

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY (DMin) IN CONTEXTUAL CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Introduction

The church and her ministries always stand in need of revitalization because of the changing realities that surround them. The clergy, who play a major role in serving and guiding of the church, have the responsibility of constantly strengthening the depth, character and direction of Christian ministry. In this theological spirit, the seminary affirms that the concept and practice of ministry should adequately respond to the specific needs and challenges that our congregations and church members are facing in the present context. All dynamic human cultures undergo transformation as they live through the socio-cultural and political realities of their historical contexts. In the same manner, the ministry of the church should keep evolving without distorting the biblical foundations of ministry. This DMin program in Contextual Christian Ministry (CCM) is intentionally designed for meeting the needs of the contemporary churches with sound pastoral insight and contextual relevance. The seminary intends on doing this primarily by training and re-equipping the clergy who are already engaged in different forms of Christian ministries, both inside and outside the church.

Rationale and Purpose of the CCM Program

Rationale of CCM

The program is based on the philosophy of “outcome-oriented” and “impact-driven” theological education. It is based on the following assumptions and theological commitments:

- The love, grace and justice of God is experienced in concrete historical contexts and communities
- This implies that theological education should not only seek to understand the context and needs of the students but also develop a curriculum that creatively engage these realities
- The seminary should teach what students need to know for what they should be doing in the ministry
- The ministry of graduates should make a constructive difference by affecting the social and spiritual health of the institutions and communities they serve
- True effectiveness of a theological institution does not lie in the programs it offers and the number of graduates a seminary produces but through the impact that the graduates are making in the life of churches and institutions they serve.

Goal and Objectives of the CCM

The CCM program seeks to work using the best resources and experiences of the seminary and churches at producing graduates who will love, serve and guide the church and society in the right path that God desires with pastoral conviction, biblical-theological depth, and intellectual clarity. The objectives of the CCM are:

- Equip students for mastering and applying constructive resources from all core theological disciplines in the lived context of their ministries
- Help students in building skills and confidence in interpreting the multi-layered social forces that surround and affect the people they serve
- Empower graduates to live a life of faithful discipleship and model a prophetic Christian worldview in the midst of relativism, secularism and materialism
- Produce students and ministers who demonstrate Christian vocational clarity through a life of character-spiritual transformation and conviction to work for change in the name of the triune God

Uniqueness of the CCM Curriculum

The CCM curriculum is built around three foci:

1. TIPS pedagogy:

The program seeks to nurture as well as achieve holistic integration and formation for ministry in the lives of graduates through a model of TIPS pedagogy:

T – Theological and Biblical coherence

I – Intellectual proficiency

P – Practical efficiency

S – Spiritual maturity

2. Three methodological and pastoral commitments:

In order to control the content, quality and relevance of theological education, the curricular design of CCM program takes serious consideration of the context and specific ministries of the graduates. Three methodological commitments guide our curricular design:

- Context-centered
- Ministry-based
- Impact-driven

3. Making ministry as one's learning space:

The program is intentionally designed to let students make use of their current ministry as a class room (as a spiritual-social-academic laboratory). This strategy has three further objectives in mind:

- i) To help students appreciate and understand that his/her current place of ministry has enormous resources to offer for personal growth and academic reflection.
- ii) To take ownership of and enrich the content and direction of the DMin program by directly relating it to context of his/her ministry.
- iii) To enable students to contextualize and apply what they learn in their respective ministries and leadership positions.

Cohort Model of DMin Program

The DMin program at OTS follow a rolling cohort model. The cycle of a cohort is three years. A new batch of candidates is admitted to the program after every three years.

Description of the CCM Course-work

Students must earn a minimum of 48 credits for the DMin degree. The DMin program in CCM offers specialization in two key areas:

- Core competency courses for Christian ministry (15 credits): These include interdisciplinary courses that enable students to develop competencies for doing contextual Christian ministry in the context of NEI and South Asia
- Research competency courses for Christian ministry (9 credits): These courses prepare students to develop the theoretical framework of a specific discipline or an interdisciplinary approach which is employed heuristically for writing of his/her DMin dissertation. Students will fulfill these requirements through independent study (guided reading/literature review) as well as select subjects from an existing pool of courses available in other programs. The overall plan of the research competency courses should be worked out in consultation with the primary supervisor and CDP.

