



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DIVINITY SCHOOL



MDIV Handbook

Updated Sept. 2026

Table of Contents

Master of Divinity Program at Chicago	4
Introduction to course of study	
Degree Requirements	6
Course of study timeline	
Accountability	10
Advising	
Annual Reviews	
Enrollment and Registration	11
Course Registration	
Leaves of Absence	
Program Withdrawal	
Transferring Programs	
Graduation	
Grading and Incomplete Coursework	14
Academic Probation	
Field Education	16
Field Education: 2 nd Year Placement	
Forms: Learning Agreement & Action Plan	
Field Work Intensive	
Chaplaincy and Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)	
Chaplaincy Certificate requirements	
MDiv Thesis and Project	22
Purpose; Defining the Issue; Schedule	
Public Presentation	
Evaluation Guidelines	
Dual Degree Programs	25
Application; Registration; Financial Aid;	
Curriculum and Integration; Field Work (Crown only)	
Additional Resources	27
University-Wide Certificates	
Religious Practice and Community Life	
Swift Hall Groups and Resources	
Resources for Personal Growth	
Campus Resources	
Divinity and University Policies	31
Admissions Review System	
Records Maintenance	

Academic Grievance
Listserv

Appendices.....33

Appendix A: Course of Study Template
Appendix B: Annual Progress Review Form
Appendix C Field Education Learning Agreement
Appendix D: Field Education Action Plan
Appendix E: Field Education Intensive Contract
Appendix F: Thesis Proposal
Appendix G: Thesis Cover Page Template
Appendix H: Thesis Archives Permissions Request

Contact Information

The University of Chicago Divinity School

1025 East 58th Street, Chicago IL 60637-1577

Prof. Cynthia Lindner

Director of MDiv Studies

Swift 400C | clindner@uchicago.edu

See Cynthia for: course of study planning, academic advising, thesis presentation, arts of ministry courses, vocational discernment

Prof. Erika Dornfeld

Director of Field Education and Community Engagement

Swift 400B | dornfeld@uchicago.edu

See Erika for: field placements, community organizations, academic advising, CPE, chaplaincy

Dean of Students Office

Swift 104 | (773) 702-8217

DivinityDOS@uchicago.edu

Mimi Maduff

Dean of Students

Swift 107 | mhalpern@uchicago.edu

See Mimi for: BONDS Peer Mentors, degree requirements, Divinity School policies, financial aid, student status changes, and teaching appointments

Nathan Hardy

Assistant Dean of Students

Swift 107 | njhardy@uchicago.edu

See Nathan for: Applications to other graduate programs, career planning, professional development, recruitment and admissions

Philip Guzman

Student Affairs Manager

Swift 104 | guzmanp@uchicago.edu

See Philip for: Course registration, graduation, newsletter, orientation, supplemental funding

Master of Divinity Studies

The following pages offer detailed descriptions of the MDiv course of study: readers are encouraged to consider the coursework section of this handbook as a map of the terrain with some suggested routes, rather than simply a prescription of requirements.

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 and practice 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.

The Master of Divinity degree has historically served as the “gold standard” for ministerial preparation and training for chaplaincy and spiritual care in a variety of settings and still serves that function for students who aspire to those professions today. Rooted in the Divinity School's foundational commitment to the training of scholarly ministers, today's MDiv program welcomes students of many traditions—Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Confucian, Christian, Humanist, and more—as they prepare for engagement in an ever-widening variety of contexts alongside students anticipating ordination and traditional vocations in religious community leadership. Many “non-traditional” students have discovered the value of this curriculum—at once broadly humanistic and deeply practical-- for their own professional endeavors, from social work, community organizing and advocacy, to education, law, medicine and business. Wherever human beings gather in our contemporary world—in classrooms, courtrooms, hospital rooms, congregations or community centers—those who would convene these efforts are well-served by a healthy respect for the complexity of the human project, a deeply-informed moral imagination, an acceptance of the inevitability of human suffering, the patience to pay attention to its many manifestations, and the recognition of the power of ritual, language, care, and community to create and sustain (and also, at times, to confound) human flourishing.

These vital human occupations and preoccupations inform the over-arching orientation for our MDiv course of studies. The curriculum asks students to establish breadth of competence in the study of religion, developing a thorough understanding of the textual, historical, philosophical, and social scientific foundations for public engagement, communal leadership, and spiritual engagement, joining reflective practice with critical scholarship. MDiv-specific cohort courses offered throughout the three-year curriculum invite students to explore and experience the arts of leadership and practice in their own traditions and in others, and in other contexts and non-traditional venues, building students' knowledge and skills and expanding their moral imaginations to equip them for thoughtful and innovative public engagement in our increasingly diverse religious landscape, with its increasingly complex human challenges and possibilities.

Situated in the heart of a major research university, within walking distance of three 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. An elective certificate in chaplaincy helps students build upon several strong Clinical Pastoral Education programs in the city with select courses in social work, public policy or medical ethics and an advanced MDiv seminar in spiritual care; field placements in medical centers, university chaplaincy offices, advocacy organizations and other institutional settings offer opportunities to extend students' practice and strengthen their skills.

Introduction to the Course of Study

The MDiv program prepares religious, spiritual, cultural and community leaders who are informed by a variety of traditions, professions, and disciplines, equipped to serve in diverse contexts, and committed to the pursuit of learning, lifelong. To these ends, the MDiv curriculum provides a sequence of studies that requires the student to do several things at once. More specifically, the MDiv's curricular goals are as follows:

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

Each year of the MDiv program offers required courses which serve as exercises in critical discernment, practical theology and spiritual reflection, providing a common structure for the work of all students in the program. Engagement in field education runs concurrent with these courses and offers students rich opportunities for practical experience in a variety of communities and settings.

- In the first year, students engage in foundational courses in the study of religion, language study, and the basic practices of leadership and engagement.
- Second year coursework centers coursework in the arts of ritual and speaking; spiritual care and counseling; leadership, community, and the dynamics of change with extensive community engagement and practical reflection.
- The third year (or the fourth, in the case of students pursuing dual degrees) consists of research and completion of a thesis and a public presentation drawing together the student's coursework and field experience to construct a focused exploration and deeply informed judgment about some aspect of religious thought, experience, community, 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.
- Whether or not they elect to pursue certificate programs or a dual degree with another professional school, all MDiv students are encouraged to engage coursework offered by other University departments and professional schools as part of their own curriculum design, to gain the multidisciplinary sensibilities requisite for skillful and adaptive religious leadership, community-building, and meaning-making.

