



# **MDiv Program Handbook**

**The University of Chicago Divinity School**

Published September 2023

# Table of Contents

<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Master of Divinity Program Guidelines</b>	<b>3</b>
Degree Requirements	6
Enrollment and Registration Requirements	9
Graduation	10
Grading and Incompletes	11
Annual Reviews and Program Transfer	12
<b>Field Education: Overview</b>	<b>13</b>
Field Education: Year-long Site Placement	13
Learning Agreement	15
The Action Plan	16
Field Work Intensive	17
Clinical Pastoral Education	18
<b>Senior MDiv Thesis and Project</b>	<b>19</b>
Purpose	19
Defining the Issue and Approach	19
Schedule	19
Public Presentation	20
Evaluation Guidelines	21
<b>Dual Degree Programs</b>	<b>22</b>
Application	22
Financial Aid	22
Registration	22
Field Work (Crown dual degree only)	23
Curriculum and Integration	23
<b>Chaplaincy Concentration and Certificate Programs</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Additional Resources</b>	<b>25</b>
Cross-registration at area schools	25
Advising	26
The Committee on MDiv Studies	26
Religious Practice and Community Life	27
Swift Hall Groups and Resources	28
Resources for Personal Growth	29
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>30</b>
Appendix A: Learning Agreement	30
Appendix B: Action Plan	32
Appendix C: Site Placement Evaluations	34
Appendix D: Field Work Internship Contract Form	36
Appendix E: Senior Thesis Cover Sheet	38
Appendix F: Annual Progress Review Form	39

# Contact Information

## **The University of Chicago Divinity School**

1025 East 58th Street, Chicago IL 60637-1577

### **Cynthia Gano Lindner**

Director of Ministry Studies  
Swift 400C | (773) 702-8280  
clindner@uchicago.edu

### **Erika Dornfeld**

Director of Field Education and Community Engagement  
Swift 400B | (773) 834-4693  
dornfeld@uchicago.edu

### **Dean of Students Office**

Swift 104 | (773) 702-8217  
DivinityDOS@uchicago.edu

### **Mimi Maduff**

Interim Dean of Students  
Swift 105 | (773) 702-8249  
mhalpern@uchicago.edu

### **James Robinson**

Dean of The Divinity School  
Executive Assistant to the Dean: Jaime Jones  
Swift 101 | (773) 702-8221  
[jjones4@uchicago.edu](mailto:jjones4@uchicago.edu)

### **Bursar**

(773) 702-8000                      6030 South Ellis Avenue

**Registrar** For grades and fees, see <https://registrar.uchicago.edu/policies-regulations>

(773) 702-7891

### **Student Loan Administration**

(773) 702-6061                      970 East 58th Street, Fourth floor

### **Student Health Services**

(773) 702-4156                      5841 South Maryland Avenue, Suite R100

### **Student Counseling Services**

(773) 702-9800                      5555 S Woodlawn Avenue



# Master of Divinity

*The following pages offer detailed descriptions of the MDiv course of study; readers are encouraged to consider it a map of the terrain with some suggested routes, rather than simply a prescription of requirements. As our MDiv program is committed to training leaders from a wide range of religious communities, preparing students for service in a variety of venues and roles, the language of this guidebook strives to reflect the commitments of multiple traditions, and to articulate practices consonant with a range of vocational settings.*

## MDiv Studies at the University of Chicago

The Master of Divinity (MDiv) program at the University of Chicago Divinity School is a dynamic three-year curriculum combining coursework in the study of religion and the arts of religious leadership with significant field work in multiple settings, alongside ongoing participation in a cohort-based learning community that nurtures students' intellectual, spiritual, professional and personal formation.

Rooted in the Divinity School's historic commitment to the training of scholarly ministers, today's program welcomes students of many traditions—Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Confucian, Christian and Humanist—as they prepare for engagement in an ever-increasing variety of contexts alongside students anticipating ordination and traditional vocations in religious community leadership. Coursework in their traditions' histories, languages and texts, their theologies, philosophies, and ethics, and anthropological studies of living communities deepen students' understandings of their own commitments and those of the communities they will serve. MDiv-specific cohort courses offered throughout the three-year curriculum invite students to explore and experience the arts of religious leadership and practice in their own traditions and in others, building students' knowledge and skills and expanding their religious imaginations to equip them for thoughtful and innovative public engagement in our increasingly diverse religious landscape.

Situated in the heart of a major research university, within walking distance of four seminaries and surrounded by Chicago's diverse neighborhoods, MDiv students may tailor their learning to their anticipated contexts with dual degree programs in social work, policy, or law; interdisciplinary certificate programs in areas of interest such as health care, conflict studies, and gender and sexuality; or additional denominational studies at neighboring schools. An emerging concentration in chaplaincy helps students build upon several strong Clinical Pastoral Education training programs in the city with select courses in social work and policy and an advanced MDiv seminar in spiritual care; field placements in medical centers, university chaplaincy offices, advocacy organizations and other institutional settings further extend the practice.

Whether or not they elect to pursue these compound programs, all MDiv students are encouraged to engage coursework offered by other University departments and professional schools to gain the multidisciplinary sensibilities requisite for skillful and adaptive religious leadership, community-building and meaning-making in complex and multivalent public spaces.

# Introduction to the Course of Study

The MDiv program prepares religious and spiritual leaders representative of a variety of religious traditions who are equipped to serve in diverse contexts and who will continue a lifelong pursuit of learning in their religious practice and leadership. To this end, the MDiv curriculum provides a sequence of studies that requires the student to (1) establish a breadth of competence in religious studies; (2) develop a thorough understanding of textual, historical, and theoretical foundations for religious leadership; and (3) integrate this classical program of learning with rigorous and reflective practice.

The field education component of the program offers students rich opportunities for practical experience in religious communities and other faith-informed settings. First-year students participate in field sites selected by the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement through an introduction to Chicago's many neighborhoods during their year-long Colloquium: Introduction to Religious Leadership and Practice. Second-year students work for nine months (the entire academic year) engaged in supervised field education in a community of practice in the Chicago area, chosen by the student in consultation with the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement and the community's leader(s). This requirement aims to provide broad exposure to the life of a religious community and various practices of spiritual leadership. A third field work component offers the opportunity for students to engage in a unit of hospital or campus chaplaincy, community advocacy, or other specialized training in some aspect of religious leadership and practice. This third field work requirement may be satisfied by working at the site full-time for three months, usually as a summer intensive, or spreading out the work over a longer period for the same number of hours.

Each year of the MDiv program offers required courses which serve as exercises in practical theology and religious reflection, providing a common structure for the work of all students in the program. These include: Colloquium: Introduction to Religious Leadership and Practice (a year-long integration seminar; taken the first year); the second-year Arts of Religious Leadership and Practice sequence with the concurrent year-long Practicum; and the third-year Senior Thesis Seminar culminating in the completion of an original thesis and its public presentation.

- **Introduction to Religious Leadership and Practice (Colloquium)** invites students to identify, examine, and synthesize the core practices of public religious engagement: attention, conversation, and reflection. It runs concurrently with classes during all three quarters of the first year (though students register for the course only in the autumn quarter) and is designed to provide a forum for academic, professional, and personal integration, vocational development, and building a public, theological voice. Students in this course will also participate in introductory field experiences arranged by the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement. Students are encouraged to think about their preparation for leadership as one oriented towards multiple publics--the religious/spiritual community, the academy, and wider society—and to cultivate a lively and ongoing conversation, internally as well as externally, between these audiences.
- **The Arts of Religious Leadership and Practice**, a three-quarter sequence including Ritual and Speaking; Spiritual Care and Counseling; and Community, Leadership and Change, offers both theoretical perspectives and practice labs for cultivating skills pertinent to these distinct but overlapping aspects of religious life. On the one hand, this coursework relates these perennial features of religious life to the Divinity School's historical, philosophical, theological and cultural exploration of religions. On the other hand, it relates knowledge about religious practice to students' concrete experiences in their second-year field education settings and the embodied wisdom of communities of practice.
- **The Field Work Practicum (Practicum)** is a weekly seminar for second-year MDiv students. It runs concurrently with the Arts sequence and the student's field placement during all three quarters. The course provides a forum for practical theological reflection. Students spend substantial time examining their field

experiences in facilitated small groups, as well as exploring broader themes of religious leadership in communities, through workshops, speakers, and selected readings.

