

Student Intern Handbook  
Master of Arts Programs

CLAREMONT  
SCHOOL OF  
THEOLOGY

[www.cst.edu](http://www.cst.edu)

# **Student Intern Handbook Master of Arts**

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Developing Your Learning/Serving Agreement .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Your Supervisor.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Ethical Expectations of Student Interns.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Guidelines for Assessment .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Learning/Serving Agreement &amp; Student Learning Outcomes.....</b>	<b>8</b>

# **Student Intern Handbook for Master of Arts Students Claremont School of Theology**

## **Introduction**

Internship placements for MA students can be in a variety of settings including social service, justice and advocacy, non-profit management, health services, and campus ministry. Religious, interreligious, and secular sites are possible. In addition to the internship students participate in either a weekly seminar (face-to-face or online) or a directed study. For a directed study students select the professor of record, with that person's consent.

This handbook is an orientation to the internship process and expectations. The academic component is described in the seminar syllabus or directed study plan that goes with your internship. The internship experience and the seminar or directed study should complement each other, with the seminar/directed study providing regular structure and opportunities for reflection on your internship experience.

The role of an intern is to learn through participation in a practicum context. The overall outcomes for the MA internship program are that by the end of the internship experience students will be able to:

1. Utilize academic knowledge in an applied setting.
2. Act with competence across religious and/or cultural boundaries.
3. Articulate the connections between their academic work and the broader community.
4. Demonstrate personal integrity in service and leadership activity.

These outcomes relate to the whole experience – internship and seminar/directed study together. All participants in the program – student interns, site supervisors, and faculty – work together so that students achieve these learning outcomes. In addition to the overall outcomes listed above, you will develop particular learning outcomes based on the needs and characteristics of your setting and also your own interests, skills, and vocational directions.

A handbook for MA internship supervisors is also available on the school's website (under Academic Resources at [www.cst.edu](http://www.cst.edu)). Make sure you read it so you have an overview and understanding of the school's expectations for supervisors.

Here is a summary of your responsibilities as an intern:

- Participate at your placement site, **8-10 hours per week**, from the beginning of the semester through the last week of the year/semester.
- Develop a **learning/serving agreement** in consultation with your supervisor. This is your job description for the year. It is due in the

beginning of the semester to your seminar instructor or directed study professor. Submit a copy to the director of field education also.

- Fulfill all commitments of this agreement throughout the duration of your internship.
- Attend and participate fully in the MA internship seminar or directed study, completing readings and written work as assigned.
- Meet weekly with your site supervisor at a mutually agreed-upon time.
- Participate in the assessment process. You will receive an assessment from your supervising mentor and will complete a written self-assessment for your seminar instructor at the end of each semester.
- For a 2-semester internship, update your learning/serving agreement at the beginning of the second semester, revising it as appropriate to your setting and emerging outcomes.
- You are responsible to communicate with the field education director for guidance if needed, to report changes in your internship, or to report any incident.
- Take responsibility for your own learning and the quality of your internship experience.

### **Developing your Learning/Serving Agreement**

At the beginning of your internship, you are responsible for working with your supervisor to develop a learning/serving agreement, which is the job description and learning outcomes statement for your work as an intern. The term “learning/serving” is intended to convey that whatever your background at this point and whatever tasks you take on during the year, your primary role as an intern involves both service and learning.

The Learning/Serving Agreement Form is included at the end of this handbook and is also provided on the CST website. The completed form will be due early in the semester, along with a 1-2 page description of your work plan and learning outcomes. The process of developing this should be a top priority during the first weeks of the internship.

The learning/serving agreement you submit must include a completed one-page form with contact information, plus a 1-2 page narrative describing:

1. Your internship responsibilities – what you will be doing week by week and over the course of the semester(s).
2. The most important 3-4 outcomes you want to achieve through this service. At least one outcome should be in each of the following areas:
  - a. Skill development
  - b. Personal development– spiritual, physical, emotional, and/or moral
  - c. Integrative reflection – exploring connections between internship experiences and classes, theological themes, and/or vocation.

For each outcome, describe the actions you will take in order to accomplish it.

