



**Guidelines & Expectations
For Mentors & Proctors
2018-2019**

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Introduction

This handbook should provide you with the basic guidelines and expectations you need to serve as a *mentor-proctor* on behalf of the student who has requested your assistance. If you still have questions regarding your role as a mentor-proctor after reading this handbook, please contact the seminary dean (dean@rbseminary.org). You can also find more information about the seminary on our website: www.rbseminary.org.

The Mission of RBS

RBS exists to help churches train men who aspire to gospel ministry, as well as to provide further training for men who are already engaged in gospel ministry (2 Tim 2:2). Secondly, as an extension of the local church's teaching ministry, the seminary also provides further instruction for laypeople who desire to enhance their understanding of Scripture so that they might more effectively serve in the church (Eph 4:12).

Academic Programs

RBS offers the 34-credit Marrow of Theology program, the 60/61-credit Biblical Counseling program and the 97-credit Divinity program. The Marrow program can be completed as a Master of Theological Studies (MTS) or a Diploma of Theological Studies (DTS). The Counseling program offers a Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling (MABC) or Associate of Arts in Biblical Counseling (AABC). In the Divinity program, the student may earn the Master of Divinity (MDiv) or the Bachelor of Divinity (BDiv) degree. To qualify for a master's level degree a student must have an earned undergraduate degree, such as a Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS).¹

¹ The applicant's current age, family needs, and/or vocational responsibilities make it difficult or impossible to obtain a Bachelor's degree. In such cases, the student may be allowed to enroll in the seminary and will be awarded the Bachelor of Divinity (BDiv) degree upon completion of the program. Students graduating with the BDiv degree may later request to exchange that degree for a Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree after completing at least five years of full-time Christian ministry. The student should contact the dean for more information about this special arrangement.

Working with the Local Church

We believe the responsibility to train church leaders and to equip church members belongs to the local church. The purpose of RBS is to assist local churches fulfill that role. For this reason, RBS operates under the oversight of six local churches (see “Seminary Board” below). Moreover, the seminary’s faculty and lecturers primarily consist of men who not only have biblical knowledge and teaching ability but also are engaged in pastoral ministry. Finally, the seminary is committed to help pastors and churches train men who aspire after and show potential for the pastoral ministry, as well as laypeople, church leaders, and men whose aspirations to full-time ministry may still be tentative.

For this reason, an applicant must be a member in good standing of an evangelical church whose pastor is supportive of his pursuit of theological training. If an applicant is already a pastor, it is assumed that the local church has already recognized the applicant’s gifts and graces and is supportive of his pursuit of more training.

RBS expects that the applicant will work together with his pastor and home church throughout the course of his training. Practically, this means that the applicant can humbly receive the initial and ongoing assessment of his pastor and church regarding his qualifications if he is pursuing the pastoral ministry. The applicant will also select one of his pastors to serve as his mentor-proctor to provide guidance and input on coursework, writing projects, preaching, and practical ministry. The mentor will also be responsible to proctor the student’s quizzes and exams. By working together with his pastor and home church, the applicant will not only be following the biblical pattern for ministerial training (Eph. 4:11-12; 2 Tim. 2:2), but will be more effectively commending himself to the church (1 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:15), the world (1 Tim. 3:7), the Lord (1 Pet. 5:5), and his own conscience (Acts 24:16; Heb. 13:18).

In keeping with our “church-based” philosophy of ministerial training, RBS has asked the student to request that you serve as his mentor-proctor. In this role, you will provide the general oversight of the student’s training. If the student is already a pastor, he is not required to have a mentor² but he must still have a proctor. What is practically entailed in mentoring and proctoring will be delineated in the following pages.

Admission Requirements

The most basic requirement for admission into one of the seminary’s training programs is membership in good standing in a Bible-believing, evangelical church and the commendation of the applicant’s pastor.

Laymen and laywomen may apply for enrollment in either the 34-credit Marrow of Theology program or in the 60/61-credit Biblical Counseling program. The 97-credit Divinity program is only open to men who are already ordained or those who aspire to formal gospel ministry and have the commendation of their pastor to pursue advanced training.

