal. The proposal is a public document within the School. Students are allowed a maximum of 2 submissions. Failure to gain approval by the second submission, or by the end of the third year after completion of coursework, whichever comes first, will result in academic review by the D.Min. Committee.

5 WRITING THE PROJECT THESIS

5.1 Project Thesis Format Requirements and Timeline

Students preparing for graduation must consult the School of Theology website (http://www.bu.edu/sth/academics/advanced-studies/graduation-deadlines-for-stm-thd-phd-and-dmin/) for important information on guidelines for format, format review, and thesis submission.

The first complete draft of the thesis is due to the readers on or before the last Monday in January to qualify for graduation in May of the same year. At the same time, the draft must be submitted to the Advanced Studies Program Coordinator for the first format review.

The project thesis review must be held no later than the fourth Friday before commencement.

6 THE PROJECT THESIS

6.1 Administrative Guidelines for the Project Thesis

Complete the research and write a preliminary draft (or drafts) of the Thesis. Each student should work out an acceptable modus operandi with her or his advisor. Most find it very useful to submit chapters as they are completed. Some will wish to do a whole draft before submitting it, though the latter process entails certain obvious risks.
D.Min. candidates must be registered each semester or be on an official leave of absence. The student must consult the STH website regarding thesis guidelines (http://www.bu.edu/sth/academics/advanced-studies/graduation-deadlines-for-stm-thd-phd-and-dmin/).

### 6.2 Drafts of the Thesis

#### 6.2.1 Preliminary Draft

The initial draft of the thesis, or parts of the thesis, are submitted to the faculty advisor for guidance and suggestions on revision. These drafts should be fully legible, footnoted, and in proper English, but they need not meet the stylistic form requirements of a completed thesis. Approval of such drafts is always subject to further revision when the reader sees the whole thesis.

#### 6.2.2 Official First Draft

This is the first formal draft of the complete Project Thesis, incorporating revisions and modifications recommended following the reading of the preliminary draft. This should be formatted, and include the title page, table of contents, bibliography, and preliminary abstract. This draft should be submitted by the last Monday in January (for a May graduation) to the faculty advisor and to the Advanced Studies Program Coordinator for format review.

#### 6.2.3 Review Draft

Prior to the Project Thesis Review, a complete and formatted draft of the Thesis incorporating all revisions must be submitted to each member of the Review Committee at least three weeks before the oral defense.

#### 6.2.4 Final Draft

Instructions for the submission of the final draft can be found here: http://www.bu.edu/sth/academics/advanced-studies/graduation-deadlines-for-stm-thd-phd-and-dmin/.

### 7 THE PROJECT THESIS ABSTRACT

#### 7.1 Abstract Guidelines

The Abstract is a statement summarizing the major or important points of the thesis in no more than 100 words. The Abstract must be approved by the Faculty Advisor.

The first sentence or two of the Abstract should be a succinct statement of the thesis. Describe the method of study or research, and the results or conclusion reached in the study. The Abstract should be written in the third person active voice.

### 8 PROJECT THESIS REVIEW

#### 8.1 Dates and Scheduling of Project Thesis Review

The Faculty Advisor is responsible for constituting a Project Thesis Review Committee of at least two faculty (including the advisor) and for scheduling the Review. The project thesis review must be held no later than the fourth Friday before commencement. Copies of the Project Thesis should be distributed to the Committee three weeks ahead of the Review date. Note that the student should also have applied for Graduation with the Registrar by the stated deadline.

#### 8.2 Project Thesis Review Committee Structure
The Project Thesis Review Committee consists of the Faculty Advisor and one other person who has faculty status at Boston University or at another accredited institution and at least a degree comparable to the doctorate. Any external readers require the permission of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

8.3 Project Thesis Review

The student will provide a copy of the final draft of the thesis and the abstract to each Committee member three weeks prior to the scheduled review. The Committee will conduct a review with the student of the Project Thesis and its impact on the student’s ministry.

Following the completion of the committee deliberations, the Faculty Advisor will complete the Project Thesis Review form (from the Advanced Studies Programs Office), obtain the signatures of the Committee members, and file the form with the Registrar.

8.4 Follow-up

Following the successful completion of the Review, the student is required to make any changes or corrections to the Thesis or abstract requested by the Committee. These changes normally require the approval of the Faculty Advisor. The candidate is then required to prepare the final copy according to the instructions posted here: http://www.bu.edu/sth/academics/advanced-studies/graduation-deadlines-for-stm-thd-phd-and-dmin/. 