



**Lancaster**  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

## FIELD EDUCATION GUIDELINES

Our mission is to educate and nurture leaders to join in God's redemptive and liberating work so that all creation may flourish.

### **Master of Divinity Goals**

The Field Education program helps shape Master of Divinity students into spiritual leaders. The six goals of the degree are:

1. To encounter and engage theological disciplines in order to contribute to contemporary modes of thinking and community building
2. To develop critical skills for theological analysis of and creative engagement with current challenges and changes in the church and the world
3. To enhance practices of ministry through focused skill development, empowering capable leadership in parish and related contexts
4. To critically engage matters of faith, justices and human difference in local and global contexts
5. To cultivate a willingness to lead, sustained via ongoing vocational discernment, self-awareness, and accountability with partners in ministry
6. To develop a life-long commitment to individual and communal spiritual practices rooted in faith, hope, love and justice

The Field Education Program seeks to embody the Seminary's Vision:

**Where God transforms us to transform others and the world.**

## **Field Education is integral to Ministerial Formation**

Field Education is a core requirement for the Master of Divinity program at Lancaster Seminary. The Ministerial Formation sequence actively engages students in shaping lives of faith, ministry, and leadership and is composed of five elements: Field Education, Comprehensive Vocation Review, Ministry Seminars, International Cross-cultural Seminar and Boundary Training.

**Field Education** is contextual learning. It is the place where the seminarian has the opportunity to fully engage in ministry. In that setting the student-minister learns about daily life in pastoral and social practices in a context other than the classroom, under the wise supervision of a mentor.

**Comprehensive Vocation Reviews** are opportunities for the seminarian, with the assistance of the faculty, denominational representatives, and other professionals to assess her or his progress in the Master of Divinity program and to discern her or his vocational path.

**Ministry Seminars** The formation of one's identity as a spiritual leader is a fundamental dimension of the Master of Divinity Program. This formation takes place through one's service, study, prayer life, fieldwork, worship, community living, and relationships. The Ministerial Seminars help students to pay attention to the ways in which their lives are being shaped by these experiences and to the way in which God is calling them to engage the world. In essence, the seminars are discernment groups; they are designed to invite and to encourage students to become more aware and attentive to their lives. The Ministerial Seminars include a series of courses that assist students in this process of spiritual development, theological reflection, and personal integration.

**The International Cross-cultural Seminar** invites students to an appreciation of social, political, economic and ecclesial otherness. It is an immersion experience which includes a two-week experience in the southern hemisphere where our teachers and seminarians are active learners in the host country, engaging the hosting country as our teachers and seminarians as active learners.

**Boundary Training** is about healthy interpersonal boundaries integral to enabling the trust necessary for ministry. This workshop focuses on issues of power and vulnerability in the ministerial relationship, engaging the concepts of sacred trust of ministry, fiduciary duty, and self-care for ministerial leaders. The purpose is to promote healthy ministerial relationships and to reduce the risk of sexual misconduct by ministerial leaders.

## **What is the purpose of Field Education?**

The purpose of field education is to provide students with context to practice ministry under the supervision of a skilled practitioner. It is where Masters of Divinity students draw from the art and practice of ministry enhancing skills.

Lancaster Seminary covenants with teaching congregations, agencies and other institutions to provide Master of Divinity students with the opportunity to engage with pastoral and social ministries. With the assistance of the supervisor and the lay committee (in congregational settings) seminarians will be invited to explore, create, and nurture ministerial possibilities and to reflect upon their implications. All teaching congregations, agencies, supervisors, and lay committees must meet the criteria established by the Seminary and must be approved by the Field Education Office before a student is allowed to consider it their site placement.

Please note: all policies are subject to change in accord with faculty decisions. Implementation of these policies is at the discretion of the Dean of the Seminary and the Coordinator of Field Education.

