

The Purpose and Work of a Placement Site Lay Committee

Each seminarian in Field Education placement has a committee of 3-5 people (the “lay committee”) which meets with the seminarian on at least a monthly basis. This committee plays an important role in the field education experience and must be established by the time the student begins at the placement site. It is the supervisor’s responsibility to identify and recruit members of the lay committee prior to the start of the student placement.

Lay Committee Membership

The most important attribute for membership on the lay committee is a commitment to the seminarian’s growth and formation in ministry. Ideally the committee includes members of the congregation or agency who represent different aspects of the placement site – whether by age group, tenure, ministry focus or some other dimensions. It is important for the committee to be comprised of people who are regularly present at the placement site (for worship and/or other activities) and will have significant exposure to the seminarian’s involvement in ministry. The supervisor should take the initiative to form the lay committee as the seminarian will not have enough information about potential committee members prior to starting their placement. The supervisor does not serve on the lay committee. A chairperson or convener should be identified to convene the monthly meeting.

The Purpose of the Lay Committee

The lay committee facilitates and supports the student’s learning through field placement in the following ways:

- Praying for the student and their family
- Welcoming the student to the placement site and introducing them to others
- Helping the student become aware of the site’s history, organization, membership, neighborhood and resources
- Being interested in the student’s family, academic courses, and plans for the future
- Being familiar with the student’s learning goals and providing honest and caring feedback about the student’s efforts to meet them, remembering that the student is not yet a professional whose training is complete
- Participating in activities for which the student is responsible
- Being present when the student is preaching, and offering specific and meaningful feedback regarding the homily relative to the student’s preaching goal(s)
- Engaging in dialogue about your own faith, understanding of ministry, and experiences of Christian community
- Completing the required assessments at the end of each semester

- Structuring appropriate occasions for the community to say good-bye when it is time for the student to leave.

Possible Lay Committee Meeting Schedule and Activities

June – August	Confirm membership of lay committee and identify convener (supervisor accountability)
September	Welcome the seminarian and begin to introduce them to others at the site Meeting #1 – Get acquainted, review learning goals, identify ways of connecting to programs and people
October - November	Facilitate seminarian’s process of learning about the site, meeting people, and accessing groups and materials to support their learning. Be sure student and family have plans/connections for the holidays. Meetings #2 and #3 – Provide feedback on sermon (if student has preached); check-in with student on progress toward goals; identify further needs for support; and ask about family and academics
December	Continue to attend activities in which the student is involved and facilitate continued integration into the community; stay connected regarding family, holidays and the end of the academic semester Meeting #4 – Provide feedback on sermon (if student has preached); affirm growth that the committee has observed; discuss any issues or problems that may be emerging; discuss learning goals for Spring term; complete, discuss and provide signed assessment form to student.
January	Depending on their academic schedule, the student may not be present at the site over the holidays and during January break.
February	Welcome the student back to site community; Meeting #5 - Check-in regarding family, academics and plans for the future; review Spring learning goals and activities to support them, discuss and support student’s work on congregational development project
March – April	Continue to attend activities in which the student is involved and support work on the congregational development project Meeting #6 and #7 - Provide feedback on sermon (if student has preached); check-in with student on progress toward goals; identify further needs for support; and ask about family and academics.
May	Plan appropriate good-bye for the student, stay connected to the student’s family and academics. Meeting #8 – Provide feedback on sermon (if student has preached); affirm growth that the committee has observed; discuss any issues or problems that emerged and how they were handled; reflect on congregational development project; complete, discuss and provide signed assessment form to student.