DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

PROGRAM FOR THE M.DIV. DEGREE

The degree of Master of Divinity (M.Div.) certifies completion of a program of theological studies designed primarily, although not exclusively, to prepare the candidate for ordination to the Christian ministry. The requirements reflect the intention of YDS to provide an education that is theologically informed, professionally competent, academically rigorous, and oriented to the life of the church.

The minimum requirement for the M.Div. degree is the successful completion of seventy-two credit hours and a three-year residency with the following caveats:

1. Students with heavy responsibilities outside of school are strongly advised to reduce their course load, but the total program of study for the M.Div. degree shall not be expanded beyond six years. Students will not receive financial aid for course work beyond the requirements.

2. The residency requirement of three years may be reduced when credits, up to a maximum of twenty-four hours, are transferred. In order to receive the M.Div. degree, students who transfer credits must complete at least two years of resident work at YDS, one of which must be the final year.

3. Exceptions to the final-year residency requirement may be made for students on approved exchange or joint-degree study. In all cases a minimum of forty-eight credits must be earned through course work at Yale.

Students are encouraged to elect courses in other schools or departments of the University. Any student who takes more than nine hours in another school or department of the University comes under the regulations for interdepartmental study; see Interdepartmental Studies, in the chapter Other Curricular Considerations. See the chapter Areas and Courses of Study for information about credit for undergraduate courses.

M.Div. students may opt to complete a thesis or project by following the procedures outlined below.

Minimum requirements for graduation include the following distribution of courses in the curriculum:

**Area I** Twelve credit hours distributed between Old Testament and New Testament. Elementary Hebrew and Greek do not meet this requirement but are counted toward the total number of hours needed for graduation.

**Area II** Twelve credit hours, including at least one course designated to meet the Theology requirement. Only explicitly introductory courses taught by Divinity Theology faculty may count in fulfillment of this requirement; this includes Introduction to Theology (REL 600) and Systematic Theology (REL 626). Only three hours of Denominational Courses may be counted toward the Area II requirement.

**Area III** Nine credit hours in Historical Studies, six of which must be met by any two of the following introductory courses: REL 712, REL 713, REL 714, and REL 715. Only three hours of Denominational Courses may be counted toward the Area III requirement.

**Area IV** Twelve credit hours, including REL 812.

**Area V** Nine credit hours.

**Supervised Ministries** See Supervised Ministries, in the chapter Other Curricular Considerations.

**Elective** Eighteen credit hours.

Additional Distribution Requirements

Every M.Div. student is required to take one course (three credit hours) in a non-Christian religion or one course in the relationship between Christianity and other religions.

Every M.Div. student is required to take one course (three credit hours) that either focuses on or integrates in a sustained way material on class, gender/sexuality, race/ethnicity, disability, and/or global/cultural diversity. This course may also include material on globalization.

Every M.Div. student is required to take one course (three credit hours) in Christian Ethics. Courses that are designated as meeting the Ethics requirement introduce students in a comprehensive way to what it means to live as a Christian, and to how Christians have thought about the kind of people we ought to be and the kinds of actions we ought to perform and avoid, given Christian faith commitments. It cannot simply be a course that focuses on a particular moral issue, nor can it be a course in philosophical or nontheological social ethics.

All M.Div. students are additionally required to complete the nine-hour workshop Negotiating Boundaries in Ministerial Relationships (REL 3990). This workshop is a prerequisite for the Part-Time Internship with Practicum, Summer Intensive Internship with Practicum, and Part-Time Internship with Advanced Practicum.

No course may be counted toward meeting the requirements simultaneously in more than one area or toward meeting more than one of the distributional requirements within a single area.
For students with special and clear vocational plans, the Professional Studies Committee may approve a course of study that differs from the indicated area minimum requirements.

The first year of study is designed to provide general orientation in the various areas of theological education.

