

Pacific School of Religion

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OFFICES OF FIELD EDUCATION AND CONTEXTUAL LEARNING

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FIELD EDUCATION AT PSR

Your congregation or community agency can offer valuable Field Education experience for PSR students.

An important part of theological education at Pacific School of Religion is field education for students in congregations and community agencies. Field education integrates academic study, spiritual discipline, and the practice of ministry. It is the portion of the MDiv curriculum that involves students in supervised work in ministry in PSR-approved ministry settings.

Criteria for placements

Field Education differs from field work, unsupervised church employment, and other employment because it requires:

- Involvement in significant learning opportunities for the full range of the work of ministry;
- Ten-fifteen hours a week in an approved setting;
- Development of a learning/serving covenant at the beginning of each semester as the first step in the self-directed, self-reflective learning process;
- Regular reflection sessions, one hour weekly, with an on-site mentor;
- Written evaluations by the mentor and the seminarian that are submitted to the Field Education Office at the end of each semester;
- Regular feedback from a constituency group (Teaching Parish Committee or Teaching Agency Committee) concerning the seminarian's growth and level of competency;
- And, for students in Concurrent Field Education, participation in a weekly seminar throughout the academic year in which there is disciplined reflection on the practice of ministry.

Mentors within the local area are expected to participate in 2-3 scheduled meetings with Field Education faculty during the academic year, usually two in the Fall and one in the Spring. Orientation training for mentors occurs in late August, before the start of the Fall semester.

Frequently Asked Questions: Churches and Agencies

Q: What should we be thinking about in order to offer a good placement?

A: Students need an opportunity to prepare themselves for a leadership role and to stretch into areas of ministry that may be new to them. While the student's work may focus in a particular area, it is expected that s/he will be exposed in significant ways to the whole ministry of the setting chosen. In offering a placement, it is helpful to reflect on all the elements of the ministry and to be open to considering what ways a student may both learn and contribute. The student's work with you is shaped by the learning needs of the student as well as the needs of the congregation or agency.

Q: What is required of the mentoring role?

A: A mentor is expected to meet with the student for an hour each week. Those sessions are not staff meeting time, but rather time for reflection on the work and the student's learning. Mentors are required to write evaluations of the student's work at the end of each semester. Regular meetings with Field Education faculty and other mentors provide training and support for those serving in this role.

Q: Do others in the congregation/organization also have a role?

A: The congregation or agency and the student develop ways for the student to receive regular feedback from the laity of the congregation or the constituency of the agency. This group meets monthly with the student to provide additional perspectives on the ministry and to give feedback on the student's work.

Q: How many hours of work are expected from seminarians?

A: Students in concurrent field education are expected to spend a total of 15 hours per week which includes the hour of mentoring, any staff meeting time, and preparation.

Q: May we start looking for a student as soon as we've decided to offer a placement?

A: During the first week of March, all part time concurrent placements for the following academic year are announced to students. Though we welcome information about possible placements at any time during the year, we announce them all at once to give students fair access. We ask that interviews be conducted during March and early April. As decisions are made, it is important that our office be notified.

Q: We've offered a placement, but no one has called. What should we do?

A: Students are encouraged to seek placements that further their own vocational goals. Since the group of students is different each year, it is difficult to predict what the interests and needs will be. There are always more placements offered than can be filled by students; however, a placement left open one year may be filled the next.

Arranging a Placement: For Congregations and Agencies

Field education placements may be **part time (concurrent)** or **full time (internship)** during the academic year. As an elective option, students may receive academic credit for **full time summer** placements.

Congregations and agencies interested in offering a placement and able to provide the requisite mentoring should [download and submit the Notice of Field Education Opportunity](#) form to the Field Education office. Please include a brief description of the ministry setting and the needs and learning opportunities. The Field Education office notifies students of available placements. Students are responsible for contacting and interviewing with placements suitable to their vocational goals.

Field Education faculty and staff are available for assistance and guidance in the placement process, but the final decision and acceptance is the responsibility of the congregation or agency and the student. Both parties need to be explicit about their expectations. These expectations need to be communicated clearly to members of the congregation or constituents of the agency and to appropriate denominational or organizational personnel and committees.

Congregations and agencies should be aware of the financial needs of seminarians, since many have left paying jobs to make time for field education. The Field Education office may be consulted about financial remuneration; however, all financial arrangements are negotiated between the congregation or agency and the student.

The timeline for offering placements may vary depending on whether it is a full time or part time placement. Concurrent (part time) field education opportunities are announced to students in early March for the following academic year. Students are expected to notify the Field Education office of their placements by mid-April.

PSR is grateful for the partnership of congregations and agencies in preparing seminarians for ministry and community leadership. We recognize and appreciate the commitment made to seminarians in providing mentoring and an opportunity to be learners.

Field Education office: 510-849-8238

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