



VTS Doctoral Application
Prerequisites and Requirements
(to be submitted through the official Admissions portal)

Doctor of Ministry Prerequisites

To qualify as a **Doctor of Ministry** candidate, applicants must:

- Possess an earned Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary or its equivalent, consisting of at least 72 hours of academic credit with at least a B-grade average (consideration will also be given to applicants with a master's degree in another theological discipline; see below for more details)
- Show strong motivation for professional spiritual growth
- Exhibit curiosity, humility, and courage to learn and try new ways of leading
- Demonstrate a strong capacity for writing, reading, reflection, and conversation in the English Language
- Have at least three years related experience and currently work in ministry

While the Doctor of Ministry degree builds upon a Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree, consideration for the DMin is given to an applicant without an MDiv under the following circumstances:

(1) Student holds a theological master's degree of at least 48 credits. This degree includes coursework in biblical studies, theology, ethics, and practical theology.

AND

(2) Applicant has at least eight years of cumulative experience in full-time ministry and currently works in ministry.

Doctor of Educational Ministry Prerequisites

To qualify as a **Doctor of Educational Ministry** candidate, applicants must:

- Possess an earned Master's degree of at least 48 credits in a discipline related to DEdMin studies (e.g. education, organizational behavior, public administration, social work)
- Demonstrate a strong capacity to comprehend and work with texts and concepts from the classic theological disciplines
- Show strong motivation for professional and spiritual growth
- Exhibit curiosity, humility, and courage to learn and try new ways of leading
- Demonstrate a strong capacity for writing, reading, reflection, and conversation in the English Language
- Have a minimum of three years' experience in employed educational vocation, and currently work in a position of organizational leadership, direction, or instruction in a religiously affiliated or sympathetic educational setting
- Be an active member of congregations and faith communities for at least six years and through the present.

Submission Requirements

1. **An official transcript** of work completed at each college, university, or seminary the applicant has attended. Transcripts must be official copies sent in sealed envelopes, or emailed by the institution to admissions@vts.edu.

2. **A resume or CV** that includes a record of all significant employment and volunteer work since college.

3. **Essays** (delineated below; double-spaced, Times New Roman font with 1" margins).

4. Reflection on the Seminary Covenant

Within the application, you will have an opportunity to read the Seminary Covenant. Please read the Covenant carefully. It is intended as an invitation to all members of the community to embrace the joys of living in a diverse community and to wrestle authentically with the challenges. You will be asked to submit 350 words or less of personal reflection on the Seminary Covenant, along with your other essays.

5. **Three letters of reference:** one letter of endorsement and recommendation from the applicant's ecclesiastical authority or equivalent, one recommendation letter from a ministry colleague and one from an academic instructor. In other words, one letter must speak to the applicant's spiritual readiness, one must speak to an applicant's professional readiness, and one must speak to the applicant's academic readiness for doctoral work. For DEdMin. applicants, the letter of endorsement from a church pastor or priest must include an affirmation of applicant's active involvement in church life.

6. **A criminal background check** is a part of the enrollment process for admitted students. We require background checks for students who live on-campus during the summer residency. Members of the admissions office staff will provide information and instructions for initiating the background check.

Essays (see #3 above):

The Admissions Committee is interested in the applicant's range of experience in the practice of ministry. Applicants need to prepare the following items and upload them to the online application:

1. A 4- to 5-page essay entitled "Theology of Leadership," which displays how the applicant understands and expresses leadership within their specific ministry context. The essay should include the following elements: 1) a brief description of applicant's ministry context (no more than one page); 2) a portrayal of the applicant's leadership within that context, that is, how the context shapes their leadership and how their leadership shapes that context; 3) exploration of theological and biblical resources that shape the applicant's approach to leadership. The essay should reference at least two books significant to the applicant's thought and practice.
2. A 2-page Personal Statement outlining the applicant's areas of interest for research, study, and practice of ministry during doctoral work.
3. **Students applying to the DMin who do not possess an MDiv** must also complete the following essay: In 6-8 pages, write an analysis of a discrete instance in your ministry that proved difficult to navigate. The instance should be the sort of situation that provides opportunity for ministry learning. The essay should include the following two elements. 1) Brief description of the case in 2 pages. 2) Describe how you might interpret what happened

during this situation using two interpretive lenses. One interpretative lens should be from theology or biblical studies and should be 2-2½ pages. Another interpretative lens should be from philosophy or the social sciences and be 2-2½ pages. Overall the case study should indicate the struggle of the situation and your response, your capacity to understand and adapt your vocation to the cultures embedded within your context of ministry, a basic self-understanding of your ministerial identity, and a readiness to engage in ongoing spiritual formation.

All application materials become the property of Virginia Theological Seminary.