

Updated: June 2022

***Program Handbook:  
Ph.D. in Ministerial Studies  
at Biblical Seminary of the Philippines***

## **1. Introducing Biblical Seminary of the Philippines**

Biblical Seminary of the Philippines (BSOP) seeks to assist local churches by preparing and training men and women directed by God into professional Christian ministry in its various roles and responsibilities. The school subscribes to the historic Christian faith in the evangelical and non-denominational tradition. It aims to provide biblical and theological instruction that will enable its graduates to understand the Bible and communicate its truths effectively. In addition, it desires to develop skills in ministry and Christian service, and it seeks to nurture the student's spiritual life through personal interaction in its community setting, thus cultivating a Christ-like character and life-style.

### **1.1 Vision Statement**

BSOP envisions disciple-making of servant leaders to build up the Body of Christ in Asia and beyond that effects a biblical impact on peoples across cultures.

### **1.2 Mission Statement**

BSOP provides holistic and quality theological education for churches in Asia and beyond by equipping God's workers with God's Word for God's work for the glory of God.

### **1.3 Professional and Holistic Ministry Training**

Throughout the school's various programs, BSOP seeks to develop students in the three complementary areas of spiritual formation/maturity, biblical knowledge, and ministerial skill. These emphases of training intend to promote a well-rounded and balanced development of the Christian minister, who will be able to communicate God's message by proclamation and testimony. In other words, BSOP wants students to be prepared for ministry with their head, heart, and hands. For further information on the training objectives and targeted outcomes of BSOP, see section 1 "General Information" of the BSOP student handbook.

### **1.4 Core Values**

**1.4.1** We are committed to the Word of God written in the words of human beings. As such, we seek to study and communicate God's Word with diligence to

arrive at responsible exegesis of the Bible and its applications in our contextual settings with global awareness. We aim to teach and apply God's Word with a passionate burden for the lost, the poor, and all other people of the world. Above all, we desire to obey God's Word in thought, word, and action in our personal lives, relationships with others, with society, and with the whole created order.

- 1.4.2** We are committed to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, who works mightily in all of us, to transform us into the image of Christ and to help us attain the full stature in Christ. As such, we seek to cultivate spiritual disciplines, to live our Christian life in servanthood, and to minister to others with Jesus Christ as our model.
- 1.4.3** We are committed to God's universal family of redeemed brothers and sisters from every race, tribe, tongue, and culture. We celebrate the unity and diversity in Christ and hence make every effort to preserve both. As such, we encourage and practice expressions of both our God-given unity and human cultural diversity in worship, in ministry, and in every aspect of our body life.
- 1.4.4** We are committed to God's mandate to the Church, that Christians are his servants and witnesses to the ends of the world. Thus, we seek to share the gospel and God's love with the people around us and to live and serve all people as Christian servants of God, by his power, mercy, and grace.
- 1.4.5** We are committed to life-learning as servants of God, to continue the study of God's Word, to continue serving his people and his creation at every God-given opportunity and ultimately to glorify God in every aspect of our life.

## **2. Academic Information**

### **2.1 Rationale for the Ph.D. in Ministerial Studies Program**

The Ph.D. program in Ministerial Studies builds on an M.Div. by providing advanced practical training in church ministry while also preparing students to develop an area of expertise and an ability to do original research that serves churches and pastors in an Asian context. The program is intended for those who are already actively involved in church or parachurch ministry and who will use their advanced training to enrich their continuing leadership in an Asian ministry context.

### **2.2 History of the Program**

Biblical Seminary of the Philippines received approval to offer the Ph.D. program in Ministerial Studies from the Philippine Government's Commission on Higher Education in 2018. At that point, preparations were made for the initial group of

students to begin their program in the 2020-2021 school year. However, the start of the program was delayed for one year, until the 2021-2022 school year, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial advisory committee for the program included: Dr. Narry Santos (Ph.D., Dallas Theological Seminary; Ph.D., University of the Philippines); Dr. Nehemiah Sia (D.Min., Dallas Theological Seminary); Dr. Stephen Tan (D.Min., Dallas Theological Seminary); Dr. Samson Uytanlet (Ph.D., London School of Theology); Dr. Joel Williams (Ph.D., Marquette University).

