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Welcome to Palmer Seminary’s Theological Field Education (TFE) program! It is our hope that your experiences in TFE will enhance your overall seminary experience and help you to become a more effective servant leader in the church and in the world.

Theological Field Education is the place in the curriculum where academic theory is tested and tried. It is the place where you can be challenged to not only teach and preach your theology, but live it. It is the place where you can develop your gifts, discern your calling, and have the opportunity to be the Body of Christ in the world.

Theological Field Education is what you make it: we challenge you to enter into this process with an open mind and a teachable spirit. The more you “put into” TFE, the more you will gain. It is a life-changing experience for those who dare to embrace it.

So—welcome to TFE. May your experience be a blessing and a challenge, to the glory of God.

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Purpose

"The Whole Gospel for the Whole World through Whole Persons", Palmer Theological Seminary’s (PTS) motto, calls us to understand the broad purpose of theological education: providing supervised experience in ministry to prepare the whole person to respond to the Gospel imperative to meet the varied challenges of our changing world.

Palmer Theological Seminary’s understanding is that TFE is an integral part of Seminary training. Using an action/reflection style of learning, Seminarians are enabled to test their vocational calling, utilize persons and events as sources of theological and ministry learning, and integrate theory with practice. Theological Field Education provides a grounding of students’ seminary training in ministry experience, enabling the development of professional competency and confidence in ministerial identity and authority.

We are preparing students for the wider church. TFE is an opportunity to experience a variety of ministry settings.

Who We Are

Palmer Seminary has vested Supervised Ministries with responsibility for these programs: Theological Field Education (TFE), Clinical Pastoral Care (CPC), Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), and Placement Information. TFE is our largest program. Please feel free to visit us online or call to receive information about our programs.

Curriculum Options for Student Internships

Palmer students have several options to complete their ministry and clinical internship requirements for the M.Div. degree. This may not apply for students who matriculated at Palmer before Fall 2011.

Option 1: TFE 1A & 1B (SUPV520 & 521) at Level 2, earning 2 credits
TFE 2A & 2B (SUPV530 & 531) at Level 3, earning 2 credits
CPC (SUPV522) at Level 2 or 3, earning 2 credits

Option 2: TFE 1A & 1B (SUPV520 & 521) at Level 2, earning 2 credits
TFE 2A & 2B (SUPV530 & 531) at Level 3, earning 2 credits
CPE (SUPV532) at Level 2 or 3, earning 2 credits for ½ Unit of CPE

Option 3: CPE (SUPV532) recommended at Level 2, earning 4 credits for 1 Unit of CPE
TFE 1A & 1B (SUPV520 & 521) at Level 2 or 3, earning 2 credits

Student Readiness for TFE

Prerequisites for TFE 1A & 1B are as follows:

- Minimum 20 units completed
- CM502 Intro to Pastoral Care or CM522 Holistic Habits for Ministry or PRMN510 Foundations of Pastoral Care and Counseling
- INT501/SFRM510 Spiritual Formation
• CT M 501 Systematic Theology I or THLE 520 Systematic Theology and Ethics: Vision of Community (may be taken concurrently and must be successfully completed in the fall semester of the TFE year in order to continue in TFE)

**Prerequisites** for 2A & 2B are as follows:
- Minimum 40 units completed
- CM 507/508 Middler Theological Field Education or SUPV 520/521 TFE 1A & 1B completed

Entrance to the TFE program is singular, in September of each year.

**Academic Requirements and PTS Policies**

TFE requirements are based on the academic policies and procedures of PTS, with adaptations made for the contextual education component that is also required.

Faculty has mandated that no student shall be waived from Theological Field Education. The amount of reading and written material required for successful completion of TFE 1A & 1B and TFE 2A & 2B meet the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and Palmer Theological Seminary standards required for granting one-unit of credit per semester.

Given the participatory nature of TFE, attendance in the TFE seminar group is **mandatory**. Small group dynamics are impacted by absences; therefore, students are expected to attend all classes. Work cannot be made up outside of class. Students are expected to arrive on time and to remain for the duration of the class. Tardiness of ten minutes or more for any three seminars will constitute one absence. Students are allowed no more than two excused absences for each semester. Therefore, students are strongly encouraged to restrict absences for emergency needs only. Collegiality and confidentiality are essential to the effectiveness of the seminar group formation.

Extensions given for written work must follow the guidelines in the PTS Student Handbook (Policy on Incomplete Coursework/ Requests for Extensions). The Supervised Ministries Administrative Leadership Team represents the faculty in this case. No exceptions to the printed guidelines will be accepted.

A failure to comply with the requirements of the course will result in a designation of "No Credit" for the course. Theological Field Education courses are required for graduation with the M. Div. degree. The successful completion of both semesters is required to earn credit for each.

All correspondence concerning TFE will be forwarded to students via "eastern.edu" accounts.