**Assessment Requirement**

The M.Div. is a professional degree program, and students are expected to grow in their understanding of their own place in the community of faith; to understand the cultural realities and social settings within which religious communities live and carry out their missions; to grow in emotional maturity, personal faith, moral integrity, and social concern; and to gain capacities for growth in the practice of ministry. The faculty has established learning goals for Religious Heritage, Cultural Context, Personal and Spiritual Formation, and Capacity for Ministry and Public Leadership. It is expected that students engaged in such learning will, during the course of the degree program, gain clarity about their own place in professional ministry—ordained or nonordained—within the church or in the broader society.

In order to measure progress toward these goals, M.Div. students are required to participate in a program assessing their progress. Each student builds a portfolio of work that includes significant academic projects, creative projects, and brief essays reflecting on the goals outlined above. This portfolio is developed with the support of faculty advisers and the associate dean for leadership initiatives. In addition to regular conferences with an assigned academic adviser, students are also required to participate in a mid-degree consultation, based on the M.Div. portfolio. That consultation will normally include the faculty adviser, the associate dean for leadership initiatives or the director of Anglican studies and formation at Berkeley, and several other professionals acquainted with the student’s work and focus. Each M.Div. student must participate in an End-of-Degree conversation as part of the assessment requirement.

**Supervised Ministry Requirement**

Students who enroll in the M.Div. program must complete four hundred hours of a supervised ministry as part of their degree requirements. Students may elect to meet this requirement in several ways. See Supervised Ministries, in the chapter Other Curricular Considerations, for definitive information about requirements and policies regarding supervised ministries.

**Thesis and Project Options**

A thesis or project is an option in the third year of the M.Div. program. Candidates interested in a thesis or project must initiate the process by selecting first and second readers (either of whom may or may not be the academic adviser) appropriate to the topic who are willing and able to work with the student. Readers will ordinarily be Yale faculty members. However, with permission of the senior associate dean of academic affairs, the first reader can be a part-time or visiting Yale faculty member, and the second reader may be external to Yale. Completed thesis or project proposals must be submitted no later than the end of the first week of the term in which the thesis or project will be initiated. Students are strongly encouraged to submit a proposal form at the end of the term prior to the term in which they hope to begin the thesis or project.

Key elements of the process include (1) a one-page description of the thesis or project; (2) signatures of the first reader, second reader, and academic adviser; (3) a statement of support from the first reader and, in the event the first reader is not a full-time member of the YDS faculty, a second statement of support from a person who is a full-time member of the YDS faculty; (4) specification of what must be submitted as evidence of progress achieved by the Monday of the fifth week of classes in which the thesis or project is begun.

The senior associate dean of academic affairs reviews the completed application and makes a determination on whether or not the proposal is approved. Students who have not obtained approval prior to the start of the term in which the thesis or project will be initiated are advised to register for another class in the event that approval is not granted.

Theses or projects written for the M.Div. program are eligible for elective credit only. All thesis and project students must register for the M.Div. Thesis or Project course (REL 3799) for one or two terms.

Further details on thesis and project requirements are described in the document “Yale Divinity School Timeline Requirements for M.A.R./M.Div. Theses,” available in the registrar’s office.

**PROGRAM FOR THE M.A.R. DEGREE**

The degree of Master of Arts in Religion (M.A.R.) certifies either completion of a comprehensive program of study in preparation for one of the many forms of ministry or service, or completion of one of the concentrated programs of advanced study described below.

The minimum requirement for the M.A.R. degree is the successful completion of forty-eight credit hours and a two-year residency with the following caveats:

1. Students with heavy responsibilities outside of school are strongly advised to reduce their course load, but the total program of study for the M.A.R. degree shall not be expanded beyond four years. Students will not receive financial aid for course work beyond the requirements.
2. The residency requirement of two years may be reduced when credits, up to a maximum of twelve hours, are transferred. In order to receive the M.A.R. degree, students who transfer credits must complete at least three terms of resident work at YDS, one of which must be the final term.

