VIRGINIA BEACH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
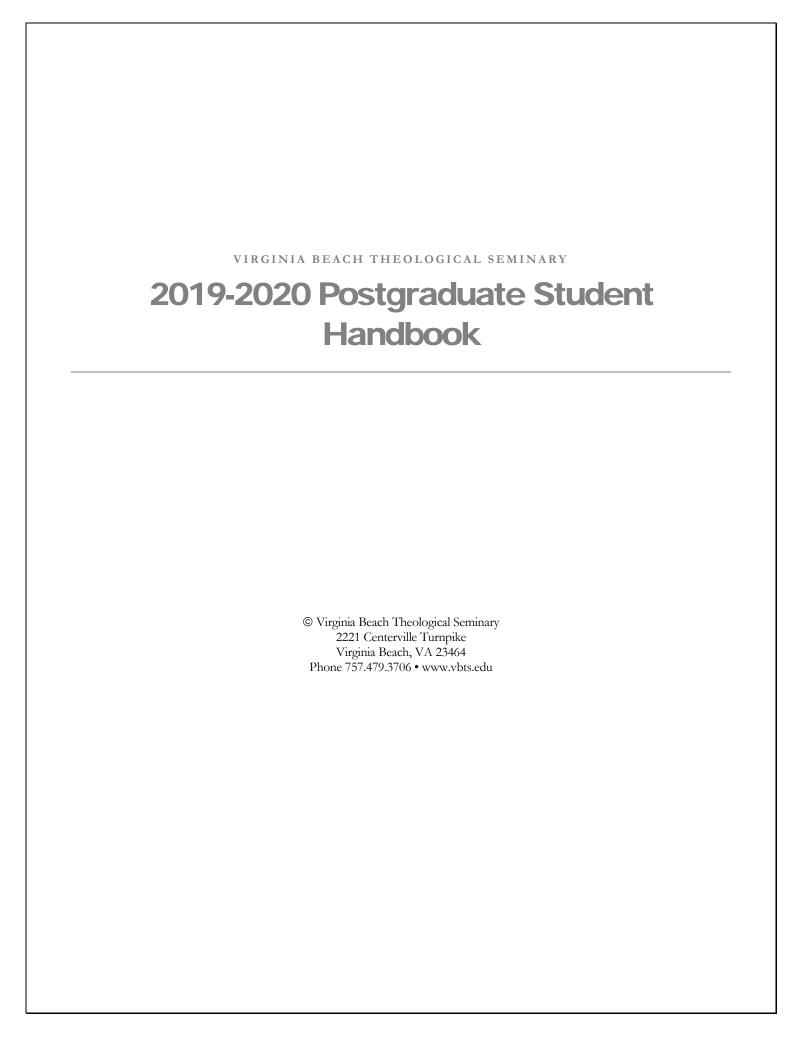
2019-2020 Postgraduate Student Handbook

VIRGINIA BEACH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

2019-2020 Postgraduate Student Handbook

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1. Introduction

The Postgraduate Student Handbook is intended to introduce readers to the Master of Theology and Doctor of Ministry degree programs, summarize policies and information unique to these programs, and supplement the VBTS Catalog and Student Handbook.

1.1 Vision and Mission

Virginia Beach Theological Seminary opened its doors in the summer of 1996 with the vision of training pastors, missionaries, and skilled Christian workers in the context of the local church. Colonial Baptist Church has served as the gracious host of VBTS since its inception and provides an appropriate context for ministerial training. The interactive relationship between the seminary and Colonial Baptist Church enables students to observe the practical application of sound theology and a biblically informed philosophy of ministry.

The development and application of ministry philosophy is a focal point for the seminary. VBTS is committed to the ministry principle that God accomplishes His work through the sufficiency of the biblical text. God displays His grace in the church by applying the Scripture to the conscience of the believer, empowering the believer to live for Christ, and enabling the believer to properly distinguish between the priorities of Scripture and the preferences of human traditions. This "grace philosophy of ministry" exalts the text of Scripture, the person of Christ, and the edification of His church.

The mission of Virginia Beach Theological Seminary is to equip each student for local church ministry and global missions through biblical academic training in a ministry-based environment. In so doing, the seminary seeks to honor the Lord Jesus Christ and to uphold His inerrant word. The seminary mission statement is conceptualized in the expression, "Sharpening Servants for Global Ministry."

The identity of the seminary is inseparably united with its affirmation of a dispensational hermeneutic, a pretribulational and premillennial view of the end times, and a Baptistic perspective of the church.

1.2 Philosophy of Education

The seminary's Philosophy of Education centers on four key elements: educational presuppositions, educational mission, faculty qualifications, and the educational process.

Educational Presuppositions

The seminary is committed to the direct method of presenting divine truth from the Bible, using its original languages as its primary foundation, which it views as the authoritative and exclusive revelation from God to man in this age of grace. In addition, it rejects all forms of secular relativism, which deny the complete authority of the Holy Scriptures. It believes that true scholarship is that which submits to the authority of Holy Scripture and in so believing rejects the exaltation of human intellect above the written Word of God.

The seminary emphasizes a biblical rather than a philosophic approach to education. It is not merely evangelical, but specifically Baptist in approach with an emphasis on creating a global biblical vision within each student. The normal (literal)-grammatical-historical-literary method of biblical interpretation is consistently applied to the text of Scripture. This hermeneutic governs our understanding of the progressive nature of biblical revelation. It also discerns a difference between the biblical terms "Israel" and "Church." Consequently, it follows a dispensational contour rather than a covenant or reformed expression of interpretation. In addition, it establishes the coming of Christ as both pretribulational and premillennial. Of necessity, the clear presentation of biblical revelation will include the gracious but firm refutation of theological error in the classroom experience.

Educational Mission

Virginia Beach Theological Seminary is a local church-based graduate school. It is the educational objective of the seminary as an independent Baptist institution to positively contribute to the larger body of Christ through the preparation of humble servant-scholars who can rightly divide the authoritative, infallible, inerrant Word of God, and passionately articulate the Gospel of the Grace of God. In order to fulfill its purpose to the greatest possible degree, the seminary makes theological education accessible to the local community through traditional resident education, as well as other communities by means of distance education.

Qualifications for the Faculty

The ultimate responsibility for training ministers of the gospel belongs to the local church (2 Tim 2:2). VBTS does not simply function in the context of a local church ministry; instead, it approaches the educational task in keeping with biblical ideals which pertain to the local church. Since teachers are integral to the teaching process, and since the biblical directive calls for qualified ministers to prepare the next generation of ministerial leadership, VBTS emphasizes the qualifications of its faculty as indispensable to its philosophy of education.

VBTS faculty members are expected to be Christian scholars committed to guarding truth, explaining truth, and proclaiming truth. Annually, faculty members affirm in writing their commitment to the seminary's Biblical Foundations Statement. When each full-time faculty member, along with his family, actively participates in the ministries of Colonial Baptist Church, the educational distinctives of VBTS are publicly affirmed.

The Faculty and Staff of the seminary endeavor to demonstrate a sincere reliance upon the grace of God for the outworking of the will of God in every aspect of seminary life. This involves a commitment to being men and women of integrity so that the atmosphere of the VBTS campus demonstrates a biblical love for people and a reverential fear of the Lord (2 Pet 3:14-18).

