



MOUNT ST. MARY'S SEMINARY & SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

CINCINNATI + OHIO

Lay Ecclesial Formation

Field Education Handbook

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Table of Contents

Introduction..... 1

Field Education Operating Principles 2

Process 3

 Determine Field Education Site..... 4

 Field Education Proposal Form 5

 Perform Ministry Hours..... 6

 Evaluate the Experience 7

 Prepare Reflection Paper 8

Field Ed Time Log Template 9

Introduction

Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) document guiding lay ecclesial ministry formation, explains, "The Church has always required proper preparation of those who exercise a ministry. In the same way, CIC [*Codex Iuris Canonici* – the Code of Canon Law], canon 231, states that 'lay persons who devote themselves permanently or temporarily to some special service of the Church are obliged to acquire the appropriate formation which is required to fulfill their function properly,'"¹ The document continues, "The knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for pastoral ministry may be taught in traditional classroom or seminar formats, but that is not enough. The teaching must be supplemented by practical experience in real situations and by mentored reflection on those experiences."²

Field education enables lay ecclesial formation students to grow in their ability to respond to pastoral needs with sensitivity, skill, and confidence. It provides an opportunity to explore gifts and interests, test skills in new and challenging situations, and ground an understanding of the Catholic principles of justice, mercy, and social teaching in lived experience.

All lay ecclesial formation students are required to complete a specific number of field education hours directly serving a ministerial population. The number of required hours is determined by the respective formation program (100 hours for MAPM and GCPM; 75 hours for CPM; 35 hours for graduate-level endorsements; 20 hours for non-graduate-level endorsements).

Students complete their work through consultation with their Formation Advisor (either the Dean of the School of Theology or the Coordinator of Lay Ecclesial Formation) and under the direction of a supervisor at a specific ministry site.

This handbook will guide the student through carrying out his or her field education component, evaluating the experience, and writing a reflection paper upon completion.

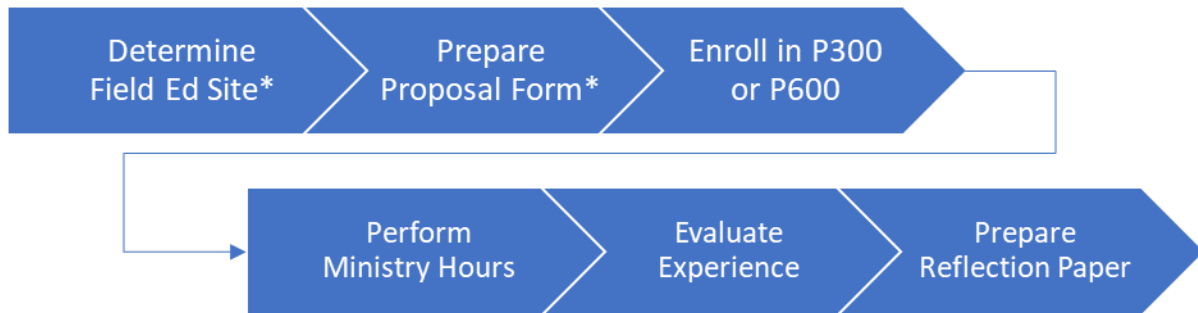
¹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2005), 33.

² *Co-Workers*, 49.

Field Education Operating Principles

- The project must be in keeping with (arch)diocesan policies and Catholic doctrine.
- It must model effective ministry and an appropriate pastoral approach.
- Of the required field education hours, 80 percent must be spent working directly with the ministerial population at the ministry site; only 20 percent may be spent in training, orientation, and reading (as provided by the supervisor). Travel time to and from the site is not counted.
- The student is expected to log all hours spent in the ministry setting and skills practiced during that time. The participant is also expected to keep a journal in which reflections, questions, and concerns are noted.
- For some field education experiences, there is a fee for supervision or workshops required for the experience. These fees are the responsibility of the participant, and the method of payment is negotiated between the participant and the on-site supervisor or administrator.
- Some field education experiences are group experiences such as, for example, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Participants apply for these programs directly to the organization or institution offering them.
- Students may not collect any information from individuals for future use, study, or analysis.
- Students may not engage in interactions with individuals that are intrusive or confidential in nature. Interactions must be benign and carry no reasonable potential for harm, discomfort, or embarrassment for the participants
- If the field education experience involves contact with children, the student must complete all Archdiocese of Cincinnati child protective and fingerprinting requirements, as noted at <https://catholicaoc.org/offices/safe-environment>.
- The student has one calendar year from the time of project approval by the Formation Advisor to complete the field education experience.

Process



**Approval needed to proceed.*

Determine Field Education Site

- Discuss initial ideas with Formation Advisor.
- Obtain preliminary consent from ministry site.

Prepare Field Education Proposal Form

- Fill out the form and have it signed by the proposed site supervisor.
- Email the form to Formation Advisor.
- Receive approval to proceed.

Enroll in P 600 (MAPM, GCPM, and graduate-level endorsement students) **or P 300** (CPM and endorsement students)

Perform Ministry Hours

- Work at and complete the approved field education experience.
- Maintain a field education time log.

Evaluate the Experience

- Meet with site supervisor as needed (but at least once).
- Complete self-evaluation form and discuss with site supervisor.
- Ask site supervisor to sign the time log; send it to Formation Advisor.

