St Mark's
National Theological Centre

Field Education Manual

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The Field Education Program — An Introduction

St Mark's National Theological Centre is committed to a balance between the study of theology in a vocational context. An important part of this commitment to a balance between academic reflection and praxis is the field education program. For each professional ministry student, a sequential program of ministry practicum will be designed to provide supervised field experience in as many aspects of ministry as possible, using supervisors, colloquiums, experience-in-ministry reports and evaluation instruments. The student will engage in guided reflection upon the various functions of Christian ministry. Credit will be granted with the completion of annual appraisals of the field education experience approved by the Co-ordinator of Field Education, co-signed by the Placement Supervisor and Student.

The Objective and Goals of Field Education at St Mark's

St Mark's is concerned for credible scholarship and competent ministry. Involvement in the field education experience contributes to this objective, shaping significantly aspects of the lives of those who participate in this opportunity for personal growth and ministry.

For us, field education is a process by which a person will no doubt find the call to ministry confirmed repeatedly. Students at St Mark's describe their call more often as a gradual process rather than as a specific event. Through this process one may determine the reality of his or her call, develop a valid personal concept of ministry, and mature emotionally and spiritually.

Field Education provides a context for dialogue between theological reflection and ministry engagement. The field education program attempts to provide an opportunity for learning by experience in the field under qualified supervision. As an integrative force in the student's experience, field education provides a means to bring together the various elements of preparation for ministry. Diligent use of both academic tools and ministry skills provided by theological education is joined with active involvement in ministry.

Education-in-the-field is an integral part of preparation for Christian service, whether ordained or not. It is a learning process that takes place through practical experience in a church setting or in other forms of ministry. It enables the student, as an intern, to develop some of the ministry skills by which he or she has been gifted by the Spirit of God.

Much energy goes into attaining skills, such as counselling, teaching, visiting, preaching, administration, or evangelism. Therefore, it is hoped that at the conclusion of the field education program, every student-intern will be able to offer his community or particular place of service a combination of skills that will make possible effective ministry. We consider it essential for all Christians, including those in professional ministries, to formulate a biblical world-view within which they can integrate the complexities of contemporary life, and, as a result, both speak and act prophetically to our own generation. Field education has the potential of contributing to this objective in a significant way.

Some Guidelines

In order to make possible this kind of vital learning experience, a number of guidelines for the entire program are set out below:

The system of feedback, supervision and evaluation built into the program distinguishes field education from field service or field work. The student can expect a variety of experience and evaluation offering feedback concerning his or her personal, professional and spiritual growth. A systematic approach to evaluation is used. This systematic approach includes evaluative reports from supervisor, CPE group process, Director, faculty advisers, the Field Education Co-ordinator, self assessment and other instruments of appraisal as may seem appropriate.

Field education experiences normally take place within the same time frame as other curriculum requirements. This often raises a tension between the practice of ministry and the need to complete studies in the whole range of biblical, historical, integrative and theological disciplines. This is intentional. Our hope is that every student will learn to handle this stress factor between study and practice. It is inherent in all Christian vocations: everyone in a Christian vocation experiences pressures to give all of their time to others in the doing of ministry. Yet, those who stay in ministry, do so only by taking generous portions of their time for study and preparation. The field education program permits considerable freedom in scheduling major time commitments so that the student can co-ordinate practicum with academic responsibilities.

Four Goals of Field Education

The probable truth is that St Mark's can only prepare a student adequately for the initial years of ministry. After that, the student will need personal skill and self-understanding to continue to move forward in the work to which God has called. In this context, the field education process is the beginning of a larger journey. The college experience of field education is intended to provide the student with such skill and understanding through the practice of ministry so that he or she will be able to assess a ministry situation and to determine, with God's guidance, the direction needed in renewal and growth for continuing in ministry. To do this certain goals need to be understood and put into practice.

The four goals of field education at St Mark's are:

1. Personal maturation
2. Theological integration
3. Spiritual formation
4. Skill competence

Field Education Co-ordinator, Placement Supervisors, Support Group and others join the student/intern in taking responsibility so that growth towards these goals can be achieved.

The Nature of Supervision

Supervision should encourage people to be independent rather than dependent, i.e., to take initiative and responsibility in his/her own education and formation. On the other hand, independence must be exercised with accountability. The intern student is responsible for organising his/her own goals and ministry objectives along with clearly understanding the expectations of:

Rector / Supervisor
Parish Council / Executive Parish
Bishop and/ or College

The supervisor is responsible for helping the person in supervision learn from work experience by reflecting regularly on and generalising about that experience. The supervisor and student/intern are expected to establish a learning covenant, specifying their mutual expectations of each other and goals for the supervisory relationship. The supervisor should apply the same standards of behaviour to himself/herself as might be applied to the person in supervision; openness to feedback, readiness for growth, appropriate vulnerability as well as willingness to take responsibility for constructive criticism.

The Learning Covenant

A covenant is an aid to the student and supervisor having a clear negotiated agreement about what is needed, expected and intended between the people involved. It must be flexible and changed by renegotiation as needs change. At the same time it needs to be specific, providing clear parameters of accountability for both student/intern and supervisor. The contract is to represent a reasonable marriage of the needs of the student in respect to ministry and the parish's need for ministry. It does not have any legal sense and it is not intended to create a new 'legalism'. Its primary purpose is to encourage all involved to be intentional in ministry, not simply reactive.

The spirit of generous self-giving is not blocked by a contract. It is only an aid to clarity as to where and with what end in view this generosity may be directed. For students the contract is also a help to stay within time restrictions so that other study demands are respected.

