PURPOSES OF THE APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT

THE APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT HAS THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:

1. To develop further the student's professional skills for ministry.
2. To contribute to the mission of the church through reflective praxis and actualized ministry in the student's current context.
3. To improve the student's self-directed learning skills and understanding of how ministry is accomplished.
4. To make available to other professional Christian leaders knowledge and understanding in a certain area of ministry.
5. To develop further the student's ability to do field research on the level of a professional doctorate.
6. To contribute knowledge about ministry to the larger ministerial community.

CRITERIA FOR AN ACCEPTABLE APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT

The criteria for an acceptable applied research project are as follows:

1. It must clearly relate to the student's current ministry (a front-burner issue or need) or ministry interests.
2. It must reflect the candidate's depth of biblical and theological insight in relation to ministry. This means that the student must evaluate all levels of the research project within the context of his or her biblical and theological values and truth. This is particularly critical in chapter two of the dissertation and in chapters four and five.
3. It must employ acceptable research method(s) with which the guided student has sufficient competence in order to attain adequate validity.
4. It must be focused sufficiently to allow a concentration of effort and avoid attempts to cover so much ground that the results are superficial.
5. It must give evidence of careful planning and execution.
6. It must incorporate an honest evaluation of the process and results of the project based on well-defined criteria and valid evaluative procedures.
7. It must be submitted in the form of a dissertation, written in clear, correct English (or Spanish, if the student is in the Spanish-language D.Min. program) with correct format as defined by this handbook, avoiding polemical or exaggerated claims.
8. It must be written with careful attention to the correct use of source material, documentation, and research standards.
9. When completed, it should inform the student's understanding of Christian ministry and how to minister in a more effective way.

FOUR COMMON MODELS

Students who have completed D.Min. studies successfully at Dallas Seminary often have employed one of the following four models for an applied research project. These are not the only models for applied research. Other options should be discussed with the director of D.Min. Studies.

1. **Descriptive surveys of a ministry situation.**
   The survey is designed to report current ministry conditions. Students are expected to go beyond mere description and critically analyze the survey's findings, suggesting ways to improve the ministry situation.

2. **Program development and evaluation.**
   The student will *develop* a ministry program or activity and evaluate its effectiveness. The ideal program is one that the student's ministry seeks to implement so that the program is not designed solely for the sake of completing the research project.

3. **Program evaluation and response.**
   An *existing* program will be evaluated and modified based on research findings.

   Dr. Michael Lawson, chairman of the Department of Christian Education, has developed a self-evaluation inventory for the assessment of a local church. Students interested in using the inventory as an applied research project should contact Dr. Lawson at mlawson@dts.edu.

4. **Case studies of ongoing ministry situations.**
   The student selects churches, organizations, leaders, etc., as cases to study, seeking to answer descriptive research questions. The student is expected to go beyond mere description and critically analyze the case study's findings, suggesting ways to improve the ministry situation.

The D.Min. Office highly recommends that students peruse Dallas Seminary D.Min. dissertations (projects) that are available in Turpin Library and the *Research in Ministry* (R.I.M.) index, also available in Turpin Library (on CD-ROM), to become familiar with projects that have been completed successfully at Dallas Seminary and in other D.Min. programs.

NOTE: The most helpful dissertations from the DTS D.Min. program are those completed after 2000. Please be aware that the class of 2002 and following are required to use Turabian style rather than APA style, as has been required in the past. Recent DTS D.Min. dissertations (2000–present) would be useful for style purposes and for research techniques and reporting standards.

The following are helpful examples of the models described above.

1. DESCRIPTIVE SURVEYS OF A MINISTRY SITUATION:

RESOURCE BOOK:
Fowler, F. J. *Survey Research Methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002. Read the book by Fowler unless you plan to use the case study method for your research. If you intend to do case studies for your research project, read R. K. Yin rather than Fowler.

DISSERTATIONS:
Van Goethem, Jeff. "Pastoral Options in Ministering to Cohabiting Couples" (D.Min. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1998).

2. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION:

McQuitty, E. Andrew. "Developing, Implementing, & Evaluating a Program to Prepare a Church Congregation for Facility Relocation" (D.Min. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1997).

3. PROGRAM EVALUATION AND RESPONSE:

Allen, Brent George. "Evaluated Evangelism Strategy for the People of the Old North Baptist Church, Canfield, Ohio" (D.Min. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1996).

4. CASE STUDIES OF ONGOING MINISTRY SITUATIONS:

RESOURCE BOOK:
Yin, R. K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003.