A man wishing to enroll in the Divinity program should make his aspirations known to you, his pastor. If you as his pastor deem his aspirations to be legitimate and appropriate, he may apply for admission to the seminary. By deeming his aspirations “legitimate” and “appropriate,” you are not necessarily declaring him to be fully qualified for the pastoral

² Of course, we would encourage men already ordained as pastors to have mentor-relationships with fellow elders or pastor-friends in other locations.

office. You are simply declaring that his aspirations do not appear to be misguided at this point. No man should be engaged in studies for the pastoral ministry when there are glaring immaturities in Christian grace or insurmountable deficiencies in ministerial gift. You are also reserving the right to review his progress on a periodical basis and to withdraw your support of his ministerial training should you determine there are significant deficiencies in either grace or gift.

Pastoral Recommendation

Applicants to the seminary must ask one of their pastors to fill out the Pastoral Reference Form. Normally, this should be the pastor who will serve as the student's mentor-proctor. The applicant will submit your name and email on their application and you will then receive an email from our Populi system with a link to complete the online reference form.

The Interview

After we receive the completed application packet with all references and transcripts, we will contact both the student and the mentor-proctor to set up a time for a phone or video-chat interview. We will interview the applicant and the mentor-proctor together. The interviews usually last from 40 to 60 minutes and provide you and the applicant an opportunity to ask questions and gain a better idea how the seminary programs work.

Overseeing the Coursework

Since you are the student's pastor, you should have significant input into his ministerial training. Therefore, we ask you to be willing to provide the student with initial and ongoing input and guidance as he seeks to complete his coursework.

Helping the Student Plan His Coursework

We have asked each student to develop a "study plan" as part of his application process. He should complete the "Assessing My Priorities" worksheet (found in the Student Guidelines & Expectations) and discuss his plan for coursework with you and his spouse. This study plan should include a tentative timeframe and schedule for completing his coursework. Under "timeframe," the student will specify the average amount of time per week he can devote towards his studies. He will also estimate the overall amount of time he expects to take to complete his training program. Under "schedule," the student will specify the sequence in which he plans to take the courses (2-year; 3-year; 4-year; 6-year; 8-year). RBS has provided the student with recommended schedules for coursework. We have also provided a time-budget worksheet in an appendix of the student handbook. We want to make sure the student does not neglect his fundamental responsibilities (i.e., personal health, family, work, church, etc.) while pursuing training for ministry.

We have asked the student to work with his pastor in putting together this "study plan." We would like you to ensure that the amount of time the student plans to devote towards his ministerial studies is consistent with the other responsibilities God has given him. Of course, we recognize that providential changes in his circumstances may require significant adjustments to this plan. The student should keep his pastor and dean informed of any changes in his circumstances that may affect his ability to complete his studies.

Proctoring the Quizzes and Exams

All courses require some forms of aptitude assessment. These may include book reviews, papers, sermons, and/or exams. The student should take exams while the material is still fresh in his mind. Most quizzes do not require proctoring, while most exams do require proctoring.

Students should always consult the syllabus and study guides for all questions regarding specific exams for each course. In most cases, the student may not use class notes, textbooks, the Internet, or his Bible to answer the questions. In some cases, the student may use an unmarked, non-annotated Bible to answer part or all of an exam. In a very few cases, the student may take an “open book” exam, which allows him to use his notes, textbooks, or other resources. In these few cases, however, the student will not need a proctor.

When the student attempts to take a proctored exam, Populi will require the Proctor to enter their name, mobile phone number (USA only) and agreement to proctor. Populi will then send you a text message with the password for the student to begin their exam. Populi will also require you to enter your information when the student finishes their exam, thus requiring you to be present during the duration of the exam. We suggest that you have the student come to your home or meet you at the church building. It is not required that you remain in the same room the entire time the student is taking the exam. We do, however, ask that you remain in the general vicinity to ensure that the student complies with the instructions for taking the exam.

