



Field Education
Student Intern Handbook
Master of Divinity Program

CLAREMONT
SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY

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**Student Intern Handbook, Congregational Placements
Claremont School of Theology Field Education Program
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Student Intern Handbook

Field Education

Claremont School of Theology

Introduction

This handbook is an orientation to the internship dimension of your field education experience. The course syllabus for each field education semester supplements it, describing the expectations and procedures for the seminar that is concurrent with your internship. Your supervised ministry experience in the internship setting and the seminar are intended to complement each other, with the seminar providing regular structure and opportunities for theological reflection on your internship experience.

The role of an intern is to learn through participation in ministry service. The overall outcomes for the field education program are that by the end of the field education experience students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate increased knowledge and skill for ministry service and leadership.
2. Connect theological knowledge with the practice of ministry.
3. Employ skills for forming and sustaining relationships.
4. Act with contextual awareness and cultural competence.
5. Engage in ministry with vocational and spiritual maturity.

These outcomes relate to the whole experience – internship and seminar together. All participants in the program – students, supervisors, committees, and seminar instructors – 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.

There are three handbooks for the field education program – for the student intern, the supervisor, and the teaching placement committee. All three are available on the school's website (under CST Resources at www.cst.edu). Make sure you read the handbooks for the supervisors and committees so you have an overview of the whole process and the role of each person and group.

Although most field education internships are in congregational settings, the handbooks and seminar processes are developed with a view to other contexts as well. Please feel free to adapt as needed.

As you begin your field education, you are embarking on a new, multi-dimensional learning experience that will encourage you to grow personally, spiritually, and socially. Here is a summary of your responsibilities:

- Participate in the ministry at your placement site, 8-10 hours per week, from the beginning of September through the first week in May.

- Develop a learning/serving agreement in consultation with your supervisor. This is your job description for the year. It is due in late September to your seminar instructor (check the syllabus for the exact date).
- Attend and participate fully in the field education seminar, completing readings and written work as assigned.
- Meet weekly with your supervisor at a mutually agreed-upon time.
- If your placement includes a teaching placement committee, meet monthly with that committee.
- Participate in the assessment processes at the end of each semester. You will receive assessments from your supervisor and committee chairperson and will complete a written self assessment for your seminar instructor.
- Update your learning/serving agreement at the beginning of the spring semester, revising it as appropriate to your ministry situation and emerging outcomes.
- Take responsibility for your own learning and the quality of your internship experience. This is essential in field education! What you gain from this experience will depend on what you put into it.

The Field Education Seminar

You will be assigned to one of several seminar sections on the first day of class. The overall curriculum of the seminars is the same. Each instructor brings unique gifts, and you will learn from your peers as well as from the instructor. The seminar is also intended to also simulate the support you would hopefully experience in a future clergy support group. Enter into the experience with an openness to learn new kinds of information in new ways. It is precisely because so much of your learning comes from your peers that regular participation in the seminar sessions is required to receive credit for field education.

Claremont School of Theology is committed to developing ministers who are lifelong learners combining the disciplines of practical work with intentional reflection. The reading and writing components of the seminar experience are therefore very important.

The seminar instructor is the one issuing the credit for field education. This means that your full participation in the seminar is required for you to receive credit. Your seminar instructor will be in touch with your supervisor several times during the year, checking in to see how things are going. Since our seminar instructors are experienced pastors, they understand the types of difficulties that arise in the life of the church. They will be helpful in coaching you about how to approach your context. If you are struggling with issues in your placement, the seminar instructor will be willing to meet with you individually to listen and reflect with you about the situation.

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 ministry 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 process of developing this should be a top priority during the first weeks of the internship.

The learning/serving agreement you submit must include the completed 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 3-5 most important outcomes you want to achieve through these activities. Each outcome must relate to one of the field education learning outcomes:
 - a. Demonstrate increased knowledge and skill for ministry service and leadership.
 - b. Connect theological knowledge with the practice of ministry.
 - c. Employ skills for forming and sustaining relationships.
 - d. Act with contextual awareness and cultural competence.
 - e. Engage in ministry with vocational and spiritual maturity.

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

Your internship responsibilities will probably include some observing and the kind of participation that orients you and gives you a broad familiarity with the congregation and context. In addition, you should have responsibility for one or several projects that are relevant both to your interests and to the church's work. Aim for both breadth and depth as you set up your internship plan.

