



DEGREE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

The John Case Doctor of Ministry

Wesley Biblical Seminary
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1.0 Our Mission

Wesley Biblical Seminary exists to educate and train men and women who, in fulfillment of the Church's mission, will live and proclaim Trinitarian faith, promote the Spirit-filled life, and in full commitment to the absolute authority of the Bible, actively make disciples of Jesus Christ.

2.0 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The John Case Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) in Pastoral Leadership is named for Dr. John Case in honor of his outstanding pastoral ministry and with gratitude for his long-time support of Wesley Biblical Seminary. The D.Min. is a professional in-ministry doctorate that offers advanced ministerial education to experienced pastors and other Christian workers.

The purpose of this degree is to advance the mission of Wesley Biblical Seminary by developing transformational leaders for church and society through critical study, analysis, reflection, and application at the professional doctoral level. The degree is intended for those who have earned a Master of Divinity or equivalent and are currently serving in a ministry position in a church, a church-related institution, or a parachurch organization.

The in-ministry nature of the D.Min. allows pastors and other Christian workers to pursue rigorous advanced study without leaving their ministry setting. The degree is designed to be completed in three years, which includes two years of coursework (24 credit hours) and one year from writing and defending the Dissertation Ministry Research Project (6 hours).

3.0 PROGRAM GOALS

Students who receive the Doctor of Ministry degree from Wesley Biblical Seminary will grow significantly in their intellectual, professional, ethical, and spiritual lives, as will be evidenced by excellence in their commitment and ability to:

- **Goal 1:** Proclaim the message of the Bible to the contemporary world with accuracy and cultural sensitivity but without compromising the authority of Scripture.
- **Goal 2:** Articulate both the essential outlines of Trinitarian orthodox theology and the distinct contribution of Wesleyan soteriology, their grounding in Biblical Revelation, and their implications for ministry practice.
- **Goal 3:** Practice biblical means of grace for a deepening spiritual life, lead others to do the same, and articulate a practical "sacramental theology" of discipleship.
- **Goal 4:** Demonstrate in verbal expression and in concrete action how the practice of Christian ministry and leadership grows out of the theological commitments and implications of Christian orthodox theology.

- **Goal 5:** Analyze the systemic dynamics of a local church or other Christian ministry and facilitate the movement of congregations and ministries toward greater spiritual health.
- **Goal 6:** Analyze the ideological commitments that give shape to the moral, social and political values of the culture at large.
- **Goal 7:** Lead the local congregation or other Christian ministry to engage the needs of its particular context in a holistic manner.
- **Goal 8:** Cast a vision for ministry by one's own servant-focused example and through worldview shaping, biblically based, and theologically sound teaching and preaching.

4.0 DOCTOR OF MINISTRY CURRICULUM

Two distinct phases comprise the D.Min. curriculum: (1) a coursework phase and (2) a dissertation phase. The D.Min. academic year is divided into two terms. The coursework phase of the D.Min. is designed to be completed in two years of two terms each.

- **Spring-Summer Term** (April 1 through September 30)
- **Fall-Winter Term** (October 1 through March 31)

Each term will include a five-day on-campus intensive period. That intensive period falls in June for the Spring-Summer Term and in January for the Fall-Winter Term. Each term offers two required courses that are consistently paired together, and students are expected to take both courses in each term. This allows students to enter the program at the start of either term and still complete all course work in four consecutive semesters. Beyond the intensive on-campus period, each course will require students to participate in online learning sessions utilizing Populi and Zoom.

Wesley Biblical Seminary expects that all students physically attend the intensive courses on the Ridgeland campus. However, under the following circumstances, exemptions to D.Min residency may be obtained:

- Non-US citizens living in a country outside of North America (US and Canada)
- Missionaries based outside of North America
- Additional exemptions may be occasionally granted by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, upon written request

In the event a residency exemption is granted, attendance must be through Zoom.

