

# Programs

## Admissions

VST seeks students eager to passionately and critically engage texts, traditions, and the contemporary theological, social, and political landscape.

Most students are expected to have a Bachelor's degree and competence in English, demonstrated if needed by writing the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) examination. Some students may be permitted to enter with a combination of education and experience. See the Admissions section for more information.

## Core Courses

At the core of all VST's basic degree programs is a standard complement of courses; all programs are built on this core. These courses allow a process of discernment, permitting students to survey all available facets of theological education and to test their aptitude for their chosen vocation, whether in ordained ministry or lay leadership, academic research or teaching careers, or in other professions where they incorporate their faith and spirituality. The Core Courses provide the prerequisites for upper level courses required for specific degrees.

### Core to all programs:

- HB500 – Introduction to Hebrew Bible I
- HB600 – Introduction to Hebrew Bible II
- HIS500 – Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity
- NT500 – Synoptics
- NT501 – Paul
- TH500 – Constructive Theology I

### Specific by program:

- INT500 – Research Methodologies and Theological Disciplines
- LS500 – Introduction to Christian Worship
- PT500 – Introduction to Public and Pastoral Leadership
- PT600 – Education and Pastoral Ministry in Intercultural context



### Information Literacy and Research Skills Workshops

All VST students are required to participate in 12 hours of Information Literacy Workshops (non-credit), in which they will engage in hands-on as well as theoretical work intended to develop knowledgeable, disciplined and critically astute researchers. One session will focus specifically on developing a thesis proposal and thesis writing skills. Students may be able to test out of all or part of these workshops if they already have sufficient background in the areas covered.

# Diploma in Theological Studies

## Overview of Program

The Diploma in Theological Studies is a general program that is designed to provide theological enrichment and a solid base for lay ministry. Diploma seekers may use their study time as a retreat, taking time away from busy lives to seek further spiritual development. Others may choose to continue their studies and to pursue a Master's degree, having received a solid base of theological education.

## Length of Program

This is a 24-credit hour program. The Diploma may be completed in two full-time terms, with an average workload of 40 hours per week. The Diploma may be taken part time over three years but must be completed by the end of the third year. In our experience, it is difficult for full-time students employed more than 10 hours a week to complete the Diploma program successfully in one year.

## Course Requirements for Diploma in Theological Studies

Any five of the following courses:

- HB500 – Introduction to Hebrew Bible I (3 credits)
- HB600 – Introduction to Hebrew Bible II (3)
- HIS500 – Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity (3)
- NT500 – Synoptics (3)
- NT501 – Paul (3)
- TH500 – Constructive Theology I (3)
- LS500 – Introduction to Christian Worship (3)
- PT500 – Introduction to Public and Pastoral Leadership (3)

### Plus:

- 9 credit hours of elective courses (may be taken from among the above list, or through other courses for which the student has the prerequisites)

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# Diploma in Denominational Studies

## Overview of Program

The Diploma in Denominational Studies is designed to provide a solid foundation in one of the three supporting denominations at VST – The Anglican Church of Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada and The United Church of Canada.

## Length of Program

The Diploma in Denominational Studies is an 18-credit hour program. It may be completed within one year of study. In certain cases, Presbyterian students wishing to pursue ordination in the PCC after completing an M.Div elsewhere are required to complete a more substantial Diploma program. Contact the Registrar for details.

## Course Requirements for Diploma in Denominational Studies

- One of:
  - PT610 – Public and Pastoral Leadership: Integration and Formation (3) (for Special Students\*)

- HIS500 – Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity (3) (for regular admissions students)
- HIS600 – Canadian History Seminar (3)
- Denominational Studies (see page 31 for course listings) (6 credits)
- The denominationally appropriate course from among:
  - HIS650 – The Anglican Tradition (3)
  - HIS640 – Reformation History (3)
- One elective (3)
- Involvement in worship and community life of the denomination at VST is a requirement of this program. Specifics can be arranged with the relevant Director of Denominational Formation.

*\*Special Students, in this case, are those who have been required by their denomination to do a program in denominational studies and whose academic background and fitness for ministry have been assessed by the denominational authorities. See page 52 for Special Student Admissions.*

# Master of Divinity Degree Program (M.Div.)

## Overview of Program

The Master of Divinity degree program is for those seeking an academic program with practical applications within which to explore the depth of their faith and prepare for a variety of lay or ordained ministries. VST's Master of Divinity program is accepted for ordination by the Anglican, United and Presbyterian denominations in Canada and by the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Many other denominations accept all or part of this degree program, though some require at least a year in their denominational schools. Students should check with their denomination for specific ordination requirements.

