



# TRIM

**Training in Ministry**

## **Entry Materials 2022**

**Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership**

**Student Orientation Retreat:  
July 26-28, 2022 (Tuesday – Thursday)  
Bethany Theological Seminary**

**Student Application due June 1, 2022**

**Students whose registration process is complete before April 1, 2022 may begin their program before the orientation retreat in consultation with the Coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs**

**Contact: Carrie Eikler,  
Coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs  
Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership  
[eikleca@bethanyseminary.edu](mailto:eikleca@bethanyseminary.edu) or 765-983-1810  
Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership  
615 National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374**

# **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

## **Training in Ministry (TRIM)**

*Graduation from TRIM meets the educational requirements for ordination  
in the Church of the Brethren*

### **What is TRIM?**

Authorized by the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, TRIM offers the same scope of training as a seminary education but offers it in a more flexible version so that the training can be completed closer to home and, depending on the extent of prior educational experience, in as few as three or four years.

TRIM consists of a combination of 1) general education, 2) biblical and theological studies, and 3) practical training in ministry. It is a program that allows students to design their own package of courses and other learning experiences within a balanced structure of activities.

### **Who Offers the TRIM Program?**

The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership (BAML) administers the program for three Church of the Brethren partners:

- Bethany Theological Seminary
- Church of the Brethren, Inc.
- The 24 districts of the Church of the Brethren

All students enter TRIM with the approval and support of their district. District-appointed TRIM coordinators provide guidance and support to students at the local level. Students who move to a new district while enrolled in TRIM shall notify the Brethren Academy Office, the district coordinator from the previous district, and the district coordinator of the new district. In order to continue in TRIM, a student must have the approval and support of the new district.

### **Who Can Participate in TRIM?**

Those committed to Jesus Christ and the church who

- sense a call to ministry in the Church of the Brethren and are willing to test that call
- have a high school diploma (or equivalent) and the ability to do college-level work
- wish to fulfill education requirements for ordination or to upgrade previous training
- have gifts for ministry, discerned and affirmed by the congregation and the district
- have the self-motivation to pursue a disciplined course of study for ministry

## What Does TRIM Cost?

The total cost of the TRIM program will depend on the previous education of the student, the number of courses needed to complete the program, and the progress of the student through the program (i.e. how many courses the student chooses to take each year).

Below are the various costs involved in the program. A snapshot of a student's expected course load can be provided upon receipt of transcripts.

- Enrollment Fee: \$360, due at the time of application
- Biannual Student Participation Fee: \$112.50, billed to student in January and July
- Biannual District Participation Fee: \$122.50 per student, billed in January and July
- Individual course Fee: \$300, payable at the time of course registration.
- Cost of books and any travel to onsite courses (varies by course)

Financial Assistance for course fees is available to qualifying students.

Biannual fees will be billed in January and July, based on the student's date of completion. January payment is due, in full, March 1. July payment is due, in full, September 1.

A student is considered completed when they have finished, submitted and received evaluations on all coursework, experiences and paperwork, including the exit exam. At that stage of the program, a student will receive an official letter of completion from the Brethren Academy. If that letter is issued by June 30, that student will not be billed in July. Students who complete by December 31 will not be billed in January.

## Whom do I contact about TRIM?

**Carrie Eikler,**  
**Coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs**  
Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership  
[eikleca@bethanyseminary.edu](mailto:eikleca@bethanyseminary.edu) or 765-983-1810

# ADMISSIONS PROCESS FACT SHEET

## Training In Ministry (TRIM)

*Graduation from TRIM meets the educational requirements for ordination in the Church of the Brethren*

**The admissions process into the TRIM program consists of the following steps:**

1. **Recommendation:** The district determines whether to recommend a person for TRIM, preferably in consultation with the district TRIM coordinator. A high school diploma (or the equivalent) is a prerequisite for entrance into the TRIM program.

2. **Prospective Student Profile:** The district executive/minister fills out and signs the *Prospective Student Profile* and mails it to the Brethren Academy office. The entrance process includes a background check, initiated by the district through the Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry. The profile requires the date the completed background check was submitted to the district office along with the initials of the district executive/minister.

3. **Student Application:** The Brethren Academy sends a TRIM application to the prospective student, who will complete and return it to the Brethren Academy with the enrollment fee of \$360. The application deadline is June 1, 2022. Districts differ in their determination of who pays this enrollment fee. A copy of the completed application form is sent to the district by the Brethren Academy as a courtesy. As an application is considered, Brethren Academy staff may interview the student by telephone or video conferencing platform.

