THE FIELD EDUCATION EQUATION

Field Education =
   committed supervisor
+ encouraging congregation / agency
+ student open to learn all
   that the site can teach
+ seminary approval and support

A PLACE TO BEGIN

Before you get too far into applying for a student, you need to ask why you want to do this. If a supervisor wants “help” for ministry, field education probably is not the way to go. Involvement in the PTS Field Education Program usually benefits a church, but that result should be considered a by-product. The primary target is the student. Contrary to what some may think, the student will not make the supervisor’s work load lighter. As a field education supervisor you must be prepared to invest considerable time and interest in working with the student, and be willing to join peers in supervision training. The program requires the supervisor to invest at least one hour per week of dedicated and uninterrupted time to supervise the student for the length of time the student serves in his or her placement. The student and supervisor will relate work done to the church’s theology using prescribed methods and the disciplines of writing and reflection. Field education needs to be seen as an addition to the church’s mission program, rather than a means of acquiring more personnel. While benefits to the church’s program may be secondary, you will find that field education enhances the church’s mission and enriches the supervisor’s ministry.

AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

In Field Education, students learn what it means to be a minister by doing ministry under the supervision of a trained and certified teacher. Field education differs from field work or field experience. Though the student receives compensation, he or she is not “in it for the money.” The supervision changes the emphasis. Students learn by examining how they accomplished a task, why they did what they did, and how they may do it better another time. We place students in churches and agencies because there they will acquire and test the skills and attitudes they need to become competent and successful leaders. Field Education is to ministry what practice teaching is to education and the internship is to medicine.

What will the student learn?

Students come to field education as highly capable but unfinished products. The local church is a laboratory for learning. The student should have regular opportunities to lead and assist with worship, to preach a minimum of two times, to provide pastoral care, to teach, to explore the congregation’s organization and polity, and to discover how the congregation relates to its community. At the end of the placement the student should have learned:

- What leadership requires.
- How God’s call to ministry plays out in the world.
- How to apply classroom theology to a practical context.
- How to relate to different people as a professional.
- How he or she comes across to others.
- What kind of energy ministry requires.
- How context shapes ministry.
- What a pastor/preacher/minister does.
- How a particular church or agency works.
PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

All Princeton Seminary students must take and pass two Field Education courses in order to graduate. Because academic credit is awarded, every site and supervisor must be approved and certified. In other words, every site is a classroom. The Office of Field Education must guarantee the quality of the course taught in each classroom to the faculty, administration and the Seminary’s accrediting association. Therefore we require:

- the site to provide a theologically trained supervisor who has been in professional ministry for three years and on-site for one year
- the site to provide a context for learning and serving that meets the student’s educational and professional development needs as well as the ministerial needs of the site
- the site annually to provide a description of the student’s ministry as well as educational objectives and criteria for evaluation
- the supervisor to be trained and certified in supervision, and to maintain that certification through on-going programs of education
- the supervisor to complete all required ministry reports on-time
- the supervisor to participate in periodic programs to enhance skills.

The seminary will provide the training opportunities necessary for the supervisor to fulfill the contract, offer counsel to supervisors and governing bodies to interpret the program, and work to see that the program runs smoothly.

HOW TO APPLY

1. Review the attached material.
2. Complete the information on the Online Update Center. Be as clear as possible in whatever you need to say. Take time with the educational objectives so that they will be measurable, concrete and attractive. This is the information that the student will see. They will look at several placements, and yours will be measured against the others. If the student senses that he or she is being asked to do something because others do not want to do it, they will likely turn away from the placement. Students pay attention to the supervisor’s background and ministry preferences. They prefer broad experiences, and want to do ministries they have not done before.
3. Print, sign and send the Partnership in Ministry Agreement to our office. We look for each site to provide travel and program expenses, as well as the stipend.
4. Once the online information is completed, the advisor to your denomination will review the application.
5. Finally, the supervisor will be interviewed by that advisor to confirm the financial arrangements, clarify and answer questions, and advise the supervisor about the recruitment process, if appropriate.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Presently the recommended minimum stipend for a student engaged in field education full-time during the summer is $3150; part-time during the academic year is $2700; full-time for a year long placement is $1500 per month. In addition, the site is required to reimburse the student for mileage for private vehicle use while on official business. PTS recommends using the IRS rate, currently 50.5¢/mile. The site should also reimburse the student for pre-approved, out-of-pocket expenses like supplies, trips, meals, or overnight lodging necessitated by the field education work. Any reimbursement to the student for expenses commuting to and from the site is considered earned income and is therefore taxable.

Other considerations for Year Long Placements: Medical Insurance presently costs $2150 per year for the student policy through the Seminary.

Domestic placements pay round trip air fare or mileage costs to Princeton plus expenses en route for the annual intern conference if it is held, and allow for the time. Some give the student the weekend off as well.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- New placements should be received for evaluation and approval by December 1.
- Students begin interviewing at sites as early as the end of October.
- All summer and academic-year placements must be finalized by April 1.
- New field education supervisors within the Princeton environs must attend the PTS Supervisor Orientation held in May or September.