MOUNT ST. MARY'S SEMINARY
& SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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Lay Ecclesial Formation
Capstone/Project in Ministry Handbook

Capstone Project
Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry

Project in Ministry
Graduate Certificate in Pastoral Ministry
Certificate in Pastoral Ministry

2023-2024

This handbook is designed for the use of students, administrators, and ministry site participants engaged in a ***Capstone Project*** for the Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry (MAPM) degree program or a ***Project in Ministry*** for the Graduate Certificate in Pastoral Ministry (GCPM) program or the Certificate in Pastoral Ministry (CPM) program. It outlines the process, various roles and responsibilities, timeline, and methods of assessment and evaluation.

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Capstone/Project in Ministry Introduction

This handbook is designed for the use of students, administrators, and ministry site participants engaged in a ***Capstone Project*** for the Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry (MAPM) degree program or a ***Project in Ministry*** for the Graduate Certificate in Pastoral Ministry (GCPM) program or the Certificate in Pastoral Ministry (CPM) program. It outlines the process, various roles and responsibilities, timeline, and methods of assessment and evaluation.

For those students pursuing the Masters of Arts in Pastoral Ministry degree, the Capstone Project takes the place of a thesis.

The Capstone/Project in Ministry is a substantial culminating work that allows students to integrate knowledge and experience. It puts into active use the approaches, techniques, and information learned in a variety of separate courses and experiences. It requires the disciplined use of ministry skills, pastoral planning, and theological knowledge, and provides opportunities to reflect on the entire formational experience.

It asks:

- What did you learn?
- How did you learn it?
- How do you know that you know it?
- How is this body of knowledge inter-related?
- How can you use your knowledge effectively in the practice of ministry?
- So what? What does it mean?

This process helps bridge the gap between academic and theoretical work and professional practice. It models an effective way to plan and evaluate collaborative ministry and provides a solid foundation for future ministry.

Characteristics:

- It is a culminating, integrative, synthetic, and formational experience
- Requires public articulation of theology/approach at every step
- Uses a study/action model and relies on the application of knowledge
- Fosters accountability in ministry
- Models a collaborative form of ministry
- Provides a means for program assessment

The Capstone/Project in Ministry is both academic and practical. It requires solid theological foundations and effective pastoral response. Because it takes place in both the environment of the School of Theology and a specific ministry site, students should expect revisions and input from faculty formation and theological advisors, members of the Project Board, and the implementation team.

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) document guiding lay ecclesial ministry formation, notes the importance of lay ministers learning the skills of: (pp. 48-49)

- Collaboration
- Discernment of the signs of the times and being familiar with current social, economic, and cultural situations, reflecting on them in the light of doctrinal and spiritual formation
- Gifts discernment and volunteer ministry management
- Change and conflict management skills
- Listening and communications skills
- Administrative skills
- Leadership and organizational development

The Capstone/Project in Ministry is a process designed to foster, develop, and showcase these skills, attitudes, and approaches, and put them into practice via "practical experience in real situations and by mentored reflection on those experiences." (p. 49)

MAPM students begin the Capstone with courses **P 745 Principles of Leadership for Lay Ecclesial Ministers** and **P 798 Capstone I (Pastoral Planning), followed by P 799 Capstone II.** Certificate students (GCPM and CPM) undertake their Project in Ministry via **LPP 400 Project in Ministry**. Students complete their work through consultation with their Formation Advisor and in collaboration with the leadership team and constituents of a specific ministry site.

The Capstone/Project in Ministry should reflect the particular interests, skills, and passion of the student and provide something of value to the student, the ministry site, and the target population.

It is an individual effort and cannot be a joint undertaking or shared experience with another student. Husbands and wives who both are earning the MAPM, GCPM, or CPM must undertake separate projects.

Regarding the differences between the Captstone/Project in Ministry and Field Education, see page 3 of the *Field Education Handbook*.

Participant's Checklist

The following checklist may be of assistance to the student:

1. Ministry Site selection and Needs Assessment
   - ❑ If pursuing the GCPM or CPM, enroll in LPP 400 Project in Ministry. For MAPM students, enroll in P 798 Capstone I (1 credit).
   - ❑ Identify a **ministry site**.
   - ❑ Undertake a **needs assessment** as prescribed in this handbook.
   - ❑ Identify a **target population** and a **pastoral need** to address.
2. Proposal (Draft)
   - ❑ Draft a **proposal** and submit it to **the Coordinator of Lay Ecclesial Formation**. An email submission works best. You are strongly encouraged to work on this over the summer months. Before you proceed to the pastoral plan, your proposal **must be approved by your Formation Advisor (Coordinator of Lay Ecclesial Formation)**.
3. Pastoral Plan (Draft)
   - ❑ Draft a **pastoral plan** and revise as necessary. You are encouraged to submit this before classes begin in the fall, but it is due no later than **November 1 of the given year.** An email submission works best.
   - ❑ The Formation Advisor may request a meeting if necessary to review revisions and discuss concerns.
   - ❑ Discuss possible **Theological Advisors** with your Formation Advisor. The Formation Advisor will assign a Theological Advisor (typically occurs during the program design phase of the project).
   - ❑ Meet with your Theological Advisor to examine the theological dimensions of your project. Add the results of that discussion and your further reflections to your proposal.
   - ❑ The meeting with your Theological Advisor may take place prior to or following your Project Board meeting. Be respectful of his/her time.
4. Establishment of Project Board
   - ❑ Review role of the **Project Board** and then determine Project Board membership in consultation with your Formation Advisor. Your advisor has final approval.
   - ❑ Schedule the Project Board meeting (must be held no later than **the last day of January of the intended year of completion**).
   - ❑ Submit proposal and pastoral plan to Project Board members *at least one week prior to meeting.*
   - ❑ The Coordinator of Lay Ecclesial Formation chairs the Project Board meeting. Discuss their comments and recommendations regarding your Proposal and Pastoral Plan. Revise the

Proposal and Pastoral Plan as required by your Theological and Formation Advisors and Project Board until approved.

- ❑ If pursuing the MAPM, enroll in P 799 Capstone II (1 credit).
- ❑ **Implement and evaluate** your project (project must be implemented no later than **March 1 of the intended year of completion**).

5. Theological Research Paper (ongoing from the Pastoral Plan stage)
   - ❑ Submit the final copy of your **Theological Research Paper** to your Theological Advisor. If your Theological Advisor assesses your theological research paper as unsatisfactory, you have the right to request another reader of equivalent competence who will be appointed by the Dean of the School of Theology.
6. Final Project Report and Evaluation Narrative
   - ❑ Write your **Project Report** and submit it, including your theological research paper, to your advisor for approval no later than **April 1 of the intended year of completion.**
   - ❑ Submit your Project Report to your Project Board members by email, along with copies of Forms C1 and C2 for MAPM and Form C3 for GCPM and CPM (*see below as well as on the Lay Ecclesial Formation webpage*). A majority plus one of the members of your Project Board must approve before the project is considered complete.
   - ❑ All evaluation forms must be sent directly to the Coordinator of Lay Ecclesial Formation. You will have the opportunity to review them after they have all been submitted.
   - ❑ A complete bound copy of your Project Report along with completed Forms B must be submitted to the Dean of the School of Theology by **April 15 of the intended year of completion**.