- **Upper-level Philosophy/Theology Course: Constructive Paper.** Additionally, as students engage in these exercises of practical theological reflection and in fieldwork, they are expected to extend their knowledge of their own traditions, with courses in the languages, texts, thought, and history of their religious communities. Students will also select an upper-level theology or philosophy course for which they will produce a constructive paper—considering a central theological or philosophical question, reckoning with the position of a major thinker, and coming to a critical judgment of the question.
- **The Senior Thesis Project** consists of a thesis and a public presentation that draw together the student's coursework and field experience to construct an appropriate exploration and an intellectually plausible judgment about some aspect of religious thought or practice. The specific balance among theoretical and practical resources will vary according to the student's interests and the faculty thesis advisor with whom they work.

Finally, MDiv students are encouraged to investigate course offerings in other departments of the University which might broaden a student's cultural competence or deepen their knowledge or skillset in a particular area of interest. MDiv students often find the coursework at the Crown School of Social Work, the Harris School of Public Policy, and the Division of Social Sciences particularly useful.

# Degree Requirements

The MDiv degree requires registration for three full years of scholastic residence, with the completion of a minimum of 27 courses distributed across the Divinity School's areas of study. Along with acquiring a broad foundational knowledge about religion and particular coursework in a chosen religious tradition, students are encouraged to anchor themselves more deeply in one of the school's academic areas of study. Entering students will negotiate a course of study proposal with the Director of Ministry Studies and the student's faculty advisor which will be revisited at the student's annual progress review (See **Appendix F** for progress review form). The proposal and subsequent reviews assure that the student is meeting the program's following curricular goals:

- Establish a breadth of competence in religious studies
- Develop a thorough understanding of the student's religious tradition(s) or practice
- Cultivate awareness and appreciation of other religious traditions, and the ability to situate one's own tradition or practice on a broader religious canvas
- Integrate learning and scholarship with rigorous and reflective field work
- Integrate personal and professional competence through disciplined attention to self-awareness, critical conversation, collegial accountability, and sustained spiritual practice

## **The following course requirements correspond to the competencies enumerated above:**

### *Religious studies*

\*Introduction to the Study of Religion I and II

### *Language study*

\*At least three courses in a classical language pertaining to the student's tradition(s) of focus, or else in a modern language approved as relevant to the student's intended work in religious leadership, OR demonstrated proficiency in and use of selected language, as demonstrated by B- or better in an exegesis course.

### *Texts/Scriptures*

\*Three courses in core texts/scriptures (one of these can be in another religious tradition)

### *History, Theology, Ethics and Philosophy*

\*Four courses in history, philosophy, theology, ethics (one of these can be in another religious tradition) including an upper-level course for which the student will complete a **constructive paper**

### *Cultivation of Professional Identity*

\*Introduction to the Study of Religious Leadership (Colloquium)

\*Arts of Religious Leadership: Ritual and Speaking; Spiritual Care; Community, Leadership and Change

\*Reflection on the Practice of Religious Leadership (Practicum)

\*Senior Ministry Thesis Seminar

## First Year

Bold print **highlights the courses that must be completed in a specific year**; the timing of the other required and elective courses will vary according to the student's interests and the courses offered. Three courses per quarter is the normal course load for students in the MDiv program. The University's residence system, however, allows some flexibility. For example, it is possible to take two courses in one quarter, four the next, and still graduate on time.

Depending on previous language study, students take a minimum of seven elective courses to fulfill the requirement of twenty-seven courses for the degree. Students may choose these electives from other departments and divisions of the University, as well as from the courses offered by The Divinity School. Students may also take up to four electives (and in some cases, as many as six, by permission of the Committee on MDiv Studies) in the neighboring seminaries or other Chicago area denominational schools, provided these courses do not duplicate offerings at The Divinity School. See "**Additional Resources**".

As a general rule it is desirable to complete degree requirements (e.g., languages, text, history and thought courses) earlier rather than later in the course of study. It is also important, however, to distribute elective coursework throughout the three years in order to develop interests that may contribute to the Senior Thesis Project. These twin considerations can compete, requiring students to strategize. Counsel from the Director of Ministry Studies, as well as faculty in relevant areas of study, can be essential in making curricular decisions.

*These requirements are most often completed during the first year of study:*

- The masters-level introductory courses, "Introduction to the Study of Religion I and II"
- Coursework in the classical texts and/or history of the student's chosen tradition(s)
- **Participation in the weekly reflection seminar and field education experience for first-years**
- **Introduction to Religious Leadership and Practice: Colloquium (RELP 30500)**
- Acquisition of basic skills in a relevant textual language such as Koine Greek, Sanskrit, Quranic Arabic, Biblical Hebrew, or Tibetan. A typical course of language study consists of three courses, or in the case of Biblical Hebrew or Koine, two courses plus an exegesis course. Alternately, MDiv students can choose to study a modern language pertinent to their anticipated vocational engagement—for example, Spanish or ASL. Typically three courses are required, and students must demonstrate their ability to employ the language in some aspect of field work. Students should consult with their academic advisor and the Director of Ministry Studies in the selection of the appropriate language curriculum.



## Second Year

*These requirements are most often completed during the second year of study:*

- **The Arts of Religious Leadership and Practice:** a three-quarter sequence including Ritual and Speaking; Spiritual Care and Counseling; and Community, Leadership, and Change (RELP 35150, 35202, 35300).
- **Three quarters of field education** in a community of practice, including successful completion of
- **Practicum** (RELP 40600, 40700, 40800) which meets weekly across the entire second year.
- One course, selected in consultation with the instructor and the Director of Ministry Studies, for which the student submits a **constructive paper**; to be completed before participation in the Senior Thesis Seminar.

## Third Year

*These requirements are most often completed during the third year of study:*

- **Completion of the Senior Thesis Project**, including enrollment in the Senior Thesis Seminar which meets monthly across the year. The project consists of two parts:
  - a) A thirty-five page thesis.
  - b) The oral presentation of the project in an appropriate public forum that includes student colleagues, the project's advisor, the Director of Ministry and other faculty, and wider audiences as appropriate.

## Any of the three years

*These requirements may be completed at any time across the three years of MDiv residence:*

- A total of four courses in history, philosophy, or theology/ethics); one of these should be in a religious tradition other than one's one
- An additional unit of approved and supervised field work (usually a summer intensive)

## Accountability

All MDiv students are expected to maintain a grade average of at least B-. A student whose grade average falls below B- may be placed on academic probation or asked by the Committee on Degrees to terminate their program of study. As the MDiv is a professional degree requiring the integration of study and practical engagement, failure to satisfactorily complete the first-year Colloquium or the second-year field placement and Practicum will result in the student's withdrawal from the program.

Students are advised to avoid the accumulation of “incomplete” courses on their transcript. Students who have three or more incomplete courses on their transcripts (indicated by missing grades, NGR, or I) will be required to develop a completion plan with the Dean of Students’ office and will be unable to register for more coursework until satisfactory progress is made towards resolving incomplete work.

Students are required to maintain a portfolio of selected work and other evaluative documents which will form the basis of an annual spring quarter progress review, conducted by the Director of Ministry Studies and the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement. Permission to advance in the MDiv curriculum--for example, approval of a second-year field placement or enrollment in the third-year thesis seminar--is contingent on the satisfactory completion of the annual review. The annual review form can be found in **Appendix F**.

## **Enrollment and Registration Requirements**

MDiv students are expected to enroll full-time (3 or more 100-unit courses) each quarter for nine consecutive quarters, thus completing the program in three (3) academic years. Summer enrollment may count toward the residency requirement. Students may not register for more than four classes per quarter.

MDiv students must petition the Dean of Students Office to register on a part-time basis. If approved, the student will be given an updated degree progression plans, including an updated expected graduation date.

The maximum enrollment limit for the MDiv program is four (4) years. Full-time MDiv students are expected to complete the program in three (3) years. Students in joint degree programs and those studying part-time have 4 academic years to complete the program. After 4 academic years, students are administratively withdrawn from the program, and will need to reapply for admission to continue the program. Students must be enrolled in at least 2 courses to be eligible for federal financial aid (loans and work-study).

MDiv students are expected to register in consecutive quarters of the academic year (Autumn, Winter, Spring). Students may take a leave of absence for a maximum of four consecutive quarters, including the Summer quarter. Students who do not register for four consecutive quarters will be withdrawn from the program. Administratively withdrawn students may submit a petition to resume studies. Petitions must be approved by the MDiv Program Director and the Dean of Students.

MDiv students may withdraw from the program at any time. Students wishing to withdraw from the program should consult with the Dean of Students Office.