## Recommendation of Readiness for Ministry

The granting of a Recommendation, i.e., the certification that in the opinion of the members of the Faculty Council an M.Div. graduate of the School is suitable for the exercise of ordained ministry, is the end of a process that begins early in a student's program of studies. The full text of the Board Policy on Readiness for Ministry can be found in the Supplementary Calendar/Student Handbook.

## Length of Program

This 90-credit hour degree may be completed in three years of full-time study or it may be completed on a part-time basis. There is a limit of seven years from the date of initial enrollment to the completion of this degree.

## Course Requirements for the Master of Divinity Degree

### Foundational Core:

- HB500 – Introduction to Hebrew Bible I (3)
- HB600 – Introduction to Hebrew Bible II (3)
- HIS500 – Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity (3)
- LS500 – Introduction to Christian Worship (3)
- NT500 – Synoptics (3)
- NT501 – Paul (3)
- PT500 – Introduction to Public and Pastoral Leadership (3)

- PT600 – Education and Pastoral Ministry in Intercultural context (3)
- TH500 – Constructive Theology I (3)
- Spirituality Elective (3)

### Advanced Core:

- BIBL500 – Language Tools for Exegesis (3)
- ETH500 – Christian Ethics (3)
- PT601 – Public and Pastoral Leadership: Immersion in Context (3)
- PT602 – Public and Pastoral Leadership: Current and Emergent Practice (3)
- PT610 – Public and Pastoral Leadership: Integration and Formation (3)
- TH600 – Constructive Theology II (3)
- Pastoral Theology Elective (3)

### Plus:

- 5 units of Theological Field Education – see page 15 for details
- Major Exegetical Paper – see page 13 for details
- Major Position Paper – see page 15 for details

**Elective areas:** *(certain denominations will have their own requirements which students will take to fulfill the general requirements as outlined below. VST sponsoring denomination's requirements follow)*

- 12 credits in the Practice of Public and Pastoral Leadership:
- (Pastoral Theology; Education; Liturgy; Homiletics; Denominational Studies)
- 6 credits in Bible (3 credits in each Testament)
- 6 credits in History
- 3 credits in Theology
- 3 credits in Religious Pluralism
- 3 credits in Spirituality
- 6 additional elective hours

## Denominational Requirements

VST's sponsoring denominations have designated courses that their candidates for ordination must take as part of a VST M.Div program. These courses fulfill all or part of the elective area requirements in the 90 credit-hour M.Div listed above.

### Anglican Church Requirements:

- HOM500 – Preaching
- SP510 – The Beauty of Holiness: Worship and Spirituality in the Anglican Tradition
- LS600 – Foundations in Liturgical and Sacramental Ministry
- HIS600 – Canadian History Seminar
- HIS650 – The Anglican Tradition
- NT600 - John
- TH652 – We Who Are Many Are One Body: Church and Ministry in the Anglican Tradition
- Educational Ministry Elective

### Presbyterian Church Requirements:

- Either:
  - BIBL500 plus 3 credits of Greek or Hebrew, OR
  - 6 credits of Greek or Hebrew

- DS510 – PCC Denom Studies: Introduction to PCC Worship, Theological Emphases, Governance and Mission
- DS610 – PCC Denom. Studies: Reformed Worship, Polity and Confessions of Faith
- HIS600 – Canadian History Seminar
- HIS640 – History of the Reformation
- HOM500 – Preaching
- TH650 – Reformed Theology in the 19th/20th Centuries
- Advanced Preaching Elective (may be waived by Homiletics instructor)
- Educational Ministry Elective

### United Church Requirements:

- DS520/521/522/523/525/624 – UCC Denominational Studies (see pages 31 and 32 for details)
- HOM500 – Preaching
- HIS600 – Canadian History Seminar
- HIS640 – History of the Reformation
- TH550 – Readings in Modern and Post-Modern Theologies
- Educational Ministry Elective



# Master of Divinity (Honours) with Concentration in...

## (M. Div. Honours)

### Overview of Program

The purpose of the Master of Divinity (Honours) degree is to give an enhanced preparation to students who are considering doctoral study and a teaching career in one of the areas of VST's program of theology, but who also want the full scope of preparation offered by the M.Div degree. The M.Div (Honours) program will also provide the church with pastors and other leaders who have highly developed skills in specific areas of ministry, theology, spirituality, history, or bible.