The outcomes you submit should be particular to you and your context, more focused than the five overall SLOs for field education. All outcomes should be:

- Important and relevant to the ministry 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.

At the beginning of spring semester there will be an opportunity to update this agreement. Some tasks and outcomes may have been achieved by then; others might need modification. New priorities may have emerged.

Meetings with 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.

As previously described, your first task together is to complete your learning-serving agreement and outcomes for the internship. 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:

- Entering a new community
- History, stories, and identity in the congregation or organization
- Expectations of pastors and other leaders
- Spiritual life and spiritual practices
- Theological understanding of ministry
- Ethical responsibilities in ministry
- Self-care and care for relationships; the pastor's family
- Sexuality and sexual integrity
- Legal responsibilities, including mandatory reporting
- Pastoral/spiritual care in this context
- Budgeting and financial management
- Stewardship
- Governance and administration – who does what and how is it done?
- Leadership development
- Communication
- Grief and loss
- Transitions and rites of passage

Topics specific to congregational placements:

- Denominational polity and the congregation's relationship with the denomination
- Responding to visitors, evangelism
- Outreach to the community, both service and justice
- Planning for worship and preaching

The church year in this congregation – important celebrations and traditions

Pre-marital counseling and weddings

Death and dying, funerals

More about Relationships

One of the most important aspects of your learning will be the relationship with your supervisor. You have worked with others to discern a placement with a supervision relationship that will support your learning. Now it is up to you and the supervisor to work together to make the relationship full of trust, grace, and learning.

Take responsibility to give your supervisor information that will help with that task. Share yourself openly, and assume your supervisor is working to help you develop for ministry. You must find a way to respectfully speak the truth to each other in order for the relationship to mature. Do not assume your reactions to events are obvious. Often they are not. So you will only grow into fuller trust by sharing how it is going for you, and listening non-defensively to your supervisor's concerns.

The supervisor gives time and energy to help you, in addition to a full and demanding job. Look for ways to give visible support. Remember always to be loyal to people behind their backs and express concerns directly to the person(s) involved. Do not allow yourself to become an ear for disgruntled parishioners, but be sure to direct people to share their concerns directly with the pastor. Support the leadership style of the pastor, and work to show respect by joining in the spirit of the congregation's style. Work also to be kind to the many part-time staff persons and volunteers you will encounter. A thoughtful word from you, an appreciative gesture, will mean a great deal to them. You can never overdo expressing appreciation.

The Teaching Placement Committee

The teaching placement committee is a highly recommended but not required component of the internship experience. In most congregational settings this group can be an important partner in learning for you, but in some contexts such a committee is not workable or appropriate. Talk to your supervisor about what is best. The committee's purpose is to encourage, guide, and support you in your internship experience. This group can help you learn about the church, meet people and learn about the local community, and become involved in the life of the congregation. You will probably find that the members are curious and interested in what you are learning in theological school. You can share your books, ideas and theological perspectives with them.

Your supervisor will be the one to recruit people for the teaching placement committee and will attend the first meeting. After that, it is up to you and the committee to schedule meetings, remind people, set agenda, and guide the process. At least one person from your committee is asked to attend an orientation at the beginning of the year, to help the group understand its role. Make sure you read the committee handbook and understand the committee's intended role so that you can help the group get off to a good start. As with other components of the field education experience, you are responsible for your own learning and experience in working with the committee.

You and the committee chairperson are responsible for preparing and bringing the agenda for the teaching placement committee meetings, so think about what would be most helpful to your learning process. The committee handbook includes suggested topics for the meetings during the year. One suggestion is that the committee members read a book that you are reading for your coursework and discuss it with you. A variation would be for you to teach the committee something related to your coursework or reading. It is best if you plan for this early in the year.

If you and your committee experience difficulties – for example if the committee is not meeting regularly or is not clear about their role – talk to your seminar instructor or the field education director.

Ethical Expectations of Field Education Students

As a Claremont School of Theology field education student, be mindful that you represent the seminary, your vocation and your denomination. 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 California and other 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

There are three basic parts to assessment in field education. **First** is your **self-assessment**, to assess your skills and set your own learning outcomes. **Second**, there are **assessment letters** from your supervisor at the end of each semester. Your supervisor is asked to discuss his or her assessments with you before sending them to the school. The teaching placement committee also submits a report each semester describing and reflecting on their work with you. These reports also will be shared with you. **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 included as an appendix in this 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 for five years. At some point, you may want your judicatory to have a copy of it, as you are considered for ordination. If so, you will need to request that copy from the field education office, in writing. 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!