## **EXTENDED STATUS**

MDiv students that have completed program requirements are expected to graduate. Students ineligible for graduation but who no longer need to take additional coursework (may enter Extended Status for up to four consecutive quarters, including Summer, for the purposes of finishing incomplete coursework, exams, fieldwork, etc. Extended Status confers no privileges such as registering for courses, borrowing federal loans, student loan deferment, access to health insurance, or access to the Student Wellness, and carries no tuition charges. Access to university e-mail accounts is maintained in Extended Status. Students who have not graduated at the end of the four quarters of Extended Status will be administratively withdrawn from the program.

## **Graduation**

Students must apply to graduate in the term in which the degree is completed. The deadline to apply to graduate is Friday of the first week of the quarter. Students graduating in the Summer, Autumn, or Winter quarter are invited to participate in annual convocation exercises in the Spring Quarter. Degrees are conferred in the actual quarter of graduation. The Registrar charges a degree cancellation fee for students who apply for graduation and who are not approved to graduate. Students should consult with the Dean of Students Office about eligibility for graduation.

## Grading and Incomplete Coursework

All Divinity School courses are evaluated using quality grades (A, B, C, D, and F), all of which have + or – modifiers. MA students must earn a grade of B- or better in courses that count toward degree completion. Courses grades of C+ or below and audited courses do not count toward degree completion.

Students may elect to take a course on a Pass/Fail basis. To earn a grade of Pass (P), students must earn an equivalent of B- or higher in the course to earn a Pass. Students must obtain instructor approval to take a course on a Pass/Fail. Once instructor approval is obtained, students must submit their request to the Dean of Students Office by Wednesday of Week 3 for processing.

MDiv students may no more than three (3) University of Chicago courses graded on a Pass/Fail basis for degree completion. The foundational course DVSC 30400- Introduction to the Study of Religion or HREL 32900- Classical Theories of Religion must be taken for a quality grade. The first-year colloquium- RELP 30500- Colloquium: Introduction to Religious Leadership and Practice must be taken for a quality grade. No part of the second-year Arts of Ministry sequence may be taken on Pass/Fail basis.

Note that the Divinity School modified its grading practices to allow students greater flexibility to deal with the circumstances of the health crisis for Spring Quarter 2020. Divinity School students were allowed to take any class offered by the Divinity School on a Pass/Fail basis in the Spring 2020 quarter, except those meeting any language requirements. Divinity School students that took courses on a pass/fail basis during Spring 2020 will remain in good academic standing, as long as all other degree requirements are met. Courses taken on a Pass/Fail basis during Spring 2020 will count toward the quality grade course requirement. Hence, Divinity School students will **not** have to take additional courses to make up for any courses taken on a Pass/Fail basis in the Spring 2020 quarter.

Students may also elect to audit a course, which is indicated as (R) on the transcript. Students who audit courses typically complete assigned readings, participate in class discussions, but do not turn in assignments. Audited courses are not taken for credit and do not count toward degree completion. Students must obtain instructor approval to audit a course. Once instructor approval is obtained, students must submit their request to the Dean of Students Office by Wednesday of Week 3 for processing.

Students may request an Incomplete (I) for a course to allow additional time to finish work required for a quality grade. Students who wish to take an Incomplete grade for a course must make a formal request to the instructor of record for the course using the form available on the Forms for Current Students website. These forms must be turned into the Dean of Students Office for processing. MA students have one academic year to complete and submit the unfinished coursework. After the year elapses, the I becomes permanent, and any grade submitted will be placed next to the I (e.g. I/B+). MA students with more than three Incomplete or ungraded courses on their transcript at the beginning of the academic year may not register for following quarter.

NOTE: Students utilizing federal student aid should consult with the Graduate Financial Office to determine if and how a grade of “I” will impact loan eligibility.

## **Annual Reviews**

The Dean of Students monitors academic progress for MDiv students. The Assistant Dean of Students provides annual reviews and progress reports for MDiv students every spring quarter. Any student who fails to make satisfactory academic progress as evidenced by failing to meet the enrollment and registration requirements or by failing to earn the sufficient quality grades as outlined above must develop a completion plan in conjunction with the faculty advisor, MDiv Program Director, and Assistant Dean of Students.

The student will be given a completion plan in writing that outlines what is required to regain good academic standing and the deadline for doing so, normally 1-2 quarters. If a student has substantial academic work to make-up, they may not be allowed to register for courses. Instead, the Assistant Dean will register them for Divinity Advanced Study to maintain enrollment in the program. Failure to meet the terms of the completion plan will result in the student's withdrawal from the program.

## **Transfer Among Programs**

Because a student's academic and professional interests may change, students may transfer between the master's degree programs. Students may present transfer petitions at any time after matriculation to the program. Any petition by a student to transfer to another program after admission but before registration is subject to review by the Masters Admissions Committee.

Petitions of an enrolled Master's student are subject to review by the student's faculty advisor and Faculty Program Director of the entering program. Students should complete the [Petition to Change Programs Form](#).

If a transfer petition is approved, the student will be given an academic plan for the new program, including an updated graduation date by the Dean of Students Office. Master's students maintain the same divisional aid proportion when transferring programs.

## Field Education: Overview

The field education components of the MDiv program offer students the opportunity to integrate their experience in communities of practice and academic studies to further their professional formation. The aim of field education is not only to provide practical experience in the arts of religious leadership, but also to foster a dynamic exchange between the student's coursework and practical experience in lived communities..

Toward this end, each student participates in **three field education exercises** concurrent with their MDiv coursework:

- ❖ In the first year of study, students participate in a **community engagement** experience in conjunction with their Colloquium course, spending time in observation, conversation and exploration of Chicago's many communities, learning to pay close attention to the larger civic fabric of which any religious or spiritual community is a part.
- ❖ During their second academic year, students participate in a **year-long site placement** in a local religious community of practice under the supervision of a Site Supervisor and the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement.
- ❖ To be completed at any time across the three years, each student is required to complete an additional **field education intensive**, which may be another broad-based internship in a community of religious practice, or a more focused experience in some particular facet of religious leadership, such as hospital chaplaincy(CPE), non-profit management, or policy advocacy.

The Director of Field Education approves all student field experiences and serves as the contact point between the Divinity School and the field site.

## Field Education: Year-long Site Placement

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, each student works 15–20 hours per week in a local religious community of practice, under the direction of an on-site supervisor. Students participate in the process of site selection, in consultation with the Director. The student meets with their appointed supervisor for at least an hour each week to reflect on their work and goals, as outlined on their Action Plan (**Appendix B**). The student is strongly encouraged to form a support team of three to five people from the site that can provide additional feedback and support during the year.

In conjunction with the year-long site placement, students are enrolled in the Practicum course for the year. As part of the course, the Director of Field Education visits the student's site in order to observe their leadership in action and provide feedback. Each quarter, students are evaluated on their learning goals. For the Fall and Spring quarters, the Director, student, and supervisor will meet jointly to discuss the learning goals. For the winter quarter, students and supervisors meet separately and submit a written evaluation. At any point in the year, additional meetings between the student, supervisor, and director are available upon request by either student or supervisor. (The evaluation forms for each quarter are found in Appendix C)

Students engaged in the second-year field education placement receive stipendiary aid from the Divinity School in the amount of \$9000 (\$3000 per quarter). Field placement sites are not expected to make further financial contributions, although considerations can be made to cover student transportation costs if the site requires extensive travel.



# Timeline for 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Placement

## Spring Quarter, First Year:

**Placement Selection:** The student and director work together to compile options for a site placement that best match the student's interests and needs. Students are then highly encouraged to visit each site at least once. Finally, students approach site leadership to see whether the commitments of hosting a student are of mutual interest and need. If the site and student agree to the expectations set out by the Divinity School, as outlined in the Learning Agreement, it is signed and submitted to the Director. (Appendix A)

**Submit Learning Agreement:** The Learning Agreement outlines the expectations and responsibilities of each party for the year ahead. The document is completed when all three parties—student, site supervisor, and the Director—have agreed that the site will serve as the student's placement. Signed Learning Agreements may be submitted as soon as an agreement is reached and should be completed no later than the last day of Spring Quarter.

**NOTE:** The Learning Agreement is only meant to document the broad expectations for students and supervisors. There will be an additional document, the Action Plan, that will ask for the student's specific learning goals and a plan to meet them. Even though it is not due until the fall quarter of the second year, it is wise to discuss the Action Plan with your Site Supervisor when signing the Learning Agreement.

## Fall of Second Year:

**Ethics and Boundaries Workshop:** At the start of their internship, all students will participate in a required workshop on ethics and boundaries for religious leaders. This workshop is designed to introduce and address some of the specific issues potentially encountered as a student religious leader.