### Admission to the M.Div (Honours)

Application into the Honours M.Div is normally submitted after the completion of 30 credit hours, and is made to the Public and Pastoral Leadership Committee through the committee chair. Applicants must submit the following:

One letter of recommendation from a VST faculty member

250 word statement of intent delineating the applicant's study interest and concentration

VST transcript to date

### Length of Program

The M.Div (Honours) degree program adds an additional 15 credit hours to the regular M.Div program for a total of 105 credit hours. Students entering this program should plan carefully in advance and should be aware that, in some cases, it may not be possible to complete the program in three years of study.

### Requirements for Master of Divinity (Honours) degree

- All requirements for the M.Div program
- Three additional elective courses (9 credit hours) in the area or areas of concentration. Interdisciplinary projects are encouraged.

- HON600: this 3-credit hour directed study reading course will provide the preparation and readings necessary for the writing of the major paper. Readings will be done in the area in which a student is concentrating. The Readings Course is typically supervised by the faculty advisor for the Honours Major Paper and the student will typically register for their readings course in the Fall term of their final year of study
- HON650: A major research paper, for which a student is give 3 credit-hours, is the final evaluation for the Honours M.Div degree program. A student will typically register for their major paper in the Spring term of their final year of study

### Major Paper Guidelines:

The major paper will be approximately 12,500 words (50 pages) in length and will have two readers, the primary faculty person working with the student on their readings course, and a second to be chosen by the primary faculty person in consultation with Public and Pastoral Leadership Committee. The major paper is due by the 10th week of the final term of studies, and must be approved by both readers. Any revisions required must be submitted by the last day of term prior to graduation.

### Ministry Position Paper:

Students in this program will incorporate in the Ministry Position Paper (a requirement in the M.Div program) some reflections on how this particular concentration relates to their sense of call and understanding of ministry.

# Native Ministries Master of Divinity by Extension Degree Program (M. Div.)

The Native Ministries M.Div. by Extension Program is the only degree program in North America for persons engaged in ministry in First Nations communities that is accredited by The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. At the present time, the program includes students from the Anglican, Presbyterian and United churches in Canada and from several denominations in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii.

## Partnership with First Nations Peoples and the Churches

This innovative degree program was developed in partnership with First Nations people. The primary location and context for learning is the community in which the student lives and serves. This context is crucial for the student's effective engagement with the social, cultural, political and religious values of First Nations communities. Denominational authorities are also indispensable partners. They nominate candidates and provide the necessary infrastructure for the delivery of the degree program. This infrastructure includes the identification of tutors, the allocation of suitable meeting places for course and seminar sessions and the arrangement of a suitable ministry location for the student. Certain tutor and student costs are also borne by the sponsoring denomination. The guidelines and



standards for this infrastructure are established by the School.

Throughout their enrollment in this degree program, students normally continue to exercise some congregational ministry. In this fashion, students need not leave their cultural context, and their communities are not deprived of individuals who are already providing congregational leadership.

## Native Ministries Consortium

The members of the Native Ministries Consortium are: Anglican First Nations Council of Caledonia, Native Ministries Council, BC Conference (United Church of Canada), Episcopal Church in Navajoland, Episcopal Diocese of Alaska, Cook School for Christian Leadership (Tempe, AZ), Henry Budd College for Ministry (The Pas, MB), Indigenous Theological Training Institute (ECUSA) and VST. The purpose of the Consortium is to develop, under Native direction, community-based training programs for Native ministries, both lay and ordained.

The Consortium appoints members to the School's Native Ministries Program Committee, which has primary responsibility for the M.Div. by Extension program.

## Length of Program

It usually takes a minimum of five years to complete the Native Ministries Master of Divinity Program. During the first three years it ordinarily takes to complete the foundational requirements, students are expected to attend the Native Ministries Consortium Summer School also. At the end of the first three years, an evaluation is completed and remaining curriculum requirements are outlined.

## Curriculum

The Extension curriculum encourages its students to reflect on the cultural vessel in which the Gospel came to their people and how the Gospel applies in their own culture. Students are asked to reflect theologically on the nature and calling of the Church and the understanding and significance of the Gospel to their own tradition and to the history of their people. This reflection takes place in a curriculum that uses a variety of educational



media and approaches, including:

- audio-visual materials
- texts
- lectures
- self-directed projects
- tutor-assisted studies
- seminars.

This course of study takes place in the student's own community, in tutorials and seminars conducted by tutors and the School's permanent faculty at regional sites and in courses taught during the annual Native Ministries Consortium Summer School.

Members of the School's permanent faculty offer instructional resources that provide tools for historical research, biblical interpretation, theological reflection and social analysis. With these tools, students rooted and living in their own communities apply their knowledge and skills to ministry amongst Native people.

