Lexington Theological Seminary

Student Handbook

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1.0 Mission and Vision Statements

Lexington Theological Seminary is an accredited graduate theological institution of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Consistent with the Disciples' historic commitment to Christian unity, the Seminary is intentionally ecumenical with students, faculty, staff and trustees of various denominations. The Seminary has been preparing leaders for the church since 1865.

1.1 Mission

The mission of Lexington Theological Seminary is to prepare faithful leaders for the church of Jesus Christ and, thus, to strengthen the church's participation in God's mission for the world.

Lexington Theological Seminary seeks to be a servant of the church preparing men and women for ministry in congregations through innovative instruction, flexible curriculum, congregational experience and compassionate engagement with the needs of society. The Seminary offers an online program that is competency-based, congregation-centered, and developmental in its commitment to prepare people for leadership in congregational ministry.

As an integral part of the church, the seminary serves the church as a theological resource and as a center of continuing education for clergy and lay leaders.

1.2 Purpose

The faculty, trustees, and ministry partners of Lexington Theological Seminary understand ministry to be both a divine calling and a learned profession. Students enter a 3,000 year conversation about who we are, what we are formed to be and do, what it means to be a people of trust, how to respond to life-altering events, who will hear our silent cry, how we craft questions that deepen the conversation, why we assume that the source of wonder and awe is beckoning us, how we listen and respond to the conversations of other people of trust and of mistrust, and why we understand people and the earth to be unfolding mysteries rather than unsolved problems.

The Seminary participates in this conversation in partnership with the church and society through interplay of applied knowledge, empathetic concern and spiritual practices. We do this through three primary, interrelated elements of ministry:

Intellectual **–** Preparation for ministry requires the development of the intellect with and for the community of faith. This entails understanding study as a form of prayer that shapes and replenishes the community and the ministerial leadership. Intellectual development through such study includes the thoughtful evaluation, judgment and adaptation of texts, traditions, histories and practices of the universal church in its contexts, and the development of the ability to relate the gospel to issues of contemporary society.

Practical **–** Preparation for ministry also requires that students unite their own unique qualities as persons with specific pastoral and leadership skills, including preaching, leadership in worship, counseling, teaching, administration, exploring a pastoral learning

agenda, and promotion of individual and social/political transformation consistent with the gospel. Students develop their pastoral identity in a congregation, understanding and facilitating congregational programs as interpretations of a tradition of transformation.

Spiritual **–** Preparation for ministry concerns the sources of energy and practices that develop meaningful communities of faith. Ministers-to-be as theologically informed leaders develop a way of being in the world that is informed and replenished by worship, prayer, and service. In addition, students' study, evaluate, and savor the texts, traditions, and disciplines of our ancestors' individual and collective spiritual practices as a form of spiritual midwifery on the way to new life.

2.0 Organizational Information

2.1 Board of Trustees

The affairs of the Seminary are managed and conducted by the Board of Trustees. Each Trustee is elected for a term of four years. Board members are persons who have demonstrated interest in, concern for, and support of the mission and vision of the Seminary.

2.2 Administrative Officers

2.2.1 President

The President has designated authority from the Board of Trustees, and as such, has delegated responsibility for the operation of the Seminary. The President acts as administrative head of the entire educational and business affairs of the Seminary.

2.2.2 Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean

The Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean is the Seminary's chief academic officer. The Dean is responsible for educational programs, personnel, and technology for student services, and for the library.

2.2.3 Chief Financial Officer

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the business affairs of the Seminary, including all books and accounts and audits. The Office of the CFO oversees student billing and payments of tuition, fees, and miscellaneous items.

2.2.4 Vice President for Advancement

The Vice President for Advancement is responsible for overseeing fund raising, public and church relations, alumni affairs, and event management.

2.3 Faculty

The faculty consists of regularly appointed positions augmented by a number of adjunct professors. They are scholars in their fields, performing research that annually leads to publishing of books and articles. The faculty is ecumenical in its faith traditions and is

dedicated to teaching, accessibility to students, and church involvements. Faculty design and deliver teaching which ensures appropriate learning objectives consistent with the Seminary's mission and academic standards and serve as academic advisors.

2.4 Standing Committees

Names and contact information for committee chairs may be obtained from the office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean.

2.4.1 Master's Committee

This committee coordinates matters relating to all Masters degree programs.

2.4.2 Doctor of Ministry Committee

This committee coordinates general matters relating to the Doctor of Ministry program including review and recommendations on matters of policy and procedures.

2.4.3 Pedagogy and Technology Committee

This committee provides a place for conversation, coordination, and collaboration among faculty and academic administrative personnel responsible for the seminary's use of technology in its educational programs. The committee is charged with considering best practices in the use of the seminary's current educational technologies, and with examining new technologies and practices for possible use in the seminary's programs.

2.4.4 Student Complaint Advisory Committee

This committee is appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and to investigate and make recommendations involving student complaints which do not fall within other Seminary policies and procedures. The Committee shall be comprised of seven (7) members. The members shall include three (3) student representatives, two (2) faculty members, and two (2) staff members. To the extent possible, the makeup of the Committee shall be representative of all genders, age groups, races, and sexual orientations.

2.5 Organizational Relationships

2.5.1 An Ecumenical Tradition

Lexington Theological Seminary is an ecumenical seminary of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), enjoying official connections with eleven regions. Consistent with the Disciples' historic commitment to Christian unity, the Seminary is intentionally ecumenical. The faculty, staff, and trustees are likewise ecumenical, having members from various traditions.

2.5.2 Accreditation

Lexington Theological Seminary is accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (10 Summit Park Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15275; 412-788-6510; website: www.ats.edu). The following degree programs have been approved by the Commission: Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies, Master in Pastoral Studies, and Doctor of Ministry.

2.3 Academic Partnerships and Agreements

The Seminary enjoys multiple course and degree program partnerships with other institutions. (See Section 6.0, "*Relationships with Other Institutions*," for details on each program.)

- The Hispanic Summer Program (HSP) offers an opportunity to study in a Hispanic setting, with Latina/o peers and professors. For further information see the HSP website (www.hispanicsummerprogram.org).

- The Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center (AMERC) is offered for students interested in Appalachian ministry. For further information see the AMERC website (http://www.amerc.org/).

- Roman Catholic Church: The Seminary offers a Masters program geared to the needs of Catholic students and planned in consultation with the Office of Catholic Education of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington.

3.0 Community Life

3.1 Student Conduct

All students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which would become the office of minister. Although not all students studying at the Seminary are preparing for professional ministry, the "office of minister" is the standard of conduct expected.

- Respect for others should be the foundation of all relationships.

- Students are expected to be fully acquainted with all published policies and will be held responsible for compliance with them.

- Students are expected to comply with all federal, state, and local laws. These principles also apply to any conduct that is likely to have an adverse effect on the Seminary. One aspect of conduct is the ability to adhere to Seminary policy and procedures. Students who do not register on time, pay their bills on a timely basis, return requested forms, return library books, pay library fines, write thank you notes to donors, etc. are breaching Seminary policy and engaging in conduct which does not "become the office of minister."

- Misconduct also includes, but is not limited to the following: dishonesty, substance abuse, illegal gambling, destructive negligence, falsification of records or other information, harassment or discrimination, imperiling the safety of others, and abusive or patterned promiscuous sexual behavior.

The Seminary reserves the right to investigate and sanction alleged misconduct even when it occurs off campus if the misconduct impacts the educational activities of the institution. The Seminary usually will apply the Student Code in instances where off campus or online conduct occurs in connection with a Seminary sponsored event, when students are acting as representatives of the Seminary, when the alleged misconduct affects another member of the Seminary community, or when the conduct suggests a potential danger or threat to others.

3.1.1 Disciplinary Action

Students who engage in inappropriate conduct of any nature will face action up to and including criminal prosecution and expulsion from the Seminary. Students may be dismissed at any time at the will of the faculty. Disciplinary actions for less extreme violations of the code of conduct are described as follows: The Office of the Dean receives and reviews all complaints and concerns about a student's conduct. No anonymous charges will be given consideration. If the Office of the Dean finds that a student's behavior is harmful to others, creates an impediment to the teaching mission of the Seminary or violates Seminary policy and/or procedures, the Dean will discuss the behavior with the student. If the conduct is considered to be of a serious nature, the Office of the Dean has the option to:

- Suspend the student immediately for a period of time deemed appropriate for the misconduct, or
- Impose non-academic probation for a specified time period, not to exceed one year

If after the suspension/probationary period, it is found that the student has not corrected the behavior that resulted in the disciplinary action, the Dean may permanently suspend the student from his or her academic program.

Special students and Auditors who violate Seminary policy and/or engage in inappropriate behavior can be expelled from a course. If the behavior is severe, or if it is a second violation, they can be prohibited from enrolling in future courses.

3.1.2 Appeals

If a student believes that disciplinary action by the Office of the Dean is unwarranted, he or she may file a formal complaint with the Seminary's Student Complaint and Advisory Committee. (See *Appendix B: Student Complaint and Advisory Committee Policy & Procedure*.)

The process by which students' complaints and appeals are handled can be found at *How Complaints and Appeals are Handled*.

3.1.3 Re-Admission

Any student dismissed for non-academic reasons or under permanent suspension may not apply for re-admission to the Seminary for a period of two full years from the date of dismissal. Procedures for readmission are described in Student Handbook section 5.7.5, *Application for Re-Admission after Academic Dismissal*.

3.2 Equal Employment Opportunity

Lexington Theological Seminary is an equal opportunity employer. All recruitment and employment programs and procedures are administered by the Seminary without regard to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship status, age, or physical or mental disability of otherwise qualified individuals.

3.3 Discrimination and Harassment Policy

The Seminary does not accept or tolerate harassment, discrimination, misconduct, or sexual violence in any form on its campus, in its courses, or in other settings directly related to the Seminary. (See policies in *Appendix C: Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures: Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct; Appendix D: Policy Statement on Racial Discrimination/Harassment; Appendix F: Polity Statement on AIDS/HIV; Appendix G: Whistleblower and Anti-Retaliation Policy*).

3.4 Language Issues

Persons to whom this policy applies include the administration, faculty, staff, mentors, trustees, and students of Lexington Theological Seminary. All affected parties are strongly urged to study the policy *Appendix H: Language Issues*. This document expands upon the theological and practical implementation of just language policies at Lexington Theological Seminary.

3.4.1 Just Language Statement

Lexington Theological Seminary's mission is to train men and women to be leaders of the church. To that end, the administration, faculty, staff, and students covenant together to strive for both our written and spoken language, to reflect the equality of the people of God, and to maintain the mystery of God. "Just Language – language that reflects our changing consciousness about God, the universe, ourselves, class, gender relations, race, disabilities, and violence – is essential if we are to overcome injustices and hatred that obstruct peace, equality, and harmony for which we long."[1]

3.4.2 Accountability within the Seminary Community

[1] Kathleen Ashe, "Foreword," in *Creating Just Language* (Chicago: The 8th Day Center for Justice, 1999), 4.

This policy will be specifically communicated to all incoming students, faculty, and staff. All incoming students and newly hired faculty and staff will receive the policy which provides theological reflection and practical guidelines for implementation of the Seminary's policy, emphasizing the importance of language issues in the Seminary Community. Faculty members have complete freedom to specify the way in which language issues will be treated in classroom discussion and written work. If no explicit statement is made, students should assume that they are responsible for knowing the written recommendations included in the above referenced policy.

Students, faculty, and staff members who choose to use exclusive language for people or who choose to use God-language of one specific gender only (thus choosing not to follow these recommendations) may be informed by any member of the community about the effect their usage has on others. Such reminders are generally most effective in private conversation.

3.5 Illicit Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Policy

The possession, sale, or use of alcoholic beverages is prohibited on campus and all Seminary-sponsored academic, cultural, or social events unless specifically authorized by the President of Lexington Theological Seminary. No smoking or use of tobacco in any form, including e-cigarettes, is allowed inside Seminary facilities or at public gatherings of the seminary community.

All Seminary members are prohibited from unlawful possession, use, dispensation, distribution, or manufacture of illicit drugs at Seminary facilities, on Seminary business, or at Seminary-sponsored activities.

Lexington Theological Seminary prohibits the possession of any firearm or deadly weapon on Seminary property or at Seminary-sponsored events, even if an individual has been issued a license by the State or is otherwise legally permitted to carry a weapon.

For the complete policy see *Appendix E: Illicit Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Policy*.

3.6 Non-Academic Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

For a full statement of the policy and procedures for Student Complaints and its Advisory Committee at Lexington Theological Seminary see *Appendix B: Student Complaint Advisory Committee Policy & Procedure*. For a full statement of the policy and processes for grievance procedures at Lexington Theological Seminary see *Appendix C: Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures: Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct*.

3.7 Students with Disabilities

The Seminary complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. No otherwise qualified individual shall be denied access to or participation in the services, programs, and activities

of the Seminary solely on the basis of a disability. The Seminary shall provide reasonable accommodations for each eligible student who has a physical or mental impairment or is regarded as having such impairment.

Each eligible student is responsible for presenting relevant (no more than three years old), verifiable, professional documentation and/or assessment reports to the Dean. Information concerning a student's disability is treated in a confidential manner in accordance with applicable federal laws. Documentation presented shall be reviewed to verify the existence of a disability. Further documentation may be required from the student to substantiate the claim of a disability or to assist the Seminary in determining appropriate accommodations. Documentation must meet the following criteria:

- Issuance by a qualified professional (must include the evaluator's name, title, credentials, license number, signature, and date of evaluation on letterhead stationery);

- Provision of a diagnostic statement identifying the disability and the date of the original diagnosis and including a description of the diagnostic criteria and/or diagnostic tests used;

- Description of the current functional limitations of the disability for major life activities and in an academic environment;

- Details of all medication (dosage and existing side effects), assistive devices/services, and treatments currently prescribed or in use;

- Description of the expected progression or stability of the impact of the disability over time; and

- Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, and compensatory strategies to compensate for the functional limitations.

Students requiring special accommodations must contact the Dean for an initial discussion concerning the request for accommodations. The Dean is the school official responsible for determining what constitutes a reasonable accommodation for the disability. Following the Dean's decision, the Registrar shall communicate to the student's instructors concerning the accommodations granted the student.

The Seminary prohibits discrimination or harassment based on disabilities. Grievance procedures for non-academic issues including discrimination or harassment are outlined in *Appendix C: Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures: Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct*. The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean is the designated "school official" for Title IX matters pertaining to discrimination and harassment.

3.8 Campus Facilities and Services

Access to Seminary facilities is a privilege. Students and visitors are reminded to respect all Seminary regulations with respect to campus facilities and services. Students requiring clarification of policies or procedures regarding campus facilities should contact the Business Office and review *Appendix M: Campus Safety & Security Policies*.

