



WHEATON
COLLEGE
GRADUATE SCHOOL
For Christ & His Kingdom

Doctor of Ministry Student Handbook

A. Duane Litfin
School of Ministry and Theological Studies

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Wheaton College Graduate School

The historic strengths of the graduate school at Wheaton College enable us to make distinctive contributions to the world of Christian higher education. As such, the graduate programs at Wheaton focus on areas of strategic importance. Wheaton College maintains a clear commitment to the supreme and final authority of the Scriptures, a tradition of excellence in academic pursuits rooted in the liberal arts, and a commitment to integration of Christian faith and learning in the context of a dynamic faith community.

These carefully planned graduate programs seek to bring Christian belief and perspectives to bear on the needs of contemporary society. Students have the opportunity to work closely with accomplished teacher-scholar-practitioners; and, where possible, with accomplished scholar-practitioners outside of Wheaton. We provide academic and professional preparation that will enable the committed Christian student to articulate a biblical and global worldview and to apply it to service for Christ and His Kingdom.

The graduate programs are designed to enable our graduate students to:

- Develop an appropriate graduate-level mastery of an academic discipline and of its methods of scholarly inquiry and professional application;
- Develop a biblical framework for understanding their discipline in order to integrate faith, learning, and practice effectively;
- Develop interdisciplinary breadth and inquiry through our required component of biblical and theological studies and through exposure to the broader liberal arts emphases of our academic community;
- Pursue their own holistic development in the context of this dynamic community of faith in order to prepare to serve Christ and His Kingdom throughout the world;
- Effectively serve to improve society and build the church — locally, nationally, and globally — in their chosen vocations by using critical thinking skills in the disciplines.

Since the integrating core of all our graduate programs is our institutional commitment to grounding academic study in Christian truth (i.e., “integrating faith and learning”), foundational knowledge of the Scriptures is a prerequisite to successful study at Wheaton College. Many students bring rich experiences from domestic and global Christian ministry to their graduate studies at Wheaton College, and many Wheaton College graduate alumni have, in turn, made distinctive contributions to the Church and to society around the world.

A. Duane Litfin School of Ministry and Leadership

The mission of the A. Duane Litfin School of Ministry and Theological Studies is to develop biblically grounded, theologically formed, and spiritually maturing leaders to equip God’s people for advancing the gospel world-wide.

Students join a community of academic peers that are committed to scholarship, research, ministry, and leadership development in a wide range of mission, ministry, and leadership fields. Together, the faculty and students collaborate to effectively serve Jesus Christ and advance His Kingdom through excellence in liberal arts and graduate programs that educate the whole person and build the church and benefit society worldwide.

Doctor of Ministry Staff

Dr. Marc Cortez – Dean of the Litfin School and Professor

Dr. Rochelle Scheuermann – Doctor of Ministry Program Director and Associate Professor
Dr. Eunice Hong – Research Director and Assistant Professor
Dr. Heather Matthews – Doctor of Ministry Program Manager

The Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) Degree Program

The Doctor of Ministry is for seasoned church leaders who want to deepen their faith, grow in wisdom, and develop as thought leaders and skilled practitioners for long-term fruitfulness in ministry.

The Doctor of Ministry curriculum addresses ministry professionals as whole human beings, as well as the diversity of ministry knowledge and skills needed in the 21st century by bringing together biblical and theological scholarship, theological integration, reflective practice, ministry skills, and spiritual maturity. The doctoral program is designed to be academically rigorous, focused on contextually relevant ministry praxis, and the development of spiritually formed leaders who will minister in multicultural environments.

Learning Objectives of the D.Min. degree

- ~ *Advanced Theological Integration:* The D.Min. program gives graduates the ability to engage cultural context with advanced theological acumen and critical thinking by developing theological frameworks that inform, underpin, and reshape practical ministry questions and strategies.
- ~ *In-Depth Contextual Competency:* The D.Min. program gives graduates the ability to identify and frame crucial ministry issues through research and writing that integrates multiple disciplines.
- ~ *Strategic Planning and Implementation:* The D.Min. program equips graduates to enhance their impact as ministerial leaders by developing and assessing ministry practices that respond to needs identified within a specific ministry context.
- ~ *Personal and Spiritual Maturity:* The D.Min. program enables graduates to reinvigorate and deepen vocational call and extend tenure in ministry. D.Min. programs are integrative in that they are focused on spiritual, personal, moral, and ministerial formation by adopting and strengthening formation practices related to self, community, and ministry.

As part of this D. Min. program, all students are required to complete a doctoral project, which serves as the capstone of the D.Min. program. The Doctoral Project is an opportunity for students to connect the knowledge gained from their coursework with the concrete realities of their ministries. Each student will identify a challenge they face in ministry and situate that challenge in their context, reflecting theologically on that challenge. Students then design a new ministry initiative to address that challenge which must then be implemented and assessed.

