

Certificate in Mission Leadership: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the Certificate in Mission Leadership (CML) program?

Aquinas Institute of Theology has developed and piloted a two-year program to provide a theological foundation for new and future mission leaders in Catholic health systems or facilities. This collaboration between Aquinas Institute and particular health care ministries is designed to form a new generation of mission leaders with a solid theological understanding of the healing ministry of Jesus and personal/communal spirituality. Participants will be poised to have a transformative impact in the world of health care today.

Whom is the program for?

The program is for health care associates who are new to mission leadership positions or who have been identified as future mission leaders by the health systems.

Is this a graduate certificate?

No – because the program focuses on foundational knowledge, classes are not for credit. Participants will receive a certificate of completion when they finish the program. They also will be prepared, if they choose to do so, to pursue a master's degree, such as Aquinas Institute's Master of Arts in Health Care Mission.

What courses will participants take?

The program consists of eight modules, each of them eight weeks in length:

- Introduction to Theology for Mission Leaders
- The Meaning of Healing in Sacred Texts
- Religious Pluralism and Cultural Competency
- The Church: God's Gift and Our Task
- Competencies for Mission Leadership
- Catholic Health Care: An Institutionalized Ministry of the Church
- Basic Principles of Catholic Social Teaching
- Ethical Issues in Contemporary Health Care

Are the courses available online?

Yes, the courses are 100% online, an approach that allows participants to remain in their current jobs.

What's involved in each course?

Each module includes:

- Required readings, online lectures, narrated PowerPoint presentations, YouTube files, etc.;
- Weekly online threaded discussions on Blackboard Learn, which allow participants to learn from the experience and wisdom of their colleagues;
- A two-hour, online video meeting at the end of each module;
- A final one- to two-page paper describing how the content of each module has helped or informed participants in effectively carrying out their role as mission leaders.
- A focus on the practical applications of what participants learn.

Will participants have an opportunity to meet their classmates?

Yes. Participants will meet for a two-day opening orientation September 4-6, 2016 and a two-day closing retreat in August 2018, both in St. Louis, MO. Participants' presence at these events is required. Because participants will be part of a cohort – the same participants will take the same classes together – they will be interacting with each other throughout the length of the program.

Who teaches the courses?

The Academic Dean of Aquinas Institute assigns professional theological faculty to teach the modules; selection is based largely on faculty experience, interest and familiarity with health care issues. The principal faculty of our Ashley-O'Rourke Center for Health Ministry Leadership includes Sr. Colleen Mallon who has ongoing oversight of the CML and works closely with the participating health care systems.

How much does the program cost?

The tuition per participant for the entire program is \$10,000 (\$5,000/year).

- This covers the cost of all course instruction and IT support, plus the orientation and final retreat.
- This does not cover transportation costs to the orientation and final retreat.
- Aquinas will prepare a bid for services and enter into a separate financial agreement with each participating health system. The expected commitment is for the full two years, despite potential participant attrition. Aquinas' capability to provide this service at such a reasonable tuition is dependent on the good faith of each health system sending participants to the program.

What can be expected from participants when they finish the program?

- Participants will have a basic, foundational knowledge of the theological tradition behind the healing ministry of Jesus;
- They will have examined and practiced the skills required to serve effectively in a mission leadership role;
- They will have developed the initial competencies to guide organizational change and process improvement within the healing ministry.