3.8.1 Bosworth Memorial Library

The Bosworth Memorial Library has more than 100,000 physical items (books, bound volumes of periodicals, microforms, and other media) as well as over 35,000 electronic books, and regularly receives nearly 100 periodicals. Additional materials are available through interlibrary loan. Research information is also available through library access to extensive electronic databases. The library also maintains an audio-visual library. Recordings of seminary chapel services, convocations/lectures, etc. are available for check-out. The library maintains a web portal to its many resources and services at http://lextheo.libguides.com/home. See *Appendix O: Library Policies* for a full statement of the library's policies and procedures.

3.8.2 Online Writing Lab

Seminary students are expected to be able to write at a graduate level. In order to help students reach that level, LTS offers those students who need assistance one-on-one help through an online writing lab service provided by Smarthinking. This is introduced in the orientation course required of all entering students and is accessed through a unit embedded in courses. See Handbook Section 5.13, *Seminary Writing Support Policy*.

3.8.3 Counseling

Students wishing to discuss personal concerns are invited to use the following services:

- Faculty: Each member of the faculty is available to students. The primary matters discussed with the faculty are academic and vocational; however, discussions with faculty are not limited to these issues.

- The Office of the Dean: The Office of the Dean works with students, advocates for students in appropriate circumstances, and works to assist individual students in solving problems that might inhibit academic progress.

3.8.4 Verification of Enrollment

The Registrar will provide verification of enrollment for loan deferments, denominational inquiries, etc. Students must complete a *Student Information Release Request* form. If a deferment or other request contains a release section to be signed by the student, the Information Release Request form is not required. Subsequent to provision of the verification by the Registrar, the student is

responsible for reporting to the lending or other agency any changes in enrollment (number of hours, etc.). The student should be aware that failure to provide notification of such changes may be construed as fraud.

3.85 Transcript Requests

Requests for release of a transcript must be in writing and must carry an original signature. Everyone requesting a transcript must use a *Student Information Release Request* form. Requests from students/former students with unmet financial obligations in the Business Office will not be honored until the obligation is met. The transcript can be provided to the student/former student or mailed directly to a third party.

- One work week should be allowed for preparation of a transcript. It is rare that transcripts can be provided on demand. Requests for transcripts must be pre-paid. There will be no credit or invoicing.

- Transcripts are $10 for the first copy and $2 for each additional copy requested at the same time.

- Transcripts are printed on safety paper which cannot be altered and will show the words "COPY" when copied. The back of the transcript includes a key explaining the grading system, transfer hours, etc.

3.9 Use of Seminary Resources – Computing Resources

Computers and printers are available for student use in Bosworth Memorial Library. Adding, deleting, and changing computer software is not permitted. See *Appendix P: Information Technology Policies*.

4.0 Admissions Policies and Procedures

4.1 Admissions Policies

Responsibility for determining a candidate's compliance with the requirements for admission and for administering the admissions policy is vested in the Director of Admissions, who consults with program directors, the Dean, and individual faculty as needed about particular applications.

4.2 Admissions Procedures

Admission to Lexington Theological Seminary is ongoing throughout the calendar year. All applications must be submitted through the online application process. No applications will be considered if sent by email or through means other than the online application process. Students will be eligible to begin coursework no later than six weeks after accepting an offer of admission from LTS.

Reasons for denial are not shared. When an applicant is denied admission, that person must wait at least one calendar year before reapplying for admission. This policy does not imply any promise for admission in the future. The process of reapplication and readmission are the same as those for readmission after an absence from studies. See Handbook Section 5.7.7, *Readmission after an Absence*. A new non-refundable admission fee is charged for the reapplication.

4.3 Criminal Background Checks

A criminal background check is required for Master of Divinity and Master of Theological Studies degree-seeking applicants who wish to complete their coursework while working in a ministry setting. The applicant submits their own information for that check through the online service Intellicorp, listed on the LTS website. Criminal history in and of itself does not necessarily mean the applicant will be denied admission. However, failure to disclose a criminal history on the application itself, which later turns up in the background check, may be grounds for denial.

If the criminal background check produces a criminal record of concern, the Director of Admissions may request further information from the applicant before an admission decision is made.

4.4 Admissions Requirements

4.4.1 Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies, Master in Pastoral Studies

For students applying to the Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies, or Master in Pastoral Studies programs, a completed application includes:

- A completed online application form and non-refundable application fee of $65;
- Receipt of reference letters in the Admissions office, which include:
    - Two recommendation letters submitted electronically for the general application, including a letter from each
        - An educator, if out of school less than three years; or if out of school three years or more, a recent employer who can speak to the applicant's leadership skills; and
        - A minister who can speak to the applicant's potential for Seminary study and potential for ministry;
    - If applying for an LTS scholarship, an additional letter of recommendation, submitted by a minister (not named above) who can speak to the applicant's

potential for *excellence* in ministry;

- Receipt of official transcripts, by the Admissions office and sending of official transcripts (electronic transcripts preferred) from the Registrar's office, from all secondary school attended.
    - Applicants for degree programs must have earned a Bachelor's Degree from an institution accredited by an organization recognized by the Department of Education (or international equivalent) and
    - All applicants must have a minimum grade point average of 2.5; and
- Proficiency in reading and writing in English is required for this program.

OR

For students applying to the Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies, or Master in Pastoral Studies Program through the Prior Learning Assessment Pathway who do not have a Bachelor's degree from an institution accredited by an organization recognized by the Department of Education or have not completed a Bachelor's degree, a completed application includes:

- A completed online application form and non-refundable application fee of $65;
- Receipt of reference letters in the Admissions office, which include:
    - Two recommendation letters submitted electronically for the general application, including a letter from each
        - An educator, if out of school less than three years; or if out of school three years or more, a recent employer who can speak to the applicant's leadership skills; and
        - A minister who can speak to the applicant's potential for Seminary study and potential for ministry;
    - If applying for an LTS scholarship, an additional letter of recommendation, submitted by a minister (not named above) who can speak to the applicant's potential for *excellence* in ministry;
- If the applicant has no baccalaureate or attended a *non-accredited institution*, a Lexington Theological Seminary Certificate from the Certificate in African American Ministries or Certificate in Hispanic Ministries will function as a baccalaureate-level program.
- If the applicant has a minimum of 5 years of ministerial leadership experience, whether in congregation, chaplaincy, etc., but has not received a Lexington

Theological Seminary Certificate from the Certificate in African American Ministries or Certificate in Hispanic Ministries, and does not have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution:

- applicants will be eligible for admission as a Special Student, and
- must complete a PLA portfolio for full admission to any Master's Program by completing and passing the Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio course (SIS 510)

4.4.1.1 Transfer of Certificate in Pastoral Ministry to Masters Program

Students requesting admission to the Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies, or Master in Pastoral Studies programs who do not hold a bachelor's degree (or who hold a bachelor's degree from a non-accredited institution) may be admitted to the Certificate in Pastoral Ministry with credit. Upon completion of the Certificate (with credit), if a student's performance warrants, and the student is in good standing, that student can be considered for admission to the applicable Masters degree program.

4.4.2 Doctor of Ministry

Applicants must be currently engaged in the practice of ministry, have at least three years of ministerial experience after receiving an ATS-approved Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent, and have the support of the congregation or organization being served. Doctor of Ministry students receive a 30% tuition scholarship.

Applicants for the Doctor in Ministry program must satisfy the following:

- Have a Masters of Divinity degree or its equivalent from an accredited institution
- If the applicant does not have a Masters in Divinity or equivalent, but has an accredited Master degree in the area of their vocational calling, they must:
  - Be able to critically reflect on the theological or denominational traditions of their context,
  - Demonstrate the ability to use theological, scriptural, and ethical tools to interpret their ministerial context,

- Demonstrate the capacity to critically reflect on and adapt their ministry to their context,

- Apply principles of spiritual formation to their personal and vocational lives and to spiritual practices in seeking structural change, and

- Engage as a ministry peer with others in the program in light of their ministerial or congregational leadership experiences.

- Applicants who do not have an Master of Divinity or its equivalent, but hold an accredited Master degree in an area of vocational specialty, would have to fulfill one of more of the following additional requirements *upon recommendation of the D.Min. Committee or Dean*:
    - Supplemental courses

    - Essay demonstrating any of the skills noted in the bullets in the previous paragraph

    - A year as a special student to fulfill required skills

For Doctor of Ministry applicants, a completed application will include:

- A completed online application form and non-refundable application fee of $65;

- Receipt of Reference letters in the Admissions office. These shall include two recommendation letters submitted electronically:

    - One from a professor from the applicant's M.Div. program or a more recent graduate program, OR one from a judicatory leader (*If the applicant is a member of a denomination without judicatory leadership or engaged in ministry outside of denominational or judicatory leadership, a colleague in ministry who can speak to the candidate's excellence in ministry will suffice.) and,

    - One from a recipient of the applicant's ministry site (e.g., a lay leader in the applicant's congregation ministry site).

- Receipt of official transcripts by the Admissions office and sending of official transcripts (electronic transcripts preferred) from the Registrar's office, from all post-secondary schools attended and with the following stipulations:

    - Applicants for the Doctor of Ministry degree program must have an ATS-approved Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent, or have an accredited Masters degree related to their ministerial vocation that fulfills the criteria

above, and

- Applicants must have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in their Master of Divinity or equivalent program; and

- Proficiency in reading and writing in English is required for this program.

4.4.3 Non-Degree Requirements

All non-degree students including Certificate Students, Special Students and Auditors are subject to all policies and standards of conduct described in the Seminary's *Student Handbook*.

4.4.3.1 Special Student

Special Students at Lexington Seminary can take up to twelve credit hours of coursework as long as they meet all prerequisites (or present equivalents approved by the Dean) for the courses they wish to take. After taking up to twelve credit hours, the Special Student may choose to apply to a LTS degree or certificate program, transfer to another institution, or leave the institution with twelve hours on his/her transcript.

For Special Student applicants, a completed application will include:

- A completed online application form and non-refundable application fee of $65,

- Receipt of one letter of recommendation, submitted electronically, from a minister, educator, or employer who knows the applicant well and can speak to the applicant's preparation for seminary work, and

- Receipt of all official transcripts by the Admissions office and sending of official transcripts (electronic transcripts preferred) from the Registrar's office, from all post-secondary schools attended. All applicants must have a minimum GPA of 2.5.

4.4.3.2 Certificate in Pastoral Ministry

Certificate in Pastoral Ministry students may take coursework for credit or non-credit. Applicants seeking to take courses for credit must have earned a minimum of one full-time year's credits toward a bachelor's degree from an institution accredited by an organization recognized by the Department of Education (or international equivalent). Applicants pursuing the non-credit option must have a high school diploma.

For certificate applicants seeking to take courses *for credit*, a completed

application will include:

- A completed online application form and non-refundable application fee of $65,

- Receipt of all official transcripts for post-secondary credits earned and documenting receipt of baccalaureate degree - all applicants must have a minimum GPA of 2.5, and

- Receipt of one letter of recommendation, submitted electronically from a minister, educator, or employer who knows the applicant well and can speak to the applicant's preparation for seminary work.

For certificate applicants choosing the *non-credit* option, a completed application will include:

- A completed online application form and non-refundable application fee of $65 and

- Information regarding high school graduation.
  NOTE: Non-credit seeking applicants are required to send in the name and address of the high school from which they graduated as well as the year of graduation.

4.4.3.3 Auditor

Anyone can audit courses at LTS. Auditors may take as many courses as they choose, although class size may limit their options.

For Auditors, a completed application will include:

- A completed online application form

- Other fees may apply (see website for specific fees)

4.5 Program Degree Change

Students currently enrolled in a degree or certificate program at Lexington Theological Seminary who wish to change their program to another certificate of degree program must complete a program change form. Some program or degree change requests may require a student to submit an additional letter of recommendation, complete a background check and/or complete prerequisites. All requests will be submitted to the Registrar's office for evaluation. The Academic Dean will have the final approval.

5.0 Academic Policies and Procedures

5.1 Online Courses

5.1.1 Canvas LMS (LTSOnline)

Lexington Theological Seminary uses Canvas as its learning management system. Within this learning management system, students will review lectures, participate in online discussions, complete assignments, or examinations, and correspond with faculty and classmates. Students who are admitted to the program will be required to have access to throughout the duration of their time at LTS: a computer, Broadband internet connection, webcam, and a headset with a noise-canceling microphone. For a detailed list of required technological resources see Handbook section 11.7, *Minimum Technological Requirements for Participation in LTS Degree Programs*.

5.1.2 Course Closing and Due Dates and Times

All academic program times are Eastern Time. The closing of courses and the completion times for assignments for courses are the assigned time on Eastern Time (unless a professor makes other arrangements). Usually, the latest a professor will make an assignment due is 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the last Saturday of the course. Tests and other timed assignments completed through the course learning platform are always due Eastern Time. Instructors may choose to allow other types of assignments (e.g., written projects or papers) to be due in accordance with the student's time zone. Such exceptions should not be expected. Late penalties will be assessed in accordance with Eastern Time, unless the instructor has granted a time zone extension. The course syllabus is the final authority for due dates and deadlines.

5.2 Advisors and Program Responsibilities

Upon enrolling in the Seminary, each degree-seeking student will be assigned a Faculty Advisor. Advisors are available to help students to plan their academic programs and to counsel on academic and professional matters. Students should be aware that final responsibility for their academic program and its successful completion rests with the student, not the advisor or any other representative of the Seminary.

Master in Pastoral Studies and Doctor of Ministry students will be advised by the respective program directors throughout their program of study. Non-degree seeking students should consult with the Office of the Dean regarding academic programs.

5.2.1 Change of Advisor

Master of Divinity students may request a change of advisor after completing 18 hours of study. Master of Theological Studies students may request a change of advisor after completion of 12 hours of study. To request a change of advisor, the student must notify the Office of the Dean.

5.2.2 Faculty Availability

One of the traditions of the Seminary is the faculty's availability to students. Members of the faculty want to be helpful and to work with students to enhance their theological education. Students should not hesitate to contact faculty members by telephone, online meeting platforms, or make in-person appointments.

5.3 Registration Procedures

Registration for courses is done through the school's online registration portal. Courses are available for registration on a quarterly basis (Aug.-Oct.; Nov.-Jan.; Feb.-Apr.; May-July). Registration opens two months prior to the beginning of each quarter. The registration deadline for a course is 21 days before the beginning of the course. A late fee of $25 per course is charged for registration after that deadline. The late fee may be waived for new students who have just been admitted. Dropping a course after the registration deadline has passed but before the course has begun will result in the assessment of a $50 drop fee.

