



NEBRA SKY Monastery and Divinity College

2-Year Dissertation-Only Ph.D. Program

Doctoral Research in Theology, Biblical History, Biblical Archaeology, Christian Artifacts, Sacred Texts, and Monastic Scholarship

A research doctorate for scholars, writers, and religious researchers seeking to create substantial works worthy of preservation, publication, and presentation through the Nebra Sky Monastery Library.

Program model	Two-year dissertation-only doctoral research program; no classroom coursework.
Start date	Rolling admission; accepted candidates may begin after approval of the research proposal and enrollment.
Primary outcome	A substantial dissertation, scholarly book manuscript, critical edition, research portfolio, or other approved scholarly work.
Institutional purpose	To build a modern monastic library of learned Christian research, sacred-history studies, and publishable works.
Professional scope	Not an ordination program, not a ministry credential, and not a program for church leadership licensure or ecclesiastical office. Rather an advanced theological degree which may be used for many purposes.

Program Description

The Nebra Sky Monastery and Divinity College 2-Year Dissertation-Only Ph.D. Program is a rigorous independent research doctorate designed for mature scholars whose primary vocation is not classroom coursework, but sustained inquiry, disciplined writing, and the creation of substantial works in Christian scholarship. The program is intended to serve as the central research activity of Nebra Sky Monastery: a modern continuation of the monastic tradition in which sacred texts, learned commentary, manuscript culture, history, medicine, science, and the arts were gathered, preserved, copied, studied, and transmitted to future generations.

The program invites qualified candidates to undertake a major dissertation, book-length study, critical source project, documentary research portfolio, or other approved scholarly work that advances the Monastery's mission as a center for learned works in Christianity. Its intellectual emphasis includes Biblical history, Biblical archaeology, Christian artifacts and relics, sacred geography, lost and lesser-known texts, Ethiopian and other ancient Christian textual traditions, early monasticism, Christian art and iconography, and the historical mysteries that continue to animate serious inquiry into the Christian past.

The purpose of the program is not to train clergy. Its purpose is to sponsor and recognize serious Christian research: the kind of work that belongs in a monastery library, a scholarly archive, a religious bookstore, or a permanent collection of Christian learning.

The Monastery Research Mission: A Modern Scriptorium

Nebra Sky Monastery is conceived as a research-focused monastery in the older and nobler sense of that word: not merely a place of devotion, but a keeper of knowledge. In the early monastic world, manuscripts were copied, codices were guarded, medicinal knowledge was studied, sacred art was preserved, and theological commentary was refined through disciplined lives of contemplation and scholarship. The Nebra Sky model seeks to recover that spirit for a contemporary audience.

The doctoral program is therefore more than a degree pathway. It is a mechanism for building the Nebra Sky Monastery Library: a curated body of dissertations, monographs, research books, translations, sourcebooks, digital exhibits, artifact studies, and interpretive essays that can be featured, published, distributed, and preserved as part of the Monastery's larger intellectual and spiritual mission.

Candidates should understand from the outset that the desired end product is not a routine academic exercise. The desired end product is a work with enough depth, coherence, originality, and seriousness that the candidate, the Divinity College, and the Monastery can all present it with pride as a meaningful contribution to Christian learning.

Who Should Apply

This program is intended for superior applicants who already possess the maturity, discipline, and intellectual independence required to complete a substantial research project. Appropriate candidates may include:

- religious scholars, Biblical researchers, theologians, historians, archaeologists, or independent scholars with a defined research agenda;
- authors or aspiring authors seeking to complete a serious book, treatise, annotated sourcebook, or dissertation in a Christian field of inquiry;
- graduates in theology, divinity, religious studies, history, archaeology, classics, humanities, or related liberal-arts fields whose proposed work is faith-informed and historically serious;
- researchers with an existing body of work who wish to organize, expand, revise, and defend that work as a unified doctoral-level contribution;

- scholars interested in sacred texts, apocryphal literature, ancient Bibles, Christian manuscripts, Biblical places, relics, icons, and artifacts;
- qualified digital scholars who can create a substantial research-based resource, exhibit, annotated collection, 3D presentation, or digital library contribution for the Monastery.

The program is not intended for applicants who need a structured sequence of introductory courses, weekly lectures, classroom assignments, or a professional ministry curriculum. It is best suited for candidates who already know the field they wish to investigate and can demonstrate that their proposed work is capable of reaching doctoral depth.