DISSERTATIONS:
Kutnow, James M. "Evaluation of the Year-long Pastoral Internship Ministry at the Blue Church" (D.Min. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1996).

Ristuccia, Matthew P. "Ministers' Children: A Correlational and Theological Study" (D.Min. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1991).

Tan, Florence P. "Developing Disciple-makers among Singaporean Women: A Case Study" (D.Min. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1992).

Wells, Jeffrey H. "Case Studies of Pastoral Leadership in the Church" (D.Min. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1992).

HOW TO GET STARTED

PROCEDURE AND DEADLINES

Students normally begin their applied research project before they finish their course work. Students should give thought to possible topics for the project early in their D.Min. program. Students will receive instruction concerning how to conduct the project and to prepare the dissertation in DM102 Applied Research Project Development, one of the required D.Min. courses. Students should enroll in DM102 in the summer term that is one and a half years prior to their anticipated May graduation. For example, a student wishing to graduate in May of 2011 should enroll in DM102 in the summer of 2009 or before. Students in some cohorts will receive research instruction as part of the cohort.

THE PROJECT TOPIC

To have the project topic approved, the student should submit a D.Min. applied research project topic approval form. Email the *completed form to the D.Min. Office, to arrive no later than March 15 of the year preceding graduation.* The form will be sent to the appropriate department chairman for evaluation. After approval by the department chairman, the form will be sent to the Doctor of Ministry Studies Committee for approval. If approved, the D.Min. studies director, in consultation with the Doctor of Ministry Studies Committee, will appoint an adviser (first reader) and a second reader to the project.

The applied research project topic approval form must be submitted by March 15 of the year preceding graduation. For example, the student who wishes to graduate in May 2011 should submit the form no later than March 15, 2010. Failure to secure approval may result in the postponement of graduation.

By June 1, the student must submit to the D.Min. Office a proposal that defines the project and outlines the dissertation. The proposal should follow the chapter divisions of the dissertation and summarize the key elements. These elements are: definition of the problem or issue, research questions or hypotheses, data sources and methods for collection, analytical procedures, probable conclusions and recommendations for further study, and a preliminary bibliography.

The proposal should be sent by email to the D.Min. Office, which will forward it to the student's adviser and second reader for approval. Typically, the proposal should not exceed thirty double-spaced pages. The student must obtain approval of the project proposal before proceeding to write the first two chapters of the first draft of the dissertation. The first two chapters are due **September 1** of the year preceding graduation. The remainder, the first full draft of the full dissertation, is due **November 15** of the year preceding graduation.

HOW TO FINISH:
THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE AND EXIT INTERVIEW

When the adviser and second reader are satisfied with the submitted dissertation rough draft, they will request that an exit interview be scheduled with the student. Normally both readers and the director of D.Min. Studies will interview the student. The purpose of the interview is to give the student an opportunity to articulate orally a defense of the project and dissertation and to gain feedback from the student on the value of D.Min. studies. The defense will include: (1) a summary of the project, including a statement of the purpose of the project; (2) a summary of the research design; (3) a summary of the results; and (4) a discussion of implications from the project for further study. The interview will not be limited to the project and dissertation.

The student will be asked to evaluate the value of the D.Min. program for his or her personal development and ministry. Prior to the exit interview, the D.Min. Office will send an exit interview survey and a ministry exit survey to the graduating student. The student is to complete the exit interview survey and return it to the D.Min. Office at least one week prior to the exit interview. The student's ministry supervisor (elder, senior pastor, director, etc.) should complete the ministry exit survey and return it to the D.Min. Office at least one week prior to the exit interview. The student will be asked to outline a personal program for lifelong learning.

The final draft of the applied research project, which has incorporated any changes required by the adviser or second reader, must be submitted to the D.Min. Office electronically via email on or before **March 1 for a May graduation.** If further corrections to the final draft are required, it will be returned to the student. Two (2) hard copies of the final dissertation with all corrections to the final draft will then need to be submitted to the D.Min. Office by **March 30 for a May graduation.** One copy will be bound for the library and one copy will be sent to TREN for microfilming. If you mail your final applied research project, please allow adequate time for delivery. DO NOT SEND ANY ELECTRONIC COPIES OF YOUR APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT TO YOUR ADVISER FIRST. **Every electronic and hard copy submission (final draft only) must first come through the D.Min. Office** so that it can be properly recorded and then routed.