The outcomes you submit should be particular to you and your context, more focused than the overall SLOs for MA internships. Your specific outcomes should reflect your

most important priorities for service and learning through this experience. They should also relate to one or more of the MA internship SLOs.

Your responsibilities will probably include some observing and the kinds of activities that orient you and give you a broad familiarity with the organization. In addition, you should have responsibility for one or several projects that are relevant both to your interests and to the organization's work. Aim for both breadth and depth as you set up your internship plan.

We encourage students to consider:

- One outcome in an area in which you already have some strengths.
- One in an area where you have some fears, or you know you are not particularly skilled.
- One in an "unknown" area, addressing something you have never done before.

All outcomes should be:

- Important and relevant to the needs in the setting.
- Important and relevant to you.
- Challenging and also achievable in your context and with the time available.
- Specific and measurable enough that you and others will be able to recognize when they are achieved.
- Stated with strategies or methods for accomplishing them.

For a two-semester internship, there will be an opportunity to update this agreement at the beginning of the second semester. Some tasks and outcomes may have been achieved by then; others might need modification. New priorities may have emerged.

## **Your Supervisor**

One of the most important aspects of your learning will be the relationship with your supervisor. This person has made a commitment to work with you, including meeting regularly with you for reflection and guidance. As with all dimensions of the internship experience, the more you take responsibility for the quality of your interaction, the more fruitful this relationship can be.

At the beginning of the year, arrange a regular weekly time to meet. Talk about how you will communicate with each other if one of you needs to miss or reschedule a meeting.

Your first task together is to complete your learning-serving agreement and outcomes for the internship, as described on the previous pages. More generally, the beginning of the year is the time to develop shared expectations about your work together. As you talk about schedule expectations, make sure you and your supervisor have a shared understanding of when you will be present each week and during school breaks at Thanksgiving, between semesters, and during spring break. The School does not require you to participate during these times but many interns choose to do so. A two-week break sometime between mid-December and mid-January is expected.

Some interns and supervisors structure their meetings as times to reflect on particular events as case studies. One or both of you can bring situations or issues for discussion. Or you may focus the sessions as conversations around particular topics. Talk with your mentor about the topics that are especially important and interesting to you, so that you can make sure to cover them. Possible topics include:

- History of the organization
- Mission, values, and vision – and how they developed
- Organizational structure
- Governance and management
- Context of the organization
- Most important current challenges and opportunities
- Ethical responsibilities
- Legal responsibilities, including mandatory reporting if applicable
- Conceptual/theological underpinnings of the organization
- How planning and evaluation are done
- Important relationships with other organizations and people
- Stakeholders in the community
- Financial planning, budgeting, and management
- Leadership development
- Communication
- Organizational culture

### **Ethical Expectations of Student Interns**

As a Claremont School of Theology student intern, be mindful that you represent the school. You are expected to:

- Demonstrate honesty in communication with all persons.
- Treat all people with respect and care.
- Use discretion in all social and professional electronic networking, posts, blogs, etc.
- Maintain professional boundaries (emotional, physical, financial) with congregants, coworkers and supervisors.
- Honor all obligations, commitments and relationships established in the learning/serving agreement.
- Be aware of your own professional limitations. If you are not qualified or able to provide needed care, seek advice or help from someone who is.
- Obtain written permission from your site supervisor to receive/handle money for any reason.

- Practice confidentiality. Discuss with your site supervisor the policies of confidentiality appropriate to your field site.
- Know the requirements and procedures for reporting instances of suspected abuse or neglect. In most states clergy and other religious workers are legally mandated reporters of suspected child or elder abuse and/or neglect. Talk to your supervisor and about how to proceed if a situation arises.

If, for any reason, you are struggling to work within any of these expectations, please consult with the Director of Field Education. The school is committed to providing assistance, guidance and care to all our students.

### **Guidelines for Assessment**

In most internships, assessment involves several components. One is your **self-assessment**, usually both at the beginning and end of an internship. Secondly, your supervisor will write an **assessment letter** at the end of each semester. Your mentor is asked to discuss the assessment with you before sending it to the school. **Third**, there is **class credit** given for the weekly seminar by the seminar instructor who has the overall picture, and who is the only person authorized to issue or deny credit for the course.

