



Melbourne College of Divinity

Established by the Melbourne College of Divinity Act (Victoria) 1910.
www.mcd.edu.au

Doctor of Ministry Studies – Enrolment Information 2009

Why undertake postgraduate Ministry Studies?

Ministry Studies is a field which has taken significant strides in theological education since the beginning of the 1980s. The Ministry Studies program explicitly engages the insights of the social sciences and the resources of the Scriptures and the Christian tradition. In doing so, it recognises the contexts of the communities involved in Christian ministry, and the distinct place of ordained and other authorised ministers.

The MCD Doctor of Ministry Studies is a higher degree by research which enables qualified candidates to explore some aspect of professional ministry in depth, involving peer group and personal learning strategies. The primary focus of the degree is on the *context* and *experience* of ministry, and provides significant opportunity for a candidate to develop a research project at doctoral level, typically involving theological, personal and sociological analysis of church and ministry in a particular setting.

The degree, the first doctorate in Ministry Studies to be offered in Australasia, came into existence by resolution of the College in May 1995. The first Doctor of Ministry Studies degrees were awarded at the MCD Conferral in April 2002, with a steady stream of graduates since.

IMPROVE YOUR MINISTRY
– ONE DEGREE –

**MCD professional ministerial
development programs
seek to revitalise your sense of calling,
deepen your theological understanding, and
raise your vision for mission.**

**Through collegial sharing in ecumenical
Collegium Groups, Residential Schools,
and supervised research on
contemporary issues arising from your
own ministry context,
the MCD Advanced Ministry Studies
program will enhance your skills of
engagement within your vocation.**

The DMinStuds degree offers the opportunity for candidates to

- engage in a significant postgraduate academic research enterprise
- work with issues confronting the ministry and mission of the churches internationally
- explore in depth a focussed aspect of the practice of ministry, through research at doctoral standard
- demonstrate the integration of theory and practice in their ministry to an advanced level.



Melbourne College of Divinity

Established by the Melbourne College of Divinity Act (Victoria) 1910.
www.mcd.edu.au

The doctoral program includes postgraduate level coursework, However, its major focus is the Supervised Research Project of 50,000 words.

Entry Requirements

Applicants need to hold a Master of Ministry, a research Master's degree in Theology, or an equivalent professional qualification. In addition, each candidate is expected to have been involved in the practice of ministry for at least six years.

Each candidate's admission, progress and examination is handled personally by the Director of Research, under the supervision of the Research Committee of the MCD Academic Board.

The degree can be undertaken in any location in Australia and New Zealand where suitable support resources and supervision are available. However, for remote candidates, travel to Melbourne is normally necessary to participate in Collegium Groups, Advanced Ministry Studies Residential Schools and the Research Seminar.

The School of Theology, Otago University offers the MCD DMinStuds for New Zealand candidates through a co-operative arrangement with the MCD.

*International students need to have **either** achieved a IELTS score of at least 7.0 overall and in each area, **or** have completed tertiary study of at least five years duration with English as the language of instruction within the previous two years, to be eligible for candidature in MCD research awards.*

Structure of the degree

The DMinStuds consists of a qualifying component, coursework and research sections, normally completed in sequence. The degree is the equivalent of three years' full-time study, with the research component being the equivalent of at least two years' full-time work. The degree can be taken part-time over a period of up to eight years.

Entrance and Qualifying

Each candidate must demonstrate capacity to work to postgraduate level in both Ministry Studies and theology generally. MCD MMin graduates are normally required to complete two postgraduate units in theology; candidates with a research Master's degree in Theology are required to complete one Collegium Group and one Advanced Ministry Studies Residential School. Details, with dates, can be found in the Graduate Diploma in Ministry brochure.

Trinity College Theological School, part of the United Faculty of Theology, offers online a limited number of graduate units which may be suitable for qualifying coursework.

Qualifying concludes with each candidate completing a **Comprehensive Assessment**, by means of a 5,000-word reflective essay discussed with a Panel of two or three members.

Candidates without advanced standing find that it usually takes around a year to complete the qualifying section, although it represents the equivalent of one semester's full-time study.

Doctoral Coursework

Each candidate is required to complete two postgraduate units at Distinction level, one of which should focus on the practice of ministry in the candidate's own culture and faith community.

Candidates who have not completed an approved unit on research methodology for learning from human subjects, or demonstrated such ability in previous study, are required to take such a study as part of their coursework: an MCD unit is available for this purpose.

Each candidate participates in an **Advanced Ministry Studies Research Seminar**, running for 5 days full-time. The seminar engages with current issues relating to the practice of ministry and recent developments in



Melbourne College of Divinity

Established by the Melbourne College of Divinity Act (Victoria) 1910.
www.mcd.edu.au

one theological discipline or methodology, and provides opportunity for candidates to present their research proposals and have them discussed, with peer feedback.