If the exam is in a multiple-choice or true/false format, the computer will grade the exam automatically. If the exam is in a short-answer or essay question format, the course instructor will have to grade the exam manually when he receives notification that the exam has been completed and is available for grading.

Some exams may require the student to print a hard copy document (MS Word or PDF), complete the exam by hand, and then scan and upload the file where requested within the online course. If you do not have access to a scanner, you can mail the exam to the seminary address below. Please make a copy of the exam and file it away before you place the original in the mail. This will preserve the student’s work should the hard copy get lost in the mail. You can send the exam to the following address:

Reformed Baptist Seminary
Attn: Seminary Dean
2418 O Street
Sacramento, Ca 95816

The dean will immediately forward the exam to the instructor who will grade the exam and return it to the dean. After the dean has recorded the grade, he will return the exam to the student. If the student has any questions about the grading of his quiz or exam, he should contact the dean.

Submitting Semester Progress Reports

At the end of each semester, the seminary asks the student to fill out an online progress report. This helps us track his progress through the coursework. We also ask you to submit a “mentor’s progress report.” In this report, you will confirm that you have

provided the student with a basic level of mentoring that is commensurate with the level of training he is pursuing. This is explained below. Please complete the report at the end of each semester, found here: <http://rbseminary.org/student-area>.

Mentoring the Student

As the student's mentor, you provide an essential component to the student's training. RBS can provide the student with online instruction in biblical and theological studies. But the seminary cannot provide the student with the kind of discipleship and ministry opportunities found in the context of a local church. Accordingly, we depend on you, the student's pastor, to meet with the student periodically in order to evaluate his progress and to disciple him with respect to his growth in grace and service to the church.

Different Levels of Mentorship

We recognize that different levels of theological education and ministry training call for different levels of mentoring. The most basic level of mentoring will occur naturally as you fulfill your normal pastoral responsibilities on a weekly basis. However, if you agree to serve as the mentor of an RBS student, we expect a more intensive and extensive level of discipleship *relative to the student's level of training and future ministry objectives*.³

Meeting with the Student for Discussion, Feedback, and Prayer

You should meet with students in the Marrow or Counseling programs at least **once** and students in the Divinity program at least **twice** during the 20-week semester. Here are some of the things we would like you to discuss and to do with the student in these meetings:

- 1) Discuss what the student has been learning. Ask him to identify some areas where he has grown in his knowledge of doctrine or practice. Ask him if he has any questions about subjects he has been studying.
- 2) Discuss the student's progress in the program. Be willing to provide feedback on the student's coursework (reviews, papers, sermons, etc.) and to offer suggestions or guidance on current or future writing projects. Ask him how many courses he has completed and how much longer he anticipates it will take to complete the seminary program in which he is enrolled.

³ The 34-credit Marrow program is designed for laypeople who desire to grow in their knowledge of Scripture and theology to be more useful in their local church. The Marrow can also function as the first stage of training for those who wish to go on to earn a degree in the Biblical Counseling or Divinity programs. Like the Marrow program, the 60/61-credit Biblical Counseling program prepares laypeople for greater usefulness in the local church. It can also serve as another stage of training towards the Divinity program. The 97-credit Divinity program is only open to men and is primarily designed to prepare the student for ministry as an ordained pastor, church-planter, or missionary. The divinity degree may also serve to prepare a student for advanced degree programs like the Doctor of Ministry (DMin), Master of Theology (ThM), or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).

