
ORU Graduate School of Theology and Ministry

Student Handbook



This handbook is for specific information pertaining to the ORU Graduate School of Theology and Ministry. For further information, please refer to the official [ORU academic catalog](#) and the [ORU Student Handbook](#). Each student is responsible for the policies and regulations in both the catalog and the student handbooks.

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Welcome

Welcome to the ORU Graduate School of Theology and Ministry (GSTM). You have selected one of the oldest and largest Pentecostal/charismatic theological seminary in North America. We are committed to making your journey of faith at ORU a great experience—exciting, challenging, and very rewarding. This handbook was developed to inform you of the many aspects of our educational program. *Please study it carefully since you are personally responsible for completing all the requirements of your degree program.*

Our faculty is committed to train you for God’s work. Your faculty advisor is a person with much expertise and is prepared to provide you with guidance and counsel as you move through your particular program. Be intentional about discussing your academic progress with your advisor.

We are open to your ideas and suggestions for improving our programs and services. Please feel free to share them with us. May God richly bless you and direct your steps as you follow His call on your life.

Purpose

The ORU Graduate School of Theology and Ministry seeks to prepare students for competent and Spirit-led Christian ministry. The seminary is called to develop men and women who know the Bible, who have a deep compassion for people, and who, through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, can revitalize the church, evangelize the world, and heal the nations.

Professional theological education at this seminary will integrate biblical and theological training with practical skills. This integration will take place in a charismatic/Pentecostal ethos where the gifts of the Spirit are manifested and spiritual formation is nurtured.

The seminary seeks to develop leaders who can communicate the message of the gospel to those in need of a Savior, and God’s healing power to the world’s suffering. The goal of the school for its graduates is to carry this vital message of redemption, holiness and healing to those places “where God’s light is seen dim, where His voice is heard small, where His healing power is not known.”

GSTM Mission Statement:

Mission Statement: The Graduate School of Theology and Ministry, the Seminary of Oral Roberts University, educates and equips men and women biblically, theologically, and professionally to serve as Spirit-empowered leaders in the church, society, and the global community.

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY (GSTM) INFORMATION (ABC ORDER)

ACADEMIC ADVISOR

- Students are assigned to an academic advisor at the beginning of the semester (after drop/add) for assistance in academic counseling and planning the scheduling of classes toward a degree.
- Students are encouraged to meet with this advisor at the beginning of the program to discuss the degree plan and course sequencing for their particular program. During this advisement, the student may discuss any questions or concerns with the advisor.
- Additionally, students should complete the assessment requirements during each semester of enrollment.
- Faculty profiles and contact information are available at on the [ORU website](#). Contact your advisor to set up an appointment in person, by phone, or by Zoom.

ACADEMIC PROBATION AND SUSPENSION

Students enrolled in the GSTM are expected to maintain an appropriate GPA for the program in which they are enrolled. Students in all programs are required to maintain 3.00 GPAs. Students failing to achieve the minimum GPA in their particular program during any semester may be automatically placed on probation. Contact GSTM academic office for more information

ACCREDITATION

The Graduate School of Theology and Ministry is accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the *Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada* (ATS) and *The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools* (NCA).

ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER/NAME CHANGE

Students are required to provide the university with correct and current contact and information on VISION before they are registered. It is important for the GSTM academic office to be able to contact the student in order to provide efficient service. Any contact or legal name changes should be updated on Vision.

ASSESSMENT

The process of professional and personal assessment is an integral part of the total educational program of the ORU Graduate School of Theology and Ministry. Students' spiritual formation and determining the extent to which degree program goals are achieved are the goals of the assessment process. Students take the following PRFT Assessment courses:

- First semester: PRFT 056 Entry Level Assessment (0.5 credit hrs.)
- Mid-way through program: PRFT 057 Mid-Level Assessment (0 credit hrs.)

- Last semester: PRFT 058 Candidacy Level Assessment (0.5 credit hrs.)

AUDIT, COURSE PRIVILEGE

Students in the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry may—with the approval of the instructors, their faculty advisor, and the associate dean—audit, without academic credit, courses offered by the Seminary. The audit privilege allows students to attend courses for personal enrichment without fulfilling the academic requirements. Required courses in any degree program may not be audited. Regular class attendance, as outlined in the course syllabus, is required to maintain an audit on transcript. If students do not meet the audit requirements for a course, a “no pass” is recorded on the transcript. Students auditing a class may request the option of receiving a grade if they indicate this intention at the time of registration. Students must complete all course requirements according to the calendar of the course syllabus and submit a petition to the office of the associate dean to obtain credit for the course. The petition must be submitted and approved and tuition paid within one semester following enrollment in the course. Tuition must be paid at the time of the audit change request.