5.3.1 Course Enrollment Limits

Online courses have an enrollment limit of fifteen students. On-campus courses during intensive sessions have an enrollment limit of eighteen students. For registrations received during the pre-registration period, priority will be given to persons graduating in the current year and then in the order of pre-registration. Courses with fewer than five students registered may be cancelled. Students registered for a course that is cancelled will receive e-mail notification of the cancellation from the Registrar and be allowed to register for another course without being assessed additional fees.

5.3.2 Changes in Registration Once Courses Have Begun

Students may add, drop or withdraw from courses after the course has begun.

5.3.2.1 Adding a Course

To add a course once it has begun, students use the seminary's online registration portal. This must be done within the time limit noted below and will incur a $25 late fee.

5.3.2.2 Dropping a Course

To drop a course once it has begun, students use the online registration portal. This must be done within the time limit noted below and will incur a $50 drop fee. Tuition will be reimbursed through the drop date. A course which is officially dropped by the drop date receives no grade and is not recorded on the student's transcript.

5.3.2.3 Withdrawing from a Course

To withdraw from a course once it has begun, students must email a request to the Registrar. This must be done within the time limit noted below. Tuition is

not reimbursed for a withdrawal. A course which is officially withdrawn from by the withdrawal date receives a grade of W and is recorded on the student's transcript.

- Courses from which a student withdraws are counted towards the number of hours of financial aid awarded; therefore, withdrawal from a course ultimately results in the student's having to pay full tuition for the equivalent hours in order to complete curriculum requirements.

- Withdrawn courses accrue no hours and do not contribute to GPA; they do, however, appear on the transcript.

- Students who need to withdraw from a course after the withdrawal deadline due to extraordinary extenuating circumstances must have such a withdrawal approved by the Dean.

- If a student elects not to complete a course and the withdrawal date has passed, the course grade will be recorded as a failure; it will appear on the transcript.

5.3.3 Time Limits for Adding/Dropping a Course After It Has Begun

5.3.3.1 2-Week Online Courses

Add:	1 day
Drop:	3 days
Withdrawal:	1 week

5.3.3.2 4-Week Online Courses

Add:	2 days
Drop:	1 week
Withdrawal:	2 weeks

5.3.3.3 8-Week Online Courses

Add:	4 days
Drop:	3 week
Withdrawal:	4 weeks

5.3.3.4 On-Campus Intensive Courses

Add:	Not allowed
Drop:	Not allowed
Withdrawal:	1 day

5.3.3.5 Covenant Groups

Add:	Not Allowed
Drop:	Before 2nd meeting
Withdrawal:	Before 3rd meeting

5.3.3.6 Competency Exercises and Capstone Projects

If a student wishes to withdraw from a competency exercise or a capstone project, he/she must address his/her request to the Dean. The Dean will decide whether to grant the request after consultation with the faculty in charge of the exercise or project.

5.4 Withdrawal from Seminary

Voluntary withdrawal from the seminary occurs when a student sends a written notification that he/she is withdrawing from the seminary to the Registrar.

A student will be administratively withdrawn after one year of no activity on the part of the student. See Handbook section 5.7.7, *Re-Admission after an Absence*.

5.5 Grading Policy

5.5.1 Principles of Grading

Students should remember the following realities about the grading system:

- Grades are expressions of a faculty member's judgment on the quality of the student's work and, thus, are intended to serve as indicators of performance and progress.
- Poor grades are not punitive in intent. A poor grade should be understood as a "red flag" signaling the need for improvement.
- The time and energy spent on a course or assignment are not the determining factors in evaluation of the quality of work accomplished.
- A grade is not an assessment of the student's worth, but an evaluation of the work submitted.
- The level of work required in seminary, as in all graduate and professional schools, should be substantially higher than that required for completion of an undergraduate degree.

5.5.2 Grade Values

The definitions of grades are as follows:

A: Indicates work is at a level substantially above that required for successful completion of the course.

B: Indicates work is above that required for successful completion of the course.

C: Indicates work meets but does not exceed basic course requirements and expectations.

D: Indicates work may complete basic course assignments but is not at an acceptable graduate level.

F: Indicates work does not fulfill basic course requirements and expectations for the course. Courses for which an F is earned are part of the Grade Point Average (GPA) calculation but do not accrue hours.

CR: Indicates a level of achievement sufficient enough to pass the course, i.e., at C level or higher (73 or higher in LTSOnline).

NC: Indicates a level of achievement sufficient enough to pass the course, i.e., below C (72 or lower in LTSOnline).

S: Indicates satisfactory compliance with the requirements of auditing or non-credit participation in a course by a Certificate in Pastoral Ministry student.

U: Indicates failure to comply with the requirements of auditing or non-credit participation in a course by a Certificate in Pastoral Ministry student.

The use of plus/minus with the letter grades allows faculty members to distinguish levels of performance more carefully and accurately. Pluses and minuses for B, C, and D grades and minuses for A grades are recorded on the official Seminary transcripts. There are no pluses awarded for A or F grades.

5.5.3 Calculation of Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)

The GPA is calculated based on the following values:

		A	4.0	A-	3.7
B+	3.3	B	3.0	B-	2.7
C+	2.3	C	2.0	C-	1.7
D+	1.3	D	1.0	D-	0.7
		F	0.0		

5.5.4 Grading Criteria

The following academic factors influence a student's grade:

- The ability to identify, select and use resources and research methods pertinent to the course.
- The grasp of basic content of the course, including appropriate data, theory, and skills and proficiency in demonstrating them.
- The ability to communicate ideas and insights material to the course, demonstrating skills in the use of language, organization, and clarity of thought.
- The ability to interpret and integrate ideas and insights creatively, responding with originality to others' ideas, and demonstrating skill in theological reflection across disciplinary lines.
- The ability to conceive appropriate applications of the course to the profession and practice of ministry.
- Personal maturity (i.e. demonstrating a sense of personal freedom, empathy for fellow students and faculty), a sense of integrity in coursework, a commitment of energy to the work, and openness to dialogue, and a sense of responsibility to the course and fellow members of the class.

5.5.5 Additional Grading Criteria, D.Min. Program

In addition to what has been previously stated, D.Min. students will be graded on a series of criteria, including the following standard assessment of doctoral level work. D.Min. students at LTS will demonstrate their abilities to do critical thinking and sound theological reflection by:

- doing careful, thorough research,
- interpreting evidence accurately,
- identifying salient arguments,
- thoughtfully analyzing and evaluating alternative points of view,
- drawing warranted, non-fallacious conclusions,
- explaining assumptions and reasons,
- justifying key results and procedures,

- being fair-minded in following where evidence and reason lead,
- demonstrating integrative thinking, and
- writing with correctness, clarity, and coherence[2].

5.5.6 Grading in Degree and Certificate Programs:

5.5.6.1 Grading in the M.Div. Program

- All 500-level courses taken in the Apprentice Phase (Level I) of the M.Div. program are graded with letter grades.
- SIS courses, LW 577 (Practice Preaching), and Covenant Groups are graded CR/NC.
- Level I courses that are a requirement of the program must be passed with a C grade or higher and must be repeated as many times as necessary to achieve that grade. Scholarship funds will not apply to retaken courses. Every repetition of a course remains on the transcript and the latest grade assigned the course is recorded in the GPA.
- The competency exercises that conclude the Apprentice Phase (Level I or 500-level study) in each subject area are graded by letter grade.
- All 600-level courses taken in the Journeyer Phase (Phase II) of the M.Div. program are graded by letter grade.
- The Capstone Project, taken as the Master Phase (Level III) of the M.Div. program, is graded by letter grade.
- A GPA of 2.3 is required for graduation.

5.5.6.2 Grading in the M.T.S. Program

Except for the M.T.S. project grading in the M.T.S. program is by letter grade. The M.T.S. project is graded by CR/NC grade. A GPA of 2.3 and a CR grade on the project are needed for graduation.

5.5.6.3 Grading in the M.P.S. Program

Grading in the M.P.S. program is by letter grade. A GPA of 2.3 is needed for graduation.

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[2] Adapted from Peter A. and Noreen C. Facione, *Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric* (Millbrae, California: The California Academic Press, 1994.)

5.5.6.4 Grading in the Certificate in Pastoral Ministry Program When Taken for Credit

Grading in the Certificate in Pastoral Ministry program when taken for credit is by letter grade. A GPA of 2.3 is needed for graduation.

5.5.6.5 Grading in the Certificate in Pastoral Ministry Program When NOT Taken for Credit

Grading in the Certificate in Pastoral Ministry program when NOT taken for credit is by S/U grade.

5.5.6.6 Grading in the D.Min. Program and the Certificate in Congregational Renewal and Leadership Program

Except for the final D.Min. project and the project seminar, DM 890, grading in the D.Min. program is graded by letter grade. DM 890 and the final project are graded CR/NC. A GPA of 3.0 and passing grades for DM 890 and the final project are required for graduation. Thus, all grading for the Certificate in Congregational Renewal and Leadership program is by letter grade, and a GPA of 3.0 is required for graduation.

5.6 Incomplete Work

Should extraordinary circumstances exist which preclude the student finishing work and receiving a final grade, faculty may opt to not record a grade for the student for up to 30 calendar days following the date grades are due. If a grade has not been submitted at the end of the 30-day period, the Registrar will record a grade of NC or F for the course. The grade of NC or F may be changed at the faculty member's discretion.

Under special circumstances, grades may be left blank for more than 30 days and up to 90 days if the faculty member and student have entered into a written agreement which outlines completion of the work. A copy of this written agreement must be provided to the Registrar prior to the initial 30-day deadline to prevent recording of a NC or F.

Courses for which grades are left blank past 90 days will have a grade of NC or F recorded with any and all resultant penalties imposed.

For a M.T.S. project which is not complete at the end of the term for which it was registered, a No Credit (NC) will be reflected on the transcript until the project is successfully completed.

- If the grade point average for a student with a missing grade places the student on probation or causes dismissal, that action will be suspended until the end of the 30-day period mentioned above.

- If no grade has been recorded by the end of the 30-day period, a grade of NC or F will be factored into the grade point average for the course. If the grade point average

results in probation or dismissal, the action will be taken immediately.

NOTE: Students may be billed late for tuition when being placed on probation. (See section 5.7, Academic Probation and Academic Dismissal.)

5.7 Academic Probation and Academic Dismissal

While on probation, students will not be considered for degree candidacy, will not graduate, and will not receive financial aid.

5.7.1 Probation in Masters Degree and Certificate Programs

Probation occurs when a student falls below a cumulative GPA of 2.3 after 12 months or after completing at least 5 credit hours (whichever comes first). A student on probation must raise the cumulative GPA to 2.3 or higher within the next 24 months of coursework. An M.Div. student must have a cumulative GPA of 2.3 or higher before moving to the Master Phase (Level III) of study. Failure to achieve requirements for raising the cumulative GPA to 2.3 after 24 months will result in academic dismissal. A student may be considered for readmission after a year from dismissal date. For readmission, the student will submit a letter to the faculty for reinstatement and provide a plan for improving their academic performance.

The dean will notify in writing any student who is placed on probation or dismissed. A copy of the letter will be sent to the Registrar who will place the letter in the student's file.

5.7.2 Tuition and Scholarships on Probation

Scholarships may be impacted by probation status. Because grades are sometimes posted after new courses begin, students placed on probation at the end of the prior course may be billed late for tuition balances currently due. Students on probation who have not paid in full by the "Add/Drop" registration deadline will be dropped from their courses with no opportunity for reinstatement in those courses at that time.

5.7.3 Probation in the D.Min. Program

Probation occurs for Doctoral students anytime their GPA falls below 3.0. Once on probation, students have 4 credit hours to raise their GPA to 3.0. If they are unable to achieve this GPA, they will be dismissed from the D.Min. program. The dean will notify in writing any D.Min. student placed on probation, with copies sent to the Director of D.Min. program and Registrar. The Registrar will place a copy of the letter in the student's file.

5.7.4 Dismissal

The Seminary reserves the right to dismiss students at any time due to unacceptable academic work or for other reasons by vote of the faculty. Dismissals may be appealed according to procedures outlined in section 5.8.2, *Appealing Other Academic Matter*. Reasons for dismissal are not shared with students. See section

3.1.3, *Re-Admission* for readmission after non-academic dismissal.

5.7.5 Application for Re-Admission after Academic Dismissal

Application for re-admission after academic dismissal will be voted on by the full faculty. Students dismissed for academic performance may apply for re-admission after a lapse of one academic year. Such students, who are then placed on academic probation a second time, may be dismissed after 24 months if they are unable to maintain a 2.3 average and will be eligible for reinstatement three years after dismissal. The dean notifies in writing students who are dismissed for any reason, with a copy of the letter sent to the President and the Registrar. A copy of the letter is also placed in the student's file. After a three year period, students can re-apply as a Special student. If they maintain a GPA of at least 2.3 or higher after 12 credits, they can request a transfer to a degree program. Requests for re-admission shall be made, in writing, to the full faculty.

- Requests for re-admission after expulsion or study that has been terminated by action of the faculty shall be made, in writing, to the faculty.

- Requests for re-admission to the program from which the student was terminated shall be made, in writing, to the full faculty, after one calendar year has passed.

- Requests for admission to a different program after termination from another program shall be made, in writing, to the full faculty.

A student dismissed from a degree program can be accepted into a certificate program.

5.7.6 Academic Forgiveness

Students who have been dismissed after a second time with a GPA of less than 2.3, who are currently enrolled, have completed 12 credits as a Special student, and successfully maintained a 2.3 GPA, can apply to the Dean for academic forgiveness upon re-applying for reinstatement to a degree or Certificate program. A review of their transcript will be carried out by the Registrar and grades and credit hours for courses in which the student received less than a C- (less than 70%) will be voided. While these courses are no longer considered for degree requirements or quality-point computations, they will remain on the student's record. Academic actions, such as probation or dismissal, recorded at the end of the voided terms, will also remain. While forgiven course grades are removed from the calculation, the course work does remain a part of the students' permanent record, and the forgiven work may be taken into consideration when assessment of financial aid.

Academic forgiveness is an internal policy. LTS cannot guarantee how this policy will be viewed by other institutions should the student choose to transfer elsewhere.

5.7.7 Re-Admission After an Absence

Students who seek to enroll in courses after more than one year of absence must

submit a request for re-admission. A letter must be sent to the Director of Admissions requesting re-admission to the seminary. The Director of Admissions may ask for additional information depending upon the length of absence and the circumstances at the time of the student's departure.

5.8 Academic Appeals

5.8.1 Grade Appeals

The LTS grade appeals policy strives to balance the values of academic freedom for faculty in determining grades and the protection of students from unfairness in grading. A student is ordinarily expected to raise a grading issue with the faculty member. If the student is unable to find an acceptable solution, he or she may appeal the grade. A student's dissatisfaction with a course grade is not, in general, sufficient grounds for warranting an appeal. Appeals are normally only brought forward on grounds such as discriminatory treatment of the grade determination process significantly departing from the syllabus.