### **2.3 Program Emphases**

The emphases of the Ph.D. program in Ministerial Studies are threefold. First, the program emphasizes advanced training in the practice of ministry. The program is designed for students who are actively involved in ministry and in serving the church, with the goal of helping them to function in that role more effectively. Second, the program aims to prepare students to develop an area of expertise along with an ability to do research in that area of study. For the purposes of this program, students will need to focus on one of the following three areas of study within the field of ministry studies: pastoral leadership and administration, pastoral care and discipleship, or expository preaching. Third, the program stresses the need for students to provide leadership for the church within an Asian context, a setting with its own unique opportunities and challenges.

### **2.4 Admission Requirements**

**2.4.1 Personal Qualifications** - Applicants for all programs at BSOP must show evidence of the following:

- Sound doctrinal beliefs, genuine Christian character, and good physical health
- A clear sense of God's calling to full-time ministry or to a life of dedicated service through one's vocation or profession
- Active participation and ministry involvement in a local church

**2.4.2 Program Qualifications for the Ph.D. in Ministerial Studies** - Applicants for this program must also fulfill the following qualifications:

- An M.Div. or the equivalent with a GPA of 1.5 (B+) from a seminary accredited by the Asia Theological Association (ATA), the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA), or the equivalent
- At least 5 years of ministry experience after the completion of the MDiv degree
- Current full-time involvement in a church or church-related ministry
- Submission of an essay (1500 to 2000 words) expressing your philosophy of ministry. What do you consider to be the biblical foundations, priorities,

and goals of pastoral ministry? The essay should demonstrate your ability to interpret Scripture, to reflect deeply on the nature of ministry, and to write well in English.

- A TOEFL score of at least 550 or the equivalent for all applicants whose first language is not English. Consideration will be given to applicants who completed an M.Div. in which English was the language of instruction.
- Completion of 12 credit hours in graduate-level ministerial studies
- Completion of 12 credit hours in graduate-level biblical studies.
- Completion of 12 credit hours in graduate-level theological studies.

## 2.5 Application Procedure

- Secure an application packet for the Ph.D. in Ministerial Studies program at the BSOP website (<https://bsop.edu.ph>).
- Fill in the forms and submit all requirements to the Office of the Registrar ([registrar@bsop.edu.ph](mailto:registrar@bsop.edu.ph)).
- Provide three references: one from a former professor, one from a pastoral colleague, and one from a leader in the prospective student's church (e.g. an elder or deacon). The purpose for these references is to show evidence of your Christian character, your academic ability, your strengths in ministry, and your potential for further growth in church leadership. Reference forms should be sent by e-mail to the Office of the Registrar ([registrar@bsop.edu.ph](mailto:registrar@bsop.edu.ph)) or by mail to BSOP (Biblical Seminary of the Philippines, Attn: Registrar, P.O. Box 11, 1469 Valenzuela City, Philippines).
- Ask all undergraduate and graduate institutions that you have attended to send official transcripts of your academic record to BSOP.
- Submit an essay reflecting your philosophy of ministry.
- Meet for an interview with the admissions committee.
- Wait until you have received your letter of acceptance and the identification of your start date before coming to Manila.
- Note that some additional requirements may be expected of international students who are coming from outside the Philippines. For further details see the information on "Admission Procedures" in section 2 "Academic Life" in the BSOP Student Handbook.

## 2.6 Admission to the Ph.D. Program

Entrance into the Ph.D. in Ministerial Studies program is competitive, since there are only a limited number of spots that are available for students to begin the program each school year. Every effort will be made by the school to accept the most highly qualified applicants. Therefore, acceptance into the program depends on more than simply meeting the basic qualifications. Applicants should keep the competitive nature of the program in mind as they complete the application procedure. Students who are accepted into the Ph.D. in Ministerial Studies program will receive a designated start

date, which will normally coincide with the beginning of one of the three trimesters during the school year.