The library copy must be printed on a **laser printer with 20-pound, acid-free stock paper of at least 25 percent cotton.** The TREN copy can be a photocopy of the original, but the student still must use the **20-pound, 25 percent cotton paper.** The Seminary recommends Permalife White Bond paper, available from the DTS Book Center.

APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT TIMELINE

DEADLINE	SUBMIT	EXAMPLE	
Summer or Winter, at least one and a half to two years prior to anticipated graduation but as early as the topic is known	Enrollment in DM102 (Some cohorts include research instruction)	December 2011 Graduation SU2010	May 2012 Graduation WI2010
March 15 of the year prior to anticipated graduation	Topic Approval Form to the D.Min. Office	Oct. 15, 2010	March 15, 2011
June 1 of the year prior to anticipated graduation	Proposal to the D.Min. Office	Jan. 1, 2011	June 1, 2011
September 1 of the year prior to anticipated graduation	First draft of the first two chapters to the D.Min. Office	Apr. 1, 2011	Sept. 1, 2011
November 15 of the year prior to anticipated graduation	First draft of all chapters to the D.Min. Office	June 15, 2011	Nov. 15, 2011
February 1 of the year of anticipated graduation	Exit Interview completed	Sept. 1, 2011	Feb. 1, 2012
March 1 of the year of anticipated graduation	Final draft to the D.Min. Office that includes any changes required by the adviser or second reader	Oct. 1, 2011	March 1, 2012
March 30	Two final copies with all corrections made to the D.Min. Office	Oct. 30, 2011	March 30, 2012
Commencement Ceremony		N/A	May 2012

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR FINAL COPY

Two originals, each in its own 8.5x11x2 box, are to be submitted to the D.Min. Office. Detailed instructions on the submission of the final copies will be sent to each candidate when the first draft is returned to the student.

PROOFREADING DIRECTIVE

FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Your work needs to be proofread by a person who speaks English as a first language. If you do not have someone to do this, that service can be provided for a fee. Contact the D.Min. Office at dmin@dts.edu to arrange for a proofreader. Professors, advisers, and second readers cannot be proofreaders. If your work comes to us with typographical and grammatical errors, it will be returned to you for careful proofreading. Therefore, all your work must be proofread before you submit it. Your written work needs to be submitted as free of errors as possible. Always plan proofreading time into the completion of your papers and dissertation.

FOR STUDENTS WHO SPEAK ENGLISH AS THEIR FIRST LANGUAGE

Professors, advisers, and second readers cannot be proofreaders. Therefore, all your work must be proofread before you submit it. If you need help, that service can be provided for a fee. Contact the D.Min. Office at dmin@dts.edu to arrange for a proofreader. If your work comes to us with typographical and grammatical errors, it will be returned to you for careful proofreading. Your written work needs to be submitted as free of errors as possible. Always plan proofreading time into the completion of your papers and dissertation.

CARRYING OUT THE APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT

The Research Problem: What Issue Will Be Addressed by the Research? The D.Min. applied research project begins with a clearly defined **research problem.** By "problem" we do not necessarily mean something wrong that needs to be fixed. A research problem provides the **rationale** for the applied research project. Some research literature refers to the research problem as a "problem statement" or "purpose statement." A research problem may be:

- a ministry that needs to be developed (why it needs to be developed is actually the problem)
- a descriptive and evaluative study of what and why various ministries have succeeded or failed in selected contexts
- a particular ministry skill, philosophy, or issue that needs improvement, development, or resolution
- a reason for a descriptive and evaluative study of an existing ministry

    NOTE: Sample research problem statements appear on the following pages.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Most research questions in D.Min. studies come as a "grand tour" (Creswell, 1994, p. 70). That is, the research question states in abstract form what will direct the study or what the researcher wishes to know, learn, explain, or clarify as a result of the project.

Reference

Creswell, J. W. *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994.

Typically, the research question will use wording that points to the research method that will be employed or at least to its *quantitative* or *qualitative* nature.

E.g., **qualitative:** What influence do interracial leadership, relevant expository preaching, and blended music have on the racial integration of Caucasians into Dothan Community Church?

E.g., **quantitative:** Will teaching selected doctrines of systematic theology to CBS students improve their ability to understand and evaluate the false doctrine of the WOF Movement?

THE HYPOTHESIS

A research hypothesis is simply an educated guess as to what results the researcher expects.

In quantitative research, the hypothesis will indicate the expected degree of relationship among variable factors or the expected degree of difference between groups on a particular factor.

In qualitative research, the hypothesis simply helps the researcher to be precise in describing and evaluating anticipated results from interviews, case studies, focus groups, or other qualitative methods.

