

Provisional Policy Regarding M.Div. Equivalency

ATS 5.5 Students without an accredited Master of Divinity degree may be admitted, provided the school has publicly stated admissions criteria that address the following six areas and provided the school documents how each applicant meets each of these criteria: (a) the ability to thoughtfully interpret scripture and the theological tradition of one's ministry context, (b) the capacity to understand and adapt one's ministry to the cultural context, (c) a basic self-understanding of one's ministerial identity and vocational calling, (d) a readiness to engage in ongoing personal and spiritual formation for one's ministry, (e) an accredited master's degree (or its educational equivalent) in an area related to one's ministry setting or vocational calling, and (f) significant ministerial experience that enables the applicant to engage as a ministry peer with other students in this advanced professional doctorate.

Applicants who do not hold a Master of Divinity degree, but meet all other application requirements for the Doctor of Ministry program at LPTS, will need to complete the following steps:

- a) Prepare a letter or extensive email that addresses their own preparation or ways that they meet each criterion above. Include any documents or artifacts that evidence each point. Applicants may also answer this in a narrative form, reflecting on each point and discussing how their own vocational placements and educational training have prepared them with these capacities.
- b) Email the documents with the aforementioned cover letter to the Director of the Doctor of Ministry program, Dr. Dianne Reistroffer (dreistroffer@lpts.edu)
- c) Complete a brief interview (30 min) with the Director of the Doctor of Ministry program and another full-time faculty member who teaches in the program. This meeting will occur after receipt of the supplemental letter and documents identified above and before the full application goes to the DMin Admissions Committee.

Evidence of meeting these six areas or criteria:

(a) Graduate course work in Scripture (both testaments), history of Christianity, theology, and ethics; or demonstrated knowledge evidenced by preaching and teaching artifacts [sermons, Bible studies, written publications, blogs, podcasts].

***Documents:* Transcripts, admissions essays, references, and supplemental material submitted with the application plus the admissions interview rubric.**

(b) Graduate course work in culture and context, sociology, especially sociology of religion, gender, race and class, congregational studies; preaching, teaching, other presentations (video/written/digital).

Documents: Transcripts, admissions essays, references, and supplemental material submitted with the application plus the admissions interview rubric.

(c) *Documents:* Admissions essays, PIF or equivalent, references, and supplemental material submitted with the application, plus the admissions interview rubric.

(d) *Documents:* Admissions essays, references, and supplemental material (e.g. a self-care plan) submitted with the application, plus the admissions interview rubric.

(e) An accredited master's degree or its equivalent*

***Equivalent in this instance shall mean:**

A collection of thirty (30) or more graduate-level credits taken at accredited institutions, or, a degree conferred in another country equal to or higher than the master's degree in the United States. [Ref. SACSCOC Standard/Requirement 9.2/ATS Standard 5.5]

(f) For admissions purposes, "significant ministry experience" consists of at least three years in ministry following the first seminary degree, or a consistent professional ministry during the five years prior to enrollment. "Consistent professional ministry" means to be engaged in ongoing, not episodic or seasonal, ministry as one's main occupation or one of two or more occupations. Professional ministry refers to performing activities in ministry that requires a certain level of education, skill, or training, normally leading to certification, licensure, endorsement, or ordination by an ecclesial body. Examples: a lay or ordained pastor under call or appointment, a Christian educator on staff at a church, a therapist on staff at a faith-based mental health facility, a director or program coordinator for a community-based, not-for-profit organization working with area faith communities.

Documents: Transcripts, admissions essays, references, resume or vita, and supplemental material submitted with the application plus the admissions interview rubric.

Revised and adopted by the LPTS Faculty on December 6, 2023