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, and the wider university. Along with acquiring a broad foundational knowledge about religion and particular coursework in a chosen religious tradition or professional practice, students are encouraged to *anchor themselves in one of the school's academic areas of study*. Entering students will negotiate a course of study proposal with the Director of MDiv Studies during orientation (using the template found in **Appendix A**) which will be revisited at the student's annual progress review in the spring of the first year (See **Appendix F** for progress review form). The proposal and subsequent reviews are not binding, but rather a way to track and ensure that the student is both making sufficient progress on degree requirements, as well as developing a coherent and comprehensive course of study that matches both theirs and the program's goals.

The following are course requirements by area/competency (corresponding to the degree goals on page 5):

Religious Studies

- ☐ Introduction to the Study of Religion and Text and Context in the Study of Religion (**DVSC 30500; DVSC 30600**)

Language Study

- ☐ *At least three courses in a classical language pertaining to the student's tradition(s) of focus, or 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 or reading course, OR
- ☐ Other proposed coursework/exam demonstrating proficiency, approved by the MDiv Studies Director

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 (not necessarily one of each)
- ☐ **Constructive paper written as final assignment for one of the above courses (must be in upper-level course, with a Divinity School instructor)**

Cultivation of Professional Identity

- ☐ Introduction to the Study of Religious Leadership (Colloquium) **REL P 30500**
- ☐ RELP Sequence: Ritual and Speaking; Spiritual Care and Counseling; Community, Leadership and Change **REL P 35100; REL P 35200; REL P 35300**
- ☐ Practice of Religious Leadership (Practicum I, II, III) **REL P 40600; 40700; REL P 40800**
- ☐ MDiv Thesis Seminar **REL P 42800**

Course of Study Timeline

Certain courses must be completed in a specific year (**indicated in bold**); 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 with special permission from the MDiv Program Director and the Dean of Students. Students are required to remain in full-time status for the duration of their degree program.

Depending on previous language study, students take a minimum of seven elective courses to fulfill the requirement of 27 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 take up to four of these electives (and in some cases, as many as six, by permission of the Committee on MDiv Studies) in the neighboring seminaries or selected schools providing traditional religious education, provided these courses do not duplicate offerings at the Divinity School.

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 to develop interests that may contribute to the MDiv Thesis Project. These twin considerations can compete, requiring students to strategize. Counsel from the Director of MDiv Studies, as well as faculty in relevant areas of study, can be essential in making curricular decisions.

FIRST YEAR

- Introduction to the Study of Religion and Text and Context in the Study of Religion (**DVSC 30500; DVSC 30600**) (first year strongly recommended)
- Coursework in the classical texts and/or history of the student's chosen tradition(s)
- **Introduction to Religious Leadership and Practice: Colloquium (RELP 30500)**
Colloquium invites students to identify, examine, and synthesize the core practices of public religious engagement: attention, conversation, reflection, and response. It is designed to provide a forum for academic, professional, and personal integration; vocational development; and cultivating a public theological voice. Students will also work with the Director of Field Education to consider the factors involved in choosing a second-year placement, practicing the skills for "reading" a community of practice.
- **Language study:**
A typical course of language study consists of *three courses*. Students must demonstrate acquisition of basic skills in a relevant textual language such as Koine Greek, Sanskrit, Quranic Arabic, Tibetan, or Biblical Hebrew. Alternately, MDiv students can choose to study a modern language pertinent to their anticipated vocational engagement—for example, Spanish or ASL. Students should consult with the Director of MDiv Studies in the selection of the appropriate language curriculum.

LANGUAGE STUDY CONTINUED

A foundational commitment of the Divinity School is the notion that both academic citizenship and religious leadership requires multilingual proficiency. Therefore, the Divinity School requires all its students to demonstrate such proficiency, albeit in a variety of ways. MDiv students must demonstrate acquisition of basic skills in a relevant textual language such as Koine Greek, Sanskrit, Quranic Arabic, Tibetan, or Biblical Hebrew. Alternately, MDiv students can choose to study a modern language pertinent to their anticipated vocational engagement--for example, Spanish or American Sign Language (ASL).

Students should consult with the Director of MDiv Studies in the selection of the appropriate language curriculum. There are many language courses offered both within the Divinity School and across campus. If students would benefit from additional preparatory work, the [Academic and Professional Reading Institute](#) offers virtual courses (with extensive self-study) in 12 different languages. These language offerings are **non-credit** seminars. Students who wish to enroll in APRI seminars must apply to the Dean of Students Office for financial aid to cover the cost of these courses. Financial aid is **not automatically applied** to APRI seminars.

Students who register for APRI and decide not to take the course, must drop the course by the published deadlines for a full refund. Students who fail to complete the course or to drop by the published deadlines to receive a full refund, will be responsible for covering the total cost of the course. The Divinity School will not cover the cost of failed APRI courses or course registrations that have not been dropped by the published deadline for a full refund.

SECOND YEAR

- **The Arts of Religious Leadership and Practice:** a three-quarter sequence including Ritual and Speaking (**RELP 35100**)
Spiritual Care and Counseling (**RELP 35200**)
Community, Leadership, and Change (**RELP 35300**)
- **Three quarters of Field Education** in a community of practice
- **Practicum (RELP 40600, 40700, 40800)** which meets weekly across the entire second year.
- **One constructive paper** written in a class selected in consultation with the instructor and the Director of MDiv Studies. The student must submit their constructive paper (to the instructor of record) before participation in the Thesis Seminar.
 - A note about process: the class selected must be an **upper-level course**. Students will consider a central question, reckon with the position of a major thinker, alongside some situation, event, or human experience, and come to a critical judgment of the question. The specifics of what constitutes a constructive paper varies across disciplines; students should consult with the instructor for specific guidance before writing, to ensure the paper meets disciplinary expectations for a constructive work.