Alma Johnson-Hawkins
Interim Director of Field Education
Claremont School of Theology
1325 N. College Ave.
Claremont, CA 91711
(909) 447-2534 ajohnson-hawkins@cst.edu

Suggestions for intern involvement in congregational ministry

Worship leadership and preaching

- Analyze the liturgical life of church or setting
- Prepare worship with a team
- Participate in leading worship
- Participate in and plan wedding/funeral/baptism
- Analyze several sermons, with emphasis on theological issues
- Prepare a sermon, receive mentor feedback
- Deliver a sermon; receive feedback from teaching placement committee
- Other _____

Religious education

- Attend meetings of the committee(s) overseeing Christian education
- Design a unit of adult education or children's education
- Teach the units designed
- Lead a Sunday School class
- Lead a Bible Study
- Collaborate with others in shaping a curriculum
- Other _____

Spiritual/Pastoral Care

- Visit house-bound, hospitalized, and institutionalized persons
- Listen to stories of parishioners
- Participate in a weekly prayer group
- Observe and analyze forms of pastoral intervention and referral (e.g., sit in on a pre-marital counseling session)
- Plan and implement a congregational program to enhance pastoral care
- Other _____

Administration

- Observe/participate in administrative boards and committees
- Attend one or more staff meetings
- Observe and analyze the budget-making process; discuss with supervising mentor
- Analyze the financial status of the church/site
- Participate in stewardship activities
- Plan and implement an intervention or strategy relevant to an administrative meeting
- Other _____

Outreach evangelism, service, and justice

- Identify the social context of the church in terms of age, class, economics, gender, race, and sexual orientation
- Identify social agencies in area and establish contact with them
- Identify and participate in the social ministries of the church
- Analyze relevant missions in the community in terms of replication, resources needed, and so forth
- Call on newcomers to the church
- Analyze the church's patterns of responding to newcomers
- Investigate how the church is known (or not) in the community
- Other _____

**Field Education Self-Assessment
Congregational Ministry Placements**

Name _____
Date _____

Overall Assessment
1 – Weak
2 – Adequate
3 – Strong

Priority for internship
1 – Little or no focus
2 – Moderate focus
3 – Extensive focus

Learning outcome	Assessment
Knowledge and skill in worship and preaching	Self-assessment _____ Priority for internship _____ Examples and comments:
Knowledge and skill in education	Self-assessment _____ Priority for internship _____ Examples and comments:
Knowledge and skill in pastoral care	Self-assessment _____ Priority for internship _____ Examples and comments:
Knowledge and skill in administration	Self-assessment _____ Priority for internship _____ Examples and comments:
Knowledge and skill in outreach (evangelism, justice, service)	Self-assessment _____ Priority for internship _____ Examples and comments:
Integration of academic knowledge with the practice of ministry	Self-assessment _____ Priority for internship _____ Examples and comments:
Skills for forming and sustaining relationships	Self-assessment _____ Priority for internship _____ Examples and comments:
Contextual awareness and cultural competence	Self-assessment _____ Priority for internship _____ Examples and comments:
Vocational clarity	Self-assessment _____ Priority for internship _____ Examples and comments:
Spiritual maturity	Self-assessment _____ Priority for internship _____ Examples and comments:



Claremont School of Theology Field Education

**Learning/Serving Agreement &
Student Learning Outcomes**

To be turned in to the intern’s seminar instructor. 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. Each outcome must relate to one of the field education learning outcomes:
 - a. Demonstrate increased knowledge and skill for ministry service and leadership.
 - b. Connect theological knowledge with the practice of ministry.
 - c. Employ skills for forming and sustaining relationships.
 - d. Act with contextual awareness and cultural competence.
 - e. Engage in ministry with vocational and spiritual maturity.

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

Student Intern’s Name:
Congregation/Organization name:
Supervisor’s name:
Supervisor’s email:

Teaching Placement Committee (if applicable)	
Committee Chairperson’s Name:	
Preferred Phone Number:	E-mail:
Preferred Address:	

Student Intern’s Responsibilities:

- To devote 8-10 regular hours per week to the ministry placement/ placement site.
- To meet weekly with the supervisor and monthly with the Teaching Placement Committee (if applicable).
- To communicate regularly with the supervisor about the schedule, activities and reflections on ministry/faith development and personal/professional growth.
- To meet regularly with the supervisor 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.
- 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 under Additional Requirements.

