SASKATOON THEOLOGICAL UNION

Doctor of Ministry Degree in Contextual and Practical Theology

with an option to specialize in rural ministry and community development

Student Handbook 2025-2027

The Doctor of Ministry program
offered cooperatively between
St. Andrew's College and
Lutheran Theological Seminary
is accredited by the
Commission on Accrediting of
The Association of Theological Schools (ATS)

The Commission on Accrediting
10 Summit Park Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15725-1110

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WELCOME

… to the Doctor of Ministry program at the Saskatoon Theological Union, a partnership of, Lutheran Theological Seminary and St. Andrew's College.

We celebrate your interest and commitment to lifelong learning and look forward to supporting your study, research and ministry.

The Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program is designed as a professional degree. It is intended to sharpen your skills and build ministry in your site, while allowing you to learn in context. It is offered in a cohort-based format. While most coursework is done online to allow completion of a doctoral degree without having to relocate, you will gather in person with your cohort at the beginning and midpoint of your program.

This handbook is provided to inform you of program policies and procedures, answer important questions concerning the program, and guide you toward completing your work. Please keep it on hand for ready reference.

In addition to the materials in this handbook, the faculty and staff of the seminaries and theological colleges of the Saskatoon Theological Union (STU) are available to provide personal guidance and to respond to your questions.

May God bless you and your people as you grow together through this degree.

DMin Committee
Saskatoon Theological Union

PURPOSE AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Purpose

The work of contextual and practical theology is foundational to this DMin program. The program provides ministry professionals and their ministry settings with interdisciplinary tools to engage their communities and contexts more effectively. Through cohort-based learning and contextually based ministry teams, students will integrate academic, theological, and practical knowledge in and for ministry.

Expected Outcomes

Students who complete this DMin program will have the following skills and abilities:

- The ability to analyze their ministry setting and to integrate academic, theological, and practical knowledge by drawing on the resources of practical theology.
- A deepened capacity for spiritual leadership through building learning communities with their peer cohort and within their ministry setting, particularly with their ministry team.
- The ability to engage in qualitative research and to apply appropriate tools in the development and execution of a research project.
- The capacity to demonstrate, through a research project report, learnings about their ministry setting and how this learning contributes to new knowledge and understanding of the theology and practice of ministry within denominational, ecumenical, and community contexts.
- A deepened experience of the academy and acquiring skills to present, teach, and continue academic pursuits and research.

OVERSIGHT OF THE DMIN PROGRAM

The Schools

The DMin program is a creation of the member schools of the Saskatoon Theological Union (STU): Lutheran Theological Seminary and St Andrew's College. These schools have worked together to provide graduate theological education for over forty years.

The DMin Committee of the STU Common Faculty

General oversight of the DMin program is vested in the Common Faculty, which consists of all faculty members in the Saskatoon Theological Union. Hands-on oversight of the DMin program is carried out by the DMin Committee, which is appointed by the Common Faculty. The Director of DMin program chairs the DMin Committee and acts as a liaison between students and the committee.

In cases where a student has a conflict with a faculty member that they are not able to resolve directly, they are encouraged to contact the Director of the DMin program. If a student has a conflict with the Director of the DMin program, they are encouraged to contact the STU Academic Dean or a member of the DMin Committee to help mediate a resolution.

Program Advisor

Each student will be assigned a Program Advisor, who will advise the student through the first phases of the program (coursework). When a student first enters the DMin Program, the DMin Committee appoints the Program Advisor (often the Director of the DMin program).

The responsibilities of the Program Advisor are to be available for consultation regarding the student's program and decisions regarding course choices, and to advise the DMin Committee when the student is ready to be paired with a Project Advisor.

Project Advisor

By the end of the first year in the program, the DMin Committee will pair the student with a Project Advisor, when appropriate, to begin refining their research inquiry and project proposal. A Project Advisor may be a member of the STU faculty or someone outside STU who is qualified to supervise the student's DMin project.

It is the responsibility of the Project Advisor to:

- Ensure that the student submits a sound project proposal that conforms with the *STU Project Proposal Guidelines* and is likely to receive DMin Committee approval.

