

**SAN FRANCISCO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
ADVANCED PASTORAL STUDIES PROGRAM
POLICIES and PROCEDURES on ADMISSIONS**

The following excerpts from the recently-revised Advanced Pastoral Studies Program Policies are relevant to admissions questions.

ADMISSION: PREREQUISITES

Professional Experience

The nature of the Doctor of Ministry as a professional degree assumes that a student is returning to school after years of experience as a religious professional, thus bringing that maturity and experience to the educational process. The requirement of three years of experience in ministry normally refers to full time, post-M.Div. professional ministry. The Association of Theological Schools allows an exception to this provision for up to 15% of entering students in a given year.

Ordination Equivalency

We recognize that some faith groups do not ordain persons for leadership, and/or that in some faith traditions certain persons, because of their gender, race, or sexual orientation, are prohibited from ordination. If an applicant to the Doctor of Ministry program is not ordained in the usual sense of the word, he or she must submit documentation testifying to his/her status as a professional religious leader, however so considered in her or his faith tradition. We accept as equally valid such terms as licensing, consecration, commissioning or endorsement, as so denominated by the applicant's faith tradition.

M.Div.

Evidence must be presented that the applicant has a Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent with a GPA of 3.0 or above.

M.Div. Equivalency

Applicants to the Doctor of Ministry program who are requesting equivalency for the M.Div. degree must submit transcripts of all their graduate theological work. The applicant's transcripts will be evaluated by the Registrar and APS committee, according to four criteria:

- a. Were these courses taken at an educational institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools?
- b. Is the total number of semester units 72 or more?
- c. Is the overall GPA 3.0 or higher?
- d. Does the applicant's course work include an array of courses covering the span of theological disciplines?

If the applicant's previous studies meet these criteria, she or he will be granted M.Div. equivalency

for purposes of application to the Doctor of Ministry program.

Provisional Admission

Students who are not eligible for admission to the D Min program because they do not have an M.Div. degree, and have been denied equivalency based on the regular criteria, may be granted provisional admission while they take the additional graduate level theological courses necessary to meet the equivalency requirement. In order to be admitted provisionally to the D Min program, an applicant must have, at the time of admission, at least 48 graduate theological units. He or she must then secure up to an additional 24 units. These additional units will focus on subject areas felt to be deficient in the student's array of earlier course work, as determined by the APS committee. Such students are eligible to take some or all of these additional courses at the D Min or M.Div. course level at SFTS or other GTU schools. Such students may also secure the necessary course work at any other accredited university or seminary approved by the APS Director. Upon satisfactory completion of these units, the student will be advanced to full admission by the APS committee, and then continue taking the normal sequence of seminars in the program.

Students so admitted must meet all of the other requirements for admission (three or more years experience in ministry 3.0 GPA., ordination or its equivalent, writing sample, and sufficient references).

Scholarly Writing

As part of the application for the D Min, potential students must submit a sample of scholarly writing in English that includes the use of research, footnotes and scholarly analysis.

TOEFL

Applicants for whom English is a second language must include in their application evidence of a TOEFL score of at least 550 (paper-based test) or at least 80 (internet-based test). Those students who take the paper-based exam must also demonstrate that their oral communication skills are adequate for full participation in all seminars. Therefore the internet-based test is preferable.

If an applicant has also earned an appropriate theological degree from an English-speaking university or seminary, this requirement is waived.

TRANSFERS and TRANSFER OF CREDITS FROM OTHER PROGRAMS

Students who have begun Doctor of Ministry studies in a program of another accredited theological institution may apply and, if admitted, request transfer credit up to half the number of required APS seminars for work completed at another accredited institution. Transferable work will be decided by the APS Committee in consultation with the Dean on a case-by-case basis.

ENROLLMENT: STUDENTS WITH ADVANCED STANDING

Cooperative Agreement with SFTS Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction Program

Students who have received a Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction (DASD) from SFTS are eligible, if otherwise admissible, to enter the D Min with advanced placement equal to nine semester units. Such students enter the multi-disciplinary D Min program, completing three additional seminars—another nine units—before advancing to candidacy and the D/P.

