Field Education
A Program for Ministerial Formation

Field education is a vital and exciting component of the Divinity School’s academic program. Ministry contexts provide abundant opportunity for action as well as reflection, enabling students to work with their personal and spiritual gifts and experiences as well as the rich conceptual material offered by the Divinity School. In these settings students are typically (1) working to clarify and test their calls to ordained or lay ministry; (2) exploring ministerial roles and identity; (3) building and strengthening the diverse skills required for ministry; and (4) learning to understand and approach ministry theologically as well as psychologically, sociologically, and organizationally.

Field Education Credit Requirements

Two units of approved field education placement are required for graduation in the Master of Divinity degree program and one for the Master in Church Ministries program. The Master of Theology and Master of Theological Studies degrees have no field requirements. A unit is defined by one term placement, either a full-time summer term of 10 or 12 weeks or an academic term of 30 weeks at minimally 10 hours per week. To be approved, the field setting must provide ministerial identity and role, distinct ministerial tasks, qualified on-site supervision, a service-learning covenant, regular supervision conferences, and effective evaluation.

To qualify for credit the student must apply and be approved for a credited placement, develop and complete a learning covenant with acceptable quality of work, cooperate with the supervisor, and prepare an evaluation of the experience. Evaluation will be done by the field supervisor, student, lay committee, and field education staff. The student’s faculty advisor will review the evaluations and render the appropriate credit towards graduation.

Prerequisite for the initial field placement is enrollment in or completion of one of the designated Church’s Ministry electives. Prerequisite for the second placement in the M.Div. program is completion of 16 academic credits and the first field placement. The first placement must be completed within 12 months of the completion of the Church’s Ministry course, the second following the midler evaluation.

Guiding Ministerial Formation

Development of readiness for ministry is the responsibility of each student. If the field education staff has reservations about a student’s readiness for a field placement, they will specify requirements preparatory to the assignment. If the student requests,
a committee consisting of the student’s faculty adviser, a member of the Field Education Committee, and a member of the field education staff will review the staff’s decision. Divinity School admissions materials, faculty perceptions, evaluation by the field education staff, and, if necessary, additional professional evaluation will be used. This committee will approve the field assignment or refer the student to remedial avenues of personal and professional development, including, if necessary, a leave of absence or withdrawal from school. Such action will be referred to the Academic Policies Committee for inclusion in assessment of that student’s progress toward graduation. When, for whatever reason, a student’s evaluation from a field setting raises questions about his/her ministerial learning and/or growth, or his/her use of the setting for those purposes, the same committee may be convened to assess the student and the experience in order to make appropriate recommendations to the Academic Policies Committee.

Field Settings for Ministerial Formation

Students may elect to meet their field learning requirement in one of several ways. They may volunteer in ministry. The setting must meet the requirements set by the Divinity School, but students, with the direction of the office of field education, have latitude in selecting their settings. They must invest a minimum of 300 hours in preparation and presence, a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 30 weeks in the setting, and comply with the requirements specified by the Divinity School.

Students may use a setting where they have found employment by a congregation or church agency (self-initiated placement). Again, approval by the office of field education for credit, 300 hours of preparation and presence, at least 10 hours per week, plus compliance with Divinity School requirements regarding setting, supervision, and structure are required.

Field placements are often made in settings that have been developed and approved by the Divinity School. These offer opportunities for ministerial service with supervision, appropriate identity, and evaluation. All these settings meet field placement requirements.

A variety of ministry settings is available for particular student goals: parish settings (rural, suburban, and urban patterns); institutional settings (public housing, mental retardation centers, and retirement homes); campus ministry settings (positions on the campuses of a variety of schools) urban ministries, and overseas congregations.

While the Divinity School offers this rich diversity of settings for personal and ministerial formation, the large majority of placements fall in local churches in small communities. Because of the Divinity School’s ties with the United Methodist Church, most field placements occur in that tradition. However, the Divinity School will do everything possible to assist every student in finding at least one placement in his or her own denominational tradition. Each student is required to complete one credit in a local church setting, unless permitted by the Field Education Committee to do otherwise.