Cohort Residential Module: Course-work for Year 1 and 2

Students will be required to complete twenty-seven (27) credits during the first two years of the study program. During the two years of course-work candidates will complete nine (9) modules (five core competency courses, three research competency courses, one course on research methods in Christian ministry), along with writing of comprehensive exam, presentation of Supervised Practicum Project, and defense of thesis proposal.

Candidates are required to attend four two-weeks long mandatory residential modules (two modules during the first year and another two modules in the second year). Each module carries three to six credit units. The duration of a module is 4 – 6 months. Students are required to complete 170 hours for each credit unit of course: 60 hours of pre-course assignments, 70 hours of cohort residential module, 40 hours of post-course requirements. The course work is fulfilled through a triangular teaching-learning method:

- Pre-course assignments: Taking part in supervised reading/reflection and submission of assignments prior to attending the two-weeks CRM
- Course work during two-weeks residential module: Participation in the two-weeks CRM
- Post-course assignments: Completion of final integrative readings/assignments

Break-down of DMin Program Schedule

Year	Modules and unit of hours	Courses/Other Activities	Credit Units
		Research Methods in Christian Ministry-I	2

1	1 st Cohort Residential Module	2 core competency courses	2+3= 6
		Total Credit Units for 1 st Module: 8	
1	2 nd Cohort Residential Module	2 core competency courses	3+3= 6
		1 research competency course	3
		Total Credit Units for 2 nd Module: 9	
2	3 rd Cohort Residential Module	Research Methods in Christian Ministry-II	1
		2 core competency courses	2+3= 6
		1 research competency course	3
		Supervised practicum (entire months of second year study)	
		Total Credit Units for 3 rd Module: 10	
2	4 th Cohort Residential Module	1 Research Concentration Course	3
		Comprehensive Exam	Pass/ Fail
		Presentation of Supervised Practicum Project	6
		Thesis Proposal and Defense	
		Total Credit Units for 4 th Module: 9	
3		a) Implement Supervised Practicum Project b) Teaching Assistantship at OTS c) Final review of Supervised Practicum Project d) Defend DMin dissertation	

3-5	Dissertation & Public Defense		12
		Total Credit Units	48

Supervisory and Support-structure of the DMin Program

The following mechanisms are put in place for providing an active and all-round support for students during their DMin study program:

A	Coordinator of DMin Program (CDP): Overall supervision of DMin students: personal, pastoral, administrative, and academic.
B	<p>Pastoral Accompaniment Team (PAT): PAT is a critical element in the DMin program as they serve as co-mentors with the faculty and function as a local support team throughout the candidate's study. Primarily comprising of members from the DMin candidate's local area/region, this team of at least two persons should be constituted immediately upon acceptance of admission by the student in consultation with the CDP.</p> <p>The team should include credible individuals/church members/clergy who can accompany (pray, listen and converse) the candidate during the entire length of his/her DMin program years. Members in this committee should be able to offer honest and constructive support for strengthening the performance and growth of the candidate.</p> <p>Since DMin is not a full residential program, a mechanism will be worked out by the CDP so that candidates can report periodically about their progress to the PAT.</p>
C	DMin Committee (DC): This committee should include at least three members (primary supervisor, a faculty, ministry expert (a clergy who has sound practical experience in the area of the candidate's dissertation topic). This committee (under the leadership of the supervisor) shall work closely with the CDP and the students in finalizing the 3 research competency courses.

Annual Self-Assessment and Review

Based on journaling and self-assessment of students, the CDP, PAT and Dissertation Committee will collectively review the overall performance and growth of each DMin candidate.

Supervised Practicum in Context

All DMin candidates are required to participate in an intensive and professionally supervised practice-oriented ministry during the second year of their program. Each student is required to choose one important aspect (area) from his/her current ministry and evaluate, develop a vision and a plan of action for making this chosen area stronger and more effective in the future. Students should pick an area which he/she considers so indispensable for his/her work. A format and working guideline should be drawn up under the guidance of the CDP, DC, and PAT. Students are expected to discuss and finalize the plan for their supervised practicum by the end of their First Year.

The final product of this supervised practicum will be the presentation of Supervised Practicum Project (SPP), in 3000 to 4000 words. This will be a document that provides resources and action plan for strengthening a particular ministry. The document can be in English or any local language. This SPP should be approved by the DC and PAT, and finally presented during the fourth CRM.