3. Exceptions to the final-term residency requirement may be made for students on approved exchange or joint-degree study. In all cases a minimum of twenty-four credits must be earned through course work at Yale.

Students are encouraged to elect courses in other schools and departments of the University. Any student who takes more than nine hours in another school or department of the University comes under the regulations for interdepartmental study; see Interdepartmental Studies, in the chapter Other Curricular Considerations. See the chapter Areas and Courses of Study for information about credit for undergraduate courses.

Students awarded the M.A.R. degree who continue their studies for the M.Div. degree will not be awarded both degrees for less than four full academic years of study.

M.A.R. students may opt to complete a thesis or project by following the procedures outlined below.

**Assessment Requirement**

Students in the M.A.R. degree program are required to participate in a program assessing their progress. Each student builds an online portfolio of work that demonstrates progress toward the degree's learning goals. Learning goals for students in M.A.R. concentration programs are determined by the faculty in each area; learning goals for students in M.A.R. comprehensive programs are developed, beginning in the second term of study, by the students themselves, in consultation with their academic adviser and with the associate dean for leadership initiatives. M.A.R. students will upload work demonstrating fulfillment of their goals, beginning early in the second year of study. Students will post a brief narrative outlining how the goals are being fulfilled. Faculty members in each concentration will meet to discuss the progress of students studying in their area; academic advisers will review the work of advisees in comprehensive programs. Each M.A.R. student must participate in an End-of-Degree conversation as part of the assessment requirement.

**Comprehensive Program**

Minimum requirements of the comprehensive M.A.R. program include the following distribution of courses in the curriculum:

- **Area I** Six credit hours. Elementary Hebrew and Greek do not meet this requirement but are counted toward the total number of hours needed for graduation.
- **Area II** Six credit hours.
- **Area III** Six credit hours.
- **Area IV** Six credit hours.
- **Area V** Six credit hours.
- **Elective** Eighteen credit hours.

No course may be counted toward meeting the distributional requirements simultaneously in more than one area. The distributional requirements of the M.A.R. degree are sufficiently flexible that students can devote a significant part of the program to specialized interests.

**Concentrated Program**

The concentrated M.A.R. program offers the opportunity to pursue advanced work in one of the disciplines of theological study. The faculty limits the number of applicants accepted into the concentrated program and reviews the progress of each upon completion of the first term. If progress is not satisfactory, the student becomes responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the comprehensive program. Concentrations are offered in Asian Religions; Black Religion in the African Diaspora; Ethics; Hebrew Bible; History of Christianity; Latinx and Latin American Christianity; Liturgical Studies; New Testament; Philosophical Theology and Philosophy of Religion; Religion and Ecology; Religion and the Arts; Second Temple Judaism; Theology; Women's, Gender, and/or Sexuality Studies in Religion; and World Christianity/Missions.

**ASIAN RELIGIONS**

The concentration in Asian Religions requires twelve credit hours of language study and a minimum of twelve credit hours of study in Asian religions. At least eighteen credit hours of YDS course work is required of all candidates.

**BLACK RELIGION IN THE AFRICAN DIASPORA**

The concentration in Black Religion in the African Diaspora is an interdisciplinary program based in the YDS curriculum and encourages students to take courses pertinent to African American religious studies in other departments of the University. At least eighteen credit hours must be taken in courses focusing on black religion, with one course in at least four areas of the curriculum. In addition, six credit
hours of foundational study are required in Bible and twelve in history and theology. Although not required, up to six hours of credit may be given for a major paper or project.

ETHICS
Individual programs are planned for each of the students concentrating in Ethics. Ordinarily six credit hours of Bible and twelve in history and theology are required. At least eighteen credit hours must be taken in ethics, and it is possible to plan the program so that primary emphasis is placed on either theological ethics or social ethics. Although not required, up to six hours of credit may be given for a major paper or project. Courses may be taken in other departments of the University (for example, in Philosophy, History, Political Science, Sociology) or in another professional school.