The Faculty of VBTS is entrusted by the Board of Trustees with the task of spiritual mentorship—the unique opportunity to prepare students for a ministry of the Word through both classroom and personal relationships (2 Tim 2:1-2). This sacred stewardship flows out of a "grace philosophy of ministry" which emphasizes the centrality of Christ, the necessity of God's grace, the sufficiency of the biblical text, and the priority of the church. As such, the members of the faculty seek to motivate students to pursue a love for God, a love for the Truth, a love for the church, and a burden for the lost.

Educational Process

As Christian scholars, the faculty are devoted to accurately handling the subjects assigned to them (2 Tim. 2:15-16). Since Christian scholarship must never be devoid of affection for the glory of God and His Word (Ps. 19:7-11), members of the faculty promote a positive classroom atmosphere. Truth is communicated enthusiastically, courageously, and creatively with the goal of exalting the person and work of Jesus Christ (Jn. 5:39). Although classroom instruction includes an exposure to alternative views, it seeks to be constructive and affirmational to the larger Body of Christ, while avoiding speculations that are unproductive (Eph. 2:19-22; 4:11-16).

The teaching and learning process seeks to achieve higher orders of learning that are appropriate to graduate education. Learning outcomes are designed to emphasize the development of skills which equip students to engage course content at the analytical, evaluative, and application levels. Course content is designed to advance these learning outcomes. Residential course delivery combines various pedagogical approaches, including interactive lectures, student directed discussions, group projects, and individual research assignments. Online courses, available in the master's level programs, are designed to advance the vision and values of the seminary by bringing students and faculty together through synchronous and asynchronous video, instructor directed discussion boards, and interactive projects. Diverse and creative course delivery for both residential and distance learning is structured to facilitate higher orders of learning in a way that actively engages both teacher and student in the learning process. Finally, verification of learning is established by a variety of assessment devices at the course, program, and institutional levels. Each element of the learning process is informed by the Christian worldview of knowledge, reality, and ethics as expressed in the seminary's Biblical Foundations Statement.

1.3 Educational Objectives

As a result of receiving a degree from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary, the graduate will be able to:

A. Exegete the various portions of the biblical text in terms which account for its historical and literary contexts, with a view toward understanding the intention of the author.

B. Correlate the results of exegetical studies into theological expressions that are clear, coherent, historically informed, and culturally relevant.

C. Communicate the results of exegetical and theological studies in formats relevant to ministry and global mission.

D. Serve effectively in those ministry capacities for which the particular degree program was intended to provide preparation.

1.4 Facilities

Colonial Baptist Church has graciously built a Christian education building to host Virginia Beach Theological Seminary. As a result, scholarly faculty and experienced pastors are able to work together to bring seminary students the experience of learning ministry in the context of a local church. Comfortable and up-to-date seminary classrooms, technology, office spaces, and library provide an ideal place for efficient and productive study.

1.5 Location

Virginia Beach Theological Seminary is located in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Located on the southeastern coast of Virginia and situated within the seven-city metropolis of Hampton Roads, the seminary is uniquely positioned to equip evangelical pastors and teachers serving this population of nearly 2 million people. Virginia Beach Theological Seminary is the only seminary in Hampton Roads and the entire eastern half of the state to offer a Doctor of Ministry in Expository Preaching.

1.6 Accreditation

Virginia Beach Theological Seminary is a member of the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS), having been awarded Reaffirmation I of its Accredited Status by TRACS' Accreditation Commission on April 3, 2012. The accredited status is reflective for a period of ten years.

More information about TRACS may be found on their website at www.tracs.org. TRACS is recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

Virginia Beach Theological Seminary is approved by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to provide theological education.

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2. Program Overview: Master of Theology

2.1 Description and Rationale

The Master of Theology (ThM) provides the student with advanced and specialized biblical study beyond the Master of Divinity. Intended as preparation for teaching and research, the program emphasizes skills designed to prepare students for an enhanced ministry of the Word or terminal degree studies.

2.2 Learning Outcomes

As a result of receiving the Master of Theology degree, the graduate will be able to:

A.   exhibit proficiency in a specialized area of biblical studies.
B.   display advanced research and writing skills.
C.   design and deliver an academic course in a select field of study.
D.   demonstrate readiness for enrollment in a terminal degree program.

2.3 Seminar Format

The ThM is a postgraduate, research-oriented degree. Consequently, the program differs substantially from the M.Div. and other typical graduate programs. The program consists of four research seminars and a series of mentorships and culminates with a capstone thesis.

2.4 Curriculum Sequence

The curriculum is intended as uninterrupted sequence of six academic terms, to be completed within 2 years.

Summer 1	5
Advanced Theological Research Methods	4
Postgraduate Mentorship 1	1
Fall 1	5
Disciplinary Seminar 1	4
Postgraduate Mentorship 2	1
Spring 1	5
Disciplinary Seminar 2	4
Teaching Mentorship 1	1

Summer 2	5
Disciplinary Seminar 3	4
Teaching Mentorship 2	1
Fall 2	5
Thesis 1	4
Research Mentorship 1	1
Spring 2	5
Thesis 2	4
Research Mentorship 2	1
Total Credit Hours	**30**

2.5 Mentorship Sequence

Six one-credit mentorships, which provide students with faculty guided learning, are designed to complement the 4-credit seminars and Thesis sequence. Two Postgraduate Mentorships build advanced skills needed for postgraduate level research and instructional design. Following these, two Teaching Mentorships guide students through the process of preparing and delivering theological instruction. Finally, two Research Mentorships provide coaching and faculty interaction to assist students in progressing through the thesis sequence.

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3. Program Overview: Doctor of Ministry

3.1 Description

The Doctor of Ministry in Expository Preaching is a professional terminal degree program designed to provide the graduate with enhanced exegetical, theological, and communication skills for the purpose of serving the church most effectively through the means of expository preaching. The 34 credit-hour curriculum consists of seven 4 credit-hour courses delivered in module format and culminates in a 6 credit-hour final project. Intended for experienced pastors, missionaries, and others whose primary calling is the ministry of preaching God's Word, the Doctor of Ministry in Expository Preaching is available only to men who meet the qualifications for pastoral ministry as articulated in 1 Timothy 3.

3.2 Rationale

The rationale for the Doctor of Ministry in Expository Preaching is derived from the seminary's mission, which is grounded upon the principle that the church possesses the responsibility for training its ministers, and that this responsibility is most consistently and effectively fulfilled in the context of a local church. Students enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry in Expository Preaching will receive outstanding instruction from accomplished churchmen who hold accredited terminal degrees, possess extensive ministry experience, and demonstrate credible scholarship.

3.3 Learning Outcome

As a result of receiving the Doctor of Ministry degree from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary, the graduate will be able to:

A. Demonstrate exegetical skills in various genres of the biblical text.
B. Articulate theological expressions that are clear, coherent, historically informed, and readily applicable.
C. Correlate the results of exegetical and theological studies in expository sermons which are relevant to ministry and global mission.

3.4 Module Format

Classroom sessions for the Doctor of Ministry program are delivered in the form of concentrated, one-week resident modules. Qualified professors deliver interactive lectures, establish reading, research, writing, and applicational assignments appropriate to course and program learning outcomes, and evaluate the learning progress of each student.

Although the classroom instruction consists of a one-week module, the entire course consists of 14 weeks, and is divided into 3 elements:

A. Pre-class Assignments. Reading and written assignments are designed to introduce the student to the subject and lay the groundwork for productive classroom experience. These assignments will be administered through the Populi learning management system. Beginning on the 1st day of the academic term, this element is normally 5 weeks in duration.

