

MINISTRY SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Overview

The Ministry Scholars program (<https://www.bethel.edu/academics/5-year-ministry/>) is Bethel University's bachelors to master's degree program that reduces cost and time-to-completion by streamlining undergraduate and graduate education. Graduates receive a bachelor's degree from Bethel University's College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and a master's from Bethel Seminary. This program is well suited for a variety of majors who want to become equipped to lead churches, parachurch organizations, and other ministries. It is also a good fit for ministry-minded students who want to pursue bi-vocational ministry or work outside of professional ministry. Students learn from successful ministry leaders and experts in Biblical and Theological Studies, Spiritual and Personal Formation, and Transformational Leadership. This program offers supplemental training resources, developmental activities, and discipleship opportunities to prepare ministry-minded students for effective ministry leadership. Students also gain valuable field experience in local churches and ministry settings.

The objectives of the program are that graduates will demonstrate age-appropriate growth and ultimately ministry leadership preparedness in the following domains:

1. **Spiritual life:** Students will grow spiritually, deepening their love for, commitment to, and dependence on God, and develop an instinct to trust in God and to connect intimately with God.
2. **Discernment of call:** They will clarify and reaffirm their sense of calling to vocational ministry and what that looks like in a changing world.
3. **Emotional maturity:** They will become emotionally mature adults, possessing the ability to sense and manage emotions, to see others' perspectives, to sympathize and empathize, to follow and lead as appropriate and to foster healthy relationships.
4. **Cultural competence:** They will become culturally aware, gaining a perspective that all cultures possess strengths and vulnerabilities, an ability to work across cultural lines and an appreciation that diverse teams are stronger teams.
5. **Bible knowledge:** They will gain a clear understanding of the Bible's content and a deep and abiding passion for the truth of the Gospel.
6. **Spiritual wisdom:** They will grow in wisdom, possessing a capacity to apply the Bible so that others are inspired by their teaching and preaching to live out biblical truth and experience human flourishing.
7. **Intellectual virtues:** They will develop virtues such as critical thinking, respect for data, intellectual humility, and thirst for learning, combined with the skill to interpret and teach the Bible accurately.
8. **Leadership capacity:** They will learn to follow leaders and to lead followers—enlisting people, building teams, leading change and achieving results.
9. **Godly character:** They will become virtuous people—individuals who love others, speak truth, live humbly, sacrifice their own interests, live justly, express joy and show compassion.

What is Bethel looking for in a Ministry Scholar?

- Ability to maintain a minimum of 3.0 GPA (cumulative college grade point average or unweighted high school GPA if the student has less than one year of college experience) throughout the duration of the Ministry Scholars program while enrolled at CAS and Seminary.
- Ability to provide a pastoral and ministry leader reference that speaks to the student's character and call to ministry.
- Commitment to prioritizing activities, discipleship opportunities, and retreats offered to Ministry Scholars, designed to enable the individual to develop a strong sense of community.

General Criteria for Participation in the Ministry Scholars Program

This is a rigorous program that streamlines undergraduate and graduate education while providing robust discipleship and co-curricular experiences to prepare students for effective ministry.

Throughout the program, students are expected to meet and maintain certain academic standards and demonstrate a commitment to their spiritual and professional growth related to their calling to vocational ministry.

Students must maintain a 3.0 minimum GPA throughout the duration of their undergraduate degree program at Bethel University's College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and while enrolled in the master's program at the Seminary.

Prior to Seminary enrollment, students will be evaluated by the Ministry Scholars Program Director for their readiness to transition to graduate level education. The evaluation will be based primarily on academic ability, spiritual maturity, character, and the continued discovery of the student's calling. This evaluation will take place before the student enrolls in seminary level courses. In order for students to begin taking seminary courses, they will need to have completed 60 credits counting towards their bachelor's degree and have taken the two prerequisite courses: BIB101 Introduction to the Bible and THE201 Christian Theology.

Admission to the Seminary is conditional on earning a Bachelor's degree from CAS with an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 and obtaining approval from the Ministry Scholars Program Director.

Degree Requirements

Ministry Scholars will take courses offered at Bethel Seminary as part of their baccalaureate program (totaling a minimum of 122 credits). While the program is meant for those interested in ministry, any major may take seminary courses. In each major, seminary courses can be taken with elective undergraduate credit.

Courses taken at the seminary as part of the undergraduate degree will count towards both undergraduate and seminary credit. These courses are offered through the seminary and students may take them in-person (when offered) or online.

In order for students to begin their seminary courses, they must:

- Complete at least 60 credits towards their bachelor's degree
- Complete and earn at least a 3.0 GPA in the following prerequisite courses: Introduction to the Bible (BIB 101) and Christian Theology (THE 201)

Students may take seminary courses but cannot exceed more than half of the total credits for the seminary degree that they are pursuing. The greater amount of credits for a graduate degree must be taken while as a graduate student in the seminary. The seminary degree options which students can take courses in will be limited by the seminary advisors.

Admission to the Seminary after finishing the undergraduate degree is conditional on earning a Bachelor's degree from CAS with a GPA of 3.0 or better and obtaining approval from the Ministry Scholars Program Director.