## **Objectives of Field Education at Lancaster Seminary**

To provide students with healthy ministerial contexts in which they can explore vocational paths and can contribute to the religious and social fabric of our world

To develop or to deepen the sensitivity, compassion, and discernment needed to minister with people of various cultures, ages, and educational backgrounds

To develop a habit of theological reflection as an integrative force in shaping a life of faith, ministry, and leadership

To foster in students a healthy sense of self, personal confidence, and team ministry

To engage students in a wise supervisory process in which they will experience shared ministry, critical reflection, professional competence, and faith development

To develop within students a healthy self-assessment process

To expose students to a culture of evaluation

To prepare them to be more reflective religious leaders in the local and global landscape of the church and the world

## **Core Values of the Field Education Program**

Supervisor and field sites should start with the life-experience the student minister already has, to honor and name those skill sets as an introduction to these core values.

1. ***Art and practice of ministry*** --- Students learn from doing and being at the field placements. Moving away from the classroom environment and engaging in hands-on experience is the best way of learning about their gifts and talents. Supervisors become mentors in this educational experience.
2. ***Safe place to learn*** --- It is essential that students serve in safe environments where unresolved institutional conflict does not get in the way of learning. We do not assume that ministry contexts are to be totally free of conflict, because conflict is natural and produces growth when addressed in a healthy manner.
3. ***Opportunity to learn and grow*** --- Students will have the marvelous opportunity to set their own learning goals, identifying what they need to learn and how. With the guidance of their supervisors they will fine-tune their covenant draft and ask for feedback in the Ministry Seminar context from their peers, ministerial guide and faculty. This will become their roadmap and guide for the next two semesters of learning.
4. ***Ministerial Identify Formation*** --- The field education placement will offer students the chance to see themselves as ministers. The church or agency where the student is practicing the art of becoming a minister/chaplain should provide a teaching environment in which there are spaces for self-reflection, self-discovery and affirmation for who the student is becoming.
5. ***Learning Ministerial Skills from Practitioners*** --- We conceive the placement as an apprenticeship to learn from pastors and agency leaders/administrators. Field education should not be used as a place to reproduce the theological learning that students are obtaining from their Seminary courses.
6. ***Spiritual attentiveness*** --- To be a religious leader requires one to be constantly nurturing the life that comes from God. Students are encouraged from the beginning of their first year to be attentive to the Spirit of God moving in their life as they are being shaped for their calling. In their first year Ministerial Formation class, students are expected to practice a variety of spiritual disciplines in their life of prayer and to pay attention to what is happening within them. Students are expected to continue exploring spiritual practices and doing spiritual discernment throughout their degree program and their ministries.
7. ***Theological Reflection*** --- The questions that the students ask themselves about their lives is core to theological reflection. As the student's life changes in the formation process, we ask them to see how God changes with them. We encourage theological reflection to be done with the field education supervisor. Theological reflection is not about problem solving but about exploring, developing, and strengthening our relationship with God, self and others.

## **General Expectations For All Teaching Congregations, Agencies, and Institutions**

Field Education will be given .5 credits per 10-week term, for a total of 3 credits in the entire program. MDiv students are required to participate in field education for six 10-week terms. A student may request to do one summer 10-12 week field education placement out of the two years of field education requirement.

Day students complete their field education in their second and third year of the MDiv program. Weekend students complete their field education in their third and fourth year of their MDiv. One option for completing a year's worth of FE is to do a full-time summer placement, during 10-12 weeks and completing the 200-240 hours at the site. Students are encouraged to start at their field education placement in the beginning of August and finish in April. The goal is to achieve their learning goals within the hours indicated above.

A Field Education site is a learning site. Sites interested in being a Teaching Congregation, Agency, or Institution should be willing to:

Prepare staff members and community members in advance of engaging a seminarian in field education; agree to follow the Field Education Guidelines.

Approve a student minister to serve and learn. Upper level administrators of an agency/institution and/or church boards or consistories should approve and affirm being a teaching site.

Provide a multifaceted and diverse learning environment.

