

Seminary Doctoral Program Policies and Procedures

Portland Seminary of George Fox University

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1. Introduction

This manual is intended to serve as a student guide concerning the Seminary Doctoral Program's policies, procedures, requirements, and expectations.

It is not intended to be comprehensive, covering all situations that will arise for students. Inevitably, issues will arise not covered in the policies below. In those instances, it is at the Seminary Doctoral Program Director's discretion to determine the appropriate action to be taken. This information is subject to change.

2. Academics

- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Academic Honesty](#)
- [Academic Warning, Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal](#)
- [Classification of students](#)

Grading standards

- [University grading system](#)
- Program-specific standards

Grade	Score
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79

C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	> 59

3. Admissions

Admissions Criteria

For the Doctor of Leadership and Global Perspectives, the following educational and professional prerequisites are required:

- Completed regionally accredited master's degree in an area relevant to your professional context (for example: humanities, social sciences, business, education, ministry, etc.)
- Documentation of significant professional leadership experience (CV or resumé)
- Minimum GPA of 3.0 in the most recent graduate program
Transcript evaluators give greater weight to graduate-level courses and more recent transcripts. Exceptions may be possible for a lower GPA in some circumstances; email seminary@georgefox.edu to inquire.
- A professional context for the Project Portfolio research sequence
- Evidence of advanced-level competence and critical thinking in the practice of leadership beyond the master's level
- Doctoral-level writing skills
- Computer and basic computer skills
Applicants must own or have access to a computer with up-to-date software (including current software applications) and a reliable internet connection, and be proficient in Microsoft Word.
- Statement of faith

For the Doctor of Ministry, the following educational and professional prerequisites are required:

- Completed master's degree in a ministry-related field from an accredited institution*
*Applicants not holding a ministry-related master's degree may be admitted by demonstrating the ability to: a.) thoughtfully understand and explain the Bible and their theological tradition, b.) adapt their ministry to their context, c.) clearly articulate their ministerial identity/role, and d.) demonstrate a commitment to ongoing personal and spiritual growth. Applicants submit an admission application, including essays, transcripts, resumé, and other relevant materials to address these standards.

- Competitive grade point average reflected on your official transcripts
Transcript evaluators give greater weight to graduate-level courses and more recent transcripts.
- Documentation of significant ministerial experience/context (from CV or resumé) that enables the applicant to engage as a ministry peer with other students and in the research sequence in this advanced professional doctorate
- Evidence of an advanced level of competence and reflection in the practice of ministry beyond the master's level
- Doctoral-level writing skills
- Computer and basic computer skills
Applicants must own or have access to a computer with up-to-date software (current software applications) and a reliable internet connection, and be proficient in Microsoft Word.
- Based on the assessment of these factors, applicants may be accepted, denied, or asked to provide further information or complete additional coursework to create a pathway for meeting eligibility in light of the ATS criteria. For more information on Eligibility Work, see below.

DMin Eligibility Evaluation Work

- **Standards for completing eligibility evaluation work (DMIN only)**
 - Students may complete required foundational courses either by taking the specific courses stipulated in the DMin Eligibility Evaluation, which are offered by Portland Seminary, or by taking comparable courses offered by other ATS-accredited institutions. Students living at a distance may seek to fulfill the required foundational coursework through independent studies under the guidance of resident faculty members at Portland Seminary. Typically, students will register for independent studies in the summer. Students who wish to complete the required foundational coursework through another institution must obtain approval from the Seminary Doctoral Program director before registering for the courses in question.
 - The Seminary Doctoral Program office maintains records of all foundational coursework required for the program. All non-George-Fox foundational coursework will be credited toward the DMin eligibility evaluation progress report when the Seminary Doctoral Program office receives the institution's official transcript (unofficial copies will not be accepted). All transcripts must be mailed to the Seminary Doctoral Program Office.
- **Audits of DMin admission eligibility evaluation progress:**
 - Regular audits are conducted at the end of each academic year to ensure that students required to take foundational courses to fulfill the DMin eligibility evaluation have done so. If a student has not completed all required foundational coursework by the end of the first year, another

audit is conducted at the end of the second year. In each instance, the Seminary Doctoral Program office will notify the student in writing concerning the disposition of required work. Students who have not completed all foundational work by the beginning of fall semester of the third year may not be permitted to register for the final course(s) and their progress in the Seminary Doctoral Program may be halted until all foundational work is completed.

