



GATEWAY SEMINARY

Theological Field
Education Handbook

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Section 1 - TFE General Information

Purpose

Gateway Seminary exists to assist in the shaping of effective Christian leaders for today's churches. Ministry requires leaders who not only demonstrate a thorough understanding of Scripture and theology, but who are also competent in ministry skills and who exhibit spiritual and personal maturity. The purpose of Theological Field Education (TFE) is to provide a structure and a process that facilitates the shaping of Christian leaders through the ministry practicum that is based upon a *360° feedback* team. Our objective is for every student to develop the core competencies needed for ministry, grow in their understanding of self, and increase in spiritual vitality.

Scope

Every accredited seminary is required to have a field education program, with students doing ministry under the oversight of field supervisors/mentors. At Gateway, every degree provides a ministry practicum directed and coordinated by the Office of Theological Field Education. Students serve in a variety of ministry settings under the supervision of a competent Field Mentor who is trained in supervision and the Gateway Seminary TFE system.

Structure

TFE at Gateway is structured for students to serve in a relevant ministry setting where they create a personalized Learning Service Agreement or Covenant that specifies the objectives and goals that they desire to accomplish during their practicum. In essence, students create their own graduate-level course for integrating leadership character qualities and ministry skills. This customizing approach includes their finding a *match* in a ministry setting which facilitates the development of professional skills, a Field Mentor who can help professional and personal development, a Spiritual Formation Mentor who can help them grow spiritually, and a Ministry Reflection Group. While in the ministry setting, students are involved in a Peer Reflection Group, either online or in person, which is facilitated by a GS professor.

Goals

Our goals for students in Theological Field Education include:

- Integrate ministry theory and practice
- Move to the next level of servant leadership through experiential learning
- Practice the discipline of theological reflection
- Identify, own, and affirm their gifts, strengths, and abilities
- Determine how their personhood both facilitates and hinders ministry
- Understand and develop both core and specialized ministry competencies
- Become intentional in their ministry

Core Values of a TFE Ministry Practicum

Our definition of ministry practicum is *doing real-life, hands-on ministry in a safe setting that provides opportunity for the student to learn and grow in personhood, spiritual, and ministry skills through ministry leadership actions and reflective feedback*. These are crucial elements to our particular concept of a ministry practicum.

1. **Real-life, Hands-on Ministry**

A ministry practicum is about doing ministry, not just study. Through actually doing ministry, students are able to integrate theoretical concepts with practical application. Our desire is that our students become both academicians and practitioners.

2. **Safe Setting**

Students should be able to serve in a non-toxic ministry environment. This does not mean that the student's ministry experience should be free of conflict. Conflict is an inevitable part of ministry, but the desire is that conflict experiences occur within the context of a healthy ministry setting.

3. **Opportunity to Learn and Grow**

Students learn and grow during their ministry practicum experience by performing real-life ministry under the supervision of mentors that guide, encourage, and hold them accountable.

4. **Personhood, Spiritual, and Ministry Skills**

These three elements provide an important balance upon which students learn and grow in ministry. Students should develop their skills in ministry – to become better preachers, teachers, administrators, care givers, etc. But a minister truly ministers from the very core of himself or herself. The goal is for students to also grow in all aspects of their self-identity.

5. **Ministry Action**

Students should be doing actual ministry during their practicum. They should experience in the trench, close up, sometimes messy, awkward, and stretching ministry experiences with people. The desire is that they learn on-the-job by doing ministry.

6. **Leadership Action**

The TFE mandate at Gateway Seminary is to shape Christian leaders for the future. Leadership development is the goal for students as they serve in a ministry practicum where they lead people.

7. **Reflective Feedback**

As students serve in their ministry practicum, they learn the art of theological reflection and practice reflection upon their actions, growth, and learning. The system is designed to provide real time feedback from mentors throughout the entire practicum experience.

Overview of TFE Elements

Ministry Setting

Each student serves in a specific ministry setting during his/her ministry practicum. The goal is that every student be involved in a setting and ministry that matches his/her vocational intent. Ministry settings must be approved before a student can take his/her TFE course and complete his/her ministry practicum. The TFE program is open and flexible concerning the types of ministry settings including ministry within the church, parachurch ministry, or other types of Kingdom organizations.