Provide seminarian(s) with a minimum of six (6) hours and no more than eight (8) hours of work each week. This does not include commute time. Any extension of this time will be by contractual agreement between the student and the teaching site and will not be considered part of the field education covenant.

Provide opportunities for students to make mistakes while insuring they "do no harm" to members, staff, or constituents.

Resist the temptation to place the student in the role of director or chair of a department, committee, or ministry.

Provide opportunity for critical reflection and honest and immediate feedback.

Provide a clear procedure for emergency action and/or handling of critical incidents.

Refuse to discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, color, sexual orientation, gender expression, language, learning style, physical handicap, or national or ethnic origin.

Conduct background checks on all volunteers who work with children at your site.

Provide a Supervisor who meets the requirements set forth in these guidelines.

## **Specific Guidelines for Teaching Congregations**

The Teaching Congregation placement is seen as a practical extension to the classroom here at the Seminary. While it is important that field education placements highlight the educational aspects of learning the art and practice of ministry, we acknowledge the need and desire for financial support to seminarians involved in this experience. The following guidelines are just that, guidelines. They may be helpful to a Teaching Congregation in making plans to provide placement for a seminarian. Since we do *not* consider this placement as “*employment*,” we hesitate to calculate a stipend range based on an hourly rate. At the same time, by doing so it offers a formula that might be helpful in working with institutional or congregational committees that might ultimately make decisions regarding finances. Therefore stipends are highly recommended, but not required by the Seminary. The Seminary recognizes it has no jurisdiction over internal church decisions; nevertheless it advocates for a stipend with the goal to assist students with their educational expenses.

The field education experience is designed to take place for the Day MDiv student during their second and third year. As for the Weekend MDiv student’s field education, placements are required during their third and fourth year. The students are expected to covenant with a congregation for an 8-month period. Masters of Divinity students are expected to do three terms composed of ten weeks each term. The church calendar will override the academic calendar. The church calendar will exceed 30 weeks (3 terms) at 32-34 weeks. This may include serving at a church site up to the second week of December in order to honor the Advent season program and April’s Lenten season. In other words, during the academic year, a student may accumulate approximately 200-272 hours of practical experience. For this amount of time, \$4,000 to \$4,500 would be a reasonable stipend of support for the seminarian for the academic year.

Students are eligible to negotiate a summer intensive term to complete one of their 1.5 field education credits. The other year must be done during an academic calendar year.

The Seminary prefers that congregations compensate students directly. In this case, the congregation must provide the appropriate IRS wage statement to the student for tax filing purposes. Students are then responsible to file their own taxes.

Congregations may send the stipend directly to the Seminary to go toward a balance on the student’s Seminary account. In this case, the congregation does not need to provide the student with an IRS wage statement. However, students should contact their tax consultant concerning any IRS regulations regarding this as reportable income.

Compensation should also be given for mileage related to Field Education work, not including, however, travel to and from site. For example, if a student is working at the church and asked to visit members of the congregation at their home or in a hospital, mileage for these visits should be compensated at the current IRS rate. Please consult the IRS website for that rate.

### **Additional Guidelines for Teaching Congregations**

In the past, congregations where a student has been a member were not eligible to be a Teaching Congregation for that student. We have learned that in certain cases allowing students to stay at their same congregation (particularly when they are serving as the pastor or ministry related staff paid position) has served the student well once the correct field supervisor is identified, trained and approved.

Congregations that cannot afford a stipend may negotiate a relationship with students who do not express a need for compensation.

The Teaching Congregation must be in good standing with its judicatory.

### **Specific Guidelines for Institutions, Colleges, Universities, Retirement Homes, Hospitals, and Community Service Agencies**

Given the diverse interest of our seminarians, we have maintained longstanding relationships with institutions that serve specific needs in the larger population both in Lancaster County and nearby counties where our students live. These institutions have served our students well in providing the range of experiences that the students feel they need. Occasionally institutions will require an updated criminal clearance beyond those that the Seminary requested in their application form when they were accepted to the Seminary. These agencies provide ample opportunities for seminarians to ground their theological formation in the ministries of compassion, nurture, justice and proclamation that support fullness of life for all people. Lancaster Seminary values the richness these institutions offer to our students.