English as a second language

- If English is a second language for the applicant, he or she must also demonstrate proficiency in the English language through a score of at least 550 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), 90 on the TOEFL iBT (internet-based test) or 7.0 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).
- Although students must complete all formal papers and course milestones in English, project portfolio activities/endeavors conducted in other languages (such as workshops and interviews) do not need to be fully transcribed to English.

Transfer Credit

- **Transfer from course-based doctoral programs:**
 - Transfer credit from another doctoral program may be allowed up to a maximum of 18 semester hours toward the 36-credit degree programs, and 19 semester hours toward the 38-credit degree programs. The General DMin allows up to 24 transfer credits.
 - Transferability of credits earned at this institution and transferred to another is at the discretion of the receiving institution. Consult the registrar's office for information on eligibility of transfer credit.
- **Transfer from research-based doctoral programs** (such as the British model). The program utilizes the University's "credit by examination" approach, which includes:
 - Official documentation from the transferring institution of attendance and official progress reports or approvals
 - Portland Seminary Doctoral Department assessment of research produced at the transferring institution for credit valuation.
- **Intra-program transfer at Portland Seminary:** Transferring within the doctoral programs (for example, changing tracks) requires director approval/review, and students may register via a customized advising plan (outside of cohort) to ensure program completion.

4. Advances / Retreats and other face-to-face intensives

Attendance

- Students must participate in the face-to-face Advances or Retreats in their entirety as a non-negotiable part of the program requirements. In those extraordinary instances in which a student is unable to attend, the student will have to attend at another time.

Housing

- George Fox University provides housing and many meals for our academic face-to-face intensives at off-site locations as a part of a single comprehensive advance fee charged to doctoral students. Face-to-face events are not designed to accommodate guests. The SCC program allows students to bring their spouse to the final, Orcas Advance, for an additional fee. Otherwise, they are designed experiences intended to create and support an intentional learning community. Students should plan to be fully present to one another and for the learning experiences the entire time of their face-to-face experience.

5. Advisors / Project Faculty

- At the beginning of the program, Advisors (Dissertation Curriculum) and Project Faculty (Project Portfolio Curriculum) are paired with students to provide them with individual guidance and coaching. These advisors and Project Faculty help students develop and focus their areas of specialization within the Project Portfolio or dissertation research sequence.
- Advisor grievance or dissatisfaction: Please consult the Seminary Doctoral Program Director should any concern arise regarding your assigned advisor.

6. Record Review / Candidacy

Record Review (Project Portfolio)

The Doctoral Department utilizes a Record Review process for students completing the Project Portfolio research and design sequence.

- **Definition:** The process that the Doctoral Department uses to screen the academic records of all doctoral students to ensure that they have successfully met all formal degree requirements to date.
- **Purpose:** The Record Review process ensures that students have satisfactorily completed all coursework and are qualified to graduate on time.
- **Procedure:** The Doctoral Department reviews all records for Project Portfolio and Doctoral Project Year 3 students in August, November, and February, and alerts any students with issues to address (e.g., poor grades, missing foundational coursework). To be positioned to qualify for graduation, each student must:
 - Maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 with no course grade lower than a B- in all taught courses.
 - Pass all Project Portfolio research and design sequence courses.
 - Have participated in all required program intensives.
 - Complete with a B- or higher all MDiv equivalency courses.
- The Seminary Doctoral Program office will only notify students with issues to address as needed.

- **Note:** *After* Record Review, students must also pass the final research course sequence and any remaining taught courses per degree requirements as outlined in the catalog.

Candidacy (Dissertation)

The Doctoral Department utilizes a Candidacy process for students completing a Dissertation.