5.8.1.1 An appeal must be initiated within thirty (30) days following the posting of the grade to the LMS. Only grades that appear on the official transcript may be appealed.

5.8.1.2 Students shall use the following procedure to appeal:

The student will submit a written statement to the Dean with evidence explaining why the grade appears unfair, with copies to the professor whose grade is being appealed and the student's Faculty Advisor.

After consulting with the professor and the student, the Dean proposes a resolution to the matter which may be either that the grade will stand or that it be changed by the professor. The Dean's recommendation will be communicated in writing to the student, the professor, the student's Faculty Advisor, and the Registrar (for inclusion in the student's file). The professor will make a decision about the grade after receiving the Dean's recommendation.

If the faculty member's response to the Dean's recommendation is unacceptable to the student, the student may request in writing that an appeals committee be convened. A committee of two regular or affiliate faculty members and a student will be appointed by the Dean to investigate. The student appealing the grade may make a recommendation to the Dean for one of the two faculty members. The appeals committee will interview the student appealing, the professor whose grade is being appealed, and/or gather other information as deemed necessary, including the Dean's recommendation. The committee will then arrive at a recommendation, supported by a rationale that the grade either stand or be changed by the professor. The committee's recommendation will be communicated in writing to the student, the Dean, the professor, the student's faculty advisor, and the Registrar (for inclusion in the student's file). The professor will make his or her final decision after receiving

the committee's recommendation.

If the student does not accept the professor's final decision, he or she may submit a further appeal in writing to the President. The President will review all materials from the prior proceedings and gather additional information as deemed necessary. The decision of the President will be final.

5.8.2 Appealing Other Academic Matters

The following other academic matters may be appealed: termination of study, expulsion – unless by the President or the Dean – for disciplinary reasons, or refusal of the faculty to re-admit a student.

These academic appeals are handled by a sub-committee of the Student Complaint Advisory Committee (see *Appendix B: Student Complaint Advisory Committee Policy & Procedure*) in addition to the Dean and the student's Faculty Advisor.

The faculty chair of the Student Complaint Advisory Committee acts as chairperson of the sub-committee unless that faculty member is the appealing student's Faculty Advisor. In such a case, the Dean shall appoint another faculty member to act as chair. Should the Dean be the appealing student's Faculty Advisor, the sub-committee chair shall appoint another member of the faculty as alternate to the Dean. Two student members of the Student Complaint Advisory Committee will be appointed to the academic appeals sub-committee by the sub-committee chair, or the Dean shall appoint one or two other students to the sub-committee if such action is necessary to ensure neutrality of the student members with respect to the appealing student, i.e., no compromising relationships may exist between appealing student and sub-committee member(s).

5.8.2.1 Notification of Intent to Appeal

The student must notify the Dean in writing that he/she wishes to appeal a specific action within thirty days of the action. By virtue of this notification, the student is automatically granting release of relevant information to the members of the committee. A hearing will be scheduled at a time convenient to both the student and the committee. After having received written notice of the faculty action with a list of specific reasons for this action, the chair, in consultation with the Dean, will provide a summary of all relevant information which contributed to the faculty's decision. The student should then prepare his/her appeal as follows:

- The student must prepare a written statement (approximately 1,500 words, double-spaced, and in 12-point font) outlining the major points of the appeal and must submit this statement to the chairperson of the sub-committee at least one week before the hearing date.

  NOTE: The student should remember that a specific faculty decision is being appealed and should answer the specific points of the faculty

decision. Thus, the student should show that: the faculty misunderstood the facts, or pertinent facts were not considered by the faculty, or circumstances and personal character have changed sufficiently so that the faculty's decision should be reconsidered. (This latter argument applies only to appeals for re-admission.) A plea for a second chance is not grounds for an appeal to this sub-committee. Nor is disagreement with the decision made by the faculty acceptable as grounds for appeal or as a defense.

- The student must arrange for evidence or witnesses that will speak on his/her behalf, including making arrangements for the release of any psychological evaluation(s) to be submitted to the committee.

  NOTE: References to psychological test(s) or evaluation(s) are not admissible. Written records must be signed by the attending psychologist or psychiatrist, or the psychologist or psychiatrist must appear as a witness. Submission of such data in any form is strictly voluntary. The chairperson may limit the number of witnesses that can appear and the time that each can speak. Written statements may be submitted in lieu of personal appearance(s) of witnesses.

  NOTE: Any data or witnesses must speak directly to the issues involved in the appeal. General character evaluations will be ruled out-of-order.

- The student may ask one person to attend the hearing as his/her personal counselor. This may be a fellow student, a faculty member, a minister, or a close personal friend. Because the appeal process is strictly within the structures of the Seminary, the appellant's counselor may not be an attorney.

5.8.2.2 Hearing Procedure

- The hearing will open with a statement by the chairperson regarding hearing procedures.

- The Dean (or an alternate) will read the statement of the faculty's action.

- The student will read his/her summary statement.

- The student may introduce data or call witnesses in support of the appeal.

- The members of the committee will have the opportunity to question the student and/or the witnesses.

  NOTE: The chairperson may rule as out-of-order any question which probes beyond the scope of the appeal, or which would require an answer in violation of privileged communication or the right of privacy.

- After evidence has been submitted and witnesses examined, the student may make a summary statement.

- The student and witnesses will be excused during the committee deliberations.

- The committee will submit a report of its decision to the President who may or may not accept the decision. The committee can make one of three recommendations: to uphold the faculty decision, to reverse the faculty decision, or, to refer the question to the faculty for reconsideration in light of new or clarified evidence.
- The President will decide upon an action. In informing the student of an action, the President may include the committee's recommendation, at his/her discretion.

5.8.2.3 General Regulations Governing the Hearing Procedure

- The committee's decision will be made by a simple majority vote. The vote will be included in the recommendation to the President without reference to how individual committee members voted and without any dissenting opinions.

- Committee members will hold all committee proceedings in strict confidence, even after the decision is made.

- The appellant student should not discuss the appeal procedure or the content of the appeal with any committee member except the chairperson. Attempted communication with or any form of harassment of committee members will be grounds for denying the appeal.

- The committee will keep no record of its proceedings. The only written document will be a report of the decision to the President.

- The student may invoke his/her right to privacy at any time; however, in doing so, he/she may be denying the committee essential information and thereby be undermining the appeal.

5.9 Courses

5.9.1 Course Loads

For purposes of determining financial aid eligibility, a full-time load is defined as 16 hours per year, and a half-time load is defined as 8 hours per year.

5.9.2 Course Numbers

- 500-level courses are introductory level Masters courses
- 600-level courses are advanced Masters courses
- 700-level course numbers are reserved for the summative exercises at the end of Master's programs, i.e., the capstone project in the M.Div., the thesis in the M.T.S., and the final research paper in the M.P.S.
- 800-level courses are D.Min. courses.

5.9.3 Directed Studies

Normally, directed studies are undertaken only in areas not offered, or not offered on a regular basis in the regular curriculum. Directed studies may be taken by students in any degree program, subject to the agreement of the professor, completion of a *Directed Study Agreement* form, and approval of the Dean. Students who wish to take directed studies with a person who is not on the faculty of LTS must receive prior approval of the Dean before completing and submitting the Directed Study Agreement. The student should be prepared to demonstrate to the Seminary that the course professor possesses an appropriate terminal degree and qualifying credentials.

- Directed studies are only allowed for elective courses at the 600-level or higher.
- Credit may be for 1 to 2 hours. The professor and student sign a *Directed Study Agreement*, accompanied by a detailed syllabus, which must be submitted to the Dean for approval at the time of registration. The Dean will notify the student of approval, disapproval, or tentative approval with changes. The Dean forwards the signed Agreement to the Registrar.
- Directed studies are subject to the same deadlines (registration, Drop/Add, grade submission) as other classes and must be completed by the end of the period for which they are registered.
- Normally, Master's students may register for no more than four hours of directed study work within their degree program.

5.9.4 Auditing Courses

Auditing provides students the opportunity to benefit from a course without being subject to credit requirements. No credit is awarded (nor would be transferred to other institutions) for audited courses. Auditing students neither submit course assignments nor do they complete course examinations. Auditors' work will not be evaluated by the professor, and feedback will not be provided. The professor may state in the syllabus specific expectations regarding auditing students' participation. Auditors must register for courses using the online registration process.

Special Students and Auditors are considered students of Lexington

Theological Seminary and as such, are subject to all policies and standards of conduct described in the Seminary's *Student Handbook.*

5.9.5 Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are important to the Seminary's program of assessment for continuous improvement of the learning experience. They are a means for students to share their opinions about the courses they have just completed. Students are required to complete a standard form online that is embedded in each course. The student's final grade for the course will not be posted by the Registrar until the form is completed. All evaluations remain anonymous. The professor will be able to access the accumulated results of the course evaluations after he/she has turned in the grades for the course. The evaluations are reviewed by the Dean and are compiled into annual reports for use in faculty performance reviews and in the faculty's annual assessment of the educational effectiveness of the school's programs.

5.9.5.1 Seminary Assessment

All student work may be used as a part of the Seminary's assessment program. The assessment use of student work in no way affects the grade the student receives. This is an evaluation of the work of the Seminary in terms of the work of the student. Students' names are commonly removed from the work used in assessment. This evaluation is intended to help the Seminary improve its education programs.

5.10 Clinical Pastoral Education

A student in one of the seminary's Master's degree programs may receive 2 credits for successful completion of a Level I unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) subject to the following terms and conditions:

- The unit is/was completed at an ACPE-accredited CPE program.
- If taken during the student's program, the student has registered for course LC 672 on entering the unit. The unit can count in this only if taken after the student has met the requirements of their degree program to begin taking 600-level electives. Upon successful completion of the unit, the student receives a grade of "CR" for the course, providing he or she submits to the Dean a copy of his or her final self-evaluation and the final evaluation by the CPE supervisor as documentation of successful completion. If the student does not complete the unit successfully, the student receives a grade of "NC" for the course.
- If the unit is taken within 5 years of the student beginning his or her program at the seminary, he or she may apply for 2 credits of advanced standing, reckoned as a 600-level elective. Such application should be addressed to the Dean and be accompanied by the student's final self-evaluation and the CPE supervisor's final evaluation of the student as documentation of successful completion.

5.11 Transfer Credit

The Seminary accepts credits transferred to or shared from other institutions according to the policy guidelines indicated below. Grades from transferred courses are not used in the calculation of the GPA and show on the transcript simply as the number of hours transferred and the name of the institution. Individual courses transferred are not listed.

5.11.1 In general, to be accepted for transfer, credits must meet the following criteria:

- Must be earned no more than 10 years prior to graduation from LTS;
- Must be graduate level, earned at a seminary or graduate school accredited by the Association of Theological Schools. Credit earned at non ATS accredited but regionally accredited institutions may be approved.
- Must carry a grade of B or above; and
- Must be judged by the Dean as appropriate to the degree sought at Lexington Theological Seminary.
- M.Div. students may transfer up to 24 hours. In order to determine the adequacy of the transferred credit for particular courses the syllabi may be requested by the Dean.
- M.T.S. and M.P.S. students may transfer up to 15 hours.
- Up to 18 hours of credits transferred from a residential program at another ATS-accredited seminary may be counted toward the residency requirements for the LTS M.Div., and up to 12 hours toward the residency requirement for the LTS M.P.S.
- D.Min. students may transfer up to 6 hours as electives.

5.11.2 Shared and Transfer Credit Within Degree Programs

- When students transfer in credits from a completed Master's degree earned outside LTS, the total number of credits transferred may not exceed the lesser of half the credits earned for the non-LTS degree or the maximum allowable amount of transfer credits for the LTS degree.
- When students complete a Master's degree at LTS and then wish to apply credits from that degree to a second LTS Master's degree, the maximum number of credits that applied to the second degree may not exceed the lesser of half the credits earned for the first degree or half of the credits needed to earn the second degree.

- Students who transfer credits from a completed LTS M.T.S. or M.P.S. into the M.Div. program must take at least two out of the four required pairs of competency exercises.

5.11.3 If the student is already enrolled in a degree program at Lexington Theological Seminary and desires to take an elective course at another institution, the student's request must be approved ahead of time by the student's advisor and the Dean. Written notice of the approval must be submitted to the Registrar prior to the taking of the course.

5.11.4 Transferred credits earned in courses taken on the quarter system are converted using one quarter hour equal to 0.667 of a semester hour.

5.11.5 Waiver of Requirements

Under certain circumstances, instead of approving transfer of credit, the Dean may approve the waiver of a requirement. The credit hour requirement must still be fulfilled by completing course work in the area where the requirement is waived. There are three such sets of circumstances:

- When a M.Div. student transfers in more than half of the credits required at the 500-level in a specific subject area, the competency exercise in that subject area may be waived.

- When a M.Div. student transfers 21 or more credits, the requirement for one 500-level covenant group may be waived.

- Depending on the quantity, character, and quality of work a student has done in a previous Master's degree program from which credit is being transferred, the requirement for a specific course may be waived (e.g., the waiver of SIS 570 when a student has successfully completed a humanities M.A. thesis).

5.12 Credit for Experience-informed Learning

5.12.1 Programs

Credit for Experience-informed Learning earned through the Prior Learning Assessment Pathway may only be applied to Certificate in Pastoral Ministry with Credit (CC) or Masters-level degrees at Lexington Theological Seminary.

5.12.2 Advanced Standing Requirements

- If the student has a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and has completed a Certificate from Lexington Theological Seminary through the Certificate in African American Ministries or Certificate in Hispanic Ministries, they will be granted advanced standing (10 credits in 500-level electives) upon admittance.

- If the student does not have a baccalaureate and has completed a Certificate from Lexington Theological Seminary through the Certificate in African American Ministries or Certificate in Hispanic Ministries, and seeks advanced standing, the student must complete and pass the Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio course. The student may receive up to 10 credits of 500-level elective credits.

- If the student has a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and seeks advanced standing in a Masters Program, the student must complete and pass the Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio course (SIS 510). The student may receive up to 10 credits of 500-level elective credits.

5.12.3 Maximum Credits Awarded

The maximum Credit for Experience-informed Learning awarded will be 10 credits. Credits will only apply as 500-level elective credits.

5.12.4 Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio Course

The Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio course (SIS 510) will be the avenue for assessing Credit for Experience-informed Learning outside of the Certificate in African American Ministries or Certificate in Hispanic Ministries programs. The Portfolio will include learning narrative essays and artifacts supporting the learning narratives. A student with a successful portfolio completes 6 of 8 essays with a passing grade of at least 73 percent.

