

DMin Topic Approval Form (TAF) Evaluation Guidelines

TAF Evaluative Criteria for Department Chairs and DMin Committee Members

The DMin student is required to design and complete an Applied Research Project also referred to as a DMin Dissertation. This document is a doctoral-level project that addresses both the nature and the practice of ministry as judged by professional standards (ATS Degree Program Standards). Normally, the student's Applied Research Project will fall under one of four types which include (a) Descriptive Surveys, (b) Program Development and Evaluation, (c) Program Evaluation and Response, and (d) Case Studies.

The student begins this process during the *DM102 The Applied Research Project Development Seminar* where he or she is educated in basic research methods and design. The student's first assignment is to choose a research topic appropriating a Topic Approval Form (TAF) template provided by the Professor. Once this assignment is complete the DMin Office sends the student TAF to a Department Chair who serves as a consultant providing feedback for the student and DMin to consider. The TAF along with feedback from the Department Chair is then sent on to the DMin Committee.

The following questions are those which a Department Chair and/or DMin Committee Member can use as a guide to evaluate the research topic:

Association of Theological Schools (ATS) evaluative criteria:

- 1) Will the Applied Research Project topic help the student be more effective in the practice of ministry?
- 2) Does the Applied Research Project topic address the nature and practice of ministry?
- 3) Does the Applied Research Project topic contribute to the general practice of ministry as judged by professional standards?

DMin Topic Approval Form (TAF) Evaluation Guidelines
TAF Evaluative Criteria for Department Chairs and DMin Committee Members

- 4) Does the Applied Research Project topic integrate theological reflection with social science research?
- 5) Does the Applied Research Project topic have potential for application in other contexts of ministry?

DMin Director's suggested evaluative criteria:

- 1) Is the student's Applied Research Project topic feasible within the stated timeframe and resources?
- 2) Is the Applied Research Project Research Problem Statement (RPS) consistent with the stated hypothesis(es)?
- 3) Is the Applied Research Project hypothesis(es) measurable?
- 4) Is the literature sampling appropriate for the Applied Research Project topic of study?
- 5) Is the Research Method an appropriate tool for assessment of the research question?

As you evaluate a DMin student's TAF please remember that it is NOT a Research Proposal, but minimally outlines the student's general research topic of interest, rationale, significance, hypothesis(es) and basic research method of choice. In addition, it is important to understand that a DMin Applied Research Project (also sometimes called a DMin Dissertation) is different than a PhD Dissertation. One of the most important goals of a PhD Dissertation is to add new information to the literature on a given research topic. The DMin Applied Research Project may certainly achieve this end. However, according to ATS, the DMin Applied Research Project's primary goal is to enhance the practice of ministry as a professional degree program.