DMin Statement of Interest and Thesis timeline

Composing the Statement of Interest (SOI) is the first step in writing the DMin thesis. The purpose of the SOI is to give the DMin director a sketch of the student’s initial research interests.

The SOI should be between 400-500 words (not including bibliography). It has three parts.

1. The SOI should state the general question or problem that the student would like to explore in the thesis and the practical, ministerial, ecclesial implications of the results of the student’s exploration of the question or problem. For example: how a robust theology of realized eschatology might shape a congregation’s ministry to the poor of their community. Or: how leadership roles of laywomen have changed in the years since women have been ordained and what these changes might mean for the local church. This question or problem should then be followed by an account of why this area of interest is relevant to the student’s ministry.

2. The SOI should specify the approach or angle the thesis will take in its exploration of the general question. Example: the thesis will examine the realized eschatologies of the Gospel of John, Gregory of Nyssa, and Dorothy Day to provide a model for thinking about our ministry among the poor in today’s church. Another example: the thesis will show how changing Christian concepts of racism can inform a church’s ministry with youth. The SOI’s description of this approach should be informed by research in the secondary scholarship on the topic. It also should explain why this approach might be a fruitful angle and why it will help address concerns important to the student’s ministry and in the advancement of the practice of ministry.

3. The SOI should have a bibliography of no fewer than 5 references (books and articles, preferably from scholarly publications).

4. List the names of Duke faculty you would propose to serve as your first reader. List the names of Duke faculty or other external advisors and experts that you would propose to serve as your second reader. If you have already secured first and second readers for your thesis, please list their names and contact information.

Due Dates: A draft of the SOI should be sent for review to the DMin Thesis Tutor by the last Monday in October of the cohort’s second year. Once the SOI is approved by the DMin Thesis Tutor, a final copy of the SOI should be submitted electronically to the DMin Program Coordinator, Ashley Lunn by the last Monday in November for approval by the DMin Director.

By late December, the student should be working to secure a first and second reader for their thesis. (Here’s where you can find a list of faculty and their fields of expertise: https://divinity.duke.edu/faculty/faculty-experts) Primary responsibility for securing the reader is the student’s. However, students can work in consultation with the DMin Director and the Program Coordinator if they need help securing a first reader. The first reader should
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be a Duke Divinity faculty member, while the second reader can be someone who has a background in the subject matter of the thesis. It is not necessary for the first reader to have a background in the subject matter of the thesis. First and second readers will need to be cleared by the DMin director before the student can finalize the DMin Proposal.
DMIN Thesis Timeline

1. Communicate with first reader to establish a timeline and expectations for completing the thesis.

2. Establish a communication plan (e.g. one time a month) by phone, Skype, FaceTime, etc. with the first reader to ensure clear expectations and communication through the thesis writing period.

3. Complete the thesis proposal by end of spring term (second year) with the input of the first reader. The student and first reader can move this deadline as appropriate based on their work together. Only the first reader needs to approve the thesis proposal.

4. Determine the semester in which the student plans to graduate and establish a writing and revising schedule based on the dates outlined in the “graduation deadlines by semester” document found on the Forms and Paradigms section of the DDS website. For a May graduate, the deadline to submit the final draft of the thesis to the first reader is the first Friday in March. Therefore, the timeline for writing and editing should extend backward for at least 6 months. Assistance from the program’s dedicated writing tutor, as well as the Center for Writing and Academic Support, is available on a limited basis. Please contact the Director of the Center to request help from the DMin thesis tutor.

5. Submit the final draft of the thesis to the first and second reader by the deadline for the semester in which the student plans to graduate.

6. Make revisions as needed with the input of both the first and second reader.