Ground Rules/Operating Procedures

1. The project must be in keeping with (arch)diocesan policies and Catholic doctrine.
2. The project must model effective ministry and an appropriate pastoral approach.
3. The project must not raise risk management issues for the School of Theology or the ministry site.
4. It may not be either substantively or partially completed, or be of a nature that does not allow for changes, revisions, and input from others. No previously completed ministerial project may be submitted to fulfill the requirement.
5. The Capstone/Project in Ministry is not a research project, but a synthetic project in which the theological research is integrated into the practical experience. Students may only collect anonymous survey data from participants to determine specific needs of the ministry site or to evaluate the success of the project. No identifiable private information may be collected from participants.
6. It may be implemented in the summer, fall, or winter. For May graduation, the Board Meeting must be held by **the end of January with implementation completed by March 1**.
7. The Formation Advisor has the authority to require revisions to the project at any stage. The Project Board may require revisions prior to implementation. If the student is unwilling to undertake required revisions, the Formation Advisor and/or the competent authority at the ministry site may reject the Proposal or Pastoral Plan and terminate the project altogether.
8. The student has **one calendar year from the time the Proposal is approved by the Formation Advisor to implement the plan and submit the final report**. A project that is not completed within that time is considered permanently incomplete. Students wishing to continue in the program (MAPM, GCPM, or CPM) must submit a new needs assessment, proposal, and pastoral plan.
9. The entire Capstone Project for the Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry degree (MAPM), including the written project, should reflect a substance, style, and theological approach commensurate with graduate-level work. Students should expect revisions.
10. The Capstone/Project in Ministry may be undertaken at the Field Education (FE) site, but **must be significantly different** from the FE experience.
11. The ministry site should be one that allows the student to take on a leadership position and function within healthy professional boundaries. Students may not engage in interactions with individuals that are intrusive or confidential in nature. The activities of the project must be benign and carry no reasonable potential for harm, discomfort, or embarrassment for the participants.
12. Current job responsibilities may not be used to fulfill Capstone/Project in Ministry requirements.
13. Self-funded projects are not allowed for any reason. Students may not pay for implementation. If the project requires financial resources, the ministry site must be willing to fund or solicit funding for the project.

Role of the Formation Advisor

The Formation Advisor is the Coordinator of Lay Ecclesial Formation or, in certain instances, the Dean of the School of Theology or another individual so delegated by either the Dean or the Coordinator. As such, the Formation Advisor has primary responsibility for guiding the participant through the Capstone/Project in Ministry.

The Formation Advisor's role is as follows:

- Offers advice (if necessary) on the selection of the ministry site and needs assessment
- Reads all drafts of the Project Proposal and gives direction for any needed revisions
- Approves the Project Proposal
- Assigns the Theological Advisor for the project
- Consults with the participant in determining membership on the Project Board and approves final membership of the board
- Reads all drafts of the Pastoral Plan and gives direction for any needed revisions
- Approves the Pastoral Plan
- Chairs the Project Board meeting
- Advises as needed during the implementation and evaluation stages of the project
- Reads the project report and give direction for any needed revisions

The Formation Advisor retains the option to terminate a project proposal after discussing his or her concerns with the student. Reasons the Formation Advisor may terminate a project include the following:

- inadequate planning and attention to necessary level of detail
- significant risk management issues
- project lacks sound pastoral practice or an understanding of Catholic teaching
- project has already been substantially implemented prior to the Project Board meeting
- student will not be supported adequately by the ministry site

Role of the Theological Advisor

The Theological Advisor is assigned by the Formation Advisor in consultation with the student. Typically, the Theological Advisor will be a member of the School of Theology faculty, a diocesan official with theological credentials in the area of ministry, or another qualified theologian.

The Theological Advisor:

- helps the student explore the theological issues of the Capstone/Project in Ministry
- guides the MAPM student in the writing of a ten to fifteen page research paper that connects the project with the larger mission of the Church; guides certificate students (GCPM and CPM) in writing a three to five page paper
- explores with the student the key theological issues and concepts at the heart of the project

For students pursuing the MAPM, the Theological Research Paper will be ten to fifteen pages in length with a minimum of five footnoted sources and a bibliography. Some students may choose to write a longer theological paper, but it should not exceed twenty-five pages in length. For certificate students (GCPM and CPM), the paper will be three to five pages in length with a minimum of three footnoted sources and a bibliography.

The Theological Advisor meets with the student to offer direction and support in surfacing theological issues to explore in the paper. Students should be good stewards of the Theological Advisor's time and come to any meeting prepared with preliminary suggestions of theological issues, possible research sources, and well-reasoned questions.

The Theological Advisor may:

- encourage continued development of the theological background for the project in a more substantial way
- challenge, question, and offer suggestions regarding theological issues
- help in connecting the proposed project to the larger mission of the Church
- suggest resources (books, articles, persons) for growth in understanding the theological issues raised by the project
- elicit new areas for consideration in the project's theological development
- articulate areas for the participant's reflection as the project is implemented

While the Theological Advisor works closely with the student, he or she does not attend the Project Board meeting and does not help with implementation.

The Theological Advisor is responsible for evaluating the Theological Research Paper. At minimum, the theological paper must receive a satisfactory grade from the Theological Advisor for credit to be awarded. If the Theological Advisor evaluates the theological paper as unsatisfactory, the participant has the right to appeal this decision and request another reader of equivalent competency who will be appointed by the Dean of the School of Theology. If the second reader judges the paper to be unsatisfactory, the student will be required to write a new paper.

The participant completes Form B and gives it to the Theological Advisor for approval. By signing Form B, the Theological Advisor attests that the research paper meets or exceeds program requirements. The student returns the signed copy to the Lay Ecclesial Formation Office once the final Project Report is complete. The signed form is not included in the bound copy of the report.

Role of the Project Board

Project Board membership is determined in consultation with the student's Formation Advisor who has final approval over board membership. At a minimum, the board will include:

- Formation Advisor

- At least two representatives from the ministry site and/or people whose knowledge or experience can contribute to this project
- One person from outside the ministry site who has expertise or experience in the area of the project is highly recommended and may be required by the Formation Advisor
- The Project Board may not consist solely of ministry site staff members and should consist of no more than seven people. The board should reflect the diversity of the ministry site and target population.

The purpose of the Project Board is to do the following:

Before implementation

- Read the Proposal and Pastoral Plan
- Attend the Project Board meeting
- Make recommendations for revisions
- Authorize the implementation

After implementation

- Read the final Project Report
- Evaluate the project using the forms provided in the this handbook (Forms C1 and C2 for MAPM; Form C3 for GCPM/CPM)

Additionally, members of the Project Board consult with and support the participant toward completion of his or her project. Project Board members do not help with implementation or participate in the project itself.

Members of the Project Board submit a written evaluation of the project to the Lay Ecclesial Formation Office by **the last Friday in April of the given calendar year**. A majority plus one of the members of the Project Board must approve the completed project before credit can be awarded. The Formation Advisor must approve the project before credit can be awarded.

Role of the Student

The student serves as the project manager for the project. While having basic skills, knowledge, and experience in the area of ministry chosen for the project, the student is not expected to be the subject matter expert for every aspect of the project, nor should the student fulfill all of the roles and tasks of implementation.

After the Project Board approves the Proposal and Pastoral Plan, the student will recruit an implementation team to further develop and implement the plan in the ministry site. It is the student's responsibility to assess the skills, talents, and attitudes needed for successful implementation and recruit the appropriate team members.

Since each Capstone/Project and ministry site differs, the size and composition of the implementation team will vary, but typically, implementation teams range from two to eight

members. Students may consult with their Formation Advisor and the leadership of the ministry site for help in determining the implementation team. Members of the Project Board may ***not*** serve on the implementation team or participate in the project itself.

The student's role is that of the coordinator and facilitator who keeps the work on track, on time, and within budget. The student is responsible for determining mid-course corrections, ensuring effective communication among team members and the ministry site, maintaining documentation, charting progress, and empowering others in service. A good image for this role is that of an orchestra leader. The conductor ensures that the music is beautiful but does not play each instrument.

Format and Style of Project Documents

The format of the Proposal, Pastoral Plan, and Project Report should follow the structure outlined in these guidelines. Use of appropriate headings allows the Formation Advisor, the Theological Advisor, and the Project Board members to know exactly where the needed information is located in the documents. Each heading should appear at the head of its section exactly as worded in this handbook. None should be assumed and none omitted.