**Any Seminary forms that require an official TFE signature (e.g. Verification form), must come from the Supervised Ministries’ Office.**
PTS International Student Policy

The Primary Designated School Official (DSO) for Palmer Theological Seminary is the Director of International Student and Scholar Services for all of Eastern University, whose office is located on the St. Davids campus. There is also a DSO with signature authority in the Palmer Admissions Office. International students on an F-1 visa must have curricular practical training (CPT) authorization added to their I-20 when starting TFE or CPE. For questions about international student policy or to request CPT authorization, please contact:

Rev. Kathy Kautz de Arango, Director of International Student and Scholar Services, Phone: 610.341.5870 E-mail: kautz2@eastern.edu

Theological Field Education Structure

Partners in Theological Field Education include the ministry site, Site Team, Pastor/Mentor and Supervised Ministries teaching faculty and staff. In addition, students are part of a weekly Seminar Group. Definitions of these terms may be found in the Glossary of the TFE Handbook.

The following represents the interwoven relationships among the various TFE partners:

Weekly seminar groups are formed through the Supervised Ministries Office (SMO) with the intention of creating diverse groups. Students who are being mentored in the same TFE Ministry Site must attend different weekly Seminar groups. Students are responsible for notifying the SMO immediately if they are placed in a group that has an intern serving in the same TFE Ministry Site. In most cases, this will result in a change in the group membership. The Supervised Ministries office is responsible for addressing any student concerns about the Seminar group.
Theological Field Education Policies

Policies for TFE are established within the Supervised Ministries department and are in alignment with the academic policies and procedures of Palmer Seminary. Adaptations are made for the contextual education component that is required.

Attendance

Given the participatory nature of TFE, attendance in the TFE seminar group is mandatory. Small group dynamics are impacted by absences; therefore, students are expected to attend all classes. Work cannot be made up outside of class. Students are expected to arrive on time and to remain for the duration of the class. Tardiness of ten minutes or more for any three seminars will constitute one absence. Students are allowed no more than two excused absences for each semester. Therefore, students are strongly encouraged to restrict absences for emergency needs only.

Consultation with the Supervised Ministries Office

Students with issues related to their ministry site placement and its continuation, relationship to their Pastor/Mentor, absences from class and other concerns related to the structure of the internship and its grading should contact staff members of the Supervised Ministries Office.

Code of Ethics

It is expected that all the participants in Theological Field Education (Seminarian, Pastor/Mentor, Site Team, Supervised Ministries’ staff and TFE faculty) be committed to the standards of ethics of the Christian church, which promotes the dignity and worth of all persons. We are accountable for our ministry as expressed in relationship to parishioners, clients, members of the community, Seminarians, Pastor/Mentors, churches, agencies, and the seminary. Commitment to the following standards is expected in Theological Field Education internships.

Avoid discrimination against or refusing pastoral assistance or educational opportunity to anyone on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, age or physical attributes.

Do not engage in any forms of harassment, abusive words, or actions, or exploitative coercion.

In this context, all forms of sexual behavior or harassment by Pastor/Mentor, Seminarian, or parishioner/client within the framework of the pastoral internship are unethical, even when a parishioner or client invites or consents to such behavior. Sexual behavior includes, but is not limited to, seductive speech, gestures and behavior, and physical contact of a sexual nature. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, comments, gestures or physical contacts of a sexual nature.

Confidentiality of the parishioner, client, and Seminarian is expected. Records are to be kept in a manner that assures security. Communication from Seminarian, parishioners and
Pastor/Mentor are treated with professional confidence. Confidences are not disclosed except:

- as mandated by law
- to prevent a clear and immediate danger to someone
- for purposes of supervision or consultation, or
- by previously obtained written permission.

**Pastor/Mentors, Supervised Ministries' staff and TFE faculty do not engage in ongoing psychological counseling with Supervised Ministries' students.**

Seminarians engage in ministry appropriate to their level of training and within the boundaries of their serving/learning covenants. They are not to engage in professional services beyond their training, level of experience and competence.

Seminarians are also responsible to uphold Conduct and Standards expectations as set forth in the PTS Student Handbook.

Charges of violation of these ethical standards are to be reported to the Administrative Leadership Team, or the Director of Supervised Ministries. In the case of charges filed against the Director, they are to be reported to the Dean of Palmer Theological Seminary for evaluation.

**Full Disclosure**

Pastor/Mentors are required to offer full disclosure of the Seminarian’s performance and conduct while under their supervision. Disclosure of misconduct will be directed to the Supervised Ministries Director and the Administrative Leadership Team.