CHANGE OF DEGREE PROGRAM OR CONCENTRATION

Students are admitted to the Seminary by acceptance into a particular degree program and concentration and must pursue studies in that program. Students may change programs only if formally accepted into another program. Acceptance into one program does not guarantee admission into another. When the program change becomes effective, the student is subject to the requirements of the current catalog at the time of matriculation into the new program.

CHAPEL

- ORU holds chapel services during the fall/spring semesters on Wednesdays and Fridays, 10:50 a.m. to 12 noon.
- All full-time residential students (enrolled in 9 hours) are required to attend both weekly chapel services
- Students are allowed two unexcused absences from chapel during each semester, but are assessed a \$50 penalty for missing three chapel services.
- Students should submit an electronic chapel excuse form within 48 hours of the absence.
- Electronic chapel excuse forms are available on the Class Pages website under [Student Development/Chapel Info](#).
- Excuses for illness must be returned to the director of student development’s office within 48 hours after returning to school.
- If a student has a disability that prevents sitting in the designated area for seminary students, he/she must contact both the director of student development and the student disability services office for assistance.



- Note: In Fall 2020, chapel is being held in the Mabee Center to allow for social distancing.

CLASS PAGES

- Class Pages is a website specifically designed for Graduate Theology students that includes information on course schedules, chapel, study trips, graduation, and more.
- To access, go to www.oru.edu>[menu](#)>[current students](#)>[class pages](#).
- Links for [Class Pages](#) specific to the Residential, Modular/Distance Education, Counseling, Doctor of Ministry, and PhD programs are on the main home page.

COUNSELING PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP

The counseling practicum/internships take place during the final year in the program. This 700-hour professional experience allows students to practice selected client-care responsibilities in the core areas of counseling, assessment, consultation, and professional functioning. Weekly supervision takes place with the site supervisor and with the faculty supervisor. Additional information is available on Class Pages.

COURSE LOAD

The full-time course load for master's level students in the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry is 9 hours. The full-time load for doctoral students in the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry is 6 hours per semester while enrolled in the coursework phase of the program. One hour per semester is considered full-time when enrolled in the project/dissertation phase.

DEGREE PLANS

- Degree plans are available in the student information center in the grad theology hallway, and also on the ORU website at <http://degreeplansheets.oru.edu/>
- Students must use the degree plan from the academic year of enrollment (fall/spring).
- Students are ultimately responsible for the courses taken and the order in which they are taken.
- Students are encouraged to consult with individual faculty advisors

DESIRE TO LEARN (D2L)

- Desire 2 Learn (D2L) is ORU's learning management system for online, blended, and residential courses.
- Students can access D2L at d2l.oru.edu and log in with the ORU single sign on.
- For D2L help, email d2lhelp@oru.edu.
- Tutorials are also available.

DIRECTED STUDY REQUEST

- Directed studies are done in every semester according to the student's need.

- Students must get approval from the course professor and the academic dean before applying for a directed study.
- Directed Studies are then requested on a Course Schedule Change Request by Academic Dean's assistant and sent to Registrar to process.
- The directed study course is then created and the assistant adds the student into the course.
- D2L is also notified of the directed study to set up a course shell.

DISABILITY SERVICES

- The Office of Disability Services at ORU, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, assures that no qualified individual with a disability is denied "reasonable accommodations" in modification of policies, practices, and procedures.
- Disability services offers "reasonable accommodations" to clients based upon individual needs.
- Students can access the [Disability Services](#) web pages on the ORU website for more information.
- The Disability Services offices can be reached at (918)495-7018 or email disabilityservices@oru.edu

EMAIL

- Outlook is ORU's email system. By FERPA law, all university correspondence must go to student's ORU e-mail address.
- For help, contact the I.T. student help desk at 918-495-6321, or go to the [IT web pages](#) to access their student guide.