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- 3) Discuss how the student is balancing the demands of life, family, church, and seminary. Be willing to offer counsel on how the student can better make use of his time and keep his priorities in proper order.
- 4) Discuss the student's spiritual growth. Ask the student about his devotional habits and walk with the Lord. Provide the student with guidance and directives in areas of sin where he may be struggling.
- 5) Discuss the student's service in the church. Ask the student what ministries he or she is engaged in. Inquire whether there are areas in which the student would like to serve but is not yet serving. Provide the student with constructive feedback.
- 6) Discuss more formal ministry opportunities related to pastoral ministry. Men in the Divinity program are required to preach at least four sermons in the presence of one or more of their pastors for thorough evaluation and feedback as part of the Preaching Practicum requirement (see below). They are also required to log at least 150 hours, including but not limited to such ministries as leading worship, organizing church outreach and special events, visiting the sick, carrying out church administrative tasks, and sitting in on counseling sessions or elders' meetings as part of the Ministerial Practicum requirement (see below). Accordingly, if the student has had opportunity to engage in any of these more formal activities that are related to pastoral ministry, provide him with constructive feedback.
- 7) Spend some time praying with the student concerning the matters discussed and his ongoing training.

Putting Learning into Practice

RBS recognizes that the demands of pastoral ministry not only require that a man be well-grounded in sound doctrine but that he also gain experience in practical ministry. Therefore, we require students in the Divinity program to work together with their pastor in fulfilling the Preaching Practicum, and Ministerial Practicum requirements.

PT 608 Preaching Practicum

Since the pastoral office requires a basic level of teaching and preaching ability (1 Tim. 3:2) and since this ability, though a gift from God, may be cultivated (1 Tim. 4:15), RBS desires that each student have the training and opportunities by which his ability may be properly developed and assessed (2 Tim. 2:2). Thus, in addition to a course on preaching and teaching, RBS requires the student to teach and/or preach a minimum of four times through the course of his program in a context where his gifts may be assessed by one or more of his pastors.

RBS recognizes that you have the prerogative, as the student's pastor, to decide the appropriate context for him to teach or preach. You will consider his current level of ability and the edification of the church. If he has never publicly taught or preached in the context of your local church, you may want to suggest that he teach or preach in a less formal context, such as a children's Sunday School class, a home Bible study, or a Nursing Home ministry. This should provide you with an opportunity for an initial assessment of his gift. You may also want him to take PT 602: Expository Preaching before he attempts to minister publicly.

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RBS requests that you provide him with the context to fulfill his Preaching Practicum requirement when you believe he is ready. We expect the student to view an opportunity to minister God's Word in the context of a local church ministry as a privilege, not a right. He should be humble and submissive towards you, as you decide the best timing and context for him to fulfill this requirement. If you do not believe the student has the basic level of gifts requisite to fulfill this requirement, you should probably encourage him to pursue another calling in life and in the church.

We have asked the student to work together with his pastor in the process of preparing the sermon. You may recommend helpful resources and review his outline or manuscript before he teaches or preaches. Each lecture or sermon must be at least 30 minutes long. He may teach or preach before the gathered church in the context of an adult Sunday School class or worship service. He may also teach or preach in a more private and less formal context. RBS requires that at least one of his pastors listen to his message and provide him with an evaluation and constructive input. We also request that you send the dean a brief note indicating the date, the passage or theme expounded, and a summary assessment, as the student completes each of the four lectures and/or sermons. The seminary provides you with a sermon evaluation form in the Course Resources part of the student's online course.

PT 619 Ministerial Practicum

RBS recognizes that the gospel ministry entails more than the public ministry of the Word. Therefore, we also require that the Divinity student be engaged in various kinds and levels of other ministries associated with the pastoral office. This would include such ministries as leading worship, organizing church outreach and special events, visiting the sick, discipling new believers, carrying out church administrative tasks, and sitting in on counseling sessions or elders' meetings.

Once again, you, as his pastor, will have to decide which of these ministries are appropriate to his current level of gift and the present needs of the church. In order to earn 3 credits for Ministerial Practicum, the student must log at least 150 hours of practical ministry in keeping with the requirements specified on the course syllabus. The seminary provides the student with a practical ministry form in his online Course Resources. You will be required to sign off on that form, confirming that the student has logged hours in the various areas of ministry specified in that form. If you or the student have any questions about what might qualify for practical ministry, please contact the dean.

Student Conduct

All students of RBS are expected to conduct themselves at all times as mature Christians. The seminary reserves the right to turn down or to dismiss students whose conduct fails to conform to the ethical norms and principles set forth in Holy Scripture.