Cohorts

Students in the Doctor of Ministry degree program will be placed in a cohort of students who will progress through the coursework together at the same pace. Students will have the opportunity to build meaningful, encouraging, and productive relationships in their cohort. Students in a cohort will receive a discount off the regular tuition rate. Please note that any prerequisite courses required and taken before starting the DMin program do not qualify for the 15% cohort discount. Students can miss up to two classes with their cohort only for emergency situations before losing the cohort discount. Students who are unable to take a course with their cohort for an emergency reason must contact the Doctor of Ministry Program Manager, Dr. Heather Matthews, for special permission.

Flexible Learning Format

Most students will continue to serve in their current ministry roles while completing the program part-time. Most courses will be delivered as one-week intensives. The courses for M.A. entrants will be offered in an online format during the summer semesters. This structure provides students the opportunity to come to campus for two weeks a year for intensive study. Once students leave campus, they are equipped to immediately apply their learning in their current context while earning a doctoral degree.

Doctor of Ministry Academic Program and Policies

Program Requirements

The Wheaton College D.Min. program is open to students with an M.Div. or an M.A. in Bible, theology, or a ministry-related field.

- ~ **Doctor of Ministry for M.Div. Entrants** - 32 credit hours
- ~ **Doctor of Ministry for M.A. Entrants** - 44 credit hours
- ~ **Total Length** – 3 ½ to 5 years
- ~ **The Doctoral Project** - The degree program culminates with the doctoral project, in which students will make a significant contribution to the practice of ministry.

Courses

Bible and Theology Courses for Theological M.A. Entrants Only (12 credits)

BITH 711	Seminar in Ecclesial Theology (4 credits)
BITH 712	Global Church History (4 credits)
BITH 713	Old Testament Book Study (4 credits) OR
BITH 714	New Testament Book Study (4 credits)

D.Min. Core Courses (12 credits)

BITH 811	Theological Hermeneutics in Ministry (4 credits)
MIN 702	Public Christianity for a Post-Christian World (4 credits)
MIN 811	Contemporary Issues in the Church (4 credits)

D.Min. Concentration Courses (12 credits)

See below for specific concentration options

D.Min Spiritual Formation (0 Credits)

MIN 703-709	Personal and Ministerial Formation
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D.Min. Project (8 credits)

MIN 851	Doctoral Research Methods (2 credits)
MIN 992	Doctoral Project (6 credits)

Total Credit Hours: 32 or 44

Concentrations

D.Min. Pastoral Leadership Concentration Courses (12 credits)

LEAD 811	Healthy and Spiritual Leadership (4 credits)
MIN 812	Gender, Sexuality, and Spirituality (4 credits)
MIN 813	Advanced Preaching and Teaching (4 credits)

D.Min. Spiritual Formation Concentration Courses (12 credits)

MIN 711	Formation and Soul Care (4 credits)
MIN 821	Theology and History of Spiritual Formation (4 credits)
MIN 822	Strategies for Spiritual Formation in Community (4 credits)

D.Min. Women in Leadership Concentration Courses (12 credits)

LEAD 831	History of Women in the Church (4 credits)
MIN 832	Women, the Bible, and the Church (4 credits)
LEAD 833	Gender Issues in Ministry Leadership (4 credits)

D.Min. Special Topic Concentration Courses (12 credits)

MIN 894	Special Topic 1 (4 credits)
MIN 894	Special Topic 2 (4 credits)
MIN 894	Special Topic 3 (4 credits)

Course Structure

During the semester, each course will meet the following expectations:

Reading: 2,000-2,500 pages

Writing: 25-35 pages (either in a single summative paper or divided into two or more papers). Papers should demonstrate biblical and theological scholarship, theological integration, reflective practice, contextual competency, ministry skills, and/or spiritual maturity.

Online Interaction: The equivalent of 10 hours, which is used to supplement the 40 hours of class during the intensive week in order to meet the 50-hour guideline for a four-hour course.

When does reading need to be finished?

We normally expect students to read the syllabus and all the readings before the first day of class. For accountability, some professors ask for a reading report to be submitted the day before the first day of the intensive.

What is the time investment for the student?

Students should plan to spend 150 hours in course work (not including travel or time securing materials). For an intensive, the breakdown is as follows:

- 50 hours: Reading prior to the intensive
- 40 hours: In-person instruction during the intensive – approximately 8 hours per day for 5 days. *Students may not miss any days of an intensive (see Attendance Policy).*
- 10 hours: Online interaction
- 50 hours: Research paper(s) and/or projects following the intensive
- Students can expect 8-10 hours of work per week throughout the semester

Transfer of Credit into the D.Min. Program

From a Domestic Institution: At least 75% of the total hours required for a degree program must be taken from Wheaton College. With department approval, up to 25% of the program can be doctoral-level transfer credit. Courses considered for transfer must have been taken at a regionally-accredited institution (exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis). Courses where students earned lower than “B-” cannot be transferred. Grades from transferred courses are not used when determining a student's cumulative grade point average at Wheaton. Credits from a conferred doctoral degree cannot be transferred. Courses taken more than eight years prior to enrollment at Wheaton may not be transferable. Students must complete their last semester of study at Wheaton.

