

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THEOLOGY & APOLOGETICS (PH.D.)

Purpose

The *Doctor of Philosophy in Theology and Apologetics* degree will prepare professional scholars and Christian community leaders at the highest level of scholarship. Trained by a qualified academic faculty, graduates with the Ph.D. in Theology and Apologetics will be prepared to serve as faculty in academic institutions and as scholars and theologically and biblically informed leaders for the church and community. This is a 57-credit-hour program: 42 hours of seminar work; fifteen (15) hours for dissertation proposal/research and dissertation defense.

As with all programs of the School of Divinity the Ph.D. program will seek to provide an environment in which students in the context of open research and inquiry will be encouraged to strengthen their faith and certify their calling to service at the highest academic and professional levels. Students will be mentored within an academic environment that fosters an awareness of the Christian's responsibility as a member of society who is responsive to the needs and concerns of diverse cultures and conflicting ideals.

The program is set within the context of a conservative evangelical academic community in which students are challenged to develop the cognitive skills requisite to a rigorous interaction with biblical, theological, historical, and philosophical understandings necessary for a self-conscious, critical, and Christian response to the world. In this setting, students will have the opportunity to become part of a community of scholars in which they can develop the concomitant skills necessary for relational and professional competence. The Ph.D. will further encourage students to explore the moral and ethical dimensions of their chosen field of study. Moreover, the program is designed to inculcate sensitivity to others and a concern for world evangelization through a vigorous defense of the gospel and a lifestyle of personal integrity and responsible scholarship.

With its mix of traditional and non-traditional delivery formats, the Ph.D. is designed to attract and retain students who desire flexibility in their schedules, breadth of exposure, and professional training in theology and apologetics. The teaching options will attract a diverse and dedicated mix of faculty and students facilitating rich interaction between future academic professionals and church leaders. The cognates are designed to further meet the needs of persons seeking studies in biblical or historical studies.

Program Learning Outcomes

The student will be able to:

- Design an original research project that adds to the knowledge base of the discipline.
- Construct a theological argument from an evangelical perspective informed by interactions with other theological traditions.
- Assess the historical development of Christian doctrine with attention to a particular doctrinal issue.

Program Specific Admissions Requirements

In addition to general requirements for admission to the School of Divinity, applicants for admission to the *Doctor of Philosophy in Theology and Apologetics* must submit the following for review:

1. An earned Master of Divinity or a Master of Theology with a thesis or a Master of Arts with a thesis.
2. An earned grade point average of 3.25 on a scale 4.00 in all previous graduate work.
3. Miller Analogy Test (MAT) results. The GRE may be substituted in special cases at the director's approval. If an applicant's scores are older than two years, then the applicant must submit new scores. For an acceptable MAT score, applications should attempt to earn a total score of 400 or better or a total score in the 50 percentile or better. For an acceptable GRE score, applicants should attempt to earn a total verbal and quantitative score of 300 or higher, as well as a 4.0 or better on the analytical writing section.
4. A writing sample that must meet the following criteria:
 - a. A minimum 30-page paper (excluding cover page, table of contents and bibliography). A chapter from a Master's thesis may be submitted if it meets the 30-page minimum. It is preferable, but not required, that the subject area be in the area of theology or apologetics.
 - b. Either submission must conform to the latest *Turabian Manual for Writers* and standard English Grammar and Composition Form.
5. A Personal Statement, Doctrinal Agreement, and Honor Code Document. Included with these documents must be the name of the applicant's current church and the name of a pastor who is familiar with the applicant's church life.
6. The student must have a pastoral recommendation as well.
7. A one-page essay on reasons for pursuing a Ph.D. in Theology and Apologetics.
8. Two Academic References. All applicants must submit letters of recommendation from two professors with whom they studied at the graduate (master's degree) level. These recommendations need to be on school letterhead and have the professors' signatures.
9. Professional vita including degrees earned, ministry experience, and/or teaching experience and career goals.

The applicant must understand that before that before registering for dissertation research, the end of the second year of admission, the student must pass a proficiency exam in German and French or Latin. Seminars in the Biblical Studies area will require one year of Greek and one year of Hebrew on their graduate transcripts. Admissions for the Fall semester are due by May 1; for the Spring semester are due by October 1; for Summer semester are due by February 1.

Transfer Credit

Transfer hours may not exceed 27 credit hours for the Ph.D. program. Transfer credits are considered on a case-by-case basis and must have been completed as Ph.D. course work within the previous seven (7) years from a regionally accredited program to be accepted. Courses must have a grade of B- or higher to be eligible for consideration for transfer credit. Correspondence studies or life experiences will not be accepted for transfer credit. Credits from a prior degree earned through Liberty University are considered transfer credits.

Admission into Doctoral Candidacy

Students who successfully complete the required 42 hours of doctoral course study with a grade point average of 3.25 or higher in the doctoral course studies will be eligible to take comprehensive examinations in the major field and chosen recommended cognate field. These exams may be written or oral, as determined by the student's mentor. Upon passing of the comprehensive examinations, the student is admitted to doctoral candidacy and may proceed toward developing a dissertation thesis and writing the dissertation under the supervision of a faculty supervisor and two faculty readers (the dissertation committee).

Students may graduate with the Doctor of Philosophy in Theology and Apologetics upon the successful completion of their dissertation requirement and upon the recommendation of the faculty.

Program Requirements

Language Requirements. In addition to the other factors relating to participation in the Ph.D. in Theology and Apologetics those pursuing a cognate must meet language requirements. A biblical language competency is required for those applicants who plan to focus on Biblical Studies as their cognate field. Students must meet any language requirements prior to their second year in the program.

Active Enrollment. To maintain active enrollment, students must enroll in course work each semester. Students must enroll in at least one course during each academic year (from Fall to Summer) to maintain active enrollment status.

Residency Requirement. The School of Divinity does not have a residency requirement in the traditional sense of requiring students to uproot and move to the physical campus in Lynchburg. Using an intensive model, students may come to the Liberty University campus or another designated location for a time of group study with a professor. A cohort model will be encouraged by requiring students to register each semester for classes through aggressive advising so that students who begin together will be directed to continue through the program together, meeting regularly and by connecting via the online learning facilities of Liberty University.

Online Options. The School of Divinity proposes to offer Ph.D. courses using the modular format so that students who are living near the campus or who are living at a distance can meet the program requirements. Students will be required to be on campus to take campus-based modular courses.

Dissertation Enrollment Policy

Once students enter the dissertation phase of their degree, they are required to maintain continuous enrollment (Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters) until they complete all degree requirements. If they do not, they will break enrollment, and they will be required to apply for readmission if/when they wish to resume the pursuit of their degree. They will have to complete their degree under the Degree Completion Plan (DCP) in effect at the time of their readmission.

Program of Study

Delivery Format: Residential Only

- Theology & Apologetics (Ph.D.)

Career Opportunities

- Senior Pastor
- Ministry Director
- University Professor
- Professional Christian Scholar
- University or K-12 School Administrator