5.13 Academic Conduct and Policies

5.13.1 Policy Regarding Plagiarism

All sources (whether copyrighted or not), including monographs (books), essay collections, dictionaries and encyclopedias, journal articles, internet articles, audio and video recordings, computer files, lectures, and private communication (letters, conversations, e-mails, etc.) that are incorporated into a student's work must be cited. LTS makes use of a Plagiarism Review Board (PRB) to review plagiarism violations and to determine penalties for these violations. (See *Appendix J: Policy Regarding Plagiarism; Appendix R: Intellectual Property Policy; and Appendix U: Copyright Policy*.)

5.13.2 Honor Code

All students registered for courses are expected to do their work with the highest ethical standards of intellectual integrity. As a part of their admission process, they are asked to read and sign the honor code. (See *Appendix I: Honor Code*).

5.14 Seminary Writing Support Policy

Lexington Theological Seminary is committed to forming students in all areas of ministerial life, including their success in written communication. To help them achieve

this success, all newly admitted degree-seeking students and certificate for credit students must submit all designated written assignments to the Seminary's online writing center prior to submitting a final draft to the professor. It is expected that students will revise their drafts based on the tutor's feedback before submitting the assignment to the professor. Even when working with the writing center, students are required to turn in assignments by the dates listed in the course syllabi.

The process for submitting drafts to and receiving feedback from the writing center is outlined in the *LTS Common Syllabus* and introduced during the Orientation Course. During that course, all students working on the Certificate for Pastoral Studies for credit and all degree-seeking students will submit a writing sample to be evaluated. This sample will provide a baseline for comparing later improvements.

5.14.1 Completion of Requirement

The Seminary will periodically review students' writing tutor assessments to determine when a student has reached a level of proficiency meriting release from the requirement. Students may request a review of their records for possible release at any time.

Degree-seeking students must reach a level of proficient writing before advancing beyond specific points in their programs:

- M.Div. students must receive notification that this requirement has been completed before they will be allowed to take their first competency exercise.
- M.T.S. students must receive notification that this requirement has been completed before they will be allowed to write their final project.
- M.P.S. students must receive notification that this requirement has been completed by the time they complete their Catholic Studies courses.

5.14.2 Continued Use of the Writing Center

Once students have received notification that they are no longer required to work with the Writing Center, they are still allowed and encouraged to use the Writing Center as desired for writing support.

Instructors can require individual students who continue to struggle with writing or entire class rosters to use the writing center for any assignment.

6.0 Relationships with Other Institutions

6.1 Hispanic Summer Program

The Hispanic Summer Program (HSP) provides seminary students with an opportunity to study in a Hispanic setting, with Latina/o peers and professors. All sponsors are fully accredited members of the Association of Theological Schools. LTS students may take one HSP course per summer. Each course carries three semester hours of credit and is given by the institution sponsoring the program that summer. Except where otherwise indicated, courses are taught primarily in Spanish, and students must be able to read materials in both Spanish and English. Students may do their academic work and participate in class discussions in either English or Spanish, as they prefer. There are limited courses available in English. Credit for courses taken in the HSP transfers to LTS as 600-level elective credit. For further details about the Hispanic Summer Program, students may consult the HSP website at www.hispanicsummerprogram.org, and/or consult the Dean.

6.2 Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource (AMERC)

The Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center is a consortium of more than thirty seminaries that has provided quality educational programs and learning experiences for seminarians and other religious leaders interested in ministry in Appalachia and other rural areas for many years.

- The centerpiece of their programs has been in-depth, contextually based dialogue with local people engaged with regional issues and involved in creative ministries. Courses are generally available in January and during the summer.

- Lexington Theological Seminary students apply for AMERC programs directly and transfer credit into the LTS program as 600-level electives. Grades are used in the calculation of the GPA. Information can be obtained from the Dean's Office or at http://www.amerc.org/.

7.0 Degree Programs

Students must fulfill the requirements of the curriculum of the degree to which they have been admitted that were in force at the time of their admission.

Should a student desire to change from one program to another, or to change from non-degree to degree-seeking status, a request for the change must be submitted to the Director of Admissions. The request must contain the reasons for the request. The Director of Admissions will review the request and make a decision or request additional information.

7.1 Master of Divinity (M.Div.)

7.1.1 Purpose Statement

The Master of Divinity (M.Div.) is a professional degree designed to help men and women preparing for Christian ministry and especially congregational ministry.

7.1.2 Program Learning Goals

- Students will gain the skills and knowledge in the fields of Interpreting the Scripture for the Church, Interpreting the Past for the Church, Interpreting the Faith for the Church, and Interpreting the Behavior For the Church that are needed for effective ministry in the Christian community.

- Students will gain the skills and knowledge in the fields of Leading the Church in Worship (including preaching), Leading the Church Through Care, Leading the Church Through Formation, and Leading the Church Into Mission that are needed for effective ministry in the Christian community.

- Students will learn to think critically and creatively about the Christian faith, including how that thought affects their own theology and life of faith.

- Students will learn to appropriate the Gospel for their varying socio-cultural and ecclesial contexts.

- Students will learn to integrate the spiritual, intellectual, and practical aspects of ministry.

7.1.3 Time Limit

The Master of Divinity degree must be completed within ten years.

7.1.4 Curriculum Requirements

The total number of credits required to complete the M.Div. degree is 76. These are allocated in specific ways as spelled out on the *M.Div. curriculum worksheet* and the web page with a *M.Div. Curriculum Overview*.

7.1.5 Residency Requirement

Eighteen credits of the work required for the M.Div. degree must be completed through courses taken at the seminary's Lexington campus.

7.1.6 The Congregational Requirement

A major component of the Master of Divinity degree is the participation in the life of a congregation. The congregational requirement is designed to support the

intellectual, practical, and spiritual goals of the M.Div. curriculum. The Seminary's curriculum recognizes the congregation as the primary context where students integrate what they have learned in courses, their growing familiarity with and basic competence in the skills of ministry, and the practical wisdom about ministry generated by their participation in the life of the congregation. In turn, this integration in the congregational setting contributes to their learning in courses. Therefore, all M.Div. students at LTS are required to engage in an accountable work role in a congregation. Full-time students will engage in an accountable work role for a minimum of ten hours a week, and part-time or less students for a minimum of seven hours a week, through all levels of the M.Div. program when they are enrolled in courses.

"Engaged accountable work" entails all related tasks and responsibilities associated with congregational sites including, but not limited to, travel to the site, communications such as phone calls, emails, and zoom or other online meetings, preparation for Bible studies and sermons, delivery of Bible classes and sermons, counseling, consultation with supervisors of the accountable site, and other related tasks.

A student who wishes to have a full-time chaplaincy position recognized as the context for this requirement must petition the Dean for an exception to this policy. Renewal of this exception must be requested annually and will be limited to one third of the student's program. Being granted this exception does not release the student from congregation-based course assignments.

Each M.Div. student will submit a *Congregation Information Form* signed by a congregational representative each year the student is enrolled in courses. The form will be submitted upon initial enrollment in the M.Div. program, and no later than the completion of three credit hours of coursework. Students will update and submit signed Congregation Information Forms every year they are enrolled in courses by a date determined by the Coordinator, verifying their continued accountable work role in a congregational context. Failure to submit a form will make the student ineligible for enrolling in further courses at LTS. Students must continue to meet the congregational requirement so long as they are enrolled in the M.Div. program. If they find it necessary to leave their service in one congregation before starting in another, they will be granted a "grace period" of three credit hours during which they may continue to enroll in courses without a congregational context. After the end of the grace period, they will be ineligible for enrolling in further courses at LTS until they have a new congregation. Only one "grace period" during the course of the M.Div. degree program, beyond the initial three credit hour period, will be allowed.

7.1.7 Mentors

Each Master of Divinity student will be partnered with a local mentor during his/her degree program. The mentors help students reflect upon the ministry in which they are participating as well as participate in the evaluation of the students' competency

exercises and consult with them in the development of their capstone project in Level III of the degree program.

7.1.8 Covenant Groups

Master of Divinity students are required to participate in four covenant groups during their course of study. Each covenant group lasts three months and earns 0.5 credit hours toward the degree. The covenant groups meet twice a month and are co-led by a professor and an experienced pastor. Students will participate in two covenant groups during Level I of their program (CO 501) before their competency exercises are completed, one while taking 600-level electives during Level II (CO 601), and one while working on their capstone project during Level III (CO 701).

7.1.9 Competency Exercises

7.1.9.1 Goals and Definitions

In the Master of Divinity program competency exercises are designed to allow students to demonstrate basic competence in two subject areas in the way that a pastor must demonstrate such competence. *This is not yet the level of competence an experienced pastor would display or even that a new-minted MDiv graduate would display, but a basic level such as would be expected of someone who has done the foundational work in the two subject areas.* Because the exercises assess competence in the way pastors must display competence, they are built around actual pastoral practices carried out in the student's congregational site, and the exercises integrate one Interpreting field and one Leading field.

After completing all other 500-level course requirements in a subject area a student is ready to take the competency exercise in that area. Subject areas are always paired in competency exercises, one Interpreting field (IS, IF, IP, IB) with one Leading field (LW, LC, LF, LM). Thus, a student must complete the course requirements in two subject areas in order to be ready to register for a competency exercise. The choice of which Interpreting field and which Leading field are paired is up to the student. Ultimately, MDiv students must pass four competency exercises, covering all eight subject areas. Competency exercises are either 1.0 credit and last four weeks or 1.5 credits and last six weeks. The credit hours earned, and length of the competency exercise depend on the subject areas being combined.

NOTE:
***Definition:** Concepts are the ideas, methodologies and processes that frame the knowledge and data being imparted. Principles are the theories, paradigms, or frameworks applied in a given field or body of work. Learnings are the

insights, theoretical and experiential that are provided by both student and teacher throughout mutually dialogical engagement.

Upon completion of the competencies, students will be able to:

- Articulate the relevant concepts, principles and/or learnings acquired in given areas of the 500-level courses.

  [Explanation] *Students are expected to draw upon concepts, principles, and learnings that present as relevant, appropriate, and necessary for successful completion of the exercise. The concepts, principles, and learnings will vary in relationship to the student, their coursework, their interests, and the shape of the Competency Exercise.*

- Articulate in a concise and coherent manner how these relevant concepts, principles and/or learnings relate with their personal, congregational, and/or denominational contexts.

  [Explanation] *Students come from, and will minister in, varying socioeconomic, cultural, racial, and theological contexts. In addition to demonstrating intellectual and practical knowledge, students must also intentionally integrate concepts, principles, and learnings gained throughout their seminary education. Consequently, students are expected to articulate a critical reflection about their personal, congregational, and denominational contexts as part of their faith journey.*

- Apply these relevant concepts, principles and/or learnings consistently to all parts of the Competency Exercise.

  [Explanation] *Students will learn to critically engage with these elements gained throughout different courses and apply the various elements to questions posed about the practice and life of ministry. This can be achieved through critical reflections on ministerial praxis and through the application of various elements gained throughout their courses allowing them to provide a reasonable articulation of their faith and faith journey.*

- Demonstrate an ability to think integratively between the two areas chosen for the Competency Exercise.

  [Explanation] *Students will identify the ways in which concepts, principles, and learnings acquired in the two areas chosen for the competency exercise intersect and co-inform each other. Moving beyond analysis of each individual area, students will synthesize their knowledge by planning and*

carrying out a ministry event and/or process that incorporates elements of both areas. In this way, students will articulate the ways in which the two areas are interrelated and coordinated within ministry.

7.1.9.2 Requirements

- The competency exercise integrates two subject areas, ordinarily one from the Interpreting area and one from the Leading area.

- The core of a competency exercise is an event or series of events in a student's accountable ministry site that displays a coherent pastoral practice or set of practices.

- Competency in each of the two subject areas, as well as their integration, is to be exhibited in this pastoral practice or set of practices.

- The student builds a portfolio of materials around this event or events that displays the pastoral practice(s). This portfolio is the basis for instructor evaluation of the student's competency. The portfolio includes the following types of materials:

    - advanced writing about the pastoral practice from the perspective of the two subject areas as a preparation for the event(s) that display the pastoral practice;

    - a recording of the event(s), e.g., a videotape of a worship, a pastoral care verbatim, or an audio tape of a meeting;

    - written evaluations by the church, the student, and the student's mentor of the efficacy of the pastoral practice displayed in the event(s).

- The instructors will prepare a description of the work the student must do to complete the exercise and an assessment rubric identifying the specific knowledge, skill, and character competencies on which the student will be assessed. This rubric should be structured in correlation with the five curricular goals for the M.Div. The instructors also design the assessment instruments used by church, student and mentor to record their evaluations of the student's performance.

- The faculty member in each subject area assigns the grade for that subject area.

- If a student fails a competency exercise, they will be allowed to re-take that same exercise once. If the student fails the second time, they will be placed on six-month probation. During this probationary period they will take all steps necessary in consultation with their advisor to prepare adequately and ensure that they acquire the competencies for which they are being examined. After a third failure, the student will be dismissed from the M.Div. program.

The student is eligible to be considered for transfer to another of the seminary's programs or they can consider re-instatement per the Dismissal and Probation policy, as delineated in #5.7 of the Student Handbook

- Students must pass all four competency exercises. If a student fails two competencies, they will be placed on a six-month probation. During this probationary period they will take all steps necessary in consultation with their advisor to prepare adequately and ensure that they acquire the competencies for which they are being examined. If a student fails three, they will be dismissed from the M.Div. program. The student is eligible to be considered for transfer to another of the seminary's programs, or they can consider re-instatement per the Dismissal and Probation policy, as delineated in #5.7 of the Student Handbook.

7.1.9.3 Competency Exercises – Procedures

- The Dean will review competency exercises designed by adjunct faculty to ensure consistency with the above framework and its implementation by regular faculty.

- The subject areas paired in each competency exercise are chosen by the student.

- Students will both register separately, and receive separate grades, for each area of a competency exercise. For example, an IF-LM competency exercise is actually registered as two separate items, an IF competency exercise and an LM competency exercise, for which the student receives separate grades.

7.1.9.4 Time Limits

- The four to six-week period allotted for the competency exercises begin the moment a student enrolls for a given exercise. Start dates are the first Monday of each month. The registrar will enroll the student in the Canvas site and inform the respective professors that the course has officially begun. The student is responsible for contacting the professors to initiate the exercise. It is strongly recommended that the student contact professors at least two weeks prior to enrolling (as a pre-competency preparation) to orient themselves regarding instructions, expectations, or any pre-scheduling of required activities. The student is also responsible for notifying the registrar in a timely fashion if they wish to withdraw from the course (see #5.3.2.3, Dropping a course, in the Student Handbook). If a student requires an extension, please refer to #5.6, Incomplete work, in the Student Handbook.