THIRD YEAR

- **MDiv Thesis Seminar** which meets monthly across the year. Students register for this course in one quarter only, typically fall quarter of the 3rd year of study (dual degree students, see the Dean of Students office for registration assistance in year 4). The overall thesis project consists of four parts:
 - A thesis proposal to be submitted at the beginning of fall quarter
 - A 35-page thesis submitted in March of Year 3.
 - The oral presentation of the project in an appropriate public forum that includes student colleagues, the project's advisor, the Director of MDiv studies and other faculty, and wider audiences as appropriate, during the spring quarter of year 3.
 - A short public essay (800-1000 words) inspired by some aspect of the thesis project in conversation with a contemporary concern, event, or discourse.

ANY OF THE THREE YEARS

These requirements can 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 own
- **A field work intensive** (see Appendix H) usually completed during the summer

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. 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 may result in the student's withdrawal from the program.

Students are strongly advised to avoid the accumulation of "incomplete" courses on their transcript. This is especially advised for MDivs, whose course and field education requirements make finishing incomplete work in later quarters even more challenging. Students who have three or more incomplete courses on their transcripts will be required to develop a completion plan with the Dean of Students Office. See "grading and incompletes" for further description.

ANNUAL REVIEWS

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 both Directors. 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. While it is the intentional of the review to assess a student's satisfactory completion of requirements, it is also equally intended to review their own personal-professional goals for their course of study; for example, areas of interest as-yet unexplored, or guidance navigating courses outside the Divinity School or university.

The progress review form (**Appendix F**) is submitted online and reviewed by the Dean of Students, who monitors academic progress for MDiv students. Any student who does not make satisfactory academic progress as evidenced by failing to meet the enrollment and registration requirements or by failing to earn the sufficient quality grades, must develop a completion plan in conjunction with the faculty advisor, MDiv Program Director, and Dean of Students.

The student will submit a completion plan detailing 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 complete, they may not be allowed to register for courses. Failure to meet the terms of the completion plan will result in the student's withdrawal from the program.

ADVISING

The Director of MDiv Studies acts a general advisor to all students in the program. The Director of Field Education has particular responsibility for advising and directing MDivs 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 them throughout the year as their academic interests develop. Should those interests suggest changing advisors, students may elect to change their faculty advisor. 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 MDiv 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 secured a thesis advisor by the end of the second year.

Enrollment and Registration

COURSE REGISTRATION

Courses offerings for the academic year may be found on the [Divinity School website](#). Registration opens for graduate students the week before classes begin in autumn, during 8th week of autumn for winter quarter registration, and 8th week of winter quarter for spring quarter registration. See the [graduate registration schedule](#). Note: The MDiv program is a fully in-person degree program. Instruction is not offered in a hybrid format.

Quarterly Registration Timeline

- **Sixth Week:** [online course time schedules](#) for the next academic quarter are published
 - **Eighth Week:** Divinity graduate students register for next quarter's classes
 - **Tenth Week:** Registration temporarily closed
 - **First Week:** Add/Drop Opens
 - **Wednesday of Third Week:** All registration changes must be submitted to the Dean of Students Office to ensure processing before registration closes on Friday of Third Week.
-
- **Full-time International Students** on F-1 or J-1 visas must register for at least 300 units each quarter. To maintain F-1 or J-1 status, federal immigration regulations require students to be enrolled full-time for all quarters listed on the I-20/DS-2019, with the exception of the vacation quarter (usually summer).
 - **International students** seeking authorization to drop below full-time enrollment **must** contact the Office of International Affairs about reduced course load options

MDiv students are expected to enroll full-time (3 or more 100-unit courses) each quarter for nine consecutive quarters (autumn, winter, spring), 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). Students are expected to graduate upon completion of degree requirements.

COURSES AT OUTSIDE INSTITUTIONS

It is possible for MDiv students to enroll in up to four courses beyond the University to meet ordination, traditional formation, or other professional requirements, with an additional two courses possible, pending approval of the MDiv Committee. 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, Bexley-Seabury, 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. Students pursuing bi-registration at a non-affiliated school will be enrolled in a Reading and Research course with the Director of MDiv 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 non-affiliated institution and to arrange to have a final transcript for the course sent to the Divinity School Dean of Students office.

To Register: Regardless of affiliation, students should complete the [bi-registration form](#). Note that the Director of MDiv 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 MDiv Studies and Dean of Students 2) Submit it to the Dean of Students' Student Office for approval and processing.

Further logistical considerations: Students should be advised that since most other schools are on the semester system (and the Divinity School is organized in quarters) special attention must be paid to these schools' starting dates: generally 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 such a class after the first week of the semester. Once the petition has been approved by the Divinity School and submitted to the other school's registrar, **the student must also register for this course online during the regular Divinity School quarterly registration process, so that the credit will appear on the student's UChicago transcript.**

PROGRAM WITHDRAWAL

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. [Withdrawal request form](#)

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 this [Petition 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.

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, winter or spring quarter of the current academic year 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 cancelation fee for students who apply for graduation who are not approved to graduate. Students should consult with the Dean of Students Office about eligibility for graduation. Students who wish to participate in an internship in the summer after they complete their degree requirements may only participate in the spring ceremony of the previous academic year if all degree requirements are completed by the graduation deadlines for the spring ceremony of the previous academic year. Students holding summer internships with questions about eligibility to participated in graduation ceremonies should contact the Dean of Students Office.

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. MDiv 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. 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 have no more than three (3) University of Chicago courses graded on a Pass/Fail basis for degree completion. For elective courses, P/F grades are acceptable. Note however that MDiv-required courses must have a "quality grade."

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 a registration adjustment](#) to the Dean of Students Office by **Wednesday of Week 3**.

INCOMPLETES

A student may request a grade of "Incomplete" ("I") if they anticipate not completing the course requirements before the end of a quarter but have: (1) participated actively in the course, (2) completed the majority of the requirements of the course, and (3) made satisfactory arrangements with the instructor to complete the remaining work by a specified deadline.