5.0 DOCTOR OF MINISTRY COURSE CYCLE

Spring-Summer Term (with intensive on-campus seminars in June)

- DM 801 | Advanced Biblical Hermeneutics (3 hrs)
- DM 802 | Transformational Preaching (3 hrs)

Fall-Winter Term (with intensive on-campus seminars in January)

- DM 803 | Sacramental Leadership (3 hrs)
- DM 804 | Disciple-making Leadership (3 hrs)

Spring-Summer Term (with intensive on-campus seminars in June)

- DM 805 | Trinitarian Personhood and Ministry (3 hrs)
- DM 806 | Wesleyan Ministry in a Post-Modern Context (3 hrs)

Fall-Winter Term (with intensive on-campus seminars in January)

- DM 807 | Christianity and World Religions (3 hrs)
- DM 808 | Philosophies Challenging the Church (3 hrs)

Ministry Research Project Courses

- DM 809 | D.Min. Project Research Orientation (0 hrs)
- DM 810 | Ministry Research Project (6 hrs)
- DM810-8xx | Ministry Research Project (continuation) (0 hrs)

6.0 DOCTOR OF MINISTRY COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

DM801 | Advanced Biblical Hermeneutics

This course is taught concurrently with its related course, DM802 Transformational Preaching. It focuses on four areas crucial to effective biblical preaching: (a) the integrity of the biblical canon and issues and principles relevant for preaching from each part of that canon, (b) the importance of and principles for understanding each biblical book in terms of its literary genre and integrity, (c) the relevance of and ability for understanding the Bible within the environment of the Ancient Near East and the first century Hellenistic world, and (d) issues that arise when we attempt to apply biblical teaching in the contemporary world. The course assumes a basic knowledge of the principles of biblical interpretation. 3 hours

DM802 | Transformational Preaching

This course is taught concurrently with its related course, DM801 Advanced Biblical Hermeneutics. It focuses on the theology and practice of preaching as a means of leading individuals and congregations into the transformational reality that John Wesley called “holiness of heart and life.” The course rigorously examines the theological purposes, hermeneutical principles, and communicative skills that are essential to biblically sound and effective preaching. 3 hours

DM803 | Sacramental Leadership

This course is taught concurrently with its related course, DM804 Disciple-making Leadership. It engages students in a historical and theological reflection on the foundations of the responsibility of the pastor, with a focus on recovering the identity of the pastor in a priestly, symbolic role as Christ’s representative to the church. As a part of this, a review of the diversity in historic Christianity regarding the nature and place of the sacraments (baptism and holy communion) will enable students

to discover within their own specific traditions how these practices can be enriched as a means of renewing the corporate life of a congregation. A new vision of the vocation of Pastor should enable students to perceive that all pastoral ministry (preaching, leading worship, counseling, mentoring, and administration) is meant to be a sacramental gift of Christ's presence to the people of God, just as the Church is to be a sacrament to the world as a Christologically centered, missionally oriented focus community whose pastor leads them in following Christ into the world. 3 hours

DM804 | Disciple-making Leadership

This course is taught concurrently with its related course, DM803 Sacramental Leadership. It focuses on local church participation in evangelistic and discipleship ministries that are coupled with compassionate social ministries. An investigation of the biblical and historical emphases of the church on these matters is included and the transformative personal, corporate, and cultural power of their coupling demonstrated. The spiritual life and worship structures of the church should support the outward missional life of the church. Therefore, the effective meshing of these critical components will be viewed in order to build a biblically fruitful church that contributes to both church health and societal welfare. 3 hours

DM805 | Trinity, Personhood, and Ministry

TBD

DM806 | Wesleyan Ministry in a Post-Modern Context

This course is taught concurrently with its related course, DM805 Trinitarian Personhood and Ministry. It engages students in the theological vision that has provided the motivation, focus, and spirituality of the Methodist/Wesleyan tradition at its best. Special attention will be given to the *ordo salutis* (theology of salvation) that John Wesley and the early Methodists bequeathed to subsequent generations, in order to discern and apply the implications of this soteriology for pastoral ministry today. Further attention will be given to how the optimistic view of God's grace in human life not only provided an evangelical counter proposal to eighteenth century English Calvinism, but also drove early Wesleyans to see social transformation as inherent in the Gospel. 3 hours