The Church Partnership Program

A seminary education can be very expensive. A comparison of tuition rates among conservative evangelical seminaries reveals that average tuition rates can range from between \$250 to \$650 per credit. If one adds semester fees and other related costs, the total

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cost for a 95-credit divinity program can range somewhere between \$25,000 and \$60,000. As a result, the student is left with a heavy financial burden.

To free the student from this financial burden, RBS charges the student a nominal tuition of \$60 per credit hour, along with a semester enrollment fee of \$500.⁴ The overall cost per credit (combining tuition fees and enrollment fees) depends largely on the rate of the student's progress. Please discuss the "Assessing My Priorities" worksheet with your applicant before the interview with the dean. This form is found in the Student Guidelines and Expectations Handbook and the student is asked to complete this as part of their application process. For a breakdown of costs which compare various programs and completion rates, see our website: <http://rbseminary.org/admissions>. The student's cost is significantly lower than he would find at most traditional seminaries.

How can RBS offer a ministerial education at such a reduced cost? Part of the reason lies in the fact that we are an online learning school. We do not have the overhead expenses of maintaining building facilities and a resident faculty. Another part of the reason lies in the fact that RBS is partially supported by the generosity of local churches. This is one more reason why RBS is a "church-based" seminary. We believe local churches should be willing to invest in those who aspire after and show potential for the ministry.

In light of this, we would like you to consider supporting RBS financially. Students who are members of Church Partnership Program churches (contributing \$2,000 or more per year) will have their tuition fees waived. The student is still required to pay their semester enrollment fee each semester they take courses. If you would like to know more about our financial needs or would like to sign up for our "Church Partnership Program," visit our website (<http://rbseminary.org/support-rbs>) or email the dean (dean@rbseminary.org).

Working with the Seminary

RBS is overseen by the pastors of local churches who are sensitive to your role in the life of the student as his pastor. We want to honor that role God has given you. As we stated earlier, RBS is committed to help pastors and churches train men who aspire after and show potential for the pastoral ministry. We stress the word "help," because we do not want to hinder, bypass, or undermine your role in mentoring and preparing the student for the ministry. Therefore, we ask that you openly communicate with the seminary if you have any concerns or questions about the training we are providing the student. You may also have some suggestions that would help us improve or better facilitate our working relationship.

Further Questions?

If you have any further questions about matters not addressed in these "Guidelines & Expectations," please contact the seminary dean (dean@rbseminary.org). We are eager to improve our program and to provide the student under your care with the best ministerial training possible. We pray that your experience with RBS will be positive and rewarding.

⁴ These numbers are based on current enrollment and tuition fees. The seminary may periodically make modest increases to these fees and will notify the students in advance.

Seminary Board

Below are the names of our seminary board members and of the churches that oversee the seminary.

Pastor Robert Briggs
Immanuel Baptist Church
1424 24th Street
Sacramento, CA 95816
916.444.6185
www.immanuelbc.net

Pastor Greg Nichols
Grace Immanuel RB Church
860 Peachcrest, NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505
616.742.1137
www.girbc.org

Pastor Jamie Howell
Grace Baptist Church
5020 Old Spartanburg Road
Taylors, SC 29687
864.322.7717
www.gbctaylors.net

Pastor Robert Elliott
RB Church of Riverside
7250 Mission Boulevard
Riverside, CA 92509
951.360.0819
www.rbc.org

Pastor Brian Borgman
Grace Community Church
2320 Heybourne Road
Minden, NV 89423
775.782.6516
www.gracenevada.com

Pastor Jeffery Smith
Emmanuel Baptist Church
5391 Johnson Road
Coconut Creek, FL 33073
954.427.2011
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Seminary Staff

Below are the names and contact information of the seminary staff members who serve the students and their pastors.

Dr. Bob Gonzales
Seminary Dean
Phone: 916.862.4291
dean@rbseminary.org

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Phone: 916.617.1770
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Secretary and Bookkeeper
Phone: 916.456.7635
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