Areas of Preferred Research

The Divinity College will consider any strong proposal that advances the Nebra Sky Monastery mission. Projects of special interest include, but are not limited to:

- **Biblical History and Sacred Geography:** historical studies of Biblical places, kingdoms, peoples, journeys, sites, and contested sacred locations.
- **Biblical Archaeology and Material Culture:** research connecting Scripture, archaeology, inscriptions, excavations, artifacts, ancient architecture, and historical geography.
- **Christian Artifacts, Relics, and Sacred Objects:** studies of relic traditions, reliquaries, icons, liturgical objects, ancient crosses, pilgrimage objects, and the evidentiary history of sacred objects.
- **Lost Texts, Ancient Bibles, and Manuscript Traditions:** studies involving apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, extracanonical writings, codices, manuscript transmission, Ethiopian Bible traditions, Syriac, Coptic, Greek, Latin, and related textual traditions.
- **Early Monasticism and the Preservation of Knowledge:** research on monasteries as libraries, scriptoria, centers of medicine, keepers of sacred texts, and patrons of learned arts and sciences.
- **Christian Art, Iconography, and Symbolic Tradition:** analysis of Christian visual language, sacred design, architecture, icons, mosaics, manuscript illumination, and the theology of image and symbol.
- **Temple, Covenant, and Holy-Site Studies:** research on the Temple of Solomon, Jerusalem, sacred space, pilgrimage traditions, and the historical memory of holy places.
- **Christian Historical Mystery and Responsible Inquiry:** scholarly investigation of unresolved historical questions, disputed traditions, artifact claims, and lesser-known sources, provided the method remains disciplined and evidence-based.

Acceptable Forms of Doctoral Work

The ordinary form of completion is a dissertation or book-length manuscript. However, because the Monastery's purpose includes the creation of useful learned works, the Divinity College may approve several forms of doctoral output, provided the final submission is substantial, original, coherent, and accompanied by adequate scholarly documentation.

- **Traditional dissertation:** a sustained scholarly argument with research question, literature review, method, chapters, notes, bibliography, and conclusion.
- **Book-length monograph or treatise:** a publishable manuscript suitable for later release through the Monastery Library, bookstore, or another publishing platform.
- **Critical edition, translation, or annotated sourcebook:** an edited, translated, or annotated collection of texts or sources accompanied by scholarly introduction and commentary.
- **Artifact, relic, or sacred-site catalog:** a documented catalog or interpretive guide supported by historical, archaeological, theological, and visual evidence.

- **Portfolio by prior and new work:** a unified body of substantial writings, revised and framed by an original integrative essay explaining the contribution of the work as a whole.
- **Digital or visual research project:** a research-based digital exhibit, 3D presentation, website collection, documentary script, or media resource, accompanied by a written scholarly component.

Creative or digital projects are considered doctoral work only when the research component is substantial and when the project can be evaluated for originality, scholarly method, documentation, and contribution to the Monastery mission.

Program Structure: Two Years of Supervised Independent Research

There is no classroom coursework in this program. The candidate's work is organized around an approved project plan, periodic progress review, mentor consultation, scholarly production, and final examination or approval of the completed work. Candidates may begin at any time after admission because the program is not tied to semester start dates.

Phase	Approximate Time	Primary Work
Application and Pre-Planning	Before enrollment	Submission of application, research supplement, prior-work samples, proposed title, project rationale, and preliminary bibliography.
Formal Research Planning	Months 1-4	Finalization of topic, research question, method, chapter outline, source plan, publication or library-deposit plan, and mentor expectations.
Research and Source Development	Months 5-10	Collection and evaluation of sources; historiographic review; annotated bibliography; source notes; artifact, site, text, or tradition analysis.
Writing and Scholarly Production	Months 11-18	Drafting chapters, manuscript sections, critical commentary, catalogs, digital materials, or portfolio components; submission of work-in-progress.
Revision, Final Review, and Library Preparation	Months 19-24	Revision, final documentation, mentor review, possible oral presentation or defense, approval, academic record preparation, and Monastery Library deposit or publication planning.

Admission Requirements

The preferred applicant holds a master's degree in theology, divinity, religious studies, Biblical studies, history, archaeology, classics, or another field directly relevant to the proposed research. Applicants with other academic backgrounds may be considered when they demonstrate exceptional preparation, a serious faith-informed research purpose, and the ability to complete the proposed work at doctoral level.