B. One-week instructional module. Students will convene on the campus of VBTS to meet with faculty and colleagues for a one-week module of classroom instruction, peer interaction, seminar presentations, overnight assignments, and other learning elements as determined by the instructor. Class will meet from 8:00-11:30 and 1:00-4:00 Monday-Friday as posted on the academic calendar and the schedule in the course syllabus. This module will normally occur on the 6th week of the academic term.

C. Post-class project. The post-class project consists of an assignment which provides the student an opportunity to implement skills derived from course content into his present ministry situation. This assignment will be administered through the Populi learning management system. This element normally begins on the 7th week of the academic term and concludes the final day of the 14th week of the academic term.

Actual dates and timeframes for pre-class, module, and post-class elements will be announced on the website, the course page in Populi, and the course syllabus.

3.5 Curriculum

The Doctor of Ministry program develops specialized skills for expository preaching in the disciplines of communication, Old and New Testament exegesis, theology, and history. Program learning outcomes are achieved through seven courses and verified through a capstone research project.

Christian Ministry and Communication	4
Leadership and Communication in Expository Preaching	4
Biblical Exegesis and Exposition	16
Expositional Preaching of Old Testament Wisdom and Poetry	4
Expositional Preaching of Old and New Testament Prophecy	4
Expositional Preaching of Old and New Testament Narrative	4
Expositional Preaching of New Testament Epistolary Literature	4
Theology and History	8
Expositional Preaching of Doctrine	4
History of Expository Preaching	4
Final Project	6
Final Project 1	3
Final Project 2	3
Total Credit Hours	**34**

4. Admissions

4.1 General Information

Acceptance into VBTS's graduate programs is based upon personal and academic qualifications. VBTS admits applicants who profess to have experienced biblical conversion by faith in Jesus Christ, who have consequently committed themselves to a life of obedience to the Scriptures, who understand the doctrinal position of the school, and who express a willingness to submit to its policies and procedures upon enrollment as a student.

Furthermore, applicants must be academically qualified to carry out the rigors of a graduate program. The Doctor of Ministry program at VBTS requires a recognized Master of Divinity degree, or its equivalent, for entrance. The Doctor of Ministry Committee will evaluate all transcripts, references, interviews, and other submitted materials to determine whether the applicant meets the standards and criteria for admission. VBTS reserves the right to refuse admission to any applicant who does not fulfill these personal and academic qualifications.

In order to nurture a positive learning environment, applicants who take exception to the doctrinal position of the seminary must indicate in writing specific points of difference. VBTS encourages the exercise of academic freedom within the broader scope of the seminary's core doctrines, values, and mission. For this reason, applicants who identify points of difference must also indicate in writing a willingness to promote a positive learning experience both in and out of the classroom by a submissive and supportive manner of life.

4.2 Non-discrimination Policy

Virginia Beach Theological Seminary admits students of any race, sex, color, handicap, national, and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the institution.

4.3 Master of Theology Program Qualifications

In addition to the general requirements for all applicants to VBTS, individuals seeking acceptance to the ThM program must meet the following program qualifications:

A. Intent to Complete—While the ThM program is designed for completion within 2 years, students must complete the program within 5 years. Applicants must articulate intention to take all courses for credit and complete the program within the 5-year time limit.

B. Qualification for Ordained Ministry—Applicants need not be ordained but must fulfill the qualifications for ministry as articulated in 1 Timothy 3. In keeping with this criterion, the ThM program is available only to men.

C. Graduate Education—Applicants must hold a traditional M.Div. degree.

1. A traditional M.Div. degree is, for the purpose of application to the ThM program, defined as a completed graduate ministerial degree designated as a Master of Divinity degree, and which reflects not less than 80 credit hours of earned academic credit at the Master's level on the transcript, of which at least 12 credit hours reflect Greek language study, 12 credit hours reflect Hebrew language study, and 9 credit hours reflect the study of Systematic Theology.

2. Transcripts of the completed Master of Divinity should reflect a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. Applicants with a GPA below 3.0 may apply for admissions: applicants accepted without the minimum GPA will begin the program on academic probation.

Application

Individuals seeking admission to the ThM program must complete the application for admission available at www.vbts.edu. In addition to confirming the general qualifications listed above, applicants will be asked to provide the following:

A. A written testimony of personal conversion by faith in Jesus Christ.

B. A written account of personal commitment to a ministry of teaching and/or preaching.

C. An affirmation indicating understanding and agreement to abide by the Student Code of Conduct.

D. An affirmation indicating substantial agreement with the Biblical Foundations Statement.

E. Endorsement from a local church affirming that the applicant fulfills the biblical qualifications for pastoral ministry.

F. Academic, Professional, and Pastoral References.

G. Official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate education.

H. A copy of a thesis or major research paper completed during the Master of Divinity program which demonstrates competence in written composition, research, and use of the English language.

Interview

All applicants will be scheduled for an interview to confirm qualifications and readiness for the ThM program.

Transfer of Credit

Applicant may contact the Registrar to request a transfer of credit from another institution to VBTS. A maximum of 6 credits of comparable coursework from an accredited institution may be transferred into the program. In order to qualify, courses proposed for transfer of credit must (1)

be postgraduate level courses, (2) be earned from an accredited institution, (3) display a 3.0 GPA or higher on the transcript, and (4) evidence content comparable to the curriculum requirement it is intended to satisfy.

Acceptance

The purpose of the application and interview is to establish the qualifications and suitability of the applicant for postgraduate study in general, as well as the readiness of the applicant for ThM studies in particular. Although Virginia Beach Theological Seminary seeks to train qualified individuals, the Seminary is not obligated to admit any applicant to the program, even if qualifications are demonstrated. In addition to the criteria listed above, admission to the ThM program is conditioned by considerations which take into account the best interests of the student body and objectives of the institution.

4.4 Doctor of Ministry Program Qualifications

In addition to the general admission requirements for all applicants to VBTS, Individuals seeking acceptance to the DMin program must meet the following program qualifications:

A. Intent to Serve—Applicants must articulate intention to serve the body of Christ in a vocational teaching or preaching ministry.

B. Intent to Complete—Applicants must articulate intention to take all courses for credit and complete the program within the 6-year time limit.

C. Qualification for Ordained Ministry—Applicants need not be ordained but must fulfill the qualifications for ministry as articulated in 1 Timothy 3. In keeping with this criterion, the Doctor of Ministry program is available only to men.

D. Graduate Education—Applicants must hold a traditional M.Div. degree, or its equivalent.

1. A traditional M.Div. degree is, for the purpose of application to the DMin program, defined as a completed ministerial degree which reflects not less than 80 credit hours of earned academic credit at the Master's level on the transcript, of which at least 6 credit hours reflect Greek language study, 6 credit hours reflect Hebrew language study, and 9 credit hours reflect the study of Systematic Theology.

2. M.Div. equivalency is, for the purpose of application to the DMin program, defined as a completed Master's degree in the area of ministry or biblical studies, and which, in combination with other ministerial or biblical studies at the Master's level, is able to display the following in the form of academic transcripts: 80 credit hours of earned academic credit at the Master's level, including 6 credit hours of Greek language study, 6 credit hours of Hebrew language study, and 9 credit hours of study in the field of Systematic Theology.

3. Transcripts of master's level study should reflect a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. Applicants with a GPA below 3.0 may apply for admission; applicants accepted without the minimum GPA will begin the program on academic probation.