From a Non-US Institution: At least 75% of the total hours required for a degree program must be taken from Wheaton College. With department approval, up to 25% of the program can be doctoral-level

transfer credit. Courses considered for transfer must have been taken at an institution determined by WES or ECE to be the U.S. equivalent of a regionally-accredited institution (exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis). Courses where students earned lower than “B-” (or equivalent as evaluated by WES or ECE) cannot be transferred. Grades from transferred courses are not used when determining a student's cumulative grade point average at Wheaton. Credits from a conferred doctoral degree cannot be transferred. Courses taken more than eight years prior to enrollment at Wheaton may not be transferable. Students must complete their last semester of study at Wheaton.

Minimum Grade in Prerequisite Courses

Students must attain a B (3.0) or higher grade in D.Min. competency requirements in order to meet the requirements for entry into the D.Min. degree program.

Provisional Admission

If a student applies for the Doctor of Ministry program with a relevant master's degree cumulative GPA lower than 3.0 and the Doctor of Ministry program director or program manager would like to offer admission, the student will receive a provisional admission. Students receiving a provisional admission must pass his/her first course in order to continue in the program. If a student is provisionally admitted and then subsequently fails his/her first course, the student may be dismissed from the program. The Doctor of Ministry Committee will vote on whether to allow the student to continue in the program.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is required. Students will need permission to miss up to ½ day (4 hours) of lecture time. Students missing between ½ day to 1 full day (4-8 hours) will be required to make up the missed time through additional work and online instruction. Students missing more than 1 full day will need to repeat the course and cannot make up the missed seat time with additional work.

Audits

Part-time graduate students who will complete all graduation requirements by the end of the current semester are entitled to a free audit. No credit is given for audited courses and the courses are not automatically recorded on the student's academic record. A transcript audit will be recorded on a student's transcript when the audit is completed in accordance with the guidelines for a transcript audit. Part-time graduate students auditing courses are charged the student audit rate.

Registration

Students must be officially registered for all courses they attend. Newly admitted and re-admitted students register via Banner Self Service. After the official registration period, a late registration fee may be charged to the student. For quad courses and other deadlines, see Registrar's [Calendar](#) in the Wheaton College catalog.

Students who expect to enroll in subsequent semesters must complete advance registration during the scheduled time. Financial accounts must be paid and all holds remedied before students may advance register. Information regarding registration is sent two weeks prior to Advance Registration. Before going online to register via Banner Self-Service, students must obtain an additional “semester PIN” from their advisor(s).

Schedule Changes

Schedule changes should be made during the two weeks of the semester through the Registrar's Office or via Banner Self-Service. Full semester courses may be dropped without a grade during the first two weeks

of the semester. After that time, a student that withdraws will receive a "W" grade. Full semester courses may be dropped through the twelfth week of the semester.

To drop a course after the second week of the semester, each student must submit the appropriate drop form to the Registrar's Office. The student's transcript will indicate a grade of "W" (withdrawal) for such withdrawals after the second week of classes. Students who do not officially drop classes will automatically be assigned a grade of "F" (failure) by the instructor. Refunds will be given according to the schedule listed in the [Financial Information](#) section of Wheaton College catalog. See also the Refund Schedule in the [Registrar's Calendar](#) for withdrawal deadline details.

Grades

Grading Scale – Doctor of Ministry courses are graded on a scale of high pass, pass, and fail. Students must receive a passing grade in all required courses for graduation. Courses that a student fails may be retaken for a passing grade.

Courses officially dropped during the first two weeks of the term are not recorded. After that time, the student will receive a **“W” (withdrawal) grade** for all courses which are dropped by the drop deadline. The “W” grade does not affect the student's grade point average.

A student should resolve any questions about grades as soon as possible after grades have been received. A student has four months from the day grades are issued to question the grade earned. After that date, grades will be considered final. Within the four-month period, a grievance by the student should be resolved with the instructor of the course. (See grievance procedure in the [Student Handbook](#).)

An **In-Progress (IP) grade** will be given when work cannot be completed by the end of a semester due to extenuating circumstances. The completion deadline for finishing the work in order to receive a grade will be determined by the professor. In-Progress grades will not affect the student's grade point average.

Course Substitutions

For students in the Theological/Ministry Master's Entrants program: A student may submit a petition to the Program Director to substitute a required course with another doctoral-level course. If the student has taken an equivalent course to the requirement, a course substitution will be approved.

For students in the M.Div. Entrants program: A student may submit a petition to the Program Director to substitute a required course with another doctoral-level course. If the student has taken an equivalent course to the requirement, a course substitution will be approved.

Program Leave

Continuous enrollment in the graduate programs is an expectation for doctoral students until all degree requirements are satisfied. However, for extraordinary reasons, a student may be granted a program leave. Students granted program leave will have their degree completion time-limit extended by the length of their approved absence, effectively stopping their degree completion “clock.” Students who have a lapse in enrollment without an approved program leave must withdraw from their program and will be subject to the normal entailments of such withdrawal.

If the circumstances for this request are of a sensitive nature which the student prefers to not discuss in detail with the faculty, the student can first go to the Graduate Student Life Office who will work with the student on initiating the program leave process.

A program leave may be granted by the committee on more than one occasion but is not to exceed a total

of two years. Once approved, the program leave will not be counted against the D.Min. program's degree completion limitation (seven years) nor will the student be assessed any continuation fees during that time. Students who take program leave for more than one semester may be placed in a new cohort and lose their cohort tuition discount.