If the instructor agrees to assign an "Incomplete," a grade of "I" will appear on the transcript. An "I" does not carry a point value and does not impact a student's GPA. Once the student has completed the course requirements, the transcript will be updated to include the quality grade. If the grade is completed within one calendar year, the mark of "I" will be removed. After one year, the mark of "I" will appear on the transcript next to a quality grade to denote that the work was not completed within a single quarter (e.g. "IA" or "IB+"). Quality grades with an "I" carry the same transcript weight as quality grades without an "I."

Because an incomplete is a formal agreement between an instructor and a student, failure to submit or complete remaining requirements by the agreed-upon deadline could result in assignment of a quality grade that the student earned based on requirements partially met in the course or a W.

Procedures to request an incomplete

1. Students should discuss the possibility of an incomplete with their instructor as soon as they become aware that they may not be able to complete all course requirements by the end of a quarter.
2. Students should discuss the timeline for completing the incomplete work for the course and detail in writing the date by which each assignment will be submitted to the instructor. The instructor should also note what grade will be assigned if the incomplete work is not submitted. This could be a “W” or a quality grade based on the work that has been submitted to date.
3. If an instructor agrees to an incomplete, students should submit the signed incomplete form to the Dean of Students Office.

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.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Effective the 2025-2026 academic year, MDiv students with three or more Incomplete or ungraded courses on their transcript on July 1 and/or do not have a minimum grade point average of a B- are not in good standing and will be placed on academic probation. The student will be required to submit a completion plan to the Dean of Students Office and return to good academic standing before registering for classes. Should the incompletes not be resolved and three or more incompletes remain on the transcript by September 1, the student will be placed on administrative leave and will not receive funding from the Divinity School until the start of the quarter after the student returns to good standing.

Good standing is also a requirement for various opportunities for funding in the Divinity School, such as supplemental funding, internships, summer programs, and other opportunities that specify good standing. This means that a student must have no more than two missing grades on their transcript at the time of application for the opportunity. Should a student who is not in good academic standing need to register for a required course that is only offered in autumn quarter, the student may [petition](#) the Program Director and the Dean of Students Office with a completion plan and a rationale for the need to register for the course. If the petition is accepted to allow the student to register for one course, tuition aid will be applied to the course according to the student’s financial aid package.

Field Education

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 the following **field education exercises** concurrent with their MDiv coursework:

- ❖ In the first year of study, students engage a local faith-based organization, listening to and learning from staff, participants, and the wider community context.
- ❖ During their second academic year, students participate in a **year-long site placement** in a local 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 a **field education intensive**, which may be another broad-based internship in a community of religious practice, or a more focused experience in some aspect of religious leadership. See **Appendix E** for details.

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

FIELD EDUCATION: 2ND YEAR PLACEMENT

In the 2nd year, each student works 15–20 hours per week in a local 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 an hour each week to reflect on their work and goals, as outlined in their Action Plan (**Appendix C**). Where appropriate, the student is 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 visits the student's site in order to observe their leadership in action and provide feedback. At any point in the year, additional meetings between the student, supervisor, and director are available upon request by either student or supervisor.

Students engaged in the second-year field education placement receive stipendiary aid from the Divinity School in the amount of \$9000 (\$3000 per quarter). This is to offset the costs of any employment the student can no longer enjoy due to time constraints, as well as associated travel costs, needed background checks, etc. 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.

International students should prepare for field education by meeting with their OIA advisor to discuss Curricular Practical Training (CPT) requirements. More information may be found [here](#).

2nd Year Placement Timeline

YEAR ONE: FALL-WINTER

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.

Submit Learning Agreement: 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. The Learning Agreement outlines the expectations and responsibilities of each party for the year ahead. Signed Learning Agreements may be submitted as soon as an agreement is reached and should be **completed no later than the last day of winter quarter.**

NOTE: The Learning Agreement is only meant to document the broad expectations for students and supervisors. There will be an additional form, the Action Plan, that will ask for a description of the student's role at the site, their specific learning goals and plan to meet them.

YEAR TWO

Start/end dates Students begin field work the first week of fall quarter and end the last week of the Spring quarter, unless otherwise agreed to by student, site, and director. Exceptions can include when a site's academic calendar begins earlier (and ends earlier) than the Divinity School's.

Availability: The courses that accompany field education in the 2nd year are held the same times throughout the year to allow for maximum flexibility. This means that students minimally are in class Fridays 9:30-12:20 and Wednesdays 9:30-10:50am. Additionally, students take at least one other class per quarter.

Students are responsible for communicating their class responsibilities to supervisors, and finding an agreed-upon, consistent schedule for the year.

Students are expected to maintain their hours during any Finals Week. However, if otherwise arranged with a supervisor, the student may flex those hours. Students are *not* expected to be at field sites during either winter break or spring break.

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.

Action Plan Submitted: The student and the Site Supervisor will collaborate on the Action Plan, which lists the student's learning goals for the year, a plan to meet them, and a brief description of their role. 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. Our program identifies four categories of such leadership that it should attempt to address during the course of the year. This does not necessarily mean students create explicit goals for each area. Rather, that these are categories of reflection for students and supervisors to consider when participating in their field placement and reflecting on their experience:

- **Public Conversation and Ritual Performance**

What are the publics of the site, and how are they engaged? What sorts of cultural patterns, behavioral norms or community rituals are present?

- **Community and Care:** what constitutes care-giving in this context? What norms, language, and practices are employed to foster a communal sensibility? What gets in the way?
- **Leadership and Authority:** how is authority deployed or shared in this context? How are leadership and authority built here? Where in my leadership and authority can I grow?
- **Vision, Mission, and Value:** what horizons of meaning and worldviews are operative in myself, and in this place?

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

Meetings and Evaluations: Evaluations for field placements happen in the context of the Practicum course. In the Fall, students and supervisors will meet with the Director to assess the feasibility of the work plan and goals and make any necessary adjustments. At the mid-point and end of the field placement term (mid-January and late May) supervisors will be asked to fill out an evaluation form in partnership with their student, based on the student's articulated learning goals.

Note: At any point in the year, additional meetings between the student, supervisor, and director are possible if requested by either the supervisor, student, or director.