7.1.9.5 Competency Exercises – Effect of Waivers

Students may receive a waiver for competency exercises in specific subject

areas by virtue of transfer credit. Since competency exercises normally integrate one Interpreting subject area and one Leading subject area, waivers may create two kinds of exceptional situations that this policy addresses.

- If, due to waivers, a student is left with a single subject area that cannot be paired with another to create a competency exercise, the student is not required to complete a competency exercise in that subject area but must take 500-level courses in the subject sufficient to complete the credit hour requirement in that area and must take a 600-level (Level II) elective that integrates that subject area with another.

- If, due to waivers, a student cannot match Interpreting and Leading subject areas for every competency exercise, the student may complete one competency exercise matching two Interpreting subject areas or two Leading subject areas. However, the student must take a 600-level (Level II) elective in the subject areas that were waived initially.

7.1.10 Policy for Moving from Level I (Apprenticeship Stage; 500-level) to Level II (Journeyer Stage; 600-level) Coursework

Students may begin to take Level II courses when they have passed one Competency Exercise. In order to take Level II courses in a subject area in which they have not passed a Competency Exercise, students must have completed at least 60% of the Level I credits in that subject area. Students may take no more than eight credits of Level II courses before passing all competency exercises. Students who fail a competency exercise will not be able to take Level II courses until that competency is completed successfully.

7.1.11 Capstone Project

The Capstone Project constitutes the Master level of the M.Div. curriculum. This 6-credit project begins with a proposal from the student defining a project to be carried out in the student's congregation and around which the student builds a portfolio of materials. The portfolio provides the basis for evaluating the student's performance.

- The Capstone Project is usually carried out in the student's congregation. Students may petition the Dean for an exception to this requirement. The student will develop this petition in consultation with her or his faculty advisor.

- Students will usually complete the project and submit the portfolio to the evaluators no sooner than 3 months and no longer than 6 months after the proposal is approved. Students should expect to spend at least 240 hours of work to complete their projects successfully. Those who intend to complete the Capstone in 3 months should therefore anticipate spending no less than 20 hours a week working on this project. Those who anticipate completing it in 6 months should expect to spend no less than 10 hours a week. Work combines reading, research, congregational activities, and writing.

- Students develop proposals for their Capstone Projects in consultation with their faculty advisors (as well as other persons the advisor deems appropriate), who gives approval when they judge proposals to be sufficiently well-developed. A completed proposal should include at the following items:
  - A hypothesis about the issue faced by the congregation that will be the focus of the project. This issue should an on-going problematic calling for adaptive change rather than a problem for which an immediate, technical solution can be constructed.
  - A brief sketch of a multi-faceted strategy for responding to the issue, including a definition of progress in addressing it.
  - A brief description of the student's initial understanding of the biblical, theological, historical, and ethical foundations for analyzing the issue.
  - A brief description of pastoral leadership approaches for addressing the issue, including liturgical, educational, programmatic, pastoral, administrative, and leading.
  - An initial annotated bibliography of resources related to the issue.
  - The contents of the portfolio that will be submitted for evaluation at the end of the project.
  - The name of the local expert (e.g., local clergy mentor, work supervisor) who will serve as a consultant for the student during the project and who will join the faculty advisor in evaluating the portfolio upon its submission.
- Students register for the Capstone Project in the month after their proposal is approved.
- Students submit a portfolio by their chosen submission date (see above). Portfolios contain the following contents and are submitted as follows:

  <u>At least one week before ministry events the student must submit:</u>

  - A 4,000-5,000 word analysis of the issue being studied. An analysis incorporates research in the relevant literature and data gathered in the congregation and/or community. It looks at the general problem and how it is manifested in the student's location. It also includes the theological affirmations (with appropriate justification) that ground the student's understanding of the issue. This paper demonstrates how the student's

learning in seminary contributes to her or his understanding of the issue.

- A 4,000-5,000 word description of the approaches the student has taken to address the issue and a justification or rationale for taking that approach. The justification/rationale must draw on various disciplines and show how they are used in a coherent fashion. This description includes the concrete steps taken in applying these approaches to the issue being addressed. It also includes the theological affirmations that ground the student's approaches to the issue. This paper demonstrates how the student's learning in seminary contributes to his or her understanding of the issue.

- An annotated bibliography that includes all literature cited in other materials included in the portfolio. It is divided by discipline and includes resources the student has utilized in his or her seminary studies.

<u>After pastoral events the student must submit:</u>

- Any surveys, questionnaires, programs, literature, sermons, lessons, etc. that were used in carrying out the project in the congregation.

- Evidence of work within the congregation approximating the amount of such work in four competency exercises. Work may include video recordings of 3-4 pastoral events (e.g., sermons, lessons, etc.) as examples of how the student's ministry addressed the issue. Pastoral events will have reflected the diversity of disciplines used in the approaches taken to address the issue. Pastoral events should reflect the same depth of work as the written work.

- A 750-1,000 word assessment of the effectiveness of the project. This consists of evaluation of the degree to which the progress aimed at was achieved and what the next steps for pastoral action might be.

- Evaluations of the project's reception by the recipients of the ministry, normally including data gathered from the recipients and "exit data" gathered from the congregation gauging the project's effectiveness.

- The project is evaluated by the local expert named in the proposal and the faculty advisor. Upon initial evaluation, the evaluation team may ask the student to re-work some part of the project or portfolio before assigning a final grade. The faculty advisor assigns the final grade for the Capstone Project. A passing grade for the Capstone Project is C (i.e., 73 or higher). A student who receives a lower grade may re-take the Capstone Project once. A student re-taking the Capstone Project may be asked to re-write all or part of their proposal. The Capstone

Project is evaluated using a rubric based on the learning goals of the M.Div. program.

7.2 Master of Theological Studies (M.T.S.)

7.2.1 Purpose Statement

The Master of Theological Studies (MTS) is a program designed to provide a basic understanding of a variety of theological disciplines and develop skill in thinking theologically so as to deepen and enrich graduates' participation in a variety of forms of service in church or society, and/or to deepen and enrich their personal spiritual lives. It may also serve graduates as a foundation for further advanced study in one of the theological disciplines. There are three tracks: the general MTS, the bilingual MTS in Latinx Studies, and the MTS in African American Studies.

7.2.2 Program Learning Goals

- Graduates of the M.T.S. will integrate broad knowledge and basic interpretive skills in the disciplines of Interpreting Scripture, Interpreting Faith, Interpreting the Past, and Interpreting Behavior.

- Graduates of the M.T.S. will show beginning acquaintance with the fields of Leading through Care, Leading in Formation, Leading the Church into Mission, and Leading in Worship, and will demonstrate basic knowledge and skill in one of them.

- Graduates of the M.T.S. will work critically and creatively with the Christian tradition, including reflecting on how that work affects their own theology and life of faith.

- Graduates of the bilingual MTS in Latinx Studies and MTS in African American Studies will be familiar with their theological, hermeneutical, historical, and ecclesial contexts.

- Graduates of the bilingual MTS in Latinx Studies and MTS in African American Studies will be familiar with project management and creatively complete a project that addresses a critical issue pertinent to the congregation or ministerial site.

7.2.3 Time Limit

The Master of Theological Studies degree must be completed within ten years.

7.2.4 Curriculum Requirements

The total number of credits required to complete the M.T.S. degree is 40. These are allocated in specific ways as spelled out on the *M.T.S. curriculum worksheet* and the web page with a *M.T.S. Curriculum Overview*.

7.2.5 Residency Requirement

There is NO requirement that credits earned for the M.T.S. degree be completed on the seminary's Lexington campus. Thus, if a student wishes, the degree may be completed entirely online.

7.2.6 Ministry Site Course

Students may receive credit for a single course for work in a ministry site after completing 20 credit hours of work in the program. This course may be taken for between one (1) and three (3) credit hours.

The student will register for a Directed Study with the Professor of Pastoral Leadership. Students will receive only Pass/Fail grades for the Directed Study in a Ministerial Site.

Each credit hour of supervised practice must include:

1) at least 40 hours of supervised practice,

2) under the supervision of that faculty member before the supervised practice begins, an articulation of the learning goals to be accomplished, and

4) a structured reflection with that faculty member about achieving the learning goals.

7.2.7 Master of Theological Studies Project

The MTS final project for the general Master of Theological Studies degree is the culmination of the Master of Theological studies at LTS. It may not be started until the student has completed no fewer than twelve hours of 600-level courses. The bilingual MTS for Latinx Studies and the MTS for African American Studies final projects also require that the student has successfully completed LM 540 or LM 541, "Project Management and Ecclesial Capacity for Transformative Action." The MTS final project is directed by a Project Advisor.

Steps for Selection of Project Advisor:

- The student will compose a brief summary (between 50-600 words) of the project topic or interest.
- Students will discuss the topic with their academic advisor and then communicate it with the Dean.
- Upon discussion with the student regarding possible advisors, the Dean will provide the name(s) of a project advisor(s) unless the student's academic advisor has agreed to work with them. Subsequently, the dean will discuss the matter with a potential project advisor.
- If both parties agree, the Dean will formally contact the project advisor.
- A form must be completed with the Registrar's office within two weeks after the agreement as per the discussion with the Dean.

- The student will then contact the project advisor to establish a reasonable timeline for completion of all aspects of the MTS project.

Standards for an MTS Final Project: The final project consists of an 800- to 1,200-word (approximately 3-5 page, Times New Roman 12 pt, double-spaced) proposal and two 5,000-word (approximately 20 pages, Times New Roman, 12 pt, double-spaced) papers. Alternatively, it can be a research thesis of 12,250 to 15,000 words (50-60 pages, Times New Roman, 12 pt, double-spaced). Whether two papers or a thesis, the project must follow the current edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.* New York: The Modern Language Association, in matters of form and style.

The MTS final project displays a level of rigor and depth that exceeds that of M.T.S. coursework. The general MTS is a combined theoretical and practical project in which the student writes a theoretical/theological paper and then applies the learnings in a second paper that addresses an issue the student identifies in the student's congregation or community. The bilingual Latinx Studies and African American Studies MTS combines a theoretical framework (integrating the areas of study) with a project that is contextualized to their congregations or ministerial site and communities.

The project provides an opportunity for a student to engage in an inquiry that will:

- Develop and demonstrate a deep and coherent understanding of a theoretical/theological or religious area and enable the student to apply it to a practical issue or question,

- Further refine and integrate various elements of the student's academic work, and

- Address an ongoing issue or question through a theoretical/theological or religious lens, or through a managed contextual project.

7.2.7.1 Procedure for the Project

Project Proposal: The project begins with the student selecting a Project Advisor as delineated above in 7.2.7. Subsequently, the student registers for the course. Additionally, the bilingual MTS in Latinx Studies and the MTS in African American Studies students should identify a religious leader (or leaders) with whom they can collaborate on a strategic project that addresses a problem faced by their community. They should also identify members of their management team with whom they are going to collaborate as well.

The student should confer with the Project Advisor about procedures and faculty expectations. The proposed Project Advisor will discuss the main considerations in the proposal with the student. The proposal will cover work anticipated in both papers or thesis. Students may not begin the project writing process until the Advisor determines that the proposal is sufficiently refined.

The project proposal is an 800- to 1,200-word (3-5 pages) document containing the following elements:

- Title
- General MTS: Statement of the nature and purpose of the project
- Bilingual MTS in Latinx Studies and MTS in African American Studies: Statement identifying the key strategic issue or ministerial needs in their contextual setting that will be addressed and anticipated outcomes for change in the church and larger community.
- Identity of collaborative (management) team and religious leader(s).
- Outline of the project's basic content (for both papers or research thesis).
- Working annotated bibliography.

Project Writing and Completion: When writing the project, the student will work with the Project Advisor. Students will usually complete the project and submit it to their advisors within 15 months of registration. If the MTS project is not complete at the end of the 15-month limit, extensions will be allowed in accordance with *Policy 5.6 in the Student Handbook*. The following process must be followed:

- Should extraordinary circumstances arise that preclude the student from finishing the project after a 15-month period of the calendar year from which they applied, the project advisor may opt to grant an additional 30-day extension.
- If the student requires more than a 30-day extension, an additional 60-day extension may be granted. The project advisor and the student will enter into a written agreement that outlines a timeline for completion of the work. A copy of this written agreement must be approved by the Dean and provided to the Registrar prior to the initial 30-day deadline to prevent recording of an NC or F.

Project Grade and Final Requirements: Students must receive a minimum of 73 on their project in order to receive a grade of Credit in the course.

When the Project Advisor has graded the project, the student will submit it electronically according to standards and formats prescribed by the Director of the Library. No credit will be given for a project that does not conform to the correct form and style. The Library will retain the approved project in electronic format according to its policies for retention and circulation of such works.

7.3 Master in Pastoral Studies (M.P.S.)

7.3.1 Purpose Statement

The Masters in Pastoral Studies program acknowledges the important role that the laity play in the life and health of thriving congregations. The purpose of the Master in Pastoral Studies program is to prepare the laity for ministry at a congregational, diocesan, or parish level. The degree is designed in particular for lay persons who seek theological and biblical training to support the work of the Church, but who do not seek ordination. Graduates of this program will have a basic knowledge of scripture, contemporary biblical scholarship, the Christian tradition, theology, and for the Roman Catholic Studies track, sacramental and liturgical traditions. They will have skills in developing and executing programs of education, in administration of parish life, and in pastoral care and nurture of Christian communities, development of congregational and community programs that enhance ecological wellbeing and care, and development of educational programs.

7.3.2 Program Learning Goals

While each track will have its own learning goals attentive to the requirements of their particular focus, in general:

- Students will gain the skills and knowledge in the fields of interpreting Scripture, interpreting the Church's past, and studies that are needed for effective ministry in non-ordained positions within a congregation, para-church ministry, parish, or diocese.

- Students will gain the skills and knowledge in the fields of leading the church through care, leading the church through formation, and leading the church into mission that are needed for effective ministry in non-ordained positions within congregations, para-church ministries, parishes, or other social settings.