4. **Orientation Retreat:** Upon acceptance into the program, the student attends an orientation retreat at Bethany Theological Seminary that includes the beginning of an eight-week online course. The orientation retreat registration deadline is strictly observed. The student is responsible for travel expenses to and from Richmond, Indiana and for books required for the online course. All other expenses during orientation are paid for by the Brethren Academy.

**The 2022 Orientation Retreat is  
July 26-28, 2022 (Tuesday – Thursday)  
at Bethany Theological Seminary.**

**Registration deadline: June 1, 2022**

**Students whose registration process is complete before April 1, 2022 may take up to two courses before orientation retreat in consultation with Carrie Eikler.**

**For more information, contact:**

**Carrie Eikler, Coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs**

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership  
[eikleca@bethanyseminary.edu](mailto:eikleca@bethanyseminary.edu) or 765-983-1810  
Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership  
615 National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374

# STUDENT REQUIREMENTS FOR TRIM

All work is planned and completed in consultation with the district TRIM coordinator.

1. Attend a **three-day, onsite, group orientation retreat** in which the student will begin an online course, receive detailed explanation of the TRIM program, and meet other students and church leaders for worship and conversation.
2. Participate in a **spiritually reflective experience** through a district calling cohort, a district-based group of ministry training students or a pastoral/collegial support group. This is coordinated through the district or through local networks.
3. Complete **30 units of coursework**, at least 10 of which need to be completed while in TRIM. (Up to 20 units may be transferred from previous education; while in TRIM, a limited number of bible/theology and ministry/ministry skills credits may be completed from institutions outside the Brethren Academy and/or Bethany Theological Seminary. Determinations regarding transferable coursework are made by the Coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs.)

Required units to be taken at the Brethren Academy level (undergraduate or above):

**10 units of Biblical or Theological Studies** (including Introduction to Biblical Studies, Introduction to Hebrew Scriptures, Introduction to New Testament, and a Brethren Studies course)

**10 units of Ministry Skills** (including Practical Ministry Colloquium)

**10 units of General Education**

4. Complete **Five (5) Required Experiences while in TRIM:**
  - a) Ecumenical, Intercultural or Interfaith Experience
  - b) Church of the Brethren College Experience or Brethren Connection Experience
  - c) Bethany Theological Seminary Experience (beyond orientation retreat)
  - d) Annual Conference Experience
  - e) District Conference Experience
5. Complete a **Supervised Ministry Internship (400 hours) while in TRIM.**
6. Graduation: Following an **exit exam and final evaluations**, students are **recognized with a certificate** at their district conference and with **recognition at the Bethany/Brethren Academy Luncheon at Annual Conference.**
7. **Financial Commitments:**
  - Enrollment Fee: \$360, due at the time of application
  - Biannual Student Participation Fee: \$112.50, billed to student in January and July
  - Biannual District Participation Fee: \$122.50 per student, billed in January and July
  - Individual course Fee: \$300, payable at the time of course registration.
  - Cost of books and any travel to onsite courses (varies by class)

Financial Assistance for course fees is available to qualifying students.

# DISTRICT EXECUTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

## Training In Ministry (TRIM)

### **Preliminary Responsibilities**

1. Consult with the District Ministry Commission/District Board (or equivalent) to secure district backing for involvement in the program, including budgeting district support for each TRIM student. The biannual fee paid by the district is \$122.50 (\$245 a year), to be invoiced in January and July.
2. Contact candidates that may be best trained for ministry through TRIM or respond to candidates that approach the district.
3. Submit a *Prospective Student Profile* for each eligible candidate to the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership.
4. Promote TRIM as a potential track for ministry training with individuals for whom it would be appropriate.
5. In conjunction with the District Ministry Commission (DMC), secure a qualified, seminary-trained person to serve as the district TRIM coordinator, or intentionally renew the arrangement with the current district TRIM coordinator. Encourage the DMC to clarify how the district will handle the matter of district TRIM coordinator expenses.
6. In the event of an interim between district TRIM coordinators, all communication from BAML and the TRIM student, and all district coordinator responsibilities will go through and rest with the district executive.