An approved ministry setting for a student's ministry practicum will:

- Provide a venue for a student to grow in personhood, spiritual, and ministry skills by involvement in a significant ministry leadership capacity.
- Provide leadership that realizes the student's ministry practicum is for both the student's personal development and the ministry of the specific setting. This is negotiated with the student in the form of a Learning Service Agreement or Covenant that is finalized in consultation with the Field Mentor and approved by the TFE professor.
- Provide leaders and members that understand and support the student and his/her ministry during the ministry practicum.
- Provide an approved Field Mentor who is actively involved in the ministry. In rare cases, the setting may be approved to allow someone who is not directly involved in the ministry to serve as the student's Field Mentor.
- Provide adequate feedback from recipients and/or partners of the student's ministry in the form of a Ministry Reflection Group enlisted and trained by the student.
- Provide for the student to be involved in at least 10 hours of ministry per week that includes at least six hours of face-to-face people contact time.
- Provide opportunities for the student to observe leadership teams in action (such as staff meetings, deacons, trustees, church council, board of directors, committees, etc.) in order for the student to understand their functions and to experience them in action.
- Commit to allowing the student to serve the entire duration of the ministry practicum.

Field Mentor

Prior to submitting his or her TFE application, the student enlists a Field Mentor who will assist and direct them as the student's work supervisor during the time of his/her ministry practicum. Beginning with the completion of the Initial Core Competency Inventory and the creation of the Learning Service Agreement, the Field Mentor will meet weekly with the student during the course of the 35-week ministry practicum.

Spiritual Formation Mentor

Prior to submitting his or her TFE application, the student enlists a Spiritual Formation Mentor who will assist and encourage them to work toward the spiritual and personal growth goals they set for their TFE experience in their Learning Service Agreement. Students are encouraged to draw from the resources of the larger Christian community to find their Spiritual Formation Mentor, although Gateway professors and staff may serve as Spiritual Mentors.

Peer Reflection Group & Leader

During their ministry practicum, students participate in a weekly on-campus two-hour class or online group with other TFE students as a Peer Reflection Group. A Gateway professor facilitates this course serving as the Peer Reflection Group Leader. The professors are experienced and practicing ministers who may teach in an adjunct capacity while serving full-time in ministry. Learning activities include:

- Involvement and discussion of specific material presented by the professor

- Discussion of what is going on in their respective ministries
- Discussing relevant ministry reading material assigned by the professor
- Writing and presenting a case study of a “critical incident” from their ministry each semester
- Discussion and reflection of the case studies presented by other students
- Learning and practicing the discipline of theological reflection

Ministry Reflection Group

After the first class meeting, students enlist four to five persons from their ministry setting who are ministry recipients and/or ministry partners to form a Ministry Reflection Group (MRG). This group provides the student feedback from a “hands-on” perspective. In certain situations, it is difficult to enlist ministry recipients. In these situations, we allow the student to enlist ministry partners age 18 and above as group members or persons in close relational proximity to the ministry.

270° Update Meeting

The first semester field evaluation of the student’s ministry will take place during the break between the first and second semesters during a meeting of the Field Mentor, the Spiritual Formation Mentor, and one member of the Ministry Reflection Group.

- The 270° Update meeting is a mid-term assessment of the student and ministry.
- The Field Mentor will serve as the facilitator of the meeting.
- The Field Mentor, Spiritual Formation Mentor, and MRG will report on this meeting on their regular monthly report forms.
- The student is responsible for scheduling and arranging this meeting.
- However, the student will NOT be present or participate in this meeting.
- The Peer Reflection Group Leader will not participate in this meeting.

360° Evaluation Conference

At the end of the ministry practicum students are involved in a final Evaluation Conference. This conference is scheduled for a date in the last few weeks of the final semester of TFE (normally late April or early May). **The six persons involved in the conference include** the student, Peer Reflection Group Leader (professor), Field Mentor, Spiritual Formation Mentor, one representative from the Ministry Reflection Group, and the TFE program director or designee as facilitator.

The student will be provided potential dates and be responsible for scheduling the date and time for their Evaluation Conference with each member of the persons listed above. The student secures their commitment to be present.