7.3.2.1 Program Learning Goals for Master in Pastoral Studies in Creation Care and Ecotheology

Students who complete the Creation Care and Ecotheology track will:

- Explore the biblical, theological, and ethical bases for Creation care living and ministerial practice

- Consider the importance of Creation care living in daily life habits and ethos

- Explore the ecumenical dialogue that is taking place about Creation care with ecclesial and non-ecclesial organizations

- Determine how creation care is related to acts of communal justice in the world and in the Church

- Identify practical and literacy resources regarding Creation care and ecotheologies

- Identify church and community partnerships and practice sites to join in active ministries in Creation care

7.3.2.2 Program Learning Goals for Master in Pastoral Studies in Roman Catholic Studies

Students who complete the Roman Catholic Studies track will:

- Fully comprehend and integrate the complexity, history and living praxis of Roman Catholic traditions

- Deepen their understanding of various Christian religious traditions, discovering areas of shared traditions and beliefs, that will enable ecumenical dialogue

- Become familiarized with select non-Christian religious traditions
- Gain the ability to live out the learning (praxis) achieved in the program, which in turn will support leadership in congregations, parishes, para-church, or social settings that have ministerial import

- Express a renewed commitment to spiritual practices in their personal and professional lives

7.3.2.3 Program Learning Goals for Master in Pastoral Studies in Spiritual Formation and Care

Students who complete the Spiritual Formation and Care track will:

- Deepen their knowledge about theological and biblical bases of spiritual formation

- Be familiarized with the psychological theories that undergird spiritual formation and care

- Explore different models of faith development and its impact on spirituality

- Examine different issues that affect and contribute to spiritual formation and care of others such as trauma, grief, suffering, and discrimination

- Consider the role of spiritual formation in areas of chaplaincy, spiritual direction, congregational leadership and education, and other practical applications

7.3.3 Time Limit

The Master in Pastoral Studies degree must be completed within ten years.

7.3.4 Curriculum Requirements

The total number of credits required to complete the M.P.S. degree is 40. These are allocated in specific ways as spelled out on the *M.P.S. curriculum worksheet* and the web page with a *M.P.S. Curriculum Overview*.

7.3.5 Residency Requirement

The program is completed fully online with no residency requirements, other than the student's chosen practicum site.

7.3.6 Pastoral Studies Practicum (LM 677)

The pastoral studies practicum is a 3-credit hour course that entails a 15 week, 10 hours a week hands on learning experience with supervision in a parish or congregational setting, chaplaincy or hospital, or parachurch or community setting that reflects the student's area of study and interest. The practicum will provide students with opportunities to observe and then practice a ministry, develop the spiritual and relational skills needed, and envision a project that can be carried out after completing the degree.

Student responsibilities:

1. Meet with supervisor and draw up a list of goals and tasks
2. Observe
3. Incrementally take responsibility
4. Keep "planning book"
5. Journal
    - Keep track of hours and how they are spent
    - Keep a record of reflections: what worked, what went wrong, what you think and feel about this experience
6. Final assignment

After having a conversation with your supervisor about your practicum experience, write a paper (1800-2000 words, Times New Roman, 12 pt, double spaced) that sums up in hindsight answers to the questions:

- What did you learn?

- How did you grow?
- In what areas do you want to grow?
- From a theological/ ministerial and practical viewpoint, how did the practicum further (or fail to further) your formation?

Advisor's role:

1. Keep in touch with the student.
2. Have conversations with the student and the supervisor twice during the practicum: as the student assumes responsibility and at the end.
3. Read the journal and final paper. Inform the Registrar when the practicum has been completed. The Practicum receives a pass/fail grade.

7.3.7 Masters in Pastoral Studies Final Integrative Paper (MPS 770)

At the completion of LM 677 (Practicum) and coursework in a given track, students will have an opportunity to demonstrate competencies in the subject matter and its integration of learning from the practical ministerial site experience, and how they plan to apply this integrative competence in their daily life and vocational calling by writing a final integrative paper [6000-7500 words (double-spaced, Times New Roman); or 25-30 pages]. The topic will be approved by the program advisor. A faculty advisor in the discipline will be assigned by the program advisor in consultation with the Dean.

The paper will be comprised of four key parts:

- Presentation of a particular pastoral issue the student has encountered, or about which they desire to deepen their knowledge and response. This can be written in the form of a case study (where the student presents a situation they have really encountered), or a brief presentation of a hypothetical situation they are likely, or fear, to encounter [600-800 words or 2-3 pages].
- A *theoretical* exploration of how the selected topic is handled in literature, with a particular attention to the perspective of theology and the human science, teachings of the church, or other relevant fields of study. This would include how systematic or constructive theologians, biblical scholars, ethicists, or other related fields of study might interpret the predicament presented. The current version of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (NY: The Modern Language Association) is to be followed. This section will be 2000–2200 words or 8–9 pages.
- A plan of care that weaves all these different dimensions of work together and that demonstrates how pastoral, spiritual, and/ or ecological care are best

constructed in conversation with reality (the case or issue at hand), theory (all that we can learn from others about the issue), reflection (an essential ingredient for effective pastoral care response), and creativity (the response which reflects one's own unique gifts and capacities for care). [2000–2200 words or 8–9 pages].

7.4 Doctor of Ministry-Building Capacity for Transformative Ministries

The Doctor of Ministry program at Lexington Seminary, a graduate professional degree, is designed to enhance pastors' capacity to critically interpret and engage contemporary cultures and structures as a means to give fresh expression to the gospel and to transform their communities.

7.4.1 Program Goals

A graduate of the LTS D.Min. Building Capacity for Transformational Ministries program will:

- Have a basic acquaintance with a range of approaches to interpreting contemporary cultural and structural contexts, and facility in at least one approach,
- Have facility in integrating advanced work in the classical theological discipline with the critical interpretation of culture and structures in service to the church's articulation of the gospel,
- Have a basic acquaintance with a range of approaches for re-imagining organizations and institutional practices that are informed by the critical interpretation of cultures and structures, and facility in at least one approach, and
- Have a basic acquaintance with approaches to building capacity and empowering congregations/ministerial sites for transformative ministry.

7.4.2 Residency Requirement

Four credits of the work required for the D.Min. degree must be completed through courses taken at the seminary's Lexington campus.

7.4.3 Course Work

Students will enter the D.Min. program as a cohort and work through the initial required courses with their cohort. All classes receive two hours of credit and follow the letter grade scale of the Master's-level programs.

7.4.3.1 Initial Required Courses

Scheduled over approximately eighteen months, an entering cohort of students will take the following courses (for a total of ten hours of credit) in order:

- DM 811, *Building the Capacity of the Reflective Practitioner* (online)

- DM 812, *Building Cultural Frameworks for Contemporary Contexts* (on-campus intensive)
- DM 813, *Building Congregational/Ministerial Frameworks for Contemporary Contexts* (on-campus intensive)
- DM 814, *Building Theological Frameworks for Contemporary Contexts* (online)
- DM 815, *Building Capacity for Transformative Ministries* (online)

7.4.3.2 Electives

Students will complete twelve hours of electives. These electives will be taken primarily after the completion of the initial required courses. However, one elective (a two-credit hour course) may be taken following the successful completion of DM 811 and another two electives (each a two-credit hour course) may be taken following the successful completion of DM 812 and DM 813. These courses will primarily (but not exclusively) be 600-level M.Div. courses with added requirements for D.Min. students. These added requirements must include individual research in which course content is related to the interpretive approaches learned in the required courses.

A minimum of four credits must be taken in the practical disciplines (Leading courses), and a minimum of four credits must be taken in the classical theological disciplines (Interpreting courses).

7.4.3.3 Concluding Required Course

Once students have successfully completed all their electives, they will take a final online required D.Min. course, DM 890, *Writing the Final Project*. This course will help them prepare and present for critique a proposal for their final project. The course is considered completed and passed when the D.Min. Committee approves the proposal.

7.4.3.4 Transfer Credit

D.Min. students may transfer up to six elective hours into the program. For information on allowable transfer credits see Student Handbook section 5.11, "*Transfer Credit*."

7.4.4 The Final Project

The final DMin project represents six credits of doctoral level work on a problem, issue, or question that a congregation/ministerial site has identified as critical for the Church and wider community. The student will develop and implement a contextually sensitive and theologically consistent project, intervention, or program

that builds capacity in the congregation/ministerial site for transformative ministerial action in the community. The project will employ a reflection-action-reflection methodology, and use the approaches to cultural and structural analysis, congregational/ministerial analysis, theological reflection, and building capacity for transformative ministry developed in the program. The audience of the project is the student's peers in ministry.

7.4.4.1 Project Proposal

DM 890, *Writing the Final Project*

Once D.Min. students have independently completed their electives, a new D.Min. cohort will be created to form a community of co-journeyers through the final phase of the program and help them prepare and present for critique a proposal for their final project.

Each student will work with a project advisor in developing their individual proposal. The student will work in consultation with the D.Min. Director to select an advisor in advance of the course.

Upon completion of the project, the student with the D.Min. Director and advisor, in consultation with the Dean, will select two additional readers for the institutionally approved list to form the Project Committee.

The instructor will guide the cohort through the specific expectations for the final project and proposal.

Proposal Contents

The project proposal should demonstrate to the D.Min. Committee that the student:

- has developed a critical assessment of a problem, issue or question in the community that can be addressed by the congregational/ministerial context;
- has developed a sound approach drawing on methods of cultural and structural analysis, congregational/ministerial analysis, and contextual theological reflection learned in earlier coursework for studying the problem, issue or question;
- has developed a plan to employ a method of building capacity for transformative ministry to address the problem, issue, or question; and
- has engaged the scholarly literature related to the problem, issue, or question.

The proposal should include the following four elements:

- a title page with the project title, student's name, project advisor's name, and date of submission;

- a 1500-word presentation of the project including the elements described in the preceding paragraph;

- an outline of the chapters of the project following the format described below, with each chapter described in 100 words; and

- an annotated bibliography of scholarly and practical books, journal articles, and online resources related to the problem, issue or question being investigated consulted in the literature review required in the preceding paragraph.

The proposal should be formatted in the same style as the final project.

Submission of the Proposal

Students may only submit the proposal to the D.Min. Committee with the approval of their project advisors. When such approval has been gained, students should email a digital copy of the proposal to the D.Min. Director, who will present it to the D.Min. Committee.

After reviewing the proposal, the Committee will take one of the following actions:

- approve the proposal, so that students may move forward on their project with their advisor without any further oversight by the Committee,

- approve the proposal with suggestions, so that students may move forward on their project with their advisor without any further oversight by the Committee, but with the expectation that the work will take into consideration and make adjustments for concerns raised by the Committee,

- require the submission of a revised proposal, in which case students, with their advisor, must address concerns raised by the Committee before moving forward, or

- reject the proposal, in which case students must seek a different problem, issue or question to address and develop a completely new proposal to be considered by the Committee.

7.4.4.2 Project

The project will follow a reflection-action-reflection logic.

- Using methods of cultural and structural analysis, congregational/ministerial analysis, and contextual theological reflection, students will reflect on a problem, issue, or question that arises out of their ministerial experience and in conversation with scholarly literature.

- Students will develop a strategy aimed at building capacity for transformation in addressing the problem, issue or question and carry out the strategy in their congregational/ministerial context.

- Finally, students will reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the actions taken, naming potential directions for future action.

The chapter structure of the D.Min. project tis to be as follows:

- Introduction to the problem, issue, or question

    - A description of the problem, issue or question should be one in the student's individual context, but one which can be found more widely in the field of ministry in relevant contexts,

    - A review of the scholarly literature related to the problem, issue, or question,

    - A description of the student's approach in relation to literature and statement of the thesis for the project, and

    - An introduction to the structure of the rest of the project.

- In the following two to three chapters, all three of these approaches need to be included and integrated in analyzing the ministerial context and the wider community:

    - Cultural and Structural Analysis (drawing on one of the methods learned and tested in coursework)

    - Congregational/Ministerial Analysis (drawing on one of the methods learned and tested in coursework)

    - Contextual Theological Analysis (drawing on one of the methods learned and tested in coursework)

- The closing two chapters should be as follows:

    - A Proposal for a project in building capacity in their congregational or ministry for transformation in the community (drawing on one of the methods learned and tested in coursework) and

- A Description of the Action Taken, Lessons Learned, and Reflection on what was done including next steps.

Length and Formatting of the Project

The optimum length of the final project (excluding the bibliography) is approximately 125 pages, and there is an absolute maximum of 150 pages.

The project is to be written using 12 point, Times New Roman Font.

Pages are to be double-spaced, with 1.5-inch left hand margins and 1-inch margins on the other three sides, printed single-sided.

The project must follow Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013) in matters of form and style. For formatting, see Student Handbook section, 7.4.4.3, *Project Completion and Defense, Final Submission*.

7.4.4.3 Project Completion and Defense

Project Submission Deadlines

Projects deemed ready for defense must be submitted to the D.Min. Director no later than **February 1** in the year the student intends to graduate.

The D.Min. Director will schedule the defense on a date that allows the readers adequate time to work through the project and allows the student adequate time to make revisions required before submitting the final copies of the project.

Following the defense, any required revisions and final approval, the final physical and digital copies of the project must be submitted to the Director of the Library by **June 1** in order for the student to participate in graduation.

Completion and Submission for Review

The final project is designed as independent work that takes place under the guidance of the project advisor. The rhythm and process of advising is to be negotiated between the advisor and the student. The advisor must approve the completion of the project as ready for defense before it is submitted to the D.Min. Director.

Once completed, the project is to be submitted in digital form as a MSWord document (.docx) file via email to the D.Min. Director. At that point the Director, in consultation with the student and project advisor, will appoint two other readers to a Project Committee.

Project Defense

After being given adequate time to read the project, the Project Committee will convene for an oral defense that will last 1 to 1.5 hours. The student will open the conversation with a brief summary of the project. The Committee members will then ask the student questions concerning the project.

The Committee evaluates the final project on a Pass/Fail basis. The Committee will give a decision on the project as soon as possible following the meeting. The Committee will take one of the following actions:

- pass the project with honors,
- pass the project as is,
- pass the project pending required revisions, overseen by the project advisor and/or the D.Min. Director,
- defer the decision concerning passing or failing the project and require the student to make significant revisions and present the project to the Committee again, or
- fail the project.

If the Committee fails the project, the student may not continue to work on the problem, issue or question that was the focus of the project toward the completion of the degree program. This leaves the student two options:

- The student may work with the D.Min. director to start the process for developing a new project (This does not require retaking DM 890, but does require working with a new project advisor to submit a proposal to the D.Min. Committee for approval.) or
- The student may choose to be awarded the Certificate in Transformational Ministries and Leadership in lieu of finishing the degree program.

Final Submission

When the final project is submitted, it must be accompanied by a one-paragraph abstract of 100 words or less to be published in the *American Theological Library Association's Research in Ministry (RIM): An Index to Doctor of Ministry Theses and Projects.*

The final copies of the project conform to the following formatting standards:

- title page and signature page following the template established by the D.Min Committee;

- pages are to be double-spaced, with 1.5-inch left hand margins and 1-inch margins on the other three sides, printed single-sided;

- the paper copies submitted to the library should be laser printed on acid-free paper that meets the following minimum criteria: 20-pound weight, 92 bright, 25% cotton content.

The student must submit two physical copies and one digital copy to the Director of the Library. Students are responsible for the binding fees for two copies. One archival copy remains in the Library and the other is returned to the student. Students may pay for additional personal copies to be bound if they so desire. The digital copy must be submitted in MSWord (.docx) format.