THE APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT

EXAMPLES: THE LOGIC OF D.MIN. RESEARCH

EXAMPLE 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT	RESEARCH QUESTION	HYPOTHESIS	METHOD/PROJECT
This research project evaluates the Zaporozhye Bible College (ZBC) as a model for providing Bible college education in modern-day Ukraine	Does Zaporozhye Bible College provide an acceptable educational model for Bible college education in modern-day Ukraine?	Given the religious and political history, language, and churches of modern-day Ukraine, ZBC does provide an acceptable educational model for Bible college education in modern-day Ukraine.	**Case study** on Zaporozhye Bible College that includes needs of the Ukrainian church, educational options, evaluation of ZBC curriculum, and ZBC graduates, etc.

EXAMPLE 2

PROBLEM STATEMENT	RESEARCH QUESTION	HYPOTHESIS	METHOD/PROJECT
The problem examined in this study is whether a father-child relationship in an evangelical minister's family influences the child's church involvement as an adult.	What influence does growing up in the home of an evangelical minister have on one's church involvement as an adult?	**H1:** The minister's child who reports a positive relationship to his or her minister-father as a child will also report high church involvement as an adult. **H2:** The minister's child who reports a negative relationship to his or her minister-father as a child will also report little or no church involvement as an adult.	Two **surveys** that compare: (1) factors of the paternal childhood relationship and (2) factors of adult church involvement.

EXAMPLE 3

PROBLEM STATEMENT	RESEARCH QUESTION	HYPOTHESIS	METHOD/PROJECT
This project examines to what extent DTS alumni shift from expository preaching to current-topic preaching during their preaching careers.	Has a significant percentage of Dallas Seminary alumni who serve as preaching pastors changed their philosophy of preaching from expository preaching to current-topic preaching?	Less than 25 percent of DTS alumni who serve as preaching pastors have changed their philosophy of preaching from expository preaching to current-topic preaching.	**Descriptive survey** that seeks information about current and former preaching philosophy among DTS alumni and whether there has been a change in philosophy.

EXAMPLE 4

PROBLEM STATEMENT	RESEARCH QUESTION	HYPOTHESIS	METHOD/PROJECT
This project studies the extent to which the teaching of Murray Bowen's family systems theory increases the effectiveness of Christian & Missionary Alliance women counselors in Taiwan.	Will teaching Murray Bowen's family system theory and therapy to Taiwan Christian & Missionary Alliance women counselors enable them to become more effective family counselors?	Post-test scores on a counseling questionnaire to measure participants' understanding of Murray Bowen's family system theory and therapy will be significantly higher than pre-test scores.	**Program development and evaluation:** Develop 12 sessions for teaching Bowen's family system theory and therapy. Use pre- and post-test participants.

EXAMPLE 5

PROBLEM STATEMENT	RESEARCH QUESTION	HYPOTHESIS	METHOD/PROJECT
This project evaluates the methods used by Texas Southern Baptist churches to evaluate and choose their Christian education curriculum.	How do Texas Southern Baptist churches evaluate and choose their curriculum for Christian education?	The majority of Texas Southern Baptist churches designate a staff member or lay leader to conduct an annual evaluation of available curricula.	Evaluative survey of 100 Texas Baptist churches to learn of their practices in evaluating and selecting CE curriculum.

EXAMPLES: THE LOGIC OF D.MIN. RESEARCH

EXAMPLE 6			
PROBLEM STATEMENT	**RESEARCH QUESTION**	**HYPOTHESIS**	**METHOD/PROJECT**
The problem of this project is to evaluate the use of temporary facilities by churches in a location transition for meeting ministry objectives.	To what degree did the use of temporary facilities help the church to meet its ministry objectives?	Overall ministry objectives continued to be met, but attendance declined.	Four **case studies** of churches that have used temporary facilities to move from one permanent location to another.

EXAMPLE 7			
PROBLEM STATEMENT	**RESEARCH QUESTION**	**HYPOTHESIS**	**METHOD/PROJECT**
This project is intended to evaluate the assimilation program of Temple Baptist Church (TBC).	To what degree does the current assimilation program of TBC assist people to become involved in the church's ministries?	**H1:** The current assimilation program helps people to identify appropriate educational classes for their children. **H2:** The current assimilation program helps people identify appropriate adult educational classes. **H3:** The current assimilation program helps people to join a small group. **H4:** The current assimilation program helps people to understand the church's core beliefs and values.	Evaluate the existing program by interviewing new church members.