Cooperative Agreement with Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry

A cooperative agreement with Seattle University allows students completing Seattle's one-year Program in Pastoral Leadership to enter the D.Min. Program at SFTS, if approved for admission, with advanced placement equivalent to nine semester units. Such students would need to complete three seminars—another nine units—before advancing to candidacy and the D/P.

Cooperative Agreement with McCormick Theological Seminary

A cooperative agreement with McCormick Theological Seminary allows students who are approved for admission and who have completed McCormick's one-year Certificate in Pastoral Leadership followed by the one-year SFTS Diploma in Executive Leadership to begin SFTS D.Min. studies with advanced placement equivalent to three courses—nine units. Such students would need to complete three seminars—another nine units—before to advance to candidacy and the D/P.

An experimental cross-registration agreement allows SFTS D.Min. students to enroll in courses offered by McCormick Theological Seminary for transferable credit. Ordinarily, students would not satisfy core or foundational course requirements through this arrangement. Exceptions may be allowed by mutual agreement of both program directors.

CURRICULUM SUBSTITUTIONS

Students may not substitute a course or courses for any required component of the program.

EXCEPTIONS:

As delineated above, coursework completed for the SFTS Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction, Seattle University Certificate Program in Pastoral Leadership, and D.Min. courses offered by McCormick Theological Seminary.

Students in the Executive Leadership Concentration may request completion of the four seminars in the SFTS Diploma in Executive Leadership program to be credited as the equivalent of two D.Min. seminars. (*Effective Fall 2014*)

COURSEWORK

Teaching Format

The courses in the Doctor of Ministry are taught in a doctoral seminar format. Students carry major responsibility to fully engage in their learning experience by presenting on the readings and engaging in critical theological reflection through class discussions, written assignments, and participation in online forum exchanges via the Moodle system.

Plagiarism

It is the policy of SFTS to identify and to penalize acts of plagiarism. The Seminary's definition of plagiarism and its policies on plagiarism are described in the *D/P Guide*. Students guilty of plagiarizing material in seminar papers or in the D/P are subject to disciplinary procedures, including possible suspension or permanent dismissal from the program.

Grading

Grading options in the APS program are:

- Pass/Fail
- In-Progress
- Incomplete.

An "in-progress" grade may be given when a student is engaged in a multi-part course (e.g., the Dissertation/Project Seminar) which may require more than one semester or one summer session to complete.

In addition to issuing a grade, instructors will provide a narrative summary of the student's performance in class, indicating strengths, weaknesses, and areas for future growth and improvement. This narrative is shared with each student and a copy is placed in the student's file in the APS office. If a student disagrees with the instructor's evaluation, he or she may write a response to the APS Committee, which will also be noted and placed in her or his student file.

Evaluation of Courses by Students

Each SFTS student is asked to complete an electronic course evaluation at the end of each seminar. These evaluations are completely anonymous, but a student must file an evaluation before his or her grade can be released. Faculty members do not see course evaluations until they have submitted their own evaluations and grades.

Extensions

Seminar extensions: All students are expected to complete their work on time. Each class syllabus should indicate the deadline for submitting each piece of assigned written work. If a student is not able to complete all the requirements for a course by the instructor's stated deadline or by the last

day of the class, the student may request an extension of up to three weeks. This request must be made on or before the last day of the class, and the instructor is not obligated to grant the extension. Extension of the deadline beyond the three-week limit may be granted only with the approval of the Dean as well as the instructor. If the instructor does not receive the overdue work by the new deadline, and in the absence of sufficient work of passing quality, the grade will be changed to an "F." Notations of "Incomplete" that are not replaced by a grade will be converted to an "F" at the end of the next grading period.

Program Extensions: Students who do not complete the program in four years from the time of their first seminar (or two years after the completion of the required 18 units of course work) may be granted a yearly extension for up to four years. Students should request an extension in writing and describe their timeline for the completion of the program. Each year, students will be required to pay a continuation fee of \$400/semester. Students who fail to show satisfactory academic progress (SAP) after four years of extension (eight years after their first seminar) may be required to withdraw from the program. Thereafter the policies regarding administrative withdrawal apply.

