

2021-2023 McCormick Theological Seminary Statement of Educational Effectiveness

Our Mission

At McCormick Theological Seminary, a seminary of the Presbyterian Church (USA) since 1829 and a progressive leader within the Reformed tradition, we are committed to institutional life, scholarship and ministry that are ecumenical, urban, and cross-cultural.

Our statement of educational effectiveness is grounded in the intent of the McCormick Theological Seminary mission to nurture the gifts of those called to faithful Christian ministry through academic study, practical experience, and spiritual formation. McCormick Theological Seminary engages in institution wide, systematic assessment to determine the merit and extent to which our institutional life, scholarship and praxis of ministerial leadership illuminates the ecumenical, diverse, and cross-cultural nature of the communities we serve. Our evaluation of educational effectiveness is addressed through three institutional metrics for institutional program priorities:

- findings from annual program and office reports,
- our degree program quality metrics (ATS Institutional Report on Admissions, Indebtedness, Graduate and Placement Rates), and
- our non-degree quality metrics (MTS Office/Program Quality Data Audits).

In 2021, McCormick Theological Seminary initiated its institutional assessment plan to evaluate its educational effectiveness through annual unit reviews of its degree programs and analysis of how well students have met the learning outcomes the MTS Faculty has established for each degree program. The MTS Strategic Interventions Committee (Academic Affairs, Admissions, Student Services, and the Registrar) reviews student retention data for MTS determining benchmarks for enrollment. This committee also works with McCormick's standing committees to report on areas for quality improvement, which is then reviewed by the institution's Administrative Cabinet. Improvements based upon this review are acted upon through the designated institutional standing committee and/or reported to the MTS Board of Trustees Committee (excluding policy improvements, which are solely trustee decisions).

Through these metrics, a cross cultural, urban and ecumenical environment of high quality is maintained in the delivery of all our programs: the Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Ministry, and Master of Theological Studies degrees, the Doctor of Ministry degree, and the Latinx and Black Church Studies certificate programs.

As an institution, we are changing. We have embraced the transformation of our programs and educational experiences cognizant of the changes in learning platforms and student expectations. Since this year has been brought us to a challenging phase of institutional transition, we have assessed institutional program priority outcomes in these areas:

(1) Appropriateness of our degree and certificate programs

Through our institutional committee assessment reports from Admissions, Academic Policies, and Student Success, we have essential feedback loops that help us to sustain appropriate and meaningful theological education to the individuals and the communities we serve. These reports have fed into the on-going redesign work of our current academic and educational programs to emphasize a social impact education design. Social impact design embodies problem solving and project-based learning in the authentic contexts of the professional learners.

(2) Accessibility of our degree and certificate programs

As we institute a more consistent “hybrid” course delivery, we have increased the availability and the use of multiple modalities in learning opportunities to be more responsive to diverse lifestyles of our learners. Data findings from our student questionnaires and course evaluations about instructional delivery as well as the findings from the ATS institutional profile indicate that our learners have responded favorably to the hybrid structure for course delivery and the revisions in our academic calendar that increase the opportunities for peer-to-peer engagement and broad-based formation.

(3) Affordability of our degree and certificate programs

For our institutional priority program outcome to maintain affordable educational options for working professionals and emerging religious leaders, McCormick continues to maintain a high percent of our students who incur no debt in relation to their continuous enrollment to program completion. In the 2021-22 graduating class, 70 % of our graduates had no educational debt (see numbers below), which represents a slightly higher percentage than the institutional average of other Presbyterian seminaries which stands at 68.3%. *Source: GSQ Table 7-B (previously Table 7, in 2019-20 and earlier)* This is attributed to the model of “financial planning” versus “financial assistance” operating in the Office of Student Financial Aid and the outcomes of the MTS Advancement Office. The model of “financial planning” focuses more holistically on the students’ finances long-term.

Educational Debt	2021-22 Graduating Class
None	70%
Less than \$10,000	20%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	10%

(4) Affirming nature of our degree and certificate programs

The redesign of our degree and non-degree programs aims to improve the integrated learning ecosystem across all educational programs and experiences to affect affirming spiritual, human, intellectual and vocational formation that embodies justice

Measures for Personal Growth and Learning Outcomes in Specific Skill Areas

- A. Degree program reviews are conducted using the logic model, which process informs key decisions that can affect MTS resource allocation and delivery of the programs. We assess and evaluate learning outcomes using **key performance indicators**, such as:
1. an 80% achievement rate on e-folio artifacts for master’s programs
 2. a 2.7 or above on a 4-point leadership inventory for master’s theses, and doctoral projects/dissertations and,
 3. enrollment data shared in both the IPEDS and ATS Annual report for each degree program providing matriculation and completion rates to inform the viability of faculty/student ratio, student success, and program engagement that advances the MTS mission.
- B. Another indicator of our educational effectiveness is demonstrated in how McCormick Theological Seminary has positioned itself as a educational institution committed to justice. We have been consistently engaged in social justice work around the city of Chicago, the country, and the world. This signature of social justice is recognizable in our learners and alumni. According to the findings from the ATS Graduate Student Questionnaire, graduating students completing academic programs at McCormick indicate a strong sense of addressing issues of systemic oppression in both ministerial practice and personal formation. The top five personal growth areas for McCormick learners were:
1. Empathy for the poor and oppressed
 2. Concern about social justice
 3. Enthusiasm for learning
 4. Insight into the troubles of others
 5. Respect for their own religious traditions