DM807 | Christianity and World Religions

This course is taught concurrently with its related course, DM808 Philosophies Challenging the Church. It engages students in a comparative study of the nature and content of Christian theism in contrast to other world religions, modern cults, New Age spirituality, and their corresponding worldviews. Special focus is given to the spirit of religious relativism and universalism in the contemporary Western world. These studies will equip students with greater competence and confidence when engaging persons from other religious worldviews. Furthermore, pastors will be empowered to teach other religious worldviews to their congregations to protect the faithful from error and prepare believers to be winsome, confident witness to the Gospel's truth in our increasingly multicultural age. 3 hours

DM808 | Philosophies Challenging the Church

This course is taught concurrently with its related course, DM807 Christianity and World Religions. It involves students in a rediscovery of essential Christian orthodoxy and its engagement with various non-theistic, naturalistic, and secular philosophical systems that have risen over the last two hundred years in Western culture. The goal of the course is to equip those who preach, teach, or engage in evangelistic ministries to have greater competency in interacting with, explaining, and critiquing these “isms” for contemporary believers and seekers. Special emphasis will be given in the course to competing belief and value systems that make up the so-called “postmodern” perspectives on truth, meaning, and moral values, so that congregations will be prepared and equipped to stand for the Gospel in the face of false ideologies. 3 hours

DM 809 | Project Research Orientation

This video course is designed to give basic information for the Doctor of Ministry student to understand the general research techniques required to create the prospectus and dissertation. After seeing the videos, the student will consult with the Director of Research to finalize the prospectus document. When the full faculty approves the prospectus, the student is released to begin writing the dissertation. The student will register for DM 810 to begin writing the dissertation.

DM 810 | Ministry Research Project

The Ministry Research Project is a doctoral student’s dissertation, a culminating work that integrates insights from the previous courses with research and application in the context of the student’s place of ministry. A committee of two WBS faculty members will oversee the dissertation process. With permission, an external reader who possesses the necessary academic and professional credentials to critically examine the ministry project could be a committee member. The final requirement for the D.Min. degree is the successful completion of an oral defense of the dissertation before the faculty committee. All revisions requested by the committee must be done and a final digital copy submitted to the library before the student receives the degree diploma. 6 hours

7.0 DOCTOR OF MINISTRY DEGREE MAP

| COURSEWORK PHASE (TWO YEARS) | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Term | Tasks |
| Term 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enroll in offered courses and DM809 • Attend on-campus intensive (January or June) • Watch research orientation videos in DM809 (Populi) • Read relevant chapters on D.Min. research • Begin considering topics for the dissertation |
| Term 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enroll in offered courses • Attend on-campus intensive (January or June) |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss dissertation topics with the Director of Research • Begin drafting Dissertation Prospectus • Begin gathering sources for the literature review |
| Term 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enroll in offered courses • Attend on-campus intensive (January or June) • Begin drafting literature review • Submit final draft of Dissertation Prospectus to Director of Research |
| Term 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enroll in offered courses • Attend on-campus intensive (January or June) • Attend Dissertation Prospectus Faculty Review (via Zoom) scheduled by the Director of Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Upon Prospectus approval, the Director of Research will assign Primary Supervisor and Second Reader ○ Upon Prospectus approval, student will be enrolled in DM810 |
| DISSERTATION WRITING PHASE (14 MONTHS) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct research for the dissertation. • Write dissertation. The Primary Supervisor will be the chief contact person during the writing phase. • Provide a finished dissertation manuscript to the Second Reader, who will examine the dissertation and offer suggestions for improvement. • Once the Second Reader's comments have been incorporated into the project, submit dissertation to the Director of Research. Upon submission, the Director of Research will provide a copy of the submitted dissertation to the Primary Supervisor and Second Reader and schedule the dissertation defense for a date no later than six weeks after the date of submission. • Defend dissertation. • Complete any necessary revisions to the dissertation and submit final copy to Director of Research. • Complete TREN release and submit to the Director of Library Services • If you opt-in to TREN copyright registration, pay current fee through the Director of Business Affairs. • Return any library books. • Pay any outstanding bills. • Submit final approved version of dissertation to the Director of Library Services in Microsoft Word format. | |

8.0 WRITING THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation is the culmination of the D.Min. degree. It is an integrative project that combines insights from the student's coursework with independent research that is oriented toward the practice of ministry. The dissertation should address a pastoral situation or problem both theologically and practically. The focus is on finding biblically sound and carefully reasoned solutions to problems that arise in the context of ministry. A successful dissertation will effectively demonstrate the student's competency in identifying a problem, analyzing relevant literature, designing a solution, and evaluating the results.