Agencies welcome our students doing their field education placement with them but usually, because of budget limitations are not able to offer a stipend. Occasionally some institutions are able to offer a free lunch or mileage but those arrangements are up to the organization to determine if they can afford the expense.

Supervisors in the agencies are not required to name a lay committee for the student. Retirement homes and colleges have at times worked to have a small group of college students or residents offer feedback to the seminarian.

Lancaster Seminary partners with non-profit community organizations that are working on larger social issues, such as homelessness, poverty, inner-city violence, domestic violence, child and women rights, immigration and refugee resettlement, and peace and justice advocacy. It is essential that religious leaders today learn to become engaged in these social issues to develop a Christian prophetic voice. These sites allow the Seminary to connect with its neighbor agencies and to serve in the name of the Gospel we proclaim, without proselytizing.

## **Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)**

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is a formal educational training for ministry managed under a CPE Center at certain Hospitals. It is run independently from Lancaster Seminary administration; therefore seminarians interested in doing a first unit with CPE need to apply directly to that CPE Center/Hospital. As a training program it will require that students create their own learning goals, invest in reading and writing assignments, interact with peers, attend regular didactic seminars, complete clinical time with patients and experience individual supervision. The main educational model of CPE is “action/reflection;” in which students engage in real ministry and reflect on what happened in their pastoral encounters. “Clinical” refers to hands-on ministry experience, not necessarily a medical environment. Given its high academic competencies standards in the area of faith and spiritual/emotional care, Lancaster Theological Seminary will encourage students to complete one unit of CPE as one equivalent to their required field education years. Lancaster’s MDiv does not require CPE; it is the student’s option but often a prerequisite for their ordination within denominational processes.

Clinical Pastoral Education is interfaith professional education for ministry. It brings theological students and ministers of all faiths (pastors, priests, rabbis, imams and others) into supervised encounter with persons in crisis. Out of an intense involvement with persons in need, and with feedback from peers and supervisor, students develop new awareness of themselves as persons and of the needs of those to whom they minister. From theological reflection on specific human situations, students gain a new understanding of ministry.

Clinical Pastoral Education is not only for those seeking to explore a call as a chaplain. CPE will provide those already in ministry better pastoral care skills. In other words it will help them to become a more effective pastor/spiritual leader. CPE offers space for discernment, and it will not necessarily lead into a full time job as a chaplain.

### **Application process to a CPE Center:**

Recommended time for submitting application: if aiming for a Spring CPE Unit students need to submit early to mid-fall, if Summer Unit submission is early spring and if Fall CPE Unit they should submit late Spring. The student is encouraged to send their application in to more than one CPE site (most local CPE Centers only offer Extended CPE Fall & Spring units or Summer units).

Fill out a CPE application available to be download from the ACPE website or Hospital’s Chaplaincy Care & Education Department’s website. A single application may be used to apply to different CPE Centers. The written application will take time to complete, as it includes open questions such as: faith journey, a presentation about a time you have assisted someone in times of need/crisis, etc.



Once a Supervisor receives an application, they decide whether or not to contact the applicant for an interview. In the interview the supervisor will pay attention to the capacity of the applicant to do self-reflection. Successful applicants will be “not afraid to go where there might be pain and/or live with the discomfort.”

An interview is no guarantee a candidate will be accepted. The CPE Supervisor will contact the references named on the application who will be asked to return a form with the necessary information in order for the Supervisor to make the final decision. (The candidate should encourage his/her references to fill out the form and sent it back ASAP.) Each supervisor considers multiple factors, including diversity, when selecting the students that will form a peer group.

