

ALTERNATE ROUTE PROGRAM

1. Do I need to fill out an Admission Initial Inquiry Information form?

The Admission Office appreciates it when you fill out this preliminary form so that we can communicate more easily with you.

2. Can only men apply to the Alternate Route (A.R.) Program?

Because of the doctrinal position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), all candidates for the A.R. degree must be male by natural birth.

3. Why is there an A.R. to ordination?

The A.R. Program exists for men who demonstrate circumstances exceptional enough to warrant that they not be required to complete the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) Program in order to be certified for a call in the pastoral ministry of the LCMS.

4. Will a man who completes the A.R. Program receive a degree?

An academic degree will not be granted; however, a certificate will be awarded upon successful completion.

5. Who may qualify for the A.R. Program?

- A Concordia University graduate, whose name appears on the Synod roster as a commissioned minister, who has at least eight years of successful experience as a commissioned minister, and who is a communicant member in good standing of an LCMS congregation, or;
- A communicant member in good standing of an LCMS congregation, who is at least 35 years old, who has accumulated at least 10 years of significant experience directly related to Word and Sacrament ministry in an LCMS setting, and who has completed at least 60 semester hours of college-level course work, or;
- A man licensed by his District President to perform functions belonging to the pastoral office.

6. Is an undergraduate degree required for the A.R. Program?

An undergraduate degree is not required. See items b) and c) in question #5. Note that the equivalent of an associate's degree is required (60 semester hours of college-level course work).

7. Are there church membership requirements?

An applicant must be a member of an LCMS congregation; if married, his wife must also be a member of an LCMS congregation.

8. How long does the application and admission process of CTSFW typically take?

We suggest 6-12 months prior to enrollment; however, 3-4 months is the average time frame to complete and gather the required documentation so that the applicant's file can be sent before the Admission Committee. Unforeseen challenges can delay the time frame, which is why we always recommend starting, completing, and submitting the application well in advance of your desired start date.

9. Must I complete an application for admission to the A.R. Program?

A completed application is required. Applying to CTSFW is a four-step process that goes as follows:

- Step 1: Initial Application
- Step 2: Family Information
- Step 3: Education and Employment History
- Step 4: Personal Background Information

Each step will be emailed to you with directions and links for uploading all required documents, and our online application can be completed at your own pace. Upon completion of each step you will receive an email for the next step in the process. Each new email will also include an application checklist, letting you know which items have been completed and which are pending completion. All questions must be answered and all required documents received in order to present an application file to the Admission Committee. See "What About Transcripts?" for additional information.

10. What is the requirement for recommendations?

Recommendations are required from your senior or sole pastor and four personal acquaintances. If you have graduated from a Concordia within the last five years, a recommendation is also required from the president of the college or university. The four personal references should be from adults who have known you well for a period of time and are not related to you. You will be asked to provide the names and contact information of your references. We suggest that you contact them prior to submitting their names in order to get their permission and to obtain up-to-date phone numbers and email addresses.

11. What about transcripts?

In order to present an admission file to the Admission Committee, we need at least an unofficial transcript from all colleges or universities in which you are currently enrolled, have attended, and/or through which you have completed a degree.

In order to begin taking classes, a final official transcript is required from all colleges or universities you have attended and/or completed a degree through in order to complete your admission file. Admission for applicants who are approved with only unofficial transcripts in their file is subject to the receipt of all final official transcripts.

Applicants should arrange to have final official transcripts sent to the CTSFW Admission Office via U.S. Mail to: Concordia Theological Seminary, ATTN: Admission Office, 6600 N. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, IN 46825 or emailed to Admission@ctsfw.edu by the registrar of any previous colleges or universities.

12. Must I have an interview with my district?

Every applicant to a seminary program leading to ordination is required to participate in a pre-admission interview in the district where he holds communicant membership. Note: If the applicant is married the interview must include the wife. The district office will forward the results to the CTSFW Admission Office.

13. Am I required to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)?

Applicants whose undergraduate GPA is below 2.75 are required to complete the GRE and have the scores forwarded to the CTSFW Admission Office. Applicants who already have a master's, doctorate, or equivalent degree are not required to take the GRE. GRE test scores beyond five years will not be accepted.

14. Can I take the GRE online?

The GRE is available online at www.ets.org/gre or you can contact them by telephone at (866) 473-4373.

15. Am I required to undergo a criminal background check?

Yes, Protect My Ministry, an agency contracted by the LCMS, is used. The applicant must sign a waiver release so that the results will be submitted to the CTSFW Admission Office.

16. After my application is accepted, must I complete the Confirmation of Admission?

Yes, this indicates your intention to enroll at CTSFW for the term of your admittance. It allows CTSFW to prepare more effectively for your arrival.

17. Must I take the Entry-Level Competency Exams (ELCE)?

- a) All incoming A.R. students are required to show entry-level competency in Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). This can be done by passing a competency exam offered through the Registrar's Office, taking online courses offered by the Seminary (which are good for four years), or taking six undergrad semester hours in OT and six undergrad semester hours in NT with a GPA of at least 3.0.
- b) An incoming A.R. student who has Greek language skills can demonstrate competency by taking a competency exam or passing six semester hours in Biblical Greek with a GPA of at least 3.0.
- c) All incoming A.R. students are required to take the Christian Doctrine exam or they must have completed six undergrad semester hours in doctrine (Lutheran theology, Lutheran Confessions, Christian doctrine) with a GPA of at least 3.0.

18. I do not have the pre-seminary Greek requirement. What should I do?

The Seminary offers Greek: Summer Greek, Fall Greek, and online Greek. However, since Greek is a pre-seminary requirement, credits in Greek do not apply to A.R. graduation requirements.

19. Is Hebrew a requirement of the A.R. Program?

The A.R. Program does not require Hebrew. The A.R. Program only requires Greek.

20. May I apply to CTSFW if I and/or my wife have been divorced?

Yes, the Seminary's Divorced Applicant Policy for pastoral applicants may be found at www.ctsfw.edu/pastoral-divorce-policy.

21. Must I answer personal background questions on the A.R. application for admission?

Yes, however, please understand that answering yes to any of the personal background questions does not automatically jeopardize your application. Our goal is both to get to know you better and to help you think through any significant issues from your past. We are concerned about how you have dealt with the issue and what spiritual counsel and professional/medical treatment was sought. Your honesty is greatly appreciated.

22. May I apply to CTSFW if I have significant household debt?

Yes. Accepted applicants whose consumer debt exceeds \$20,000 will be referred to a financial counselor from Concordia Plan Services who works with our students at CTSFW.

23. Must I submit an autobiographical statement?

Yes. We ask that you provide an autobiographical statement that includes your education, work, and church experiences and provides information about any events or people who have been instrumental in your decision to apply for the A.R. Program in 1,500-2,000 words.

24. Must I answer the personal reflection questions?

Yes. We ask you to respond to the following three items, writing 100-200 words for each personal reflection question:

1. Why do you want to be a pastor?
2. Please reflect on 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
3. What strengths and weaknesses will you bring to this task?

25. How many credit hours are required in the A.R. Program?

Individuals must successfully complete a total of 92 quarter hours, which includes 6 quarters of fieldwork and 1 year of vicarage (3 quarter hours).