The contract is a three-way agreement. The Co-ordinator of Field Education is involved as one expression of the concern of the wider Church for quality of the student's training. He is responsible to the Bishop, the Theological Colleges and especially to lay people involved in the training to ensure that the proper values and standards are maintained in this program.

Requirements

1. A two year sequential field education practicum; 140 hours each year.
2. An approved ministry agreement, signed by the student-intern, the supervisor and the Co-ordinator of Field Education.

3. Participation in regular supervisory meetings.
4. Completion of one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education.
5. Satisfactory completion of evaluation instruments in May and September each year.

Evaluation

Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

Placements

It has been the policy to provide the student with two parish placements, based on their geographic location, and taking into consideration:

- family requirements
- past church experience
- expressed needs of students
- expressed wishes of their sponsoring church or agency.

New students need to make an appointment to see the Field Education Co-ordinator as quickly as possible after their enrolling with the "Professional Ministry" program.

The placements, are required only for the term of the 20 weeks. However, we encourage engagement in the parish as quickly as possibly in the new year.

The process of appointment is:

1. The Field Education Co-ordinator discusses the possibilities with the student and encourages them to contact the parish or agency and meet the Rector/Ministry and discuss the possible placement.
2. In all instances it is the college that confirms the final agreement with the placement supervisor (eg. Parish Priest).
3. Placement agreements are to be completed by mid-March.

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Field Education Placement Contract

STUDENT:

ADDRESS:

Phone:
Email:

PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR:

ADDRESS:

Phone:
Email:

PLACEMENT:

A Guide To Calculating Time Allocation:

Agreed Tasks:	Day Of Week (during term)	Time Allotment: (hours per week incl. preparation)	Total Hours:

Supervisory meetings	.5 weekly (1 hour a fortnight)
Sermons	8-10 hours per sermon
Lay Support group:	.5 weekly (2 hours monthly)
Agreed tasks:	Allow for travel and preparation

Supervisory Conference

Regular time:
Day:
Place:

Date of Placement Commencing

Date of Placement Concluding:

Other Relevant Dates
(Particularly noting times when the student will be absent because of vacation, college, or other church responsibilities):

Where at all possible, the placement should begin and conclude with an appropriate liturgical recognition.

Statement of Goals for this Placement
(negotiated between student-intern and supervisor)

Review
At any stage, the student or supervisor may ask for an evaluation conference, to assess the relationship and/or negotiate a change of covenant or placement.

This Covenant is accepted by

_____ **Student**

_____ **Supervisor**

_____ **College:**

_____ **Date**

Evaluation of Placement by Student/intern

To be completed at mid-point and near the completion of placement

Student

Course

Year

Placement

Date

1. To what extent has the placement been able to meet the goals negotiated?

2. How has the placement assisted your own personal and spiritual growth?

3. How often have you met with your supervisor?

4. How helpful, in your judgment, were the supervisory sessions?

5. Were you able to establish a Support Group? How helpful has it been?

Signed _____ _____

Student **Supervisor**

(Please attach additional sheets if required)

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Placement Supervisor's Report on Student Placement

Supervisors Report/Evaluation (To be completed at end of placement)

Date

Name of Student _____ **Supervisor** _____

Placement

Please mark one box in each column with your evaluation of this student as:

1. Outstanding
2. Very good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Unsatisfactory

Personal Work Habits:

1 2 3 4 5

❑❑❑❑❑ Punctuality
❑❑❑❑❑ Keeping appointments
❑❑❑❑❑ Handling absences responsibly
❑❑❑❑❑ Preparation for placement activities/tasks

Relation to Church/Agency

❑❑❑❑❑ Meets church/agency obligations
❑❑❑❑❑ Understands church/agency goals and objectives
❑❑❑❑❑ Follows proper channels in functioning

Relationships with People

❑❑❑❑❑ Works comfortably with staff
❑❑❑❑❑ Relates well to others
❑❑❑❑❑ Assumes responsibility for his/her part in relationships

Functioning within Expected Role

❑❑❑❑❑ Exercises initiative in fulfilling activities/tasks
❑❑❑❑❑ Protects confidentiality
❑❑❑❑❑ Understands role as helping/enabling people
❑❑❑❑❑ Is creative in completion of activities/tasks
❑❑❑❑❑ Is a good leader

Liturgical Functioning:

❑❑❑❑❑ Communicates well an understanding of liturgical practice
❑❑❑❑❑ Appears relaxed in leadership of public worship
❑❑❑❑❑ Showing growth in preaching techniques and content
❑❑❑❑❑ Able to share reflection with others on this aspect of experience

Supervisory Relationship

❑❑❑❑❑ Assumes responsibility for participation in conferences
❑❑❑❑❑ Submits records and written work when required
❑❑❑❑❑ Handles criticism well
❑❑❑❑❑ Evaluates supervisor's suggestions before acting upon them.

How have you addressed the student's spirituality and its development and growth?

To what extent has the placement been able to meet the goals of the student?

How often have you met with the student?

How helpful in your judgment were the supervisory sessions to the student?

Please give specific evaluative comments on any item you have marked with a "U".

What are your suggestions for remedial action by the student?

Please also report

Learning goals the student has been working on.

Strengths evident in the students work in the placement.

Emergence of a ‘pastoral identity’.

Skills which need strengthening or skills needing to be acquired.

Clarity of student’s faith, relationships with/to God, ability to communicate this.

Any other comments:

Signed: _____ _____

Supervisor Student

Please retain a copy for your file and reference