The Divinity College may consider applicants in the following categories:

- Master's degree in Divinity, Theology, Biblical Studies, Religious Studies, or a closely related field - preferred.

- Master's degree in History, Archaeology, Classics, Liberal Arts, Humanities, or another field relevant to the proposed project.
- Bachelor's degree in Divinity, Theology, Biblical Studies, or related faith-based studies, where the applicant also demonstrates exceptional research maturity.
- Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts or another relevant field, where the applicant demonstrates additional faith-based background, prior scholarly work, substantial writing experience, or special preparation for the proposed project.
- Applicants with an extensive body of completed religious, historical, archaeological, or theological work may be considered for a program built around expansion, revision, scholarly framing, and final presentation of that body of work.

Admission is selective. Meeting minimum credentials does not guarantee acceptance. The Divinity College reserves discretion to determine whether the applicant and the proposed work are suitable for doctoral-level sponsorship.

Application Materials

Applicants should submit the standard application and a detailed Research Proposal Supplement. The supplement should be treated as the candidate's first demonstration of doctoral readiness. It should normally include:

- working title and research field;
- one-page project abstract;
- statement of the research question or problem;
- explanation of why the proposed work matters to Christian scholarship and to the Nebra Sky Monastery mission;
- summary of the current state of the field and what the candidate believes is new or underdeveloped;
- description of sources, archives, texts, artifacts, digital collections, or field materials to be used;
- proposed methodology;
- preliminary chapter outline or project architecture;
- preliminary bibliography;
- writing sample or samples of prior research, books, articles, papers, videos, catalogs, or other scholarly/creative work;
- publication, library-deposit, bookstore, or digital-exhibit plan, where applicable.

The Divinity College does not provide advisory opinions on informal project ideas before a full application is submitted. The no-cost application process is the appropriate channel for project review.

How Applications Are Judged

Applications are reviewed in two parts.

1. Suitability of the Applicant

The Divinity College evaluates whether the applicant appears capable of bringing the proposed work to completion. Relevant considerations include prior academic work, writing ability, research experience, seriousness of purpose, spiritual or faith-based background, intellectual independence, and evidence of sustained interest in theology, Biblical history, archaeology, Christian artifacts, sacred texts, or related fields.

2. Suitability of the Proposed Work

The Divinity College evaluates whether the proposed project is appropriate for doctoral sponsorship and whether it advances the purposes of the Monastery. The project should be original, substantial, feasible, well-documented, and capable of producing a completed work that may be preserved, published, excerpted, displayed, sold, distributed, or otherwise featured through the Nebra Sky Monastery Library.

Preference is given to projects that do one or more of the following:

- bring together scattered sources into a useful scholarly guide or sourcebook;
- illuminate an important Biblical site, artifact, relic tradition, manuscript tradition, or historical mystery;
- produce a work suitable for book publication or library presentation;
- create a serious catalog, annotated collection, digital exhibit, or educational resource;
- strengthen Nebra Sky Monastery as a destination for Christian scholarship and learned religious works.

Evaluation Standards for the Completed Work

Because approved projects may take different forms, no single mechanical checklist can determine success. Nevertheless, every doctoral submission must satisfy the following standards:

- **Originality:** The work must offer a meaningful contribution, synthesis, interpretation, source collection, argument, framework, or presentation not merely copied from existing literature.
- **Substantiality:** The work must have the depth and scale appropriate to a doctoral research degree. It should represent sustained investigation rather than a short essay or ordinary term paper.
- **Scholarly method:** The work must show disciplined use of sources, responsible treatment of evidence, proper citation practices, and clear separation between fact, interpretation, tradition, and speculation.
- **Relevance to mission:** The work must fit the religious, historical, textual, archaeological, artistic, or monastic research purposes of Nebra Sky Monastery.
- **Quality of writing and presentation:** The work must be organized, coherent, readable, and sufficiently polished for preservation, library deposit, publication, or public presentation.
- **Integrity:** The work must be the candidate's own work and must comply with the Divinity College's standards on plagiarism, attribution, permissions, and responsible scholarship.
- **Final approvability:** The work must be something the candidate and Nebra Sky Monastery and Divinity College may reasonably present as an accomplishment worthy of a doctoral degree.