ENROLLMENT

Students are responsible to electronically enroll for classes each semester on the VISION secure system at <https://vision.oru.edu>

FAST-TRACK PROGRAM, GRADUATE

The Fast Track Program allows ORU junior and senior students to enroll concurrently in graduate courses and apply those hours toward a master's degree in the Graduate School of Education, Graduate School of Business, or Graduate School of Theology and Ministry. Students may register for a maximum of six semester hours of graduate courses per semester. Students remain classified as undergraduate students and are billed the corresponding undergraduate tuition rate as long as enrollment remains between 12.0 and 18.5 credit hours. If enrollment is below 12.0 or exceeds 18.5 credit hours, they are billed the corresponding graduate per credit hour tuition rate. Students may earn up to 12 hours towards a graduate degree through the fast-track program. Graduate level courses taken through the fast-track program may not be used to fulfill undergraduate degree requirements. Requirements for the Fast-Track follow:

- Complete a Fast-Track Program application form available in the college in which the student is interested or the Admissions Office
- Have completed a minimum of 90 semester hours of coursework for the College of Education and the College of Theology and Ministry or 60 semester hours of coursework for the College of Business
- Have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00.
- Need less than a full course load for graduation.

More information is available in the Graduate Theology section of the academic catalog.

FIELD EDUCATION

Field education enables students to integrate and employ Biblical-theological principles, practices of ministry, and charismatic empowerment in diverse contexts of supervised ministry in the church, community, and consultation/reflection groups to achieve competency in functioning as effective ministers of the Gospel. For at least two semesters, Master of Divinity and master of practical theology students have opportunities for in depth interpersonal, social, and spiritual ministry at sites such as hospitals, nursing homes, service organizations, and local churches. Qualified supervisors guide students through experiences that give accountable, practical training to develop their full potential as professionals in ministry. Professors, site supervisors, and students meet weekly in consultation/reflection groups—either online or in a residential context—to discuss students’ successes and challenges. Students receive guidance in dealing creatively with problems they may have encountered and in integrating their academic studies with practical experiences. The ministry/reflection emphasis encourages students to establish and evaluate their personal abilities as minister theologians. A liability insurance fee is assessed for all field-based courses.

FINANCIAL AID

- See [Financial Assistance/Scholarships](#) page on the ORU website.
- The financial aid coordinator may be contacted for more information at finaid@oru.edu, or at 918-495-6510.

GRADE, INCOMPLETE

On rare occasions, the grade of “I” may be given for work that is incomplete at the end of the course semester due to a catastrophic event. The following procedures must be followed to apply:

1. The student must establish with the instructor and the academic dean that work is incomplete for good cause and submit a petition for incomplete grade with documentation.
2. Petitions are found at <https://petitions.oru.edu/>
3. The Petition must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the end of the semester.
4. The submission of a petition does not automatically ensure the granting of an Incomplete.

5. The petition must be approved by the academic committee of the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry.
6. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate the petition, make up any incomplete work, and submit a completed Request for Grade Change form (which has been signed by the course professor) to the academic office.
7. If the work is not completed by the end of the subsequent semester, the incomplete will automatically convert to an “F,” unless an extension is formally granted.

GRADES

Grades are released by the registrar’s office approximately mid-week after finals week. Students retrieve grades electronically using ORU’s VISION. Before candidates for the Master of Divinity degree graduate, they must pass at least 80.5 semester hours of coursework, complete all prerequisites, satisfy all proficiency requirements, and have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00. Before the conclusion of the fifth semester of full-time studies, students must have completed the professional evaluation process and received a “pass” grade on the Candidacy-Level Assessment.

GRADES, REQUEST FOR CHANGE OF GRADE

- Students must submit an electronic Request for Grade Change form, signed by the course professor, to the academic office to make a change in individual enrollment status, audit, credit, or pass/fail. <https://petitions.oru.edu/>

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

- Graduate assistantship positions in the GSTM work-study program may be available to several qualified students with specified abilities and skills. Opportunities are primarily available in the seminary administrative offices.
- To apply, see the dean’s administrative assistant, GC 4A26E.

GRADUATE THEOLOGY STUDENT ASSEMBLY (GTSA)

- The Graduate Theology Student Assembly (GTSA) is made up of current grad theology students who serve the student body in the seminary.
- The representatives are elected by GSTM students each spring for the following academic year.
- The GTSA works to benefit student services, the administration of ORU, and to improve communication and understanding of needs in all areas.
- The Director of Student Development in the GSTM works very closely and is available to provide information to students.

GRADUATION

- All students, whether graduating in December or May, must fill out the online graduation

application on Vision and turn in required documents to the dean's office by the given deadline in the first week of December.