9.0 TYPES OF DISSERTATIONS

Doctor of Ministry dissertations vary in the problems they address and in the methods employed to address those problems. Whether the dissertation is more practical or more theoretical, all D.Min. research projects focus on solving a clearly articulated problem faced in the context of Christian ministry.

9.1 Ministry Design

One common approach to the D.Min. dissertation is the ministry design (or in-ministry project).¹ This type of project identifies the need in ministry for a specific program or ministry, usually in a local church, and creates a formational curriculum or plan to strengthen participants in the area in question. Such a dissertation will integrate theological reflection on the topic in focus with practical strategies for equipping participants for thoughtful and faithful ministry. Successful dissertations will effectively measure the growth of those who participate in the program.

9.2 Theological Appropriation

This type of dissertation will take a specific doctrine or area of theology and appropriate it in light of a specific pastoral problem. This will require a detailed account of the theological area under consideration. That account would need to employ an appropriate theological method (e.g., biblical theology, textual exegesis, historical theology, systematic theology) and be thoroughly conversant with relevant scholarly literature on the topic. Such a dissertation will also require a doctoral-level analysis of the pastoral problem to be addressed. Examples include but are not limited to church unity and factionalism, marriage and divorce, clinical depression, political engagement, parenting, racism, etc. A successful dissertation of this sort would then build on the theological account and the analysis of the problem to develop a series of pastoral strategies for appropriating the theological topic in question to address the problem in local church settings. Any number of topics might be proposed; the following are provided for illustrative purposes: justification by faith and racial/ethnic

¹ Nancy Jean Vyhmeister and Terry Dwain Robertson, *Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 45–52, 87–88.

healing, a trinitarian approach to pre-marital/marriage counseling, the Incarnation and ministry with the poor, the doctrine of holiness in churches marked by political conflict, preaching text-oriented sermons in a screen-saturated culture, the Incarnation and generosity, justification by faith and the experience of shame, the science of spiritual formation, cruciformity and pastoral suffering, holiness and moralistic therapeutic deism, etc.

9.3 Case Study

A case study offers a full picture of a particular individual or group including their background, context, and status to provide a full and detailed presentation of the person or group.² This sort of study aims to learn from the past in order to plan for the future. For example, a church's ministry with a specific group of people might be studied in detail in order to articulate strategies for future similar ministries. When a D.Min. dissertation takes the form of a case study, it should include significant theological reflection on the circumstances of the case in question. A case study typically involves four parts: observation, analysis, interpretation, and action.³

9.4 Comparative Analysis

A comparative analysis takes up two or more historical or present-day approaches to a current problem in ministry and evaluates their relative strengths and weaknesses. Drawing on that evaluation, the dissertation will typically articulate a fresh approach to the problem that is also grounded in serious theological reflection on the problem under investigation. A comparative analysis will likely depend heavily on relevant published work as data for analysis, but it may also benefit from interviews with practitioners of the approaches under consideration.

The D.Min. dissertation is not necessarily limited to one of the above categories, though these are certainly common. Whatever approach is taken, the problem to be addressed must be clearly articulated and the methodology to address it must be followed carefully and appropriate for doctoral-level studies.

10.0 THE DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS

Students should begin thinking about possible topics and methods for the dissertation early during the coursework phase of the D.Min. program. In consultation with the Director of Research, students will write a Dissertation Prospectus that proposes the problem to be addressed, the methodology for addressing it, and initial theological reflection on the problem. The Director of Research is available for appointments via phone or Zoom to discuss potential avenues for research. In most cases, students

² Vyhmeister and Robertson, *Quality Research Papers*, 53.

