

Doctor of Ministry Q & A

Why should I consider earning a D.Min. degree?

There are many positive reasons why you might consider earning a D.Min. degree; I'll mention only four: First, the D.Min. program is designed to deepen your knowledge of and skill in ministry so that you can serve with greater professional, intellectual and spiritual integrity. Second, it is the most thorough, comprehensive means of "continuing education." Attending the occasional seminar or conference doesn't compare to this. Third, the landscape of the world in which we minister, including the church, has changed a great deal since we graduated from seminary; are we equipped to lead the church into this new context of opportunity? Fourth, your ministry experience and personal growth position you to genuinely appreciate additional training at a more advanced level.

Who is the D.Min. program designed for?

The D.Min. program is designed to meet the needs of individuals who are engaged in vocational or bi-vocational ministry and are seeking additional training to enhance their ministry effectiveness. This includes, but is not limited to, senior pastors, associate pastors, youth pastors, children's ministry directors, professors, teachers, chaplains, counselors, missionaries, para-church ministry leaders, and ministry agency heads, etc.

What are some distinctive features of your D.Min. program?

There are scores of wonderful Doctor of Ministry Programs located throughout the country, most of which offer signature elements that brand their programs. Listed below are four distinctives of CUSM's D.Min. program:

Convenient

- Finish your terminal degree in four – six years (6 modules and a dissertation)
- Remain active in your current ministry without relocating
- Attend one single two-week residency per year
- Located near the Seattle airport
- Frequent, personal contact with D.Min. director and School of Ministry staff

Affordable

- Payment plans are available upon request
- Audit classes for a fraction of the cost (benefits master's and non-degree students)
- VA Benefits and generous Church/Organization Matching Scholarships

Diverse

- Study under specialists (from top evangelical seminaries & organizations)
- Receive training in multiple subject areas
- Interact with classmates in various ministry fields

Accredited

- Corban University is regionally accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). This level of accreditation allows students to be eligible for federal financial aid and allows credits and degrees to be transferred to other regionally accredited universities and seminaries.

Can I apply without a Master of Divinity degree?

You are welcome to apply to the D.Min. program without a M.Div. degree so long as you have a Master's degree that consists of a similar number and kind of credit units—what is technically referred to as "M.Div. equivalence" (see the following question). Students with other graduate degrees such as an M.T.S. or an M.A. in biblical studies may be admitted so long as they have completed a minimum of 72 graduate semester hours. Applicants who do not meet this requirement may still be admitted to the program but will be required to take additional graduate level courses to make up the difference in credit units.

What does "M.Div. equivalence" mean?

M.Div. equivalence refers to the total number of graduate units associated with the completion of a Master of Divinity degree—ranging from 72-96 (108-144 quarter hours)—depending upon any given seminary's interpretation of accreditation stipulations. CUSM uses 72 semester credits (108 quarter) as the measure for M.Div. equivalence. Accreditation bodies (e.g. TRACS, ATS) view the M.Div. degree as the foundational graduate degree for the D.Min. There are, however, other graduate degrees now being offered that consist of a comparable number of credit units. Should your graduate degree fall into the range of credit units mentioned above, you are encouraged to contact the D.Min. department for a degree assessment. A copy of your transcripts (an unofficial copy is permitted) will be required.

What if I am not currently engaged in vocational ministry?

Typically, entrance into the D.Min. Program is conditioned upon the student's involvement in vocational ministry. There are peculiar situations in which individuals not currently engaged in vocational ministry may be accepted into the D.Min. program. An example of this may be a pastor who has recently resigned from a church and is in the process of seeking a new place of ministry. The situation, however, must be exceptional since the module assignments are intended to be implemented in the student's ministry context.

What is a "residency"?

A residency is that scheduled time when students and professors meet together on-campus to study. Every module requires students to come on campus for instruction and guidance. Starting in 2012, there will only be one residency per year, typically held in June for two weeks. Students are required to make the appropriate travel and housing arrangements to facilitate their stay. CUSM stands ready to offer assistance in planning your stay if that is helpful or necessary for you.

How much will it cost to complete the D.Min. program?

Beginning in spring 2013, the total tuition cost for the Doctor of Ministry program is approximately \$12,500. Tuition is paid by semester or a payment plan. Including fees and the project-thesis modules, the overall cost is approximately \$14,000 (some of the thesis-project expenses such as proofing, printing vary amongst students).

Application Fee: \$50 paid once with initial application

Doctor of Ministry Fee: \$200.00 per year

Tuition: \$415 per credit hour (30 credits = \$12,450)

Audit Fee, CUSM Current Student (e.g., M.A., or M.Div.) - \$400 per module

Audit Fee, Non CUSM Student - \$500 per module

How long will it take to finish the entire program?

At CUSM, a student may complete the program in 4-6 years, depending upon his/her initiative and the availability of modules. To finish the program, the student must successfully complete 6 modules and write and defend his/her Thesis-Project. The maximum number of years allowed to complete the program is six, with an additional year granted upon petition due to extenuating circumstances (continuation fee may apply).

What is a "Thesis-Project"? Is this similar to a dissertation?

The Thesis-Project is the capstone assignment of the D.Min. Program, and in that sense, it is similar to a Ph.D. dissertation. Upon the completion of the course work associated with the program, the student undertakes an involved research-oriented project that focuses on addressing a problem of ministry within their ministry context and experience. More specifically, students are required to:

- identify a viable problem in their ministry that deserves to be addressed;
- pose a researchable question;
- create a hypothesis that proposes a feasible answer to the problem of ministry being addressed;
- develop a biblical and theological foundation for the project;
- interact meaningfully with literature in the field that informs our understanding of the central theme(s) of the project along with a methodology to address it;
- develop a methodology to test the hypothesis;
conduct the research methodology in an objective, informed manner;
evaluate and report the results through whatever statistical analysis is required;
- draw concise and accurate conclusions from the project that contribute to an understanding and practice of ministry;
- submit a scholarly paper that presents the preceding points in a manner that meets high academic standards;

- defend the thesis-project before his/her doctoral committee.

Why does a D.Min. degree require a Thesis-Project?

The Thesis-Project is the culminating written project towards which the entire program moves. More specifically, the thesis-project offers students an opportunity to apply what they have learned within the program. It will demonstrate their ability to integrate theory and practice in developing a strategic, researched approach that addresses a specific problem of ministry peculiar to their ministry context. It is the final and most determinate evidence that the student has fulfilled the academic and practical requisites of this doctoral program.

Can D.Min. modules be audited?

One of the unique features of CUSM's D.Min. program is that courses (modules) may be audited by anyone involved in full-time vocational ministry as well as CUSM students enrolled in Master's degree programs. Auditing a course is dependent upon space availability.