During a program leave, the student's project advisor is not expected to provide project supervision. When a student takes a program leave, the student will also no longer hold student status and therefore will need to access campus resources such as the library and SRC as a guest. Students who have taken leave from the program for one or more semesters must petition the program for approval to restart the program.

If the student is approved for a program leave, the student will also submit a [Withdrawal or Cancel Enrollment form](#) to update their records.

[Withdraw or Cancel Enrollment from the Graduate School](#)

Any graduate student finding it necessary to withdraw from the College while currently enrolled must complete and submit the "Withdraw or Cancel Enrollment" form and submit it to the registrar. A student who leaves the College during the semester without completion of the withdrawal process will receive grades earned and may forfeit all fees or deposits paid to the College.

If a student is asked to withdraw or is dismissed for disciplinary reasons, a "W" will be recorded on the transcript for courses in which the student is enrolled. The regular refund policy applies for a student who is dismissed for disciplinary reasons.

Any student not returning to the College after completing a term should complete and submit the "Withdraw or Cancel Enrollment" form.

NOTE: See the Refund Schedule in the [Registrar's Calendar](#) for withdrawal deadline details.

[Academic Standing \(Probation and Dismissal\)](#)

Any student who fails a Doctor of Ministry course (receives an F grade) will be placed on academic probation. The probationary status will be removed if the student passes (receives a pass or high pass grade) in all courses the subsequent semester. Students who fail two D.Min. courses during the course of their academic program may be dismissed from the D.Min. program. Any failed required courses must be passed to qualify for graduation.

[Time Limit for Degree](#)

Students have a maximum of seven years from the time of enrollment to finish the D.Min. degree. If students do not complete the D.Min. program within the seven-year limit, they will be dropped from the program unless the student petitions the Doctor of Ministry Committee and is granted special consideration. Petitions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. A petition to continue enrollment past seven years must include a persuasive rationale for the program not being completed on time and a detailed plan to complete the unfulfilled requirements in a timely manner.

[Degree Conferral and Commencement](#)

Upon satisfactory completion of all degree requirements, Wheaton College confers upon the student the degree of Doctor of Ministry.

A student is subject to the requirements listed in the catalog for the year in which the first enrollment

occurred or to the requirements of a subsequent catalog under which the student is enrolled for credit as a degree-seeking student. All requirements must be met, however, under the same catalog.

In order to participate in the annual May Commencement ceremony (including in absentia), a student needs to minimally meet the following criteria:

- All course requirements for the degree or certificate need to have been completed in the prior fall, registered for in the spring, or able to be completed in the upcoming summer, and
- The student would need to be registered for all the required credits for their doctoral project no later than the spring semester but would not need to be on track to complete the project by the end of the summer term.

Students need to submit an application to graduate and identify which May Commencement ceremony they wish to participate in according to the criteria above. Students may only participate in one Commencement ceremony (including in absentia). They will receive the diploma or certificate when all requirements are finished.

Graduation Requirements

The following requirements must be met for graduation:

- D.Min. students must pass all the D.Min. Core courses and complete the Doctoral Project in the D.Min. program at Wheaton College Graduate School. D.Min. students will also need to take their final semester of study at Wheaton College Graduate School.
- An “Application for Degree” must be submitted to the Registrar's Office according by announced deadline dates.
- All requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree must be completed within seven years from the date of entrance.

Integrity of Scholarship

By affirmation of the Wheaton College Community Covenant, all students, faculty, and staff are expected to understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and to take personal responsibility and accountability for their work. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense against an academic community and against the standards of excellence, integrity, and behavior expected of its members. Academic dishonesty degrades the educational and research mission of the College. Truth and honesty are to be followed in all academic endeavors, including the taking of examinations and in the preparation of class reports and papers. Areas of concern related to academic integrity include plagiarism, cheating, fabrication of information or data, unauthorized collaboration, lying, defrauding, misrepresentation, or deception related to assigned or voluntary academic work. The definition of academic dishonesty, the method for reporting violations, and the procedures of the disciplinary process are stated in the “Policy on Academic Honesty” in the Student Handbook on the internet.

Gender Inclusive Language

For academic discourse, spoken and written, the faculty expects students to use gender inclusive language for human beings. The policy is both theological and missional.

Evangelical Christians continue to have differences about how to interpret scripture in reference to many questions about what it means to be male and female, but we are united in the affirmation that both men and women are fully human, created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27).

The college seeks to equip students for service in the world for Christ. Students need to be ready to communicate in that world. We want our students to succeed in graduate school, in the corporate world, and in public communication: all settings in which gender inclusive language for human beings is expected and where the inability to use such language may well be harmful to the Christian witness.

Evangelical Christians are not separatists. Missionally, we have long been committed to being in the world and in the broader culture, following the example of Christ our Lord who does not “belong to the world” but who was sent into the world by the Father and so sends us (John 17:14, 18). We are commanded to be in the world for the sake of the gospel. Paul counsels Christians in Corinth to attend to the consciences of others giving “no offense to Jews or Greeks” (1 Cor. 10:32). Paul also draws on the doctrine of the goodness of creation (1 Cor. 10:26), reminding the church in Corinth that it will not be polluted by engagement in the world because the world is God’s.