If the admission requirements noted above are not fully met, provisional acceptance may nevertheless be granted to exceptional applicants who may then be required to complete supplementary assignments in addition to their regular coursework. They will gain full acceptance after having successfully completed 18 credit hours and their required supplementary work. Those admitted provisionally because they have not yet demonstrated their fluency in English must pass the TOEFL or an equivalent examination within 12 months of their first coursework. Those who pass will gain full acceptance immediately; those who fail three attempts will lose their provisional status.

## **2.7 Graduation Requirements**

- Satisfactory completion of 33 credit hours of Ph.D.-level coursework with a GPA of at least 1.75 (B). Students must take at least one course related to research methods, at least two courses in pastoral leadership and administration, at least two courses in pastoral care and discipleship, and at least two courses in expository preaching.
- Satisfactory completion of the Ph.D. in Ministerial Studies language requirements as described in section 2.8 below.
- Satisfactory completion of a comprehensive examination as described in section 2.9 below.
- Completion and successful defense of a dissertation (12 credit hours) as described in section 3 below.
- Satisfactory character evaluation as jointly determined by the faculty.
- Satisfactory completion of all other requirements specified by the student's program committee.
- Clearance of all financial obligations to BSOP.
- Attendance at graduation and all prior graduation rehearsals and the graduation dinner.

## **2.8 Language Requirements**

All students in the Ph.D. in Ministerial Studies program are expected to be able to use English in their research and writing. See section 2.4 "Admission Requirements" above for a description of the expected level of English proficiency. In addition, students may be required to demonstrate their proficiency in other languages for research purposes, depending on their dissertation topic. With prior approval of the program director and the dissertation advisor, a student may write a dissertation in a language other than English.

All students are also expected to have the ability to use an Asian language in a ministry context. Students are encouraged to complete their Asian language requirement before

the end of their first year in the program. The Asian language requirement must be completed prior to the submission of a dissertation proposal. Students are expected to preach a series of 3 to 5 sermons or to teach a series of 3 to 5 Bible lessons in their chosen ministry language. A full manuscript of each sermon or lesson must be submitted to the program director, who will identify an appropriate language evaluator to determine if the student needs further remedial language instruction. This ministry language requirement is in keeping with the program's emphasis on ministry in Asia, a context that often presents the challenge of a multilingual environment. Students who fail three attempts to pass the ministry language requirement will be dropped from the program.

For further information on the language requirements for the Ph.D. in Ministerial Studies program, see the current version of the "Guidelines for Language Requirements and for the Comprehensive Exams."

## **2.9 Comprehensive Examination**

The comprehensive exam will be completed in this program through writing reviews of scholarly works related to ministerial studies. The literature reviews are divided into two stages: general field literature reviews and area focus literature reviews. Students are encouraged to complete the general field literature reviews by the end of the second year in the program. For this stage, students will read and review books within each of the following three areas of study: (1) pastoral leadership and administration, (2) pastoral care and discipleship, and (3) expository preaching. Students are encouraged to complete the area focus literature reviews by the end of the third year in the program. For this stage, students will read and review books that are relevant to the specific area of research within which they plan to write their dissertation. The comprehensive exam should be completed within 6 months after the last class taken by the student for credit. The comprehensive exam requirement must be completed prior to the submission of a dissertation proposal. Students should contact the program director or their dissertation advisor for the current guidelines concerning the comprehensive exam in the Ph.D. in Ministerial Studies program.