- **Definition:** The status of a doctoral student who has completed all formal degree requirements and who is eligible to complete the Dissertation and participate in an Oral Defense.
- **Purpose:** The candidacy process ensures that students have satisfactorily completed all coursework and that only qualified students proceed to completing their Dissertations.
- **Procedure:** After a student has finished all coursework (32 semester hours), he or she is ready to begin the candidacy process. To qualify as a doctoral candidate, each student must:
 - Maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 with no course grade lower than a B-
 - Submit the Dissertation Proposal and gain approval from the Dissertation Advisor
- Students advanced to candidacy will continue in the program. If the student is not advanced to candidacy, he or she may not be permitted to register for DMIN800 / DMIN900 Dissertation. Students not advanced to candidacy are given specific guidelines for reevaluation.
- The Seminary Doctoral Program office will notify students of their status following the second year of the program.

7. Catalog (Graduate / Seminary)

- [Doctor of Leadership in Global Perspectives \(DLGP\)](#)
- [Doctor of Leadership in the Global Marketplace](#)
- [Doctor of Ministry \(DMin\), Leadership and Spiritual Formation track](#)
- [Doctor of Ministry \(DMin\), Semiotics, Church, and Culture track](#)
- [Doctor of Ministry \(DMin\), Spirit-filled Global Leadership in the African Diaspora](#)
- [Doctor of Ministry \(DMin\), General](#)

8. Complaints process and procedures

- [General student complaints](#)
- [Reporting sexual misconduct](#)
- [Discrimination, bias, and harassment](#)
- [Title IX support services](#)

9. Contact

- [DLGP faculty and staff](#)
- [LSF faculty and staff](#)

10. Course/Program Incompletes, Leave of Absences, Withdrawals

- [Incomplete Grade Policy](#)
- [Leave of Absence](#)
- [Withdrawal from Courses](#)
- [Withdrawal from the University/Program](#)
- [Re-admittance into the University/Program](#)

11. Directions

- [Newberg Campus](#)
- [Portland Center](#)

12. Dissertation

- [Dissertation Guidelines, Standards, Templates and Samples](#)
- Cases of conflict between feedback from advisors:
 - In those cases when the advisee discovers that there is a conflict between the primary and the secondary, tertiary or Expert Advisors' feedback, the student is to appeal to the Dissertation Advisor to resolve the matter.
 - It rests with the Dissertation Advisor to facilitate a satisfactory solution with the other advisor(s) and advisee.
 - If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the program director will take the matter to the doctoral committee for review. The decision of the doctoral committee will be final.

13. Dissertation Continuation (DMIN805/905)

- Students who register for 805/905 the first time and 1) submit and do not pass the Dissertation *or* 2) do not submit the Dissertation at all will receive a registration hold on their account.
- Second and following instance of registering for 805/905:
 - At the beginning of the semester, students will draft a Dissertation Progress Plan to document the dissertation progress they will make in the term of registration.
 - At the end of the semester, students must complete a Dissertation Continuation Progress Report to document dissertation work completed within the term. The Faculty Advisor reviews the report and makes a Pass / No Pass assessment based upon the semester progress plan from the start of the term.
 - If it is **Pass**, the registration hold will lift and students may register for the next semester of 805/905.
 - If it is a **No Pass**, students cannot register for the next semester. Instead, they must resolve the outstanding work that was agreed upon in the plan to their Faculty Advisor's satisfaction. In the next semester, students will

be passively withdrawn until the work is completed and grade is resolved. Students will also have to fill out a short readmission form to continue.

14. Federal laws and regulations compliance

- [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)
- [Anti-Harassment \(ex. Title IX, hate crimes, discrimination, harassment, and sexual assault\)](#)

15. Fees and Additional Financial Information

- [Student Financial Services](#)
- [Tuition and Retreat fees](#)
- [Additional Financial Information](#)
- [Removal of Institutional Charges](#)

16. Graduation, Hooding, and Commencement

- [Steps to Completing the Dissertation](#)
- Final steps to Completing the Project Portfolio are outlined in the [951 Section of the Project Portfolio Handbook](#)

17. Inclusive language policy

- See course syllabi
- See also the [Project Portfolio Handbook](#)

18. Medical policies

- **Measles Vaccination:** Doctoral students are not required to show proof of measles immunization.
- **Health Insurance:** Doctoral students are not required to provide proof of health insurance.