Language remains fluid, and professors should discuss specific guidelines for practice with students.

Helpful resources for practice include:

- Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 9th edition: Chapter 7
- The Chicago Manual of Style (16th Edition) 301-304.

The policy does not apply to language used for God nor does it require any rephrasing of quotations. The policy does not imply answers to contested questions about the best standards for biblical translation.

Graduate Student Information

Academic Information

Enroll at Wheaton: Our helpful form provides all the steps in the process.

- [Enrollment for Flexible Learning Students \(PDF\)](#)

Register for Classes: Note: you must first be enrolled as a student and have a “My.Wheaton” account to register for classes.

Academic Resources

- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Wheaton Library Guide for Students at a Distance](#)
- [Wheaton Library D.Min. Research Guide](#)
- [Registrar's Office](#) - Go to the [Graduate Registrar](#) for information on registering for graduate courses, transcript requests, graduation requirements, commencement, and other academic records.
 - ~ [Academic Deadlines for Students](#)
 - ~ [Access Your Grades](#) -Through DegreeWorks. (Our user-friendly degree-tracking application. See “Communications and Technology.”)
 - ~ [Address Change \(PDF\)](#) - Use this form to let us know if your address has changed.
 - ~ [Registrar Forms](#)

Payment Information & Policies

[Student Financial Services](#) - SFS is responsible for processing all payments and financial aid.

[Student Billing and Payment Gateway](#) – An online, self-service site for all of your student account transactions.

Contact Student Financial Services at sfs@wheaton.edu with any questions.

Communication and Technology

Official Communication

Wheaton College uses Banner Self-Service, a component of the College's administrative database system, and College-administered student email accounts for official communication between students and administrative offices.

Electronic Mail

Students are given College email accounts upon acceptance. Official notifications will be sent to these accounts. Students are responsible for reading their college email and must use their college email accounts in official correspondence to ensure proper identification. It is Wheaton College policy that students, faculty, and staff are to communicate electronically only via my.wheaton.edu email, Wheaton Portal, and Canvas. Be sure to check these regularly. Set up your my.wheaton.edu email account by visiting [Account Setup](#).

AIT: [Academic and Institutional Technology](#) offers solutions in the effective use of media and the integration of technologies to enhance curricular and campus programs. Contact AIT with any technological issues or problems - from troubleshooting internet connections to help using campus printers.

- [Flex learning technology help page](#)
- [Connecting to the Wheaton Network](#)
- [Technology @Wheaton](#) for New Students

Troubleshooting Common Internet and Technology (Printing!) Problems When Students Come on Campus

- **Internet Connection:** Watch for the network access screen on your device(s) when you open your internet browser while on campus; this will guide you to re-registering your device(s)
- [Thundercloud Printing](#)—enabling your computer or device to print using Wheaton's Network and printers when you are on campus.

Wheaton Portal (<http://portal.wheaton.edu>) is the place to access information and tools, such as your my.wheaton.edu email account, Banner Self-Service (though which you register for courses, drop and add courses, see your grades, request transcripts, see your student account, pay your bills, view academic calendars and resources, access Canvas, and more.) By logging on to the portal, you will also be automatically logged into many of the online systems used at Wheaton College.

Banner is the administrative software database program that powers everything from applications to the Wheaton portal, to grading and transcripts after graduation. Virtually every office at uses Banner systems.

Banner Self-Service provides online registration for classes and communication of class schedules, grades, student account balances, and financial aid information. Students access Banner Self-Service through the Wheaton Portal. Data encryption and user authentication protect students' personal information.

Canvas Learning Management System is used for accessing class materials, discussion, online tests and assignments, and grade tracking, and your program-related

DegreeWorks is the official application used to track student progress and requirements towards fulfilling a degree. A DegreeWorks audit will show completed and in-progress courses and will display requirements that still remain before obtaining a degree. Additional features in DegreeWorks include: a “look-ahead” function, a planner, an ability to add notes, and a GPA calculator. The DegreeWorks audit also identifies which courses have been taken at Wheaton College and which have been transferred from other institutions. Lastly, the audit shows which courses need prerequisites before enrolling. **If there are any errors in your DegreeWorks file, contact your department chair or program director.** For a more in-depth guide to your DegreeWorks file, please see <https://www.wheaton.edu/about-wheaton/offices-and-services/office-of-the-registrar/registrar-faqs/degree-works-faqs/>

Microsoft Teams

Wheaton College utilizes Teams for video calls, synchronous online course meetings, online community discussion groups, and as resource that stores helpful information for students.

Once you have been accepted as a student, you will be able to login to Teams using your Wheaton credentials. The online platform will provide you access to the overall D.Min Community Group and your specific cohort community group.

Graduate Student Resources

<https://www.wheaton.edu/graduate-school/student-life/resource-guide/>

Student Health Services

- [Immunization waiver](#)
- [Services Available on Campus](#)

Order Books – A syllabus for your class will be available about a week before class begins. Required textbooks may be available before then through the Wheaton College Bookstore. Visit the [Wheaton College Bookstore](#) and click on "Shop Now."