Use footnotes rather than end notes. Documents should follow the most recent edition of *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* by Kate L. Turabian, published by the University of Chicago Press. Referring to the "Athenaeum Course Papers Guide" on the Maly Library webpage (https://library.athenaeum.edu/papersguide) will be helpful when questions arise.

Final copies of the completed Capstone/Project in Ministry documents consist of the following (*elements noted with an asterisk [*] indicate that templates are given at the end of this handbook and will be downloadable from the Lay Ecclesial Formation webpage*):

- Title Page* (Note: The title page must state your program)
- List of Project Board Members*
- Table of Contents*
- Project Proposal (including Theological Research Paper)
- Pastoral Plan
- Project Report
- Appendices and Addenda

All draft sections of the Capstone/Project in Ministry, i.e., the Proposal, the Pastoral Plan, the Project Report, and the Theological Research Paper should be merged into one document with pages numbered consecutively. The document should use consistent type face and font size throughout with the body of the document being in 12 point Times New Roman font.

One bound copy of the completed project report is submitted to the Lay Ecclesial Formation Office. Bound copies of Capstone/Project in Ministry reports are kept on file in the Lay Ecclesial Formation Office for ten years.

Selecting a Ministry Site

It is helpful to think of a variety of possible locations prior to selecting a project ministry site. Possibilities include your parish, field education site, neighborhood, school, place of business, and local community agencies. The student will need to secure an appropriate place to undertake a project since accessibility, community support, available resources, the ability to serve in a leadership role, and affirmation of your work are essential components.

Consider each possible location carefully, asking the following questions:

- What is my motivation for selecting this site? Why here? Why not someplace else? What is my relationship with this site?
- Will the leadership team/administration of the site welcome my participation? Are there any conflicts of interest?
- Am I able to function in a leadership role at this site? Will I have the authority and support needed to complete a project? Am I trusted by the leadership/administration?
- Will I have access to necessary information and resources? Will I be able to undertake the needs assessment? Is the information available? Are the people available? Are there accurate, up-to-date files and data, demographic information, history, minutes of commissions?
- Will I be able to collaborate with others in this location?
- Will the required input of my Formation Advisor, Theological Advisor, and Project Board members (some of whom will not be members of the ministry site community) be welcomed, resented, or ignored?
- Are there any barriers? Hidden agendas? Minefields to negotiate? Do I have a difficult history with this site? With its leadership/administration?
- If this is my place of employment, can I identify a need to address that lies OUTSIDE of my job description? Will undertaking a project in the workplace put undue pressure on working relationships and dynamics? Will it interfere with job requirements, time, and resources?
- Can I establish healthy boundaries in this site? Will I be tempted to over or under function? Will I have too much interference, or too little interest and support?
- Does this location bring out my best gifts? My passion? Do I care about the people in this place? Do I want to serve them?
- Are there events/initiatives at this site that may affect implementation or that might interfere with the project in ministry (e.g., capital campaign, building renovation, pastor/leadership transition, school closing)?
- Is the leadership/administration open to the results of a needs assessment or do they want to assign me a need to address?
- Is the ministry site comfortable with the required timetable of the project: proposal in the summer or fall, plan written in the fall, Board meeting by end of January, implementation in the winter or early spring?
- Are there other students undertaking projects at this location? Will that be a problem?

Needs Assessment Strategies

When conducting your needs assessment, consider the following strategies.

1. **Informal listening and observation.** Use the occasions that spontaneously present themselves to speak with members of the proposed target population. Invite their questions, perceptions, and suggestions. Ask them, "What would you like to see happen?" "What do you need from the community?" Listen in as people speak about their needs. Some **advantages** of informal listening are that (1) it is the easiest and most natural method of gathering information, and (2) it requires the least amount of training or special skills to use effectively. Some **disadvantages** are that (1) informal listening may be selective, specifically favoring those eager to come forward, those who are known to you, and not those who are marginal or alienated, and (2) it may not provide the kinds of carefully controlled and focused or easily tabulated and quantifiable responses yielded by other methods.

2. **Formal interviews.** Interviews, whether conducted by telephone or in person, are usually formally set up by appointment in advance for a particular time and place. In a completely structured interview, all of the questions are carefully designed ahead of time to elicit the exact specific kinds of responses desired, and all interviewees are asked the same questions. In a semi-structured interview, there are some questions designed to be answered by all interviewees, but you are then more flexible in following the lead of the person being interviewed, so that half of each interview will vary from one interviewee to another. Some **advantages** of formal interviews are that (1) they may allow for and even require more controlled, focused, and easily quantifiable responses that can be more easily generalized or summarized across the total population, and (2) they require some training on the part of the interviewer, but not a whole lot. Some **disadvantages** are that (1) interviews require someone skilled in designing questions in the case of the structured interview, as well as in generalizing and quantifying the results, and (2) interviews may be more intimidating to and more demanding of the time and energy of respondents.

3. **Focus group meetings.** In needs assessment meetings, a number of respondents are called together into one place, where they participate in a group process carefully designed to elicit the kinds of input desired. Some **advantages** of assessment meetings are that (1) they are time and energy efficient in that larger numbers of responses may be gathered by fewer interviewers, (2) they offer a bonus of ownership through participation to respondents without compromising any of the advantages of the structured interview, and (3) respondents get to hear one another's input, which does not happen when the one-on-one interview is used. Some **disadvantages** are that (1) assessment meetings require facilitators with group process and group facilitation skills in addition to considerable time and energy commitments for logistical preparation and follow-through, and (2) a fixed meeting date and time may be inconvenient for some whose input would be critical.

4. **Paper surveys.** Respondents anonymously fill out a carefully constructed questionnaire designed to secure the exact kind of data desired. These are then tabulated or otherwise processed. Some **advantages** of surveys are that (1) they can potentially reach the largest number of respondents with the greatest amount of anonymity and sampling validity, and (2)

they provide the most easily quantifiable results. Some **disadvantages** are that (1) the design of the survey questionnaire and the interpretation of results both require considerable sociometric and social research skills to be effective, and even then surveys tend to be somewhat self-limiting and self-fulfilling in their findings, and (2) unless used sparingly, surveys can become annoying to respondents, who then lose their motivation to participate.

5. **(Arch)diocesan directives and initiatives** that have not been implemented in your community.

6. **Parish-wide survey results** that provide a listing of needs and gaps. For this to be valid information, the survey should have been conducted within the last three years.

7. **Dramatic and unexplained or unaddressed changes** in demographics, finances, or levels of participation in the community. This type of needs assessment should be backed up by information from parish records or community census information.

8. **Information gathering sessions** with key committees in the community. These could be long-range planning, stewardship, leadership, education, or advisory councils. Also, minutes from these commissions and committees can facilitate discussions of unmet needs.

A Capstone/Project in Ministry requires a minimum of three different needs assessment strategies, one of which must include contact with members of the proposed target population. Speaking with ministry site staff members constitutes ONE method, no matter how many staff members are interviewed.

Needs Assessment Pitfalls

An effective Capstone/Project in Ministry identifies the needs and wants of its target population and directs the available human and material resources toward meeting those needs.

As you undertake a needs assessment, be aware of the following pitfalls:

- **Failing to distinguish between needs and wants**
  It is tempting to meet surface "wants" rather than taking the time to discern the authentic pastoral needs that lie beneath the surface. These "wants" are often more visible and easier to navigate. During the needs assessment process, it may be helpful to ask, "If you get what you say you want, what will that do for you? What will change?" This reframing may help move the conversation back to the deeper, more underlying need.

- **Jumping into implementation without assessing needs**
  Too often in ministry, those in leadership positions assume they know what their constituents need and offer initiatives and programs based on those assumptions. Sometimes the attitude of "Let's just do something!" prevails because it seems quicker than taking the time to assess and plan. When these initiatives fail, it can be easy to connect the lack of success to a lack of interest, faith, or commitment on the part of the target audience rather

than on the part of the organizers. It is critical to engage the target population in the assessment process and explore what they truly need. When this dialogue is skipped or avoided, the true needs of the people can often be left unfulfilled.

