

Contracted Study Requirements

Doctor of Ministry Program Ashland Theological Seminary

A contracted study is an opportunity to explore a specialized topic or material not usually included in the D.Min. curriculum to advance the student toward completion of the doctoral project. A student works with a professor to create a contracted study. It may include an experiential component (e.g., travel, retreats, seminars, interviews) and/or a research component (e.g., library, social science, or biblical research).

Generally students are permitted no more than two contracted studies in their course of study. Requests for additional directed studies must be directed to the Associate Dean of the Doctor of Ministry program.

A contracted study agreement outlines the name and nature of the study, the professor/advisor of record, and requirements. Each contracted study will have a reading and a writing component that serve as a foundation for the course and a record of the learning. Contracted studies involve:

- Approximately 2,000 pages of reading
- Approximately 175 hours of work distributed among reading, instruction/seminars, and assignments/writing
- 35 to 40 pages of written work
- Completion within a 90 day period

A contracted study agreement form is available online, or from the D.Min. office, and must be signed by the student and the professor/advisor of record (who ultimately issues a grade for the study). It is then submitted to the Associate Dean of the D.Min. program for final approval. A billing statement for four semester hours of tuition plus a contracted study fee of \$480 is issued at the beginning of the contracted study period, payable upon receipt.

Areas for contracted studies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1. Review of Literature** – The student will identify and interact with the most significant authors, ideas, and examples on a given topic. A review of literature seeks an answer to a specific question—your research question.

A contracted study for a review of literature is designed to contribute directly to Chapter Three, “Review of the Literature,” of the doctoral dissertation. This study is normally supervised by the student’s advisor. The following three assignments are required for a review of literature:

- Provide one page that lists your purpose statement, including your research question, from your proposal.
- Compile and submit a list of the 40-50 most salient publications (books and articles from scholarly journals) related to the research question of your doctoral project. Endeavor to have at least 7-10 journal articles because these represent the most recently published research. In addition to your advisor, use one or more faculty members in your field of study as resource persons. Faculty may be especially helpful in identifying current articles, publications, and research in the field.

- Write a 25-40 page paper that is a review and critical evaluation of the literature that impacts the focus of your project. Your review will encompass the theories, data, models, and programs that others have presented and will provide a theoretical framework and a contemporary setting for your project. Be sure to follow the guidelines in “Writing Chapter Three: The Literature Review” in Part III of the current edition of *How to Write the Doctor of Ministry Proposal and Research Project* for preparing this paper.
- 2. Experiential** – The student may develop a study that involves preparation for and involvement in attending a seminar/series of seminars, retreat(s), study-related travel, or interviews of experts and noted authorities in a particular field. Experiential contracted studies will include foundational reading and a reflective writing component. Examples:
- Attend a church planting seminar with appropriate reading and writing
 - Attend three seminars on small group ministry, comparing and contrasting the underlying theologies and philosophies
 - Engage in a cross-cultural experience that informs the doctoral project
- 3. Knowledge Mastery** – This is a study under the direction of a master professor or expert in the field. It involves reading, reporting, reflecting, writing, and other appropriate pedagogical experiences for gaining mastery over a specific knowledge/skill base under the direction of an expert in the field. It may include biblical, library, and/or social science research. It may also include extensive interviews with other knowledgeable persons. Examples:
- A study of the work of Christian Schwartz
 - The role of lay pastors in the Wesleyan movement
 - Kinship in the early church