### **The Native Ministries Consortium Summer School**

The Native Ministries Consortium Summer School is offered annually during two weeks in July. This is an opportunity for students who are often isolated from one another to gather, learn and worship together. It is also an opportunity for intensive course work. In addition to students in the Native Ministries Program, the Consortium Summer School serves people from a wide variety of educational backgrounds.

### **For More Information**

A more complete description of the Programs' courses and evaluation is available through the Native Ministries Program Office. This guide identifies the content of each course and the means by which students demonstrate their competency in the various knowledge and skill areas. The Office can be reached by telephone at 604-822-9480 or by fax at 604-822-9212, e-mail: [nmp@vst.edu](mailto:nmp@vst.edu)

Inquiries can also be made through the School's website at [www.vst.edu](http://www.vst.edu).

# Master of Arts in Theological Studies Degree Program (M.A.T.S.)

## Overview of Program

The Master of Arts in Theological Studies degree program is for those seeking further development in their spiritual journey in relation to other professions, for those interested in further academic study or for those wishing to develop further perspectives in theological thought for personal or professional enrichment.

This program allows students to concentrate their studies in one of five areas. Students will choose one of the following areas before beginning their courses:

**Biblical Studies** – This concentration is intended for those seeking an in-depth and rigorous analysis of Scripture from various perspectives along with biblical language training. Students choosing the Biblical Studies concentration are required to complete 6 credit-hours of either Biblical Hebrew or Biblical Greek as part of their coursework, and write the Major Exegetical Paper (see page 13 for more details).

**Christian Spirituality** – This concentration is for those seeking to explore theories and practice of spirituality within the Christian tradition.

**History and Theology** – For those with a passion for history and theology, this program offers an opportunity to explore historical, ethical and constructive dimensions of the contemporary theological imagination. Students within this concentration are required to take at least 3 credit hours of advanced coursework in both historical and theological studies.

**Public and Pastoral Leadership** – This concentration offers an opportunity to bring together theory and practice as a way to re-imagine and actively engage God's world. Students in this concentration are required to take at least one unit of theological field education as part of their program.



**Integrative Studies** – A generalist’s choice, this concentration allows study in all of the above subject areas and equips the degree-holder with a broad base of knowledge in theological studies.

### Length of Program

The Master of Arts in Theological Studies degree is a 48 credit-hour program, and can be completed in two years of full-time study. However, if a student wishes to study part time, all courses required for this degree must be completed in seven years from the date of first registration. An M.A.T.S. student can expect that a typical workload within a Master’s level course will be, depending upon the subject matter and course style, up to 100-125 pages of reading per week per 3 credit course and that evaluation will be made (in addition to seminar preparation and participation) on the basis of a 25-30 page research paper or its equivalent.

### Final Major Evaluation

Students typically complete their M.A.T.S. program by sitting a six hour comprehensive examination in their last semester of studies. A M.A.T.S. student may petition to the Research Degrees Committee to be allowed to complete her/his course of study by researching and writing a thesis. The thesis would be an advisable path for those, for example, who will be applying for further academic study at other universities. Students will be granted 6 credits in the preparation and successful completion of a thesis.

For more information on M.A.T.S. thesis and comprehensive examination guidelines, see the *Supplementary Calendar/Student Handbook* on the VST website: [www.vst.edu](http://www.vst.edu)

## Course Requirements for Master of Arts in Theological Studies Degree

### Foundational Core:

- HB500 – Introduction to Hebrew Bible I (3)
- HB600 – Introduction to Hebrew Bible II (3)
- HIS500 – Christianity and Judaism in Late Antiquity (3)



- INT500 – Research Methods and Theological Disciplines (3)
- NT500 – Synoptics (3)
- NT501– Paul (3)
- TH500 – Constructive Theology 1 (3)
- **Plus one of:**
  - ETH500 – Christian Ethics (3)
  - LS500 – Introduction to Christian Worship (3)
  - PT500 – Introduction to Public and Pastoral Leadership (3)
  - TH570/571 – Pluralism/World Religions (3)
  - Denominational Studies (see page 31 for details) (3)
  - Spirituality Elective (3)

### Advanced Coursework:

24 credit hours of advanced coursework, with at least 12 credits taken through courses within the student’s chosen area of concentration

# Master of Theology Degree Program (Th.M.)

## Overview of Program

The Master of Theology degree is a post-graduate degree designed to provide the student with: 1) an advanced understanding of one area or discipline within the general context of theological study, and 2) the development of research methods and resources appropriate to the area or discipline chosen. The program may serve to prepare a student for further graduate study at the doctoral level, preparation for some forms of teaching, the scholarly enhancement of ministerial practice, or disciplined focus in an area of theological study for personal interest. Two streams of study are available: One option requires the writing of a scholarly thesis; this is the option generally recommended for those preparing for doctoral work. The other option, the General Research Option, requires additional course work and a significant project. The program requires specialization in the area of study in which the thesis is written but allows for diversity in the selection of courses. It is offered in any field in which a student's interests and the School's resources coincide.