Student pastors may use their call or appointment for placement credit by registering with the field education office, participating in an assigned mentoring group, and submitting requisite evaluation materials.

Master of Divinity students may use a basic unit of clinical pastoral education to meet one placement requirement.

Pre-Enrollment Ministry Discernment Program

Each year, during the summer prior to enrollment, the Divinity School offers up to 10 entering United Methodist Master of Divinity students an opportunity to explore the
nature of the church, the role of ministry, their personal 'gifts and graces' for ministry, their persons in relation to the office of ministry and the implications of these experiences for their emerging Christian vocation.

Anticipating the first year of theological education and the first field education placement, this program provides students close-range introduction to the nature and dynamics of the practice of ministry under trained and committed pastoral supervisors and lay persons. Orientation events and theological reflection exercises conducted at three-week intervals together with in-course Divinity students provide critical support and learning opportunities which enhance the process of spiritual, vocational and personal discernment. Honest perspective from pastors and laity on the students' use of this opportunity gives students an early read on their potential for leadership in the community of faith.

These experiences fall exclusively within United Methodist congregations in the state of North Carolina, primarily in rural or semi-rural settings. They provide a $3,450 salary, a $4,300 scholarship, and room, board and travel expense for the 10-week term. Ordinarily, 10-week terms begin the Memorial Day weekend and conclude the second Sunday of August. In order to participate in this program, students must have access to personal transportation and be available to serve anywhere in North Carolina.

Since the Ministry Discernment Program occurs prior to enrollment at Duke Divinity School and, thus, participants have neither enrolled in nor completed the prerequisite Church Ministry elective, such placements will not receive field education placement credit.

**Internship Program**

A full-time internship embraces both a full-time salaried position and a learning commitment in a single context over a six- to 12-month period. These opportunities provide in-depth practice of ministry skills particular to the student's field placement setting and vocational goals. Internships must encompass an advanced level of specialized field experience that is more complex and extensive in its serving and learning potential than the basic field education short-term placement. The internship may be individually designed to meet the needs and interests of the student, provided that the plan includes a student learning covenant, approved supervisory standards, and an investigation-research project acceptable to the assigned faculty adviser. When these components are satisfactorily met and the evaluation reports are filed, credit for up to two courses may be assigned to the internship. No additional academic credit may be accumulated during the intern year. Grading for the two course credits will be on a pass/fail basis.

Internship settings may be student-initiated or negotiated by the school. In either case an agency contract covering all agreements must be made and filed with the office of field education. Types of settings occasionally available for internship placement include campus ministry and college chaplaincy positions; parish ministry positions such as associate pastor or director of education; and institutional positions.

To be eligible to register for an internship, the student must have completed at least one-half of his/her degree program and be registered as a student in good standing in the Divinity School. Application forms and processing for internships will be done through the office of field education.

**Students Serving As Pastors**

Students frequently serve as pastors of churches or part-time associates during the period of their study in the Divinity School. These appointments or calls are arranged by the appropriate denominational official or body. The Divinity School recognizes this arrangement and recommends that the student consult with the office of field...
education, as agent of the dean, before accepting an appointment as pastor or associate pastor.

The office of field education cannot arrange these appointments or calls. This is within the jurisdiction of denominational authorities, and students should initiate their own arrangements. The office of field education, however, requires a student application for appointment prior to accepting one. The office also provides area church officials with recommendations for students upon request.

Students who serve in these capacities ordinarily may enroll in no more than three courses per semester, thus requiring eight semesters to complete the Master of Divinity degree. Student pastors are not permitted to enroll in summer study of any kind. Relaxation of this requirement requires the permission (on the appropriate form) of the supervising church official, the pastor-parish or other personnel committee, the field education staff, and the senior associate dean for academic programs. Students are strongly and actively discouraged from attempting to commute more than 50 miles one-way on a daily basis. Extensive commuting will jeopardize the student's academic program, health, ministry, and family life.