19. Virtual Learning Center (formerly Portland Writing Center)

The Virtual Learning Center offers one-on-one writing assistance free of charge for GFU students to help students become better writers. They offer assistance in many areas, including the following:

- Gathering your thoughts and beginning the writing process
- Organization and overall clarity
- Grammar, word choice, and academic writing style
- Following the rules of APA, MLA, and Turabian formats

Consultations: Consultations are scheduled for 60 minutes and can be face-to-face, e-mail, or via Zoom video conference. Learn more at:

<https://www.georgefox.edu/offices/virtual-learning-center/index.html>

20. Project Portfolio

See the [Project Portfolio Handbook](#) for policies relating to the Project Portfolio coursework.

21. Copyright and Proprietary Concerns

We understand that graduate students may have concerns about protecting their work after publication on the GFU Digital Commons. While the likelihood of someone "stealing" your work is low, we want to provide some reassurance and information about proprietary and copyright protection of your work.

Automatic Copyright Protection:

- Your written works, such as Project Portfolios or Dissertations, are protected by copyright from the time they are created and fixed in a permanent format.
- An original work of authorship must be independently created and possess some degree of creativity.
- U.S. copyright law does not require you to include a copyright notice or formally register your work with the U.S. Copyright Office to secure protection. However, our Project Portfolio and Dissertation templates do include a copyright notice page to provide an extra level of protection, even though it is not legally required.

Formal Copyright Registration:

- While not required, there is an option to formally register your work with the U.S. Copyright Office, which involves a fee of at least \$100.
- Formal registration is typically pursued if there is a likelihood of bringing a lawsuit for infringement in the future.
- Copyright registration is more common for published documents with significant financial stakes, rather than academic works.
- For further information on US copyright law, please see the [US Copyright Office website](#).

Digital Commons:

- Your fully completed and committee-approved doctoral Project Portfolio or Dissertation will be published on our [GFU Digital Commons](#). Please see [Digital Commons explanation for publishing](#) for information about the Digital Commons, including information about plagiarism and proprietary concerns. Prior to archiving on the Digital Commons, if students still have concerns about protecting their work, they may petition the doctoral program director/associate director to submit a redacted version of their final Project to alleviate proprietary concerns.

22. Registration

- Late Registration
 - Before the add/drop period ends (see the [academic calendar](#) for specific information).
 - After the add/drop period, students must initiate an online academic petition to add the appropriate courses.
- Students who are two semesters behind cohort schedule due to incompletes and/or unresolved non-passing grades will be subject to a registration hold for future Doctoral registration until all coursework is resolved.

23. Services

- [Directory: Offices and Services](#)
- [Admissions \(Seminary\)](#)
- [Disability and Accessibility Services](#)
- [Institutional Technology](#)
- [Library services](#)
- GFU online platforms
 - [Canvas](#)
 - [DLGP Blog](#) *This is a public posting forum for students in the DLGP program. Given the public nature of the forum, students with privacy concerns should communicate with the course instructor/program director.
 - [GFU e-mail](#)
 - [My.georgefox.edu](#)
 - [Zoom](#)
- [Registrar's office](#)
- [Student Financial Services](#)

24. Turabian style exceptions and clarifications for Dissertation and Project Portfolio

- Turabian standard: The Seminary Doctoral Program adheres to the guidelines and standards as set forth in Turabian, K., Booth, Wayne C., Colomb, Gregory G., Williams, Joseph M., Bizup, Joseph, & FitzGerald, William T. *A manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 9th ed. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.
- If Turabian allows more than one approach to a topic, the Department gives the student and advisor full discretion unless explicitly stated otherwise below.
- **Clarifications and exceptions:** The Seminary Doctoral Program makes the following clarifications or exceptions to the guidelines outlined in Turabian:
 - For **Project Portfolio-only**: For the general aesthetic for font, margin, title page, spacing, figures, and tables, follow the style utilized in the Project Portfolio 750-951 templates provided in the Handbook for each Milestone. Each of the assignments in the Handbook lists the style parameters utilized in the templates.