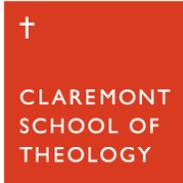
Guidelines for your self-assessment will be given in the seminar syllabus each semester. The format that your supervisor will use is found in the mentor's handbook. Assessment guidelines for the committee are in the committee handbook.

Your supervisor's final assessment letter will be stored in the files in the office of field education. If you need a copy for any reason you can make a written request to the field education office. Files are kept for **five years** only.

### **If You Have Questions or Concerns**

If anything is unclear or causing difficulty for you, the place to begin usually is to talk with your supervisor. Or, either your seminar instructor or the field education director can consult with you in advance about how to approach a difficult topic. The field education director is also available to speak to a supervisor if s/he is not meeting the requirements of the program or if there is some other difficulty. Usually it is best to address concerns soon after they arise – if ignored the problems often get bigger. Please do not hesitate to ask for help if you need it!

Karen Dalton  
 Associate Dean, Director of Field Education  
 Claremont School of Theology  
 1325 N. College Ave.  
 Claremont, CA 91711  
 (909) 447-2534      [kdalton@cst.edu](mailto:kdalton@cst.edu)



**Master of Arts Internships**  
**Learning/Serving Agreement &**  
**Student Learning Outcomes**

**Turn in copies in to the intern’s seminar instructor or directed study professor and the field education office. Intern and supervisor keep copies.**

**Attach a 1-2 page narrative describing:**

1. Your internship responsibilities – what you will be doing week by week and over the course of the semester(s).
2. The most important 3-4 outcomes you want to achieve through these activities. At least one outcome should be in each of the following areas:
  - a. Skill development
  - b. Personal development– spiritual, physical, emotional, and/or moral
  - c. Integrative reflection – exploring connections between internship experiences and classes, theological themes, and/or vocation.

For each outcome, describe the actions you will take in order to accomplish it.

<b>Student Intern’s Name:</b>
<b>Placement site:</b>
<b>Supervisor’s name:</b>
<b>Supervisor’s email:</b>

**Student Intern’s Responsibilities:**

- To devote 8-10 regular hours per week to the placement site.
- To meet weekly with the supervisor for reflection and monthly with the Teaching Placement Committee (if applicable).
- To communicate regularly with the supervising mentor about the schedule, activities and reflections on ministry/faith development and personal/professional growth.
- To meet regularly with the supervising mentor for reflection on the internship experience, and to raise questions and concerns.
- To maintain the highest ethical standards during the internship.

\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

**Supervisor’s Responsibilities:**

- To meet weekly with the student intern.
- To support the intern’s learning process, and follow the handbook guidelines for supervision and mentoring.
- To provide feedback and evaluations on both the intern’s strengths and growing edges to enhance the intern’s learning process.
- To establish the Teaching Placement Committee as appropriate, and offer support as needed.

- To communicate with the Field Education Office as requested or if there are concerns or questions.
- To comply with all expectations listed below under Additional Requirements.

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Supervising Mentor Signature

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Date

### **Additional Requirements**

1. The ministry site is responsible for orienting the student to the ministry site, including an explanation of any potential health or safety risks.
2. The ministry site is responsible for complying with all federal and state laws, including any applicable tax and labor laws related to the student's ministry site experience.
3. The ministry site and the school will comply with federal laws and regulations regarding non-discrimination.
4. The student is fulfilling specific requirements for field experience as part of a degree requirement. The student does not thereby become an employee or agent of the school by virtue of his or her field experience.
5. The supervisor, on behalf of the supervising agency, assumes liability for the student when s/he is acting within the scope of his/her responsibilities as agreed upon.
6. The school is not responsible for providing the student's transportation to and from the ministry site, or for providing the student's transportation for any of the student's duties during the student's ministry site experience.
7. The ministry site will keep confidential any student evaluations and other records of the student, and disclose such records only to school and other officials who have a legitimate need to know consistent with their official responsibilities.

Questions? Contact Karen Dalton, Director of Field Education, 909-447-2534,  
[kdalton@cst.edu](mailto:kdalton@cst.edu)