³ For a description of each part, see Vyhmeister and Robertson, *Quality Research Papers*, 55–62.

will write multiple drafts of the prospectus in order to refine their research questions and methods. When a satisfactory draft of the prospectus is complete, the Director of Research will schedule a Faculty Review in which the student will present the proposed research to the faculty and answer questions about the prospectus from the faculty. The Faculty Review may conclude with one of the following outcomes:

- ***Approved with no revisions*** – This means that the student has written a prospectus at the highest level of excellence, and that the faculty are confident that the student has produced a satisfactory plan for researching and writing the dissertation.
- ***Approved with revisions to the satisfaction of the Primary Supervisor*** – This means that the student has written a very strong prospectus and that any remaining weaknesses may be worked out in consultation with the Primary Supervisor as the research is conducted.
- ***Approved with revisions to the satisfaction of the Director of Research*** – This means that the prospectus has more substantive weaknesses that need to be resolved prior to the appointment of the Primary Supervisor.
- ***Prospectus not approved*** – This means the prospectus has substantial weaknesses that need to be addressed. The prospectus must be rewritten and resubmitted for another Faculty Review.

Upon the completion of the Faculty Review, the Director of Research will communicate the outcome of the Faculty Review to the student. If the prospectus is approved, the Director of Research will assign the student to a Primary Supervisor and a Secondary Reader, who will together constitute the student's Dissertation Committee.

11.0 RESEARCH DURATION

Upon the completion of the coursework component and the research prospectus has been approved by the faculty, a fourteen-month period commences during which the student should research and write the dissertation. The fourteen months are comprised of a full academic year plus one summer.

12.0 WORKING WITH THE COMMITTEE

Once the committee is appointed, the Primary Supervisor will be main contact for the student. The student should contact the Primary Supervisor immediately after the appointment is made in order to discuss expectations of the supervisory relationship, timeline, and initial plans for the execution of the project. The Director of Research may be consulted with regard to administrative matters, but once the Primary Supervisor has been appointed, the Director of Research will defer to the Primary Supervisor on all matters relating to the substance of the dissertation.

The Second Reader is not expected to be deeply involved in the supervisory process until a full draft of the dissertation is complete to the satisfaction of the Primary Supervisor. When such a draft is

complete, the Second Reader will read the full draft and offer a written response that articulates any weaknesses to be addressed or matters to be fine-tuned. The student may then integrate the recommendations of the Second Reader into the dissertation prior to formal submission.

13.0 SUBMITTING AND DEFENDING THE DISSERTATION

After the recommendations of the Secondary Reader have been received by the student and incorporated into the dissertation, the student will submit the dissertation to the Director of Research electronically via email. The Director of Research will then schedule a formal defense of the dissertation. The formal defense will be held either in person or via Zoom. The Director of Research, or another person appointed by the Director of Research, will chair the defense; the Committee will conduct the defense by asking the student relevant questions about the research. Once the defense is complete, the student will be dismissed from the gathering while the Committee confers in order to determine an outcome. Possible outcomes include:

- ***Pass with no revisions*** – This is the highest possible outcome. Students who receive this outcome will be immediately eligible for graduation pending the satisfaction of any other outstanding obligations or fees.
- ***Pass with minimal revisions subject to the approval of the Primary Supervisor*** – This outcome will be granted when a dissertation requires revisions that can be completed in less than four weeks. Once the Primary Supervisor approves those revisions, the student will be eligible for graduation pending the satisfaction of any other outstanding obligations or fees.
- ***Fail with substantial revisions subject to the approval of another Formal Defense*** – This outcome means that the dissertation requires significant revisions that will take more than four weeks to complete. When the student completes these revisions, the Director of Research will schedule a second formal defense. If the second defense is unsuccessful, the student will be dismissed from the program and ineligible to graduate.

Upon the successful completion of the Formal Defense and any necessary revisions, the student will be eligible to graduate with the Doctor of Ministry pending the resolution of any administrative matters and the payment of any outstanding fees.

14.0 ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

Students will be assessed at the defense for the extent to which their project accomplishes meets the following standards.

1. Analyze the dynamics, commitments and needs of the culture and the local church in order to facilitate (cast a vision for) greater spiritual health.

