

**THE PROGRAM LEADING TO THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF HEBREW LETTERS**

**Handbook Revised 2018**

**Pines School of Graduate Studies**

**Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion**

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAM LEADING TO THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF HEBREW LETTERS, CINCINNATI SCHOOL

The program leading to the degree of Doctor of Hebrew Letters (D.H.L.) is an international program of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion administered centrally by the Pines School of Graduate Studies. Students may work with faculty members on any of the campuses, in Cincinnati, Los Angeles, and New York (in Jerusalem as well, under certain circumstances). Eligibility for matriculation in the D.H.L. program is normally limited to rabbinic graduates of HUC-JIR (any campus). The basis for this eligibility is the period of residency that is required for the M.A.H.L. degree and subsequent rabbinic ordination. Rabbinic ordines of other academically accredited institutions may also be eligible for the D.H.L. program, and should consult with the director of the Pines School of Graduate Studies.

### I. General Requirements and Application Procedure

There are three elements to the D.H.L. program, each of which is described in detail in this document:

1. a course of study
2. a set of oral examinations
3. a doctoral dissertation

The core of the program is a course of study in three subject areas--one major field and two minor fields--designed by the student in collaboration with three faculty advisors (one for each field).

There is often a relationship among the three subject areas, but it is not required that there be one. The specific requirements of the course of study may be fulfilled entirely by guided independent study, or by a combination of independent study and coursework.

**Either the major or *both* minors must include substantial study of Hebrew texts.**

The major and minor areas normally are selected from the following list (other areas of Judaic Studies maybe considered as well, as long as they are duly approved):

Bible and Related Literature  
Hebrew Literature  
Human Relations (minor field only)  
Jewish Liturgy and Worship  
Jewish Religious Education (minor field only)  
Jewish Theology  
Jewish Philosophy  
Jewish History  
Judaism and Early Christianity  
Judaism and Hellenism  
Medieval Jewish Biblical Commentaries  
Midrashic and Homiletical Literature  
Talmud and Rabbinic Literature

To initiate the application procedure, the student must first secure the agreement of three faculty members (on any campus) to be their advisors—one for the major field and one for each of the two minor fields. The student then fills out the program application, which can be found and filled out electronically here:

[https://sis.huc.edu/forms/gen\\_cf/inq\\_app\\_exec\\_screen.cfm?scor\\_id=6C2491F5FB0872D3FC44D49A64D0240F](https://sis.huc.edu/forms/gen_cf/inq_app_exec_screen.cfm?scor_id=6C2491F5FB0872D3FC44D49A64D0240F).

Once the completed application (which lists the three faculty advisors) and the application fee have been submitted to the National Office of Recruitment and Admissions, and the PSGS Office has been notified that the application process is complete, the student is formally admitted to D.H.L. candidacy.

Upon admission to D.H.L. candidacy, the program of study for each area must then be formulated with, and approved in writing by, the faculty advisor for that area. Once all three program outlines have been prepared and approved (including bibliographies), they must be submitted to the director of the Pines School of Graduate Studies. When ready, the dissertation proposal (including bibliography) must also be submitted to the director for approval by the Graduate Executive Committee.

The three programs of study may be completed concurrently or sequentially, depending on the candidate's preferred manner of working. In either case, all requirements for the D.H.L. degree normally must be completed within seven years from the date of the G.E.C.'s approval of the candidate's program.

## **II. The Course of Study**

The goal of the program of study in a minor area is to develop broad competence and general proficiency in that area. The major program of study, which leads to the dissertation, goes beyond that base of competence, and cultivates professional expertise in a well-defined area of specialization.

### **A. Program of Study--Minor Areas**

The program outline for each of the two minor subject areas should specify the subject matter to be studied, including the primary and secondary source material to be covered, the methodology to be used, and tentative description of a concluding project (usually a written assignment).

### **B. Program of Study--Major Areas**

The program of study in the major subject area may augment the program outline for the minor in that area, adding the extra primary and secondary resources that are required to go beyond the level of general competence and attain professional expertise. The program outline should specify the subject matter to be studied, including the primary and secondary source material to be covered and the methodology to be used.

In the case of the major, there is no interim "concluding project" as there is for each minor. Rather, the dissertation represents the culmination of the major, which means that the major advisor normally serves as the dissertation advisor. The major program outline submitted at the time of application need not include a full dissertation proposal, but it should indicate the direction of research that will eventuate in a dissertation.