- Oversee the development of the student's DMin project, which will include:

    - Ensuring the student effectively engages with their ministry site;

    - Ensuring conformity to the approved project proposal;

    - Ensuring conformity to the writing standards for the project's final report. (These standards should be identified in the proposal and use one of the accepted style manuals: Chicago, Turabian, etc.);

    - Determine that the project's central goals are meaningful for the ministry site and make a substantial contribution to the field of inquiry;

    - Inform the Director of the DMin program when the student is prepared for the oral presentation of their project report.

- Ensure, after the presentation of the project report, that any corrections required by the examiners are made satisfactorily.

DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

The schools of the Saskatoon Theological Union follow the mandate of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code. Discrimination and Harassment are illegal and prohibited when they are based upon disability, age, religion or religious creed, family or marital status, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, race or perceived race, nationality, place of origin or ancestry, colour, or receipt of public assistance.

DMin students are required to know and abide by the particular harassment policies and procedures of the school in which they are registered.

ADMISSION TO THE DMIN PROGRAM

Admission Requirements

Students admitted to the DMin program must possess a Master of Divinity (MDiv) or Master of Theological Studies (MTS), or their equivalents as defined by their school of registration in consultation with the DMin Committee. A minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 75 per cent (or its equivalent) in the above degrees is required. Students will normally have the equivalent of a minimum of three years of active ministry subsequent to the completion of their MDiv/MTS degree (or equivalent) and will be located in a ministry site suitable for carrying out a collaborative ministry project.

Foreign Equivalencies

Given that methods of recording grades and conferring degrees differ from country to country, foreign students wishing to enter the DMin program must write to the STU Registrar, submitting details of their academic careers. This report should include transcripts of academic work and copies of any degrees or diplomas held, together with some information about the institution granting the degrees. Applicants whose first language is not English must demonstrate English fluency by either (a) a TOEFL IBT score (including the speaking component) of 88 with no component less than 20, or (b) a score of at least 120 on the DUOLINGO English test. Applicants are responsible for taking the test and ensuring that their results are sent to the STU Registrar.

Qualifying Work

If there is question about whether a candidate for admission has the prerequisites needed for the DMin program, the candidate may be required to complete qualifying work prior to formal admittance, at the direction of the DMin Committee.

Application Procedures

The application period for the Fall cohort of the DMin program opens in January and closes in April in odd-numbered years. The online application may be obtained from the STU Registrar. Applications for admission to the DMin program are made either to Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS) or St Andrew's College (SAC). The DMin degree is awarded by either Lutheran Theological Seminary or St Andrew's College, depending on which institution the student is enrolled in. Applications are received by the STU Registrar and forwarded to the Director of the DMin program and the DMin Committee for review. The DMin Committee makes admission recommendations to the Common Faculty of the STU. The school where the applicant applied will then notify the applicant of the admission decision and, if the decision is positive, enroll the applicant in the DMin program.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The DMin in Context and Practical Theology is targeted toward those engaged in ministry in Christian denominations. It is a rigorous program of study for those interested in developing a deeper understanding of the theology and practice of ministry within denominational, ecumenical, and community contexts. It is delivered primarily online, but requires students to attend two in-person intensives, 10 days in September of the first year and 4-5 days in January of the second academic year.

Those who participate in the DMin program may choose to specialize in rural ministry and community development. This specialization is primarily targeted toward those who serve in town, country, or rural settings and are interested in interdisciplinary theological study aimed at helping them to lead their ministry sites in more effective engagement with their communities.

The DMin program is a thirty (30) credit hour program and has three main components:

1) Colloquia (3; 4 credit hours total);
2) Course of instruction (7; 20 credit hours total);
3) A project in ministry planned, carried out, and written as a final report in collaboration with a team in the ministry site and presented to an evaluation committee (6 credit hours total).

Colloquia

The colloquia are opportunities for cohort-building and sharing of learning among students.