THE ACTION PLAN

At the beginning of fall quarter, the student and supervisors will fill out and submit the Action Plan, which asks for a description of the student's role and accompanying learning goals. These goals can be adjusted throughout the year and will serve as the main point of reflection and evaluation for the student.

Learning Goals: 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 each evaluation. 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 their description and goals during the year as needed, in consultation with their supervisor and the Director. This is a normal and even healthy reflection of the ever-changing dynamic of practicing religious leadership in the context of community.

Field Work Intensive

The second main field work component offers the opportunity for students to engage in specialized training in some aspect of religious leadership and practice. Unlike the second-year internship, this requirement is intentionally more open-ended. 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 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 this requirement at any stage of the program, with the exception of the 2nd year. Many elect to use the summer after their first or second year. Any intensive must be sufficient to fulfill 400 hrs of work (40hrs/wk at 10 weeks equivalent) and have an on-site supervisor.

All students must have their field work approved **in advance** by the Director of Field Education (see Director for petition form). 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. The Divinity School provides a stipend for all field work of \$6,000. The Field Work Contract (**Appendix E**) is due by the **7th 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 Divinity School supplemental funding resources. Similarly, if students have already secured equal funding from the University for a program/internship they would like to count as their field intensive, they will not receive additional stipendiary funding. Students are eligible for reimbursement for associated tuition costs of field work (such as for CPE) if pursued for either field work requirement up to \$1,000.

International students should prepare for field work intensive by meeting with their OIA advisor to discuss Curricular Practical Training (CPT) requirements. More information may be found [here](#).

CHAPLAINCY

For students interested in chaplaincy, the first step is to complete one unit—400hrs—of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), which *can be* (but is not required to be) used to fulfill the field work intensive requirement. Additionally, many Christian denominations require one unit of CPE for ordination, consecration, or certification. If used to fulfill the intensive, students working to complete a unit of CPE need only submit their and their supervisor's final evaluations in lieu of the field work evaluation. See ACPE.edu for the universal application and a list of accredited programs.

Chaplaincy Certificate

The chaplaincy and spiritual care certificate program is open to Divinity School students currently enrolled in the MDiv program. MDiv students who anticipate careers in institutional chaplaincy will benefit from its interdisciplinary coursework, providing deeper insight into various systems such as health care, higher education, the carceral system, or the military.

Students must be in good academic standing to earn the certificate. Students interested in pursuing the certificate must request enrollment no later than the **3rd week of fall quarter of their 2nd year**, and must complete all requirements by the grade submission deadline for graduating students. The certificate has two main components: curricular and co-curricular.

1) Curricular: 2 core courses and 2 elective courses

Core Courses:

- Upper-level chaplaincy seminar (offered yearly at the Divinity School)
- Spiritual care, psychology, or related class outside of one's tradition(s)

Elective Courses:

Can be in a variety of areas, including but not necessarily limited to: healthcare administration, ethics, bereavement, peace and conflict studies, suffering, etc.

Courses may be taken at the Divinity School, in other divisions on campus, or at Chicago-area seminaries. Students will identify courses of interest and must petition for their approval to ensure that an identified course is eligible to count towards the certification. To petition, email the certificate administrator with the course number and description by the end of Week 1 of that quarter.

2) Co-Curriculars: Field work and co-curricular activities

- a. **Field work:** One unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and *either* an additional CPE unit (recommended for healthcare or military chaplaincy) or 400 hours completed under the supervision of a chaplain in one's field (university chaplaincy, corrections chaplaincy, etc.).
- b. **Co-curricular activities:** Students are expected to complete 10 co-curricular activities. These include workshops, seminars, or lectures related to an aspect of chaplaincy and providing a short reflection (250 words) on each event attended. Students are not allowed to count more than 3 per quarter, to ensure co-curriculars are completed across the degree timeline. Co-curricular synopses are submitted on the certificate's Canvas page *by the end of the quarter* in which they occurred.

Timeline: MDiv students may complete the certificate on their own timeline within these guidelines:

- Students confirm with the Director of MDiv Studies their intention to pursue the certificate at the **beginning of their second year of study**.
- All requirements for the certificate must be completed by the University Registrar's deadline for any graduating master's student. For most students, this will be a two-year endeavor; students in a dual degree program will have three years to complete the certificate.
- Students may complete the CPE units across all four quarters of the academic year, including summer. If students have completed a unit of CPE in the summer between their academic years 1 and 2, it may count towards the completion of the certificate.

MDiv Thesis Project

PURPOSE

The MDiv Thesis Project is an in-depth exploration of a question or issue in that demonstrates a student's ability to foster thoughtful, rigorous, and relevant dialogue between university, wisdom traditions, and society. In the thesis writing process, students research a contemporary problem or possibility of religious life or leadership, trace the intellectual heritage of a selected issue, explore practical implications, and make a thoughtful contribution to the larger practical theological/philosophical conversation. As such, the MDiv 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 MDiv Thesis Project consists of three parts:

- Participation in the Thesis Seminar and submission of a thesis proposal, due end of fall quarter, 3rd year.
- 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 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, while questions about the evaluation or impact of a particular practice might call for an anthropological or sociological investigation. 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 thesis project 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, discipline, or theological method, as well as accumulating experience and insight into an identified issue in religious leadership or engagement, which will guide the student's summer reading.

During the spring quarter of the second year, each student works independently, confers with the seminar leader or Director of MDiv Studies, and consults other faculty members to (1) define the issue 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 or other media, and possibly communities or 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 page is included in **Appendix D**.

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 a cover page (**Appendix E**) sent to both the student's thesis advisor and the seminar leaders. A final copy of each thesis with is bound and archived in a file in the ministry suite for others to read, and a digitized copy will reside in knowledge@uchicago.edu, an online archive administered by the Regenstein Library. Students must submit the permission form before graduation for their thesis to be included in the archive (see permissions form in **Appendix G**)

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 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, art 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 MDiv 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.

SHORT ESSAY

The final movement in the thesis project, to be submitted after the public presentation is completed, is a short public essay (800-1000 words) that engages some wider concern, a public event, issue or discourse, through the lens of the thesis topic or some aspect of the project's learning. The focus here is utilizing one's learning in the service of a contemporary issue: it's a "think piece," commentary, or blog post with attention to broad public legibility and accessibility.

