



UNIVERSITY *of* DUBUQUE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Supervised Practice of Ministry Guide 2024 - 2025

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Degree Requirements & Program Options

Overview: Catalog information for MDIV and MAMD

Supervised practice of ministry (SPM) and field education (FE) are integral parts of the UDTS curriculum. The SPM settings and FE courses provide numerous opportunities for seminary students to integrate theological reflection and pastoral leadership practice. At the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, SPM is viewed as a formative experience where each student, with the guidance and support of faculty, trained supervisors, and committed laity, can develop the skills and capacities for a life of joyful service to Christ.

Field education serves several major purposes which may not be met by other parts of the ministry learning process. Students are required to integrate their classroom knowledge with daily practices and experiences and make meaning of that integration through purposeful reflection. Students build experience and skills through supervised practice with the guidance of a supervisor-mentor. Students explore, affirm, and develop their gifts for service to the people of God. Finally, students can test and further develop an understanding of their own call to ministry through inner reflection and confirmation and feedback from others within the ministry setting.

SPM placements and field education courses equip students to:

- Develop the capacity for integrating theological reflection and the practice of Christian ministry
- Develop skills and capacities for faithful and joyful Christian ministry
- Develop a holistic understanding of the pastoral vocation wherein ministry, relationship, personal spirituality, and self-care are held in a creative and faithful balance.

Credit Requirements

SPM requirements may be fulfilled through placements during the fall, spring, or summer terms, or through longer internships. MDiv and MA students may register for SPM only after their first full year of study.

- Three credits of SPM plus three credits for the completion of the three field education courses are required for the MDiv degree.
- One credit of SPM plus one credit of field education course, FE 602 Leadership in Context, is required for the MAMD degree.
- MART and MAM do not require SPM or field education courses.

Registration for SPM

- SPM 671: 1 credit of SPM – min of 120 hours of supervised ministry in a single setting/term
- SPM 672: 2 credits of SPM – min of 240 hours of supervised ministry in a single setting/term
- SPM 681: 1 credit of CPE – one unit of clinical pastoral education for SPM credit
(only one credit of CPE counts as SPM credit, additional credits may be taken for elective credit)

Ordination Considerations

Students seeking ordination are responsible for consulting with their committee on preparation for ministry or judicatory board for any requirements or expectations beyond the UDTS requirements. UDTS is not responsible for ensuring that each student meets the requirements of their judicatory – it is exclusively the responsibility of the student. All students pursuing ordination should begin a conversation with their judicatory before locating a supervised practice of ministry site or supervisor.

Some judicatories may require multiple experiences in traditional congregational ministry within the denomination or units of clinical pastoral education (CPE). Clinical pastoral education is a supervised ministry experience that is offered by ACPE accredited hospitals and institutions across the country. Students completing CPE can register for SPM credit (SPM 681) and submit their completion certificate for the CPE unit earned to complete one SPM credit.

SPM Process & Details

Site Approval

SPM must be undertaken in an approved setting. An approved setting includes a qualified site supervisor (see Supervisor Information), an established guidance committee of 3-8 members (see Guidance Committee Information), and opportunities for supervised ministry within a pre-determined position description. All sites must be approved prior to beginning an internship for SPM credit in a specified academic term.

To seek approval, registered students will complete the SPM Approval Form and submit it to Dr. Lindsey Ward, lward@dbq.edu. This form contains information about the proposed site, position description and terms, proposed site supervisor, and proposed guidance committee.

SPM Types

In an effort to broaden learning opportunities through various ministry contexts, MDiv students are encouraged to complete three unique types of supervised ministry. These types represent an ideal progression of experiences that align with required coursework taken at specific points of a student's paradigm. Coursework can be completed successfully without pairing an SPM experience, should a student not be able to arrange a specific experience as described below. Students' judicatory requirements should always take priority over UDTs types of experiences.

- Congregational SPM: This type of SPM is completed in a traditional congregational ministry setting. This experience is designed to be completed in tandem with the field education course FE 602 Leadership in Context. All MDiv students are required to complete at least one SPM credit in a congregational setting.
- Entrepreneurial SPM: This type of SPM is designed to be completed outside the boundaries of traditional congregational ministry or to begin a new program or initiative. This experience is designed to be completed in tandem with MN 630 Starting Missional Communities.
- General SPM: This type of SPM can include any type of ministry including clinical settings, student ministries, social service agencies, etc. This experience can be completed during any term after a student's first year of study.

SPM Competency Areas

Students specify four competency areas for each SPM experience they participate in. These competencies help students design holistic learning goals that model effective balance of ministry, relational, personal spirituality, and self-care in the pastoral vocation. The competencies are intentionally narrow, encouraging students to develop deep skills and knowledge in a limited number of areas at a time, but as ministry offers a complex and multidimensional experience as a vocation, it is not uncommon for students to expand goals or tasks outside of the focus as necessary for their ministry context.