Once invited by the CPE Supervisor the student will be required to pay approximately \$150 to reserve that spot and upon starting the CPE training the rest must be paid (around \$350). The first CPE unit has a cost between \$500 to \$750.

Some CPE Centers will receive a larger pool of applicants than others; therefore, we encourage students to send their applications early.

Each CPE Center may have additional or unique requirements. Students must be in contact with the Center to make sure they submit all the necessary documents with the application.

CPE begins with a single unit. Each unit includes at least 400 hours (100 hours of peer group and supervised ministry, and 300 clinical hours of practical ministry). Centers offer various modalities, including: a 10-12 week summer program, one semester Fall or Spring (20-24 hours per week) programs, or extended unit two-semesters programs (10-12 hours a week). With one unit of CPE, a candidate may apply for a full year residency program (3-4 consecutive units). CPE residencies are paid positions with benefits, but Lancaster Seminary recommends that seminarians apply for a residency after they have completed their MDiv given the high demands of required hours at the hospital (40-55 hrs a week).

The Seminary will reimburse students their CPE tuition according to the guidelines in the Student Handbook. Students doing CPE must register for Field Education (1.5 credits) with the Registrar. Students must submit all final evaluations for the CPE experience and schedule a meeting with the Field Ed Coordinator to review and debrief the learning experience. The Field Ed Coordinator will complete and sign a Field Education/CPE Form. The student will take this form to the Registrar for a signature. The student is required to present a copy of this signed form and a copy of the receipt(s) to the Business Office when requesting a refund for the CPE unit.

One CPE unit can only fulfill one Field Education placement. Students will need to consider a church placement as a way to continue improving their pastoral care skills.

### **What are the essential elements of CPE?**

- The actual practice of ministry to persons
- Detailed reporting and evaluation of that practice
- Pastoral Supervision
- A process conception of learning
- A rich variety of didactics presented by interdisciplinary staff
- A small group of peers in a common learning experience
- Structured Learning Environment
- An individual contract for learning consistent with the objectives of CPE
- The CPE program must be conducted under the auspices of a certified supervisor (faculty) attached to an accredited CPE center.

These elements are in direct alignment with the six goals of the MDiv, as stated in Lancaster Theological Seminary handbook. These same elements also allow our students to meet the objectives of one field education placement for their MDiv program at Lancaster Seminary.

### **Organizations that certify chaplains include:**

The Association of Professional Chaplains ([www.professionalchaplains.org](http://www.professionalchaplains.org)),  
The National Association of Catholic Chaplains ([www.nacc.org](http://www.nacc.org))  
The National Association of Jewish Chaplains ([www.najc.org](http://www.najc.org))

Please note: One other organization that offers CPE is the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP). They are not approved by the U.S. Department of Education. They have different standards for their programs and the certification of their supervisors. The CPSP sites have been used for field education if a student chooses. (Notice that only ACPE Centers are listed below.)

**List of ACPE accredited CPE Centers that Lancaster Seminary students have used:**

Lancaster General – Supervisor Keith Espenshade - Keespens@LGHealth.org

York Hospital WellSpan – Supervisor Peter Kuhn - pkuhn3@wellspan.org

Penn State Hershey – Supervisor Elizabeth Martin - emartin6@pennstatehealth.psu.edu

Phoebe Homes – Supervisor Scott Brooks Cope - scope@phoebe.org

Reading Hospital – Supervisor Tahara Akmal - tahara.akmal@readinghealth.org

Christiana Care Health System – Metty Mesick - mmesick@christianacare.org

Veteran Health Administration – Lebanon VA Medical Center – Eric Luther – Eric.Luther@va.gov

Lancaster Theological Seminary is a member seminary of The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc., which is nationally recognized as an accrediting agency in the field of clinical pastoral education by the U.S. Secretary of Education through the U.S. Department of Education. Address: One West Court, Suite 325, Decatur, GA 30030 Tel: 404/320-1472 Fax: 404/320-0849 [www.ACPE.edu](http://www.ACPE.edu)

Once a student completes 4 units of CPE, the candidate may apply for board certification with The Board of Chaplaincy Certification, Inc. The process involves a lengthy application in which the applicant will give evidence of how they addressed all CPE competencies, in addition to the completion of 2,000 clinical hours (outside those required for a residency), a theological degree, current ordination, and a current letter of endorsement/support from a recognized faith group. This process will take as long as six months after the candidate has completed the residency and received notice for board presentation. An application fee applies.