Dining Options

<https://www.wheaton.edu/life-at-wheaton/housing/campus-dining/>

Anderson Commons provides café service and seating for 700 individuals. Well-balanced meals from our food-service partner, Bon Appétit, offer menu variety for individual tastes.

- [Off Campus](#)
- [On Campus](#)

Accessibility Services

- [Learning and Accessibility Services website](#)
- [Learning and Accessibility Services Policy Manual \(PDF\)](#)

On-Campus Resources and Amenities

- [The Library](#)
- [Chrouser Sports Complex](#) - Free for students; includes gym, track, climbing wall, pool and more!
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Graduate Chaplain](#)
- [Public Safety Services](#) (Campus shuttles, safety escorts, motorist assistance, etc.)
- The [Writing Center](#) is here to help you in any stage of the writing process! There are special hours just for graduate students: Tuesdays from 6:30-8:30 pm, and Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3:30-6:00 pm.

About the Area

- [Explore Wheaton and Chicago](#)
- [Wheaton College campus map](#)
- [Local Area Resources \(PDF\)](#) - pharmacies, dentists, doctors, grocery stores, etc.

Technology Resources

- [General Academic and Institutional Technology Helps](#)
- [My.Wheaton Account information](#)
- [FREE Microsoft Office Software](#) for students
- [FREE LinkedIn Learning](#) for students

International Students Only

- **SEVIS Registration:** All international students are required to complete the SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) registration procedure within 30 days of the current program start date. This is to ensure that the required documents are on file and to comply with the Federal immigration regulations to report necessary information about your status to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- **Please contact the Graduate School Designated School Official (DSO) to book an appointment: Graduate Life Office;** Office: BGC 228; graduate.student.life@wheaton.edu
- International Students enrolled in Flexible Format programs, but moving to Wheaton, will find the information they need from the College's [International Students Program](#).

Other Resources

- [Bias Incident Policy](#) and [Bias Incident Report Form](#)

The Doctoral Project

In a graduate school setting, research is of critical importance. The student is expected not only to reach a certain level of expertise in a chosen field of interest, but also to contribute to the ever-expanding fund of knowledge that this field encompasses. The research involved in that contribution is to be of the highest order in terms of theory, as well as technique, with excellence at every stage as its proximate and ultimate goals. It is only as such standards are applied and such results attained that the term graduate can be used properly to describe an educational experience. For this reason, the doctoral project is an integral part of the graduate program.

The purpose of this section of the handbook is to guide Doctor of Ministry students through the project phase of the degree. To begin the doctoral project, students admitted on a provisional basis, a probation, or on special status will need to change their status to a regular student in the D.Min. program.

D.Min. students must follow the proposal and approval processes established by the D.Min. program. Registration for the Doctor of Ministry Project will happen according to the D.Min. Program policies (refer to Student Handbook for more details). On average, the doctoral project will take students 16-18 months to complete; the following timeline is a sample timeframe for completing the doctoral project:

- 16-18 months before anticipated defense date take MIN 851; write Project Proposal
- 13-15 months before anticipated defense date: defend Project Proposal; receive IRB Approval
- 12-15 months before anticipated defense date: register for MIN 992; begin data collection/analysis
- 5 months before anticipated defense date: secure editor
- 2 months before anticipated defense date: submit first draft for review
- (at least) 2 weeks before anticipated defense date: defend project with a pass
- After anticipated defense date: submit revisions and submit final copy to library (this is normally completed within 1-2 months of passing the defense)

Overview of the Doctoral Project

The D.Min. project is the capstone project of the Doctor of Ministry program. While a Ph.D. dissertation and a D.Min. project both require research and rigor, they are different types of study intended for different contexts. A Ph.D. dissertation is usually written for the advancement of knowledge in academia, while the D.Min. project employs scholarship in the Church and/or other ministry contexts.

To this end, the D.Min. program at the Wheaton College Graduate School strongly recommends that D.Min. projects implement a qualitative research methodology. Unlike quantitative methods that emphasize numerical and/or statistical analysis, qualitative research focuses on collecting data through observations, artifact analysis, focus groups, and interviews.

The Doctoral Project is an original, qualitative research project that should be about 125-150 pages in content. A typical doctoral project will follow the following outline¹:

- I. Chapter 1: Introduction
 - A. Introductory paragraph(s)
 - B. Statement of the problem
 - C. Statement of the purpose
 - D. Research questions

¹ Outline adapted from Sensing, Tim. 2022. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Dissertations*. 2nd ed. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.