## First Two-Three Weeks of Fall Quarter:

**Submit Goals and Action Plan:** The student and the Site Supervisor will collaborate on the Action Plan, which lists the student's learning goals for the year and outlines a plan to meet them. The Divinity School asks that the Site Supervisor consider how to introduce the student to the full range of skills, responsibilities, and unique considerations involved in religious leadership. The Action Plan identifies four categories of such leadership that it should attempt to address during the course of the year:

- Public Conversation and Ritual Performance
- Interreligious and Denominational Identity
- Community and Care
- Leadership and Authority

The Director of Field Education and Community Engagement must also approve the Action Plan.

## End of Fall and Spring Quarter:

**Evaluations:** The student and supervisor meet with the Director of Field Education at the end of fall and spring quarters to reflect on the experiences of the field placement and review progress on goals. Site Supervisors are required to complete written evaluations at the end of the autumn and spring quarters, using the Action Plan as a benchmark. These written evaluations serve as the basis for the in-person meeting at the end of the quarters. The spring quarter evaluation will be a comprehensive review of the internship year.

## **End of Winter Quarter:**

**Observations:** At least once before the end of the winter quarter, students will be observed on-site (by either the Director of Field Education or the Director of Ministry Studies) at a time of the student's choosing. This observation date should be an occasion that exemplifies some aspect of their work or community, and for which they would like feedback. Each student must supply at least one observation date each quarter, though only one observation for both Fall and Winter quarters is required.

## **The Learning Agreement**

The Learning Agreement (below) serves as the basic contract between the student, supervisor and Divinity School. Below are the expectations it outlines for each party for the duration of the academic year. If a student is consistently not adhering to the expectations as outlined in the Learning Agreement (for example, not attending supervision meetings), the student and supervisor will work with the Director to design a performance improvement plan, putting in place further accountability and support, so that the student can successfully meet the expectations of the agreement. (The Learning Agreement can be found in Appendix A)

### **Student**

- The student will be involved in the fullest range of leadership duties the placement affords for no less than 15 and no more than 20 hours per week (including transportation).
- The student will be enrolled concurrently in the Arts of Religious Leadership and Practice sequence and the Field Education Practicum.
- The student will complete quarterly evaluations, written or oral, and will participate in fall and spring quarterly meetings, and winter upon request, with the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement and the student's supervisor.
- The student will participate in the Divinity School's Ethics and Boundary Training Workshop, a training specific to issues of serving in a religious community as a student.

### **Site Supervisor**

- The Site Supervisor and student will engage in conferences for one hour each week, or the equivalent. This is in addition to any regular staff meetings in which the Supervisor participates.
- The Supervisor will submit to the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement written summaries of the field education experience at the end of the fall and spring quarters.
- The Supervisor is eligible for library privileges at the Regenstein Library. They are also welcome to audit Divinity School courses, with the consent of the instructor, and to attend events at the Divinity School open to the public and also by special invitation.

- Site Supervisors are invited to participate in workshops and training sessions to engage pedagogy, supervision, and continuing education held throughout the academic year.
- As part of the evaluation process, the Site Supervisor will meet with the student and the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement for fall and spring quarters, and winter if needed, to review accomplishment of goals as stated in the Action Plan.

## **The Divinity School**

- The Divinity School will provide all field sites with a copy of the University policies regarding appropriate student conduct. During the internship year the student is expected to maintain the proper bounds of conduct as outlined by University policy. Any student who violates these policies while serving as a field intern will be subject to University disciplinary action. Additionally, the field site is expected to maintain an appropriate workplace environment free from harassment and discrimination.
- The Divinity School does not conduct criminal background checks on students. Students are asked to self-disclose any criminal history upon an offer of admission. Students are also asked to grant the Divinity School permission to disclose this information to potential field sites under appropriate circumstances. While keeping within the protection provided under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Divinity School will disclose any relevant history of criminal activity or harassment prior to the placement of any student. The Divinity School respects the rights of institutions to require criminal background checks of its staff and interns; however, these checks will require student consent and will be conducted at the expense of the field site.
- The Director of Field Education and Community Engagement must approve the terms of the field education placement.
- In addition to the year-end evaluation conference, the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement will visit the student on-site at least once during the year.
- The Divinity School will provide the student with a stipend for Field Education. Although the site placement may provide the student with limited and appropriate reimbursements, the Divinity School requires no such compensation.

## **The Action Plan**

At the beginning of the Fall term, the student will design an Action Plan in consultation with the Site Supervisor, Community Support Team (if applicable), and the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement. The purpose of the Action Plan is to provide the student with a structured set of goals in each of four areas related to religious leadership and practice:

1. Public Conversation and Ritual Performance
2. Community and Care
3. Leadership and Authority
4. Interreligious and Denominational Identity

**Learning Goals:** In addition to articulating tasks and projects associated with the four areas of religious leadership and practice identified above, students are required to name **2-4 Learning Goals** to be addressed throughout the course of the year. These goals should be clear, specific, and able to be assessed (though not necessarily measured quantitatively) at the end of each quarter. Broad, unmeasurable goals such as “I want to learn how a church works,” or “I want to think more about religious leadership,” will not be helpful. Clearer goals with specific metrics will be of better use to the student and supervisor. An example of such goals might be, “I want more experience in leading meditation,” or “I want to consider critically the challenges and

opportunities of working with volunteers vs. a paid staff in this religious community.” Students may amend the Action Plan during the year and refine their learning goals as needed, in consultation with the Site Supervisor and the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement.

The formal Action Plan is not due until the fall quarter of your second year, but it is wise to discuss the Action Plan with your Site Supervisor when you sign the Learning Agreement. Plans can always be adjusted mid-stream. This is a normal and even healthy reflection of the ever-changing dynamic of practicing religious leadership in the context of community. The Action Plan can be found in Appendix C.

## Field Work Intensive

A third field work component offers the opportunity for students to engage in elective training in some aspect of religious leadership and practice. Unlike the second-year internship, this requirement can be accomplished outside of a religious community, and is an intentionally open-ended requirement, thus it’s “elective” status. Regardless of where it occurs, it still functions as a workshop for the integration of academic study and theory with religious leadership and practice. Likewise, this field work should foster the continuing commitment to deep reflection on religious leadership and practice in the context of a closely supervised working relationship with a professional practitioner.

Often this requirement is met by exploring a specific vocational path such as hospital chaplaincy, campus ministry, community organizing, adjudicatory administration, or other specialized areas. This requirement may be satisfied by working at the site full-time for three months or spreading out the work over a longer period for the same number of hours. The particulars of the field work experience are open to the specific interests of the student, provided that the student can demonstrate that the internship offers some direct involvement in the practice of religious leadership. Students may choose to complete their field work requirements at any stage of the program, with the exception of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year (hours must be completed separately from site placement). Many elect to use the summer after their first or second year to engage their particular field work selection. Any internship must be sufficient to fulfill 400 hrs of work (40hrs/wk at 10 weeks equivalent) and requires a designated on-site supervisor. (See Appendix D)

All students must have their field work approved **in advance** by the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement. In some instances where the internship is in a less structured setting the student may be required to make additional supervisory arrangements with the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement. The Divinity School provides a stipend for all field work, and tuition reimbursement for an accredited unit of CPE or similar field work program if that tuition exceeds \$500. The Field Work Contract is **due by the eighth week** the quarter before field work will begin in order to ensure payment of the stipend. Students are not allowed to receive a stipend for an internship from more than one office of the Divinity School. If a student will receive degree credit for an internship, as outlined above, they may not seek or receive additional funding for that same internship via UChicago Grad or Divinity School supplemental funding resources.

# Clinical Pastoral Education

Completing one unit (summer intensive) of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is one way to fulfill the Divinity School's field work requirement. Although not required by the Divinity School, many Christian denominations do require one unit of CPE for ordination, consecration, or certification. It is also a requirement for any student pursuing certification in chaplaincy. CPE, however, is open to students of all religious affiliations. All students are thus encouraged to inquire about their religious tradition's policies regarding completing a unit of CPE.

**\*\*Students working to complete a unit of CPE need only submit their supervisor's final evaluation and their final self-evaluation in lieu of the field work contract and evaluations.\*\***

There are many CPE programs available locally in and around Chicago as well as throughout the country. All CPE programs use the same universal application.

For more information on the history and practice of CPE, including application forms and a list of centers that offer CPE, please consult the [National Association for Clinical Pastoral Education](#). More information on specific opportunities for CPE units offered in the Chicagoland area is offered at the Divinity School's annual "CPE Info Night", hosted at the beginning of the autumn quarter.