Colloquium I (DMN 601) is an in-person orientation to the DMin program. It may be held in conjunction with the initial DMin Foundations course (IU 605). During Colloquium I, students will engage in building cohort cohesion, theological reflection, and share their preliminary research ideas and questions as they begin to work on a personal learning plan for the degree program. (1 credit)

Colloquium II (DMN 602) will focus on students continuing to apply concepts of practical theology and other disciplines as foundations for their research, in order that they can engage in reflective conversations with their ministry team in the development of their core research question. This colloquium requires some preparatory reading, the sharing of ideas, and discussion. (1credits)

Colloquium III (DMN 603) is dedicated to sharing project ideas and firming up project proposals. 2 credits)

Coursework

The required coursework constitutes twenty (20) credit hours of mandatory and elective courses.

The following courses (14 credits) are mandatory:

- DMN 605 Foundations in Contextual & Practical Theology (3 credits)
- A course in either biblical studies, ecclesiastical history, or theology (3 credits)
  DMN 781 Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods (2 credits)
- DMN 701 Qualitative Research Tools and Applications (3 credits)
- DMN 777 Capstone Course - students develop and rehearse their public presentation with feedback from their peers (3 credits)

In addition, each student will choose two electives (3 credits each) from among courses offered at the DMin level and appropriate to their learning plan. With the approval of the student's Program Advisor and the DMin Committee, a student may transfer in electives from other accredited institutions, amounting to up to six credit hours. Students may also work with a faculty member or a qualified external professor to devise a self-directed reading course. A *DMin Reading Course Proposal* form is available from the Director of the DMin program. The DMin Committee approves the syllabi for reading courses prior to the course beginning.

Courses offered through the DMin program have these three components:

- **Pre-class preparation:** This may involve substantial reading and other assignments. Syllabi will be made available to students approximately sixty days prior to the course start date.
- **Class time:** Classes may be offered in-person, online, or in a hybrid format.
- **Post-class work:** This will involve assignments which draw on assigned readings, classroom presentations and interaction, as well as additional research. Post-class assignments are due ninety days from the arrival of the course syllabus or sixty days from the final day of the class component, whichever is later.

Project in Ministry (DMN 789)

The project, final report, and public presentation of the student's project count as 6 credit hours toward the DMin degree.

Forming the Ministry Team and Choosing the Project

Prior to admission into the program, the applicant will provide evidence that their ministry site has given permission for, and is invested in, the student's participation in the DMin program. Throughout the first half of the DMin program, students work with their ministry sites (including community members) to identify a topic or area in which a collaborative project might be carried out. This project will be led by the DMin student, who is responsible for the initiation, recruitment and training of the team to develop a project. Instruction on how to form a ministry team is given during Colloquium I.

Project Proposal

By the end of DMN 701 Qualitative Research Tools and Applications, students will have worked with their ministry team to select a topic or area to research and begin to develop a project. Prior to commencing research, the student prepares a project proposal and ethics application in collaboration with the ministry team. The *STU DMin Project Proposal Guidelines*, *Project Proposal Outline,* and *Ethics Protocol Outline* guide this process. Project Proposals are submitted to the Director of the DMin program for review and approval by the DMin Committee.

The Project

The DMin project involves systematic research and action around a significant topic or area in the student's ministry setting. Students will engage in research with their ministry team and community to explore the topic or area of interest.

Final Project Report

The final project report reflects this collaboration, using input from, and language that is accessible to, the ministry team that participated in the project. The student and ministry team will seek to integrate the practice of theory, theology, and experience of ministry as revealed in their project in their ministry setting.

The final project report is prepared according to the *STU DMin Project Final Report Guidelines*. It is to be between 15,000 and 25,000 words (70 to 100 pages plus appendices and bibliography), including a title page and a 200-word abstract. The report should follow one of the standard style guides (Chicago, Turabian, etc.) in its recent edition. Whichever of these authorities is chosen, the student shall ensure that the rules are applied consistently throughout the final project report.

Presentation of the Final Project Report

When the Project Advisor has determined the final project report is ready for presentation, they will inform the Director of the DMin program, who will arrange for an oral presentation of the project, after first determining that the other requirements have been met.

The Director of the DMin program normally presides at the project presentation.

The evaluation committee consists of the Project Advisor and two other faculty members: one from STU and one who holds an earned doctorate from another institution. This external evaluator may be from a non-theological discipline provided that this discipline is relevant to the project being evaluated.