**Pastor/Mentor Confirmation**

Qualifications for Pastor/Mentors of Palmer Seminary students include an earned Masters level degree in theology from an institution accredited by the US Department of Education and a minimum of 2 years of competent parish or professional ministry experience. Pastor/Mentors who are ordained may be accepted into the TFE program at Palmer with 10 years of competent ministry experience in lieu of a Master’s degree. Pastor/Mentors must have completed, or be willing to complete, TFE 700 The Ministry of Supervision - the training event offered by the Seminary every fall (and sometimes spring). The purpose of this training is to clearly communicate the PTS Field Education process and expectations, striving to foster the best first field education experience for all partners. Certification training must be completed within the academic year that the Pastor/Mentor serves in this capacity. Pastor/Mentors will not be considered for a second year of service until they have completed TFE 700. (Also see “Criteria for selecting a Pastor/Mentor” Section 5, Handbook)

**Ministry Site Confirmation**

The Supervised Ministries Office must approve all TFE ministry site placements for participation in the program. Official notification of non-approval will be communicated to
the ministry setting. All ministry site placements must be fully endorsed by the Pastor/Mentor and, when appropriate, by congregational leadership. In instances where the Pastor/Mentor is off-site, endorsement comes from the ministry site, where the intern serves. Students may complete both levels of TFE in the same site, (except in the case of the Home Church Waiver which is not automatically renewed), but are not required to do so. Students should check with their denomination for other requirements.

Ministry Site Supervisory Personnel

No member of the Seminarian’s family may serve as their Pastor/Mentor or serve on the Site Team. Current Palmer Seminarians may not be considered for supervisory positions regardless of years and quality of ministry experience, nor may they serve on Site Teams. Please refer to the section “Pastor/Mentor Confirmation” for further requirements. Non-traditional placements and supervisors will be assessed based upon their graduate education and professional experience equivalent to the M. Div. standard. Theological Reflection, even in a non-traditional placement, is a core educational component of the supervisory experience. Non-traditional placements refer to any site other than the local church.

Early Termination

The Seminarian is expected to serve in the same TFE placement for the duration of both fall and spring semesters. As agreed in the Serving Learning Covenant, neither the Seminarian nor the Pastor/Mentor may terminate the TFE ministry site placement without approval of the Supervised Ministries Office. If the internship is terminated by the Seminarian without approval, a grade of “No Credit” may be given to the student for the year. When an internship is terminated, the Office will determine the next step. This may include participation in individual reflection on the circumstances of that departure. This reflection would take place with a staff member of Supervised Ministries for the duration of the academic year. The purpose of this singular work is educational; it is an opportunity for learning from the experience through guided reflection.

Home Church Policy

It is the policy of Supervised Ministries that no Seminarian may serve in their Home Church except with the expressed written consent of the Director and Administrative Leadership Team. Approval of one Seminarian’s proposal does not constitute precedent for another Seminarian to obtain approval. Each proposal is treated as unique. Exemption from this policy may be granted under the following conditions and are for one year only (students may reapply for a second year):

A. If the Seminarian gives evidence that he/she is the Senior pastor of the ministry site in consideration.

B. If the Seminarian is not a Senior pastor:
   1. A completed Home Church Waiver Application must be submitted to the Office of Supervised Ministries
2. An interview/meeting between the Seminarian and the Administrative Leadership Team or Director may be required.
3. An interview/meeting between the potential Pastor/Mentor and the Administrative Leadership Team or the Director of Supervised Ministries may be required.

*A Home Church is defined as:
A church of origin, in which the Seminarian acquired membership or devoted a substantial amount of time in fellowship.

or
A church in which the Seminarian has developed a substantial relationship with the congregation either as a layperson or as part of ministerial leadership.

Applications for a waiver from the Home Church Policy may be obtained in the Supervised Ministry offices. The application and all other supporting materials need to be submitted to the SM Office for review and action. The SM Office will make a decision within two weeks of receipt of the completed waiver application.

Theological Field Education Elective Internship - SUPV650 Information
(Full course syllabus available on the Supervised Ministries website)

Course Description
This elective internship offers the possibility of an intensive serving/learning experience in ministry. Arrangements must be negotiated with and approved by the Supervised Ministries office. The Seminarian may earn up to a total of 7 units in Theological Field Education of which only three may be electives. These 3 units are in addition to the units required of TFE students in the M.Div. degree track.

A total of 3 units may be given.

One unit = 120 - 140 Contact Hours
Two units = 240 - 280 Contact Hours
Three units = 360 - 420 Contact Hours

TFE elective is not an independent study and cannot be taken in lieu of SUPV 520/521 (TFE 1A & 1B) or SUPV 530/531 (TFE 2A & 2B).

All electives must be pre-approved by the Supervised Ministries Office no later than 30 days prior to the appropriate registration period. Registration forms for TFE electives are in the Supervised Ministries Office. Consultation with your academic advisor is necessary to insure fulfillment of requirements for graduation.

Desired Course Learning Outcomes
1. Develop personal and professional skills through the implementation of the serving/learning covenant
2. Integrate theory, theology and tradition with the practice of ministry
3. Perform with increasing competence in the broader dimensions of ministry
4. Learn appropriate methods of theological reflection on ministry experience
5. Engage in relationships of support and evaluation with peers, supervisor, laity and faculty
6. Develop a philosophy of life-long learning and collegiality
Course Prerequisites (√)
- Minimum 20 units completed
- CM502 Intro to Pastoral Care or CM522 Holistic Habits for Ministry or PRMN510 Foundations of Pastoral Care and Counseling
- INT501/SFRM510 Spiritual Formation
- CTM501 Systematic Theology I or THLE520 Systematic Theology and Ethics: Vision of Community

Process Steps (to apply for SUPV650 Elective Credits)
- I have met/consulted with the Supervised Ministries Office. Date: ___________
- I have received, read, and accept the SUPV650 packet, which includes program guidelines and Internship requirements.
- I have submitted my proposal (components outlined below) for approval 30 days prior to the appropriate registration period.