# Senior MDiv Thesis and Project

## Purpose

The Senior MDiv Thesis and Project is an in-depth exploration of a question or issue in religious leadership that demonstrates a student's ability to foster thoughtful, rigorous, and relevant dialogue between university, religious community, and society. In the thesis writing process, students have the opportunity to research a contemporary problem or possibility of religious life or leadership, trace the intellectual heritage of a selected issue and make a thoughtful contribution to the practical theological conversation. As such, the Senior Thesis Project serves as the culmination of the student's Divinity School work.

Thesis ideas might emerge from course readings and lectures, classroom discussions, observations from site placements or other field work; in every case, the articulation of the problem, as well as the statement of a thesis and elaboration of an accompanying argument will be grounded in the textual, historical, and constructive studies that are integral to the MDiv curriculum. Ideally, the thesis makes use of research and writing from previous courses and is informed by the student's practice and reflection in field education and fieldwork.

Successful completion of the Senior MDiv Thesis Project consists of three parts:

- Participation in the Thesis Seminar
- Completion of a 35-page paper, due at the end of winter quarter of the third year
- A public presentation of thesis findings in the spring quarter of third year

## Defining the Issue and Approach

It comes as no surprise that most people begin research projects with a topic that interests them. The initial task of research is to transform that interesting topic into an issue, question, or problem that the research will be designed to resolve by creating a hypothesis, an argument, or an interpretation. Different issues require different resources and methods in order to address them effectively. One might ask, for example, "How did things get to be the way they are?" The question assumes that a historical method will supply important parts of the answer. On the other hand, one might ask, "How is this idea or practice related to that idea or practice?" For questions of this systematic and relational type, the scholar frequently turns to such disciplines as theology, philosophy of religion, or ethics. The movement from topic to issue is the crucial first step of effective scholarship, and students can find helpful suggestions about this process in *The Craft of Research*, by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams.

The articulation of the thesis issue should arise and draw its principal resources from the educational experience of the University of Chicago—broadly conceived to include faculty, courses, field education, experience of religious leadership and practice, and fellow students. That is to say, the thesis engages both the lived experience and wisdom of communities of practice, and the critical and constructive resources of our classrooms. It is conceived in and aimed towards mutually enriching conversation among multiple stakeholders.

## Schedule

It is wise to keep the senior thesis in view from the time a student matriculates in the MDiv program. Students should be attentive to the questions raised by their study and practice, and should plan coursework that will promote proficiency in a particular area of study or theological method, as well as accumulating experience and insight into an identified issue in religious leadership and practice.



During the spring quarter of the second year and the following summer, each student works independently, confers with the seminar leader or Director of Ministry Studies, and consults other faculty members to (1) define the issue in religious leadership or practice that the thesis will explore, (2) clarify the method or approach, (3) identify an advisor, and (4) identify primary resources.

A thesis proposal with approval from the faculty advisor is due during the fall quarter of the third year. (The seminar leader will establish the deadline.) The thesis proposal (no more than 5–6 pages, or 1,500 words) includes the following elements:

- A statement of the issue in religious leadership or practice
- The thesis about that issue
- A description of the approach or method to be employed in exploring the issue
- A 1–2 page annotated list of primary resources—texts and possibly resource persons—to be consulted
- The name of the faculty member who has consented to advise the thesis

The proposal is to be submitted with a cover sheet signed by the student and faculty advisor. This proposal reports to the Committee on MDiv Studies the student's intention to participate in the thesis process, the thesis title, and the name of the faculty advisor. An example of this cover sheet is included in the appendix section of the Handbook.

Beginning in the autumn quarter of their final year, students will meet in regular seminar sessions once a month to sharpen their proposals, consider various aspects of the project, and present work in progress. The thesis is submitted on the established deadline at the conclusion of winter quarter, with copies sent to both the student's thesis advisor and the seminar leaders. A final copy of each thesis is bound and archived in a file in the ministry suite for others to read.

During the spring quarter, students will make a public presentation of the central findings of the thesis. A brief description of the presentation design, with a presentation date, venue, and title, is also due on the last day of the winter quarter.

## **Public Presentation**

The intent of the public presentation is to foster creative communication and wider discussion of the Senior MDiv Thesis; as the thesis is an exercise in practical or public thought, it is important to keep the public presentation in view from the inception of the writing process. The presentation assumes a diverse audience with interest in, but not necessarily previous exposure to, the paper's findings. Students are encouraged to consider the public presentation as an adult education event that builds on the written project but is quite distinct from it.

Presenters should resist the temptation to make the public presentation a synopsis of the thesis. Instead, identify a major point from the thesis and then create a form of presentation that will explore that point in an appropriate and memorable way with the audience. Past presentations have utilized a range of formats—panel discussions, interviews, ritual experiences or sermons with discussion afterwards, curriculum creation with opportunities for groups to experience some dimension of the learning material, arts exhibits with artist talks, and one-act plays followed by conversation between audiences and actors.

Students are encouraged to plan presentation times and formats to maximize participation by a healthy representation of publics; fostering robust attendance at the presentation is part of the student's leadership responsibility, and part of the MDiv cohort's collegial responsibility to each other. Audiences should include the thesis advisor, the thesis seminar leader and Director of Ministry Studies; final scheduling must be done in consultation with these persons.

The Divinity School will promote the presentations in its calendar, but students are encouraged to learn the useful art of promotion as part of the work of public leadership.

## **Evaluation Guidelines: Senior MDiv Thesis**

The grade for the Senior MDiv Thesis will be assigned in consultation between the thesis seminar leader and the faculty advisor for the thesis. Final grades for the course will be submitted after the successful public presentation of the project in the Spring quarter. Faculty are asked to evaluate the thesis with reference to the following rubric:

### **Questions toward Evaluation of the Thesis**

#### **Formulation**

How well does the project define its main issue? Is there a clear statement of its question or problem? Is it appropriate to the project's purpose, scope, and audience?

#### **Research**

How thoroughly has the project been researched? Does the thesis demonstrate adequate knowledge of the literature in its field, and of appropriate field research methodology, if relevant?

How well does the project employ relevant scriptural/textual, historical, and theological resources?

How effective is the project's organization or argumentation? Is the thesis convincing?

#### **Audience(s)**

How well does the project engage its intended audience, context, and/or vocational location?

#### **Originality**

Each project should be a unique exercise in practical theological or spiritual reflection. Both the student and the project's faculty advisor are encouraged to describe at least one original consideration for evaluation.

# Dual Degree Programs

The Divinity School offers dual degree programs with the Crown Family School of Social Work and the Irving B. Harris School of Public Policy Studies. These programs serve students who wish to combine education for religious leadership with training for social work or expertise in public policy. In addition to making these pursuits formally possible at the University, the dual degree programs allow students to complete an MDiv and an AM in social work or public policy in four years, rather than five if the two degrees are pursued separately. Students in the dual degree programs register for eight quarters in the Divinity School and four quarters in the cooperating school. The recommended arrangement is the completion of two years (six quarters) at the Divinity School, followed by one year and one quarter (four quarters) at the Crown or Harris School, followed by two final quarters at the Divinity School. Students enrolled in a dual program complete all of the ordinary requirements for the MDiv, but need take only 24 courses for the degree with Crown, or 22 courses for the degree with the Harris School, rather than the full twenty-seven required for the MDiv degree.

Additionally, the Divinity School and the Law School offer a dual degree program for students whose professional plans require training both in religion and in law. Students may apply to do a dual MDiv/JD. For more information about these programs, please contact the Dean of Students Office.

## Application

Applicants must gain acceptance to both schools to enroll in a dual degree program. Normally, the prospective student will apply to both schools prior to matriculation, and indicate on each application his or her intent to pursue the dual degree. First-year MDiv students may, however, submit their application during their first year to the relevant AM program and enter the dual degree program upon acceptance by Crown or the Harris School. At each school, offers of admission are for the autumn quarter. Admission to one program is advantageous, but does not guarantee admission to the other; be advised that these programs have admission limits and so it is important to apply to Crown or Harris School at least a year before you intend to begin there.

## Financial Aid

Students enrolled in the dual degree program will be charged the tuition of the School they are in residence at for the particular quarter. Likewise, students are only eligible to receive financial assistance from the School that they are residence at for a particular quarter. All four Schools have different tuition rates and divisional aid policies. It is the student's responsibility to know their eligibility and plan accordingly.

## Registration

Students in the dual degree program register for a total of eight quarters at the Divinity School and four quarters at Crown or the Harris School. As mentioned above, the recommended sequence is for the student to spend the first two years (six quarters) at the Divinity School, the third year (three quarters) and the first quarter (autumn) of the fourth year at Crown or the Harris School, and the final two quarters (winter and spring) at the Divinity School. This arrangement has the greatest potential to ensure that the student will participate fully in each program. It is essential that the student devote a full academic year to the required curriculum of Crown or the Harris School, and, given the collegial nature of the program, it is best for MDiv students to complete the first two years of the MDiv in the company of their entering class. This sequence also has administrative advantages. Each school counts quarters of registration as a requirement for the degree, so the student must be registered for the required number of quarters at the respective school. It is

also least disruptive to the student's registration and financial arrangements (for example, for loans and Work study eligibility) to minimize the number of times that the student officially transfers from one school to another.

### **Field Work (Crown School dual degree only)**

The MDiv from the Divinity School and the AM from the Crown School of Social Work each require students to complete two field education components. For the Divinity School, these requirements are (a) the field education internship (the second-year placement in a local religious community under the supervision of a Site Supervisor and the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement) and (b) an elective unit of field work (a more focused field experience, usually completed over the summer).

The Crown School requires two year-long field work assignments (first year: 480 hours for the Core, second year/summer: 640 for Clinical Concentration and 496 for Administration Concentration). Students in the dual degree program must meet the field education requirements of both schools, but are usually able to arrange for the second year-long field work requirement at Crown to fulfill the second field work requirement of the Divinity School as well. They are thus able to complete the field education requirements for both degrees with three field placements, rather than the four that would be necessary if the degrees were completed separately. This arrangement is subject to the approval of the Director of Ministry Studies at the Divinity School.

### **Curriculum and Integration**

The dual degree programs have much to recommend them, but they do not provide the student with as much latitude in arranging his or her curriculum as would be the case if the student were pursuing the degrees separately. Particularly in the fourth year, when completing the second year of study at the Crown School or the Harris School, the Senior MDiv Thesis, and culminating coursework at the Divinity School, students can experience conflicts in scheduling that, while inevitable, nonetheless frustrate good intentions. It is wise for students to aim to complete a substantial portion of the coursework required for the MDiv during the first two years at the Divinity School. We encourage students to use the Senior Thesis Project as a way to formally synthesize their work in the two programs. It is highly recommended that students retain co-advisers, one from the Divinity School, and one from Crown or Harris School, to assist them in a Senior Thesis Project that will facilitate this integration.

## Chaplaincy Concentration

MDiv students who anticipate careers in institutional chaplaincy will benefit from interdisciplinary coursework providing deeper insight into various systems such as health care, higher education, the carceral system, or the military. The chaplaincy concentration requires students to complete one unit of fieldwork in a setting that is supervised by a chaplain, plus 3 courses:

\*A core course in chaplaincy, taught in the Divinity School every other spring quarter (required)

Plus two of the following:

\*An elective course in an applicable policy topic at the Harris School (education policy or health care policy)

\*An elective course pertinent mental health issues at the Crown School (ie, Death and Grief, Trauma-informed practice)

\*An elective course in some aspect of chaplaincy as practiced in student's tradition (from one of our neighboring institutions, or taught here by visiting practitioners).

## University-wide Certificate Programs

Several University departments offer interdisciplinary certificate programs that are open to all graduate students, providing the opportunity for MDiv students to think broadly and critically about some aspect of public engagement. The structure of these programs vary, as do the application processes. See, for example:

- [Certificate in Global Conflict Studies](#)
- [Certificate in Health Administration and Policy](#)
- [Certificate in Social and Economic Inequality](#)
- [Certificate in Gender and Sexuality Studies](#)
- [Certificate in non-Profit Management](#)
- [Certificate in Education and Society](#)

## Additional Resources

## Registration at Outside Institutions

It is possible for MDiv students to enroll in up to four courses beyond the University to meet ordination or other professional requirements, with an additional two courses possible, pending approval of the Committee on Ministry Studies. This can happen at either affiliated or non-affiliated institutions.

Affiliate Schools: The schools with which the Divinity School has a formal registration agreement are currently: Catholic Theological Union, Chicago Theological Seminary, Bayan Islamic Graduate School, the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, McCormick Theological Seminary, Seabury Western, Garrett Evangelical Seminary, and Meadville/Lombard. These courses will show up as listed on a student's transcript.

Non-Affiliate Schools: It is possible for students to enroll in courses at institutions with which the Divinity School does not have formal registration agreements. In these cases, ancillary fees, such as those of affiliation, may apply: these are the student's obligation.

To Register: Regardless of affiliation, students should complete the [bi-registration form](#). Note that the Director of Ministry Studies must approve each course in advance. Students may not take courses at schools that duplicate those offered at the Divinity School.

Students should:

- 1) Complete the form and obtain signatures of the Director of Ministry Studies and Dean of Students
- 2) Submit it to the Dean of Students' Student Office for approval and processing

Transcript Note: Students pursuing bi-registration at a non-affiliated school will be enrolled in a Reading and Research course with the Director of Ministry Studies in the appropriate University of Chicago quarter; this placeholder course will be graded pass/fail, where a passing grade is a B- or better, upon receipt of a final transcript (recording the course title and grade). *It is the student's responsibility to negotiate the registration process at the institution of non-affiliated bi-registration and to arrange to have a final transcript for the course sent to the Divinity School Dean of Students office.*

Further logistical considerations:

Students should be advised that since most area seminaries are on the semester system (and the Divinity School is organized in quarters) special attention must be paid to seminary starting dates: early September, for the autumn semester (these course listings are available in April) and early February for the spring semester (these course listings are available in November). Students will not be allowed to join a seminary class after the first week of the semester. Once the petition has been approved by the Divinity School and submitted to the seminary registrar, students register for this course online during the regular Divinity School quarterly registration process. Students should register for autumn semester seminary courses during the Divinity School's Autumn Quarter registration and for spring semester seminary courses during the Divinity School's Spring Quarter registration. (Seminary "J" term courses are generally not eligible for University credit). In special circumstances and with the approval of the Director and the Dean of Students, MDiv students may petition the Committee on MDiv Studies to take up to two additional courses in these schools.

**The student must request that the school send an official transcript to the Divinity School Dean of Students so that a grade will be recorded on their University transcript.**

## Advising



The Director of Ministry Studies acts a general advisor to all students in the MDiv program. The Director of Field Education and Community Engagement has particular responsibility for advising and directing MDiv students in the completion of their field education requirements. The Dean of Students office has special responsibility for matters pertaining to registration, financial aid, disciplinary issues, and graduation.

First-year students are also assigned a faculty advisor and are encouraged to consult with that person throughout the year as their academic interests develop. Should those interests suggest changing advisors, students may elect to change their faculty advisor by submitting the [Change of Advisor Form](#) (on Dean of Students webpage). MDiv students are encouraged to consult with various faculty in their areas of interest throughout their courses of study and will be asked to secure a faculty thesis advisor as part of the proposal process for the Senior Thesis—this faculty person may—but also does not need to be—the same as the student’s overall faculty advisor. MDiv students are expected to have a thesis advisor by the end of the second year.

## **The Committee on MDiv Studies**

The Committee on MDiv Studies oversees curriculum, degree requirements, the conceptual foundation of the program, and it also reviews student petitions. Its membership includes a revolving group of faculty (one of whom serves as chair of the committee) and several standing members: the Dean of Students, the Dean of Disciples Divinity House, the Director of Ministry Studies, and the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement. The Committee meets twice per quarter. Its agenda is set by the faculty committee chair, in consultation with the Director of Ministry Studies.

# Religious Practice and Community Life

MDiv students have a dual challenge and opportunity in their first year: to explore the breadth of spiritual practice in our city, locating a community that will support and deepen your own practice during your studies, and to begin the process of identifying a field placement site for your second year. There are options within the University and the immediate neighborhood. Below is a non-exhaustive list:

## Open Space: Bond Chapel

Open Space is exactly that—an intentional space for non-sectarian, multi-religious community which centers reflection and prayer. This weekly 30-minute gathering provides the Divinity School community with unique opportunities for conversation, reflection, and fellowship around the things that enliven us, weigh on our hearts and minds, and give our work here meaning. To volunteer to speak contact Buki Ogunseitan [oogunseitan@uchicago.edu](mailto:oogunseitan@uchicago.edu) or Jenny Howard [jennyhoward@uchicago.edu](mailto:jennyhoward@uchicago.edu). Follow Open Space on Instagram: @uchiopenspace.

Buddhist:

**Hyde Park Zen Meditation:** Spiritual Life and Ancient Dragon Zen Gate provide zazen meditation, dharma talks about their practice, and community discussion on Wednesday evenings from 6pm to 7:30pm. Email: [hydeparkzen@googlegroups.com](mailto:hydeparkzen@googlegroups.com).

Christian:

## Episcopal Eucharist

On Sunday at 5:30 pm (Eucharist) and on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm (Evening Prayer), [Brent House](#) sponsors a simple service with communion, and often a meal together afterward. All are welcome.

## Roman Catholic Eucharist

Mass is offered at a variety of times on Sundays at the [Calvert House](#), the Catholic Center at the University.

Jewish

## Hillel

[UChicago Hillel](#) is the center and catalyst for Jewish life at the University of Chicago. Hillel welcomes students of all backgrounds and hopes to foster an enduring commitment to Jewish life, learning and Israel. Weekly Shabbat services begin at 6:30pm and dinner begins at 7:30pm on Friday evenings.

## Chabad

[The Rohr Chabad Center](#) was founded on the principle that Jewish students, regardless of personal practice, deserve a space on campus where they can feel comfortable, without labels or judgment. Friday Night Services are at 6:30pm and dinner at 7:15pm. [info@chabaduchicago.com](mailto:info@chabaduchicago.com).

Muslim

## Jumu'ah Prayer times

Insha'Allah, Jumu'ah prayer is hosted by the [UChicago Muslim Students Association](#) and will be held in Bond Chapel every Friday at 1:30 pm. Follow the MSA on Instagram: @uchicagomsa for all event information.

**UChicago Spiritual Life** has a variety of on-campus programs and spaces designed to provide restoration, including *20 Minutes Still*, and *Yoga at Rockefeller*, open to all students. See their [full list of programs and spaces](#).

# Swift Hall Groups and Resources

## Divinity Students Association (DSA)

The Divinity Students Association (DSA) is an organization run by and for University of Chicago Divinity School students. Every registered Divinity School student is automatically a DSA member. The organization contributes to many spheres of life in the Divinity School, including academic, professional, and social. Above all else, the DSA strives to foster a true community of Divinity students from every degree program. The Divinity Students Association was founded in the early 1960s and has operated as an independent nonprofit (501c3) within the Divinity School since 1968. The DSA is focused on pursuing three goals:

- [1] to enhance student life and research;
- [2] to foster collegiality and social cohesion;
- [3] to work with the Divinity School administration in areas pertaining to student needs.

Throughout the academic year, the DSA hosts events, including the (in)famous 4-8's and pub nights, supports students through grants, the Swift Cares Fund, myriad academic clubs, and serves as liaison between the student body and administration. To receive information about DSA events and activities, contact DSA at [contactdsa@lists.uchicago.edu](mailto:contactdsa@lists.uchicago.edu), subscribe to the DSA listserv at <https://lists.uchicago.edu/web/info/dsa>, or visit [dsa.uchicago.edu](https://dsa.uchicago.edu).

The DSA funds several clubs for the benefit of the student body and the Swift Hall community. There are three types of clubs:

- Affinity Groups: These groups are organized around identities that are under-represented and/or marginalized in the Divinity School and they build community and space for people of those identities.
- Student-Founded Clubs: These are clubs organized by students around particular interests not covered by the Academic Area Clubs or Identity Clubs.
- Academic Clubs: These are clubs organized around the Divinity School's areas of studies. Some are partially funded by the area or by CAS.

Check out the [full list of clubs and descriptions](#). Contact DSA President Tony Beall ([ajbeall@uchicago.edu](mailto:ajbeall@uchicago.edu)) or reach out to club leaders at [divinitystudentsassociation@gmail.com](mailto:divinitystudentsassociation@gmail.com)

## **BONDS (Building Opportunities and Networks for Divinity Students) Peer Mentorship Program**

Peer mentors support emotional and academic well-being of incoming students through regular email check-ins, Zoom meetings, and social events. Peer mentors may answer questions about campus and student life, moving to Chicago, experience with remote and on-campus courses, languages, etc. They may also direct students to the appropriate person in the Dean of Students Office or on campus for additional support. For more information about the Dean of Students office, visit the website (<https://divinity.uchicago.edu/our-community/dean-students>).

# Resources for Personal Growth

Graduate school is a time of growth and self-development. With that growth can come stress and the need for formal self-reflection. Many students seek guidance in the form of spiritual direction, pastoral counseling, or therapy, especially when offering spiritual support to others in field work settings. Here are a few options to consider if you are looking for spiritual growth or a place to go for help with crises large or small.

## Student Counseling Services

5555 S. Woodlawn Ave., 773-702-9800

All students are permitted up to ten free visits with a counselor at SCS, after which counselors can refer students to therapists and counselors approved by student insurance.

## Spiritual Life Office

Ida Noyes Hall, Room 034, [spirit@uchicago.edu](mailto:spirit@uchicago.edu)

Spiritual Life serves as a destination for all things spiritual and religious at the University of Chicago.

We address the complexities of religious encounter in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and provide a space for members of the University community to ask big and small questions about meaning and purpose.

## Institute for Spiritual Leadership

5498 South Kimbark Avenue, 773-752-5962

Several MDiv students have made use of the spiritual direction at ISL. ISL describes itself as “an independent, not-for-profit corporation. Its purpose is to enhance in all persons the capacity for spiritual leadership essential to facilitating growth and transformation in people, of organizational systems, and of societal structures thereby promoting a more just, humane and sustainable world.”

## Center for Religion and Psychotherapy

30 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1920; 312-263-4368

[The Center for Religion and Psychotherapy](#) is a not-for-profit organization with offices throughout the greater Chicago area. The Center provides in-depth psychotherapy that attends to religious and spiritual, as well as psychological concerns. In addition, CRPC offers consultative services, as well as continuing education opportunities for clinicians, academics, and religious leaders. Members of the faculty and staff represent a variety of different religious traditions and approaches to religious and spiritual life.

## The Claret Center

5536 S. Everett, 773-643-6259

Located on the east side of Hyde Park, Claret offers psychotherapy, massage therapy, spiritual direction, and other services. More information is available at <http://www.claretcenter.org>.

## Khalil Center

[info@khalilcenter.com](mailto:info@khalilcenter.com)

[The Khalil Center](#) is a psychological and spiritual community wellness center advancing the professional practice of psychology rooted in Islamic theology.

## Intraspectrum Chicago [Intraspectrum-chicago.com](http://intraspectrum-chicago.com)

773.750.3505; [intake@intraspectrum-chicago.com](mailto:intake@intraspectrum-chicago.com)

A variety of counseling services (individuals, couples, group and family) for the LGBTQI community.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Learning Agreement Form



Divinity  
School

Swift Hall  
1025 East 58th Street  
T 773.702.8200  
F 773.702.6048

[divinity.uchicago.edu](http://divinity.uchicago.edu)

## Field Education Learning Agreement

### Student

- The student will be involved in the fullest range of leadership duties the placement affords for no less than 15 and no more than 20 hours per week (including transportation).
- The student will be enrolled concurrently in the Arts of Religious Leadership and Practice sequence and the Field Education Practicum.
- The student will complete fall and spring written evaluations and will participate in fall and spring quarter meetings with the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement and the student's supervisor.
- The student will participate in the Divinity School's Ethics and Boundary Training Workshop, a training specific to issues of serving in a religious community as a student leader.
- If a student is consistently not adhering to the expectations as outlined in the Learning Agreement (for example, not attending supervision meetings), the student and supervisor will work with the Director to design a performance improvement plan, putting in place further accountability and support, so that the student can successfully meet the expectations of the agreement.

### Site Supervisor

- The Site Supervisor and student will engage in conferences for one hour each week, or the equivalent. This is in addition to any regular staff meetings in which the Supervisor participates.
- The Supervisor will submit to the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement written summaries of the field education experience at the end of the autumn and spring quarters.
- The Supervisor is eligible for library privileges at the Regenstein Library. They may also audit Divinity School courses, with the consent of the instructor, and to attend events at the Divinity School open to the public and also by special invitation.
- Site Supervisors are invited to participate in workshops and training sessions to engage pedagogy, supervision, and continuing education held throughout the academic year.
- As part of the evaluation process, the Site Supervisor will meet with the student and the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement at the end of fall and spring

quarters to review accomplishment of goals as stated in the Action Plan document, to be completed at the beginning of fall quarter.