Continuing Education Students

From time to time, qualified non-degree students may take a D Min seminar for continuing education credit. In such cases, the APS committee will establish appropriate tuition, usually half of the tuition paid by degree students. Non-degree students are expected to do all the required work (with the exception of a final paper if appropriate) and to participate fully in the learning process.

DISSERTATION/PROJECTS

Current Learning Objectives for the Doctor of Ministry degree adopted by the Faculty in November, 2010 include #C: "Use interdisciplinary and research skills to develop innovative approaches to ministry and pastoral work" with a signature assignment of "the completed Dissertation/Project, with particular chapters on project development, implementation, and evaluation."

The APS Committee has adopted modest adjustments to D/P Policies and Guidelines which both:

- preserve expectations regarding substantial and rigorous research to be reflected in the Dissertation part of the final manuscript
- allow for reporting and presenting innovative Projects in demonstrable formats which reflect the medium utilized, including other-than- print media.

Length. Ordinarily, the average length of the D/P is 150 to 200 pages, plus appendices. With appendices, the entire document should not exceed 300 pages. However, when appropriate, since Projects involving digital and other media may be better demonstrated in non-print forms such as CDs and DVDs, the length of the manuscript may be less than 150 pages. When appropriate, with the approval of the D/P Advisor and the APS Committee, the Project may be presented in an alternative demonstrable format accompanying/enclosed with the D/P manuscript such as CDs, DVDs, and USB storage devices showing social media sites.

CERTIFICATE IN ADVANCED PASTORAL STUDIES

All students, upon having completed the seminar requirements and the candidacy interview, may choose, in lieu of pursuing the D/P requirement and completing the degree, to request a Certificate in Advanced Pastoral Studies. Students may choose this option for any reason, such as complete satisfaction with the course work completed, change in personal or ministry circumstances, or change in vocational interests.

The APS Committee may also determine that, based on written work and instructors' evaluations, a student does not have the skills to complete an acceptable D/P. In such cases, upon withdrawal from the program, the student will receive the Certificate in Advanced Pastoral Studies in lieu of the D.Min. degree.

Students who have been advanced to candidacy but make no demonstrated progress on the D/P within two years (as reported in the annual SAP Form) may be invited to consider receiving a Certificate in Advanced Pastoral Studies in lieu of the D Min degree. In making these determinations, the APS Committee consults with the student's D/P advisor.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Tuition

Tuition is charged to the student's account on a per-course basis. The tuition for that seminar is due and payable the first week of class. Tuition for the D/P phase of study will be charged on a per-semester basis.

If a student is not able to pay the entire tuition at the due date, he or she may ask the SFTS business office for a payment plan, and must fulfill the terms of any such plan. If a student does not pay all of his or her tuition for any seminar in a timely manner, he or she cannot register for the next seminar or segment of the program.

WITHDRAWAL: ADMINISTRATIVE (ALSO SEE READMISSION)

Students may be dismissed by the APS committee at any stage in the program due to tuition debt or lack of academic progress.

Within five years, a person who has been withdrawn from the program may request readmission by writing to the APS committee, provided that her or his financial account is clear. In all cases, the student must submit an updated or new D/P topic or design proposal, if he or she was formerly at the D/P stage of the program.

After five years, a person seeking readmission must accompany her or his request for readmission and updated topic or design with an outline of his or her plan to finish the program in a timely

manner. If the APS committee grants readmission, the student will also be required to complete one additional resource seminar (paying the current tuition rate and, when applicable, the yearly continuation fee) plus a D/P workshop (no charge).

After ten years, a student seeking readmission must accompany her or his request for readmission and updated topic or design with an outline of his or her plan to finish the program in a timely manner. The student will also be required to complete two additional resource seminars (paying the current tuition rate and, when applicable, the yearly continuation fee) plus a D/P workshop (no charge).