Requirements
1. The Seminarian must submit a proposal to the Supervised Ministries Office including the following information:
   a) Define your learning goals for the internship. (see “Tips for Writing Goals” included in the SUPV650 syllabus)
   b) Diagram your projected time involvement, including contact hours, areas of responsibility, study and preparation.
   c) Submit a comprehensive job description.
   d) Duration of your internship.
   e) Indicate time designated for regular supervision.
   f) A signed letter of agreement from pastor/mentor and related-church or agency.

2. Read and write book critiques for at least two assigned texts recommended by the pastor/mentor due respectively at the 1/3 and 2/3 markers in the internship. These critiques will be read, responded to and returned to the seminarian by the pastor/mentor. (Use the format for Reading Critiques included in the SUPV650 syllabus)

   Write 5 Theological Reflection Papers for each unit of credit for this course. Use the format for Reflection Papers included in the SUPV650 syllabus. These papers will be read, responded to by the mentor, and returned to the seminarian. A critical incident report or verbatim may be substituted for the Theological Reflection Paper.

3. Your internship may afford you the opportunity to participate in an interdisciplinary group while serving at your placement site. This component will depend entirely on the particular pastor/mentor and facility. As a part of this interdisciplinary learning you, at times, might be required to attend and participate in selected in-service training or interdisciplinary event.

4. The Administrative Leadership Team of the Department will have the option to assign additional readings and assignments related to the internship experience.

5. Both the pastor/mentor and the seminarian will be required to complete an end-of-the-internship summary. (Use the End-of-Service evaluation forms included in the SUPV650 syllabus)

6. The final grade will be "Credit" or "No-Credit".
7. All requirements for the TFE elective must be completed according to the dates approved in the proposal. Requests for extensions shall be filed with the Department within 2 weeks of the date set for completion in the proposal. 

All work must be filed with the Supervised Ministries Office.  
[TFE Elective Internship Syllabi and Details are available from Supervised Ministries]

**TFE and Technology**

**Communication:**  
All correspondence concerning TFE will be forwarded to students via “eastern.edu” accounts.

**On-line Learning and Theological Field Education (TFE):**  
Palmer Theological Seminary courses utilize on-line learning in a variety of ways. Some courses are taught entirely on-line while others, such as TFE, are considered to be web-enhanced courses. As a web-enhanced course we utilize the resources of technology but do not use them as the sole means of instruction.

**All Students:**  
The Handbook is available on-line as are all of the forms. This makes the Handbook and forms readily available to pastoral interns at www.palmerseminary.edu/current-students/supministries. Once on the Supervised Ministries Homepage click on “Field Education Program”. You can then navigate from section to section. All forms are included and can be downloaded to print. While the assessments (mid- or end of year) are combined in a single form, the questions for each partner are different.

**Pastor/Mentors and Site Teams:**  
The Handbook is available on-line as are all of the forms. This makes the Handbook readily available to you and your ministry site at www.palmerseminary.edu/current-students/supministries. Once on the Supervised Ministries Homepage click on “Field Education Program”. You can then navigate from section to section. All forms are included and can be downloaded.

**Seminar Groups & Blackboard:**  
Seminar Groups may use Blackboard for discussion, information sharing, assignment tracking and group announcements. Your group will be identified by your Seminar Leader’s name and level (TFE 1A & 1B or TFE 2A & 2B). You will use the same password that you have received for use with your eastern.edu/myEastern account. Your Seminar Leader will let you know to what extent your group is using Blackboard. TFE assignment forms and program documents are not available on Blackboard, but are instead on the TFE website.

**Technical Support:**  
- For information including tutorials and FAQ about Tech support: http://www.eastern.edu/helpdesk/index.html
- For Academic Computing (Email/Computer Lab/Wireless Access): 484-384-2937 or semis@eastern.edu or Richard White, PC Support Technician and User Support, East Falls, Palmer Theological Seminary, 18th & JFK Academic Computing rwhite@eastern.edu
The following glossary for Theological Field Education represents terms useful for all TFE partners.

**A. People and Places**

- **Pastoral Intern** is the Seminarian enrolled in Theological Field Education. The experience is comprised of supervised ministry and faculty-led weekly seminars. Some seminarians serve in approved ministry sites new to them while others may function within established calls to the pastorate.