- E. Definitions (if needed)
- F. Delimitations
- G. Limitations
- H. Significance statement- theoretical, practical (ecclesial)
- II. Chapter 2: Literature Review (Theological and Theoretical Constructs)
 - A. Introductory paragraph(s)
 - B. Description of theological themes pertaining to the project
 - C. Description of theoretical frameworks themes contributing to the project
- III. Chapter 3: Methodology
 - A. Introductory paragraph(s)
 - B. Explanation of proposed research paradigm
 - C. Data collections strategies and procedures
 - D. Data analysis methods
 - E. Positionality
 - F. Ethical considerations
 - G. Validation strategies
- IV. Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion
 - A. Introductory paragraph(s)
 - B. Summary of findings from data analysis
 - C. Discussion
- V. Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusion (Implications, Suggestions for Further Research)
 - A. Introductory paragraph(s)
 - B. Implications
 - C. Suggestions for further research
 - D. Concluding paragraph(s)

The D.Min. Project Proposal

During MIN 851, students will work closely with the Research Director to come up with a plausible qualitative research project. Generally, the project proposal will consist of the Introduction Chapter (Chapter 1), the Literature Review (Chapter 2), and the Methodology Chapter (Chapter 3). Once the Research Director and student agree that the project proposal is ready for defense, the student will defend their project proposal before the members of the committee either in-person or virtually. The candidate must provide a copy of the proposal to each member of the committee at least two weeks prior to the date of the scheduled defense. At the defense, the candidate can expect to defend their project proposal and answer questions from the committee. The following outcomes are possible scenarios of a proposal defense:

1. The proposal passes with no revisions.
2. The proposal passes with minor revisions (edits may be approved by just the Research Director).
3. The proposal passes with major revisions (edits must be approved by entire committee).
4. The proposal does not pass and needs to be re-written (project proposal defense must be rescheduled).

D.Min. Project Readers

Each D.Min. project will have three members on their committee: First Reader, Second Reader, and the Research Director. Either the First or Second Reader must be from Wheaton.

- The First Reader will serve as the key subject matter expert and will guide the student in their research; the First Reader must have either a Ph.D. or D.Min.
- The Second Reader will also be a subject matter expert that will provide additional subject matter

- expertise.
- The Research Director will serve as a research guide and support the student in obtaining IRB approval and preparing for the proposal defense.

Preference of First and Second Readers must be identified during MIN851 and approved by the Research Director *before* the student approaches any members of the committee. Refer to the Appendix for a list of expectations for each member of the committee.

IRB Approval for Human Subject Research

After the candidate has successfully defended their project proposal, they must pass the required Social and Behavior Research Training from The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) and receive approval from Wheaton College's Institution Review Board to begin research on human subjects. More information regarding the process for human subjects research approval can be found on [Wheaton's IRB site](#). A sample template of the Informed Consent Form can be found in the appendix.

Registering for the Doctoral Project

Once the student successfully defends their project proposal and receives IRB approval, they are ready to begin their research. Registration at this stage of the program will be coordinated by the D.Min. academic program and the Registrar's Office. The student may register for MIN 992 Doctoral Project after the successful completion of MIN 851. If additional time is needed beyond MIN 992 to complete the doctoral project, continuous enrollment in Project Continuation is required for the student to retain status with the college, including the use of the College's learning resources, facilities, and other benefits. A \$50.00 fee will be charged for each semester (fall, spring, and summer) of project continuation; students that will be working on their projects full time (30 hours or more per week) should register for MIN 899, while students working on their projects part time should register for MIN 999. Students must continue to register for Project Continuation until Wheaton Library accepts the final copy of the project. Students will not receive a degree until their work has been accepted by the Wheaton Library. Per the Catalog, students have a maximum of seven years from the time of enrollment to finish the D.Min. degree. See "Degree Conferral and Commencement" in the D.Min Program Handbook for more details on timing of MIN 992 with relation to Commencement participation.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Write-up

Under the supervision of the First Reader, the student can begin collecting and analyzing data and writing up their findings upon successfully passing the proposal defense and receiving IRB approval. It is recommended that the student regularly corresponds with their First Reader (at minimum once a month) to connect over the progress of their research.

Two to three months before the student anticipates turning in their completed project, the student must contact and secure an editor. The student will communicate with the editor directly to negotiate compensation and establish expectations; payments should be made directly to the editor. The editor will work with the student to make sure the project is properly formatted according to the D.Min. Form and Style Guide and written to conform to the academic standards of a doctoral degree.

The D.Min. Project Defense

Once the project has been completed, the First Reader will work with the candidate and rest of the committee to coordinate a suitable time and date for the defense. Completed projects should be sent to the Second Reader and Project Director at least three weeks prior to the date of Project Defense. The Project Defense may either be in person and/or virtual and is open to faculty and students.

The following outcomes are possible scenarios of a project defense:

1. The project passes with no revisions.
2. The project passes with minor revisions (edits may be approved by just the First Reader).
3. The project passes with major revisions (edits must be approved by entire committee).
4. The project does not meet the standards of a Doctor of Ministry project and does not pass.

Final Submission of Doctoral Project

All D.Min. projects submitted to the library must complete the technical reading process. More information about the technical reading process can be found on Wheaton College's [library site](#).

Students are hereby notified that copies of a student's dissertation will be made available to the public through the College's library.

Commencement and Hooding

Refer to [Wheaton College Graduate School's Commencement page](#) for more information regarding commencement.

It is important to also note that because the date of degree conferral is based on the semester the library receives the final copy of the doctoral project, the date on the student's diploma may be after the date of the Commencement ceremony in which the student participates.