Mentoring, Progress, and Final Review

Each candidate works independently under the general oversight of the Divinity College and an assigned project mentor or reviewer. The program is flexible by design. There are no weekly class meetings and no set classroom attendance schedule. Candidates are nevertheless expected to maintain reasonable communication, submit progress updates when requested, and provide draft sections or samples of work sufficient for review.

Final approval may include mentor review, editorial review, written responses to reviewer questions, a virtual oral presentation, or a defense-style discussion of the completed work. The Divinity College may require revisions before final approval, particularly where the work is intended for publication, sale, display, or inclusion in the Monastery Library.

Academic Record and Completion Documents

Because there is no coursework, no conventional course-by-course transcript of grades is issued. Upon successful completion, the Divinity College prepares an Academic Record identifying the candidate, the approved doctoral program, the title and nature of the completed work, the period of supervised independent research, the date of approval, and publication or library-deposit details when applicable.

The final academic record may identify the dissertation field or research concentration, such as Biblical History, Biblical Archaeology, Christian Artifacts, Sacred Texts, Early Monasticism, or another approved specialization. This

allows the Divinity College to preserve one coherent degree title while still documenting the candidate's actual research field.

Copyright, Publication, and Monastery Library Use

Independent scholarly work created by the candidate remains the intellectual property of the candidate, except where a separate written agreement provides otherwise. As a condition of enrollment and completion, the candidate grants Nebra Sky Monastery and Divinity College a continuing, non-exclusive right to preserve, display, excerpt, describe, promote, publish, distribute, sell, or otherwise use the completed work, in whole or in part, in connection with the Nebra Sky Monastery Library, bookstore, website, educational activities, and institutional mission.

Where a candidate creates technical assets for the Monastery itself - such as website code, 3D models, digital architecture, interface designs, proprietary media systems, or platform improvements - ownership and usage rights should be addressed in a separate project agreement before work begins.

Tuition and Time to Completion

There is no cost to apply. Current tuition is \$3,750 USD per year, with a payment plan of \$1,350 down and eight monthly payments of \$300, or \$3,400 USD per year if paid in a single lump sum in advance. The expected program length is two years. Some candidates may complete a project sooner, while others may require additional time depending on the scale of the work, the pace of writing, and the amount of review required.

If a candidate requires additional time beyond the expected period, additional annual tuition or continuation fees may apply depending on the level of mentoring, review, and institutional support required. Tuition terms should be confirmed at the time of enrollment.

Level of Work Sought

The kind of work envisioned is not superficial commentary. A successful project may resemble a serious 200- to 300-page book, a focused dissertation, a documented archaeological or textual study, a substantial sourcebook, or a carefully researched treatment of a Christian historical question. For example, a book-length archaeological treatise on the Temple of Solomon, drawing together Biblical sources, Quranic references, site history, and archaeological findings, would represent the level of ambition and documentation that Nebra Sky seeks to encourage.

Candidates who have already authored substantial material may apply for review. In appropriate cases, the doctoral program may be structured around the expansion, revision, scholarly framing, and final approval of an existing body of work, provided the final submission meets doctoral standards and contributes meaningfully to the Monastery Library.

Call for Scholars

Nebra Sky Monastery and Divinity College invites all scholars, particularly religious scholars, Biblical researchers, writers, historians, artifact researchers, and serious independent scholars to propose works worthy of a modern monastery library. The ideal candidate is someone who can help make Nebra Sky a go-to place for new Christian scholarship: a place where readers can find serious books, dissertations, source collections, artifact studies, sacred-history research, and learned works that deepen understanding of Christianity and its historical inheritance.

If you have the discipline to create a substantial work of Christian research - a work that belongs on the shelf of a monastery library - Nebra Sky Monastery and Divinity College welcomes your application.

Final Degree Title

Doctor of Philosophy in Theology (Ph.D.)

The candidate's exact field will also be shown as a research concentration or dissertation field on the Academic Record, and optionally on the diploma if desired. For example:

Doctor of Philosophy in Theology (Ph.D.)

Research Concentration: Biblical History, Archaeology, and Christian Artifacts

**Get Started On Your Scholarly Journey Today
By Contacting Admissions@NebraSky.Org**



Replica of the find situation of the Nebra Sky Disc for the German exhibition *Der geschmiedete Himmel* (German "The forged sky"). As published at The Archaeologist, <https://www.thearchaeologist.org/> March 28,2022