- **Ministry Site** is the church/agency where Seminarians serve and learn with persons in professional and lay ministry. While recognizing that some Seminarians may serve in full-time pastoral positions, which are year-round, Theological Field Education credit requires a minimum 10-12 hours-per-week commitment in ministry from September through May. Students must begin placement in an approved setting before September 30. Students may complete both levels of TFE in the same site, (except in the case of the Home Church Waiver which is not automatically renewed), but are not required to do so. Students should check with their denomination for other requirements.

- **Pastor/Mentor** is the professional person in the field who is responsible for guiding and supporting the Seminarian’s serving and learning. This person (usually a parish pastor, agency director, denominational leader or chaplain) provides a significant function in the Theological Field Education of the Seminarian. Some serve as mentors to pastoral interns while not practicing ministry in the same site as the intern. We designate these mentors as “Off-Site” Pastor/Mentors. A key requirement of this education is the weekly meeting with the Seminarian for reflection in the supervisory conferences. The Pastor/Mentor must agree with the program’s philosophy and participate in its training events. The structure of the supervisory conferences between interns and their mentors may be different for Off-site mentors (see Section 5 for additional information).

- **Site Team** is the lay group that represents the larger church/agency in providing a channel of communication, education, and feedback between Seminarian and congregation or agency in an atmosphere of support, accountability and practice of ministry experience. This group meets 6-8 times throughout the year (monthly) and contributes to the mid-year and final evaluations of the Pastoral Intern.

- **Seminar Group** is the gathering of students that meets weekly at the Seminary for theological reflection upon ministerial experiences for the sake of learning and growing. Written reflection papers/case studies are presented for discussion by students. The seminars are facilitated by TFE faculty.
Theological Field Education Faculty and Staff are the seminary personnel who coordinate and implement the program of Theological Field Education. This includes the Director of Supervised Ministries, the Administrative Leadership Team, the Coordinator, and TFE faculty.

TFE Partners are the Supervised Ministries Office/Palmer, the Pastor/Mentor, the Site Team, and the Pastoral Intern.

B. Common Terms
Guidelines for participation in the program are based upon an assumption that Theological Field Education is central to and concurrent with one's seminary education for maximum benefit and growth.

Serving/Learning Covenant is the basic agreement that defines the relationship between Seminarian and church/agency in light of mutual expectations, commitments, and obligations. The covenant must be negotiated, completed, signed, and submitted to the Supervised Ministries Office by October 15th in order to participate in the program. The covenant is not to be terminated prior to a meeting of the Seminarian, the Pastor/Mentor, the Director or a member of the Administrative Leadership Team of Supervised Ministries and when possible, the Site Team chairperson. The Seminarian and Pastor/Mentor negotiate hours, including holidays and January Term.

Theological Field Education Internship involves a time commitment to the Theological Field Education ministry site of 10 to 12 hours per week.

Financial Remuneration of at least $12.00 - $15.00 per hour is strongly recommended, but it is recognized that some ministry sites are able to offer more and others offer less. While this is only one of the considerations in deciding upon a Theological Field Education site placement, increasing expenses are a concern for Seminarians. We encourage both Seminarians and Pastor/Mentors to think of other benefits that can be given when financial remuneration is not possible. Compensation from internships is taxable income requiring a federal W-2 form. U.S. Department of Justice form I-538 is required for all international students.

Diverse Ministry Experience is desired for each Seminarian. While the church/agency has particular ministry needs, the Seminarian needs to be challenged for professional growth by a full spectrum of ministry opportunities. The church/agency, Pastor/Mentor, and Seminarian need to work together to make this possible.

Theological Reflection is the process of reflection upon ministry that is used with intentionality in the Seminarian's Theological Field Education seminars. Theological Reflection always concludes with the question: What does God require of me in this situation? The principles of that process undergird the supervisory conference with the Pastor/Mentor, in meetings of the Site Team with the Seminarian and in participation in the TFE seminar.
Media Interaction Reviews provide the opportunity to think and to reflect upon theological themes as they are expressed through performance art and film.

Assessments are related to the Serving Learning Covenant. They are:
(a) Appraisal by the Seminarian, Pastor/Mentor, and the Site Team concerning their covenant-keeping, and
(b) Assessment of the Seminarian’s growth. While this is to be an ongoing process among Seminarian, Pastor/Mentor, and Site Team, two written assessments are slated per academic year. The mid-year and end of year assessments will be administered among all three partners. Evaluations are to be jointly shared and discussed. The Seminarian is responsible to return the completed and signed evaluation forms to the Supervised Ministries Office. Note that the assessment forms may be different for each of the TFE partners.
(c) Students are encouraged to assess their progress and growth throughout the year informally.
(d) Throughout the year, the seminar groups will be involved in group evaluations. Written evaluations are requested at the end of each semester.
Section Seven: Site Team Guidelines and Information

A Guide for the Site Team

Site Team Training

Journey of the Site Team

Students are expected to download their forms and those of the other TFE partners, as necessary. All forms are available online: www.palmerseminary.edu/current-students/supministries/fielded
Welcome to Palmer Seminary’s Theological Field Education (TFE) program! We are delighted that you have agreed to partner with Palmer Theological Seminary in the educational experience of preparing men and women for Christian ministry. It is our desire that your experience and that of the other Site Team members will be one in which you feel the joy of contributing to God’s plan of extending God’s reign by helping raise up and provide ministerial growth for leaders of the church, its agencies and institutions. Further, it is our hope that your experience with the TFE program will confirm your own journey of faith and renew your enthusiasm for your leadership role in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Theological Field Education is the place in the seminary curriculum where academic theory is tested and tried. It is the place where seminarians can be challenged to not only teach and preach their theology, but live it. It is the place where seminarians can further develop their gifts, the understanding of their calling, and have the opportunity to be the Body of Christ in the world.