4. Students who hold a completed master's degree in area of biblical studies or ministry but who have not completed coursework equivalent to the M.Div. degree may apply

for a provisional acceptance to the program. Provisional acceptance to the DMin program is available to students who engage in a recommended program of study leading to the completion of M.Div. equivalency requirements. For students who receive a provisional acceptance, a full acceptance to the DMin program is contingent upon the completion of these studies. For more information regarding how an applicant may receive provisional acceptance, please contact the Academic Dean.

E.   Ministry Experience—Applicants must have completed at least 3 years of preaching or teaching experience subsequent to completion of the Master of Divinity (or its equivalent).

Application

Individuals seeking admission to the DMin program must complete the application for the Doctor of Ministry in Expository Preaching, available at www.vbts.edu. In addition to confirming the general qualifications listed above, applicants will be asked to provide the following:

A.   A written testimony of personal conversion by faith in Jesus Christ.

B.   A written account of personal commitment to a ministry of teaching and/or preaching.

C.   An affirmation indicating understanding and agreement to abide by the Student Code of Conduct.

D.   An affirmation indicating substantial agreement with the Biblical Foundations Statement.

E.   Endorsement from a local church affirming that the applicant fulfills the biblical qualifications for pastoral ministry.

F.   Academic, Professional, and Pastoral References.

G.   Official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate education.

H.   A copy of a thesis or major research paper completed during the Master of Divinity program (or equivalent) which demonstrates competence in written composition, research, and use of the English language.

Interview

All applicants will be scheduled for an interview with the Doctor of Ministry Committee to confirm qualifications and readiness for the DMin program.

Transfer of Credit

Applicant may contact the Registrar to request a transfer of credit from another institution to VBTS. A maximum of 6 credits of comparable coursework from an accredited institution may be transferred into the program. In order to qualify, courses proposed for transfer of credit must (1) be post-graduate level courses, (2) be earned from an accredited institution, (3) display a 3.0 GPA or higher on the transcript, and (4) evidence content comparable to the curriculum requirement it is intended to satisfy.

Acceptance

The purpose of the application and interview is to establish the qualifications and suitability of the applicant for post-graduate study in general, as well as the readiness of the applicant for DMin studies in particular. Although Virginia Beach Theological Seminary seeks to train qualified individuals, the Seminary is not obligated to admit any applicant to the program, even if qualifications are demonstrated. In addition to the criteria listed above, admission to the DMin program is conditioned by considerations which take into account the best interests of the student body and objectives of the institution. All decisions to admit applicants to the DMin program are at the discretion of the Doctor of Ministry Committee.

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5. Enrollment

5.1 Qualifications

Each student in the ThM and DMin programs will maintain the qualifications prerequisite for program acceptance. This includes fulfillment of the biblical qualifications for ministry. In keeping with this requirement, a student who is separated from his wife will not be permitted to continue enrollment in the program. See "Program Qualifications" above.

5.2 Progress

In order to remain enrolled in a postgraduate program, students must demonstrate progress in the program leading to graduation. See "Academic Requirements" below.

5.3 Student Code of Conduct

See Student Handbook, "Code of Conduct."

5.4 Grade Point Average

A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. See "Academic Policies" below.

5.5 Withdrawal from Enrollment

Students who wish to withdraw from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary must:

A. Indicate to the Registrar intent to withdraw as a student from the seminary.

B. Complete the Student Exit survey available in Populi's Dashboard.

C. Return security access key fob to the seminary's office.

D. Return all resources borrowed from the library. Sources not returned to the library will be billed to the student's account.

E. Fulfill all financial obligations to the seminary.

Students who fulfill the withdrawal procedure will be in good standing with the seminary. Students who do not complete the withdrawal procedure will not have access to their academic transcripts until the withdrawal procedure has been successfully completed.

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6. Academic Policies

6.1 Academic Term: Master of Theology Program

The ThM program is delivered in six consecutive terms. Each term is 14 weeks in duration.

6.2 Academic Term: Doctor of Ministry Program

All courses in the DMin program are administered within the 14-week spring and fall academic terms. The first day of the academic term is the first day of each DMin course, and the final day of the academic term is the final day of each DMin course. The 14 weeks of each course will consist of 3 elements: (1) a specified number of weeks for preparatory work, (2) one week of residential instruction on the campus of VBTS, and (3) the remaining weeks in the academic term for the completion of coursework.

6.3 Orientation

Orientation for postgraduate students is provided in an online format. Completion of the orientation is required of all postgraduate students within 30 days of enrollment of the first course of the program. Alumni of VBTS, being well-informed on many aspects of the seminary, will be required to complete an abbreviated version of orientation.

6.4 Academic Advising

All new students enrolled in a postgraduate degree program must meet individually with the Academic Dean prior to the beginning of the first term of enrollment. During this interview a Graduation Plan will be discussed and developed. Students will meet with the Dean again each year to review progress in the Graduation Plan and make adjustments as necessary.

6.5 Academic Preparation

Since the rigors of academic work at the postgraduate level are both challenging and rewarding, students are encouraged to consider the following:

A. Theological study is a spiritual discipline requiring absolute dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

B. Investigation of Bible content, theological concepts, church history, and training in the biblical languages should result in a greater appreciation and enjoyment of the eternal God.

C. Students should have a reliable computer, a good word processor that will handle Greek and Hebrew fonts. A bibliographic database (such as Zotero), can be a useful tool for

expediting the process of research. For the purposes of writing and research, the student should have the most recent edition of Kate Turabian's, A Manual for Writers, which should be followed in conjunction with the VBTS Guidelines for Papers, Theses, and Final Projects.

6.6 Course Registration

Each semester students will be given an opportunity to register for classes in the upcoming term. Since early registration facilitates textbook ordering and decisions on course offerings, students are encouraged to finalize their schedules and care for financial obligations in a timely manner.

6.7 Registration Changes

Adding a Course

A student may add a class within the first five days of the fall or spring term. Class additions must be initiated in writing by the student with the Registrar and approved by the course professor and finalized by the Academic Dean.

Course Withdrawal

Students may drop a class by completing a Course Withdrawal form (available in Populi). The following course withdrawal policies apply:

A. A student may drop a course without penalty by the end of the first week of a class. The student will receive a 100% refund of tuition and fees, and no mark will appear on the student's transcript.

B. A student may withdraw from a course by the end of the second week of a class. The student will receive a 50% refund of tuition and fees, and the student's transcript will be marked with a "W" (withdrawn) for the course.

C. A student may withdraw from a course after the end of the second week only until the end of the fifth week of a class. The student will receive a 0% refund of tuition and fees. The student's transcript will be marked with a "WP" (withdrawn passing) or "WF" (withdrawn failing) for the course.

D. A student may not withdraw from a course after the end of the fifth week of a class. If the student does not fulfill course obligations, the student will receive a grade in accordance with the class syllabus and the VBTS grading policy. The student will not be eligible to receive any refund for tuition and fees. A student may not change registration status during this period.

6.8 Course Attendance

The Master of Theology and the Doctor of Ministry in Expository Preaching are residential degree programs. Doctor of Ministry courses are delivered in a concentrated 5-day module format. The nature of the course content and delivery is such that course objectives cannot be sufficiently achieved unless classroom attendance is carefully maintained. Similarly, Master of Theology courses are seminar based; attendance at all sessions is critical for the presentation and interaction necessary for the fulfillment of course objectives.

Consequently, students are required to attend all course sessions in their entirety in order to receive a passing grade for the course.