7.4.4.4 Time Limits

If a Doctor of Ministry student who is enrolled in DM 890, *Writing the Final Project*, or having in enrolled in DM 891 and are in the process of writing their project, ceases to contact their advisors and/or demonstrates no evidence of active participation in the life of the seminary—either through contact with advisor, office of the Dean, or faculty member—for a more than a calendar year from the date of their registration in either DM 890 or DM 891, they shall be administratively withdrawn from the program and the seminary. They can apply for readmittance if they desire to complete the program at a later date.

7.5 Non-Degree Students

Special students and auditors do not necessarily require or seek a terminal degree but are interested in furthering their theological education. They may enroll in one class to transfer to another school or simply to learn some new information. The Certificate in Continuing Education Program is a continuing education "micro-credentialing" program for pastors and graduates of theological programs who desire further theological training in a specific area of interest.

7.5.1. Special Students

7.5.1.1 Once admitted, special students can enroll in up to 12 credit hours a year. The academic credit earned can be transferred to another school or into a degree program at LTS. Please refer to 4.4.3.1 for further information.

7.5.1.2 Special Students are required to complete all assignments as required as indicated by the course syllabus or course instructor to earn academic credit.

7.5.2 Auditors

7.5.2.1 Auditors may enroll in as many courses as they wish. Auditors do not earn academic credit.

7.5.2.2 Auditors are not required to complete any assignments or post on discussion boards. Course professors are not required to grade their work.

7.5.3 Certificate in Continuing Education

7.5.3.1 Students enrolled in the Certificate in Continuing Education Program must complete the 5 credit hours associated with the particular topic or theme offered in a given academic year, complete 70% of assigned readings, and post twice a week on discussion boards, when applicable.

7.5.3.2 LTS Degree students who enroll in all classes and complete the requirements will receive a notation on their transcript. Non-LTS students will receive a certificate upon completion of all requirements and payment of fees.

8.0 Certificate Programs

8.1 Certificate in Pastoral Ministry

The Certificate in Pastoral Ministry is a Master's-level program designed for non-degree seeking students. To earn the certificate a student must complete 24 credit hours matching specified credit totals in each of the eight subjects of the curriculum. Students in the program may take courses either for academic credit or not for credit.

8.1.1 Purpose Statement

Some ministerial situations do not demand an academic degree but require that certain skills be demonstrated to qualify for the position or for commissioning. Additionally, a certificate can help an individual transition into a new career area, gain confidence and background in a particular skill or pursue a new area of interest. Certificate programs are intended to meet these diverse needs.

8.1.2 Program Learning Goals

- Students will gain a beginning level of skills and knowledge in the fields of Interpreting the Scripture for the Church, Interpreting the Past for the Church, Interpreting the Faith for the Church, and Interpreting the Behavior For the Church that are needed for effective ministry in the Christian community.

- Students will gain a beginning level of skills and knowledge in the fields of Leading the Church in Worship (including preaching), Leading the Church Through Care, Leading the Church Through Formation, and Leading the Church Into Mission that are needed for effective ministry in the Christian community.

8.1.3 Certificate in Pastoral Ministry, taken FOR CREDIT

Students who have earned a minimum of one full-time year's credits toward a bachelor's degree from an institution accredited by an organization recognized by the Department of Education (or international equivalent) may take courses for academic credit. In this case they must complete all the work and fulfill all the requirements of a particular course that are expected of degree seeking students. Credit hours earned in this way may transfer into a degree program at a later time if the student so chooses.

8.1.4 Certificate in Pastoral Ministry, taken NOT FOR CREDIT

Students who take the courses without credit must fulfill the following requirements to have satisfactory completion of the courses recorded in order to earn the certificate without credit:

- View all online lectures
- Read 70% of the course material
- Participate in the online discussion through an average of at least 2 posts per week

Courses completed according to these norms are not granted academic credit, and thus are not transferable to other programs.

8.2 Certificate in Congregational Renewal and Leadership

The Certificate in Congregational Renewal and Leadership is a 10-hour post-Master of Divinity program designed for non-degree seeking students. Certificate Students complete a Doctor of Ministry admissions application and upon acceptance take the first five courses in the D.Min. program as part of a cohort. Students in the certificate program may apply to transfer into the D.Min. program. Likewise, students in the D.Min. program may choose to receive the certificate if they decide not to complete all of the requirements for the D.Min. degree.

All courses in the Certificate and D.Min. programs are 2 credit hour courses. The course requirements for the Certificate are:

- DMIN 811 *Building the Capacity of the Reflective Practitioner*
- DMIN 812 *Building Cultural Frameworks for Contemporary Contexts*
- DMIN 813 *Building Congregational/Ministerial Frameworks for Contemporary Contexts*
- DMIN 814 *Building Theological Frameworks for Contemporary Contexts*

- DMIN 815 *Building Capacity for Transformational Ministries*

The admissions standards as well as expectations and policies concerning academic performance for the Certificate in Congregational Renewal and Leadership are the same as those for the D.Min. program.

9.0 Preparing for Graduation

9.1 Application for Conferring of Degree

Students who plan to graduate submit an Application for Conferring of Degree to the Registrar during February of the year in which graduation is planned.

9.2 Caps and Gowns

The Seminary arranges for provision of caps and gowns for graduates. The cost is part of the graduation fee. Students will be notified of procedures for ordering.

9.3 Graduation Costs and Fees

Students should plan ahead for the expenses of graduation. Each student will receive a statement from the Business Office itemizing the amounts due, including a graduation fee. Failure to pay outstanding financial obligations may prohibit graduation.

9.4 Students Seeking Ordination

Students who are pursuing ordination must seek the proper endorsement from the appropriate denominational agencies. For members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), this means a regional committee or commission on ministry. Members of other denominations should consult their own ecclesiastical officials. In most cases, it is important to begin the process early and not wait until the last year of seminary study.

10.0 Financial Policies and Procedures

10.1 Payment and Refund Policy

Students are expected to meet tuition, fees, library, and other obligations when they are due. Students will not be allowed to have transcripts or other information released, or graduate, if money is owed to the Seminary. Students will be allowed to register for courses but will not be able to start a course until all outstanding balances are paid.

- Bills with clear due dates are provided. Balances not paid within 30 days of the due date may incur a late fee.

- Payments will be accepted in cash, by check or credit card.

- Refunds are provided for tuition and fees if the student drops courses by the published deadline. A fee will be charged for any course dropped less than 21 days before the

start of the course see section 5.3, “Registration Procedures.” There are no refunds for withdrawn courses or late fees.

- The seminary does not cover added costs for programs such as CPE, AMERC, or the Hispanic Summer Program even though it grants credit for work done in them.

10.2 Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees are subject to change each academic year. Students are encouraged to consult the school’s website for current information.

10.3 Financial Aid

Financial aid is available to students who file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Aid in the form of student loans is available to qualifying students. The FAFSA can be filed online at https://fafsa.ed.gov/. Students should request that a copy of the processed results be sent to LTS by entering the school code G01971. For additional financial aid and scholarship information, students should contact the Director of Financial Aid.

10.3.1 Scholarships

- Each Disciples of Christ or United Church of Christ M.Div., M.T.S., Certificate in Pastoral Ministry with credit, or Special student who has been an active member of a Disciples of Christ or UCC congregation for a year or longer and who is under care of his/her regional commission on the ministry will receive a scholarship of 50% per credit hour up to the total number of credits required by the program. All D.Min. and Certificate in Congregational Renewal and Leadership students, and all other M.Div., M.T.S, Certificate in Pastoral Ministry with credit, or Special students will receive a scholarship of 30% per credit hour up to the total number of credits required by the program. Each Roman Catholic M.P.S student will receive a scholarship of 50% per credit hour up to the total number of credits required by the program. Students who retake any coursework because they have failed the coursework will receive no scholarship aid for that retaken coursework.

- LTS provides up to 10 full-tuition scholarships for outstanding M.Div. students. These scholarships will be given for a maximum of four years.

    - The 10 full-tuition scholarships will be offered at a rate of one or two per year to students. These scholarships will be awarded by the LTS Scholarship Committee to any student, regardless of denomination, who meets the criteria for “potential for excellence in ministry.” No criteria beyond a record of past academic success, exceptional promise for a future in congregational ministry and the ability to successfully complete a **minimum of 12 credit hours per calendar year** apply to these scholarships. The scholarships are available for

four years only and are non-renewable.

- Students who receive these scholarships will not simultaneously be eligible for the 50% or 30% scholarships listed above.

- LTS provides up to ten 75% tuition scholarships for outstanding M.Div. students. These scholarships will be given for a maximum of four years.

  - The ten 75% tuition scholarships will be offered at a rate of one or two per year to students. These scholarships will be awarded by the LTS Scholarship Committee to any student, regardless of denomination. No criteria beyond a record of past academic success, exceptional promise for a future in ministry, demonstration of financial need, and the ability to successfully complete a **minimum of 12 credit hours per calendar year** is required to apply for these scholarships. The scholarships are available for four years only and are non-renewable.

  - Students who receive these scholarships will not simultaneously be eligible for the 50% or 30% scholarships listed above.

- No scholarship aid will be provided to non-credit certificate students or auditors.

- Students receive no scholarship aid while on probation.

10.3.2 Loans

- Federal Stafford Loans: Federal Stafford loans are available to Lexington Theological Seminary degree-seeking students. For additional information, contact the Director of Financial Aid.

- VA Loans: LTS is an approved school for students who qualify for Veterans Administration Benefits.

10.4 Billing Errors or Inquiries

All billing inquiries should be made of the Director of Financial Aid.

10.5 Returned Check Policy

A student whose check is returned to the Seminary for insufficient funds will be charged a $50 returned check fee for each check returned. If a second check is returned for insufficient funds the student will be denied check payment privileges for their remaining time at seminary.

11.0 Miscellaneous Information and Policies

11.1 Call to Active Military Service

Lexington Theological Seminary responds to the needs of students who are called to active military service by being as helpful and accommodating as possible.

When a student leaves after the drop deadline but prior to the withdrawal deadline, the Seminary will:

- Refund all tuition and fees for the term
- Maintain active student status
- Retain scholarship status
- Enter the grade of W (withdrawal) for each course with the reason noted on the transcript

When a student leaves after the Withdrawal deadline, the Seminary will:

- Enter the grade of W for all course work unless the course(s) are sufficiently far along to allow the granting of credit and grade for the course(s)
- Draw up a letter of agreement/contract between the student and each faculty member outlining what work needs to be completed in order for the student to receive credit for the course. (This will be filed with the Registrar.)

The returning student will be allowed a full year after de-activation to complete work for credit.

11.2 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)

See *Appendix A: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*.

11.3 Changes in Personal Information

The student is responsible for reporting all changes in personal information promptly to the Registrar including, but not limited to, mailing and/or residential address changes and e-mail address changes. To change your name a legal document (social security card, marriage certificate, etc.) which shows your legal name must be submitted to the Registrar. The Office of the Registrar will notify all other Seminary offices of the information change(s).

11.4 Recording Policy

Material prepared for and presented in courses by instructors are their intellectual property. Therefore, before recording lectures in onsite courses, students must obtain permission

from professor or lecturer. Use of any material (oral, written, or digital) produced by the instructor for the course may not be shared outside the Seminary setting except by written consent of the professor or lecturer. If used outside the classroom with permission, the student is responsible to provide proper entity, citation and credit for all materials used.

11.5 Cell Phones and Other Devices

All audible communication devices should be turned off while students are in the classroom, chapel and other areas where audible devices would cause a disturbance.

11.6 Textbooks

Students may obtain books for their courses via personal sources or from a Seminary recommended source.

11.7 Minimum Technological Requirements for Participation in LTS Degree Programs

These are the minimum & preferred specifications that we recommend for LTS students. If you have questions, please reach out to the Instructional Designer/Technologist about any additional recommendations. Please note that we do not recommend any specific brands.

Hardware:
PCs

- Operating System
  - Minimum: Windows 10 64-bit, Windows 7 Ultimate, or Windows 8.1 Pro
  - Recommended: Windows 10 64-bit
  - Optimal: Windows 10 64-bit

- Memory (RAM)
  - Minimum: 8 GB or more
  - Recommended: 16 GB or more
  - Optimal: 32 GB or more

- Processor
  - Minimum: Core i5 (Windows) | 1.6 GHz or higher; AMD FX-4300; Ryzen 5
  - Recommended: Core i7 (Windows) | 2.3 GHz or higher; AMD FX-9590; Ryzen 7
  - Optimal: Core i7 or i9 (Windows) | 2.6 GHz or higher

- Hard Drive (can be solid state drive or hard disk drive)
  - Minimum: 500GB
  - Recommended: 500GB or more
  - Optimal: 1TB or more

- Headphone set with microphone, external microphone
- Webcam
- Digital Video Camera (*not a cell phone*) or access to one
- External hard drive for backups or USB 2.0 or 3.0

Mac

- Operating System
  - Minimum: High Sierra (OS 10.12) or better
  - Recommended: Mojave (10.14) or newer
  - Optimal: Mojave (10.14, or newest one)

- Memory (RAM)
  - Minimum: 16GB or more
  - Recommended: 16GB or more
  - Optimal: 64GB or more

- Processor
  - Minimum: Core i5 (Windows) | 1.6GHz or higher
  - Recommended: Core i7 (Windows) | 2.3GHz or higher
  - Optimal: Core i7 or i9 (Windows) | 2.6GHz or higher

- Solid State Drive
  - Minimum: 512GB or more
  - Recommended: 1TB or more
  - Optimal: 4TB

- Headphone set with microphone, external microphone
- Webcam
- Digital Video Camera (*not a cell phone*) or access to one
- External hard drive for backups or USB 2.0 or 3.0 (highly recommended)

Internet Browser:

The latest version of at least one of the following is Required. They are listed in order of their compatibility with LTSOnline (with the most compatible first). It is strongly recommended that you use one of the top two:

- Google Chrome
- Mozilla Firefox

Internet:

You must have at least one of the following. They are listed in order of their desirability for speed and full participation in LTSOnline (with the best listed first).

- Minimum: 2.6Mbps/1.8Mbps (up/down)
- Recommended: 3.8Mbps/3.0Mbps (up/down)

Software:

You must have all of the following:

- Latest version of Windows Media Player
- Latest version of Adobe Reader
- Microsoft Office 2017 or productivity software compatible with Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint

Technology Agreement Form:

New students will be required to fill-out the LTS Online Technology Requirement form prior to registering for their first online course. The form is located within the online application.

All students are responsible for fulfilling and maintaining all these requirements for the duration of their studies at LTS. Lack of any technology as listed here will not constitute a basis to be excused from mandatory class assignments.