Instructions for Completing the Teaching Ministry Learning/Serving Covenant

The Learning/Serving Covenant in general and learning goals in particular establish the foundation upon which the field education experience will be based. Effort, prayer, discernment and dialogue invested in this process will bear great fruit as the placement progresses.

SECTION I. Provide requested information, review designated items, initial as appropriate. Please include the month, day, and year when indicating the duration of the placement.

Discuss the hours the student is expected to spend on site: When does the day begin and end? Talk about the role the student minister holds in the particular church: expected habits, performance and dress. Visit such items as work space, punctuality, cooperation, preparedness, and absenteeism. If a certain behavior is expected by the supervisor, say so. Structure the position so that the goals and supporting objectives, tasks and resources are realistic for the time available, and assignments are given so students can adequately prepare.

Note that time spent in traveling to and from the site is not included in the required minimum weekly hours on-site.

Vacation periods should be mutually established between student and supervisor and approved by the Seminary (through the Learning/Serving Covenant review process). Be sure to discuss the academic calendar and expectations for field education during reading weeks, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and semester breaks. Students must be able to decline opportunities that violate the covenant or compromise their work at Seminary.

The supervisor and student should review the Field Education Handbook together in order to understand the purpose and requirements of the program. Review the Sexual Harassment Policy which applies to all parties and Field Education sites. The financial arrangements regarding the student’s stipend and reimbursement for expenses need to be finalized as well.

SECTION II. On a separate sheet, describe the distribution of hours on site in activities such as designing work-shops, classes, and retreats, attending CE meetings, teaching, preaching, pastoral care, worship leadership or other specific site-related tasks. The student is expected to be on site a minimum of 8 hours each week with 2 or more additional hours in preparation. The total time commitment should not exceed 15 hour each week. If the student is using this placement to satisfy then the student will need to participate in worship leadership on a regular basis, provide pastoral care, and preach at least once each semester. The minimum time spent on site should be increased to 10-12 hours. The total time commitment should not exceed 15 hour each week.

SECTION III. Practice of Supervision: Review the "Aspects of Supervision" section from the Field Education Handbook (pp.33-39). The student needs to know what to expect in the supervisory sessions. State the time and place for supervision and be consistent with the arrangements. Supervision needs focus and requires time for the undergirding of theological reflection. Sunday after worship may not be the best time. A regular, uninterrupted 60 minute period is essential. No placement will be considered complete without it. The supervisor needs to say what satisfactory performance looks like in terms that are objective and clear. For example, the supervisor may state very simply "my expectations will be satisfied when..." Although it may be difficult, standards should be spelled out from the beginning. It is important for the student to know how satisfactory performance will be measured.
SECTION IV. Student Ministry Position: a program of growth leading to becoming a confident leader and competent minister. This section should present the mutually agreed upon learning goals and objectives of both the student and supervisor. Using the format below, create the actual covenant:

**Step 1.** It is helpful for the student to write a brief paragraph or to develop a list that identifies strengths and growing edges. This information will be beneficial as supervisor and student work together to develop learning goals.

What are the student’s strengths and growing edges? Gifts for ministry? What are the experiential gaps in the student’s preparation? To what vocation/form of ministry does the student feel called? What experiences (preaching, planning worship, attending a church board meeting, making a presentation and/or teaching a class/Bible study, home and hospital visitation, etc.) does the student need to have in order to prepare for that ministry?

Students are encouraged to consider the courses they are taking and other commitments they may have with their preparation for ministry process (such as ordination exams, writing candidacy essays, preaching, etc.), as well as any of the growing edges from the final appraisal of their previous field education placement (if applicable). What learning goals can you develop that will integrate these others areas of learning and growth so that field education has greater coherence with students’ other experiences?

**Step 2.** Write goals, methods of achieving goals, resources and means for measurement for each of the five areas of formation: Self Awareness, Relationship Development, Skill Acquisition, Test/Affirm Vocational Call, Integration (see Learning/Serving Covenant for more specific description of each area).

**EXAMPLE:**

**Goal Area:** Skill Acquisition

**Goal:** An intended long-term accomplishment; *What do I want to learn about ministry and why?*

I want to improve my preaching.

**NOTE:** Instead of stating: “I want to become more confident,” indicate what will be done to become familiar with an unfamiliar task so that confidence will result.

**Method of achieving goal (How will this goal be achieved?):** *What will I have to do to learn it? How am I going to learn it?*

By the end of the term I want to discover which style of sermon I am most comfortable with: story, exegetical, topical, etc.

I will preach two sermons per term with each one using a different style.
**Resources for Learning/Means for Measurement:** General approaches that can help you to achieve your goals and objectives and to enable reflection on the tasks you have decided upon;

**How will I and others know that I have learned it?**

- I will create a sermon evaluation and use it each time that I preach. and/or
- I will meet with my Lay Support Committee after each sermon that I preach in order to invite their feedback.
- I will discuss sermon styles in supervision and do some reading in this area.
- I will invite comments on my sermons from my practice of ministry professors.

The Office of Field Education thanks Dr. Jean Stairs from Queens Theological College, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, for sharing the original resource for the example layout above at ATFE (January,1993), Minneapolis, MN, that enabled this piece to be developed.

**What to turn in:**

1. The completed Learning/Serving Covenant (front and back)
2. Section II separate page(s)
3. Section III separate page(s)
4. Section IV separate page(s) with final page signed by student and supervisor

Academic Year students, please turn in all paperwork in person to 304 Templeton Hall during office hours. Summer and Year-Long-Intensive students may fax or mail in paperwork to: Princeton Theological Seminary, Office of Field Education, P.O. 821, Princeton, NJ 08542-0803 or FAX 609-497-7872