6.9 Course Schedule

Fall modules will normally meet the 4th week of September; Spring modules will normally meet the 2nd week of February. Please consult the seminary website for the scheduled dates of each course.

6.10 Academic Progress

The Academic Dean will prepare a Graduation Plan for each student in the DMin program. The purpose of the Graduation Plan is to map the student's history and trajectory of progress. Although the Graduation Plan can be adjusted to accommodate the changing circumstances of a student, the student must demonstrate that progress in the program is sufficient to ensure graduation within the time limitations of the program.

6.11 ThM Grading

The following grading scale is applied for all academic requirements for the Master of Theology Program:

A	96-100	Outstanding work: superior achievement of course objectives
A−	94-95	
B+	92-93	Good work: commendable achievement of course objectives
B	89-91	
B−	87-88	
C+	85-86	Acceptable work: satisfactory achievement of course objectives
C	81-84	
C−	79-80	
D+	77-78	Minimal work: marginal achievement of course objectives
D	72-76	
D−	70-71	
F	0-80	Failure: unacceptable work

ThM students must maintain a 3.0 GPA in the program. Students who carry a GPA of less than 3.0 will be placed into the academic probation process, as described in the Catalog.

ThM Students must achieve a 3.0 cumulative GPA to graduate.

6.12 DMin Grading

The following grading scale is applied for all academic requirements for the Doctor of Ministry Program:

A	96-100	Outstanding work: superior achievement of course objectives
A-	94-95	
B+	92-93	Good work: commendable achievement of course objectives
B	89-91	
B-	87-88	Substandard work: below standard

C+ 85-86
C 81-84
F 0-80   Failure: unacceptable work

The minimum grade for passing a Doctor of Ministry course is a B, with the exception of no more than two courses, which may receive a grade of C, C+, or B−. Course grades not attaining to this standard will be recorded as an F.

Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA in the program. Students who carry a GPA of less than 3.0 will be placed into the academic probation process, as described in the Catalog.

The minimum grade for passing the final project is a B.

Students must achieve a 3.0 GPA to graduate.

6.13 FERPA (Family Rights and Privacy Act)

The student may contact the Office of the Registrar at registrar@vbts.edu for the complete policy regarding student records access. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. These rights are:

A. The right to inspect and review the student's educational records within 45 days of the day the seminary receives a request for access. The student should submit to the registrar written requests that identify the record(s) he or she wishes to inspect. The Office of the Registrar will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

B. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes is inaccurate or misleading. The student may ask the seminary to amend a record that he or she believes is inaccurate or misleading. He or she should write the Office of the Registrar, clearly identify the part of the record he or she wants changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the seminary decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, the seminary will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her rights for further appeal.

C. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent the FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is defined as a person employed by the seminary in an administrative, supervisory, academic, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit and health staff); a person or company with whom the seminary has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the board of trustees; or a person assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

D. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the seminary to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

E. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

6.14 Academic Integrity and the Academic Honor Code

Integrity is a critical element in VBTS's goal to "Sharpen Servants for Global Ministry." Since Scripture values the internal soundness of one's character, it is expected that every student will be committed to the highest level of integrity in the process of ministry preparation. Honesty in all aspects of seminary life is expected whether or not a student is asked to give an account of his or her actions. Students will pursue a path of academic honesty and moral purity in every aspect of study (reading, research, writing, test taking) and in all opportunities of accountability (i.e., reporting the completion of assignments). Plagiarism, falsified reports, and other violations of academic honesty will be subject to discipline in accordance with the disciplinary procedures outlined in this handbook.

6.15 Plagiarism

VBTS is committed to integrity in all aspects of academics, including research and writing. Plagiarism is a breach of academic integrity. Plagiarism is the presentation of words, phrases, and/or ideas as originating with the author, when in fact such is not the case. Words, grammatical structures, and ideas which are not original to the author must be properly presented and documented.

The most obvious forms of plagiarism include the copying of entire works or sections of works, and presenting them as one's own work, or the submission of someone else's paper under one's own name. However, the most common forms of plagiarism do not involve the intent to steal the work of another; rather, they involve the lack of intent to properly credit the work of another. By means of this lack of intent, the student who plagiarizes may be credited for quality academic writing, when in fact this was accomplished by another.

Examples of plagiarism include:

A. failure to use quotation marks to indicate direct quotations, even when the source is cited;

B. failure to block larger direct quotations, even when source is cited;

C. failure to cite a source that supplied wording;

D. failure to cite a source that supplied an idea or method;

E. failure to use one's own wording and/or phrasing in the paraphrasing of the work of another, even when the source is cited;

F. use of the grammatical structure of another author. This is usually done by substituting particular words within a sentence of the original source. This may not be done under any circumstances, even when citing the source in a footnote.

Plagiarism, intentional or unintentional, is not tolerated at VBTS. All postgraduate students at VBTS hold a graduate degree, a universally recognized credential for academic competence. Therefore, all students admitted to the Doctor of Ministry program are regarded as competent for engaging in academic research and writing, understanding what plagiarism is, and knowing how to avoid plagiarism. Students who consider themselves deficient in this area will benefit from the review of research and writing methods provided in the seminary's Orientation, as well as from the seminary's Guidelines for Papers and Theses and Final Projects.

The penalty for plagiarism may include failure of the course. Intentional plagiarism is a violation of the student Code of Conduct, and as such, may result in academic suspension.

6.16 Unauthorized Distribution of Copyrighted Materials

Virginia Beach Theological Seminary has developed and implemented written plans to effectively combat the unauthorized distribution of copyright materials by users of the institution's network, without unduly interfering with educational goals. VBTS students are required to respect applicable laws related to use of copyrighted material.

Technology Based Deterrents

As a technology-based deterrent, VBTS uses a next-generation firewall (NGFW), which has been configured to block Peer-to-Peer (P2P) file sharing on the network.

Mechanisms for Educating and Informing the Community

As a mechanism for educating and informing the community about appropriate versus inappropriate use of copyrighted material, VBTS asks all students in New Student Orientation to complete training in the seminary's Learning Management System on their understanding of the following statement explaining the civil and criminal penalties for violation of Federal copyright laws (34 CFR 668.43(a)(10)(ii)):

Copyright infringement is the act of exercising, without permission or legal authority, one or more of the exclusive rights granted to the copyright owner under section 106 of the Copyright Act (Title 17 of the United States Code). These rights include the right to reproduce or distribute a copyrighted work. In the file-sharing context, downloading or uploading substantial parts of a copyrighted work without authority constitutes an infringement.

Penalties for copyright infringement include civil and criminal penalties. In general, anyone found liable for civil copyright infringement may be ordered to pay either actual damages or "statutory" damages affixed at not less than $750 and not more than $30,000 per work infringed. For "willful" infringement, a court may award up to $150,000 per work infringed. A court can, in its discretion, also assess costs and attorneys' fees. For details, see Title 17, United States Code, Sections 504, 505. Willful copyright infringement can also result in criminal penalties, including imprisonment of up to five years arid fines of up to $250,000 per offense.

For more information, please see the website of the U.S. Copyright Office at www.copyright.gov, especially their FAQ's at www.copyright.gov/help/faq.

Additionally, VBTS asks all faculty and staff to read and understand the following article posted in Populi's Shared Folder - "Reproduction of Copyrighted Works by Educators and Librarians" (written by the United States Copyright Office).