- Instructions and deadlines for applying to graduate, graduation protocol, and information on the GSTM Hooding Ceremony are on [Class Pages > Graduation](#).
- For further questions, students may contact academics@oru.edu.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The primary objectives of the Student Complaint and Grievance policies and procedures are to ensure that students have the opportunity to present complaints and process grievances regarding certain action(s), inaction(s), and/or communications by a member of the ORU community and that ORU has a consistent and orderly process for resolving those complaints or grievances in a fair and just manner.

- For academic grievance procedures, students should contact the academic dean's office.
- For student conduct and discipline complaints and grievances, students should contact the Director of Student Development.
- For more information, students should refer to the grievance section of the [ORU Student Handbook](#)

HEALTH FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

- New students at the seminary enroll in a one-semester, one-credit course entitled GHPE 503 Graduate Health Fitness.
- Students who completed Health Fitness I and II as ORU undergraduates may apply for advanced standing and substitute an activity course for GHPE 503.
- Students will also take one additional 0.5 credit HPE activity course.
- Contact the registrar for information on changing a 1 credit activity course to 0.5 credit, or for taking an HPE course as pass/fail.

HOLY SPIRIT RESEARCH CENTER (HSRC)

- The HSRC is home to one of the world's finest collections of material about the Pentecostal and charismatic movements worldwide. This special library collection on LRC 5E02 offers researchers at any level books, periodicals, information files, and audio and video cassettes at various levels, from the popular to the highly academic.
- The HSRC can guide in beginning research or add a deeper dimension to research on any topic within Pentecostal-charismatic studies.
- For more information, students can contact Dr. Daniel Isgrigg at disgrigg@oru.edu

INFORMATION CENTER

Degree plans and course schedules are conveniently located at the entrance of the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry office area directly across the hallway from the elevator on the

GC 4th floor.

JOINT-DEGREE PROGRAM

A joint degree program allows students to gain an area of expertise for future ministry. Students may enroll in two master's degrees simultaneously. With proper planning and advisement, they may fulfill the requirements for both degrees with significantly less time than it would take otherwise. Some graduate programs, however, cannot be combined in the joint degree program. The Master of Divinity and M.A. in Practical Theology degree plans, including their concentrations, may not be used together as a joint degree. Likewise, the M.A. in Professional Counseling (Licensed Professional Counselor, MAPC/LPC) and the Professional Counseling with the Marital and Family concentration (MAPC/MFT) may not be combined under the joint degree program, although additional courses and concentrations can be added to the degree if the student desires to qualify for dual state licenses (LPC/LADC, LPC/MFT, MFT/LADC).

LIBRARY ACCESS

- The ORU library is located on the fourth and fifth floors of the LRC. A computerized checkout system is used which requires a validated Eagle Card.
- The library has many resources for distance students as well.

MODULAR/BLENDED/ONLINE COURSES

The Modular program offers the following course delivery systems:

- **Blended A:** Begins with new semester; 7 weeks online, then 2½ days on campus.
 - Mon – Tuesday, 8:30-5:30
 - Wed, 8:30 – 2 p.m. (Chapel 10:50-noon in fall/spring; Modular orientation luncheon 12-2 p.m.)
- **Blended B:** Begins mid-semester with 2½ days on campus, then 7 weeks online.
 - Wed, 10:50 –noon: Chapel (fall/spring); 12-2 p.m. Modular orientation luncheon; 2:30 pm-5:30 pm: class
 - Thurs – Fri: 8:30-5:30
- **Modular:** Pre-course work, one full week on campus (Mon-Thurs, 8:30-5:30; Fri, 8:30-1:30), and post-course work.
- **Online:** Full semester online courses; no campus visit required.

Residential students may request permission from the academic office to take a modular, blended, or online course.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

ORU takes the issue of plagiarism seriously and addresses it on its website, in the academic calendar, and in course syllabi.

The ORU catalog states:

ORU students are committed to developing their minds by doing their own academic work. They do not engage in plagiarism, whether accidental or intentional. Plagiarism is

the inappropriate use of others' ideas or information, such as using sources without citations or direct quotes without quotation marks. Even paraphrasing or summarizing without giving credit to the original author is considered plagiarism.

Written assignments using sources must demonstrate ethical and accurate use of source material. Plagiarism and any unethical or inappropriate use of sources are not tolerated.