Prepare Reflection Paper

- Write a reflection paper.
- Format as specified.
- Submit to Formation Advisor.

Determine Field Education Site

Field education is often transformational, revealing new paths of service, new opportunities to use gifts and talents, and new ways of viewing self, others, and the Church in light of the Gospel. That is why it is important to give careful consideration to your choice of ministry location.

Consult with current lay ecclesial formation students or graduates regarding ideas for field education experience, or obtain some suggested sites from your Formation Advisor. Consider these questions as you evaluate potential ministry sites:

- What types of ministries have you been involved in previously?
- What have you learned about yourself and your gifts from your involvement in those ministries?
- What kinds of ministry settings have you worked in thus far?
- With what ministry populations have you worked?
- What ministry-related gifts and skills have others affirmed in you?
- Is there a ministry experience that you feel curious about or called to that is quite different from anything you've done so far?
- What kinds of ministers do you respect and admire the most and why? Who would your ministerial heroes be?
- What ministerial skills would you like to acquire, develop, or master?
- What ministry experience have you not had thus far but would like to have?

Also give thought to practical considerations such as hours of operation and driving distance since field education is an on-site, in-person experience.

Contact your choice of ministry sites and have an initial discussion. Determine who you would be your site supervisor. Obtain preliminary consent of the site and/or the site supervisor.

Note to permanent deacon aspirants: You should notify your (arch)diocesan diaconate office of your choice of field education site and obtain the director's concurrence.

Field Education Proposal Form

Student: _____ Date: _____

Formation Advisor: _____

Ministry Site: _____

Ministry Site Supervisor: _____

Briefly describe the proposed field education experience:

What are your personal goals for this field education experience? Specify particular skills to be developed or practiced in behavioral, measurable terms.

In what ways will the skills you develop in this field education experience be beneficial for others?

What activities will you perform in order achieve your goals as stated above?

What do you see as the theological basis for your participation in this supervised ministry experience?

Planned start date: _____ Planned completion date: _____

Requirements for award of credit for field education:

- *Hours of participation: 100 hours for MAPM and GCPM; 75 hours for CPM; 35 hours for graduate-level endorsements; 20 hours for non-graduate-level endorsements.*
- *At least one student/site supervisor meeting for evaluative discussions.*
- *Student's final self-evaluation form discussed with site supervisor.*
- *Student's completed time log signed by site supervisor and submitted to Formation Advisor.*
- *Student's reflection paper submitted to Formation Advisor.*

After preparing this proposal, the student must sign it, obtain the site supervisor's signature as agreement, and then submit it to his/her Formation Advisor. Only after being fully approved may the student enroll in P 300 or P 600 and officially begin the field education experience.

Student

Ministry Site Supervisor

Formation Advisor

Perform Ministry Hours

Site Orientation

As you begin your ministry experience, it is advisable to ask your site supervisor to review safety, security, and other protocols with you such as the following:

- Ethical code of conduct and confidentiality expectations.
- Health precautions and protocols.
 - Especially in a health care setting, types of PPE (personal protective equipment) to be used and whether the student is responsible to provide his or her own.
- Standard policies and procedures for volunteers to report safety or security issues.
- Expectations for appropriate attire.
- Other practicalities such as parking, site policies regarding storage of personal belongings, wearing of identification badges, etc.

Time Log

You are required to keep an ongoing log of hours spent in the ministry setting and skills practiced during that time. The time log form is provided at the end of this handbook. When your required number of hours have been fulfilled, ask your site supervisor to sign and date the log. Submit the signed time log to your Formation Advisor.

Journal

It is recommended that you keep a journal throughout your field education experience. Noting insights, questions, or concerns will provide material for later personal, ministerial, and theological reflection.

Enrolling in Theological Reflection

Note: When you have completed approximately half of your field education experience, you should enroll in the required one-credit Theological Reflection course (P 502 for MAPM, GCPM, and graduate-level endorsement students or P 102 for CPM and endorsement students).

Evaluate the Experience

Self-Evaluation

Upon completing your field education experience, prepare a self-evaluation treating the following topics:

- Points of growth in qualities necessary for effective ministry (values and attitudes, working relationships, work habits, initiative, self-awareness, communication).
- Achievement of personal goals set for this experience in your field education proposal.

Supervisor's Evaluation

The final meeting with your site supervisor should take place as you near the completion of your field education experience. At that meeting, share your self-evaluation responses with your supervisor and discuss his/her feedback to these or similar evaluative questions.

At that final meeting (if you haven't already done so), ask your supervisor to sign and date your completed field education time log. Send the log to your Formation Advisor.

Prepare Reflection Paper

Upon completion of your field education experience, write a three-page reflection paper answering these questions:

- In light of your field education goals, what were some of the chief areas of formational growth for you in your field education experience?
- What insights did you gain about yourself as a person?
- What personal or ministerial areas of growth have you become aware of as a result of this experience? What needs for further training, development, or experience have been suggested to you by the experience, and what are your plans regarding those?
- How do you envision you will be able to use the knowledge, skills, and experience that you have acquired during your field education experience in your present and future ministries?
- How did your site supervisor's evaluation comments compare with your self-evaluation?

The document should be typed double-spaced and use Times New Roman 12-point font. Submit the paper to your Formation Advisor.

