

A Guide to Writing a D.Min Project Report
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

The Purpose of the Report

The Project Report is just what its name suggests: a report on the D.Min. project that you conceived, designed, and carried out. The Prospectus you created had as its purpose to describe the situation in ministry you intended to address, identify the theological and biblical concerns related to the situation you were to address, the means or methods you intended to employ in the process, ways you intended to evaluate the results of your project, and a beginning, working bibliography of works you expected to consult. Your Project Report is a “Retrospectus.” It describes your deepened understanding of the situation you addressed, including a theological and biblical interpretation of it, the methods you actually used, and the means of evaluation of the outcomes of your project you actually used, and it provides a concluding summary of what you learned from doing the project and implications you may see for further enhancement to the practice of ministry and the mission of the church. Finally, it may include appendices supporting your work and a complete bibliography of works cited and consulted in the process of carrying out your project. Your report should be 70 pages in length, double spaced, not counting appendices and bibliography.

Please keep in mind that your project is a work of practical theology and not a research dissertation. That is, your task is to extend knowledge and practical wisdom in an area of ministry through theological reflection and action that participates in the ongoing creative and redemptive activity of God, as you perceive that in your ministry situation. Your Project Report articulates practical theological perception that begins in a pastoral imagination grounded in experience, the interpretation of sacred texts and Christian traditions, and research that interprets your ecclesial or ministry context and contemporary reality. More simply put, your

practical theological reflection aims to discern what you perceive God requires of you and those to whom and with whom you minister in a particular situation and setting and how you together have responded.

The format for the writing of the Project Report follows basically that for the writing of dissertations and theses as described by Kate Turabian in *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Eighth Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers. A detailed description of formatting requirements at Louisville Seminary for the D.Min Project Report may be found on the seminary's website or may be obtained from the Earnest Miller White Library.

An Outline of the Project Report

While there is room for variance in a Project Report design, the following outline of chapters indicates those elements required in any and all reports.

Chapter One: The Purpose of Your Project

1. Describe the situation in ministry to which your project is addressed as a response.
2. Describe the circumstances, historical and contemporary, and the context, including demographics and identity characteristics of the ministry setting of the situation.
3. Identify questions for ministry posed by the situation, including questions related to the mission of the church, current ways of doing and seeing ministry as a religious leader or as a congregation, and questions related to the pastoral and prophetic witness of the church to the larger world.
4. Briefly describe the meaning of the situation in light of the Gospel and the means (ministry practice) you designed and implemented in response. You will have opportunities to elaborate on meaning and your *praxis* response in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two: Practical Theological Critical Reflection on Your Situation and Ministry Practice

1. Provide a critically reflective practical theological interpretation of the situation your project addressed, in light of the historical traditions of the Church, including Scripture, and historical and contemporary theologies.
2. Describe the connection(s) between your specific project design and the ministry situation you have addressed as interpreted in light of biblical, historical theology, and practical theology.

Chapter Three: Methodologies

1. Describe in detail the research you did to determine the design of your project and the means of carrying it out.
2. Describe in detail the research undertaken to understand and interpret your situation in ministry, including interviews, questionnaires, congregational studies, ethnographic studies, etc.
3. Describe in detail research undertaken in fields and disciplines related to the ministry practice created to implement your project, e.g., Christian education, pastoral psychology, leadership studies, etc.

Chapter Four: Outcomes and Means of Evaluation

1. Describe the implementation of your project, what you actually did, including what you planned to do, any modifications of those plans in the process of implementation, and any complicating features.
2. Describe the outcomes of your project with respect to the situation in ministry your project addressed: was the practice of ministry you designed as a response to the situation in ministry your project addressed effective? For example, did it offer a new or revised way of seeing ministry practice, personally or congregationally? Did it meet a perceived need in the congregation or place of ministry? Did it contribute to the life of faith and the practice of faith in the community of faith? Etc.

3. What means of evaluation did you use to determine the effectiveness of your project, e.g., how did you determine your responses to questions like those posed in paragraph 2 above?

Chapter Five: Summary Comments

1. Your overall experience of carrying out the project;
2. A description of what was learned from doing the project, new skills and knowledge gained, and contributions to your developing theology of ministry and spiritual maturity received in the process;
3. Your thoughts regarding how your project contributes to the practice of ministry and a theology of ministry more broadly;
4. Implications for further research in the practice of ministry and critical, practical theological reflection on the practice of ministry.

Appendices

Bibliography

Concluding Steps

Your project report is written under the direction of your Project Director/faculty adviser and a second reader chosen in consultation with the Program Director. Often multiple drafts of the report are submitted to your readers for their comments and any suggested changes. It is important that you begin work with library personnel on proper formatting of the project early in the drafting process. Once a final draft is prepared, you and your readers may set a date for an oral examination on your project report. Once the project report is approved by your readers and its formatting approved by the library, your work is complete. Graduation follows certification by the registrar that all degree requirements have been met and subsequent action taken by the faculty to recommend to the Board of Trustees that your degree be conferred.

Critical Dates

Your project report must be “library ready” before your request to graduate can be honored. Since the faculty and the Board of Trustees must vote on your readiness to graduate by their fall or spring meetings, the dates for those meetings determine by when your work, examination, and any final editing must be complete and the report submitted to the library. Please keep the following deadlines in mind:

If you intend to graduate in December, your report must be approved and ready for library submission by October 1;

If you intend to graduate in May, your report must be approved and ready for library submission by April 1.

Please keep in mind that this document is a *Guide* for writing your project. At its heart, however, the writing process is a collaborative effort between you, your adviser, your second reader, and others from whom you may seek wisdom and advice along the way. You will likely have questions that may not have been addressed in this Guide. Please know that the Director of the program, your adviser, and others stand ready to help as needed, though, of course, the ultimate responsibility for a successful conclusion to project and the report lies with you.

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