- a. Tested in the dissertation document by the research of the dissertation in the analysis of context, the perceived problem, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of the plan. In the case study, the analysis of the case would furnish evidence of analytic ability.
 - b. The review of Literature should demonstrate ability to analyze what resources are needed to investigate the problem or case. Ability to synthesize the resource data is also an analytic ability.
2. Demonstrate leadership through identifying a community/congregational need/situation and creating a multi-level, measurable strategy for moving toward improvement.
 - a. Tested in the dissertation document by student's ability to create and implement a ministry design which has potential to resolve the problem.
 - b. For a case study design, leadership would be measured by the identification of a crucial issue or person that sheds light on a contemporary problem and advocating appropriate principles and practices that will foster health and healing in the local church
 - c. For a comparative analysis, leadership will be evaluated based on the student's ability to build on existing models, creating fresh and effective strategies to meet ministry needs. Attention will also be given any projected role that a leader may have in implementing any hypothetical model.
 - d. For a theological appropriation dissertation, leadership will be measured by the student's ability to identify a community/congregational need and develop theologically grounded strategies for ministry in that area.
3. Proclaim/articulate the ways in which the student utilized the worldview and values of the biblical, orthodox, Trinitarian, and Wesleyan perspectives in the dissertation project.
 - a. Tested by a fifteen-minute oral presentation at the defense.
 - b. The student will explain how his/her project was conceived and constructed within the values and world view of biblical, orthodox and Wesleyan principles.

15.0 STYLE REQUIREMENTS AND EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE

The dissertation should conform to the standards set forth in *The SBL Handbook of Style*, Second Edition (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014). Students may consult the "Student Supplement for *The SBL Handbook of Style*, Second Edition" (available here: <https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/pubs/sblhssupp2015-02.pdf>). Students should know that doctoral level writing requires detailed attention to grammar, syntax, formatting, style, and notation. Students who need any assistance in these matters should consult the Director of Library Services for resources. Students may find it necessary to hire an expert in SBL formatting in order to prepare a final draft that is characterized by the highest level of excellence. The cost of any such assistance is the responsibility of the student.

16.0 DISSERTATION AND GRADUATION DATE

A student must submit his/her dissertation in final form with proper citations and bibliography by January 1 of the year in which the student wants to graduate. The dissertation defense must be passed by March of that same year in order for the student to graduate in the coming May. The student will NOT receive her/his degree diploma until all revisions are complete and the finalized dissertation is submitted to the Director of Library Services.

17.0 CONTINUATION FEE

Students will be required to pay a continuation fee starting the ninth term after matriculation. See the current academic catalog for the cost.

18.0 SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Doctor of Ministry students maintain good academic standing by having a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.00. Students who received a grade of less than B- in any course will not receive credit for that course and will be required to retake that course the next time it is offered. Students who have not maintained satisfactory academic progress at the completion of their coursework will not be eligible to proceed to the dissertation writing phase of the degree and will be dismissed from the program. Students who fail to maintain good academic standing and are ineligible to proceed to the dissertation and will be notified by the Vice President of Academic Affairs. If the student believes there are extenuating circumstances, he or she may appeal the dismissal in writing to the Vice President of Academic Affairs, who will present the appeal to the Faculty for a decision. The Faculty's decision will be final.

19.0 TIME LIMITS FOR COMPLETION OF DEGREES

In order to maintain academic continuity, the D.Min. degree must be completed in five years. Requests for exceptions to this limit may be sent to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Extensions for the Doctor of Ministry degree entail a continuation fee.

20.0 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Graduation from WBS with the D.Min. will be determined by the completion of a comprehensive assessment rather than the mere accumulation of a designed number of credit hours and a certain Grade Point Average. To graduate from WBS with a Doctor of Ministry degree, students must:

- Complete the prescribed course of study with at least a GPA of 3.00.
- Satisfactorily write and successfully defend the dissertation including any required revisions.
- Demonstrate the achievement of the published goals and competencies related to the chosen degree and concentration.

- Clear all financial obligations to the seminary.
- Receive a vote of recommendation by the Faculty and approval by the Trustees.
- Be present for graduation exercises. Only in extreme circumstances will degrees be awarded *in absentia*.

21.0 PAYMENT OPTIONS FOR DOCTOR OF MINISTRY STUDENTS

21.1 Full Payment each term

Tuition payments should be made using check, cash, or credit card (including relevant fees) and must be received in the business office by the first day of the D.Min. term (April 1, October 1). Students should check with the office of admissions for D.Min. scholarships.