## Length of Program and Course Requirements

The Th.M. degree is a 27 –credit hour program. The normal course of study involves the following:

- 15 credits Courses in the area or discipline of study
- 6 credits Courses in theological fields outside the area of study
- 6 credits Either: Th.M. thesis preparation and writing OR one additional course and preparation of a Th.M project; and an oral examination on the thesis or project

All work for any course undertaken as a part of the Th.M. program must be completed within one month of the end of the term in which the student registered for the course.

In addition to the language(s) required for admission, each candidate must demonstrate a sufficient mastery of any other ancient or modern language required for the thesis topic before the thesis is undertaken. Note:

Additional credit hours may be required for language requirements in certain disciplines depending on the student's background and interests.

It is recommended that a student studying full-time take no more than 9 credit hours per term. All work for the Master of Theology degree must be completed within five calendar years from date of admission.

## General Areas of Study

Currently, studies for the Th.M. may be undertaken in:

- Hebrew Scriptures
- New Testament
- Liturgical Studies
- Homiletics
- History
- Theology

## Th.M. Thesis or Project

If the thesis option for the Th.M. program is chosen by the student, this requires that the student successfully complete a thesis demonstrating scholarly competence, including the formulation of a research topic or question relevant to the field of study, critical understanding of primary and secondary sources in the field, demonstration of appropriate research methods, and the ability to make a sustained and critical scholarly contribution to the field. The Th.M. thesis should be 22,500 – 30,000 words (90 – 120 pages). The Th.M. project option will likewise show scholarly competence in a more delimited area of study in a paper of 11250 – 12500 words (45 – 50 pages). The project may include alternate media (performance, video, etc) in addition to a paper of 7500 –8750 words (30 – 35 pages).

For more information on Th.M thesis and project guidelines, see the Supplementary Calendar/Student Handbook on the VST website: [www.vst.edu](http://www.vst.edu)

# Doctor of Philosophy Program

## In conjunction with the University of Wales Lampeter

### Overview of Program

To provide advanced study in the field of theology, a PhD program based at the University of Wales Lampeter is offered through VST. This research-structured PhD program allows a student to prepare for a teaching career in theology or to enhance congregational, social, pastoral, or educational ministries. The UW Lampeter Theology and Religious Studies Department has an international reputation for excellence in research and research supervision in a broad range of areas. The UW Lampeter PhD program is offered in areas for which VST and UW Lampeter faculty can support doctoral research. These areas currently include Biblical Studies, Homiletics, History and Theology. Programs may also be possible in Education, Ethics, and Spirituality. In all cases, prospective students must consult with the Director of Advanced Degree Programs at VST for information about a possible program.

The PhD is a research-based doctorate in which a student works with faculty advisors both at VST and Lampeter. A specified number of years of directed research [depending on full or part-time status] culminate in the production of a dissertation that constitutes an original contribution to learning. A student will be registered as a student of the University of Wales Lampeter. However, all of the directed research will be done in Canada. A student can be resident in Vancouver, or can accomplish the program as a distance education degree by making at least one or more yearly research visits with the faculty supervisor.

### Length of Program and Course of Study

The degree of PhD is awarded purely for research, the completion of a dissertation, and the oral defense of the dissertation. There are no courses associated with the degree, although a student may, in consultation with their advisor and the Advanced Degree Director, audit certain VST courses useful for their research. The requirement for the UW Lampeter PhD is a dissertation of 80,000 to 100,000 words. The dissertation must be judged to constitute an original contribution to learning and to give evidence of systematic study and of the ability to relate the results of such study to the general body of knowledge in the subject. Full-time students register and pay fees for a period of two years. Part-time students must register and pay fees for four years. The dissertation may not be submitted until six months before the end of the period of fee-paying registration and must be submitted before a fixed time limit, as indicated in the chart below. The only time the student will be required to go the University of Wales Lampeter will be for the oral examination of the completed thesis. The travel costs of the examination trip are the student's responsibility.

<b>Scheme of Study</b>	Must submit dissertation not later than the number of calendar years shown below from the official beginning of period of study.
<b>2 years full-time</b>	2 years fee paying + 2 years 'writing up' = 4 years
<b>4 years part-time</b>	4 years part-time fee paying + 3 years 'writing up' = 7 years