Theological Field Education is an opportunity for seminarians to learn how to collaborate with those they serve in developing the most effective ministries they can in any particular setting. We commend you the educational task of supporting and giving feedback to your seminarian as he grows in his/her call to ministry and in his/her ability to perform ministry tasks.

For your fuller understanding of the expectations of TFE, we ask you to read the departmental policies in Section I of this TFE Handbook. This section includes selected Palmer Theological Seminary’s academic policies, the TFE Code of Ethics, and policies about ministry site confirmation, Home Church Policy, Supervisory Personnel, and Full Disclosure.

If you have any questions, please be in touch with the SM office. Again welcome to TFE at Palmer Seminary. May your experience be a blessing to you and for God’s work among us.

Purpose

The Site Team offers the pastoral intern a significant opportunity for support and accountability. The relationships formed with this committee provide a most important component to the Seminarian’s education, and a collegial style of clergy-lay dialogue that will continue to be a foundation for effective ministry in the future.

The Site Team is actively involved in the formation of the Serving/Learning Covenant created between the pastoral intern and the ministry site. During the 6-8 meetings that occur during the year between the Site Team and pastoral intern, the covenant becomes the basis for discussion and assessment. The seminary provides formal assessment tools to help gauge the Seminarian’s growth and understanding. The Site Team’s insightful and forthright participation in these disciplines is necessary.

As representatives of the congregation or other ministry site, the Site Team provides a channel of communication and education, and network for support and accountability. Members of the Site Team seek to talk “with” rather than “about” the Seminarian. From their perspectives as laypersons, participants affirm effective performance in ministry and identify areas requiring improvement. The acceptance and encouragement of the committee offer the Seminarian a valuable dimension of support in developing and confirming a sense of professional identity and competence. Engaging in the process of forming covenants
and evaluations encourages the Seminarian to serve with a relationship of accountability to the church/agency.

When the seminarian is also the pastor in the TFE Ministry Site, the Site Team is not designed to function as a Staff Relations or similar committee. Instead, the Team is to function educationally in support of their growth through goals in the TFE experience.

Design of Committee

The committee is a small group of approximately 5 persons designed specifically to serve as a Site Team. The pastoral intern is a member of the committee, but may not serve as Chair. The committee will be selected by the supervising Pastor/Mentor (or by the Student Pastor if the Mentor is Off-Site.) The Pastor/Mentor may consult with a key lay leader. When a Seminarian is returning to the same ministry site, the Pastor/Mentor may want to consult with the student as well. Selection of the committee should include diversity of age, gender, background and theology. Members are likely to be most effective who have an interest in nurturing the growth of the Seminarian, and have gifts for providing a relationship of direct, non-threatening communication. No current Palmer Seminarian may serve on a TFE Site Team.

The Pastor/Mentor, or Student Pastor, generally convenes the initial meeting of the committee. The Site Team chairperson facilitates subsequent meetings. Neither the Pastor/Mentor, the Pastor/Mentor’s spouse, members of the Pastor/Mentor or Seminarian’s family, nor current Palmer students may serve as members of the committee. This ensures the building of a professional relationship with the committee, unencumbered by a confusion of roles, relationships, and responsibilities.

The Teaching Church Model is essential to the success of effective supervisory training by the Site Team. Your active involvement and guidance in the supervisory process is as essential as the pastoral supervisory component. The Seminarian needs to receive from you, as lay persons, helpful feedback in their practice of ministry (see Mid-year Reflection on Learning). You will not be able to effectively assess these components in readiness formation unless you are actively involved in their learning and practice of ministry.

Initial Responsibilities

Teams with On-Site Pastor/Mentors assist the Seminarian and the congregation to establish a relationship through:
- **Introduction of the Seminarian to the congregation**, perhaps in installation special service incorporating expressions of mutual commitment.
- **Provision of a place** in which to study, pray, counsel, and prepare for other aspects of ministry—with desk, access to telephone, clerical services if necessary, and so on.
- **Inclusion of the Seminarian’s name** in staff listings on bulletin, newsletter, and elsewhere.
- **Preparation in a preliminary way for closure and recognition** of the Seminarian when the term of ministry is complete.

Teams with Off-Site Pastor/Mentors will not have the partnership with the off-site Pastor/Mentor in establishing relationship with the congregation. Instead, the Site Team will help to establish the TFE program, as an educational experience, in the TFE ministry site.

