

**ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
**FIELD EDUCATION OFFICE**  
**FIELD MENTOR AND SITE GUIDELINES**

**The foundation of Field Study at ATS rests on three pillars:**

***Do Ministry***

***Reflect on Ministry***

***Improve in Ministry***

**All a student does in Field Study builds on these three endeavors.**

**To Field Mentors:**

Thank you for stepping into the role of Field Mentor and providing a Field Site for a student's Field Study. The part you play in developing a Christian leader will have rewards which continue far beyond either your ministry or that of the student. You are vital to the success of the Field Study, and we value your time, energy, and expertise that you provide. In order to help you do the best job possible, we are providing you with some basic guidelines and recommendations. You can remember your responsibilities as *Relationship, Relevant Ministry Experience, Reflection, Reporting, and Reward*.

**Guidelines for Field Mentors**

**Relationship**

- Develop a rapport with your student of trust and honest sharing.
- Agree to meet with your student at scheduled appointments either each week or every other week. Please do not allow more than two weeks to pass without meeting.
- Plan for times to spend outside of the ministry context, so you both can learn what the other is like in different settings.
- Discuss with your student what your role will be. Is your student looking to you as a Spiritual Mentor as well as Field Mentor, or do they have someone else serving in that capacity? What role(s) are *you* comfortable serving for your student?
- Do what you can to support, encourage, and equip your student to succeed in ministry.
- Share with your student your struggles and joys in ministry.
- Have fun with your student!

**Relevant Ministry Experience**

- Discuss with your student their goals for ministry. What experience do they bring and what experience do they hope to gain?
- The student needs to complete a specified number of ministry hours each semester (50 hours for FLD 6601; 75 hours for FLD 6602, 6603, 6604 & 6605; and 50 hours for FLD 6610). The number of semesters your student will need to complete for Field Study depends on the program they are in (250 hours for all MA's; 400 hours for MDiv).

- Discuss with your student how many hours per week they will work to fulfill the required hours. The student may wish to work more than needed for the Field Study.
- Determine together what does and does not count toward hours. (Any time spent serving, leading, planning, or preparing counts as ministry hours. This includes the time they spend with you.)
- Plan for and provide appropriate work for your student to do. Please consider a level of difficulty based on the readiness of your student. You want to stretch your student enough so they don't always, but most often, succeed.
- Try to connect the type of work assigned with the type of ministry to which your student feels called, or wishes to explore. It is also good to allow them to experience areas outside their interest (since ministry isn't always just the things we like to do!).
- Your student may need to complete special projects as part of each Field Study course. Your student will have all of the necessary information and materials to explain these assignments to you. Your role will be to help steer them toward plans that best meet their needs for professional and personal development.

## Reflection

- This is where your regular meetings are so critical. Use that time to reflect on the ministry your student has done and is doing, and to project toward the ministry they are planning to do.
- Actively listen to your student, ask probing questions, and appropriately share from your experience things that are helpful for your student's growth.
- Here is a simple process expressed with the acronym **N.A.M.E.** to help your student reflect on incidents and issues that your student faces:
  - **Narrate** – What are the detailed *facts* of the incident?  
*Who? What? Where? When?*
  - **Analysis** – Why did these things happen the way they did?  
*Consider what light is shed on the incident from Scripture, history, church background, personal experience, and cultural influences.*
  - **Meaning** – What has this taught me about how to do ministry?  
*Discern a principle or axiom from your analysis.*
  - **Enactment** – How will I do ministry differently in the future?  
*Apply the principles you have learned to your own practice.*
- If there are no pressing issues or incidents to discuss, here are four simple questions that open conversation and help to keep it on track:
  - 1) *What is one thing in ministry that is going well?*
  - 2) *What is one thing in ministry that is giving you difficulty?*
  - 3) *What is coming up next in ministry for you?*
  - 4) *How can I help?*
- Please feel free to add any questions you have found helpful in mentoring leaders.
- In Field Study, the “Field” is *doing* ministry, the “Study” is *reflecting* on ministry.  
*Without reflection there is no learning!*

## Reporting

- The *student* is responsible for recording and reporting the required documentation.
- Your role is to do the following:
  - 1) Sign the **Field Study Application** which the student is to complete prior to starting the Field Study.
  - 2) Sign the student's **Field Study Hours Log** at the end of each semester.
  - 3) Complete a **Field Mentor Evaluation** at the end of each semester and submit it to the Field Education Office.
  - 4) In the student's final semester you will be invited to attend their **Graduation Interview**. This is a special two-hour meeting of the student with their Field Mentor, Spiritual Mentor, Faculty Mentor, and Field Education Director to reflect on their journey through seminary and their preparation for ministry. Please plan to attend this opportunity to bless the student!
- Semesters end in early December, early May, and mid-August.

## Reward

- Ashland Theological School has agreed to allow all Field Mentors to audit one course without charge, at any center (Ashland, Cleveland, Columbus, or Detroit).
- Simply contact the Field Education Office for instructions on how to register to audit a class!

## Guidelines for Field Sites

Not only do student interns need an active and supportive Field Mentor, but those at the Field Site also need to understand the special needs of a Christian leader who is learning to do ministry:

- The Site needs to “fit” the student theologically, denominationally, and personally. It is important that the student can invest in the mission of the Site without reservation.
- The Site should provide a wide range of ministry area options from which a student can draw for their experience.
- The Site should provide the ministry area(s) which interest the student and allow them to explore the type of ministry to which they feel God is calling them.
- The Site needs to have people who understand and support the mission of providing a safe and encouraging place for student Christian leaders to practice ministry (which means they need to allow students to make mistakes and failures).
- The Site must provide sufficient hours for the student to complete the required hours each semester.
- The Site may choose to pay the Field Study student for the service they provide, but this is not required by the Seminary.