Ministry Competency Options:

- Committee Responsibilities
- Ecumenical Cooperation
- Evangelism
- Leading Worship
- Pastoral Care
- Planning and Administration
- Preaching
- Teaching Responsibilities
- Visitation
- Other

Personal Spirituality Competency Options:

- Devotional Reading
- Fasting
- Journaling
- Meditation
- Prayer
- Spiritual Direction
- Spiritual Retreats
- Other

Relational & Leadership Competency Options:

- Advocacy for Marginalized/Abused
- Affirming Skills
- Community Organizing
- Conflict Management
- Listening Skills
- Peace and Justice Ministry
- Small Group Leadership
- Other

Self-Care Competency Options:

- Counseling/Therapy
- Improve Diet
- Personal Hobby
- Regular Exercise
- Regular Family Time
- Regular Time Off
- Support Groups
- Time Management
- Other

SPM Learning Covenant and Goals

Students will enter into a learning covenant with their approved site's qualified supervisor and selected guidance committee to guide their learning experience toward growth and development throughout the term. Learning covenants are best established through conversation and planning with the supervisor and guidance committee.

SPM learning covenants include the following

- Learning goals for specific learning in each competency
- Descriptions of responsibilities and methods of learning within each competency
- Resources that will be used to support learning within each competency
- Means of evaluation/feedback for each competency

SPM learning covenants should be submitted by the student and signed by both the site supervisor and the established guidance committee chairperson. They are due at the beginning of the term prior to completing any supervised ministry.

Reflection, Feedback, and Evaluation

An essential component to learning in supervised ministry is active and frequent reflection. Students are encouraged to pause and reflect throughout the SPM experience with themselves and in community with their supervisor and guidance committee. There are two reflection opportunities that are required for SPM experiences, midterm reflection and final reflection and evaluation, however students are encouraged to reflect on experiences in a regular rhythm that best meets their needs in addition to the requirements. (See Supervisor Information and Guidance Committee Information for more information on reflection opportunities.)

SPM Midterm Reflection asks students to document growth and progress in each of the four competencies of their SPM experience. Students are encouraged to share stories and examples of situations that helped them learn and grow, mistakes that were made and what they learned from them, learning that has been integrated from coursework and selected resources, and summaries of feedback received from supervisor and lay committee. Supervisors and guidance committee chairs will view and make comments on the SPM Midterm Reflection prior to submission.

Other options for reflection are provided including a reflective interview or submission of reflective artifacts for each competency. Students should select the option that they feel is most reflective for themselves and most conducive to their setting and their learning.

Feedback is an essential component of learning in the SPM environment. Formative feedback should be planned into the SPM experience through scheduled meetings with supervisors and guidance committees, especially following events or exercises in the SPM competencies. (See Supervisor Information and Guidance Committee Information for more information on feedback opportunities.)

All students are required to participate in a formal evaluation process at the end of their SPM experience. Self-evaluations provide an opportunity for a summative reflection of the experience and growth and development that took place throughout the experience. Supervisor and guidance committee evaluations formally document growth and development within the specific context of the position served in through the SPM experience. Evaluations, while shared with all covenant partners at the SPM site, and if requested, the student's judicatory, are otherwise not shared unless a written request is made by the student. Final Evaluations are due prior to the end date of the term. Credit cannot be awarded without the submission of the Final Evaluation.

Remuneration

In setting the terms for remuneration, the student is free to negotiate with a church/institution and serve for any stipend upon which both agree. However, the seminary considers the following guidelines to be minimal. For all the categories of employment, the employing church or institution is encouraged to contribute to the Social Security payments of the student.

A part-time intern might expect to negotiate a salary in the range of \$850-\$1,400 per month, plus any additional needs such as transportation, housing, expenses, food, etc. If possible, churches are encouraged to contribute medical insurance and the denominational pension plan as well.

Tuition

Supervised Practice of Ministry (SPM) tuition is identical to that of any other course in the curriculum. Please consult the UDTs Catalog and Handbook or Student Accounts for current tuition rates.

Supervisor Information

Qualified Supervisor Requirements

Field supervisors have a unique role in the supervised practice of ministry process. Supervisors are seen as mentors in ministry, able to provide experience and insight honed by years in the ministry, helping to shape and develop a junior colleague exploring their vocational call into ministry.