Procedures for Handling Unauthorized Distribution of Copyrighted Material

The procedures for handling unauthorized distribution of copyrighted material are as follows: If it becomes clear that a student or staff member has been distributing copyrighted materials without authorization, the administration will follow a 3-step procedure.

A. The student or staff member will have to complete retraining on his or her understanding of appropriate versus inappropriate use of copyrighted material.

B. If infractions continue after retraining, the administration will proceed to counseling.

C. If infractions continue after retraining and counseling, the student will be subject to a range of disciplinary action, including and up to expulsion. The employee will be subject to a range of disciplinary action, including and up to termination of employment.

Biennial Review of the Effectiveness of Plan, Procedures, and Deterrents

The institution's designated technology officer will conduct a biennial review the effectiveness of the school's plans to combat the unauthorized distribution of copyrighted materials by users of the institution's network. The assessment criteria used in the review will include, but not be limited to, the following:

A. Determining the number of DMCA (Digital Millennium Copyright Act) take-down notices received by the school for illegal activity on the school's network.

B. Researching the availability and affordability of updated technology deterrents for implementation on the school's network.

C. Considering the practices and procedures of other schools for prohibiting the unauthorized distribution of copyrighted material on their networks.

D. Legal Alternatives for Downloading and Acquiring Copyrighted Materials

E. Every two years, Virginia Beach Theological Seminary will, in consultation with the designated technology officer, conduct a biennial review of legal alternatives for downloading or otherwise acquiring copyrighted material. The results of this review will be posted in the Shared Folder in the Files section of the school's Learning Management System, so that all students can access it. One recommended site for students to legally acquire copyrighted material is the following - http://www.educause.edu/legalcontent.

6.17 Student Academic Freedom

Students are entitled to full freedom in research and in publication of their results. In light of this privilege they should at all times be accurate, exercise appropriate restraint, show respect for the opinions of others, and, where appropriate, make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the seminary.

6.18 Auditors

Since the quality of the post-graduate class experience depends in part on student preparation for class, the seminary does not make provision for auditors in postgraduate courses.

6.19 Course Deadlines

Papers and course requirements must be completed in accordance with the deadlines established in the course syllabus. Each professor will assess penalties for work submitted according to the established deadlines of the syllabus.

6.20 Incompletes

In the event that a student encounters unforeseen and unpreventable circumstances which interfere with the completion of a course according to the schedule in the syllabus, a student may submit a request to the Administration for the course to be marked as Incomplete. This is done through the Request for Incomplete Status form in Populi. If approved, the Registrar will mark the student record as Incomplete. All courses marked by the Registrar as an Incomplete must be completed no later than the last day of the following academic term. Incomplete courses not completed within the parameters of the next academic term will be marked with an F by the Registrar.

6.21 Research Paper Policies and Guidelines

Unless otherwise stipulated in the course syllabus, all papers submitted for course requirements must conform to the format of the current edition of Turabian, A Manual for Writers and VBTS's Guidelines for Writing: A Manual for Research Papers, ThM Theses, and Doctoral Final Projects. The physical copy of all written work, which is submitted for a grade in a given class, becomes the property of the professor, although, in most cases, it is returned to the student. The content and/or ideas of such documents, however, remain the intellectual property of the author and may not be copied or used without the permission of the author.

6.22 Academic Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal

In the event that a student's grade point average drops below 3.0, the following process will be implemented:

The student will meet with the Academic Dean to assess the circumstances contributing to the semester grade point average dropping below 3.0. The Academic Dean will document the meeting and provide a written report to the Registrar. The Registrar will include the report in the student's file and will mark the student's grade report, Academic Probation.

If a student's semester grade point average drops below 3.0 a second consecutive semester, the student will be suspended from the program for a period of one year. The Registrar will include the report in the student's file and will mark the student's grade report, Academic Suspension. If the student desires to continue in the program, he will, at the end of the one year suspension, petition the faculty for Program Continuation (permission to continue in the program), and indicate to the faculty measures that have been taken to ensure a successful completion of the program. The decision of the faculty to approve or decline Program Continuation is final.

In the event that (1) a student in Academic Suspension declines to petition the faculty for Program Continuation, (2) the faculty declines to extend Program Continuation to a student in Academic Suspension or (3) the student's semester grade point average drops below 3.0

for a third consecutive semester, the student will be dismissed from the program. The Registrar who will include the report in the students file and mark the student's grade report, Academic Dismissal.

6.23 Reproduction of Course Material

The reproduction and/or transmission of a course syllabus and course material by any means is prohibited unless express permission is granted by the professor. This applies also to video or audio recordings of a class. Brief quotations of course syllabi and content can be cited in written projects without the permission of the professor as long as they are properly referenced.

6.24 Recording Class Sessions

With the approval of the course professor, students are welcome to record (audio or video) classes to supplement their own note taking and to facilitate their own mastery of the course content. In this situation, the student takes full responsibility for any recording. Such recordings may be used by the enrolled student for the purpose of fulfilling course objectives. Recordings of class sessions may not be distributed, made accessible on the internet or any form of media, or used for purposes other than fulfilling the objectives of the course.

6.25 Responsibility for Computer Technology

Students using computer technology to complete class assignments must take full responsibility for their work and the operation and security of their technology. Assignment deadlines need not be adjusted for technology failures.

6.26 Electronic Devices

Cell phones are to be silenced for class. Responding to calls when class is in session (except in the case of emergency) is not permitted. Similarly, texting, emailing, and other forms of personal communication are inappropriate when class is in session. Internet usage is supplied by the seminary to enhance the educational value of classroom; use of the internet for purposes not related to the class session is considered an inappropriate distraction and a lack of consideration for the learning community.

6.27 Exceptions from Course Policies

It is not considered appropriate to request an exception from course policies for the sake of personal plans, or for circumstances which arise due to lack of preparation or planning. At the discretion of the professor, consideration may be taken for extended illness, injury, bereavement, or other extenuating circumstances that were unforeseen and unpreventable.

6.28 Degree Completion Time

The Master of Theology program must be completed in 5 years. The Doctor of Ministry program must be completed within 6 years. The timeframe for the completion of a degree program begins with the first day of the first course taken at the VBTS that is applied to requirements of the degree program. The timeframe may not be suspended in the event that courses are not taken during one or more academic terms within the timeframe. In the event

of extenuating circumstances, a student may appeal in writing to the Academic Dean, who in turn will present the appeal to the faculty. The faculty will determine the outcome of all appeals regarding degree completion time.

6.29 Graduation Requirements

A student must complete the following prior to graduation:

A. Complete all academic requirements, including the final project, within the time limitation;

B. Complete the final project with a grade of B or higher.

C. Submit the Intent to Graduate form (available in Populi);

D. Give evidence of a saving faith relationship with the LORD Jesus Christ that manifests itself in godly character and conduct;

E. Successfully complete all academic and program requirements with a minimum GPA of 3.0.

F. Meet all financial obligations;

G. Complete an exit interview with the Academic Dean or an exit survey as requested.

H. Additionally, all graduates must have faculty recommendation and be approved for degree conferral by the VBTS Board of Trustees.

6.30 Graduation Honors

Graduation honors for the seminary's postgraduate programs are based on the following criteria:

A. Cum laude (with honors) minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.75.

B. Magna cum laude (with high honors) minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.85.

C. Summa cum laude (with highest honors) minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.95.

Grades transferred from other institutions are not used in computing the cumulative grade point average.