- ORU syllabi include the following University Plagiarism Statement:
Students and faculty at Oral Roberts University must adhere to all laws addressing the ethical use of others' materials, whether it is in the form of print, electronic, video, multimedia, or computer software. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating involve both lying and stealing and are violations of ORU's Honor Code: 'I will not cheat or plagiarize; I will do my own academic work and will not inappropriately collaborate with other students on assignments.' Plagiarism is usually defined as copying someone else's ideas, words, or sentence structure and submitting them as one's own. Other forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to) the following:
 1. Submitting another's work as one's own or colluding with someone else and submitting that work as though it were his or hers;
 2. Failing to meet group assignment or project requirements while claiming to have done so;
 3. Failing to cite sources used in a paper;
 4. Creating results for experiments, observations, interviews, or projects that were not done;
 5. Receiving or giving unauthorized help on assignments.By submitting an assignment in any form, the student gives permission for the assignment to be checked for plagiarism, either by submitting the work for electronic verification or by other means. Penalties for any of the above infractions may result in disciplinary action including failing the assignment or fail

PREREQUISITES

- Students taking internship, field education, practicum courses, or testing and assessment must ensure compliance with the appropriate prerequisites specified in the university catalog.
- Counseling students should consult the *Courses that Require Prerequisites* sheet in the information center.

PRACTICUM, MINISTRY - TEACHING MINISTRIES, URBAN MINISTRY, PASTORAL CARE AND CHAPLAINCY

The counseling practicum/internships take place during the final year in the program. This 700-hour professional experience allows students to practice selected client-care responsibilities in the core areas of counseling, assessment, consultation, and professional functioning. Weekly

supervision takes place with the site supervisor and with the faculty supervisor. Additional information is available on Class Pages.

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

Teaching assistantships are available to students primarily in the academic Master of Arts degree programs. Responsibilities are usually in the theological baccalaureate program of ORU. Assistantships may include working under the supervision of a faculty advisor to enrich existing course content, developing new teaching resources, leading undergraduate Bible and theology discussion groups, participating in limited classroom teaching and lectures, or preparing special projects and assignments. These positions require an average of 15 hours per week.

THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENT

All students entering any master's level degree program are expected to have a comprehensive knowledge of English grammar and composition, the ability to do theological research, and a basic theological bibliography. Students passing the Theological Research Proficiency examination during first-semester orientation with a minimum score of 85 percent fulfill the requirement. Others are required to enroll in GTHE 517 Seminar in Theological Research. Passing this course constitutes satisfying this proficiency requirement, which must be satisfied before students are allowed to enroll for graduate credit beyond 24 semester hours (not including prerequisite coursework). Taking PRM 784 Counseling Research meets this requirement for students in the M.A.

THESIS RESEARCH AND WRITING

- Students enrolled in M.A. academic degrees (Biblical Literature and Theological/Historical Studies) need to write a thesis. This process provides opportunity for the student to utilize and integrate knowledge of theological and hermeneutical perspectives, methodological tools, languages, research skills, and socio-historical information in the discipline in order to produce an academic study demonstrating competency in one specialized aspect and topic in the area of concentration.
- Students must petition to enroll in GBIB/GTHE 756 Thesis Research and Proposal in the next to last semester of the program. Also required are a current example of their writing in a recent paper and a filled out degree plan.
- If this course is successfully completed, the student must then petition to enroll in GBIB/GTHE 757 Thesis Writing the following semester.
- Students in the Master of the Divinity program may apply to enroll in Thesis Research and Thesis Writing courses using two electives in their degree plan.

TRANSFER OF CREDIT/ADVANCED STANDING

Students entering the Seminary with advanced knowledge in a particular area of the curriculum may receive credit for courses to which the advanced knowledge

relates by passing a comprehensive examination with a score of 80% or above. Such examinations must be taken during the first semester of residency. The Graduate School of Theology and Ministry follows the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) guidelines regarding credit transfer and advanced standing. ATS requires that the transfer courses be graduate level courses from an institution accredited by ATS or a recognized accrediting body. ATS allows seminaries and graduate schools to admit students with advanced standing with credit by reducing the number of hours required for the degree. The courses selected for advanced standing must be comparable to the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry graduate courses, and the amount of credit is limited. Students with ORU undergraduate majors in Old or New Testament or in Theological and Historical Studies and who are eligible to apply for the M.A. academic track could receive advanced standing for undergraduate courses with a “B” or better.

VISION

Vision is ORU’s student enrollment and registration system, and is also used to set up ORU e-mail accounts, access grades and transcripts, update address information, etc. Students should follow instructions in their graduate Admissions acceptance letter on how to login and set up their account.

- Vision is available at vision.oru.edu
- Use the ORU single sign-on to login