## **The Responsibility of Lancaster Theological Seminary**

As part of its commitment to field education and ministerial formation, the Seminary will:

Provide students with foundational skills in the following disciplines:

### **Core Courses:**

- New & Old Testament
- Theology
- Church History
- Ministerial Formation 1, 2, & 3
- Theological Reflections
- Worship & Preaching
- Pastoral Theological Methods
- Religious Education
- Christian Ethics

### **Interdisciplinary Courses:**

- Church and Social Change
- Developing Leaders
- Interpreting Context
- Christianity and the Arts
- Making Disciples/Evangelism
- Living Christian Movement 1 & 2
- Knowing God

Ensure students have a structure to process the integration of scholarly disciplines of practical ministry from within the context of the supervised ministry setting. Students will have an opportunity for group learning with peers and ministerial guides facilitating the learning experience. This will be accomplished in the Ministry Seminars.

Provide resources such as library, faculty, vocational discernment and a spiritual and intellectual atmosphere of dialogue to exchange information and critical feedback. Provide students with diverse ministerial settings to engage in supervised ministry.

Customize learning experiences to accommodate students who: come as pastors of congregations, have specific denominational requirements, and might be discriminated against because of sexual orientation, gender, race and/or ethnicity.

Facilitate open lines of communication between the field education site, the Seminary, judicatory representatives, and the student in order to maintain a healthy atmosphere for teaching and learning.

## **The Supervisor**

The supervisor is one who demonstrates competency, wisdom, and dedication in a particular ministry or vocation and who can serve as a model for another person who is pursuing a similar ministry or vocation.

The supervisor is one who has enough insight and experience to know what happens in the process of growing in one's self-awareness; who is sensitive to the discomfort that can accompany the learning process; and who is skilled in the art of theological reflection.

## **Requirements**

All Supervisors must be in good standing in their denominations and not under review with their denomination. Beginning May 2010, all supervisors will be required to submit a confirmation letter of good standing from their judicatory. A prospective supervisor interview would be held at their site before the minister is invited to attend the supervisor training.

The Supervisor should also have an outline of responsibilities for the student minister prepared in advance.

All Supervisors must have a minimum of three years of authorized work in their particular field.

All Supervisors must be in their current position in the teaching site for a minimum of one year.

Those holding an interim position in a congregation, agency, or institution are not eligible to be supervisors.

All Supervisors must have completed the process of certification offered by Lancaster Seminary before supervising students. The certification and training session is offered annually during the spring (typically in the beginning of May) and certifications are good for five years. Check the Seminary website for details.

All Supervisors and teaching sites will undergo regular review by the Office of Ministerial Formation.

## **Responsibilities of the Supervisor**

### **Supervisors will:**

Understand their role as supervisor as an act of service.

Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and ethical practices with the seminarian. This includes respecting the personal space and wishes of a student regarding any physical contact.

Honor and respect the ministerial formation process of a seminarian. Relate to the seminarian as a member of their team without relinquishing their supervisory role.

Guide the seminarian toward experiences that will encourage personal and professional development.

Agree from the beginning to schedule meetings with the student and to discuss how to best communicate with each other in between supervisory sessions (email, text- message, calls on cell-phones or church phone among others).

Communicate effectively with the seminarian in both form and content.

Supervisors are required not just to approve the learning goals of the student, but to help the student shape realistic and achievable goals for the full academic year.