In keeping with the goal of the school to develop competence in ministry, students should use their pastoral appointments as learning contexts. Student pastor mentoring groups, comprised of four to six students together with a learned pastor, meet weekly for counsel, direction, and critical theological reflection. Biennial evaluation is required in the pastor's parish. If all the conditions outlined for credit are met, and all reports are completed and filed at the appropriate time, credit may be extended. If, however, the parish setting proves inadequate for the student's needs for ministerial growth and development, the field education staff will convene a review committee consisting of the student's faculty advisor, a member of the Field Education Committee, and one of the field education staff to review the student's needs and take appropriate action to assist the student in growth. Examples of such action are: requiring an alternative field experience, or a basic unit of clinical pastoral education, psychological evaluation, personal therapy, spiritual direction, and leave of absence from the school.

Clinical Pastoral Education Policy

Students will have the following options for completing a unit in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). The new policy applies to CPE units taken either during the academic year or during the summer.

CPE WITHOUT ACADEMIC CREDIT

1. Conference/Judicatory Requirement — Many denominational conferences and judicatories are now requiring candidates for ministry to complete a unit of clinical pastoral education in an accredited CPE center. To satisfy this requirement, a student may enroll in an accredited Association of Clinical Pastoral Educators (ACPE) CPE program of his/her choice. The student is responsible for paying the CPE center directly for all fees related to enrollment in and completion of the unit. The student is also responsible for having the CPE center mail directly to the office of field education the original or certified copy of the supervisor's final evaluation indicating the unit was successfully completed and a full unit of CPE credit extended. The office of field education will be responsible for notifying the student's appropriate denominational/judicatory officials regarding successful completion of the required CPE unit.

2. Field Education Requirement — Students may also use a unit of clinical pastoral education to fulfill the first or the second field education
requirement. In this case, a student must initially consult with the director of field education and then enroll in an accredited ACPE CPE program. The student is also responsible for having the CPE center mail directly to the office of field education the original or certified copy of the supervisor’s final evaluation indicating the unit was successfully completed and a full unit of CPE credit extended. The office of field education will then notify the Divinity School registry to this effect, and field education credit will be recorded. Field education credit for a CPE unit is granted on the basis of the office of field education staff’s approval of both the program and experience.

3. Personal/Professional Growth — Students may enroll in a unit of clinical pastoral education for the sole purpose of personal growth and professional/pastoral skills development (no judicatory and/or field education credits are needed/requested). The student is responsible for paying the CPE center directly for all fees related to enrollment in and completion of the unit.

CPE WITH ACADEMIC CREDIT

1. Academic Credit — In all cases above, if a student also desires academic credit (2 course credits) for an accredited clinical pastoral education unit, then he/she must register for CPE 100 or CPE 200 during the Divinity School course registration period. The student will be responsible for the Divinity School tuition costs related to the CPE unit’s two-course equivalency. The Divinity School tuition charge for these two course credits will be at the current Divinity School tuition rate at the time the academic credit is officially recorded on the student’s record. The respective CPE center’s fee will be paid by the Divinity School (up to $450—if the center’s fee is more than $450, the student is responsible for the difference). The student is also responsible for having the CPE center mail directly to the office of field education the original or certified copy of the supervisor’s final evaluation indicating the unit was successfully completed and a full unit of CPE credit extended. The office of field education will then notify the Divinity School registry to this effect, and academic credit for two courses will be recorded.

The Divinity School will consider academic credit for CPE units completed in prior semesters. However, the Divinity School will not reimburse the student for CPE center fees incurred. In these cases, the student will pay the current Divinity School tuition rate at the time the academic credit is officially recorded on the student’s record. Approval of the academic credit for a CPE unit from an ACPE accredited agency will be determined by the director of field education and the academic dean.