Appendix A

SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

FULL DOCTORAL PROJECT TITLE IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS, CENTERED:

SUBTITLE

A Doctoral Project

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Litfin Divinity School

Wheaton College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

by

FirstName MI. LastName (as it will appear on degree)

Wheaton, Illinois

Month Year

Appendix B

Sample Informed Consent Form

[Title of Project]

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by [Name of Researcher] of [Name of Department] at [Name of School].

Purpose of the Study

- State the purpose of the study

Procedures

- Specifically state how individuals will participate in the study (ie. interview, audio/video recording, etc.)
- Include expected duration of participation

Potential Discomforts and Risks

- Include any risks or discomforts (ie. physical, emotional, mental, etc.) that may arise from participating in the study

Potential Benefits of the Study

- What are potential benefits to the participant?
- What are potential benefits to society/others?

Compensation for Participation

- Will there be any (monetary) compensation for participating in the study?
- If none, please state so

Confidentiality

- How will you ensure confidentiality (ie. how will you store data, how long will you store data, how will you dispose data at the end of the study, etc.)?
- How will confidentiality be maintained?

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation is voluntary, and you may refuse and/or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Contact Information for Questions and/or Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please contact [include name of primary researcher, phone number, email, and address]. For questions regarding your rights as a participant, please contact Wheaton College's Institutional Review Board Chair at sarah.hall@wheaton.edu or 630-752-5774.

Signature of Research Participant

I understand the research procedures as described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the study and have been given a copy of this consent form for my records.

Participant's Signature _____

Date _____

Investigator's Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix C

D.Min. Project Reader Expectations

This document serves as a guide outlining responsibilities for those serving on a Doctor of Ministry project committee. Responsibilities include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

Director of Research

The Research Director will serve as a research guide and support the student in obtaining IRB approval and preparing for the proposal defense.

- Work closely with student during MIN851 to define problem statement, purpose statement, central research question, and sub-questions
- Help student craft Chapters 1 (Introduction), 2 (Literature Review), and 3 (Methodology)
- Determine First and Second Readers
- Prepare student for Project Proposal Defense
- Set up and Conduct Project Proposal Defense
 - Send all readers a copy of the Project Proposal at least two weeks before the Proposal Defense
- Guide student in completing CITI Training and obtaining IRB Approval
 - Student must complete all 14 modules of CITI Training and receive a Certificate of Completion prior to submitting any IRB Requests
- Serve as resource for research/methodology related questions during project phase
- Set up Final Project Defense
 - Coordinate a time for Final Project Defense
 - Invite other faculty and students to Final Project Defense (ie. set up Teams meeting and send invitations)
- Work with student to complete suggested edits from defense hearing
- Help student secure an editor
- Prepare document for library submission

First Reader Responsibilities

The First Reader will serve as the key subject matter expert and will guide the student in their research. The First Reader will “receive” the student once student has passed the Project Defense and received IRB approval to begin conducting research.

- Accept initial agreement of First Reader Responsibilities
 - Read through document outlining Doctor of Ministry Project Reader Expectations
 - If needed, accept and sign Letter of Agreement
- Actively participate in the Proposal Defense
 - Readers will receive the Project Proposal (Chapters 1-3) two weeks before set Proposal Defense date
 - Read through the Project Proposal in its entirety and be prepared to provide substantive feedback during the Proposal Defense
- Work closely with student through project as the subject matter expert
- Guide student through the process of Data Collection, Data Analysis, and Write up

- Check-in with student at least once a month for progress updates on dissertation project
 - Serve as a resource as student writes Chapters 4 (Findings) and 5 (Implications)
- Send completed project to Second Reader and Project Director at least three weeks prior to date of Project Defense
- Conduct Final Project Defense

Second Reader Responsibilities

The Second Reader will also be a subject matter expert that will provide additional subject matter expertise.

- Accept initial agreement of Second Reader Responsibilities
 - Read through document outlining Doctor of Ministry Project Reader Expectations
 - If needed, accept and sign Letter of Agreement
- Actively participate in the Proposal Defense
 - Readers will receive the Project Proposal (Chapters 1-3) two weeks before set Proposal Defense date
 - Read through the Project Proposal in its entirety and be prepared to provide substantive feedback during the Proposal Defense
- Provide guidance and act as a resource as a subject matter expert as needed
- Actively participate in the Final Project Defense
 - Readers will receive the Final Project in its entirety three weeks before set Project Defense date
 - Read through the Project in its entirety and be prepared to engage with substantive feedback during the Project Defense

Appendix D

The following components must appear in order in all doctoral projects*:

1. Signature Page
2. Title Page
3. Copyright Page
4. Abstract
5. Dedication Page (optional)
6. Acknowledgments
7. Table of Contents
8. List of Figures, Tables and/or Illustrations
9. Chapters
 - a. Chapter 1 Introduction
 - b. Chapter 2 Literature Review
 - c. Chapter 3 Methodology
 - d. Chapter 4 Findings and Discussion
 - e. Chapter 5 Summary and Conclusion
10. References
11. Appendixes

*Students should refer to the D.Min. Form & Style Guide for more detailed instructions.