The focus of the Evaluation Conference is to determine readiness for ministry, assess the student’s ministry self-awareness, if the student has developed the necessary core competencies for ministry, has made substantial progress toward the learning goals that they established for their ministry practicum, and has the ability to relate well with others in a ministry setting.

Section 2 – Student Information

TFE Application Process

All students taking TFE at Gateway Seminary **MUST APPLY** and submit their completed application to the TFE Office for approval prior to normal registration. Students may not enroll online or directly through the registrar's office for any TFE class prior to their TFE application approval.

TFE Requirements

MDIV, MAEL, MAIM, MMiss, MACC, DTH, and DEL degrees/diplomas require two semesters of TFE:

- Students must complete two-continuous semesters of TFE through service in a ministry setting for 35-weeks of both semesters including the holiday break in a fall-spring sequence only.
- Course prerequisites:
 - P1111 Foundations for Ministry (for MDiv, MTS, MMiss, MAIM, MACC, DTH)
 - E1111 Foundations for Educational Leadership (MAEL, DEL)
- Students will be enrolled in the same TFE class section that will meet on the same day and time for the two consecutive semesters. Therefore, it is important to look ahead at the spring schedule, as **TFE sections changes will not be allowed during the spring semester.**
- P1121-P1122 Leadership in Ministry Practicum meets the TFE requirements for all degrees. Students may substitute other courses for TFE only from the approved courses listed below.
- **Completion of the fall semester of TFE (P1121) and failure to complete the spring semester (P1122), results in failure of the fall semester, and will require the student to take P1121 over in a continuous sequence with P1122.**

MTS degree requires two semesters of TFE or the optional courses listed below:

- Students preparing for ministry as a vocation are strongly encouraged to take P1121-P1122.
- Students not preparing for ministry as a vocation may take P1121-P1122 or select two of the following three optional courses:
 - P1115 – Spiritual Formation
 - L1411 – Christian Ethics
 - S2521 – Biblical Hermeneutics

TFE Substitutions

Two approved course substitutions for P1121-P1122:

- P2553 Clinical Pastoral Education
- I2361-I2362 Church Planting Apprenticeship

All course substitutions follow the same application procedure and deadline as TFE.

TFE Application Deadline

The **TFE application deadline is May 15** and also applies to any course substitution being requested by the student. Click here: <http://www.gs.edu/academics/theological-field-education/>.

Variable TFE Credit

The default credit required for all degrees (except MTS) is two hours of credit for a minimum of 10-hours of ministry service each semester. Students who serve more hours may contract during the application process for more credit. Any credit above the four hours (for two semesters of

TFE) will be counted as elective credit. If you are eligible for extra credit hours, you do not have to take them as that will increase your tuition costs.

- 2 credit hours (default): 10 hours per week, 6 of which are face-to-face ministry hours
- 3 credit hours: 20 hours per week, 13 of which are face-to-face ministry hours
- 4 credit hours: 30 hours per week, 20 of which are face-to-face ministry hours

Before Applying for TFE

Selecting a Ministry Setting

The TFE application asks the student to provide information concerning the proposed ministry setting. In some cases, the student will already be involved in a ministry setting and will decide to continue in this place. In other cases, students may search for a specific ministry place to do TFE. In either case, the student should ask, *How can I get the skills that I need and apply them in a real-life, practical ministry setting?* For example, it will be difficult for a student to learn to do cross-cultural ministry in a place that reaches only their ethnic group; or to learn how to minister to youth in a community and congregation of senior adults. The answer to this question should guide the selection of the proposed ministry setting. Other questions that students should ask while considering the *where* issue:

- Will this ministry setting provide leadership practice in ministry?
- What are the setting expectations for this ministry?
- What kind of direction, support, and resources will it provide for the ministry?
- Will the ministry leadership allow the student to at least observe or better participate in the whole ministry, especially in the decision-making processes?

Sample types of ministry settings and possible ministries within those settings are listed below. This is not a complete list of all the areas or ministries where you may do ministry. Your creativity is encouraged in what you do and where you do it, as long as it meets the necessary TFE requirements.

- **Church:** pastoring, preaching, teaching, church planting, arts/worship, children's or youth ministry, evangelism/discipleship, small groups, etc.
- **Parachurch Ministry:** rescue mission, collegiate ministry, outreach to international students, crisis pregnancy center, etc.
- **Other Kingdom Organizations or Ministries:** chaplaincy, administration & teaching in a CLD center, service at a community non-profit agency, service in a Christian school setting, etc.