- **Failing to recognize your own limits**
  The ministry site will have many needs, but you cannot address them all. Even within a specific target population, you cannot serve everyone. From the many needs that surface, you must select the ONE that you are able and willing to address. Throughout the process, you must be cognizant of both the graciousness and generosity of God in responding to our needs, and the very real limits of the human and material resources at your disposal.

Defining a Target Population

An effective Capstone/Project in Ministry will focus on *who* the project is intended to serve.

You cannot be all things to all people because human and material resources are always limited. Whatever you do as a minister will benefit some people at your ministry site more than others. This is true whether or not you are conscious of the fact and can name the primary beneficiaries of your project. It is also true regardless of whether or not you intend those to be the primary beneficiaries.

Once you become aware of who the beneficiaries of your project are, you can more freely and responsibly choose how best to direct the resources at your disposal. It is also important to remember that you yourself will always be, to some extent, among the beneficiaries of your own project and that your needs must always be balanced with the needs of those whom the project is serving.

These questions may help identify the target population:

- Who will benefit directly from this project?
- What specific need is being addressed?

Correctly identifying the target population and key stakeholders early in the planning process is critical.

- Who must be involved in the project?
- Who will be affected by the project?
- Who has a vested interest in the outcome of the project?
- Who will receive the project "deliverables"?
- Who will read the evaluations?

Keep the target population focused and narrow. The answer to "Who is my target population?" must be realistic in terms of the ratio between the amount of human and material resources available to do the project and the number of people to be served by it, so as to avoid unrealistic aims or ministerial burnout. Although there are times when a project may have more than one target population, in such instances it would be important to prioritize them as primary beneficiaries,

secondary beneficiaries, and so on. To have more than two such groups can lead to diminishing results.

In pastoral planning, having a clear understanding of who you are primarily serving allows you to be a good steward of time and resources. It will help you accept or rule out ministerial tasks based on the determined target population, as well as keep you from avoiding "mission expansion" and ministerial burnout.

The Proposal

In light of the needs surfaced through the needs assessment and consultation process, consider your own gifts, skills, and interests.

As you begin shaping your Proposal, remember that a Capstone/Project in Ministry:

- has a clearly articulated goal(s);
- has interrelated, interdependent, and sequential steps and tasks;
- provides a necessary service, product, or information (the "deliverable"); and
- has a definite beginning and ending date for evaluative purposes.

Most Capstone Projects/Projects in Ministry are designed, fully implemented, evaluated, and end within one calendar year.

The following considerations will help aid the overall success of the project:

Project Scope: What does the project look like? What is included and not included in the project? What will be created, reported, delivered as a result of your project? How "big" should the project be? If the scope is too big the project becomes unmanageable, unaffordable, and unrealistic. The project scope should be realistic given limited personnel, resources, and time, and should conform to the project parameters listed in this handbook. How will you and those accountable at the ministry site know when the project is finished?

Quality: How good does the unique service, product, or information (the expectation/"deliverable") have to be? What is realistic given the project constraints?

Liabilities: What obstacles or liabilities does the project pose for the target population? The ministry site? Mount St. Mary's School of Theology?

Cost: How much will the project cost? What is the proposed budget? Who is responsible for funding the project?

Resources: What resources, both material and human, are needed to implement the project successfully?

Time: How long will it take to implement and evaluate the project? Beginning date? Ending date?

A change in any one of these considerations will necessitate adjusting at least one and maybe all the others.

The Proposal is an abstract summary of the project. Specific details such as scheduling, budgeting, the communications plan, etc., belong in the step-by-step Pastoral Plan that follows the Proposal.

Refer to individuals by title rather than name so that the Proposal will convey the roles and positions of the people involved. Submit your Proposal to the Coordinator of Lay Ecclesial Formation. Note that there may be revisions requested; if so, the student will be obliged to make such requested revisions until the final version of the Proposal is approved.

Guide for Writing the Capstone/Project Proposal

The Capstone /Project in Ministry Proposal will include the following components (*asterisk [*] indicates templates at the end of this handbook and downloadable from the Lay Ecclesial Formation webpage*):

1. **Title Page*** The project title should indicate precisely what the project is about.

2. **Project Board Members*** This form remains blank until board membership is finalized.

3. **Table of Contents***

4. **Introduction**
   - In one or two sentences, briefly describe the project you propose to do. Project details belong in the Pastoral Plan, not the Proposal.

5. **Ministry Site and Target Population (address each bullet point)**
   - Describe the ministry site where you will be doing your project.
   - What target population will you be serving?
   - Include any demographic and environmental information related to the site that is important to your project. Be specific. For example, what are the pertinent demographics of the ministry site, the target population, the secondary population (if there is one), and the community where the ministry site is located? Specific data such as population size, diversity (including age, gender, ethnic, social, linguistic, economic, educational), and stability over time should be included as these factors can impact the success of your project or maybe even undermine your project if not addressed appropriately. Events, initiatives, and issues at the ministry site or in the community where the ministry site is located can also impact your project. This information might also include sacramental data and parish history, as needed.
   - Does your site have a mission statement? If so, include it in this section and show how your project relates to it. If not, write a statement of mission for your project.

6. **Validation of the Need in the Local Community (address each bullet point)**
   - What pastoral need does your project address?
   - How were those needs surfaced? Who was involved? What methods of needs assessment were used? Be specific.
   - Why have you chosen the specific response to this pastoral need?

7. **Responses to the Need (address each bullet point)**
   - Has this overarching pastoral need been addressed at this ministry site in the past? If so, by whom and with what results? (NB: It is rare that a true pastoral need has never been addressed in a ministry site. Thus, be sure to seek a thorough consultation with those at the ministry site to be well-informed about the past and present initiatives in the ministry site, and whether your proposal will truly serve a pastoral need.)
   - Is this pastoral need being addressed at this ministry site by another individual or group? If so, by whom? How will your project differ from what is already being done?
   - How has this pastoral need been addressed in other places, such as similar parishes or institutions?
   - What gifts do you have that can be useful in responding to this need?
   - What personal values are involved in your response to this need?
   - What personal challenges do you anticipate? What weaknesses do you have that may serve to undermine your project? For example, do you have a tendency to procrastinate? Do you find it difficult to delegate? Are you uncomfortable meeting new people?

Everything listed above must be included in the Proposal. Do not turn in the first draft, but spend time honing and revising it, and formatting the document according to the requirements.

Submit the proposal to your Formation Advisor via email in a Word document. Allow a week for your Advisor to read and respond.

Guide for Writing the Capstone/Project Theological Research Component

The following component helps the student connect the practical elements of the Capstone/Project in Ministry with the Church's theological vision. You may begin this work after your Project Proposal and Pastoral Plan have been approved and you have been assigned a Theological Advisor by your Formation Advisor. This research component should be included in your final **Project Report**, as a result of consultation with your Theological Advisor.

Examination of the Need in the Larger Church or Broader Community
Exploring the theological issues that lie at the heart of your project, this synthetic research paper is meant to help you connect your project with the mission and ministry of the universal Church. In order to generate some themes by which to integrate the practical with the theological, explore the following questions with your Theological Advisor:

- What are the areas of theology that intersect with my project? For example, if my project is to organize an evening of reflection for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, what are the principles of Sacramental Theology, Liturgical Theology, and Ecclesiology that provide the foundations for this project?
- When recalling the various themes drawn from the courses of the Pastoral Ministry program, what areas of overlap do I find between those courses and the needs that have been expressed at my ministry site and with my target population?
- How is the Church's theological vision of herself as the Mystical Body of Christ made more evident through my project?

For students pursuing the MAPM, the Theological Research Paper should be ten to fifteen pages in length with a minimum of five footnoted sources and a bibliography. For certificate students (GCPM and CPM), the research paper should be three to five pages in length with a minimum of three footnoted sources and a bibliography. The norms established in the School of Theology's *Course Paper Guide* (https://library.athenaeum.edu/papersguide) apply.