## **2.10 Program Overview**

It is expected that doctoral students will complete all work for the Ph.D. in Ministerial Studies within five years. This includes, but is not limited to, passing courses worth a total of 33 credit hours, passing language requirements, passing both stages of the comprehensive examination, and completing a substantial (200-250 page) dissertation worth 12 credit hours. Ph.D. students will take courses totaling 33 credit hours during their first three years of study (normally 3 to 4 courses a year). Students should plan to complete their language requirements by the end of the first year of study, the initial stage of their comprehensive examination by the end of their second year of study (general field literature reviews), and the final stage of their comprehensive examination by the end of their third year of study (area focus literature reviews). At

the beginning of the fourth year of study, students should produce a dissertation proposal that will be accepted by their dissertation committee. In the remainder of the fourth year and by the end of the fifth year, students will complete their dissertation and successfully defend it.

A student needing more than seven years to complete the Ph.D. may petition the program director for a one-year extension. A student who has been in the program for eight years without finishing but has made significant progress on his or her dissertation and seems likely to finish within one further year may petition the program director for a final one-year extension. No further extensions will be granted. Any Ph.D. student who has not completed all work within eight or at most nine years will be dropped from the program.

This program's courses are normally modular in format; most are worth three credit hours. Modular courses are one or two weeks in duration. Some online courses may be available. Students should normally expect each course to take at least 120 hours, including both in-class instruction and out-of-class work. One-week courses normally meet from Monday to Saturday, 6 hours each day. Two-week courses normally meet from Monday to Friday both weeks, 4 hours each day. Students will receive both pre-class and post-class assignments to complete the minimum expected hours of study. Online courses will follow the typical BSOP trimester schedule.

## **2.11 Financial Information**

For current information related to tuition and other fees, as well as scholarship inquiries, see the "Admissions" page at the BSOP website:

(<https://bsop.edu.ph/student/admission>).

## **2.12 Additional Academic Information**

Students seeking additional academic information (for example, on issues related to registration, attendance, grading, academic integrity, student discipline, plagiarism, and the use of the library) should see the BSOP Student Handbook.

## **2.13 Style Manual**

Student papers in the Ph.D. program should normally follow the format found in *SBL Handbook of Style for Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014). For formatting and stylistic issues not covered in the *SBL Handbook*, students should refer to Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Paper, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018). For style sheets of the dissertation title page, signature page, and copyright page, see Appendix A, B, and C of this handbook.

### **3. Dissertation Guidelines<sup>1</sup>**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of these guidelines is to give a general overview of the dissertation process. The dissertation is the culminating project of the student's academic program. It represents an opportunity for the student to be involved in original research that demonstrates scholarly reflection and thoughtful contextual analysis. As soon as possible, students should begin to focus their studies on their dissertation's topic and related issues. This will bring greater continuity to their studies and shorten their research and writing time. These guidelines are provided to assist the student, dissertation advisor, and dissertation readers through the dissertation process. Specific questions not covered here should be addressed to the advisor or program director.

#### **3.2 Three Stages in Writing a Dissertation**

##### **3.2.1 Prospectus**

The prospectus is a short (3-7 page) paper that allows the student to think through the proposed research before expending energy on unfruitful exercises. At this stage it will become clear that many proposed dissertation topics are too ambitious, too broad, or in some other way unrealistic. The dissertation advisor is responsible for guiding the student through the process of fundamentally shaping the research. Generally, a prospectus contains the following parts:

- Statement of proposed research: title, statement of the problem, statement of purpose, delimitations, conceptual framework, and a basic table of contents
- Outline of research methods, including a preliminary literature search
- Questions to be answered by the study
- Potential contributions of the study

Once the advisor and the program director agree that the proposed research project is both realistic and appropriate, the student may advance to the proposal stage.

##### **3.2.2 Proposal**

The proposal builds on the prospectus, including such items as an extensive discussion of the problem to be addressed, an extensive review of relevant literature dealing with the problem, and a description of methodology and procedures. The proposal should also include a schedule for the completion of the thesis or dissertation. Once the advisor and the program director agree that

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<sup>1</sup> These guidelines are adapted from the Asia Graduate School of Theology Ed.D. Program Handbook.



the proposal is acceptable, the program director, in consultation with the advisor and the student, will begin the process of recruiting committee members.