HEBREW BIBLE
The concentration in Hebrew Bible requires eighteen credit hours of Hebrew and Hebrew-based courses, six credit hours of Greek, the foundation courses in Old and New Testament Interpretation (REL 503, REL 504, REL 505, and REL 506) or their equivalents, and six credit hours of exegetical, thematic, or historical courses, selected in consultation with an adviser.

HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY
The concentration in History of Christianity trains students in the history of Christianity and in historical methods of analysis for the study of religion. The curriculum includes a wide range of courses, from early Christianity to the Reformation and contemporary America, and is broadened by the opportunity to take courses in other departments and programs of the University (for example, in Religious Studies, History, American Studies, African American Studies, History of Art, and Classics). Students are challenged to engage with the past in ways that treat earlier cultures with integrity, while exploring how those pasts continue to inform our present. Through the rigorous study of manuscript, printed, visual, and oral sources, students learn a range of methodologies and approaches to history as well as enter current debates on topics such as memory, war, race, and gender. Faculty emphasize the historical study of theology and religious thought; the cultural contexts in which ideas were formulated, expressed, and disseminated; and the historical intersections of Christianity with other religious traditions. The concentration requires at least eighteen credit hours in historical studies, and students are encouraged to complete a thesis, especially if their plans include further graduate work.

LATINX AND LATIN AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY
The Latinx and Latin American Christianity concentration is an interdisciplinary program for students who wish to study Latinx and Latin American religious culture, theology, and history. Students can choose to focus their studies on Latinx Christianity in the United States or Christianity in Latin America, or to explore both with an eye toward developing a more hemispheric perspective in relation to these fields and geographic areas (i.e., the United States and Latin America). The concentration requires eighteen credit hours to be taken in Latinx and/or Latin American Studies, twelve of which must be in Latinx and/or Latin American religion courses and six of which can be in other related departments and disciplines. Students are also required to take courses in biblical studies, history, ethics, and theology for the purposes of a well-rounded program of study. Students who do not speak Spanish and/or Portuguese are encouraged to take relevant language courses.

LITURGICAL STUDIES
The concentration in Liturgical Studies requires eighteen credit hours of study in the major area, including the introductory core course of the program, REL 682, Foundations of Christian Worship. Students must take nine credit hours of limited electives in liturgical studies, three with an historical focus, three with a theological focus, and three with a strong methodological or practical component. The remaining six credits may be taken as electives, but students are strongly encouraged to seek out a course in their own denominational worship tradition. The remaining thirty credits required for the M.A.R. with a concentration in liturgical studies will be taken in the various areas of study of the YDS and Institute of Sacred Music (ISM) curricula, according to a student’s academic interests and professional goals and in consultation with faculty in the area of concentration.

NEW TESTAMENT
The concentration in New Testament requires eighteen credit hours of Greek and Greek-based courses, six credit hours of Hebrew, the foundation courses in Old and New Testament Interpretation (REL 503, REL 504, REL 505, and REL 506) or their equivalents, and six credit hours of exegetical, thematic, or historical courses, selected in consultation with an adviser.

PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION
Individual programs are planned for each of the students concentrating in Philosophical Theology and Philosophy of Religion. Eighteen credit hours are required in biblical and theological studies—the latter including but not limited to moral, historical, liberation, and systematic theology—with at least six in biblical and six in theological studies. At least eighteen hours must be taken in philosophical theology or philosophy of religion. Courses in the social sciences and in historical and philosophical study of religion may be taken in other departments of the University, especially in Religious Studies and Philosophy.

