



Concordia University System

Director of Christian Outreach (DCO) Program Standards

Approved June, 2026

Prologue:

A Director of Christian Outreach (DCO) is a Synodically certified, called, and commissioned leader in witness and evangelism, prepared for ministry in congregational, mission, and broader church contexts. DCOs serve the Church by specializing in outreach, evangelism, and Christian service, assessing outreach opportunities unique to a given ministry setting and equipping congregations and organizations to bring the Gospel to people in winsome and effective ways. The Concordia University System DCO Program Standards specify the instructional, formational, and experiential expectations that prepare students for commissioned ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as Directors of Christian Outreach.

These standards supplement the general CUS Church Work Program Standards and ensure that DCO candidates are equipped as faithful theologians and collaborative leaders for witness and outreach across a range of ministry contexts. Formation of a DCO includes the development of Christian character, relational and leadership skills, cross-cultural competency, and a lifelong commitment to witness, service, and professional growth.

Standard 1: Foundations of Christian Outreach Ministry

The program forms students in the theological, historical, and vocational foundations of Christian outreach and the Church's ministry of witness and service.

Standard 2: Leadership, Administration, and Team Ministry

The program forms students as servant leaders who plan, administer, and evaluate outreach and ministry programs in collaboration with pastors, church staff, and lay leaders as members of a team ministry serving the mission of the Church.

Standard 3: Mission Engagement and Cultural Context

The program prepares students to understand and engage cultural contexts for ministry and witness in faithful, mission-oriented, and ethical ways.

Standard 4: Research, Reflection, and Ongoing Formation

The program fosters habits of theological reflection, scholarly inquiry including research, and lifelong learning essential to faithful and effective ministry.

Standard 5: Biblical and Theological Foundations of Mission

The program equips students to ground Christian outreach in the mission of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments, applying Lutheran theology and the Lutheran Confessions to the practice of evangelism and outreach ministry.

Standard 6: Cross-Cultural and Global Mission Engagement

The program prepares students to engage diverse cultural, religious, and global contexts for witness and outreach, applying principles of biblical interpretation and cross-cultural ministry to settings ranging from the local congregation to the international mission field.

Standard 7: Evangelism Strategy and Congregational Outreach

The program develops students' ability to assess, design, and implement contextually appropriate evangelism strategies that equip congregations and ministry organizations to share the Gospel in relational, ethical, and mission-oriented ways.

Standard 8: Fieldwork and Internship

The program provides structured, supervised experiences in outreach and evangelism ministry—including an internship placement of at least 12 months—to integrate learning, spiritual formation, and professional competencies for service as a Director of Christian Outreach.