Selecting a Field Mentor

The TFE application requires that you provide information on the proposed Field Mentor. The Field Mentor is the student's ministry practicum supervisor and the primary person that will provide direction and constructive feedback in the TFE process. **The student is required to meet one hour per week in a one-on-one supervisory session with the Field Mentor during the 35-week TFE experience.**

Requirements for TFE Field Mentors are outlined in Section Three. The proposed Field Mentor must be approved prior to the approval of the TFE application. If the desired Field Mentor does not meet the qualifications or cannot meet all of the responsibilities, the student should consult with the Director of Theological Field Education or Regional Campus TFE Coordinator.

The key element in selecting a proposed Field Mentor is determining who has the experience and/or insight into the ministry skills and knowledge the student hopes to develop, and could therefore serve well in the supervisory role.

Selecting a Spiritual Formation Mentor

The TFE application requires a proposed Spiritual Formation Mentor. This person will help the student in achieving the spiritual and personhood goals that will be developed during the ministry practicum. Students are encouraged to draw from the resources of the larger Christian community as they consider a Spiritual Formation Mentor, although Gateway professors and staff may serve in this role. Requirements for TFE Spiritual Formation Mentors are outlined in Section Four.

Selecting a Ministry Reflection Group

After the beginning of the TFE course the student is required to enlist a Ministry Reflection Group. This group of four to five persons age 18 and above will provide the student with feedback from a *hands-on* perspective. This group will be recipients or ministry partners of the student's ministry practicum. More details on the selection of this group will come during the first TFE class. Requirements for TFE Ministry Reflection Groups are outlined in Section Five.

Required Ministry Commitments

The student must follow critical time commitments and assume responsibility for making sure that the Field Mentor, Spiritual Formation Mentor, and MRG can follow through on all required commitments. These include weekly or monthly meetings, monthly reports, periodic evaluations, and participation in the midterm 270° Update Meeting and the on-campus 360° Evaluation Conference in the spring. During the TFE ministry practicum, the student will need to commit to spending at least 10-hours each week in the ministry setting with at least 6 of the 10 hours being face-to-face ministry with people.

Required Meeting Commitments

Weekly Meetings:

- Peer Reflection Group Meetings: Students participate in a weekly two-hour class with other TFE students. eCampus students participate in an online peer group experience. A Gateway professor facilitates the class portion of the course.
- Field Mentor Meetings: Students meet one hour per week with their Field Mentor.

Monthly Meetings:

- Spiritual Formation Mentor Meetings: Students meet at least one hour per month with their Spiritual Formation Mentor. Longer or more frequent meetings are allowed and encouraged.
- Ministry Reflection Group Meetings: After the TFE class starts, students enlist a Ministry Reflection Group of four to five persons and meets with them three times during each semester. **Three members of the MRG must be present** with the student for a monthly meeting to qualify.

Section 3 - Field Mentor

A key component in the TFE ministry practicum is the Field Mentor relationship. The Field Mentor is the student's supervisor during the time of his/her ministry practicum. We view the Field Mentor as more than a supervisor in the typical understanding of that role. This is because we believe that supervision is actually ministry. This means that the student's Field Mentor provides a dynamic role of giving guidance and encouragement while holding the student accountable. At Gateway we desire quality and dedicated Field Mentors who are committed to helping students to develop both personally and professionally. We have discovered that the investment a Field Mentor makes in a student creates a lifetime impact.

Role

The role of a student's Field Mentor during his or her TFE ministry practicum is crucial. The Field Mentor is a supervisor, a guide, an instructor, and a model for the student intern. The Field Mentor is normally the student's direct supervisor in the ministry setting during the ministry practicum. Field Mentors guide the student through various aspects of practical ministry in which the student normally has little experience. Field Mentors often will need to instruct the student in how to do certain ministry activities. The approach and specific ways the Field Mentor practices ministry becomes a model that shapes the student's paradigm for doing ministry.