RELIGION AND ECOLOGY
The concentration in Religion and Ecology is an interdisciplinary program based in the YDS curriculum and draws on faculty resources in biblical studies, ethics, liturgical studies, pastoral care, spirituality, theology, and world religions and ecology. It spans the study of eco-theology; eco-spirituality; eco-feminism; theologies of embodiment, place, land, race, and indigeneity; environmental ethics; liturgy and creation; and cosmology and ecology. At least fifteen credit hours must be taken in the area of religion and ecology, as well as six credit
hours in the School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. In addition, fifteen credit hours of study in Bible, theology, and/or history are required, with a minimum of three credit hours of each.

**RELIGION AND THE ARTS**

Students in the Religion and the Arts concentration elect one of three tracks: Literature, Visual Arts, or Music. The emphasis in each track is on history, criticism, and analysis of past and present practice. Each requires twenty-one credits in the area of concentration: in visual arts or music, twelve of these credits must be taken with ISM faculty; in literature, six must be taken with ISM faculty. In addition, at least fifteen credits shall be devoted to general theological studies: six credits in Area I, six credits in Area II, and three credits in Area III. Twelve credits of electives may be taken from anywhere in the University, though the number of electives allowed in studio art, creative writing, or musical performance is at the discretion of the adviser and requires the permission of the instructor. In total, one-half of the student's course load must consist of YDS credits. An undergraduate major in the field of concentration or its equivalent is required.

**SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM**

The M.A.R. in Second Temple Judaism is concentrated on the Second Temple and Rabbinic periods (approximately 500 BCE to 500 CE). This program is a cooperative one that brings together students and faculty from YDS and from the Department of Religious Studies in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. The period in question covers the later stages of the Hebrew Bible and the formative period of both Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity. The centuries between the last books of the Hebrew canon (early second century BCE) and the emergence of both Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity (by the second century CE) are especially crucial for the development of both traditions. This program overlaps with the concentrations in Hebrew Bible and New Testament but is distinguished by its emphasis on noncanonical Jewish material and on the early rabbinc tradition.

**THEOLOGY**

The program in Theology permits concentration in theological studies with a sequence of courses totaling eighteen credit hours selected for this purpose. Suggested concentrations are systematic, historical, or liberation theology. The foundation courses in Old and New Testament Interpretation (REL 503, REL 504, REL 505, and REL 506) or their equivalents are required of all candidates, as are six credit hours in the history of Christian theology. Individual programs are designed utilizing these guidelines.

**WOMEN’S, GENDER, AND/OR SEXUALITY STUDIES IN RELIGION**

An interdisciplinary concentration in the context of the YDS curriculum is offered in Women’s, Gender, and/or Sexuality Studies in Religion. At least eighteen credit hours must be taken in women’s, gender, or sexuality studies, either (1) focusing on a particular thematic interest or set of inquiries, or (2) demonstrating a breadth of learning across the Divinity curriculum. In addition, six credit hours of study are required in Bible (or other sacred texts, with the adviser’s permission), and six hours are required in history and/or theology. Students are encouraged to take relevant courses in other departments of the University.

**WORLD CHRISTIANITY/MISSIONS**

The concentration in World Christianity/Missions is designed for students who are interested in the historical expansion of Christianity and/or who wish to spend a period of time working with churches and organizations in other countries or who wish to pursue graduate studies in a relevant field. Students are required to take a range of courses dealing with Christianity in its historical, biblical, and theological dimensions as well as Christianity’s interface with culture and with other religions. Students may opt either for Missions or for World Christianity as their emphasis within the concentration. Twelve credit hours are required in the core curriculum of each emphasis. For either emphasis, six credit hours in foundation courses in biblical studies are required, as are six credit hours of work in theology and/or ethics and six credit hours in the history of Christianity. There are six credit hours of electives. Students who opt for the Missions emphasis will take a minimum of six credit hours in one of four geographic area studies programs of the University (Latin American, African, East Asian, or Southeast Asian studies) as well as six credit hours in World Christianity. Relevant courses in the other departments of the University may also be included after consultation with the adviser. For those emphasizing World Christianity within the concentration, six credit hours in Missions are required as well as six credit hours in world religions. Students may also opt for a major research writing project as part of their course requirement in consultation with their adviser.

