



Executive Summary

Bayan Islamic Graduate School affirms the Master of Divinity (MDiv) as the preferred and standard credential for admission to its Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program. However, in recognition of the diverse ways ministerial formation occurs across faith traditions, Bayan has developed a rigorous, competency-based framework to evaluate applicants who do not hold an MDiv. This process is publicly stated and structured in alignment with the six criteria outlined by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) for determining MDiv equivalency. Each applicant is required to demonstrate academic preparation, theological literacy, vocational clarity, and substantial ministerial experience at a level consistent with the expectations of advanced professional doctoral study. This approach ensures that all admitted students are prepared to engage as ministry peers in a doctoral-level cohort while also acknowledging the varied educational and ministerial pathways within and beyond the Christian tradition. The assessment will be conducted by the DMin program director.

Rationale for Admitting DMin Students Without an MDiv or Post-Master's Ministry Experience

1. Bayan Expands MDiv Equivalency with Integrity and Rigor, Recognizing Diverse Ministry Formation Pathways

Bayan recognizes the Master of Divinity (MDiv) as the standard and desirable credential for admission to Doctor of Ministry (DMin) programs. It provides a well-established foundation for theological education, ministerial identity formation, and professional leadership in many Christian contexts. Our admissions materials and website publicly state that the MDiv is a preferred qualification for the DMin program.

However, we also recognize that faith communities outside of the Christian tradition have not historically used the MDiv structure as the normative path for preparing religious leaders. For instance, in many religious communities, including the American Muslim context, spiritual formation and leadership development often occur through alternative but equally rigorous pathways. These may include:

- Accredited master's degrees in fields such as religious studies, chaplaincy, theology, education (especially when related to teaching in faith-based institutions), or nonprofit leadership
- Traditional seminary training or classical study in sacred texts and language
- Substantial ministerial leadership and teaching experience in faith-based institutions or service organizations

In these contexts, the absence of an MDiv does not reflect a lack of preparation, but rather the absence of a Christian-structured credential in traditions that have developed different, culturally embedded models of theological and ministerial formation.

Therefore, in alignment with ATS's stated policy, Bayan applies an expanded definition of MDiv equivalency that is:

- Publicly stated in all admissions materials
- Formally documented in a structured rubric used by admissions reviewers
- Strictly aligned with the six areas of competence outlined by ATS:
 1. Scriptural and theological interpretation
 2. Cultural and contextual awareness
 3. Ministerial identity and vocation
 4. Spiritual formation and readiness
 5. An accredited master's in a related field



6. Substantial ministerial experience

Each admitted applicant's file includes clear evidence that these areas have been met or exceeded, and internal review processes track how equivalency determinations are made.

2. Bayan's Admissions Process Fully Aligns with ATS's Six Criteria for MDiv Equivalency

(a) Ability to thoughtfully interpret scripture and the theological tradition of one's ministry context

Applicants demonstrate engagement with sacred texts and theological frameworks through:

- Graduate coursework in religious studies, theology, or sacred texts
- Traditional seminary or classical training
- Scriptural language study (for example, Arabic)
- Writing samples or teaching experience in religious interpretation

(b) Capacity to understand and adapt one's ministry to the cultural context

Applicants demonstrate contextual responsiveness through:

- Personal statements
- Service to diverse or underrepresented communities
- Culturally grounded program leadership
- References from community-based leadership roles

(c) Basic self-understanding of ministerial identity and vocational calling

Bayan assesses vocational clarity through:

- Narrative statements of ministerial purpose
- Resumes showing leadership in religious contexts
- Supervisor references attesting to call and character

(d) Readiness to engage in ongoing personal and spiritual formation for one's ministry

Spiritual readiness is assessed by:

- Descriptions of formation experiences
- Mentorship and retreat participation
- References noting personal maturity and growth practices

(e) Accredited master's degree in an area related to one's ministry setting or vocational calling

Applicants must hold an accredited master's in a related area:

- Religious studies, chaplaincy, theology, nonprofit or community leadership
- Education aimed at religious teaching or service leadership

(f) Significant ministerial experience enabling peer-level engagement in a DMin cohort

While Bayan does not require this experience to occur after the master's, applicants must demonstrate:

- Sustained ministry experience
- Peer-level leadership
- Ability to contribute meaningfully to a doctoral-level cohort

Bayan's admissions process maintains the rigor, structure, and accountability expected for advanced ministerial education. It ensures every admitted DMin student has the academic grounding, vocational maturity, and peer readiness consistent with ATS's intent and expectations.