Students may begin to implement the project while continuing to write the research paper.

Form B *(see below)* should be submitted along with your completed project report.

The Pastoral Plan

Once your Proposal is approved by your Formation Advisor/Coordinator of Lay Ecclesial Formation, you are ready to begin writing the Pastoral Plan for your project. Whereas the Project Proposal is an initial overview, the Pastoral Plan provides a more detailed outlook.

1) **Capstone/Project Goal(s) and Objectives**
   - Clearly state your project goal(s).
     a. A goal is a clear statement of the desired outcome in concrete, specific, achievable, and measurable terms.
        Example: At least 50 parents over the next four months demonstrate the ability to listen to the concerns of another without sending solutions, evaluating the other's input, or withdrawing from the other, and exhibit the ability to paraphrase content, and reflect feelings and meanings.
        Goal Statement Evaluation Criteria:
        - Is the goal statement specific? Is it stated in terms of the desired end state of the target population?
        - Is it measurable (focused as much as possible on the doing component of the target population's behavior?)
        - Is it achievable? Realistic (not set too high?)
        - Is it relevant, worthwhile (not set too low?) Is it rooted in one or more mission purposes?
        - Is it time bound? Does it have a fixed beginning and fixed ending point?

     b. An objective is a clear statement of how you plan to achieve your goal(s).

2) **Program Design (Action Plan)**
   - Give a detailed, step-by-step description in both narrative and schematic form, being sure to include "who will do what by when." Refer to individuals by title rather than names. (See schematic example on page 21 of this handbook.)
   - No one step should be too difficult in itself; each step should flow easily out of the preceding step and lead easily into the next one.

3) **Resources**
   - What human resources (persons or groups) do you need to adequately respond to the stated need? With whom will you collaborate in this ministry? How will you divide the tasks, if appropriate?
   - What material resources will you need? What financial arrangements do you need to make? What physical resources do you need (e.g., meeting space, DVD player, refreshments, unlocked doors)? Are these readily available? If not, where will you find them?
   - What educational resources have helped you or will help you? What skills and books will be needed (e.g., group dynamics, adult education principles, listening skills, etc.)? What body of knowledge has provided you with background for this project (e.g., textbooks, courses, etc.)? What body of theological writing is important to this project (e.g., liturgy, discipleship, models of Church, death and resurrection, etc.)?

4) **Contingency Plans**
   - What are some possible obstacles or challenges that could occur during the implementation phase of this project?
   - What are your backup plans if such instances happen?

5) **Evaluation Plans**
   - After this project has been completed, how will you determine whether and to what extent your goals have been achieved?
   - List the information you will need to assess the attainment of your goals.
   - Choose an appropriate format (e.g., interviews, meetings, questionnaires).
   - Explain why you chose this evaluation method.
   - Include a sample of all evaluation forms you plan to use.
   - When your project is complete, to whom (other than your Formation Advisor and Project Board members) will you provide the results, and for what purposes?
   - (See additional information on page 23 of this handbook.)

6) **Financial Plan (Budget)**
   - What is the projected monetary cost for implementing your project?
   - How was the cost of your project determined? What factors did you take into consideration?
   - If you solicit bids for services and supplies, how will decisions be made concerning which vendor(s) to employ?
   - What is your source of funding? (NB: Personal funding for the project in ministry is prohibited.)

- Has your funding source(s) made a firm commitment to fund your project, and if so, what is maximum amount they have agreed to fund?
- How will you address cost over runs?

7) Communications Plan

- Have you clearly identified your target population and all the stakeholders who will be impacted by your project or who can impact your project both positively and negatively?
- Have you determined…
  - what needs to be communicated (specific information or content), to whom, by when;
  - what each communication is intended to accomplish (inform, update, invite);
  - what are the most the most effective tools to use for each communication (consider to whom the communication is directed and choose the most appropriate tool accordingly);
  - how often communication should take place;
  - who is responsible for each communication?

8) Project Board Members

- Based on the input given by your Formation Advisor (*see below*), list the members of your project board.

Discuss the Pastoral Plan with your Formation Advisor. When complete, submit the Pastoral Plan to your Formation Advisor via email in a Word document.

Once your Formation Advisor approves the Pastoral Plan, you will discuss the composition of the Advisory Board and be assigned a Theological Advisor.

After being assigned the Theological Advisor, explore the theological issues that underlie the Proposal and Pastoral Plan with him or her, placing it in context of the larger Church and broader community.

Add the results of your discussion with your Theological Advisor, and merge the Proposal and Pastoral Plan into one document, numbering the pages consecutively using 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and with one-inch margins.

Consult with your Formation Advisor to schedule the Project Board meeting. The last day of January of the intended year of completion is the latest date you can hold your board meeting and still anticipate graduation in May. **Submit your Proposal and Pastoral Plan to your entire board at least one week prior to your board meeting.**

At the board meeting, the members will discuss the Proposal and Plan and suggest revisions that will strengthen the project. The Project Board will include:

1. the Formation Advisor or delegate
2. at least two representatives (and no more than four) from the ministry site and/or people whose knowledge or experience can contribute to this project
3. one additional person from another ministry site with experience in the project area

NB: The Theological Advisor does not attend the Project Board meeting. However, the Theological Advisor must approve the final Theological Research Paper for your project to be considered complete.

Designing Your Program

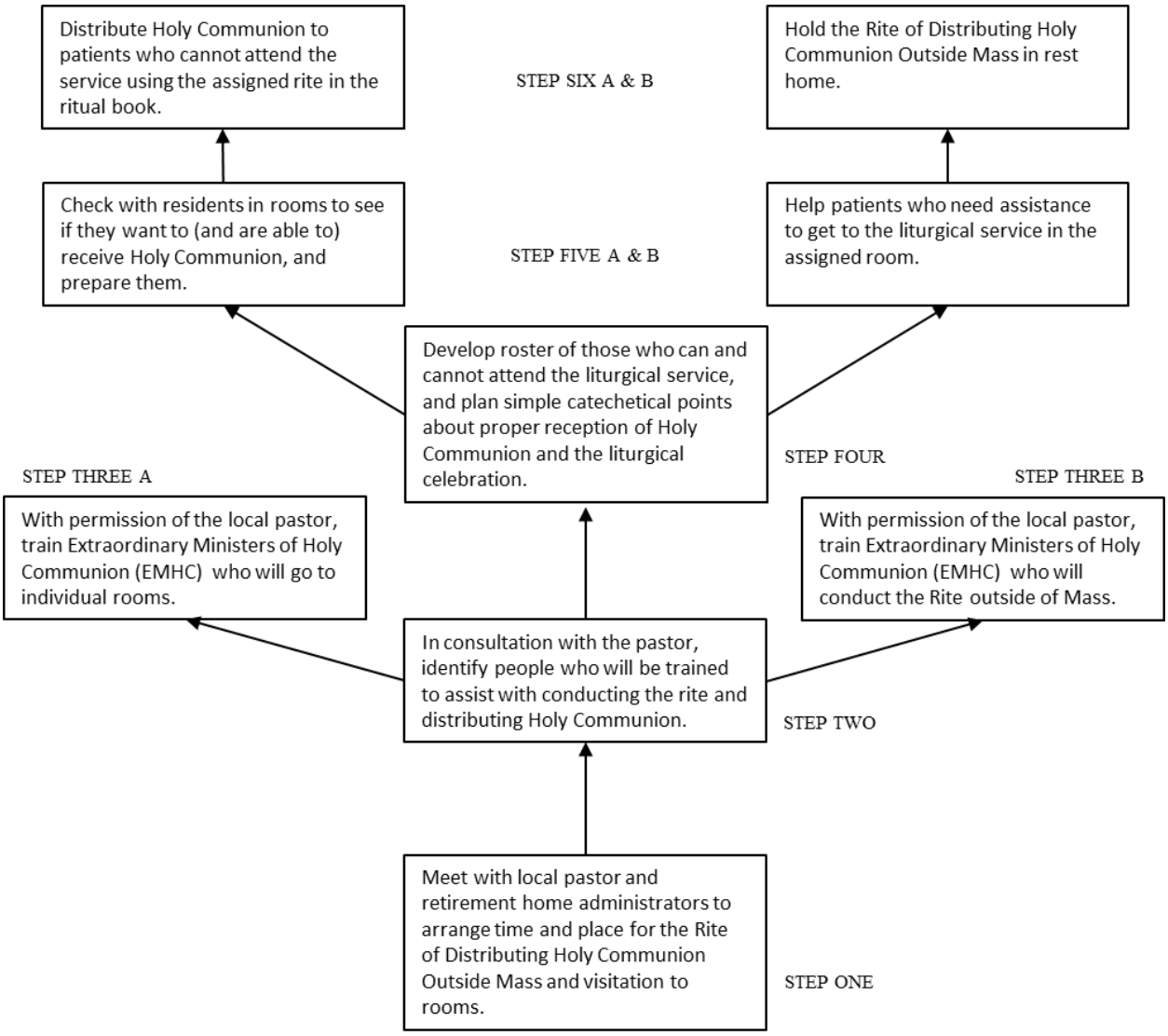
Pastoral programs should be organically related to authentic pastoral needs, mission, and goals of the intended target group.