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7. Master of Theology Thesis

Purpose
The thesis is the capstone learning experience for the Master of Theology program. The purpose of the final project is to verify that the student has achieved the intended learning outcomes of the program and is able to implement what has been learned in the form of postgraduate academic research. Since the Master of Theology is an academic rather than a professional degree, the final project is intended to be applicable, directly or indirectly, to continuing studies in a terminal degree program.

Objectives
The objectives of the thesis are (1) to define a topic of study in the form of a question or problem within the field of program specialization, (2) to demonstrate conversant knowledge of relevant literature and argumentation, (3) to propose a solution to the question or problem, and (4) produce a persuasive argument in support of the solution through the use compelling evidence.

Topic
The curriculum of the Master of Theology focuses on one of three areas of specialization: Old Testament, New Testament, or Theology. The thesis will be dedicated to the research of a topic within the specialization and display the development of skills learned in the seminar and mentorship learning experiences.

Oversight
The Director of the ThM program will appoint a reading committee of VBTS faculty to provide oversight of the ThM thesis. The committee will consist of a thesis advisor, assistant reader, and form advisor. The primary faculty member of the discipline will serve as thesis advisor. The role of the thesis advisor is to provide the student with direction throughout the writing process leading to a completed thesis which demonstrates achievement of the ThM program learning outcomes. The role of the faculty reader is to complement the thesis advisor by providing a second opinion concerning the strength of evidence and coherence of argumentation presented in the thesis. The form advisor assists the thesis advisor by ensuring that the thesis meets the required presentation standard. The thesis advisor may also request the services of an accomplished scholar from another institution as specialist reader. The role of the outside reader is to provide the committee and the student with the value of an additional perspective.

Progress

Failure to meet any of the appointed deadlines may, at the discretion of the reading committee, result in (1) placing the student in a one-semester course continuation, or (2) course failure. Progress through the thesis is measured as the student advances through 4 phases:

Phase 1—Prospectus

The purpose of the *Seminar in Advanced Theological Research Methods* is to guide the student through the development of the thesis prospectus. The prospectus will provide justification for the topic and will include (1) an introduction to a research problem as situated within the context of the discipline, (2) a summarization of the current state of scholarship concerning the problem, (3) an introduction to relevant literature, and (4) conclude with a definitive thesis statement.

Phase 2—Thesis 1 Seminar

The Thesis 1 seminar entails research and composition leading to completion of the majority of the first draft of the thesis. Phase 1 includes the following steps:

Step 1—Conversion of Prospectus to Introduction. (5-7 pages, Sept 7).

Step 2—First draft of chapter 1 (15-25 pages, Oct 15)

Step 3—First draft of chapter 2 (15-25 pages, Nov 15)

Step 4—First draft of chapter 3 (15-25 pages, Dec 15)

Phase 3—Thesis 2 Seminar

The Thesis 2 seminar entails research and composition leading to completion of the first and second drafts of the thesis. Phase 2 includes the following steps:

Step 5—First Draft of chapter 4 (Feb 15) in conjunction with entire rough draft (including front and back matter).

Step 6—Committee Review and Response (March 1)

Step 7—Revised and Corrected Second Draft (Apr 1)

Step 8—Form Clearance (April 7)

Phase 4—Thesis Defense and Committee Affirmation

Step 9—Thesis Defense (Apr 15). The student will provide an oral present and defend the argument of the thesis before a group of faculty, students, and guests invited by the thesis advisor.

Step 10—Final Thesis Revisions (Apr 22)

Step 11—Signatures of the Reading Committee (April 29)

Form

The thesis will be prepared according to the standards of the latest edition of Turabian, and the interpretation of Turabian as provided in the VBTS Guidelines for Paper, Theses, and Final Projects. The member of the reading committee serving as form advisor must provide

final clearance of the thesis. Theses that do not receive form clearance from the form advisor will not be admitted to the thesis defense.

Printing and Binding

The librarian will assist the student in securing the services of a printer and binder. The appropriate fee will cover the expense of printing and binding two copies; additional copies may be procured at the student's expense. The first copy will be archived in the seminary library; the second will to the student. The student will also submit an electronic copy to the seminary librarian in pdf format.

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8. Doctor of Ministry Final Project

Purpose
The final project is the capstone learning experience for the Doctor of Ministry program. The purpose of the final project is to verify that the student has achieved the intended learning outcomes of the program and is able to implement what has been learned in the context of the ministry in which he serves. Since the Doctor of Ministry in Expository Preaching is a professional degree, the final project is intended to be applicable, directly or indirectly, to the student's ministry of preaching.

Topic
The curriculum of the Doctor of Ministry in Expository Preaching is delivered through the seminary's three departments of education: the department of Christian Ministry and Communication, the department of Exegesis and Exposition, and the department of Systematic and Historical Theology. In keeping with these curricular divisions, the final project will be directed to a topic related to one of the following three categories of study:

A. Ministerial. Topics in this category will entail an experimental study in a select aspect of expository preaching. Projects within this category seek to address a challenge or problem associated with the ministry of preaching, propose practical solutions, and verify the feasibility of solutions through implementation through testing and practice in a ministerial setting. Experimental research is correlated with relevant literature, resulting in an analysis and recommendation for future ministerial practice.

B. Exegetical. Topics in this category engage in a targeted exegetical study. The study will demonstrate the student's ability to apply skills obtained in the program to research, evaluation, and application of a portion of the biblical text significant to the practice of expository preaching.

C. Historical/Theological. Topics in this category engage in a targeted historical or theological study, the result of which will commend to the reader conclusions which inform the practice of expository preaching.

Progress
Progress through the final project is measured as the student advances through 15 steps in 3 phases:

Phase 1—Candidacy
A student may apply for candidacy if all required coursework is completed, or if presently enrolled in the final required course. The Candidacy phase extends from

January 1—July 31 of the year prior to the year of anticipated graduation, and includes the following steps:

Step 1—Application for Candidacy, including declaration of intended area of writing. (Jan 1)

Step 2—Formation of Final Project Committee, Assignment of Advisor (Feb 1)

Step 3—Submission of Topic and Abstract (May 1)

Step 4—Approval of Topic and Abstract (Jun 1)

Step 5—Submission of Proposal (Jul 1)

Step 6—Approval of Proposal (Jul 31)

Step 7—Confirmed Satisfaction of Pre-requisites for Candidacy (Jul 31)

- Completion of all coursework

- 3.0 Cumulative GPA

- Resolution of unresolved disciplinary issues

- Fulfillment of outstanding financial obligations

Step 8—Admission to Candidacy

Details concerning requirements for the topic, abstract, and proposal may be located in the seminary's Guidelines for Writing.

Phase 2—Research and Composition
The Research and Composition phase extends from August 1—December 31 of the year prior to the year of anticipated graduation, and includes the following steps:

Step 9—Enrollment in Final Project 1; completion of Introduction, which is chapter 1. (3 credit hours; Aug 1)

Step 10—Completion of draft for chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the final project. (Dec 1)

Step 11—Approval of chapters 2, 3, 4 by Form Reviewer (Dec 15)

Phase 3—Drafting and Defense
The Drafting and Defense phase extends from January 1—August 1 of the year prior to the year of anticipated graduation, and includes the following steps:

Step 12—Enrollment in Final Project 2; submission of first draft (Jan 1)

Step 13—Submission of second draft (Feb 1)

Step 14—Submission of corrected Draft (approved by Form Reviewer); Final Project Defense (Mar 1)

Step 15—Submission of Final Draft (Apr 1)

Project Length
The project (excluding front and back matter) must be 125–50 pages in length.