Following the seminar, each candidate develops a draft **Supervised Research Project proposal**, in association with the supervisor, which is submitted for approval to a Panel (normally including the candidate, supervisor, MCD Director of Research and one other person). Once the SRP proposal is approved, the candidate prepares a submission for ethical clearance to the **MCD Human Research Ethics Committee**. When clearance is given, the candidate is advanced to Research status.

Candidates find that it usually takes around a year to complete coursework and research planning, although academically it represents the equivalent of a solid semester of full-time study.

Supervised Research Project and Thesis

The major work involved component of the DMinStuds degree is the research project, which takes the form of a 50,000 thesis. Considerable efforts are made in the planning stage to ensure that the topic which candidates choose is both feasible and supportable, and has appropriate supervision, methodology and library support.

Research Projects deal with one or more aspects of the practice of ministry: most involve significant field-based research; all are expected to demonstrate depth and advanced skills in theological reflection. The resulting thesis – which can be in the form of a published monograph – will provide evidence of systematic investigation, disciplined and critical reflection, and a capacity to research and practice ministry at the highest academic level.

Examination

The SRP is examined in two stages.

- It is first submitted to **two examiners**, one of whom is normally overseas, who report to the Chair of Examiners: not uncommonly revisions are asked for from their reports.
- When the Chair of Examiners reports that the thesis is acceptable, though possibly needing minor revisions, the candidate undergoes a public **Oral Defence** before two of the examiners and the supervisor, with a chair appointed by the Research Studies Committee. The Oral Defence Panel reports back to the Chair of Examiners, who rules on any necessary further changes before award of the degree can be recommended by the Academic Board to the MCD Council.

Fees

Total fees for an MCD doctoral degree are set at: \$23, 970 (2009)

(Part-time students are charged according to the units taken in each semester.)

Students undertaking the DMinStuds are eligible to apply for an *Australian Postgraduate Award*, which pays for tuition fees, plus a living allowance (\$20,427 per year in 2009). These are awarded on a competitive basis: the number available varies annually, as allocated to the MCD by DEEWR.

Where Commonwealth Research Training Scheme funding permits, the MCD seeks to award an RTS place to each doctoral candidate from the time of the approval of their Supervised Research Project.

FEE-HELP

If you are an Australian citizen, or hold a Permanent Humanitarian visa, you are eligible for a Commonwealth Government FEE-HELP loan. The Commonwealth pays the MCD for your studies, and your loan is repaid through the tax system once their taxation income reaches \$41, 595 (2008-2009).

October 2008 21 Highbury Grove, KEW Vic 3101 Australia, Telephone +61 (03)9853 3177

Facsimile: +61 (03) 9853 6695 www.mcd.edu.au admin@mcd.edu.au

Page 3 of 4



Melbourne College of Divinity

Established by the Melbourne College of Divinity Act (Victoria) 1910.
www.mcd.edu.au

The MCD recommends that all eligible DMinStuds students not holding an APA or RTS place consider FEE-HELP seriously: the scheme ensures a stable cash flow to the MCD and the RTIs, and students who make early voluntary repayments to their FEE-HELP loan receive a 10% discount from the Commonwealth, without reducing the amount paid to their RTI.

Further details about FEE-HELP are provided on the MCD web site.

Governance and Accreditation

The MCD Research Committee oversees all MCD Higher Degrees by Research, and each RTI Research Coordinator is a member. The Committee reports to the MCD Academic Board, which is responsible to the Council for all matters of academic policy and procedure.

All supervisors are approved by the MCD Academic Board, while all examiners are appointed by the Committee. Examiners' reports are considered by the appropriate Chair of Examiners, as noted above: each Chair of Examiners is appointed by the MCD Council, on the recommendation of the Board. This system of checks and balances seeks to ensure that each supervisor and examiner is qualified, equipped and appropriately experienced for their role in relation to MCD research degrees.

The MCD as a whole is audited every five years by the Australian University Quality Agency (AUQA): the first took place in 2005, and the AUQA Report on the MCD can be found at <http://www.auqa.edu.au>.

Applications

Intending candidates should discuss their plans with the MCD Director of Research, and submit a completed Postgraduate Degrees (Research) Application form, available on the MCD website, with the relevant section for the DMinStuds completed. After it has been signed by the Director of Research, this form is submitted, with the application fee, to the MCD office: the Director of Research will forward it to the Admissions Committee for consideration. *Acceptance into the DMinStuds is decided by the Committee on the recommendation of the Director.*

Once an application is accepted, the person concerned is offered a place. When this offer is accepted, the particular course of study is discussed in more details with the Director of Research, who is available for consultation at any stage.

For further information:

Contact

MCD Director of Research
21 Highbury Grove
Kew 3101 Australia
Phone: [+61]3 9853 3177
Fax: [+61]3 9853 6695
email: directorofresearch@mcd.edu.au
website: www.mcd.edu.au