YDS enables women and men to prepare for the lay or ordained ministries of Christian churches. As part of that preparation, YDS offers a ministry studies support program to each Master of Divinity degree student. The program accommodates the student's needs and expectations for the degree, and Yale's requirements. Support for ministry studies within the context of the degree includes the help of academic advisers, the associate dean for leadership initiatives, and the Berkeley Divinity School director of studies.

The M.Div. is a professional degree, required by many Christian denominations for ordained ministry. Utilizing the YDS faculty and student body as well as the resources of the broader Yale University academic community, M.Div. students engage in a three-year program of intellectual discovery and personal formation. The M.Div. degree prepares students for their denominational ordination process in a program that is theologically informed, professionally competent, academically rigorous, and oriented to the life of the church. Yale provides all of the course work required for most denominational ordination requirements and also offers the context and broad system of support for this journey of the mind and spirit. The degree also prepares students who are not ordination-bound for a wide range of careers in professional ministry and church service. Assessment of progress is offered throughout the academic program so that students in the M.Div. program can move forward, with broad institutional support, into the ministries that are most appropriate for their interests, their gifts, and their hopes.

In addition to academic work, ministry studies include possibilities for regular worship with the YDS community at Marquand Chapel, at Berkeley Center, and in a wide range of denominational and other settings. The Annand Program for Spiritual Formation, sponsored by Berkeley Divinity School and open to all students, encourages learning the fundamentals of prayer and Christian discipleship from seasoned clergy and lay teachers. The Supervised Ministries programs offer rich opportunities for professional growth within congregational ministry and non-parish settings.

In all aspects of ministry studies, consideration of issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality, and the broad scope of social justice concerns are of central importance.