A qualified supervisor will meet the following requirements:

- At least three years of prior ministry experience
- Currently serving in active ministry role
- A completed MDiv degree or equivalent education for your role
- Available on-site or extremely familiar with the student's ministry site

Supervisor Expectations

The following basic functions are expected of the field supervisor, often in conjunction with the selected guidance committee:

- Getting started
 - o Personal/professional needs are being met such as office space, sufficient balance of work and personal time, details for ensuring timely payment of stipends, etc.
 - o Acquainting the student with the congregation/institution including local traditions, role expectations, etc.
- Support
 - o Students will need spiritual, emotional, and collegial support as they grown and learn through conversation, guidance, and prayer
 - o Preparing helpful, constructive observations, reflection, feedback, and evaluation.
 - o Listening deeply to the student and members of the congregation/institution in order to discern, interpret, and communicate needs or concerns
- Observation
 - o Look for areas of thriving and struggling in the student's ministry through observation in various ministry experiences
- Reflection
 - o Offering opportunities to reflect not only on appropriateness of actions taken in practicing ministry, but also the theological values behind actions and plans and how God is present in experiences
- Feedback
 - o Feedback should be descriptive but not interpretive.
 - o Feedback should be focused on things that the student has the capacity to make changes on.
 - o Feedback should be given in a spirit of loving concern to be helpful.
 - o Feedback should be timely and specific.
- Regular meetings
 - o It is a minimum requirement that all SPM students meet with their supervisor every other week during their experience; approximately 6 meetings in the fall or spring, and approximately 4 meetings in the summer term.
- Assessment
 - o Share with the student perceptions of their progress in ministry, especially those selected for particular focus during the SPM experience.
 - o A formal evaluation will be completed and shared with the student at the end of the SPM experience.

Resources and Support

As a valued member of the supervised practice of ministry team, it is important that supervisors feel adequately equipped for role.

Each site supervisor will be sent a copy of the text, *Empower: A Guide for Supervisor-Mentors in Theological Education* (Senior & Floding, 2020). This text will help shape the relationship between student and supervisor, encouraging appropriate and essential mentorship identities for specific contexts.

A collaborative online community of site supervisors is available to all site supervisors. This online community will showcase resources for guiding reflective experiences, providing effective formative feedback, providing summative evaluation, and open forums for asking questions, seeking support, or viewing other internship contexts. Access to this community will be provided to each site supervisor following formal site approval.

Guidance Committee Information

Guidance committees are an integral part of the supervised practice of ministry team, serving as formative and evaluative voices in the student's learning experience.

Guidance Committee Requirements

Each SPM experience requires a guidance committee. Site supervisors are encouraged to initiate the selection and formation of the group. The group must meet the following requirements:

- 3-8 members of the congregation/institution who are familiar with the history, traditions, and expectations of the site
- Individuals can be selected from church/institution leadership including existing committees, session members, educators, etc. or from the general membership
- If an SPM student is serving as an employed fulltime or student pastor of the SPM site, it is recommended that the student build a guidance committee that includes at least some members from outside of the congregation being served. Leadership of nearby churches/institutions can be called upon to serve in this case.
- The guidance committee should appoint a chairperson. The chairperson's duties include:
 - o Convene regular committee meetings (minimum of two per term)
 - o Consult with the site supervisor about duties and expectations
 - o Coordinate opportunities for formative feedback and the summative final evaluation

Guidance Committee Expectations

Guidance committees are expected to join the site supervisor in the support, observation, reflection, feedback, and assessment for the SPM student. How this looks in practice may be very different for different churches/institutions.

One of the primary expectations for guidance committees is to meet with their SPM student at least twice during a term. The purpose of these meetings is to provide opportunities for feedback and evaluation. Ideally, meetings are scheduled shortly after an opportunity for the guidance committee to observe the SPM student practicing ministry to provide formative feedback. Examples of timely formative feedback meetings include convening a meeting after a worship service in which the SPM leads part of the service or preaches a message to the congregation; or after attending an adult education class led by the student; or after visiting with home-bound congregants. These meetings can be reflective opportunities to discuss what took place.

One of the other essential functions of a guidance committee is to provide a formal summative evaluation of the student's progress and growth toward their learning goals for the SPM experience. An evaluation form is provided, and the committee chair should coordinate the committee's evaluation feedback into a single response. This evaluation will be shared with the student.

One additional role that guidance committees need to be aware of is the role of acting as a safety net for the student and/or the site supervisor should any issues arise in the course of the internship. Guidance committee chairpersons should be prepared to listen to concerns of the student intern if they experience situations that could be considered inappropriate between a supervisor and the student. Examples might include negative or gossip talk about the congregation or any members, inappropriate advice for situations, avoidance such as missed meetings or required forms, or even in very rare situations, harassment or ill-treatment by the supervisor. In events such as these, it is crucially important for a guidance committee or guidance committee chairperson to be prepared to communicate with UDS, the student's judicatory, and the site supervisor to ensure a safe and secure internship experience for the student.

Resources and Support

The function of a guidance committee may differ significantly from site to site or internship to internship. The site supervisor is expected to clearly communicate expectations of the guidance committee for the specific context. This includes guiding the committee to specific opportunities to observe the student in ministry, providing tools to provide useful feedback, and encouraging productive and effective evaluation information.