Requirements

General Qualifications of a Field Mentor:

- Successful completion of the Gateway TFE Field Mentor training prior to the TFE course.
- Service in a full-time ministry position for at least three years.
- Service in their current ministry for at least one year.
- Possesses formal theological training and/or several years of significant ministry experience.
- Practices the ministry skills needed by the student.
- Commits to the student's learning process and teaching new ministry skills.
- Commits to the student's professional and personal growth.
- Commits to being a "safe" person with whom the student can share openly and honestly.
- Is able to handle the doubts, fears, failures, and insecurities of a student minister.
- Commits to meeting one-on-one with the student for at least one hour per week during the year.
- Understands the difference between a one-on-one meeting and a staff meeting.
- Commits to submitting monthly reports required by the syllabus due dates.
- Commits to participating in the midterm 270° Evaluation Conference.
- Commits to participating in the on-campus 360° Evaluation Conference in the spring.

Field Mentors may not be:

- A relative of the student
- Another Gateway student
 - Exception: A PhD, ThM or DMin Gateway student may serve as a Field Mentor for a Masters-level TFE student.
- A Gateway professor
- A member of the student's MRG
- The same person as the student's Spiritual Formation Mentor

The Director of TFE or the Regional Campus TFE Coordinator may consider making exceptions as needed.

Accountability

As students develop their Learning Service Agreement or Covenants, they agree to perform certain ministry functions, work toward achieving specific ministry goals, and develop a plan for spiritual and personal growth. As they go through their ministry practicum, the Field Mentor can and will hold them accountable to effectively strive toward accomplishment of what they have agreed to do.

Guidance

Students may be called upon to perform ministry functions for the first time. The Field Mentor can give advice and direction before, during, and after they are involved in the various aspects and responsibilities of ministry. He/she may give instructions and assistance prior to ministry actions and/or events and lead the student through “debriefing” the ministry actions and outcomes.

Encouragement

There are times that students will need encouragement. Ministry is often times hard. They will make mistakes; they will be misunderstood; and they will probably experience conflict. The Field Mentor is there to help them walk through these difficult and often confusing times. He/she should be a safe person with whom the student can share both frustrations and disappointments along with successes and accomplishments.

Training

Field Mentors must be trained in our TFE Field Mentor Training Seminar. Topics include:

- Definition of Supervision
- Ministry of Supervision
- Two Poles of Supervision
- Learning Service Agreement or Covenant
- Accountability and Evaluation
- Stages & States of Supervision
- Basics of TFE at Gateway Seminary
- Dynamics of the *TFE 360° Feedback* Team
- Conducting Supervisory Meetings

Sometimes prospective Field Mentors may ask, *Why do I need to take the Gateway training?* You may have had previous supervision training, but not all trainings are equal. It benefits you and your student to understand our philosophy of field education at Gateway, the unique features of our TFE program, and our understanding of supervision as ministry.

The Responsibility

1. Meet with the student weekly for a one-hour supervisory meeting

Field Mentors must commit to meet one hour each week with their student intern for a one-on-one supervisory session. This is not a staff meeting. It is to focus upon the student’s individual growth and learning. We desire Field Mentors who take the time to adequately prepare for these meetings and see them as an investment into the life of a student. The Field Mentor will lead the student to be equally prepared for these meetings.

The supervisory meeting with the student should include:

- Assisting and holding the student accountable for working on his/her covenant goals
- Development of both personhood, spiritual and ministry skills
- Debriefing and evaluation of ministry performed
- Development toward the established covenant goals

2. Assist the student in the completion of the Core Competency Inventory

- Students will complete the Core Competency Inventory twice – once at the beginning of the course and again at the end.
- Students are to complete the Initial Core Competency Inventory in an interview format with their Field Mentor during the first session together.
- While the ministry task will be the focus of the Learning Service Agreement or Covenant, elements revealed from the Core Competency Inventory may be incorporated into the goals set forth in the Covenant.
- Other items may be worked on in cooperation with the Field Mentor within the ministry setting as a way to create and develop new ministry skill sets.
- The TFE experience will conclude by completing the Final Core Competency inventory in the same interview format with the Field Mentor.
- The results of the Final Core Competency inventory will be used in the creation of the student's final Theological Reflection paper.
- This will provide a better assessment of competency growth during the ministry experience.

