

# DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

## Overview

The Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program invites students to expand their competencies as they act as change agents in their roles as faith-based leaders. Public leaders desire innovative strategies that minimize adverse ecological, social, and economic impacts. Religious communities and faith-informed leaders are responsible for collaborating with other industry professionals to imagine and implement such innovations. The DMin degree provides students the tools to think theologically, contextually, and strategically in their role as public leaders.

The School of Divinity advances Wake Forest University's commitment to Pro Humanitate by leveraging its unique mission to prepare "agents of justice, reconciliation, and compassion for Christian churches and other ministries." The Doctor of Ministry program centers the wisdom and experience advanced ministry practitioners have developed through their professional experience. The curriculum creates opportunities for ministry professionals to explore and develop their wisdom to further their ministries and contribute to the flourishing of the organizations and broader communities they serve. The program also promotes the well-being of ministry professionals through cohort-based learning experiences

## Goals for the Doctor of Ministry Degree

The School of Divinity's Doctor of Ministry program convenes learning communities of faith-informed leaders from diverse professional settings who design and implement projects that lead to community transformation. The DMin program equips students to:

- Engage in complex forms of textual, contextual, and intersectional analysis, vocational discernment, and theological reflection that shape innovative approaches to ministry practice [ATS standards 5(a) and (b)];
- Create collaborative learning communities that benefit from the wisdom of faith-informed leaders who serve in a variety of professional contexts [ATS standard 5(d)];
- Develop leadership strategies that position faith communities and other organizations to theologically interpret how to create the conditions of justice, equity, and repair in their particular context [ATS standard 5(c)];
- Design, implement, and assess a project in the student's ministry setting that connects the practice of ministry in particular communities to a theologically informed understanding of human flourishing and the well-being of all creation [ATS standards 5(a), 5(b), 5(c), and 5(d)].

These four learning outcomes align with the four learning areas for Doctor of Ministry programs as identified in ATS standard 5.3(a)-(d).

## Requirements

### Doctor of Ministry Curriculum

The Doctor of Ministry degree is a three-year, 30-credit-hour professional doctoral degree designed for religious leaders in traditional and non-traditional settings who seek to deepen their understanding of ministry and theology and enhance their leadership practices. The DMin is delivered in a hybrid format, including five three-credit required courses and five three-credit elective courses. The program culminates with a thesis project: students design, propose, complete, and present findings

of a summative final place-connected project. The project builds upon the issues and questions raised throughout the three years of coursework.

Courses are delivered in an asynchronous online format. Cohorts convene each January and June for five-day in-person learning experiences focusing on developing the Doctor of Ministry project.

### Doctor of Ministry Core/Required Courses

- MIN 740: Theological Reflection as Praxis (3h)
- MIN 750: Analyzing Communities and Contexts (3h)
- MIN 760: Transformational Religious Leadership (3h)
- MIN 770: DMin Project Seminar/Proposal (3h)
- MIN 780: DMin Project Seminar/Presentation (3h)

### Required Coursework

The 15-credit hours of required Doctor of Ministry coursework prepares students to formulate, research, write, and complete their final projects.

One required course is offered sequentially each semester, excluding summers. Following this pattern, the first four required courses are offered in four sequential fall and spring semesters. The third year of the DMin program focuses on writing the DMin project; no required course is offered in the fifth semester. MIN 780 ("DMin Project Seminar/Presentation") is offered in each cohort's sixth and final semester, concluding the required course sequence.

### Elective Coursework

All DMin electives are designed to cultivate an expanded understanding of the nature of religious leadership and enhance competencies in reflective ministry practices. Electives also encourage ministry leaders to explore new knowledge at the intersections of theology and contemporary faith communities. Some hybrid teaching strategies to accomplish these aims include focusing on real-life case studies and practical experiences alongside related readings and creating cohort reflective and feedback practices for course content. The role of faculty in these courses is two-fold: (1) to provide content expertise and (2) to function in a mentoring role with learners as they explore their growing edges as religious leaders.

DMin elective courses are offered in an asynchronous online format during the fall and spring terms of the academic year and the two summer sessions. In the three years of the program, students have eight opportunities to complete five elective courses (six semesters and two summers). Students may take more than one elective offering at a time.

### DMin Elective Credit for Master's-Level Courses

DMin students may take master's-level courses offered throughout the academic year that have been adapted collaboratively by students and instructors to meet DMin program goals, with DMin-specific syllabi and assignments appropriate to the doctoral level.

For Doctor of Ministry students taking courses primarily offered to master's-level students at WFUSD, student learning outcomes must be related to the Doctor of Ministry program goals (described above). Assignments must be adjusted as appropriate for doctoral-level work.

DMin students wishing to register for a course primarily offered to master's-level students must, in collaboration with the instructor, amend the course syllabus to meet the learning outcomes of the DMin program, reading and writing assignments that evidence advanced-level expectations related to those outcomes, and appropriate means of

assessment. The amended DMin course syllabus must be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs.

## Independent Study (IDS) Courses

Through independent study (IDS) coursework, the School of Divinity offers DMin students opportunities to craft their elective coursework to their research interests. Students may register for IDS courses during any academic year or summer term. DMin students are limited to a maximum of nine (9) total credit hours of IDS coursework.

The following are possibilities for IDS courses:

1. Syllabi for courses that faculty have developed for previously offered Master of Divinity or Doctor of Ministry courses, adjusted to meet the learning outcomes of the DMin program.
2. A theme or topic of interest to a student and faculty member developed as an IDS course syllabus meeting the learning outcomes of the DMin program.

Faculty members are not required to facilitate IDS courses.

The Doctor of Ministry Program Director ensures that IDS courses are created according to the guidelines and expectations found at the link here (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GnAqDcyoao0UBBSJG2Li9FANdmvqygN9EAFkcWmyD4E/edit?usp=sharing>). Syllabi for IDS courses must be created and approved no later than the end of the second full week of each semester or summer term.

## Advising Process

The Doctor of Ministry Program Director advises all DMin students during the first three semesters of study. The Director will work with students to complete the first 9-credit hours of required coursework and 15-credit hours of elective coursework and to craft a research question and the broad contours of the Doctor of Ministry project.

DMin students ordinarily complete MIN 770 "Project Seminar/Proposal" course in their fourth semester. Students select a faculty advisor for the Doctor of Ministry project. The faculty advisor will guide the project's completion, ordinarily by the end of the student's sixth semester.

## Doctor of Ministry Project

To enroll in the MIN 770 "Project Seminar/Proposal" course in the fourth semester, students must have completed MIN 740, 750, and 760 and at least nine (9) credit hours of elective coursework. In the MIN 770 course, students will select a project adviser and complete a Doctor of Ministry project prospectus (described below), which will be approved both by the student's project advisor and the Doctor of Ministry Program Director. Students must also identify a second reader who, along with the Doctor of Ministry Program Director and the student's adviser, will assess the project in its final form.

The fifth semester of study has no required course component and is reserved for the drafting of the DMin project.

For a December graduation, the Doctor of Ministry project must be submitted and defended no later than November 1 and for May graduation, no later than April 1. Submissions beyond those dates will delay graduation until the following May or December. All graduates in an academic year are recognized and presented with diplomas at the May Commencement ceremony.

## Doctor of Ministry Residency Requirement

First-year Doctor of Ministry students meet in August before their first fall term begins for a three-day in-person orientation and retreat. Students meet for several other prearranged in-person meetings throughout the program. In order to graduate, Doctor of Ministry students must participate in and complete all required residency periods during their course of study.