At the end of the project presentation, the evaluation committee shall make a decision concerning the acceptability of the final report and presentation, and will assign one of the following:

- *Acceptable with distinction:* This grade reflects a project report and presentation of exceptional quality that makes a very significant contribution to the practice of ministry.
- *Acceptable with minor revisions*
- *Not Acceptable without major revisions and a subsequent presentation*
- *Not Acceptable*

If the evaluation committee decides that the final report and/or presentation is not acceptable, the candidate may request that the DMin Committee approve the resubmission of an appropriately revised report and/or a second presentation. In considering such a request, the DMin Committee shall consider the reasons for the candidate's failure in the initial report and/or presentation, and the opinion of the Project Advisor. A subsequent report or revised presentation may not be submitted sooner than four months and not later than twelve months after the first presentation. In the case of conflict with the absolute time limits of the program, the limits can be extended to accommodate a revised report and/or second presentation. A candidate who is unsuccessful a second time shall be judged to have failed the program.

Project Report Revisions and Binding

If the evaluation committee assigns a passing grade to the project report and presentation, it shall be the responsibility of the Director of the DMin program to present this recommendation to the Common Faculty for ratification, after which the STU Registrar is informed that all of the requirements of the degree have been met.

If the evaluation committee stipulates minor revisions or alterations, it is the responsibility of the Project Advisor to certify to the Director of the DMin Program that such alterations have been made satisfactorily, after which the Director of the DMin program presents a recommendation to the Common Faculty.

The student must present to their school of registration one professionally bound copy and one digital PDF of the Project Report in its approved form, including the abstract and bearing the signatures of each of the members of the evaluation committee. A receipt from a bindery indicating that a copy has been ordered will be sufficient for graduation.

Duration of the DMin Program

The duration of the program will vary with each student, depending on the scope of the student's professional responsibilities and the pace of progress toward the stated goals of the program. The responsibility for identifying and meeting all requirements within the appointed timeframes rests with the student.

The program will normally be completed in three years. If a student has not completed the program after three years, they may request an extension of one year from the DMin

Committee. A maximum of two one-year extensions will be granted to a student. The purpose of the “five-year window” is to help to keep the cohort together, to ensure that obtained knowledge is reasonably current at the time the degree is conferred, and to assure progress in the program. The start of the program is considered to be the date of Colloquium I.

Active Status

Students will be charged a program fee each year that they are registered in the program, to a maximum of three years. This fee covers the costs of the Program Advisor, Project Advisor, and the Director of the DMin program, including administrative time. In years when no work is being done for credit, or when the three years of program fees have been paid, students will be charged a continuation fee. Students are responsible for informing the STU Registrar when credit-bearing work is being pursued (even if it is a transfer credit from another institution) so that fees can be properly assessed. If a student’s status changes partway through a year, fees may be adjusted accordingly.

Timeline

The following chart outlines the normal course of events and responsibilities over a model three-year DMin program.

Program Element	Content	Timing	Other Work
Colloquium I (DMN 601)	What is a DMin? Program introduction Theological reflection Sharing research ideas Ministry team and expectations	Year 1: September	Usually occurs with IU 605 Foundations
DMN 605 Foundations in Practical & Contextual Theology	Introduction to practical and contextual theology Introduction to research tools Community dynamics and development Reflexive practice (identity of the researcher)	Year 1: September	
Required course in biblical studies, ecclesiastical history, or theology		Year 1	Ongoing ministry team formation/meetings
Elective 1	A student's elective should connect with their research interests. This connection should be discussed with the student's Program Advisor	Year 1	Ongoing ministry team formation/meetings

DMN 781 Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods	Reflexive practice (identity of researcher, participant-observer) Ministry context analysis Theological reflection on ministry site	Year 1: Spring	Ministry team meetings continue Work on developing core research question Project Advisors are named
Colloquium II (DMN 602)	Exploring practical theology and students' core questions Reviewing practical theology and other disciplines as grounding disciplines for research question Asking: What are the theological foundations and connections for the practical research question to be explored Reflective conversation with ministry team about core research questions; report back from student and ministry team.	Year 2: September	Ministry team discussion/input on core research question Sharing learnings from practical theology readings in other disciplines Discuss core research question with Project Advisor and gather ministry team input
Elective 2	Should connect with research question. Could be directed reading course to prepare for project literature review.	Year 2: September to December	