- For both **Dissertation** or **Project Portfolio**
 - Abbreviations: Use the traditional abbreviation for citations from the Bible and other sacred works (See Turabian 9, 17.9.1 and 24.6).
 - Bibliography: Includes all sources cited, contra 17.5 (all subsections that direct users to include citations that are critical to your argument or frequently cited). Sources consulted but not cited may also be included.
 - Footnotes
 - Use the notes-bibliographic style (Turabian 9 16-17 rather than the parenthetical citations-reference list style (Turabian 9 18-19). Parenthetical citations may be used, however, for the Bible and other sacred works (See Turabian 8 17.5.2).
 - Use superscript and a space for reference numbers in notes rather than regular text with a period and a space (Contra Turabian 9 16.3.4).
 - Long form/short form rule (Turabian 16.4 and 16.4.1 clarification): The long form of the footnote must be utilized in the first entry. Thereafter, the short form will suffice in every instance in subsequent chapters. This rule applies only when the work is also cited in the bibliography, where readers have easy access to the complete data.
 - Either *ibid.* or shortened citations may be used to cite the same work in the immediately preceding note as outlined in Turabian 9th edition, section 16.4.2. Whichever is used must be consistent throughout the document.
 - Font size for footnotes should be 10pt.
 - Footnotes numbering:
 - For Track 1 Dissertations, footnote numbering should start over at each new chapter or each appendix item.
 - For Track 2 Dissertations, footnote numbering should run consecutively throughout the Written Statement body and start over with each new Appendix (if more than one).
 - For Project Portfolios, footnote numbering should run consecutively throughout the entire document, with each of the body elements (Prologue, Project, and Project Launch Plan) as well as each of the Appendices.
 - Pagination
 - Placement: Page numbers should be placed in the bottom and middle of the page for all front matter using Roman numerals. Body *and* backmatter, Arabic, upper right-hand corner.
 - Numbering Front matter utilizes lower roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc) per Turabian 9 A.1.4.1. The body, figures, appendices, and bibliography utilize Arabic numbers, beginning with '1' on the first

page of the body material and run consecutively through the bibliography.

- Title page
 - Location: List the location as 'Portland, Oregon'
 - Date: List the month and year you passed the oral defense (dissertation) or received an official 'Pass' from the Evaluation Committee, ex. 'March 2025'.
- Voice:
 - Use a *professional* voice, as if speaking to an audience of educated professionals in your context.
 - Use of first-person pronoun: See Turabian 9 11.1.7 for guidance.

25. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Seminary Doctoral programs view AI platforms as a 'thinking partner' rather than a substitute for generating original work. It is a helpful tool (like Google or library searches) to aid in discovering original sources that can be used for academic, doctoral work. AI-generated content is like Wikipedia or other tertiary sources in that it is not appropriate to cite directly as an academic source for research purposes or online cohort conversations.

In alignment with the George Fox University [Academic Honesty](#) policy, ensure that you do not plagiarize content from any generative artificial intelligence source.

AI Philosophy

At Portland Seminary, we recognize the transformative role artificial intelligence is playing in reshaping higher education. As we prepare faith-driven scholar-practitioners to lead in a complex world, we embrace AI as a tool to enhance—not replace—human intellect, ethical discernment, and deep learning.

Our approach to AI is guided by these principles:

- **AI as a Learning Partner:** Students are encouraged to use AI strategically, as a catalyst rather than a substitute for their work; to support engagement with complex ideas and improve their work.
- **Student Agency and Ethical Use:** We promote and empower students to use AI in a responsible and thoughtful manner. Our goal is to encourage open discussions about authorship, honesty, and critical thinking.
- **Future-Ready Skills:** We equip students with essential AI skills like prompt design, critical thinking, and digital discernment.

We affirm that AI, when used wisely, can support our mission to cultivate reflective and innovative leaders. As the landscape shifts, so will our approach—guided always by our theological commitments, educational excellence, and care for the whole person.