

# LOUISVILLE SEMINARY

## Field Education



### WHY FIELD EDUCATION?

Field Education is a cornerstone of the MDiv curriculum at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. In the MDiv program, deep learning happens through classroom encounters, real-world engagement, and vocational practice, forming people for diverse kinds of ministry. Students learn to interpret and proclaim the gospel, build and sustain congregations and other communities and nurture relationships grounded in love, and inspire and guide the broader church in seeking peace and justice through public ministry. Field Education provides opportunities to clarify and focus your sense of call, to integrate academic work with practice in ministry, and to develop pastoral skills and identity

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### VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

The Field Education Office serves as a fundamental resource for vocational discernment. Before you arrive on campus, you will write a “Biographical Sketch,” which will help the Director of Field Education to begin to get to know you. Then, during your first few weeks at seminary, you will be required to meet with the Director to:

- 1) Make long term plans for valuable field experiences that match your formational needs;
- 2) Answer any questions and help you begin the process of in depth vocational reflection;
- 3) Begin developing a relationship of trust that will enable us to work together.

You will meet with the Director several other times during your seminary career. The Director is also available for conversations throughout your time at LPTS. E-mail, call, or stop by the Director’s office during office hours.

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### WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS?

Because we believe that Field Education is so important, we have developed a robust set of requirements. All MDiv students must complete **FOUR** Units of Field Education.

- 1) **TWO** of these units must be completed in a congregational setting. This placement is not normally undertaken until after your first year of seminary. Special considerations are given for students already working in a congregation.
- 2) **TWO** of these units can be completed in another congregational placement, in an agency or on-campus placement, or in a full-time summer or half-time semester unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (also known as CPE, an experience required by many ordaining bodies). During the academic year, agency, on-campus and congregational placements are 12-15 hours per week, 8 ½ month commitments that typically begin in September and end in May.

Some students undertake more than the required units through yearlong full-time placements (known as internships), intensive summer placements, multiple CPE units, or first-year agency placements. That said, many first-year students find Field Education overwhelming as they adjust to the rigors of seminary. It is important to balance your ordaining body’s requirements with your personal well-being, your academic endeavors, and your growing edges in ministry.

Students may not do two field education experiences concurrently. Such an experience would be very nearly the equivalent of a 30-hour work week, which would limit time for required academic work. It would also undermine the needed length of time for practical experience, which is typically over a two-year period, or one-year and one intensive summer experience.

## SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION IN FIELD EDUCATION

Each Field Education Placement must include weekly supervisory meetings with an experienced practitioner, known as a Supervisor. The Field Education Supervisor is a vital resource for students. In the weekly supervisory conference, the student reflects upon concrete segments of ministry and engages in planning for future learning. The Director of Field Education offers training annually for new supervisors and continuing education through other workshops and experiences throughout the year.

The Seminary depends upon the Field Education Supervisor to provide on-going feedback to the student and to work with the student in a final evaluation at the end of each unit of training. This process begins at the start of the unit as the student and supervisor together establish a Learning Covenant that includes specific learning goals and plans for measurement and supervision, clarify areas of responsibility, and set criteria for evaluation. A copy of the final evaluation is normally shared with the student's faculty advisor and the appropriate governing body of the denomination to which the student is related. The Director of Field Education is available for consultation in the event that problems arise in relation to the student's work. With early negotiation, serious problems can often be averted.

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## PAPERWORK IN FIELD EDUCATION

Students placed in Field Education experiences are required to complete and submit the following forms, which aid the Field Education Office and your ordaining bodies in doing their work:

- 1) *Brief Biographical Sketch* (see above)
- 2) *Field Education Registration Form* – due before/by the first week of each semester.
- 3) *Administrative Agreement and Learning Covenant* – due twice during a year-long placement, once at the beginning and once in the middle; due once during a summer-long placement, at the beginning.
- 4) *Student and Supervisor Evaluation Forms* (including Lay Committee Evaluation, if a Lay Committee is convened) – due the last day of the fall semester and the last day of the spring semester during the academic year; due in late August during the summer.

All of the above forms are available on the seminary website, under Academics / Field Education. Specific due dates for required Field Education paperwork are listed on the Field Education Calendar for the year, which can also be found on the website.

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## FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Because fulsome engagement in Field Education requires a considerable amount of time, agency, on-campus and congregational placements offer various forms of compensation. Agency and on-campus placements provide compensation at an hourly rate equal to the minimum wage in Kentucky. The regular congregational placement involves compensation in the form of a small stipend and repayment for mileage. This compensation totals a little over \$3200 for the 8½ month commitment. Other placements (such as year-long or summer intensives internships, or church supply positions) provide other forms of compensation, which can be discussed more in detail with the Director of Field Education. Congregations and agencies are expected to provide all, most, or at least some of the compensation. There is no stipend for CPE.