21.2 Deferred Payment Plan

For an annual fee of the student may arrange a deferred payment plan with the business office. These arrangements must be completed April 1 of each year. Late payment will result in a late fee. Contact the business office for further details.

21.3 Loan agreement

Approved *Federal Direct Unsubsidized Student Loan* for a sufficient amount to cover the total tuition, books and fees. The Financial Aid Office will endeavor to quickly confirm eligibility for a loan when the FAFSA application is completed and the student is accepted to the seminary. D.Min. Students will not be registered for a new term, no transcript will be issued, and no degree will be granted unless all financial obligations to the seminary have been settled. Any balance owed 180 days after the beginning of the D.Min. term in which the charges were incurred will begin to accumulate interest at the rate of 1.5% per month.

For information about the **Mississippi United Methodist Case Scholarship**, contact the Office of the Vice President of Enrollment and Student Success.

APPENDIX 1. PROSPECTUS OUTLINE

Note: the prospectus may vary depending on the type of dissertation the student proposes to write. This outline is provided to familiarize the student with the general structure of a D.Min. prospectus.

TITLE: Propose a tentative title.

THE CONTEXT: The first part of this section describes (1) the community, city, or region; (2) the church or organization in which you intend to conduct your research; and (3) the target population. An additional section describes why you would be qualified to your research in this area and for this group. This material is particularly important for ministry design projects. More theoretical and literature-based dissertations will not need the same level of detail here.

THE PROBLEM: What is the problem your research aims to address. This should be as detailed and specific as possible.

PURPOSE: A single sentence concisely describing what your program aim is.

KEY TERMS: Define any crucial terms that are foundational to your project.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION: Include a few paragraphs of theological reflection on the problem.

THE PROPOSED PROJECT: This section is the detailed description of your project, whether a ministry design, case study, or some other course of research. For ministry designs, this section should include details regarding the program to be implemented. This might include but is not limited to small group or seminar topics, schedules, and outlines. Include processes for evaluating the effectiveness of the ministry design. For case studies, this section should describe the case and the circumstances of the case to be considered.

PROPOSED TIMETABLE: This section is often presented as a table with columns for the phases of research, your beginning date, ending date of each phase, and description/details. This schedule is tentative and subject to adjustment.

CONTRIBUTION TO MINISTRY: What might other Christian leaders learn from your research?

BIBLIOGRAPHY: In general, you should have at least three full pages of books, journal articles, videos, or other resources, including interviews with experts. The bibliography in the prospectus demonstrates that you have enough information to begin conducting scholarly research on your subject.

APPENDIX 2. DISSERTATION COMPONENTS/STRUCTURE

Note: The dissertation may vary depending on the type of research the student conducts. This outline is provided to familiarize the student with the basic structure of a D.Min. dissertation and may be adjusted based on the specific needs and shape of the student's independent research.

Introduction – The first chapter will contain much of the material from the prospectus, though significant detail should be added. The introduction will detail the context, problem, purpose, methodology, key terms.

Literature Review – The literature review is usually chapter two and will demonstrate your detailed familiarity with relevant published work on the problem you are addressing.

Theological Foundations – This chapter will offer a detailed theological reflection (approximately 15–20 pages) on the problem you are addressing. This reflection could approach the problem from a range of perspectives (e.g. biblical theology, systematic theology, historical theology, Wesleyan theology). This chapter is crucial for demonstrating that your work is not merely pragmatic but theologically sound and well-reasoned.

Program, Case Study, or other Analysis – The presentation of your research will take at least one chapter but may be expanded into multiple chapters. For example, if you are writing a ministry design, you might have a chapter that sets out the program itself and another chapter that sets forth your evaluation of the program. For a comparative analysis, you may have chapters for each of the matters you are comparing and an additional chapter that sets forth your own contribution in light of the preceding analysis. For a case study, you might have chapters on observations, analysis, interpretation, and action.

Conclusion – A concluding chapter will summarize your work, identify the contribution of your research, articulate its usefulness for ministry, and consider possible avenues for further study.

Appendices – Include any relevant material in appendices (e.g., surveys).