Lancaster Theological Seminary

Field Education Guidelines

The Field Education program supports the shaping of Master of Divinity students to be spiritual leaders. The six goals of the degree are,

1. To deepen personal commitment and devotion to Gospel and church;
2. To develop the maturity of character required for the competent and ethical practice of ordained ministry as a lifelong vocation;
3. To develop a critical and imaginative vision of God, creation, society, church and self and their interrelatedness;
4. To participate in the traditions of faith while anticipating the unique challenges of a diverse and changing world;
5. To engage in theologically grounded ministries of compassion, nurture, justice and proclamation that support fullness of life for all people;
6. To demonstrate the knowledge and ability necessary for the practice of ministry in social, cultural, environmental and ecclesiastical contexts.

The Field Education Program seeks to embody the Seminary’s commitment to be innovative, involved, and inclusive.

_Innovative:_ Searching for new ways of meeting today’s challenges in ministry;

_Involved:_ Sending students to learn and serve in churches and agencies;

_Inclusive:_ Seeking to appreciate and engage the rich diversity present in our churches and always aiming for the inclusion of “the other.”
How is Field Education integral to ministerial formation?

Field Education is one part of the Ministerial Formation Program of the Master of Divinity program at Lancaster Seminary. The Ministerial Formation Program actively engages students in shaping lives of faith, ministry, and leadership and is composed of four elements: Field Education, the Comprehensive Vocation Review, the Ministry Seminars, and the International Cross-cultural Seminar.¹

Field Education is the progressive involvement of seminarians in pastoral and social practices of ministry with attentive and wise supervision.

Comprehensive Vocation Reviews are opportunities for the seminarian, with the assistance of the faculty, judicatory 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 are a series of courses in which seminarians actively integrate the various dimensions of their lives and explore the challenges of shaping lives of faith, ministry, and leadership. Each seminar is led by a Ministerial Guide and a Faculty Advisor.

The International Cross-cultural invites students to an appreciation of social, political, economic and ecclesial otherness. The experience includes a 14-21 day encounter in a Latin American, Middle Eastern, African, Asian or Eastern European setting.

What is the purpose of Field Education?

Is the place where Masters in Divinity students learn the art and practice of ministry, accomplishing the following purposes:

Lancaster Seminary covenants with teaching congregations, agencies and other institutions to provide Master of Divinity students with the opportunity engage 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.

¹ All policies are subject to change in accord with faculty decisions. Implementation of these policies is at the discretion of the Director of Ministerial Formation and the Coordinator of Field Education.

2 Revised 9 August 2011
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 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, utilizing self-perceptions and observations from others for the purpose of shaping a life of ministry and wisdom

Core Values of the Field Education Program

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 from their MS group peers, ministerial guidance and faculty. This will become their roadmap and guide for the next two semesters of learning.

4. **Ministerial Identify** --- 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 ministerial should provide a teaching environment in which there are spaces for self-reflection, self-discovery and affirmation for who the student is becoming.
5. **Ministerial skills** --- 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 leader** --- Students are encourage 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. Students are expected to practice a variety of spiritual disciplines in their life of prayer in the formation groups and to pay attention to what is happening within them. To be a religious leader requires one to be constantly nurturing the life that comes from God. This practice is expected to continue during the second and third year at the field education site with the supervisors, lay leaders and agency administrators.

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

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; agrees to follow the Field Education Guidelines

* Discuss the student’s schedule as part of the covenant process. January will be negotiated with the student if he or she needs to go for their require Cross Culture experience during their second year. Third year students can choose to be present at their field education site in January but they will not be required to offer more than 14 weeks. If they begin working in January, they can finish earlier, if arrangements have been with their supervisor and site and all the final evaluations are completed and submitted.

* Provide a multifaceted and diverse learning environment

* Provide seminarian(s) with a minimum of eight (8) hours and no more than twelve (12) 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; Provide opportunity for honest and immediate feedback

* Provide a clear procedure for emergency action and/or handling of critical incidents.  
** See Appendix “Critical Incident Report” attached

* Refuse to discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, sexual orientation, color, physical handicap, or national or ethnic origin

* Conduct background checks on all volunteers who work with children at your site. This is the current operating procedure at Lancaster Seminary

* 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 TC 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.

The field education experience is designed to take place during the 200 and 300 levels of program. Normally, the students are expected to covenant with a congregation for one academic year, beginning with the first day of the fall term, ending with the last day of classes of the spring term. This time period involves approximately 34 weeks (including the two week Christmas break). Seminarians are to have 8-12 hours per week of involvement with their placement. Over the course of the academic year, they should have between 256 and 386 hours of practical experience. For this amount of time, $3,500 to $4,500 would be a reasonable stipend of support for the seminarian for the academic year.

The seminary prefers that congregations compensate students directly. In this case, the congregation must provide the appropriate IRS income form 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 income form. 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

* Congregations where a student has been a member are not eligible to be a Teaching Congregation for that student.

* 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, Community Service Agencies

Given the diverse interest of our seminarians we have made contact 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 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 arrange are up for 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. Although 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, intercity violence, domestic violence, child and women rights, immigration and refugee resettlement, and peace and justice advocacy. It essential that religious leaders today learn to become engaged in these sociality issues develop a Christian prophetical 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.
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:
  - Biblical Exegesis
  - Theology
  - Church History
  - Hermeneutics
  - Theological reflections
  - Worship & Preaching
  - Pastoral Care
  - Educational Ministries

* Insure 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 exchange of 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.

** 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 are offered at two different points of the year. 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 the ministerial formation process of a seminarian with respect

* 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 sections (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 Supervisory Session

The supervisory session offers the field education supervisor the opportunity to discuss with the student how integration is being effected in 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

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 (or more) in order to:

* Give feedback concerning the student's 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's or students' work, including a written evaluation at the end of the placement period.
The Learning Covenant I

Process

The seminarian, in cooperation with the Supervisor and the Faculty advisor must create a Field Education Learning Covenant and provide you with a copy.

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 insure that they get there.

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.

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 group. They should utilize the report from their Comprehensive Vocational Review when setting covenant goals.

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 for submitting Learning Covenants in advance.
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 Review process as well. The review committee can suggest areas of growth that can be addressed in the field education assignment.

Supervisors may start the process by asking the prospective student candidate what their learning goals are. It is expected that the student will take the initiative to write these learning goals in draft form to share with supervisor once the assignment as been confirmed.

Commitment Forms to confirm the field education site and the supervisor are due by the last week of class in the Spring term (May).

It is the responsibility of the student to fill out the Learning Covenant, with the input of the supervisor, and have it ready to share with their MS group during the first weeks of the Fall term. It is assumed that the students will have all the feedback first from the supervisor before sharing their learning goals in their MS group. The learning goals will serve as map that will assist the student in focusing her or his energy during the field placement.
The Learning Covenant II
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 300 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
Evaluations

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 middle and a final evaluation end of each academic year. Please see the accompanying sheet for the particular deadlines.

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 page on the Seminary website for the particular deadlines.

Students are required to provide a written assessment of 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 evaluations to be submitted by the deadline in order to receive a passing grade for their Ministry Seminar and to continue in the program.

All evaluation forms are available on our web site: www.lancasterseminary.edu.
Deadlines for Field Education Documents

Supervisors and Lay Committee members should realize that all of the documentation associated with a field education site must be submitted to the seminary as part of the requirements for the Ministry Seminars. Students who do not submit their learning goals, learning covenants, and evaluations receive a failure for that seminar.

While the student is responsible for submitting all of the documentation by the deadlines, Supervisors and Lay Committee members share the responsibility of completing any appropriate documentation with sufficient time for the student to meet the deadlines.

Supervisor Training Certification Dates

All Supervisors must have completed the process of certification offered by Lancaster Seminary. The certification and training session will be offered at least once a year.

Please consult the seminary website for Supervisor Training Dates. www.lancasterseminary.edu>current students>ministerial formation>field education>supervisor training
Appendix
Critical Incident Report

Please type up the report on a separate sheet of paper.

7. Who? What is the history? And where?
   a) Who was involved? People you knew well? Strangers? People you knew personally or professionally? (Insofar as possible, protect the specific identity of those involved.)
   b) What is the background of the events and relationships which led to this “incident”?
   c) What was the physical setting in which this took place?
   d) What was the emotional setting?

8. What happened? Narrate the incident as you experienced and perceived it.

9. What made this incident critical for you?

10. How did you feel about the incident? To what extent did others respond, verbally and non-verbally? Did you recognize the intensity of your feeling after it “was all over”?

11. Evaluate the incident,
   a) Theologically
   b) Sociologically
   c) Psychologically

12. What did you learn from this incident? What did you learn about yourself?

13. How much time has lapsed since the incident?