### **3.2.3 Dissertation**

Dissertation development requires the student to work closely with the advisor. It is important for students to realize from the outset that they themselves are responsible for scheduling meetings with their advisor, networking with experts, and providing the energy needed to complete the research project. Completing a dissertation requires self-motivation and independent work and study skills as well as a passion for the subject. Working closely with the advisor, the student will carry the research and writing of the dissertation through to completion. Typically, a dissertation will require several major revisions and a myriad of minor changes before its final draft.

When the advisor and the program director are satisfied that the dissertation has been satisfactorily completed, an oral defense may be scheduled with the other committee members. This defense must be held by March 31 of the academic year in which the student expects to graduate. It is usually open to the academic community. The student must prepare multiple copies of the dissertation for the committee members and other readers. They must all have their copies at least two weeks before the defense. Typically, even a successfully defended dissertation will require some revisions and/or corrections before its final draft is ready for binding. These revisions and/or corrections must be completed by April 30 of the academic year in which the student expects to graduate. Contact the BSOP library to determine the number of bound copies of the final draft that must be submitted to the school.

The dissertation must:

- (1) be an original work that not only demonstrates intensive study and analysis of an issue, problem, or question but also makes a new contribution to the body of knowledge;
- (2) show adequate knowledge of the field of study and relevant literature;
- (3) demonstrate the exercise of critical judgment with regard to both the student's work and that of other scholars in the same general field;
- (4) contain material that presents a unified body of work such as could reasonably be achieved on the basis of an extended time of graduate study and research; and
- (5) be satisfactory in its literary presentation, give full and adequate references, and have a coherent structure understandable to a scholar in the same general field with regard to intentions, background, methods, and conclusions.

A Ph.D. dissertation is usually between 200 and 250 pages, not including end matter. It should demonstrate broader, deeper research into the topic and offer an original contribution to the discipline. It usually takes more than a year to complete. Final approval is based on the merits of the dissertation as determined by the committee.

### 3.3 Dissertation Committee Members

A dissertation committee is to have at least four members: the program director (ex officio), the advisor, one other committee member, and an external reader. The committee's precise makeup will depend on the sort of research being done.

**3.3.1 Program Director:** The program director is an ex officio member of each dissertation committee and keeps abreast of the progress the student is making. The role of the program director includes:

- Consulting with the student on the selection of an advisor; consulting with the student and the advisor on the selection of committee members; informing committee members of their responsibilities; guiding the advisor as necessary; monitoring the advisor/advisee relationship and the progress of the student's research.
- Making sure the student is prepared for the oral defense of the thesis or dissertation; approving its date, venue, and time; making sure that the student has distributed copies of the text to all committee members at least two weeks before the defense.
- Recruiting external readers as needed; providing those who agree to be involved with a copy of the text at least two weeks before the defense; passing on their comments to the advisor, other committee members, and the student.
- Chairing or appointing a chair for the dissertation defense.
- Signing the signature page when the dissertation has been successfully completed.
- Making sure that the BSOP library has the appropriate number of bound photocopies of the dissertation.

**3.3.2 Advisor:** An advisor is typically a BSOP faculty member (full-time or adjunct), possesses an earned doctorate in the student's field of study, has special expertise in the specific area of the dissertation, and is willing to give a significant amount of time to advising the student. The student is expected to

work closely with the advisor during the research and writing stages and to submit drafts and revisions of each chapter for the advisor's critical review.

The advisor's primary responsibility is to guide the research and writing process by evaluating and providing feedback for the student's ideas and proposals. The advisor must be available to the student and willing to give him or her attention at regular intervals. Interactions with the advisor are intended to clarify and give direction to the student's work, not to substitute the advisor's expertise for that of the student. The advisor is not a co-author of the dissertation and should not be expected to do the student's work of analyzing, synthesizing, and reflecting on the research topic.