The implementation of the candidate's SPP during the entire third year of study program will be supported by the PAT and the team will also give a report by the end of the third year. It is hoped that this coordinated exercise will empower the student as well as strengthen the direction of her/her ministry. The student can explore and expand this project as a prospective area for his/her DMin dissertation.

Comprehensive Examination

As part of assessing a student's over-all performance in the program, a comprehensive examination (CE) is conducted based on topics drawn from the candidate's course-work and concerns emerging from his/her current ministry. CE is graded as pass or fail. A student should clear CE before starting of dissertation research. A candidate who fails in the CE will be required to do a re-sit within two months. If a student does not succeed in the second attempt, he/she will be awarded with an "All but Dissertation" diploma certificate from the college. This exam will be conducted in the OTS campus during the fourth residential module (end of Year 2). A general working guideline for the exam will be made available.

Thesis Proposal and Defense

DMin candidates are required to present and defend a thesis proposal (3000 to 4000 words) under the guidance of the primary supervisor and the Dissertation Committee. This exercise is done during the Fourth Residential Module, last part of second year program. A separate note on the standards and expectations of a thesis proposal will be provided.

DMin Dissertation (research, writing, public defense)

Students are expected to write a DMin dissertation of 40,000 to 50,000 words (excluding appendices and bibliography) and offer a public defense by the end of their Third Year of study.

Teaching Assistantship

DMin candidates who pass their Comprehensive Exam and defense of Thesis Proposal by the end of the 2nd year program are offered a one week of Teaching Assistantship in the Seminary. This has three distinct objectives and tasks:

I: To build leadership in co-mentoring:

This space will give candidates the opportunity to work with the faculty in co-mentoring the new cohort of DMin students. It would primarily involve sharing of their earning and experiences in the DMin program with the new batch of students.

II: DMin Candidates as Partners for Ministry formation:

As part of preparing the OTS students for ministry, this activity is initiated by the Seminary's Centre for Pastoral Renewal in coordination with the CDP. Working around a specific format and guide, they will be asked to share about challenges and opportunities in Christian ministry with MDiv and MTh students.

III: Vocalizing the role of theological education:

The cumulative result of these creative engagements will enable the candidates to consciously develop and affirm their discipline and character as theological educators, who will in turn embark on a journey life-long learning and also continue to serve as adjunct faculty.

Qualities of a Professional Doctoral Program

The DMin program adopts the seven qualities of "professional doctoral program" that are spelled out in the ATA Manual for Accreditation (January 2021, pages 78-78):

(i) Comprehensive understanding, having demonstrated a breadth of systematic understanding of a field of study at the forefront of professional practice in an aspect of Christian ministry, mastery of the skills and methods of research, and applied reflective-practice in a specific ministry context.

(ii) Critical skills, faithfully exercised, having demonstrated their capacity for independent evaluation of primary and secondary source materials, and practice-based research. Students must show ability to maintain an appropriate critical distance from their own professional context, and capacity to integrate academic knowledge and professional practice at doctoral level. A commitment to exercise such skills on the foundation of biblical faithfulness to Jesus Christ and his Church must be demonstrated.

(iii) Serious inquiry with integrity, having demonstrated the ability to conceive, design and implement a substantial project of research into, and critical analysis of, current and previous professional practice, and ability to generate mutual critique with thinkers and practitioners from outside their immediate ministry context, resulting in a sustained and coherent thesis, and to do so with Christian and scholarly integrity.

(iv) Creative and original contribution, having produced, as a result of such disciplined inquiry, a creative and original contribution that - a) extends the frontiers of knowledge, b) generates new perspectives, approaches or paradigms in professional practice, and c) enhances the integration between theological reflection and Christian ministry practice, and so merits publication in national or international professional literature.

(v) Contextual relevance, having shown their capacity, in the course of their doctoral program and in their expectation of its future potential, for biblically-informed critical engagement and enhanced and applied professional practice within the realities of their cultural contexts.

(vi) Ability to communicate, having shown an ability in communicating about their area of expertise to peer-level academic and professional audiences. Where appropriate this communication should be to non-specialists in local Christian communities and the wider society in culturally relevant ways, including their mother tongue, for example through teaching, preaching or writing.

(vii) Missional impact, having shown that they are committed, able and can be expected to use the fruit of their doctoral study, and the skills it has given them and the opportunities it affords them, to promote the kingdom of God and advance the mission of the church (both local and global) through reformulation of theory and of professional practice in transformational service and Christ-like leadership, to the glory of God.

Locating CCM Within the Vision of an Ideal Church and Society

The Ideal Church

The CCM program is inspired by the seminary's ongoing praxis for nurturing of an "ideal church" in the context of NEI, and therefore, pray and long to see:

- A community of believers who acknowledge the Lordship of God and the assurance of salvation in Jesus Christ through the ever-abiding grace and power of the Holy Spirit
- An inclusive-just Christian community which seeks to glorify God and to exist as a sign of God's reign
- A worshipping congregation that genuinely strives in embodying Christian values in all walks and contexts of lives
- A church that possesses passion for God's mission and for building of authentic discipleship in the lives of individuals and communities
- A church that takes the Scripture and leading of the Holy Spirit as the bases of their thoughts, decisions and practices
- A fellowship of believers that creates a Christ-centered loving space for dialogue, acceptance and healing of every member in the community
- A dynamic team of Christian leadership that believes in the redemptive power of selflessness and works at exemplifying the servant leadership of Christ

The Ideal Society

As a community of theological educators, we locate the specific tasks of CCM within the vision of a society that OTS is committed to contributing along with other committed Christians, which are:

- A structure, system of governance and culture of dialogue and human rights that upholds access to resources and entitlements irrespective of tribe, caste, religion and social background

- A society where individuals, churches, communities, institutions and leaders work together in promoting all-round development and human-ecological flourishing
- A community where the practice of respect and tolerance affirms diversities/ differences and promotes a culture of peaceful co-existence
- A society that works at creating safe and non-judgmental spaces for listening and meaningful expression of ideas and actions so that every individual and community can live to realize the fullest human potential that God desires

DMin Program Working Calendar

<p>What to do after Acceptance of Admission into the DMin Program</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should immediately contact the Coordinator of the DMin Program (CDP) and find out how to prepare for the DMin orientation program and the first Cohort Residential Module (CRM) • Be ready to form the “Pastoral Accompaniment Team” during the first CRM in consultation with the DC and CDP
<p>Year One</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take part in the first and second CRM • Formal review of the candidate’s performance with the DC during the second CRM • Submit plan for “Supervised Practicum in Context” during the second CRM to the CDP for review by Dissertation Committee • Discuss and finalize dissertation topic during second CRM • Form DC by the beginning of second CRM
<p>Year Two</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take part in the third and fourth CRM • Do “Supervised Practicum in Context” • Formal submission of thesis proposal during the third CRM to the CDP for review by the primary supervisor • Appear comprehensive exam during fourth CRM • Upon passing of the comprehensive exam, defend thesis proposal during the fourth CRM
<p>“</p> <p>Year Three</p>
<p>Implement Supervised Practicum Project</p> <p>Teaching Assistantship at OTS</p> <p>Defend DMin dissertation</p>
<p>Year Four – Five</p>
<p>“</p> <p>Research, writing and public defense of dissertation</p> <p>”</p>

Accreditation Status of the DMin Program

The seminary will be seeking accreditation of the program with the Asia Theological Association in 2025. Until this official accreditation is achieved, students will receive the diploma and certificate from OTS.

Timeline

Duration of the Program: The program is designed to be completed in 3-5 Academic Years.

DMin Program Admission Cycle

The second cohort of DMin students will be admitted in 2025. Admissions for the second cohort of DMin students will be conducted during the Spring of 2025. The academic year for the second cohort will begin in July 2025.

Admission Requirements:

- The candidate should have a conferred BD/MDiv degree with a minimum GPA of 3.3 (on a 4.0 scale) or a B+ grade.
- The candidate should have at least five (5) years of ministry experience after obtaining the BD/MDiv degree.
- The candidate should be currently serving in a ministry leadership position.

Application Components:

Get started on your path to becoming a DMin student at OTS:

1. Process application online
2. Provide two references:
 - i. Pastor or Ministry Peer
 - ii. Former teacher/professor
3. Provide two essays:
 - i. Faith Journey and Statement of Ministry Experience (at least 1500 words)
 - ii. Statement of Purpose for DMin Program: This essay has two components:
 - a) State the candidate's motivation (reason) for higher study (750 words)
 - b) Present at least two possible areas for DMin dissertation (750 words)
6. Upload official transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate institutions
7. Pay application fee of ₹1000 during the interview