By Degree Program and Educational Context	MDiv				Acad MA			
	Campus or Extension		Online only		Campus or Extension		Campus or Extension	
	N = 5		N = 2		N = 2		N = 4	
	Avg	S.D.	Avg	S.D.	Avg	S.D.	Avg	S.D.
Empathy for the poor and oppressed	4.8	0.4	5.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	0.0
Concern about social justice	4.6	0.5	5.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	0.0
Enthusiasm for learning	4.8	0.4	5.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	0.0
Insight into troubles of others	4.4	0.8	4.5	0.5	5.0	0.0	5.0	0.0
Respect for other religious traditions	4.6	0.5	5.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	4.5	0.5
Respect for my own religious tradition	4.8	0.4	5.0	0.0	4.5	0.5	4.8	0.4

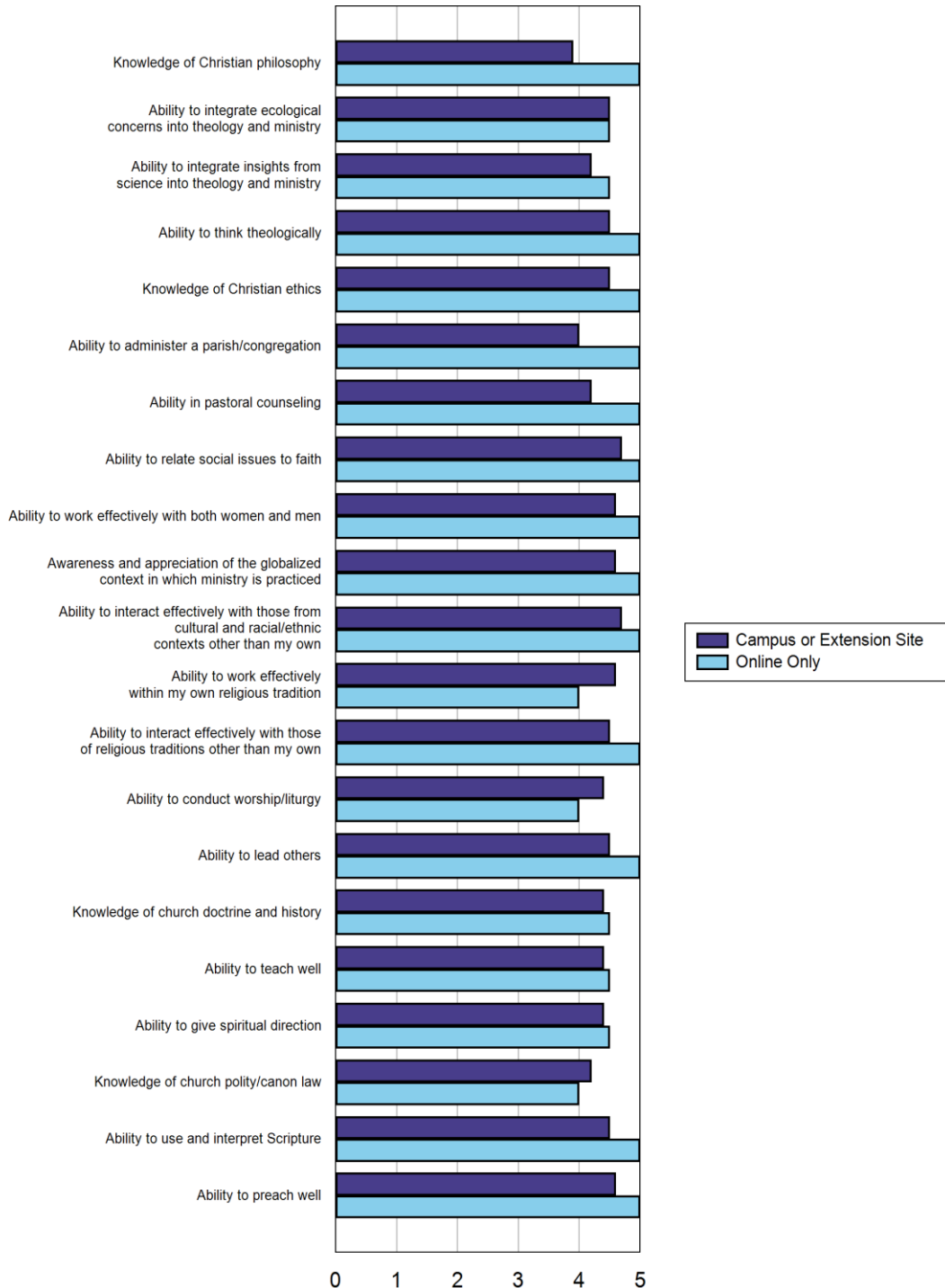
Graduating students have identified specific skill acquisitions in church leadership, social justice, and working with diverse populations as significant learning in their matriculation

and program completion. Anticipated revisions in program learning outcomes are informed by these results.

C. On the 2022-2023 Graduate Student Questionnaire, where students responded to the educational effectiveness in specific skill areas, MTS graduates identified they had acquired the following skills to an effective level:

- (1) Ability to think theologically.
- (2) Ability to work effectively with both women and men.
- (3) Ability to integrate ecological concerns into theology and ministry.

These skill areas are reflective of successfully achieved program learning outcomes for the master's degree programs: (1) To think critically; (2) To construct theological meaning, and (3) to communicate effectively.



Degree Program Quality Outcomes

Data findings presented in the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) Annual Institutional Report (IR) document demonstrate the extent to which our degree programs successfully ensure the timely completion of degree programs while maintaining student satisfaction. We continue to achieve a timely completion to graduation rate comparable with our peer institutions. Additionally, our learners have a successful placement rate upon graduation.