Supervisor Signature

Date

If Applicable – Teaching Placement Committee Chairperson's Responsibilities

- To convene a meeting with the intern and committee on a monthly basis.
- To work with the committee to follow the handbook guidelines for the purpose of supporting the intern's learning process.
- To work with the committee to provide feedback that will assist the intern in developing his/her pastoral identity and service learning experience.
- To work with the committee to maintain the highest ethical standards.

Teaching Placement Committee Chairperson
Signature

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 Alma Johnson-Hawkins, Interim Director of Field Education, 909-447-2534, ajohnson-hawkins@cst.edu

Field Education Intern Assessment – to be completed by Supervisor Claremont School of Theology

Please complete BOTH the narrative assessment and the assessment form with numerical ratings.

1. Narrative Assessment: On separate paper and using the congregation or organization's letterhead, please write a descriptive assessment including the following:

- Summarize the intern's learning goals for the semester.
- Describe the intern's activities related to each goal.
- Provide your assessment of the extent to which each goal has been reached.
- Provide a brief self-assessment of your work as supervisor – time you spent; nature of the supervisory sessions; resources, support, and authority provided for the student, etc.
- Please sign and date your assessment.

2. Assessment form: The attached form is intended to assess the Student Learning Outcomes for the field education program overall. Please complete it as well as the narrative assessment.

Since these assessments are intended for the intern's growth and learning, it is important that you talk about your assessment with your intern before sending it to the school.

Please return both the narrative assessment and the completed assessment form to your intern's instructor, at

Claremont School of Theology
1325 N. College Ave.
Claremont, CA 91711

If you have questions or concerns contact:

Alma Johnson-Hawkins
Interim Director of Field Education

Ajohnson-hawkins@cst.edu

909-447-2534

Field Education Intern Assessment – to be completed by Supervisor

Student’s name _____ Placement site _____

Supervisor _____ Date _____

Supervisor’s signature _____

Please assess the intern’s work related to the field education student learning outcomes listed below. Be sure to provide both numerical ratings, indicating for each outcome both the extent of focus in the internship and the strength of the intern’s work. Use as much space for comments as you wish – the form will adjust as you type.

Accountability and Responsibility

Overall Assessment

- 0 – Not observed
- 1 - Weak
- 2 - Adequate
- 3 – Strong

Fulfilling time expectations and other internship responsibilities	Assessment: _____ Examples and comments:
Preparation, thoroughness, and follow through in completing tasks	Assessment: _____ Examples and comments:
Honoring confidentiality, boundaries, and other ethical responsibilities	Assessment: _____ Examples and comments:
Receptivity to feedback	Assessment: _____ Examples and comments:
Readiness to ask for help	Assessment: _____ Examples and comments:
Overall self-management	Assessment: _____ Examples and comments:

Progress on Learning Outcomes

Overall Assessment

- 0 – Not observed
- 1 - Weak
- 2 - Adequate
- 3 – Strong

Extent of focus in internship

- 1 – Little or no focus
- 2 – Moderate focus
- 3 – Extensive focus

Knowledge and skill in worship and preaching	Assessment: _____ Examples and comments:	Extent of Focus in Internship: _____
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Knowledge and skill in education	Assessment:_____ Examples and comments:	Extent of Focus in Internship:_____
Knowledge and skill in pastoral care	Assessment:_____ Examples and comments:	Extent of Focus in Internship:_____
Knowledge and skill in administration	Assessment:_____ Examples and comments:	Extent of Focus in Internship:_____
Knowledge and skill in outreach (evangelism, justice, service)	Assessment:_____ Examples and comments:	Extent of Focus in Internship:_____
Connecting theological knowledge with the practice of ministry	Assessment:_____ Examples and comments:	Extent of Focus in Internship:_____
Skills for forming and sustaining relationships	Assessment:_____ Examples and comments:	Extent of Focus in Internship:_____
Contextual awareness and cultural competence	Assessment:_____ Examples and comments:	Extent of Focus in Internship:_____
Vocational clarity	Assessment:_____ Examples and comments:	Extent of Focus in Internship:_____
Spiritual maturity	Assessment:_____ Examples and comments:	Extent of Focus in Internship:_____