Programs are systematic, step-by-step means established to achieve your goals. Programs of very limited scope might be carried out in a handful of steps, while larger and more complex programs might be more extensive. Program steps should be added or eliminated only on the basis of their contribution to the mission, goals, and needs of the target population.

Principles of Program Shaping and Design

1) The entire program should move step by step toward the achievement of its goal(s).
2) No one step should be too complicated or too difficult in itself. If it is, it needs to be broken down into smaller steps.
3) No one step should take place until all prerequisite steps are completed.
4) The connection of each step to the next should be logical and clear.
5) Some steps may be performed simultaneously, making efficient use of time and energy.
6) Each step should be timely, with duration and completion dates included.
7) Each step should include who is responsible, listing titles rather than names to indicate organizational positions and roles.

Example of Project Design Schematic: Distribution of Holy Communion Outside Mass in a Retirement Home



Keeping a Capstone/Project Journal

Keep a journal or notes of your reflections while planning, implementing, and evaluating your project. These notes will provide the material for later theological reflection and for writing the Project Report.

Some of the reflections you will want to record in your journal include the following:

Personal

- What emotions am I feeling (e.g., excited, fulfilled, hurried, angry, etc.)?
- In what way are my expectations being (or not being) met?
- What is my ongoing or evolving sense of why I am doing this project?
- What new insights do I have about myself, human nature, the Church, the world, God, as a result of this project?
- What is of ultimate concern to me at this moment in my project's implementation?
- What new personal strengths and limitations am I discovering as a result of this project?

Ministerial

- What are the personal implications of initiating this project?
- How does my involvement in this project help to identify my ability and willingness to minister?
- What are my strengths and limitations as a minister as revealed by my involvement in this project?
- What am I discovering about mutuality or partnership in ministry with others through this project experience?
- How do I perceive this project as an experience? As an experience of ministry? As a personal success or failure?
- What assumptions underlie my perceptions about this project, and how might they need to be challenged?

Theological

- How does this project forward the mission of the Church?
- What are the most important aspects of the Christian tradition involved in what I am doing in this project?
- What new theological insights am I discovering as a result of this project?
- What are the conclusions that I draw from my actions and my reflections upon them as a result of this project?
- What does my involvement in this project in ministry say about my basic faith stance?

Implementation

Once your pastoral plan is approved by the Project Board, you may proceed to implement it, following the timelines and procedures.

You will recruit an implementation team to collaborate on implementing the plan. Invite them to make decisions, add creativity, and fill any gaps in the plan.

As your project unfolds, some changes or surprises may occur. This is normal in the planning and implementation process. Document the reasons for any necessary deviations from your original proposal.

Save communications, publicity items, agendas, handouts, and materials from your project implementation for your final Project Report. These can be placed in appendices at the back of the report.

Remember to keep track of the names of the people you will want to thank for helping you with your project.

Evaluating the Capstone/Project in Ministry

Reread the goal statements. After completing your project, how will you determine whether or not you achieved your goal(s)?

Steps in Determining Your Evaluation Method

1. List the information you need to assess goal achievement.
2. Choose an appropriate evaluation method.
    a. Interviews
    b. Documentation
    c. Questionnaires
    d. Tests
    e. Observation (i.e., counting behaviors)
    f. Recording

Your choices will depend upon several factors:

- Whether you need actual respondents
- The number of respondents you need to achieve sampling validity
- The amount and type of information you need
- The amount of time you will have to process and interpret the data gathered
- The extent to which you are able to anticipate the range of possible answers
- The amount of knowledge, skill, and experience you or other project team members have in using the evaluation method in question

Questions can be closed responses that provide alternative answers for each of the questions including checklists, yes/no responses, or multiple choice options. Open responses require the respondent to answer the questions in their own words and are harder to tabulate and interpret.

Include a sample of the evaluation you plan to use, along with a statement of your rationale for choosing that particular method as a part of your Pastoral Plan. Indicate who will receive evaluation data and for what purposes.

Guide for Writing the Capstone/Project Final Report and Evaluation Narrative

Following project implementation, write the Project Report and Evaluation Narrative. (See form A3 below for section headings). Include each of the following components in your Project Report (referring to people involved in the project by job title rather than name).

1) **Review of Project Implementation**
   - Detail the implementation of your plan of action. What actually happened?
   - How closely did what actually happened follow your original pastoral plan?
   - Was your action plan refined or revised in any way?
   - If so, how and why?
   - Were there any unanticipated or unintended outcomes, positive or negative?
   - If so, what is your best understanding of how those outcomes came about?

2) **Evaluation of the Project**
   - Was the evaluation of your project based upon your goals as stated in the pastoral plan? If not, why not?
   - What individuals or groups were involved in the formal evaluation of your project?
   - How was the evaluation of your project administered?
   - What were the results of your target population's evaluation of your project? Provide summaries of hard data.
   - What does the evaluation data demonstrate or imply concerning the achievement or non-achievement of your goals?
   - What does the evaluation data demonstrate or imply concerning the extent to which the target population's needs were met?
   - To what extent do your own perceptions or impressions of the project and its results differ from what the evaluation results show?

3) **Personal Spiritual Growth (Spiritual Formation)**
   - How were your personal assumptions about the project changed or challenged during its implementation?
   - What do you define as the successes and failures of your project?
   - What values have you consistently supported? How did these influence the project?
   - How has your project affected your relationship with God and with the Church?
   - Has your project experience changed or enhanced your prayer? If so, how?

4) **Ministerial Understanding (Human and Pastoral Formation)**
   - What did you learn from your project about your own capacity for ministry?
   - What did you learn about your personal strengths and limitations?
   - What insights have you had into your own needs for development and areas of growth?

- What did you learn about collaboration with others in ministry?
- Did your project empower others for ministry? If so, whom? How?
- How did this project call upon you to minister with creativity and adaptability?
- What did you learn about ministry in the context of Church?
- How does your experience reflect the tradition of ministry in the Church or depart from that tradition?

5) Theological Understanding (Intellectual Formation)

- Reflect back on the theological issues you presented in your proposal.
- Did any other theological issues surface for you while working on this project?
- What new theological understandings and conclusions have you come to as a result of working on this project?
- Has your understanding of tradition, scripture, or ministry been changed or challenged by your project experience? If so, how?