Look for competencies to affirm in a seminarian.

Observe and evaluate personal and professional characteristics necessary for their given vocations.

Reflect theologically with a seminarian.

Provide time for supervisory sessions on a regular basis, preferably once every two weeks.

Be reasonably available to the seminarian for guidance.

Provide feedback consistently and wisely.

Share openly with their students about the challenges and considerations their particular ministry entails.

The supervisor must complete the appropriate assessment documents to offer progress to a student's learning goals. These documents would be either a mid-term feedback review, a student progress review, and the final evaluation review. The form must be completed entirely, and the contents must be discussed with the student prior to submitting it to the field education office. The field education office will only accept student and supervisor signed forms, which indicates it has been reviewed and approved.

### **The Supervisory Session**

The supervisory session offers the field education supervisor the opportunity to discuss with the student the formative impact of the experience on his or her life and ministry. The session offers the student an opportunity to ask "why" as well as "how" about ministry. The session also serves as a means of clarifying issues. The sessions should be a regularly scheduled meeting that both the student and supervisor regard as sacred time. The typical supervisory session with the seminarian should last one hour and should occur once every two weeks.

**The supervisory session involves one-on-one supervision, and should address several issues:**

Professional Skills: *How can I do it?*

Personal Identity: *Who am I?*

Vocational Identity: *What is at stake for me in my work here?*

Theological Reflection: *Where is God in this?*

Early in the supervisory experience, sessions should focus on assessing the student's learning needs and developing a learning covenant. Most of the sessions throughout the placement will be devoted to reflection on ministry experience. Toward the end of the supervisory experience, evaluation of the student's growth and development as a person and minister will be the primary focus of supervisory sessions.

### **The Lay Committee**

It is the responsibility of the Field Education Supervisor to recruit and name the members of the Lay Committee, in consultation if possible with the student minister.

The lay committee is usually a group of three to five persons who together have agreed to be a significant part of the student's supervisory team in a Teaching Congregation. The lay committee is commissioned to meet with the student at least monthly in order to:

- Give feedback concerning the student or students' ministry
- Join the students in their process of discernment
- Offer encouragement
- Assist with interpreting the ministerial context
- Support the student to fulfill the learning covenant
- Evaluate the student or students' work, including a written evaluation at the end of the placement period

## **Learning Covenant Process**

The seminarian, in cooperation with the field education supervisor, must create a Field Education Learning Covenant and provide the original to the Office of Field Education when all required signatures are obtained within the official document. During the academic year, this document is due back to the field education office by the end of August.

The task of writing a covenant is a process of the seminarian (1) deciding where they anticipate going intellectually, experientially and ministerially for a defined period of their life; (2) developing action plans to move toward their destination; and (3) outlining steps they will take to ensure the outcomes of their learning goals are achieved.

Students must use the official Learning Covenant Form for recording their covenant. The Office of Field Education provides the required Learning Covenant form through the Seminary website: [www.lancasterseminary.edu](http://www.lancasterseminary.edu)

The learning covenant will provide structure for the student's relationships with his or her field education supervisor, lay committee and the Seminary. It should be mutually negotiated and accepted. Seminarians should review the following list of five benefits of covenanting:

- Covenanting allows seminarian to take charge of their own learning.
- Covenanting builds trust between seminarian and site supervisor.
- Covenanting takes seriously the uniqueness of a seminarian.
- Covenanting provides structure to get something done.
- Covenanting is a tool for good stewardship.

Prior to completing their Learning Covenant, a student should have considered all of the information and feedback from:

1. Professors regarding papers written and courses taken
2. Judicatory representatives/church and ministry committee members/mentors regarding Seminary experience to date
3. Peers, advisors, and ministerial guides in their MS classes. They should utilize the report from their Comprehensive Vocational Review when setting covenant goals in the best Field Ed placement.

A Learning Covenant must be completed and turned in to the Office of Field Education by the seminarian. The Office of Field Education will announce the due date the last week of spring term for submitting Learning Covenants for the following fall term.