**Thesis and Project Options**

A thesis or project is an option in the second year of the M.A.R. program. Candidates interested in a thesis or project must initiate the process by selecting first and second readers (either of whom may or may not be the academic adviser) appropriate to the topic who are willing and able to work with the student. Readers will ordinarily be Yale faculty members. However, with permission of the senior associate dean of academic affairs, the first reader can be a part-time or visiting Yale faculty member, and the second reader may be external to Yale. Completed thesis or project proposals must be submitted no later than the end of the first week of the term in which the thesis or project will be initiated. Students are strongly encouraged to submit a proposal form at the end of the term prior to the term in which they hope to begin the thesis or project.

Key elements of the process include (1) a one-page description of the thesis or project; (2) signatures of the first reader, second reader, and academic adviser; (3) a statement of support from the first reader and, in the event the first reader is not a full-time member of the YDS faculty, a second statement of support from a person who is a full-time member of the YDS faculty; (4) specification of what must be submitted as evidence of progress achieved by the Monday of the fifth week of classes in which the thesis or project is begun.
The senior associate dean of academic affairs reviews the completed application and makes a determination on whether or not the proposal is approved. Students who have not obtained approval prior to the start of the term in which the thesis or project will be initiated are advised to register for another class in the event that approval is not granted.

For M.A.R. concentrated program students, the academic adviser will determine area credit. Theses or projects written for the M.A.R. comprehensive program are eligible for elective credit only. All thesis and project students must register for the M.A.R. Thesis or Project course (REL 3899) for one or two terms.

Further details on thesis and project requirements are described in the document “Yale Divinity School Timeline Requirements for M.A.R./M.Div. Theses,” available in the registrar’s office.

Extended Degree Program

An extended degree program is offered for selected students in the concentrated M.A.R. program. This allows students to take additional courses during a third academic year.

Each year, the number of openings available for the extended year is determined in late August/early September. The selection committee can fill no more than this number of openings but may develop a waiting list if warranted. There may be two selection rounds, the first in the fall term and a possible second round in the spring term. If students are not selected in the fall, they may reapply in the spring; if there are spaces available, along with students who did not submit their applications for the fall-term selection round. Financial aid for the third year will be limited.

Applications in the fall term are due by October 15; notifications are sent by November 15. Students must notify the YDS Admissions Office of their decision by March 20. Applications in the spring term are due by March 1; notifications are sent by March 26. Students must notify the YDS Admissions Office of their decision by April 15. Current ISM M.A.R. students interested in applying for the third year should contact the ISM Office of Admissions for details.

Students must include the following items in their applications: (1) address and e-mail address; (2) area of concentration; (3) a completed M.A.R. course plan (blank copies are downloadable online, or hard copies are available in the Academic Affairs Office), with anticipated fourth-term courses included; (4) a statement explaining why the student wishes to extend the concentrated M.A.R. program; (5) a description of the doctoral program to which the student will be applying and how it fits into the statement of interest above; and (6) two letters of recommendation from Yale faculty. One of these letters must be from a faculty member in the area of concentration.

Students accepted into the extended year will need to apply for financial aid, and a new award will be calculated. The new award will not be based on previous scholarship aid received at YDS. Federal loan programs will be available, provided that Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is maintained.

PROGRAM FOR THE S.T.M. DEGREE

Graduates of theological schools of recognized standing who have obtained the B.D. or M.Div. degree may be admitted to a program of studies leading to the Master of Sacred Theology (S.T.M.) degree.

The work for this degree may be regarded as a fourth year of preparation for the Christian ministry. It may be used for advanced training in a specialized form of Christian service such as a college or university ministry; chaplaincy in industry, institutions, or the armed services; urban or inner-city ministry; ecumenical or interfaith leadership; the directing of continuing education; international missions; or ministry with LGBTQ youth, refugees, or the elderly. The S.T.M. program may also be used as a year of specialized work in one of the theological disciplines or as preparation for doctoral studies. The schedule of courses may involve offerings in other schools or departments of the University.