6) Theology of Ministry

- How would you articulate the Church's theology of ministry, as rooted in her ecclesiology?
- How have you found yourself engaged and invested in the Church's understanding of ministry?
- What theological "disciplines" have been helpful in developing your formation as one called to minister to others?
- How has your formation in the Lay Ecclesial Formation Program assisted your understanding of your service with and in the Church?

Note: When sending Board Members a final copy of your Project Report, be certain to include the applicable evaluation forms: C1 and C2 if you are an MAPM student; C3 if you are a GCPM or CPM student..

Complete Form B and submit it along with your Project Report to the Lay Ecclesial Formation Office.

A1 - Title Page Template

MOUNT ST. MARY'S SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
LAY ECCLESIAL FORMATION PROGRAM

TITLE OF PROJECT

AT [NAME OF PARISH OR INSTITUTION]

CITY, STATE

[CAPSTONE PROJECT IN MINISTRY / PROJECT IN MINISTRY]

SUBMITTED AS PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

FOR THE [DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS IN PASTORAL MINISTRY
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN / CERTIFICATE IN PASTORAL MINISTRY]

BY

NAME

CINCINNATI, OHIO

DATE

A2 – List of Project Board Members Template

Formation Advisor: _____

Theological Advisor: _____

Names of Other Members	Position	Parish/Organization

A3 – Table of Contents Template

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE PROPOSAL

Page Number
Introduction.....
Ministry Site and Target Population.....
Validation of the Need in the Local Community.....
Responses to the Need.....
Examination of the Need in the Larger Church or Broader Community.....
Bibliography.....

THE PASTORAL PLAN

Project Goals and Objectives.....
Program Design (Action Plan).....
Resources.....
Contingency Plans.....
Evaluation Plans.....
Financial Plan (Budget).....
Communication Plan.....
Membership of the Project Board.....

PROJECT REPORT AND EVALUATION NARRATIVE

Review of Project Implementation.....
Evaluation of the Project.....
Personal Spiritual Growth.....
Ministerial Understanding.....
Theological Understanding.....

THEOLOGY OF MINISTRY

Theology of Ministry.....

Appendices.....

B - Theological Advisor Input Form

Participant's Name: _____

Project Title: _____

Theological Advisor: _____

Date of Meeting: _____

Theological issues discussed:

Resources recommended:

New areas explored:

Suggestions for reflection:

Other directions:

I approve the Theological Research Paper as meeting or exceeding the guidelines and standards set by the Lay Ecclesial Formation Program for the Capstone/Project in Ministry.

_____ _____

Theological Advisor's Signature *Date*

C1 - Grading Rubric for P 799 – Capstone II
Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry Degree Program

Student's Name: _____

For the purposes of this rubric, "Above Average" shall be understood as surpassing the qualities described as "Satisfactory," but may not achieve the full quality of "Superior." Likewise, "Area for Improvement" shall be understood as possessing some deficiency of the qualities described as "satisfactory," but may not be wholly described as "Inadequate."

CATEGORY	SCORE
Ministry Site Selection, Needs Assessment, and Selection of Need to Address	_____/10
Proposal	_____/10
Pastoral Plan	_____/10
Theological Paper: "Examination of the Examination of the Need in the Larger Church or Broader Community"	_____/10
Project Report and Evaluation Narrative	_____/10
Writing Style, Citation Format, Revisions, Appendices	_____/10
TOTAL	**_____/60**

Ministry Site Selection, Needs Assessment, Selection of Need to Address _____/10

Points	Performance	Description
10	*Superior*	Ministry site carefully chosen; evidences appropriate community support and resources for a successful Capstone; offers potential for student to serve in a leadership role; three distinct and valid needs assessment strategies employed, one of which includes contact with members of the proposed target population; clear separation of site needs and student's

		agenda/wants; needs assessment strategies and results succinctly stated and fully documented; chosen need to be addressed is clearly defined and appropriate for the scope, timeline, student's gifts and abilities; reflects the collaborative nature of the Capstone.
9	*Above Average*	
8	*Satisfactory*	Ministry site is appropriate; three needs assessment strategies employed and documented; identified need is within the guidelines of the Capstone.
7	*Area for Improvement*	
6	*Inadequate*	Ministry site offers challenges for servant leadership or effective implementation; needs assessment is biased, inadequate, or incompletely documented; need to be addressed is vague, unrelated to target population, and/or inappropriate for the student's gifts and abilities; lies and/or scope, timeline, and collaborative nature of the Capstone.

Proposal **_____/10**

Points	Performance	Description
10	*Superior*	Ministry site fully described, including history, demographics, environmental scan, sacramental data (if pertinent), relationship of ministry site to broader community (if pertinent); events, initiatives, and issues at ministry site impacting implementation clearly described; target population clearly defined and described, and of an appropriate size and scope for effective ministry; secondary target (if appropriate) clearly defined and described; relationship between proposed project and ministry site mission clearly articulated (if ministry site does not have a mission statement, a project mission statement is incorporated); validation of the need (needs assessment results) explicitly articulated and methods of assessment are clearly articulated; defines both overarching need and proposed response (i.e., the need for Biblical literacy in parish/response of developing women's Bible study); documents how the ministry site and at least one other similar site previously/currently addresses this need; concretely and honestly explores and articulates personal gifts, values, and challenges in responding to the need.
9	*Above Average*	
8	*Satisfactory*	Describes the ministry site and includes demographic and environmental data; identifies a target population; includes ministry site mission statement; outlines results of needs assessment process; offers information about initiatives in

		ministry site related to proposed project; includes discussion of personal gifts, values and challenges.
7	*Area for Improvement*	
6	*Inadequate*	Ministry site and/or target population inadequately described; missing demographic and/or sacramental information; target population of an inappropriate size or scope; mission statement missing or unrelated to proposed project; cannot articulate relationship of project to ministry site mission; needs assessment not well-developed or inadequately described; inadequate exploration of personal gifts, challenges and values related to the proposed project.

Pastoral Plan **_____/10**

Points	Performance	Description
10	*Superior*	Goals written from desired client outcome/s in concrete, achievable and measurable terms; clearly stated objectives flowing from goals; detailed step-by-step action plan in both narrative and schematic format, outlining "who will do what by when"; shows a logical flow of events; clearly articulates the human, material, financial, physical, educational resources needed; contingency plan is complete and well-articulated; evaluation plan is comprehensive, appropriate for the ministry site and project, relates directly to the goals, and has a clear client; the financial plan is detailed, realistic, and transparent; the communications plan identifies stakeholders, content, avenues, and frequency. The plan clearly articulates, promotes and provides for collaboration and empowerment of others.
9	*Above Average*	
8	*Satisfactory*	Goals written from desired client outcome/s; objectives flow from goals; action plan presented in both narrative and schematic format; resources listed; plan contains budget, evaluation plan, contingency plan, and communication plan. Plan allows for collaboration and empowerment of others.
7	*Area for Improvement*	
6	*Inadequate*	Goals poorly defined, unachievable, or unmeasurable; narrative and/or schematic are missing, inadequate, or do not reflect effective pastoral planning; resources not properly identified or inadequately described; contingency plan missing or inadequate; evaluation plan does not reference goals, is poorly constructed, or has no identified client; budget is unrealistic, poorly planned, or inadequately funded; communication plan is ineffective, poorly defined, or incomplete. The plan does not allow for or encourage collaboration and empowerment of others.