EVALUATION GUIDELINES: MDiv THESIS

The grade for the 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 and the submission of the public essay 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?

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, the Harris School of Public Policy, and the University's Law School. These programs serve students who wish to combine education for religious leadership and practice, with training for social work, expertise in public policy, or the practice of law. 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, or to complete dual degree with law in 5 years instead of 6.

REGISTRATION

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. 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, or two in the case of Law. And, given the collegial nature of the MDiv program, it is best for students to complete the first two years of the MDiv in the company of their entering class. This sequence also has administrative advantages. It is strongly advised that students consult with each school to ensure proper course and/or quarter registration requirements are met. It is also least disruptive to the student's registration and financial arrangements to minimize the number of times that the student officially transfers from one school to another.

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 27 required for the MDiv degree. Students who are completing the dual degree with the Law School must meet with personnel from each school annually to plan their progress through both programs.

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, indicating 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, the Harris School, or the Law 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, Harris, or Law 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. For more information on each Division's tuition, see the [Bursar's office](#).

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 MDiv 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 their curriculum as would be the case if the student were pursuing the degrees separately. Particularly in the fourth year, when engaging studies at both schools simultaneously, with the final 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, Harris, or Law, to assist them in the Thesis Project that will facilitate this integration.

Additional Resources

UNIVERSITY-WIDE CERTIFICATES

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](#)

RELIGIOUS PRACTICE, 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. There are options within the University and the immediate neighborhood. Below is a non-exhaustive list:

Open Space: Bond Chapel

Open Space is an intentional space for non-sectarian, multi-religious community which centers reflection and prayer. This weekly 30-minute gathering provides the school's community with unique opportunities for conversation, reflection, and fellowship. Contacts: Kimraj Jordan and Fiyori Kidane. 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 5-pm. Email: 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 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.

Muslim

Jumu'ah Prayer times

Insha'Allah, Jumu'ah prayer is hosted by the [UChicago Muslim Students Association](#) and will be held 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](#).

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 DSA has operated as an independent nonprofit (501c3) within the Divinity School since 1968.

Throughout the 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.

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 are organized around identities that are under-represented and/or marginalized in the School and 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.

BONDS Peer Mentorship Program (Building Opportunities and Networks for Div Students)

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.

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

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

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 21st 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

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

[The Center for Religion and Psychotherapy](#) is a not-for-profit that provides in-depth psychotherapy that attends to religious and spiritual, as well as psychological concerns. It offers consultative services and continuing education opportunities for clinicians, academics, and religious leaders. Clinicians represent a variety of religious traditions and approaches to religious and spiritual life.

The Claret Center

Located on the east side of Hyde Park, [the Claret Center](#) offers psychotherapy, massage therapy, spiritual direction, and other services.

Khalil Center

[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](https://intraspectrum-chicago.com)

773.750.3505; intake@intraspectrum-chicago.com

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

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Academic Support Resources

Center for Identity & Inclusion- <https://inclusion.uchicago.edu/>
Chicago Center for Teaching and Learning- <https://teaching.uchicago.edu/>
Housing Resources- <https://grad.uchicago.edu/life-at-uchicago/housing/>
DDH Housing- <https://ddh.uchicago.edu/community/student-housing/>
UChicago Residential Properties- <http://rp.uchicago.edu/> Office of International Affairs- <https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/> Spiritual Life- <https://spirit.uchicago.edu/>
UChicago Bursar Office- <https://bursar.uchicago.edu/divinity-school-2-3/>
UChicagoGRAD- <https://grad.uchicago.edu/>
Academic Exchanges- <https://grad.uchicago.edu/academic-support/academic-exchange-program/>
Career Development- <https://grad.uchicago.edu/career-development/>
Diversity & Inclusion- <https://inclusion.uchicago.edu/multicultural-student-affairs/>
English Language Institute- <https://esl.uchicago.edu/>
Family Resources- <https://grad.uchicago.edu/life-at-uchicago/family-resources/>
Fellowships Office- <https://grad.uchicago.edu/fellowships/>
Library Services <https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/> ID & Privileges Office <https://ipo.uchicago.edu>
Email: ipo@uchicago.edu
Office of International Affairs <https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu>
Student Disability Services <https://disabilities.uchicago.edu>
Writing Support <https://grad.uchicago.edu/academic-support/writing-resources/>

Health and Wellness Resources

Chicago Student Wellness: 773.834.9355
Nurse Advice Line (after UChicago Student Wellness business hours): 773.834.9355
24/7 Therapist-on-Call: 773.702.3625
Healthiest You 24/7 Doctor: 855.866.0895
UChicago Medicine Emergency Room: 773.702.6250
Spiritual Life <https://csl.uchicago.edu/life-on-campus/spiritual-life/>
Timely Care Mental Health Support On-Demand: timelycare.com/uchicago

Safety and Security Resources

University of Chicago Police Department (UCPD) From a campus phone: 123; From any phone: 773.702.8181
Dean-on-Call: Call the UCPD at 773.702.8181 or text via the [UChicago Safe App](#)
Sexual Assault Dean-on-Call: Call the UCPD at 773.702.8181 or text via the [UChicago Safe App](#)
UChicago CARES (The Center for Awareness, Resolution, Education, and Support), [resources](#) and [reporting for students](#).
Jeremy Inabinet, Associate Dean of Students in the University for Disciplinary Affairs: 773.834.4837
Bias Education & Support Team (BEST): [Report](#) Online

Emergency Assistance

The University of Chicago understands there may be additional unanticipated and unexpected costs you will need to manage during your academic career beyond those accompanying enrollment.

Emergency Assistance Programs are available to assist only currently matriculated degree-seeking students through the [Office of the Bursar](#).

The Emergency Assistance Program includes three types of assistance:

1. Emergency Grant
2. Living Expense Advance
3. Emergency Loan

University and Divinity Policies

Adherence to University Policies

All Divinity School students are held to all policies of the University of Chicago and the Divinity School. The [Student Manual](#) is the official statement of University policies and regulations and expected standards of student conduct that are applicable to all students. Any student conduct, on or off campus, of individuals or groups, that threatens or violates this commitment may become a matter for action within the University's system of student discipline. Students should become familiar with the expectations outlined in the [Student Manual](#). Sections frequently referenced by graduate students are linked to below.