#### C. D.H.L. Courses in Real Time

The Pines School of Graduate Studies offers real-time courses open to D.H.L. students originating from each of the stateside campuses. These courses may be taken in person or through electronic connection. (Permission of the instructor is required.) Course work can be coordinated with the predefined program outlines of the minor subject areas. D.H.L. candidates may take up to two of these courses per year for no additional fee beyond the annual D.H.L. tuition. For more information, contact the Office of the Pines School of Graduate Studies.

#### D. D.H.L. Examinations

When the candidate has completed a program of study in a minor area, the advisor submits a letter of confirmation to the director of the Pines School of Graduate Studies. The D.H.L. examination can be administered only after receipt of this letter. The examination in the major may be administered when the advisor certifies in writing that the dissertation is the only outstanding program requirement, but must be taken at least one month prior to the submission of the dissertation.

The D.H.L. examinations are oral examinations that normally take place at one of the stateside campuses of HUC-JIR. Their content is based upon the work that comprised the course of study.

For the sake of convenience, candidates usually are examined in all three areas at one time; it is possible, however, to take the examinations at separate times if desired. The all-in-one examination lasts two hours, with one half-hour devoted to each minor area, and one hour devoted to the major. All three faculty advisors must attend the D.H.L. examination(s)—this can be done electronically when the advisors are on several campuses—and the other members of the faculty are invited to attend as well. Some flexibility exists for the exams outlined above.

#### E. D.H.L. Dissertation

The D.H.L. dissertation is the "concluding project" in the candidate's major area, as well as the culmination of the degree program.

"The [doctoral] research project should be an original, theory-driven investigation characterized by rigorous methodology and capable of making a significant contribution to knowledge about the subject under study."

*(The Role and Nature of the Doctoral Dissertation, Council of Graduate Schools Policy Statement, 1991, pp.6-7)*

## 1. Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal is an integral part of the program outline for the major area. The proposal should give an overview of the proposed topic, outline the specific subject matter of the dissertation, describe how the subject matter will be treated, and include some relevant bibliography. The proposal should indicate the original contribution to scholarship that the student expects to make.

The proposal may be submitted at any time during the course of study, as early as the time of application, but no later than one year prior to the anticipated date of graduation. Students are encouraged to formulate their dissertation proposals before taking the D.H.L. examinations.

The procedure for submission and approval of the proposal is as follows: the student submits the proposal to the dissertation advisor (normally the major area advisor); the advisor signs the proposal and submits it to the director of the Pines School of Graduate Studies; the director conveys the proposal to the G.E.C. for approval.

A typical dissertation proposal might be laid out as follows (each of the following items with the possible exception of the bibliography should require no more than one page):

**Cover Page**, including the student's name, the title of the dissertation, and the name and signature of the faculty advisor.

**Statement of the Problem**, giving the general scholarly context out of which the thesis topic has emerged, and indicating the questions to be raised and/or hypotheses to be verified.

**Review of Prior Scholarship**, emphasizing that which is specifically relevant to the dissertation. What is lacking in scholarship to date that makes the proposed work desirable or necessary?

**Statement of Methodology or Approach**, with particular emphasis on where it participates in and deviates from current scholarly discussion of the topic.

**Outline of the Contents of the Dissertation**, which should be simple in form, and follow a standard outline format (e.g., *The Chicago Manual of Style*).

**Preliminary Bibliography**, topically arranged, and limited to what is strictly relevant.

## 2. The Format of the Dissertation

The Graduate Executive Committee has established a number of guidelines and regulations for the preparation of dissertations. These cover such areas as required contents (abstract, title page, etc.), paper size and quality, formatting, printing, and annotation. Examples appear in the Graduate Student Handbook of the Pines School of Graduate Studies. Any significant

deviations from the regulations in that document must be discussed with the director of the Pines School of Graduate Studies and, if necessary, brought before the Graduate Executive Committee for approval.

### 3. Submission of the Dissertation

When the advisor agrees that the dissertation is ready for submission, the candidate should prepare the final copy for official submission. Two unbound submission copies of the dissertation and a pdf file copy, together with the advisor's written evaluation approving the dissertation, must be in the Office of the Pines School of Graduate Studies by March 15 if the D.H.L. is to be awarded at the spring graduation exercises.

### III. Fees

Application Fee	\$ 100.00
Annual Tuition Fee	\$ 1200.00
Graduation Fee	\$ 200.00