Developing an Effective Educational Relationship as a Site Team

As lay members of a congregation or other ministry, Site Team members are appreciated for their individual, unique perspectives on ministry that illuminate new ways for the
Seminarian to understand the church/agency and to experience oneself in ministry with the laity. Since each setting for ministry, Site Team and Seminarian are gifted in individual ways, each relationship with a Seminarian has different qualities. Some of the attitudes and functions that Site Teams and Seminarian have commonly found to facilitate a positive relationship for educational growth have included:

- openness and acceptance in the group; including all the members' ideas and feelings
- being in prayer for the Seminarian, the committee and the church/agency
- understanding the Seminarian and the laity to be in ministry together
- trust and confidentiality
- mutual respect
- sharing the heritage and mission of the church or agency
- discerning and affirming the Seminarian's gifts
- offering direct feedback on the Seminarian's functioning through viewing Seminarian's ministry and experiencing Seminarian's presence
- sharing criticism in an atmosphere of acceptance and hope
- believing that the church/agency is strong enough to live with imperfections
- acknowledgment and working toward resolution of conflict
- respect for Seminarian's boundaries and need for balance of student-hood and personal life
- resource for facing challenges, but encouraging Seminarian's growth rather than solving problems for the Seminarian
- following appropriate ethical norms

What are some additional goals and attributes that your Site Team brings to the pastoral internship? By taking the risk of being in relationship with the Seminarian and sharing what you perceive and believe, your committee contributes significantly to Seminarian establishing an effective relationship with the church/agency or other ministry, and discovering and growing in their gifts for ministry. We hope that your investment in participating in the Site Team will also offer you fulfillment and growth.

Scheduled Meetings
Because trust and communication develop best in the absence of serious problems, the Site Team is to meet with the Seminarian regularly rather than only during times of difficulty and stress. It is expected that Site Teams will meet with their Seminarian at least three (3) times each semester. The suggested schedule is monthly from September to December and from February to April (at least 6 sessions), with additional meetings scheduled if needed in a context of sensitivity to persons and confidentiality concerning issues. A suggested agenda for meetings with the Seminarian is:

- Greetings and opening prayer
- Review of the committee's purpose and the Seminarian's covenant. Site Teams of student pastors need to be careful to reflect and hold the pastor accountable only in the areas of covenant.
- Review of the Seminarian's ministry experience since the previous meeting. Suggestions of questions to be raised are:
  (a) Are the expectations, commitments, and terms of the covenant being honored?
  (b) What tasks of ministry are performed effectively by the Seminarian?
  (c) What tasks of ministry require growth and improvement?
  (d) Do additional areas of service or opportunities for learning by the Seminarian need to be considered?
(e) How can communication, education, support, and accountability be strengthened?

(f) Does the Seminarian's spouse (if married) need special attention, consideration, support, or response?

In the case of student pastors, only the 10-12 hours covenanted for the TFE internship learning goals and tasks should be considered in the Site Team meetings and for TFE evaluations.

➤ Summary and closing prayer. The key concern is that time be allowed for sharing by all committee members and the Seminarian.

Annual Assessments
The Site Team formally assesses the Seminarian twice during the year, once through the Mid-year Reflection on Learning and through an End of the Year Assessment. Assessment may be done with or without the Seminarian present, but the completed forms are to be reviewed and discussed with the Seminarian. It is the student's responsibility to submit the forms to the Supervised Ministries Office, but you greatly help the process by completing your work in advance of the due date. Site Team Assessment Forms are included in Section Three. They can be downloaded in useable form from our website. See web address at the beginning of the section.

The Assessments are read by Supervised Ministries' faculty and staff and responded to when appropriate. It is treated with maximum confidentiality by the staff and released to others outside of PTS only when written permission is granted, and is destroyed five years after the student's last contact with our department.

Retention of Student Records
The Supervised Ministries office maintains Theological Field Education records for five years following completion of the courses. Judicatories and denominations sometimes ask for information based on a Seminarian's Theological Field Education experience. You as the Site Team may want to consider writing a generic reference for your pastoral intern. The generic reference might include observations on the growth of the Seminarian serving at your ministry site over the year in Theological Field Education, his/her strengths, character traits, and what you observe of his/her professional gifts at this point in her/his journey. The generic reference may be given to the pastoral intern to keep in his/her TFE file in Supervised Ministries.

Site Team Training
Each fall, training is available for members of the site team. Generally, an evening session, at least two opportunities are provided for both the chairperson as well as members of the committee. In addition, the committee, through the chairperson, can direct specific questions or concerns to the Supervised Ministries office throughout the year.
The journey of each Site Team will be unique. Therefore, this scenario is only suggestive of some of the landscape of the journey of a Site Team. It is not meant to be a set of directions but a set of clues by which we may pace our journey.