3. Assist the student in developing the Covenant, the Learning Service Agreement

Students must develop their Covenant by the fourth week of their TFE experience. The covenant will include goals for learning specific personhood, spiritual formation and ministry skill development. Results from the Initial Core Competency will be used in its creation. Students will share the final Covenant with all Mentors, MRG, Peer Reflection Group Leader and the TFE Office.

4. Submission of supervisory meeting and student evaluation forms

- Field Mentors are required to document the weekly supervisory meeting with the student and submit seven monthly reports giving details of the weekly meetings.
- Evaluations of the student at the end of the first semester and at the end of the second semester will be incorporated into the regular monthly reports.

5. 270° Update Meeting

- The 270° Update meeting is a mid-term assessment of the student and ministry.
- During Dec-Jan school break, the 270° Update meeting will include the Field Mentor, Spiritual Formation Mentor, and one member of the Ministry Reflection Group.
- The Field Mentor agrees to facilitate this meeting.
- While the student is responsible for coordinating the logistics of this meeting, they will not be present nor participate.

6. Participate in the Student's 360° Evaluation Conference:

Since the Field Mentor is the supervisor and primary observer of the student's ministry practicum experience, it is imperative for him/her to be present at the final Evaluation Conference. This conference is generally held on-campus during the weekday hours of 8am to 5pm. However, arrangements may be made for an early evening meeting.

Field Mentor Report Forms

Students will receive directions in the TFE Report System and will direct their mentors in login procedure and the completion of reports.

Section 4 - Spiritual Formation Mentor

Ministry originates and is grounded in the personhood of the individual. Persons minister out of the *overflow* of their lives. Jesus substantiates this when he says,

The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart. (Luke 6:45 - NASB)

This fact leads to the desire that students not only grow in ministry skills during their TFE practicum, but that they also grow spiritually. To assist students in their spiritual formation, the student is asked to select a proposed Spiritual Formation Mentor when applying to take their TFE Ministry Practicum.

The TFE Spiritual Formation Mentor should possess the following seven qualities:

1. **A person who is continually growing spiritually.** Spiritual formation is a life-long process. Spiritual mentors must be committed to continual spiritual growth.
2. **A person who already has a deep level of spiritual maturity.** Although spiritual formation is life-long, the spiritual mentor needs to have a substantial level of Christian maturity. The mentor should be “further along in the faith” than the person he or she mentors.
3. **A person who knows him or herself.** Spiritual mentors should be aware of how God has uniquely created them. They should know their strengths and weaknesses and be open and honest about them.
4. **A person who is transparent.** Spiritual mentors should be able to share their understanding of themselves. They should be able to share their hopes and dreams as well as their failures, hurts, and disappointments.
5. **A person of integrity.** Spiritual mentors need to be persons of honesty, uprightness, and good moral character. Their walk should match their talk.
6. **A person who is accessible.** Spiritual mentors must be willing to invest in the life of those they mentor. This means a commitment of both time and energy.
7. **A person of discretion.** The ability to keep confidences is a must for a spiritual formation mentor. Those that he or she mentors must know that what they share will not be shared with anyone else.

Role

The role of a student’s Spiritual Formation Mentor during his or her TFE ministry practicum is crucial. The Spiritual Formation Mentor is a guide, listener, encourager, and model for the student intern. They guide the student through setting spiritual formation goals. They should be great listeners, letting the student develop through talking and reflecting. Ministry is often hard and the Spiritual Formation Mentor sometimes will need to be one of the student’s major encouragers. Spiritual Formation Mentors need to be a positive model of continual spiritual formation and growth for the student to emulate.

Requirements

General qualifications for Spiritual Formation Mentors:

- Demonstrates spiritual growth and has a deep level of spiritual maturity.
- Models transparency for open and honest discussion in areas of spirituality and personhood.
- Maintains confidences.
- Demonstrates spiritual and personal integrity.

- Gives time and attention in meeting at least once a month for a minimum of an hour during the student's ministry practicum. The student and Mentor may meet longer or more often.
- Challenges the student to go to higher levels in their spiritual journey.
- Commits to submitting monthly reports required by the syllabus due dates.
- Commits to participating in the midterm 270° Update Meeting.
- Commits to participating in the on-campus 360° Evaluation Conference in the spring.