Although the advisor may make recommendations for improving the student's writing, it is not the advisor's primary task to proofread the dissertation. It is the student's responsibility to prepare a manuscript that is clearly and correctly composed according to the standards of scholarly written English. In some cases, the student may find it valuable to engage the services of a competent editor in order to ensure that the dissertation is free from errors of grammar and spelling as well as typographical mistakes.

**3.3.3 Committee Members:** Other committee members are selected for their expertise and interest in the topic being investigated. Any committee member may work directly with a student at the request of the advisor. If the oral defense brings to light weaknesses that the committee members believe must be addressed in order to make the dissertation acceptable, immediately after the defense they are to agree on a list of revisions—additions and deletions as well as other necessary editing—that will guide the student's further work. Only after the student has completed these revisions to the readers' satisfaction should they sign the student's signature page.

**3.3.4 External Readers:** External readers are not part of the dissertation committee, but one such reader will evaluate each dissertation. The external reader is chosen for his or her expertise and interest in the research topic. The external reader's evaluation is made without consultation with the committee, and he or she is not part of the committee's final decision-making process. As a disinterested party, the external reader takes note of the primary strengths and weaknesses of the dissertation, its significance as a contribution to the field of study, its logic, coherence, critical insight, scholarship, and style and format. The external reader's evaluation is summarized in a two- to three-page critique.

The manuscript of the dissertation is to be presented to the external reader at least two weeks before the defense. The external reader is requested to return his or her written critique to the program director or the advisor no later than one week before the defense, in order that the student and the committee

members may have time to reflect on its contents. The external reader's attendance at the defense is optional.

### **3.4 Organization of Dissertation**

The following is a checklist of items for inclusion in the front matter, chapter 1, and back matter of a dissertation. Note that several of the items listed here are optional and that much though not all of this list is merely suggestive. The number of chapters and the basic outline of each chapter, including chapter 1, are to be determined by a process of dialogue and negotiation between the student and the advisor.

#### **3.4.1 Front Matter**

- Title page (see Appendix A)
- Signature page (see Appendix B)
- Copyright page (see Appendix C)
- Dedication (optional)
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables (if any)
- List of Figures (if any)
- Acknowledgments (optional)
- Abstract

#### **3.4.2 Chapter 1: Statement of the Research Question and Thesis**

- Introduction that establishes the context of prior research and shows the contribution that you intend to make (or that explains the problem you want to solve).
- Clear statement of your research question
- Explanation for why it is important to answer this question
- Explanation of the scope and limitations of your study
- Clear statement of your thesis
- Review of literature that leads up to the contribution you plan to make
- Description of the method or methods to be used in your research
- An overview of the overall organization of the remaining chapters in your dissertation

#### **3.4.3 Back Matter**

- Appendixes (if any)
- Bibliography

**Appendix A: Style Sheet for Dissertation Title Page**

Biblical Seminary of the Philippines

**Title of the Dissertation:**

**In Bold Letters**

A Dissertation Submitted to  
the Seminary Faculty  
in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Ministerial Studies

by

**Your Name [in Bold Letters]**

Valenzuela City, Metro Manila, Philippines

Month Year

## Appendix B: Style Sheet for Signature Page

Biblical Seminary of the Philippines  
Valenzuela City, Metro Manila, Philippines

Date

We hereby approve this dissertation

submitted by

**Student's Name [in Bold]**

entitled

**Title of the Dissertation:**

**In Bold Letters**

as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Ministerial Studies

\_\_\_\_\_, Dissertation Advisor  
Type Advisor's Name Here

\_\_\_\_\_, Committee Member  
Type Committee Member's Name Here

\_\_\_\_\_, External Reader  
Type External Reader's Name Here

\_\_\_\_\_, Program Director  
Type Program Director's Name Here

## **Appendix C: Style Sheet for Copyright Page**

**Copyright** © 20-- by Your Name

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