Theological Paper **_____/10**

Examination of the Need in the Larger Church or Broader Community Ministry Site

Points	Performance	Description
10	*Superior*	*10-15 page research paper with a minimum of 5 references and bibliography*. Thesis statement clearly connects topic with project; clear articulation of relationship between project and mission of Church; clear articulation and depth exploration of one or more theological issues at the heart of the project; insightful and appropriate use of secondary sources, scripture, and/or Church documents; clearly structured; free from grammatical, spelling, and word processing errors; language precise and effective in conveying understanding to the reader; citations according to K. Turabian, *Manual for Writers.*
9	*Above Average*	
8	*Satisfactory*	Paper follows guidelines; thesis statement connects topic with project; articulation of relationship between project and mission of Church; exploration of one or more theological issues at the heart of the project; appropriate use of sources; citations according to K. Turabian, *Manual for Writers.*
7	*Area for Improvement*	
6	*Inadequate*	Paper does not follow guidelines; inadequate connection between project and topic of research; unable to articulate relationship between project and mission of Church; unable to articulate one or more theological issues at the heart of the project; inadequate, incomplete, or inept use of secondary sources, scripture, and/or Church documents; poorly structured; excessive grammatical, spelling, and/or word processing errors; language imprecise or confusing; citations not according to K. Turabian, *Manual for Writers.*

Project Report and Evaluation Narrative **_____/10**

Points	Performance	Description
10	*Superior*	Implementation report is detailed, shows theological and pastoral insight; unintended outcomes are named and examined; clearly articulates revisions and changes that occurred during implementation; evaluation results clearly articulated; demonstrates understanding of the relationship between evaluation results and stated goals; articulates self-awareness of personal assumptions, challenges, and the effect of the capstone experience on relationship with God, Church,

		and spiritual growth; clearly articulates learning, theological and pastoral insights, experiences of collaboration, and connection between the project and the tradition of ministry in the Church; evidences ability to reflect theologically on experience.
9	*Above Average*	
8	*Satisfactory*	Implementation report includes all of the required elements of unintended outcomes, revisions and changes during implementation, evaluation results, challenges of implementation, and some connection between the project and the tradition of ministry in the Church.
7	*Area for Improvement*	
6	*Inadequate*	Implementation report is inadequate, incomplete; unintended outcomes missing or inadequately articulated; revisions or changes during implemented are undocumented or missing, evaluation results are missing, inadequate or poorly articulated; unable to articulate connection between project and tradition of ministry in the Church; unable to reflect theologically on experience.

Writing Style, Citation Format **_____/10**

Points	Performance	Description
10	*Superior*	Capstone report follows guidelines; free from grammatical, spelling errors, and word processing errors; language precise and effective in conveying understanding to the readers; citations according to K. Turabian, *Manual for Writers.*
9	*Above Average*	
8	*Satisfactory*	Capstone report follows guidelines; paper clearly written; citations according to K. Turabian, *Manual for Writers.*
7	*Area for Improvement*	
6	*Inadequate*	Capstone report does not follow guidelines; excessive grammatical, spelling, and/or word processing errors; citations not according to K. Turabian, *Manual for Writers.*

_____ _____

Evaluator's Signature *Date*

Please return completed form to:

Mount St. Mary's Seminary & School of Theology
Lay Ecclesial Formation Office
6616 Beechmont Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45230

C2 - Capstone Project Evaluation
Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry Degree Program

In addition to evaluating the Capstone Project in Ministry itself, the School of Theology also asks the project board to evaluate students using the following form. The purpose of this second evaluation is to enable the institution to assess quantitatively the degree to which the Lay Ecclesial Formation Program is accomplishing its goals. Please use the following scale to evaluate the degree to which the student's Capstone Project in Ministry shows accomplishment of the three general intended outcomes of the Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry degree program, as well as any further specifications of each general outcome.

Student: _____ Evaluator: _____

1 = Below minimal expectations	4 = Very Good
2 = Meeting minimal expectations	5 = Excellent
3 = Good	NA = No Basis for Judgment

1	2	3	4	5	NA

1. Students completing the MAPM degree will have matured personally and spiritually in ministry with the people of God. _____
2. Students completing the MAPM degree will have integrated knowledge of the Roman Catholic faith within ministry. _____

   Ability to draw on the wisdom of the Catholic theological tradition as an active resource in ministerial practice. _____
3. Effective leadership, administration, and service in the spirit of collaboration. _____
   a) Ability to recognize a pastoral need. _____
   b) Ability to work collaboratively with others to respond to an articulated need. _____
   c) Ability to coordinate theological and pastoral resources in responding to a pastoral need _____

C3 – Evaluation of Project in Ministry
Graduate Certificate/Certificate in Pastoral Ministry

Student: _____ Evaluator: _____

Evaluation of the Ministerial Work of the Project

A. In the implementation of this project, how well did the participant demonstrate his/her capacity for contributing to the mission of the Church?

B. To what extend did the work of this capstone project give evidence of the participant's achievement of the goals of the Lay Ecclesial Formation Program:

1. The ability to minister effectively:

2. To empower others to minister:

3. To minister with creativity and adaptability:

C. What do you see as the major strengths and/or weaknesses of this project:

Evaluation of the Project Report

A. How is the participant's understanding of the Christian theological tradition reflected in this report?

B. How is the participant's capacity for critical thought and action reflected in this report?

C. Additional comments.

Please check one:

_____ I approve of this Project in Ministry as fulfilling the requirements of the Project Component.

_____ I do not approve of this Project in Ministry as fulfilling the requirements of the Project Component.

_____ _____

Evaluator's Signature *Date*

Please return completed form to:

Mount St. Mary's Seminary & School of Theology
Lay Ecclesial Formation Office
6616 Beechmont Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45230

Appendix 1 – Example Evaluation Forms

[Evaluation of Workshop]
MANAGING CONFLICT IN THE CHURCH

Please *circle* below the number that represents the extent of your agreement that each of the training objectives of this workshop has been achieved for you personally, using the following scale:

1 - strongly disagree
2 - disagree
3 - undecided (neither agree nor disagree)
4 - agree
5 - strongly agree

* I have a new conceptual model to guide my behavior in interpersonal conflict situations.

1 2 3 4 5

* I know what style(s) of dealing with disruption and conflict I prefer and the assets and liabilities suggested by my particular style preferences.

1 2 3 4 5

* I have acquired the ability to distinguish between conflicts of needs, conflicts of values, and conflicts of emotions.

1 2 3 4 5

* I have acquired the ability to diagnose the current level of escalation of interpersonal and organizational conflicts.

1 2 3 4 5

* I have acquired a working knowledge of basic conflict management strategies and how to sequence those strategies in managing specific conflicts/

1 2 3 4 5

Please indicate below your overall level of satisfaction with this workshop:

1 - highly dissatisfied
2 - dissatisfied
3 - neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4 - satisfied
5 - highly satisfied

[Evaluation of a Course]
ENABLING PEOPLE FOR PARISH MINISTRY

How satisfied are you that each of the learning objectives of the course listed below has been achieved for you? Please ***circle*** your response under each objective, using the following scale:

1 - strongly dissatisfied
2 - dissatisfied
3 - neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4 - satisfied
5 - strongly satisfied

* Participants have acquired working knowledge of the developmental cycles of a ministry organization, which situates the ennoblement process and highlights the foundations upon which an effective human resource development effort needs to be built.

1 2 3 4 5

* Participants have acquired working knowledge of the skill tools and techniques needed to recruit volunteers for parish ministry in a way that gives them an in-depth understanding of what their ministry means for them and for those to be served and in a way that motivates them to continue to be active in volunteer ministries for the parish in different ways.

1 2 3 4 5

* Participants have acquired a working understanding of how to "contract" with volunteer ministers for their services in a way that clarifies expectations, formalizes commitment, and creates a basis for the accountability process.

1 2 3 4 5

* Participants have acquired a working understanding of how to set up in-service training and field service experiences for volunteer ministers that will help them to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to minister competently and responsibly.

1 2 3 4 5

* Participants have acquired a working knowledge of how to supervise the performance of volunteer ministers, setting up support systems that help them to value themselves and to realize how they are valued by the community, and intervening in situations where performance is below an acceptable standard.

1 2 3 4 5

* Participants have acquired a working knowledge of how to evaluate both volunteer programs and volunteer performance, together with the impact that both the program and the performance have on the community.

1 2 3 4 5

* In light of the above, please indicate below your OVERALL level of satisfaction with this course.

1 2 3 4 5

Please add below any additional comments or suggestions you might have.