DMN 701 Qualitative Research Tools and Applications	Specific qualitative research tools Applying tools to core research question and developing draft research project proposal Theological reflection on tools, ministry context, core research Question	Year 2: November	Drafting research project proposal in conversation with Project Advisor and ministry team Developing ethics proposal
Colloquium III (DMN 603)	Presenting project proposal and ethics proposal for cohort Feedback	Year 2: January	
Project Proposal and Ethics Protocol	Submitted to Project Advisor for review prior to sending to DMin Committee for approval DMin Committee assigns an external ethics reviewer	Year 2: February/March	
Research	Research commences with active participation of ministry team	Year 2: April to August	Regular connection with Project Advisor
Writing Project Report		Year 3: September to November	Submit drafts of each chapter to Project Advisor
DMN 777 (Capstone)	Share draft of Project Report with cohort Reflective conversation with ministry team following capstone presentation	Year 3: November/December	Project Advisors review draft of report before IU 777

Revisions to Project Report	Revisions based on peer, faculty, ministry team, Project Advisor input	Year 3: December/January	
Final Project Report	Submitted to the Director of the DMin program to be sent to readers	Year 3: February 1st	Project Advisor approves final report before being sent to Director of the DMin program and readers Readers must have the report in hand at least three weeks before the project presentation Reports received after February 1st will not be guaranteed a project presentation date that will allow a student to graduate in May
Project Presentation		Year 3: March	Minor revisions as required must be made and accepted by April 25th for graduation in May

Grades and Appeals

Some courses (for example the Colloquia and the DMN 777) are evaluated on a pass/fail basis. For courses where a grade is assigned, the minimum passing grade is 70 percent. Classes for which a student has been assigned a grade lower than 70 percent must be repeated, or the student must offer a substitute.

A student who is not satisfied with a grade assigned in a course should speak with the instructor and seek to find a satisfactory solution. If such a solution is not found, the student may submit a written statement giving the grounds of the appeal, together with the relevant documents, to the Director of the DMin program. The Director of the DMin program shall appoint a committee, in consultation with the faculty of the school in which the student is registered, to review the matter. The decision of the committee shall be final.

Other Policies and Procedures

Students are expected to abide by all policies governing the institutions in which they are registered (e.g. fees payment schedules, academic dishonesty, etc.).

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition fees may change in subsequent academic years.

Tuition for 2025-2026

$1635 per 3-credit course for academic credit
$1090 per 2-credit course/colloquium for academic credit
$ 545 per 1-credit course/colloquium for academic credit
$3270 for Project (6 credits)
$ 817.50 for audit of 3-credit course
$ 545 for audit of 2-credit course
$ 272.50 for audit of 1-credit course

Fees for 2025-2026

$1165 per year program fees – for three years
$ 13 per month Populi fee
$ 6.50 per credit unit Tech fee
$1165 continuation fee per year for extending the program ($582.50 per semester)
$ 150 graduation fee

Course	**Credits**	**Tuition/Fee**
Colloquium I (IU 601)	1	$ 545
IU 605 Foundations	3	$1635
Biblical/History/Theology course	3	$1635
Elective 1	3	$1635
IU 781 Qualitative Research Methods	2	$1090
Colloquium II (IU 602)	1	$ 545
Elective 2	3	$1635
IU701 Qualitative Research Tools and Applications	3	$1635
Colloquium III (IU 603)	2	$1090
IU 777 Capstone	3	$1635
IU 789 Project	6	$3270
Program Fee (3 years)		$3495
Populi Fee (3 years)		$ 468
Tech Fee (30 credits)		$ 195
Graduation Fee		$ 150
Total for 3 years		**$20658**

Students are also responsible for the cost of research (books, databases, etc.), travel, accommodation, and meals while in Saskatoon.