



Statement on Educational Effectiveness
HMS Richards Divinity School Division of Graduate Studies
La Sierra University

Current 2017 Educational Effectiveness

Degrees Conferred	June 2017
MDiv	5
MTS/ MA: Religion	9

Completion Rate

MDiv	90%
MTS	85%
MA: Religion	95%

Since most of the students in these programs are part-time, they usually complete the program in four to five years.

Placement Rate:

Since most of our students come to the Divinity School already employed in parish ministry or religious educational appointments, the placement rate is high, between 85 and 95% over the past two years.

Educational Debt

63% of the 2017 graduates indicated that they accrued between \$10,000 and \$19,000 average debt while completing their degree program at the Divinity School.

Religious Traditions

81% of the 2017 graduate students were Seventh-day Adventists.

Educational Contexts

The HMS Richards Divinity School at La Sierra University offers 95% of its graduate course offerings during the evenings from 6:00-9:50 p.m. Monday through Thursdays. This graduate schedule allows students who are working to attend coursework at a convenient time. The Divinity School has a number of hybrid classrooms allowing California resident students from remote locations to enter and participate in real-time class sessions with the professor and fellow students.

The Divinity School uses the Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ) of the Association of Theological Schools as a means of determining student satisfaction and achievement. The responses below provide an indication of how effective the Divinity School was in providing the skills needed for ministry.

Responses to the Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ) of the Association of Theological Schools

In 2017 by 16 graduates

Graduates were asked to assess the school's educational effectiveness in facilitating twenty (20) skill areas by rating each on a scale from 1-5, where 1=not at all effective, 2=not very effective, 3=somewhat effective, 4=effective, and 5=very effective.

The highest rated areas were

Ratings: 2017

Graduate Score	Personal Growth
4.3	Concern about social justice
4.3	Enthusiasm for learning
4.2	Respect for other religious traditions
4.1	Self-confidence
4.1	Self-knowledge
4.1	Self-discipline and focus
4.1	Desire to become authority in my field
4.1	Empathy for the poor and oppressed
4.0	Strength of spiritual life

Ratings: 2017

Graduate scale	Skills
4.6	Ability to think theologically
4.5	Ability to relate social issues to faith
4.4	Ability to use and interpret Scripture
4.3	Ability to interact effectively with those of religious traditions other than my own

- 4.3 Ability to interact effectively with those from cultural and racial/ethnic contexts other than my own
- 4.3 Awareness and appreciation of the globalized context in which ministry is practiced
- 4.3 Ability to work effectively with both women and men
- 4.2 Knowledge of Christian philosophy and ethics
- 4.1 Knowledge of church doctrine and history

The lowest areas rated were:

- 3.9 Ability to teach well
- 3.9 Ability to work effectively within my own religious tradition
- 3.7 Ability to give spiritual direction
- 3.6 Ability to lead others
- 3.6 Ability in pastoral counseling
- 3.6 Ability to integrate ecological concerns into theology and ministry
- 3.6 Ability to integrate insights from science into theology and ministry
- 3.5 Ability to conduct worship/liturgy

Note that not every degree program requires the same level of competency in all the skill areas. For example, MA students generally would not be preparing to lead a parish but MDiv students would. In addition, MTS students are taking a theological degree rather than a practical degree such as the MDiv.

The GSQ also asks graduates to rate the level of Satisfaction with School's Services and Academic Resources in twenty-five (25) areas using the following scale; 1=Very dissatisfied, 2=Somewhat dissatisfied 3=Neutral, 4=Satisfied, 5=Very satisfied.

Six out of twenty-five areas were scored at 4.0 or higher on the 5-point scale.

- 4.6 Access to library collection
- 4.5 Accessibility of faculty
- 4.4 Upkeep of campus
- 4.4 Writing and research support
- 4.4 Quality of teaching
- 4.4 Class size

Among the lowest in satisfaction with the school's services and academic resources follows:

- 3.8 Food service
- 3.8 Ease in scheduling required courses
- 3.8 School website and internet-based resources
- 3.8 Accessibility of administrative /staff support

3.8	Financial support
3.7	Distance education
3.7	Spiritual formation
3.6	Pastoral care
3.5	Academic advising
3.4	Housing
3.4	Health and wellness program
2.9	Extracurricular/cultural activities

Overall experience during theological program was evidenced by 13 out of 17 qualities of growth during theological studies rated between 4.0 and 5.0. The following were the highest ratings where 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree. The following are listed by students in descending order of importance.

- Know one faculty member well
- Personal faith respected
- Faculty were supportive
- Satisfied with academics
- Accepted within school community
- Grown spiritually
- Faith of others respected
- Able to integrate theology and ministry
- School tried to be inclusive
- Know students from other ethnicity
- Make good friends here
- I would still come here
- Faith is stronger

The lowest responses were:

- Able to manage financially
- Commuting increased time
- Field education and internship helpful
- Good experience for spouse/family

For further information regarding the degrees offered by the Graduate Division of the HMS Richards Divinity School, contact the Dean's office at 951-785-2041 or email divinity@lasierra.edu.