### **Responsibilities After Student Admission to Program**

1. Alongside the District Ministry Commission, determine the way in which the district TRIM coordinator will communicate with the DMC regarding TRIM student progress.
2. Ensure the availability of a spiritually reflective experience for the student. This could be through the district calling cohort, a district-based group of ministry training students or a pastoral/collegial support group.
3. Receive correspondence, student contracts, and learning materials related to TRIM students. Be in contact with the Brethren Academy office for any questions or comments regarding the district TRIM coordinator's leadership and/or student progress.
4. Work with/respond to the district TRIM coordinator in securing appropriate placement for meeting the TRIM requirement of a supervised ministry internship. (i.e. find second-staff, interims or other suitable opportunities for pastoral ministry that may be supervised).
5. Work with the district TRIM coordinator in planning for an appropriate recognition of graduating TRIM students, typically during part of District Conference, or another district-wide event.

# DISTRICT TRIM COORDINATOR

## Position Description

### Qualifications for district TRIM coordinator include

- significant experience in ministry or in other leadership in the church
- well-grounded in the beliefs and practices of the Church of the Brethren
- has a heart for the future leadership of the church
- an encourager who is willing to be reflective and honest with students
- excellent communication skills, including online communication
- has the time to spend with the students in a district as well as to complete the paperwork of a ministry training program
- willing to guide students toward the strengthening of their own faith while leaving the exact shape that faith might take to God.
- comfortable with advising students while realizing that some final decisions in TRIM need to be made by the staff of the Brethren Academy.

### Activities may vary by district, but in general include

- advising students on coursework and other TRIM requirements
- approving certain completed work (internship forms, Independent Study Units, etc.)
- contacting students occasionally to maintain a good relationship
- sending paperwork to the Brethren Academy office in a timely manner
- keeping the district leadership up to date on the progress of students
- conferring with the Coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs
- attending periodic district TRIM coordinator gatherings, which may be in person or by other forms of communication (phone, Skype, Zoom, etc.)

New district TRIM coordinators are **trained** for their position by the Coordinator of English-Language Ministry Training Programs for the Brethren Academy, ideally, at TRIM/EFSM orientation retreat. If this is not an option, district coordinators will be trained at another in-person meeting, by telephone, or through video conferencing.

In most districts the district TRIM coordinator is a **volunteer position**; however, we hope that any expenses of travel within the district, postage, long distance telephone calls, copying or other office expenses might be covered either by the district or a supporting congregation. This arrangement is made between the district TRIM coordinator and the district.

Acknowledging this is a considerable amount of work for a volunteer position, we trust that one of the **benefits** for the district TRIM coordinator will be the satisfaction of knowing that they are mentoring those who have responded to God's call and who seek to be trained to be future leaders. Additionally, district TRIM coordinators may take one Brethren Academy course per year with no charge for tuition. For those who are ordained, this will earn two CEUs.

# PROSPECTIVE STUDENT PROFILE

## Training In Ministry (TRIM)

*A Program of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership*

**To be completed by the district executive/minister**

1. Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_
2. Address \_\_\_\_\_
3. Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_
4. Church which student attends/serves:  
Congregation/location \_\_\_\_\_  
District \_\_\_\_\_
5. Ministerial status: \_\_\_pre-licensed \_\_\_licensed other \_\_\_\_\_
6. District TRIM Coordinator (Check one):  
\_\_\_\_ Will be (supply name) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ Is not yet appointed, but we have one or more prospects
7. Previous training beyond high school (entering students must have a high school diploma or equivalent)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Present employment status \_\_\_\_\_
9. The person described above (*Check each item that applies*):  
\_\_\_ Has been contacted by the district and is interested in TRIM  
\_\_\_ Has the ability to do college-level work  
\_\_\_ Is computer literate  
\_\_\_ Has a valid call to ministry, supported by the district  
\_\_\_ Could conceivably do masters-level/seminary work  
\_\_\_ Needs TRIM to complete educational requirements for ordination  
\_\_\_ Is already ordained, but would profit from additional training
10. The applicant has submitted a completed Criminal Background check to our office on \_\_\_\_\_ (date of submission). **District executive's initials required**\_\_\_\_\_.

If the applicant has not had a Criminal Background check within the past three years, he/she will need to complete one before entering the training program at the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership. Background checks are initiated by the district through the Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry.

11. The undersigned agrees the district will pay the yearly TRIM fee for this student.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of district executive/minister

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Send Completed Form, by May 1, 2022 to:  
Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, 615 National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374**