September
Welcoming and including: it’s important to be intentional about saying hello.
Becoming acquainted: Site Team and student may share a meal together

Serving/Learning Covenant negotiated, signed and due in the SM Office October 15
Covenanting together as a Site Team, deciding how we want to work together, when our meetings will be held, and describing a format for our meetings. We will each want to begin to define our role and responsibilities so that each Site Team member, the pastor/mentor, the pastor (if not the pastor/mentor), and the intern can see “where we fit.”

NOTE: When the intern is on professional staff of the ministry site, it is important to understand that the role of the Site Team is not the same as that of a Pastoral Relations Committee. The Site Team deals exclusively with the needs and growth of the staff person who is the intern in terms of his/her learning goals for the year in TFE.

October
See that we have put our Site Team covenant in writing so that it is explicit and can serve as a guide for continuing reflection and evaluation.
Be open to one another as we share first experiences together.
Encourage the intern to share freely and openly by offering our ready listening and willingness to risk sharing ourselves.
Recognize that we are each unique and different; there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit.

November
Together with the intern, reflect on this process of becoming involved, or more deeply involved, in ministry as a professional in terms of her/his own learning objectives. What does this experience feel like? What does it mean? What is happening with her/him vocationally, spiritually, emotionally and theologically? Further, what is happening to us? This is a time for naming some of the dynamics of the journey and discerning the meaning of these dynamics from the perspective of our Christian faith.

December
Already it is time to turn attention to the preparations for the Mid-Year Reflection on Learning. The Mid-Year Reflection on Learning brings us to the horizon of new possibility. Consider the Serving/Learning Covenant. Perhaps some contents of the Learning Agreement need revising. Perhaps we see ways in which we can communicate more effectively with our intern. Do we need to be more disciplined in our meetings, to make adjustments in our format in order to be more focused on our intern’s concerns? Are we getting to issues of ministry which are vital to the intern’s learning process and our shared ministry? Do we need someone to resource us? Might it be the time to call upon the Supervised Ministries team of the seminary for some assistance?

January
We have all been busy through Advent/Christmas tide. We may need a longer meeting to complete work on the Mid-Year Reflection on Learning due January 16, to re-group ourselves and to take a look ahead from now until May when our covenant with the intern will come to an end.
Time seems to be going so fast. We’ve hardly begun and yet there is so much to accomplish. We may need to be selective about the content of our time together. We may need to be more direct with each other. We have done some trust-building. Perhaps it is time to rely on that trust and to invite more risk-taking. Are we challenging the intern and allowing the intern to challenge us? Have we evidenced appropriate support for the intern and yet held her/him to accountability in both his/her learning and in her/his ministry tasks?
February
Are we seeing real progress in our intern? Are we celebrating her/his growth? And are we celebrating and claiming our growth as well?
What is the quality of our sharing? What about that covenant we made as a group in the beginning? Are we living out that covenant or do we need to write a new one in accordance with who we are now?

Theological reflection? What is it? Is it happening here among us when we meet together? What does it look like for us? Can we be more intentional about looking at our group life through the meaning of Christ in our lives?

March
Our student has raised a lot of questions. How have these affected each of us personally? How have we been growing and changing?
The inquiry about participating in Theological Field Education at Palmer Seminary next year will be arriving at the ministry site soon. Do we want to indicate our interest in continuing with this educational program to the pastor/mentor or our pastor?
The relationship with the intern is affecting us and the ministry site as well. It might be time to consider its impact on the congregation and what that means for our mission and ministry to the community.

April
Already we are moving toward the Year End Evaluation which is due at the end of April. We have experienced a lot of mutual sharing, reflecting and evaluating. Are we the best setting for our intern’s continued growth as a minister? Are we needing to make some changes in ourselves in order to challenge this intern another year? If our intern is leaving, let’s identify what yet needs to happen before we say goodbye to one another. If our intern is part of our pastoral staff, do we have recommendations for goals for another year of TFE?
It is important for us to be intentional about saying goodbye for the summer or permanently. Ending the year of TFE with appropriate ritual, celebration and grace allows all TFE partners to move forward well from this experience.
How can we help the congregation or ministry site say goodbye to the intern? How can we recognize this particular experience had by the intern and ministry site during this year?

May
The journey with our student has been a dynamic one. It has had some fulfilling moments. Let’s identify these. It has had some struggling moments. Let’s reflect also on these. All of these moments have been opportunities for new insights. Let’s name these insights. These have been the forerunners of gifts we have shared with one another. Let’s acknowledge these gifts whether born out of joy or pain; let us receive the gifts God has offered each of us through this relationship and pilgrimage. Let the closing prayers together be the fulfillment of prayers said with one another along the way.

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Supervised Ministries, Palmer Seminary

Thank You
Palmer Theological Seminary is very grateful to the persons serving on Site Teams. The Supervised Ministries Office seeks to serve committees by providing training opportunities and by conferring with Site Teams members upon request in person or by phone (484-384-2958 or 484-384-2959) about any matters of concern. Thank you for your essential role in the education of a student in training for ministry.