Spiritual Formation Mentors may not be:

- A relative of the student
- Another Gateway student
 - Exception: A PhD, ThM or DMin Gateway student may serve as a Field Mentor for a Masters-level TFE student.
- A member of the student's MRG
- The same person as the student's Field Mentor

The Director of TFE or the Regional Campus TFE Coordinator may consider making exceptions as needed.

The Responsibility

1. Meet with the student monthly for a one-hour mentor meeting

Spiritual Formation Mentors must commit to meet at least one hour each month with their student intern for a one-on-one mentor session. Usually these times together last much longer than an hour, but only one hour each month is required. These sessions are to focus upon the student's individual spiritual growth and development. The Spiritual Formation Mentor will need to take the time to adequately prepare for these meetings and see them as an investment into the life of a student.

2. Assist the student in developing spiritual goals for their Covenant of Learning

Students must develop their covenant by the fourth week of their TFE experience. A part of this covenant will include goals for spiritual formation. The Spiritual Formation Mentor will assist the student in developing those goals and oversee them throughout the course.

3. Submission of student evaluation forms

Spiritual Formation Mentors agree to submit seven monthly reports and an evaluation of the student at the end of each semester of TFE. This evaluation will give the mentor's perspective on the student's growth and development in the area of spiritual formation.

4. Participate in the 270° Update Meeting during the mid-term break

The Spiritual Formation Mentor will join the Field Mentor and a member of the MRG during the Dec-Jan break for a mid-term assessment of the student. The Field Mentor will facilitate the meeting. The Spiritual Formation Mentor will report on this meeting in the regular Dec-Jan report. While this meeting will be without the student present, the student will be responsible for coordinating the logistics for the meeting.

5. Participate in the Student's 360° Evaluation Conference:

Since the Spiritual Formation Mentor is the primary spiritual observer of the student during his or her ministry practicum experience, it is imperative for the mentor to be present at the student's end of course Evaluation Conference. These conferences are generally held during the weekday hours of 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. However, arrangements can sometimes be made for an early evening meeting.

Getting Started with Your Student

1. Encourage your student intern to take the time to do some spiritual self-assessment.
 - *Where is he/she in spiritual development?*
 - *Are there areas that he/she has neglected?*
 - *Is there a discipline that he/she needs to cultivate, or would like to try out?*

- *What are her/his greatest needs for spiritual formation?*
- 2. Give input and review his/her Spiritual Growth Goals that will be included as part of the Covenant of Learning.
- 3. Lead him/her to investigate how best to address those needs and goals.
- 4. Ask him/her if there are other areas of spiritual formation that he/she would like to address in your monthly meetings.
- 5. Decide when and where you will meet each month.

The Monthly Meeting

Spiritual Mentors meet with their student once each month during the entire TFE ministry practicum. This time is viewed as being very strategic in the investment of a student's life. Often Spiritual Formation Mentors ask what should we discuss during these meetings. The content of each meeting should be customized according to the student's current needs. However, below is a general content outline for the meetings.

1. Make prayer a priority. Always spend a considerable amount of time praying together
2. Ask the student to share with you...
 - Current spiritual struggles or *sticky* places in her/his life.
 - Character issues/concerns on which he/she is working or struggling.
 - Relational issues – hurt feelings, inability to forgive, etc.
 - What is God saying to him/her during this season of ministry/school?
3. Review and hold the student accountable concerning his/her Spiritual Growth Goals that were included as part of the Covenant of Learning.
 - What progress is being made in fulfilling the covenant goals?
 - Where is he/she “slacking off” in fulfilling the covenant goals?
 - How can you help?
4. Encourage the student to talk about the joys, frustrations, hurts, etc. Be someone that will truly listen.

Ten Principles for Spiritual Mentors

1. Good spiritual mentoring requires strong relationships.
2. Good spiritual mentoring is best done through modeling.
3. Those being mentored must desire direction.
4. Mentors accept the person being mentored where he/she is.
5. Mentors allow those they mentor to grow beyond the Mentor.
6. Mentors offer encouragement and support.
7. Mentors help (not tell) those they mentor in discerning God's direction.
8. Mentors hold those they mentor accountable.
9. Mentors challenge those they mentor to move toward new experiences, to grow beyond what they might do on their own.
10. Mentors recognize they are fellow strugglers. They are not to be judgmental or impressed with their own piety.

