

Transitioning NOBTS Graduate Students Successfully into the New Revised Degree Programs

Why are most of the graduate certificates, degrees, and specializations changing?

The NOBTS faculty has been conducting a tenth-year review of the Standard MDiv for the last two years. This study compared the NOBTS MDiv with those at all other evangelical seminaries, reviewed student evaluations of courses, surveyed recent alumni, and sought a variety of other forms of input. The Standard MDiv was approved by the Trustees in December 2010.

However, the course changes in the Standard MDiv also have the ripple effect of impacting almost all other graduate certificates, degrees, and specializations. The faculty has approved the adjustments to these academic programs, and the changes were approved by the Trustees in April 2011.

Was it an earthshaking change in the MDiv curriculum?

No. Unlike the curriculum revision in 2000, it was a “tweak” of the curriculum in areas we felt the degree could be improved for ministering effectively in the 21st century. A couple of courses were added, and some courses were refocused or adjusted in hours. Perhaps the most significant change is a reduction from 91 hours to 84 hours in the Standard MDiv, and similar reductions of hours in most MDiv specializations.

When will these changes take effect?

July 31, 2011.

Can I ignore these changes and pursue the degree as it was when I entered the program?

No, we cannot offer both all the old courses and all the new courses at every NOBTS location. Everyone will be transitioning to the degree program in August 2011.

Will this delay my graduation?

No. Our commitment is that *if you heed the advice of your academic advisor* you will graduate at least the same semester as you would have in the old degree plans, and some may possibly even graduate a semester earlier (because of the fewer total required hours). Of course, if you do not talk to or heed the advice of the academic advisor, you can make it more difficult on yourself. But there is no good reason for anyone to graduate late.

Who is the final authority in making decisions about the details about the transition in my degree program?

The Registrar.

What is the most crucial thing I need to do in my transition?

You must see your academic advisor in the Registrar's Office to work out a revised degree plan sheet. This can happen several ways:

- (a) On-campus students can go by and visit with the academic advisor the Registrar's Office at their convenience.
- (b) Off-campus students can call the academic advisor in the Registrar's Office at your convenience.
- (c) Red Carpet Week (or other academic workshops) is a great time for extension centers to sit down and talk through their degree plan with the academic advisor in the Registrar's Office.
- (d) The Registrar will visit some of the major extension centers in person or by CIV to help provide answers for your questions.

Where can I find the revised degrees?

Until the new catalog is published, you can find all the newly revised degrees and specializations on the Graduate Program page on the NOBTS website at

<http://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/Academics/mdiv-revisions/MDiv%20Revisions%20Apr.04-2011.pdf>.

Where can I find more information about the MDiv transition?

Also on the Graduate Program page on the NOBTS website, see [A Guide to Advising and Transitioning Graduate Students into the Revised Standard M.Div., M.Div. Specializations, M.A. Degrees, and Graduate Certificates](#).

Is the new MDiv more flexible?

Yes. Even in the MDiv core courses, students have the option to choose between Philosophy of Religion or Christian Apologetics, Pastoral Ministry or Christian Ministry, Christian Ethics or Biblical Ethics, Proclaiming the Bible or Teaching the Bible, and Preaching Practicum or Teaching Practicum.

What new courses are in the Standard MDiv?

There are just two truly new courses: "Discipleship Strategies" and "Church Revitalization." Some other courses have been substantially changed, such as the Greek exegesis courses, and Servant Leadership becoming "Church Leadership and Administration."

What if I've already taken a course that has been changed in the new MDiv?

The core courses you have taken previously will substitute for the new courses which are replacing them. If there is an extra hour, that hour can count as an elective. Here are some examples of valid substitutes:

- Speech Principles and Techniques (3 hours) substitutes for Preaching Practicum (2 hours) or Teaching Practicum (2 hours)
- Servant Leadership (2 hours) or Basic Church and Education Administration (3 hours) substitute for Church Leadership and Administration (3 hours)
- Christian Ministry in the 21st Century (1 hour) or Supervised Ministry 3: Church Revitalization Practicum (1 hour) substitute for Church Revitalization (2 hours)
- Contemporary Discipleship Models (3 hours) or Disciple Making through Small Group Ministry (3 hours) substitute for Discipleship Strategies (2 hours)

Is the on-campus requirement still the same (30 hours)?

Yes, the on-campus requirement remains at 30 hours. However, students enrolling August 2011 or later can take a maximum of 12 hours at an extension center hub, and must take 18 hours at the New Orleans campus. Academic workshops at the regional hubs will be reduced.

Why is the number of academic workshops at the hubs being reduced?

Enrollment in our hub workshops has been much lower than we projected, and in many cases the courses have not had sufficient enrollment to “make” as a class. Approximately half of the students even from hub locations are taking their workshops on the New Orleans campus, and the overwhelming majority of students from the other locations. We hear students talk about the value of “getting away” for the week rather than attempt to continue ministry responsibilities, and the reduced cost of housing and food on the New Orleans campus. So we are refocusing our academic workshops to where students are voting with their feet.