Oversight

Upon application for candidacy, the DMin Committee will appoint a Final Project Committee. The Committee will consist of an Advisor and a Reader. The role of the Committee is to assess the progress and success of the final project. The role of the Advisor is to assume the primary role in providing the student guidance through the process of the final project. The role of the Reader is to interact with the content of the final project, communicate observations to the Advisor, and assist in the final assessment of the project. A third reader may be appointed at the discretion of the Academic Dean. Appointments to the Final Project Committee will be contingent on several factors, including the discipline within which the topic is situated, the availability of faculty, and the expressed preference of the student.

Recommended Structure

The structure of the final project should fit the thesis statement and the nature of the evidence that supports it. The first chapter of the final project should provide a justification for the study, and the final chapter should provide a final analysis and application. A typical structure, therefore, would contain the following elements:

Chapter 1—Justification of Study (Evidence of problem, challenge, or need; Plan of Study; Survey of Relevant Resources, Thesis Statement)

Chapter 2—1st Reason and Attending Evidence

Chapter 3—2nd Reason and Attending Evidence

Chapter 4—3rd Reason and Attending Evidence

Chapter 5—Conclusion and Application

Printing and Binding

The librarian will assist the student in securing the services of a printer and binder. The appropriate fee will cover the expense of printing and binding two copies; additional copies may be procured at the student's expense. The first copy will be archived in the seminary library; the second will to the student. The student will also submit an electronic copy to the seminary librarian in pdf format.

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9. Financial Policies

9.1 Master of Theology Tuition and Fees

Tuition (per credit hour)	380.00
Student Services Fee (per semester; for internet, Populi, and library services)	265.00
Continuation Fee (per semester; for continuation in program without course enrollment)	200.00
Graduation Fee (for regalia rental, diploma, and thesis binding)	250.00

9.2 Doctor of Ministry Tuition and Fees

Tuition (per credit hour)	400.00
Student Services Fee (per semester; for internet, Populi, and library services)	175.00
Continuation Fee (per semester; for continuation in program without course enrollment)	200.00
Final Project Fee	1,500.00
Graduation Fee (for regalia rental, diploma, and final project binding)	250.00

9.3 Payment

Prompt payment of all fees is critical for efficient operation of VBTS and for the student's reputation for financial integrity. Payment can be made in full at registration or, for the fall and spring terms, payments may be made in four equal installments scheduled throughout the term or three equal payments for the summer term. The payment schedule is available through the student's Populi account. VBTS accepts credit card payments through Populi. Otherwise, students may mail or deliver cash or check to the business office.

9.4 Past Due Balance

Students with unpaid balances will not be permitted to register for subsequent terms. If a student is unable to satisfy financial obligations prior to registration, an appeal may be made to the seminary Operations Manager for special consideration and registration approval. A 1.5% finance charge per month on unpaid past due balances will be assessed.

9.5 Course Withdrawals and Associated Refunds

In the event a student withdraws from a course, the seminary will administer refunds and marks on student transcripts based on the following schedule:

Period Withdrawal is Initiated by Student	Refund	Transcript Mark
Before the end of the first week of the academic term	100%	No mark
Before the end of the second week of the academic term	50%	W (withdrawn)
Between the second and fifth week of the academic term	0%	WF (withdrawn failing)
After the fifth week of the academic term	0%	Grade per terms of syllabus

9.6 Refunds for Students Receiving DOD Educational Funding

Students who received federal aid from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) or agencies within the Department of Defense shall be reimbursed in accordance with the policies articulated within VA 21.4255. Accordingly, refunds to such student shall be administered as follows:

Definition

Enrollment consists of a registration of one or more courses within an academic term which has been initiated by an individual who has been accepted as a student in the institution.

Calculation of Enrollment Period

Enrollment is calculated from the first day of the academic term until the day the student initiates a withdrawal from the course, or the last day of the academic term, whichever occurs first. A partial week of enrollment shall be accounted as a full week.

Schedule of Charges

All DMin courses at Virginia Beach Theological Seminary are delivered within a 14-week academic term. Consequently, all charges assessed by the seminary (tuition and fees) shall be assessed on the following pro-rata schedule:

1 week of enrollment	7%
2 weeks of enrollment	14%
3 weeks of enrollment	21%
4 weeks of enrollment	29%
5 weeks of enrollment	36%
6 weeks of enrollment	43%
7 weeks of enrollment	50%
8 weeks of enrollment	57%
9 weeks of enrollment	64%
10 weeks of enrollment	71%
11 weeks of enrollment	79%
12 weeks of enrollment	86%
13 weeks of enrollment	93%
14 weeks of enrollment	100%

Prompt Refund

Unused portions of tuition, fees, and other charges associated with the period of enrollment shall be refunded in a timely manner. The Office of the Registrar shall process all course withdrawal requests, including notification of completed course withdrawals to the Business Office, within 3 business days of the date the student submits the Course Withdrawal Form. The Business Office shall process all refunds within 30 days of such notification from the Office of the Registrar.

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10. Student Services

10.1 Student Orientation

A new-student orientation is officially scheduled prior to the start of the fall term. A spring term orientation is scheduled as needed. The Academic Dean and staff prepare and present the orientation sessions that thoroughly introduce all aspects of seminary life. Additionally, seminary faculty, staff, and administration are introduced to all incoming students.

10.2 Chapel

Students residing in the Virginia Beach area are welcome to participate in chapel and the following brunch every Thursday morning during the fall and spring terms.

10.3 Lodging

The seminary is located close to a variety of suitable hotels. The office staff is available to make recommendations and advise students of available discounts. Students who desire a more economical lodging may contact the Director of Admissions for options to lodge with a host family from Colonial Baptist Church.

10.4 Building Access

Every resident student is given a key fob which provides access to the building 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The key fob should be returned to the seminary upon graduation or withdrawal from the school.

10.5 Parking

Virginia Beach Theological Seminary shares a campus with Colonial Baptist Church. The parking lot closest to the lake bordering the campus has been designated for the cars of seminary faculty, staff, and students.

10.6 Library Services

The Ernest D. Pickering Library consists of a specialized theological collection of hardcopy, periodical, and digital resources. In addition to these holdings, the Pickering Library sustains a partnership with the Regent University Library, located 5 minutes from the seminary campus. Though this partnership, VBTS students present their student ID and enjoy the benefits of an expanded collection and limited checkout privileges. The Pickering Library is also able to secure additional resources upon request through inter-library loans.

10.7 Technical Services

Upon enrollment, the seminary staff will set up access to the following technical services:

Email

VBTS provides each student with an email address. Email addresses are of the form <lowercase first name><lowercase last name>. (E.g., John Doe would be johndoe@vbts.edu.) All seminary related emails will be sent to these student addresses.

Learning Management

Each student is provided access to Populi, the seminary's learning management system. Populi is a password secured platform that facilitates the administration of each course, submission of assignments, grading, academic records, payments, and library resources.

Computer Access

Computers are provided in the library for both library and personal use. Contact seminary office for log-in information.

Internet Access

The seminary provides high speed fiber-optic wireless internet on campus to service students' academic and personal needs. Students accessing the system may obtain the password from the seminary office. The seminary has installed filters on the system to block access to sites that do not fall within VBTS standards, and its technical staff routinely checks websites accessed by students. Students should not access the internet when attending class unless directly relevant to the purposes of the instructor.