While students should be familiar with the [Student Manual](#) as a whole, the following are commonly referenced by graduate students: [Student Life & Conduct](#), [Leaves of Absence](#), [University Grievance Policy for Graduate Students](#), [Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct](#), [Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment](#), [Policy on Religious Accommodation for Missed Classes, Assignments, and Exams](#), [Academic Honesty & Plagiarism](#), [Graduate Student Parent Policy](#).

Divinity School Policies

The Divinity school's policies apply to all degree programs and should be referenced in their entirety [here](#). Areas that students might reference include policies on leaves of absence, disciplinary processes, record maintenance, and academic grievance.

Divinity School Academic Grievance

The University of Chicago Divinity School is committed to the highest ideals of our academic community. Respect, civility, and professionalism are essential to the Divinity School's mission of advancing the academic study of religion and preparing students for careers in research, teaching, and public religious leadership. All Divinity School academic appointees and staff are responsible for creating and maintaining a learning environment in which every student can maximize their potential. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Divinity School students have a means and opportunity to resolve complaints alleging abuse of authority. [The policy may be found here](#).

Employment

The terms and conditions of employment for certain graduate students at the University of Chicago who are employed to perform instructional or research services will be determined by a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the University and Graduate Students United ("GSU-UE") for the duration of the assignment to perform such services. Students can access the CBA and review frequently asked questions about graduate student unionization on the [Provost's office website](#).

Dean of Students Office Listserv Policy

The Dean of Students Office manages and approves messages for the following student listservs: divinity_ma_students@lists.uchicago.edu, divinity-students-mdiv@lists.uchicago.edu, divinity-students-phd@lists.uchicago.edu, bonds@lists.uchicago.edu, div-placement@lists.uchicago.edu, divinity_international@lists.uchicago.edu

Emails sent to the listservs must include text along with any images or attachments to ensure that the message is accessible to those using assistive technology.

- Organizations may advertise their events up to two times through the listserv.
- Organizations may only send emails related to established programs or events and are subject to review by the Dean of Students Office staff.
- Messages that publicize or endorse causes (even a very good cause), such as relief efforts for victims of natural disasters or organizations seeking assistance that are not already associated with the University, are not allowed.
- Event images or PDFs may be included.
- Emails for purposes other than academic requirements, fellowships, jobs, and events (selling or lost items, commentary on events, news stories, jokes, advertisements, etc.) will not be permitted.
- Events will be collated in the DoS newsletter to be sent out on Monday. Events that are not received in time may not be sent out on the listservs.
- Organizations should begin the subject of their email with their organization abbreviation.
- Organizations found in violation of these rules may face sanctions, including loss of listserv privileges, for a period of time.
- Email message must be related to the business and mission of the Divinity School.
- List-host moderators have the right to withhold any messages that do not meet the guidelines set forth in this policy.
- Alternative posting options include the bulletin boards and other listservs such as the DSA listserv for student information.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Initial Course of Study Proposal

To be filled out and discussed during orientation advising meeting

How to use this form: The MDiv degree has many components, requiring students to develop a level of competence and depth in certain areas, while also gaining familiarity across a wide range of skills, disciplines and traditions. The following curricular goals are meant to prompt your thinking about what shape your course of study will take. What language contributes to your intellectual or practical project, where might you want to engage in fieldwork, what area(s) of your own tradition, discipline, or practice do you need to spend more time with? Where are your gaps in knowledge? This is not a binding proposal, but rather a tool to make your first year intentional and coherent, as well as exploratory. This proposal will be used to help guide your annual progress review at the end of your first year.

- **Language requirement plan:**

- **Tradition or Disciplinary focus:**

- **Religious studies area of focus/interest/competence:** _____
- **Increased understanding of your religious/spiritual/disciplinary tradition(s)/practice:**_____
- **Increased awareness and appreciation of other religious traditions:**

- **Integrate scholarship with field work (list possible ideas/direction and goals):**

- **attention to self-awareness, collegial accountability, and sustained spiritual practice:**

Appendix B: Annual Progress Review Form

NOTE: this is an example of the online form, accessed via course website

Student Information

Name

Email

Tradition/focus/discipline

Student Id number

Dual Degree?

Introductory Classes

please mark all that you have completed

Introduction to the Study of Religion I Introduction to the Study of Religion II

MDiv Required Classes (please mark all that you have completed)

Colloquium

Ritual & Public Speaking

Practicum I

Spiritual Care & Counseling

Practicum II

Community, Leadership, &

Change

Practicum III

Thesis Seminar

Course Distribution Requirements: Ethics/History/Philosophy/Theology (4 total needed) *

Please list all course numbers along with course name

Course Distribution Requirements: Scripture/Texts (2 total needed) *

Please list all course numbers along with course name

Language Requirement (List relevant courses used to complete requirement)

Course in Another Tradition (can use one of the above courses for this requirement)

Constructive Paper Requirement

FIELD WORK INTENSIVE: please list site/plan and anticipated dates

2nd YEAR FIELD PLACEMENT

please list site/plan and dates

FIELD WORK INTENSIVE

please list site/plan and anticipated dates

Field Placement Benchmarks

Learning Agreement
Signed Successfully
completed field placement
Field Work Intensive Evaluation submitted

Thesis Benchmarks

Thesis Proposal submitted
Thesis completed
Presentation completed

INCOMPLETE COURSES: Please list course number(s) and intended date of completion for any incomplete courses on transcript

APPENDIX C: 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 begin at the site during Week 1 of autumn quarter, and end the last week of spring quarter (including Finals Weeks), unless otherwise agreed upon and documented below.
- The student will be enrolled and expected to pass each quarter both the Arts of Religious Leadership and Practice sequence and the Field Education Practicum for the academic year/duration of the placement.
- The student will complete mid-year and final 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, which includes, but is not limited to, issues specific to serving as a religious leader/in a religious context.
- If a student is consistently not adhering to the expectations as outlined in the Learning Agreement (for example, not attending supervision meetings or meeting hourly requirements), 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

- Any Supervisor new to the Divinity School is required to attend the School's supervisor orientation, held in the fall (mid-Sept.-Early Oct.) of each academic year.
- The Site Supervisor and student will engage in supervisions for one hour each week, or the equivalent. This is in addition to any regular staff meetings in which the Supervisor and student participate.
- The Supervisor will submit their portion of the mid-year and final evaluations to the Director of Field Education and Community Engagement at the listed deadline (provided in year-long calendar).
- The Supervisor may 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 support the arrangement of the student's observation by the Director, as part of their Practicum course requirement. Observations include activities like preaching, students presenting at a staff/dept. meeting, visiting a patient, etc.