### **The Divinity School**

- The Divinity School will provide all field sites with a copy of the University policies regarding appropriate student conduct. During the internship year the student is expected to maintain the proper bounds of conduct as outlined by University policy. Any student who violates these policies while serving as a field intern will be subject to University disciplinary action. Additionally, the field site is expected to maintain an appropriate workplace environment free from harassment and discrimination.
- The Divinity School does not conduct criminal background checks on students. Students are asked to self-disclose any criminal history upon an offer of admission. Students are also asked to grant the Divinity School permission to disclose this information to potential field sites under appropriate circumstances. While keeping within the protection provided under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Divinity School will disclose any relevant history of criminal activity or harassment prior to the placement of any student. The Divinity School respects the rights of institutions to require criminal background checks of its staff and interns; however, these checks will require student consent and will be conducted **at the expense of the field site.**
- The Director of Field Education and Community Engagement must approve the terms of the field education placement.
- In addition to the year-end evaluation, the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement will visit the student on-site at least once during the year.
- The Divinity School will provide the student with a stipend. Although the site placement may provide the student with limited and appropriate reimbursements, the Divinity School requires no such compensation.

### **Signatures**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor Name and Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teaching Site:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address and Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Start Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **End Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Vacations (if known)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Site Reimbursements (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: The Action Plan



**Divinity  
School**

Swift Hall  
1025 East 58th Street  
T 773.702.8200  
F 773.702.6048

[divinity.uchicago.edu](http://divinity.uchicago.edu)

### Focus Areas of Religious Leadership and Learning Goals

Due at the beginning of Fall quarter, the student will design an Action Plan in consultation with the Site Supervisor, and the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement. The purpose of the Action Plan is to provide the student with a structured set of responsibilities and participation in each of the four focus areas related to religious leadership and practice. Students may amend and adjust the Action Plan during the year and refine their learning goals as needed, in consultation with the Site Supervisor. This is a normal and even healthy reflection of the ever-changing dynamic of practicing religious leadership in a community. Please list the identified ways the student will engage each:

1. Public Conversation and Ritual Performance
2. Interreligious and Denominational Identity
3. Community and Spiritual Care
4. Leadership and Authority

**Learning Goals:** In addition to articulating tasks and projects associated with the four areas of religious leadership and practice identified above, students are required to name 2-4 Learning Goals to be addressed throughout the course of their site placement. These goals should be clear, specific, and able to be assessed (though not necessarily quantitatively) at the end of each quarter. Broad, unmeasurable Learning Goals such as “I want to think more about religious leadership,” will not be helpful. Clearer goals with specific metrics will be of better use to the student and supervisor. An example of such goals might be, “I want more experience in leading meditation,” or “I want to consider critically the challenges and opportunities of working with volunteers vs. a paid staff in this religious community.”

**Learning Goals**

Goal 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal 3:\* \_\_\_\_\_

Goal 4:\* \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Site Resources (lay persons, additional religious advisors, etc):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**This form should be completed by the end of the second week of the autumn quarter.**

The student, Site Supervisor, and the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement should each retain a copy of this agreement. **This agreement, once signed, will not be amended until all parties are consulted.**

Erika Dornfeld, *Director of Field Education and Community Engagement*  
The University of Chicago Divinity School  
1025 East 58<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chicago IL 0637-1577  
Telephone: 773-834-4693  
email: [dornfeld@ucchicago.edu](mailto:dornfeld@ucchicago.edu)



## Appendix C Site Placement Evaluations



**Divinity  
School**

Swift Hall  
1025 East 58th Street  
T 773.702.8200  
F 773.702.6048

[divinity.uchicago.edu](http://divinity.uchicago.edu)

### Practicum Fall Quarter Self-Evaluation

*The following self-evaluation will set the agenda for our in-person Fall quarter evaluation. Each student should submit a written response to the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement and their supervisor prior to this in person meeting. Answers may be brief, and will guide our conversation when we sit down together for our end-of-quarter meeting.*

**1. Which experience(s) / ministry encounter(s) this quarter have been the most instructive or challenging?**

**2. Looking forward to next Quarter, what experiences, skillsets, and/or opportunities have yet to be engaged? Do any changes to the Action Plan need to be made?**

**3. Are there ways you imagine that this current internship might inform or be connected to future work? This might include your next Field Ed experience/internship, your Senior Thesis Project, other academic projects, a future career path, etc?**

*All end-of-quarter meetings between the student, supervisor(s), and the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement should be completed before the end of the quarter.*

### Final Evaluation (Spring Quarter)

*The following evaluation should be completed by both the MDiv student and the Site Supervisor. Responses should be made available to all parties (the student, Site Supervisor, and Director of Field Education and Community Engagement) at or before the in-person meeting at the end of the quarter. Answers may be brief, and they will guide our conversation when we sit down together.*

**1. Considering the student's overall work and learning this past year, what do you see as their strongest gifts for religious leadership? In what areas do you find the most experience, skill, or promise?**

**2. Considering the Action Plan, are there any areas of work that have been left undone or unexplored? For future Field Education, which areas or skillsets would be most helpful to revisit, re-examine, or spend more time?**

**3. Mutual Feedback: Supervisors, what might you recommend to our student in terms of pursuing future learning and developing growing edges? Students, what might you offer to your supervisor in terms of receiving future interns at this site?**

*All end-of-quarter meetings should be completed before the end of the quarter.*

# Appendix D: Field Work Contract Form



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**CHICAGO**

**Divinity  
School**

Swift Hall  
1025 East 58th Street  
T 773.702.8200  
F 773.702.6048

[divinity.uchicago.edu](http://divinity.uchicago.edu)

## Field Work Elective Contract Form

(Please complete both sides of form.)

### STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student title at site: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Starting date: \_\_\_\_\_ Ending date: \_\_\_\_\_

Vacations (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Site Reimbursements (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

### SITE INFORMATION

Site Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Supervisor Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Email and phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Website: \_\_\_\_\_

## Field Work Contract Form (continued)

A. Briefly list the ongoing duties of student at placement.

B. Itemize resources available to student to perform duties at placement.

C. Identify the reporting responsibilities of student.

D. What is the anticipated outcome of the student's work?

E. List any additional expectations or goals for the Field Work placement.

We ask that both student and supervisor submit written evaluations of the student's work. If Field Work is completed in the summer, only one evaluation (at the end) is required. If the Field Work is completed during the academic year, we ask for one evaluation at mid-term and one at the end of the year. Evaluations should be mailed to the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement.

Student's signature:

Date:

Supervisor's signature:

Date:

Director of Field Education and Community Engagement:

Date:

Erika Dornfeld  
Director of Field Education and Community Engagement  
The University of Chicago Divinity School  
1025 East 58<sup>th</sup> Street, Chicago IL 60637-1577  
Telephone: 773.834.4693  
Fax: 773.834.4581  
Email: dornfeld@uchicago.edu

# Appendix E: Senior Thesis Cover Sheet



**Divinity  
School**

Swift Hall  
1025 East 58th Street  
T 773.702.8200  
F 773.702.6048

[divinity.uchicago.edu](http://divinity.uchicago.edu)

TO: The Committee on MDiv Studies  
FROM: [Student Name]

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Student phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Student e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Having completed my second year of MDiv coursework and the year-long site placement, and participated in a thesis proposal colloquium with my proposed faculty advisor and participants from the Committee on MDiv Studies, I record with the Committee on MDiv Studies

1. my intention to participate in the Senior Thesis Seminar in \_\_\_\_\_ (quarter / year).
2. my senior thesis title, \_\_\_\_\_
3. I have obtained the consent of \_\_\_\_\_ (faculty name) to serve as my faculty advisor for this thesis.

	Signature of Student	
	Advisor	Date
	Thesis seminar leader	Date

# Appendix F: Annual Progress Review Form

## MDIV DEGREE ANNUAL PROGRESS REVIEW

Student name \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID number: \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated graduation date: \_\_\_\_\_ Concentration /Tradition(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Dual Degree: MSW  MPP  Other \_\_\_\_\_

### DEGREE REQUIREMENTS COMPLETED

MDiv -specific courses: RELP 30500  35150  35202  35300  40800  42800

Language courses: \_\_\_\_\_ Requirement met? \_\_\_\_\_

Texts/Scriptures courses \_\_\_\_\_

History/Theology/Ethics/Philosophy \_\_\_\_\_

Intro to the Study of Religion I  and II

Course in another tradition (can use an above course to meet req.) \_\_\_\_\_

### FIELD EDUCATION

2nd Yr Placement: location and supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Field Ed. Intensive (site and date of completion): \_\_\_\_\_

Senior Thesis (Topic/Title) \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

**INCOMPLETES** Number of Incomplete courses \_\_\_\_\_

List of incomplete course numbers and plan of completion for each (see Addendum if more than 3)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Total course count: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of courses required to graduate: 27

Student Signature:

Dean of Students Signature: