



– TERMS AND PROCEDURES FOR ADMISSION –

MASTER OF ARTS (THEOLOGICAL STUDIES)
MASTER OF ARTS IN MINISTRY PRACTICE
MASTER OF DIVINITY

TERMS

Students applying for admission to a degree program at Austin Seminary are expected to be of honorable character and ordinarily shall provide evidence that they are in full communion with some branch of the Christian church. Students applying for admission shall also provide evidence that they have earned a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university recognized by the Seminary. As a school of the church, Austin Seminary is not merely an institution for academic study. Academic qualifications alone, therefore, do not qualify applicants for admission. The call of God and the approbation of God's people are equally important.

Austin Seminary reserves the right to exercise its discretion in granting or denying admission of applicants to any of its degree programs on any grounds consistent with its educational standards, its stated purpose and mission, its religious commitments, and its self-understanding as a community.

Applicants who believe that their academic abilities are inadequately represented by the grade point average of their previous academic work are encouraged to address that matter in the admissions essay and/or the admissions conference.

PROCEDURES

An applicant to the Master of Arts (Theological Studies), Master of Arts in Ministry Practice, or Master of Divinity degree program completes two phases in gaining admission.

I. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The faculty's Admissions Commission reviews applications on a monthly basis. For fall term admission, one must have an application file completed no later than May 1st; for international applicants, no later than January 1st. For admission at the beginning of any other term, one must apply three months prior to the date the term begins. The applicant shall:

1. Submit a formal application for admission on the form provided by the Office of Admissions or through the on-line application process.
2. Submit three essays, as described below.
 - ◆ In an autobiographical essay (3-5 pages, double-spaced), reflect on your spiritual journey and/or call to ministry. Address your personal, educational, and religious background, your work history, your gifts and abilities for ministry and service, and your current vocational goals.
 - ◆ In an analytical essay (4-5 pages, double-spaced), craft a cogent argument on a specific topic of theological interest or concern. This essay should demonstrate your capacity to think critically, write coherently, reflect theologically, and engage scholarly sources.
 - ◆ Complete a third essay, specific to the program to which you are applying, according to the directions below.
 - MATS Applicants
The MATS degree is designed to enable students to integrate theology with their life and work through foundational studies in the Biblical, Church's Ministry, and Theological-Historical departments, and advanced concentration in theology, ethics, history of religions, or biblical studies. In a brief essay (1-2 pages, double-spaced), identify your area of academic interest and how you hope to integrate that study with your life and work.
 - MAMP Applicants
The Master of Arts in Ministry Practice degree equips individuals for general pastoral leadership. It offers opportunities to focus on specific areas in the practice of ministry. In a brief essay (1-2 pages, double-spaced) speak to your ministry goals and how you hope to be engaged in pastoral leadership.
 - MDiv Applicants
The MDiv degree is designed to nurture leaders who will give strong, loving, and imaginative leadership to worshiping, learning, and serving communities. In a brief essay (1-2 pages, double-spaced), reflect on your hopes and concerns for the church and your call to ministry.
 - MDiv/MSSW Applicants
The dual degree (MDiv/MSSW) is designed for students who have a particular interest in non-traditional ministries, including agency-based social service, social justice advocacy, policy-oriented ministries, and clinical

counseling, as well as more traditional ministry roles such as pastor or chaplain. In a brief essay (1-2 pages, double-spaced), reflect on your particular ministry interest and how the dual degree will prepare you to serve in that capacity.

3. Provide an *official* transcript of record from *each* institution attended. Students applying while in the process of completing the baccalaureate degree should provide grades for at least six full-time semesters (or the equivalent) of college or university work. A final transcript indicating the baccalaureate degree earned must be submitted prior to matriculation.
4. Submit an application fee of \$50 (payable by check, money order, or credit card). This fee is non-refundable.
5. Complete the criminal history check process, including driving records, through CastleBranch.com, granting Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary permission to access those records. The cost for this service is the responsibility of the student. Note that charges and past offenses do not automatically disqualify an applicant from matriculation. All records will be evaluated in context. Contact the Office of Admissions for more information.
6. After the application form and essays are submitted and academic transcripts requested, arrange for an admissions conference with the vice president for admissions or a designated representative of the Seminary's Admissions Commission.
7. Applicants whose primary language is not English and *all* international student applicants *are required* to present scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Austin Seminary's TOEFL institution code is 6018. The minimum acceptable score varies according to the testing format, as follows:
 - ◆ PBT (Paper-based TOEFL): score of 550 or greater;
 - ◆ CBT (Computer-based TOEFL): score of 213 or greater;
 - ◆ iBT (Internet-based TOEFL): score of 79 or greater.

Students who have achieved the minimum TOEFL score but whose English language abilities are judged to be minimal may be required to take advantage of Seminary-provided assistance in English language instruction.

8. International applicants are considered for fall-term admission only and must complete an application no later than January 1st of the same year. In addition to the application procedures and TOEFL requirements outlined above, international applicants must also submit proof of adequate financial funding to cover living and educational costs for the duration of the program.

If admitted as an international student the following items are required:

- ◆ the *Intent to Matriculate* form signed and returned to the Office of Admissions;
- ◆ completed *Biographical Data for International Applicant* form; and,
- ◆ a financial deposit, due by May 1st, equal to one-half the minimum annual student budget.

An international student currently studying in the United States on an F-1 visa who desires to transfer this status to Austin Seminary, is eligible to do so only if his or her F-1 student status is being maintained. International applicants verify their F-1 student status by completing a *Transfer Request for International Student* form, available from the Austin Seminary Office of Admissions. This form requires the signature of the international student advisor at the United States institution the applicant most recently attended. When completed, the form is returned to the Office of Admissions.

The Form I-20 A-B will be issued to the international student once all standards for admission have been met and all required items received.

ACTION AND NOTIFICATION

When the application process is completed, consideration and action will be taken by the Admissions Commission. Notification of such action will be communicated to the applicant no later than one month prior to the term for which the applicant has applied.

II. THE MATRICULATION PROCESS

To complete admission an applicant:

1. must sign and return the *Intent to Matriculate* form;
2. must pay a non-refundable enrollment deposit of \$250; this deposit is applied toward the tuition and fees due upon matriculation (a separate housing deposit is required for those requesting on-campus housing);
3. must have official transcripts on file with the Office of Admissions from each institution attended, including final and official transcripts which indicate degree(s) obtained and the date(s) of graduation (*matriculation into the Seminary cannot be effected until this supplementary record has been received*);
4. must have successfully completed the criminal history check process, including driving records;
5. must be present for and participate in orientation and registration on the days and times specified in the academic calendar and orientation schedule;
6. must provide proof of health insurance coverage for oneself (and spouse and children, if applicable); and,
7. is invited to participate in the signing of the *Declaration of Intent*. (See Catalogue for additional information).