The Divinity School

- The Divinity School will provide, upon request, all field sites with a copy of the University policies regarding appropriate student conduct. During the academic 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 in a field placement 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 or the student*.
- The Director of Field Education and Community Engagement must approve the terms of the field education placement as outlined both in this agreement, and in subsequent documentation, such as the position description.
- 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.

Role Description

In 1-2 sentences, describe what position/role the student will be taking on:

Alternative start/end dates (if applicable) _____

Vacations (if applicable) _____

Site Reimbursements (if applicable): _____

Signatures and Contact Information

Student: _____

Supervisor (Name and Title): _____

Supervisor number and email: _____

Placement Site (name and physical address): _____

Appendix D: Field Education Action Plan

(NOTE: this is an example of the google form. The link will be provided via Canvas)

Fill this form out with your site supervisor. Work together to describe your position at your field site and identify 3-4 learning goals that you can work towards this year. Your goals will serve as the main points of accountability and reflection in your evaluations.

Email:

Student Name:

Supervisor Name:

Site Placement:

POSITION DESCRIPTION

In 1 paragraph, describe your overall role. What are your main responsibilities, projects, and tasks? Additionally, what opportunities for shadowing will you have? What special meetings, events, or conferences will you have the opportunity to participate in?

LEARNING GOALS

Name 3-4 goals to be addressed throughout the course of the year. These goals should be clear, specific, and able to be assessed (though not necessarily quantitatively).

GOAL 1: _____

List 2-3 ways in which you will work to meet this goal.

GOAL 2:

List 2-3 ways in which you will work to meet this goal.

GOAL 3 _____

List 2-3 ways in which you will work to meet this goal.

GOAL 4* (Optional) _____

List 2-3 ways in which you will work to meet this goal.

SCHEDULE: List your agreed-upon weekly schedule: specify days on-site and your standing supervision meeting.

Appendix E: Field Work Intensive Contract



**Divinity
School**

Swift Hall
1025 East 58th Street
T 773.702.8200
F 773.702.6048

divinity.uchicago.edu

Field Work Intensive Contract

STUDENT INFORMATION

Student Name:

Student role/title at site:

Start date: _____ End date: _____

Vacations (if

applicable): _____

Site Reimbursements (if applicable): _____

SITE INFORMATION

Site Name:

Site Supervisor Name and Title:

Supervisor Email and phone:

1. Describe the scope of work: what tasks, projects, weekly responsibilities, etc will the student perform in their role? Note any remote aspects.

2. Identify the accountability structure of the organization: with whom, and at what frequency, will the student be reporting to? List all relevant colleagues.

3. What is/are the anticipated outcome(s) of the student's work?

4. List any additional expectations or goals for the Field Work intensive that can be evaluated and reflected on in the final evaluation.

In order to receive degree credit for the intensive, both student and supervisor must submit written evaluations of the student's work. If the work is completed in the summer, only one evaluation, at the conclusion, is required. If the intensive is completed during the academic year, one evaluation must be submitted at the mid-point and one at the end of the year. Evaluations should be emailed 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:

Divinity School Contact Information

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

Appendix F: Thesis Proposal



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

Divinity
School

Swift Hall
1025 East 58th Street
T 773.702.8200
F 773.702.6048

divinity.uchicago.edu

TO: The Committee on MDiv Studies

FROM: [Student Name]

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 Thesis Seminar in _____ (quarter / year).
2. my 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 G: Thesis Cover Page Template

MDIV THESIS COVER PAGE

Please follow the following template for your thesis' cover page

{proposal}

{TITLE}

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF DIVINITY

The University of Chicago Divinity School

By
{AUTHOR}

Faculty Advisor: {name of advisor}

Chicago, IL
{DATE}

Appendix H: Thesis Archives Permission Request

Note: this is an example of the online form

University of Chicago Master of Divinity 2026 MDiv Thesis Deposit Permission Form

The University of Chicago (“UChicago”) Master of Divinity (“MDiv”) Program culminates in a Master’s Thesis, which represents the culmination of each student’s thought and experience within the MDiv Program. The MDiv Program will be transferring our physical archive of Master’s Theses into a digital archive currently stored in the Regenstein Library at UChicago. Not only will this make the MDiv Thesis archive more accessible to current students, it will also form an important piece of the history of religious education and research at the University of Chicago Divinity School.

The archive will be contained in the Knowledge@UChicago repository. This repository contains dissertations, articles, research, and theses from across the University. For more information on Knowledge@UChicago, see [here](#). The MDiv thesis archive will be accessible as a subsection within Knowledge@UChicago and will only be accessible to members of the UChicago community with a CNetID. Depositing documents into the Knowledge@UChicago requires that the depositor agree to the [University of Chicago Repository Deposit Agreement](#).

By signing this form, you are agreeing to allow the Ministry Area Research Assistant to deposit a digital copy of your thesis into the Knowledge@UChicago repository where it will be accessible to the University community as noted above. You may revoke this permission at any time by written request to the current Ministry Area Research Assistant. A physical copy of your MDiv Program Thesis will be stored in the Ministry Suite in Swift Hall.

To the extent the University of Chicago does not already have such rights, I, _____, grant to the University of Chicago, including representatives of the University of Chicago’s Master of Divinity Program, permission to deposit my Master’s Thesis into the Knowledge@UChicago repository and agree to the terms of the University of Chicago Repository Agreement available [here](#), which are incorporated herein.

Signed:

Dated: