

## Field Placement Supervision

Field Placements at CDSP are required for two courses, Field Education and Leadership for Ministry, each of which is completed as a two-semester course series. Each seminarian in field placement has an identified supervisor. For students in the MDiv or Certificate of Anglican Studies (CAS) programs, this supervisor is a clergy person in a leadership position in the placement site, typically a rector, associate rector, or agency director. Effective supervision is the most important factor in successful field placements. In accordance with the standards set by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), CDSP's field placement program assures that students are supervised by qualified persons "trained in supervisory methods and the educational expectations of the institution," and provides "established procedures for selection, development, evaluation, and termination of supervised ministry settings."

### **Placement Site and Supervisor Approval**

All placement sites and supervisors must be approved by the Director of Field Education. Beginning in 2018, approval of sites for residential students is based on the following four conditions and will be renewed annually.

1. A "Field Placement Site and Supervisor Information" form is completed using the link on the CDSP website. If a form has already been completed and submitted, it must be updated at least once every 2 years.
2. The supervisor(s) at the site are clergy who have been ordained for more than 5 years and have been in their current position for at least two years.<sup>1</sup>
3. Supervisors participate in two training sessions offered annually by the Director of Field Education. Supervisors of Field Education students must also participate in a third meeting in which they collaborate with their student in developing a project plan for the second semester of field education.
4. Students report, and supervisors provide, evidence that the supervisor is committed to the vocational and leadership development of the student. Such evidence will be provided both in conversation with the Director of Field Education and formally through the end of semester assessments and will include
  - a. Meaningful engagement in regular supervisory meetings
  - b. Visible support for the student relative to achieving their learning goals
  - c. An openness to learning from and with the seminarian, engaging the gifts the student brings to ministry and being open to change as a result.

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<sup>1</sup> Exceptions may be made for placements in non-congregational settings or for supervisors who have significant field education supervisor experience in prior placement sites.

A list of approved field placement sites will be made available to residential students at the beginning of each academic year.

Placement sites and supervisors for low-residence MDiv students are approved in collaboration with the student's diocese and must meet all diocesan-specific expectations. These supervisors are also expected to meet conditions 1-4 listed above. Training for low-residence supervisors will be offered on-line or through virtual gatherings.

## **Field Placement Supervisor Responsibilities**

### Prior to Beginning the Placement

1. Interview students who are seeking placements. This process will begin in February of the year prior to placement and is initiated by the student(s). Students can and should be expected to share their specific interests and reasons for interviewing at the particular placement site.
2. Communicate with the Director of Field Education regarding your assessment of student fit based on your interviews. <sup>2</sup>
3. Once you and the student agree to the placement, complete and sign a Field Placement Agreement (available on the CDSP website).
4. Meet with the student in April and May to develop learning goals for the student's time at your site.
5. In the case of Field Education placements, supervisors are also expected to arrange for a lay committee with one person as the identified convener.

### During the Placement

6. Be easily accessible to the student and provide ongoing direction, mentoring, professional guidance and clear communication about expectations
7. Invite the student to attend as many congregational (or agency) meetings and activities as the student's other academic and personal obligations allow. Other than those activities related to the agreed upon learning goals and within the scope of the contracted hours, these invitations should not be seen as requirements for the field education student.
8. Assign the student a range of projects and activities that are appropriate to their learning goals, to the local situation, and to the agreed upon weekly time commitment. The minimum commitment for Field Education is an average of 8-10 hours per week and for Leadership for Ministry is 5-6 hours per week. Alternative time commitments must be explicit in the Placement Site Agreement between the supervisor and the student.
9. Meet regularly with the student for supervision, reflection and training. For Field Education supervisory meetings are expected to occur weekly for one hour. For Leadership for Ministry students and supervisors must meet regularly, and no fewer than five times a semester.

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<sup>2</sup> Field Education placements are arranged by the Director of Field Education after both students and potential supervisors share their assessment of "fit" between the site and the student. The Director of Field Education will contact supervisors no later than April 1 to arrange the specific placement if one is going to be made for the following year.

10. If the placement is in a congregational setting, schedule the student to preach at least once, and preferably 2-3 times a semester, and provide meaningful, specific feedback on their preaching.
11. Complete an assessment of the student's progress at the end of each semester, using the forms and process provided on the CDSP website.

### **Student-Supervisor Relationships**

The relationship between a student and their supervisor should be based on open, authentic communication, grounded in the following:<sup>3</sup>

Needs – the primary purpose of the field placement is learning and development for the student. The student and supervisor should share a common understanding of what the student needs in order to achieve their learning goals as articulated in the learning covenant.

Interests - Both the student and the supervisor/site have interests. Explicitly exploring these interests early in the relationship will decrease the likelihood of misunderstandings later on.

Concerns – Both supervisor and student will benefit from naming concerns that arise and addressing them through mutual reflection and/or negotiation.

Humility – Students and supervisors each have the opportunity to learn from one another by listening, observing carefully, and asking hard questions. Students recognize the supervisor as a relative “expert” in many areas and also bring other areas of expertise with them into the placement.

Expectations – The contract and learning covenant spells out specific expectations. Continuing to refer to these, and to re-negotiate them as needed will increase the effectiveness of the relationship between the student and the supervisor.

If either the student or the supervisor has concerns about the relationship and its effectiveness which cannot be resolved between them, one or both of them should contact the Director of Field Education who will work with them to find a resolution.

### **Supervisory Meetings**

The primary purpose of the supervisory meeting is to engage in detailed analysis of concrete examples in ministry that will further the student's developing ministerial competence. Inherent in this purpose is the idea that learning comes not through experience alone, but through reflection on experience. In their regular supervisory meetings, the student and the supervisor explore issues related to professional skills (how to do things), professional identity and confidence, vocation, and practical theology. At least half of the meeting should be spent in this last area, finding and exploring the theological dimension(s) of ordinary life and ministry situations through theological reflection.

The agenda for a supervisory meeting should be created by the student and open to mutual revision at the start of the meeting. The agenda will typically include at least the following:

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Matthew Floding, ed. *Engage: A Theological Field Education Toolkit*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2017

1. Nuts and bolts (administrative details, assigning and planning activities, etc...)
2. Sharing of concerns and/or providing feedback
3. Mutual structured theological reflection on an experience or situation in a specific area of ministry. This should represent at least 50% of the meeting time.

### Providing Feedback on Actions in Ministry

Effective feedback for a seminarian, as for anyone, should be specific, based on observable behavior, grounded in compassion, and designed to increase the student's options. One model for providing feedback is the following.

1. When you \_\_\_\_\_ (observable behavior)
2. I felt/I observed others/I noticed \_\_\_\_\_ (specific feeling/observable behavior in others), and I wonder whether this was your intention
3. If so, how did it feel to you?
4. If not, what alternative behavior(s) might you consider for the future?

### Structuring Theological Reflection

Students in Field Education at CDSP are familiar with the following structure for theological reflection.<sup>4</sup>

1. **Description –**
  - a. what happened, who was involved?
  - b. what was the embedded theology in the situation?
2. **Analysis –**
  - a. what does a more deliberative theology reveal about the situation or experience?
  - b. What questions emerged for you from the experience or situation?
  - c. What are some alternative ways of understanding the situation or experience in light of our Christian faith?
3. **Frame a View –**
  - a. What is your personal theological perspective on the experience/situation? How does it relate to the core concerns of faith?
  - b. What theological resources inform your view (scripture, tradition, reason, experience)
  - c. How is this deliberative theological understanding similar to or different from your embedded theology?
4. **Judgement and Response –**
  - a. Make a choice – is the action within your experience/situation consistent with your theological perspective? If not, what action would be?
  - b. What criteria have you used to come to this assessment?
  - c. What might you ask for from others or do differently in the future (if anything)?

Students in the second semester of Field Education will be familiar with additional structures for theological reflection. Students in Leadership for Ministry will be completing written theological reflections regarding specific areas and practices of ministry in the placement site and are required to

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<sup>4</sup> From Howard W. Stone & James O. Duke, *How to Think Theologically* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Fortress Press, 2013

learn about the supervisor's theological perspective as part of their own deliberative process. The specific format for reflection is less important than the deliberative process of seeing experiences in and practices of ministry through a specifically theological lens.

### **End-of-Semester Assessments**

In order to pass their courses, whether Field Education or Leadership for Ministry, students must submit an assessment of their placement learning and experience. Forms for this assessment are available on the CDSP website. The assessments are to be grounded in the learning goals developed and agreed upon at the beginning of each semester and are to be *joint* assessments developed in conversation between the student and the supervisor. The student is responsible for assuring that the assessment is completed and submitted according to the deadlines set in their specific class. These assessments provide important information for canonical student reviews that are submitted by CDSP to dioceses as part of the vocational discernment process. Given this, it is critical that the assessments be both honest and specific regarding student activities and learning.