Each candidate is required to plan, submit for approval, and pursue an integrated program designed to serve one of the purposes stated above, and a minimum of three-fourths of the courses taken must be related to a designated field of concentration. However, candidates who use the program as a general preparation for ministry may request a waiver of the normal requirements that there be a specific area of concentration and that the written project be related to this field.

A candidate for the S.T.M. degree must complete the equivalent of at least twenty-four credit hours of graduate study beyond the B.D., M.Div., or equivalent degree. Only course work graded High Pass or above is credited toward the S.T.M. degree. A thesis, major paper in a regular course, or other acceptable project in the selected field of study is required. The option of a Credit/No Credit grade is not available for the S.T.M. degree.

YDS M.Div. students accepted into the S.T.M. degree program and in need of financial aid will need to submit a new financial aid application. A new award will be calculated that is not based on previous scholarship aid received at YDS. Federal loan programs will be available, provided that Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) is maintained.

The work for the degree may be undertaken in one year, or distributed over two, three, or four years; it must be completed within four years after matriculation. In the case of students who wish to extend their studies, nine credit hours is the minimum course load that can be regarded as a full-time program of study. Normally no work taken prior to matriculation will be counted toward the degree, nor will credit be transferred from other schools unless approval to count a course to be taken elsewhere has been given in advance. Students will
not receive financial aid for course work beyond the requirements. International students are permitted to take three terms to complete their S.T.M. degree.

An extended paper, an independent thesis, or a project in the candidate's area of concentration is required for the S.T.M. degree. Extended papers are written in conjunction with the regular requirements for courses credited toward the S.T.M. degree. Candidates who choose to write theses or pursue projects must register for one or two terms of REL 3999, S.T.M. Thesis or Project, three credit hours per term. Projects are restricted to programs focusing on some aspect of ministerial practice. Candidates must present a proposal stipulating which of these three options they intend to pursue. The academic adviser, the adviser chosen to direct the thesis or project, and the director of S.T.M. studies must approve the proposal in advance. Normally the adviser who directs the thesis or project will also serve as academic adviser. A thesis, project, or extended paper must demonstrate independent research and critical inquiry.

The length of manuscripts submitted to satisfy the S.T.M. thesis or project requirement will vary, depending on the subject matter. In conceptual fields, a one-term thesis or project report will normally be 50–60 pages long; a two-term thesis or project report, 100–120 pages. In text-based fields, shorter theses may be more appropriate. Candidates must submit a completed thesis or project report by the specified deadlines set for that academic year to the academic adviser and an additional faculty reader. If both readers judge a thesis or project to be distinguished or of exceptional quality, such distinction will be recorded on the candidate's transcript.

After an S.T.M. thesis has been approved by faculty readers, and prior to 5 p.m., May 9, 2019, a candidate must provide one correct copy to be microfilmed for the Divinity Library. This copy must be presented to the registrar's office unbound and in final form. It must have a title page, be free of typographical errors, and employ an acceptable literary style, including standard forms for references. (Recommended manuals include the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers; The Chicago Manual of Style; Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations; and The SBL Handbook of Style for Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines.) Candidates will receive a form in regard to microfilming and copyright, to be submitted to the library with the final copy of the thesis.

An extended paper is written in conjunction with regular requirements for a course in which a candidate is currently enrolled or which the candidate has previously completed. The length of an extended paper should normally exceed the usual requirement for a term paper by one-third to one-half. Only the instructor of the course will evaluate the manuscript submitted, and the only grade recorded will be the grade for the course. As a rule, extended papers will not be deposited in the Divinity Library, although an instructor may recommend the submission of a paper of exceptional quality. The final decision on this matter will involve the judgments of a second reader and the director of S.T.M. studies.