A Guide for Spiritual Mentors

You are encouraged to read the article by Dr. Doran McCarty entitled *A Guide for Spiritual Mentors*. It addresses the role of being a Spiritual Formation Mentor. We have provided this article on the resource page for our Spiritual Formation Mentors in working with their student interns.

Spiritual Mentor Report Forms

Students will receive directions in the TFE Report System and will direct their mentors in login procedure and the completion of reports.

Section 5 - Ministry Reflection Group

Committees of congregants who receive an intern's ministry have been helpful in giving worthwhile feedback to students in Theological Field Education programs. St. Alban's Institute conducted an intensive research program among various American theological schools to test out the effectiveness of such committees in their supervision programs. They found when students and their Ministry Reflection Group (MRG) have worked together seriously and openly, students have greatly profited from the experience.

Purpose

The Ministry Reflection Group is a committee of four to five persons that the student enlists in the ministry setting to provide feedback during the ministry practicum. The persons receiving or directly observing the ministry are the most significant persons from whom the student can get feedback. The MRG provides the student structure for that feedback. The MRG group will symbolically hold up mirrors that will allow the students to see themselves in ministry.

The student must realize that the level of input from an MRG is dependent upon enlistment and training of the group. The student should explain to the MRG that their purpose is to give honest, constructive, and sometimes, difficult feedback concerning the student's ministry. The student must authorize and give permission for this type of open feedback.

Role

The MRG is an "ad hoc" group that is designed to give feedback and reflection – not direction. It has no authoritative function or decision-making power. It provides the structure to help people become partners with the student in every level of the ministry, calling, and career. It also gives the student's Field Mentor and the Peer Reflection Group Leader (Professor) a mechanism to gain insight and accountability.

During the first month of TFE class, students are required to submit to their TFE professor a Ministry Reflection Group (MRG) Data Form that includes the names and contact information of the MRG. Students will need to enlist their MRG during the first three weeks of class.

Requirements

The enlistment of the MRG will follow the guidelines below:

- The student will enlist four to five members, schedule all monthly MRG meetings and provide MRG training for the group.
- The student should not enlist admirers and/or supporters. Likewise, students should not enlist their greatest critic to win them over. Instead, enlist persons that will give direct, honest feedback.
- Members should represent as many adult age groups within the ministry setting as possible.
- Members should be ministry recipients (those the student leads or teaches) and/or ministry partners (those the student ministers along side). It is preferred that ministry partners not be persons on the church staff.
- The MRG should include at least one male and one female for perspective.
- The MRG should include at least one person that serves as a leader in the ministry setting.
- If available, one member should be a supervisor in their vocation.
- The student will enlist one member to be the MRG Recorder.
- The MRG Recorder commits to summarizing the group discussion and will submit reports required by the syllabus due dates.
- The MRG Recorder commits to participating in the midterm 270° Update Meeting.

- The MRG Recorder commits to participating in the on-campus 360° Evaluation Conference in the spring.

MRG members may not be:

- A relative of the student
- Another Gateway student
 - Exception: A PhD, ThM or DMin Gateway student may serve as a Field Mentor for a Masters-level TFE student.
- The same person as the student's Field Mentor
- The same person as the student's Spiritual Formation Mentor

The Responsibility

- Students will meet with their MRG for one hour each month during each semester scheduled at regular intervals. Plan to meet at approximately the same time each month.
- The MRG session MUST have at least three members present or the meeting must be rescheduled. Less than three MRG members present – no meeting.
- Student bear the responsibility for each action and decision made, even if that action or decision results from discussion with the MRG.
- Give the MRG permission to give you constructive criticism.
- Each MRG meeting will provide approximately ten minutes with the student out of the room, which allows the group to discuss the student and ministry in private.
- The student and the MRG must be sensitive and careful about confidences. The student should not present any material to the MRG that would violate a confidence. The MRG should demonstrate maturity and not discuss the consultation session and agenda outside the MRG meetings. All proceedings (information, discussion, comments, and completed evaluation forms) of the Ministry Reflection Group are to remain confidential.
- The MRG will be represented during the 270° *Feedback* session during the Dec-Jan break.
- The MRG will be represented during the final Evaluation Conference during the last few weeks of the final semester.

Report Forms

Students will receive directions in the TFE Report System and will direct their mentors in login procedure and the completion of reports.