## **Learning Goals**

Well-crafted learning goals are essential to an effective Learning Covenant. The goals are created by the student, based upon the particular skills they want to learn at the placement. While creating these learning goals the student should keep in mind his/her needs, the needs of the church/agency they are serving and the recommendations give to them by their in-care committee. Goals can also emerge from the Comprehensive Vocational Review process as well. The review committee can suggest areas of growth that can be addressed in the field education assignment.

## **Potential Areas for Ministry and Learning**

The following areas are some of the potential areas of ministry and learning that a seminarian and supervisor should consider when creating the learning covenant. This is not an exhaustive list. It's offered to stimulate conversation.

Seminarians and supervisors should take into account the degree to which a student is prepared to take on particular responsibilities. Some areas or activities may be more appropriate for students at the second field education level.

### **Administration**

- board, staff, and church finance meetings
- stewardship and fundraising
- church communications, publications, and website
- record keeping

### **Education & Training**

- curriculum development for adults and youth
- teaching and leading classes
- volunteer training
- faith enrichment programs and retreats
- pre-sacramental programs

### **Pastoral Care**

- home visitation
- hospital and nursing home visits
- bereavement visitation
- care of shut-ins

### **Liturgy and Worship**

- worship planning
- seasonal planning
- worship and prayer leadership
- preaching
- minister training

### **Social Justice Ministry**

- direct service to those who are poor or in need
- volunteer recruitment, organization, and training
- education events
- prison visitation

### **Non-for-Profit Agency Management**

- Fundraising/Budget
- Use of public/web media in advertising
- Public Relations in working with constituency supporters
- Volunteerism and recruitment
- Daily personal management
- Program Creation and Implementation

### **Accommodations**

Please note: Some LTS students are entitled to certain academic accommodations as per the *Americans With Disabilities Act*. Appropriate documentation is on file with the Seminary. The student is responsible for initiating these accommodations by setting up a meeting with their field education supervisor before or within the first week of the placement to discuss how these accommodations may be implemented.

## **Evaluation Forms**

Please note that students, working with their supervisors, are responsible for the submission of all evaluation forms according to the posted deadlines. All evaluation forms are available on our web site: [www.lancasterseminary.edu](http://www.lancasterseminary.edu).

### **On-going Assessments**

The supervisor and lay committee covenant with the student to provide support and feedback. Sharing feedback should be a natural part of the supervisory sessions and meetings with the lay committee. On-going feedback about the student's participation in ministry and the goals set forth in the learning covenant helps to keep things moving in the right direction.

### **Written Assessments**

**Supervisors** are required to provide written feedback about the student's experience to the Seminary at the end of Term I and Term II and a final evaluation at the end of the agreed Field Education placement timeframe.

**Lay Committees** are required to provide a written evaluation of the student's experience to the Seminary at the end of each academic year. Please see the Field Education timeline for particular deadlines.

**Students** are required to provide a written assessment of themselves, their supervisor, and field education site at the end of each academic year.

**Students, Lay Committees, and Supervisors** share the responsibility of locating the appropriate evaluation forms and submitting the forms by the deadline.

In order to encourage healthy and constructive assessment practices, all parties included in the evaluations should review the comments before they are submitted to the Office of Field Education.

Supervisors and Lay Committees should be aware that students need their assessments/evaluations to be submitted by the deadline for each document in a term in order to receive a passing grade for their field education requirement.

Field education sites are required to provide the following assessments and evaluation documents:

**End of Term I:** Mid-Term Feedback (by Supervisor) due the last Friday of Term I

**End of Term II:** Progress Report (by Supervisor) due on the last Friday of Term II

**End of Term III:** Final Evaluations:

Supervisor's Final Evaluation, Lay Committee Evaluation and Student Self-Evaluation all due last day of class in April on the last Friday of Term III (slightly earlier for graduating students)