



Summer Distance Master of Divinity Program

Information and Handbook for
United Church of Canada Students

2025–2026 Academic Year
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Program Information

INTRODUCTION OF ATLANTIC SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND THE SUMMER DISTANCE M.DIV. PROGRAM

Atlantic School of Theology (AST) was founded in Halifax in 1971 by the amalgamation of three antecedent institutions: Pine Hill Divinity Hall (United Church of Canada), King's College Faculty of Divinity (Anglican Church of Canada), and Holy Heart Seminary (Roman Catholic Church). Its primary mission has been training ministers and priests for the United, Anglican, and Roman Catholic Churches and it is fully accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada.

AST's **Summer Distance Master of Divinity Program** ("SD M.Div.") combines online/hybrid courses taken during the Fall and Winter Terms with the 6-week Summer Term of on-campus courses in Halifax. Founded in 2001 and rooted in The United Church of Canada, the SD M.Div. was expanded and revised in 2018 to welcome students of all denominations. The first Anglican student joined in 2019.

This model supports field-based education for ministry, offering students significant opportunities to integrate rigorous academic study with the practice of ministry. Students enrolled in the SD M.Div. complete their required courses while working in supervised ministry sites. Throughout their studies at AST, students in the SD M.Div. participate in practical ways in their preparation as faithful and effective leaders for the church. This approach to theological education provides a high level of accessibility to students and offers the church the active service of dedicated priests and ministers-in-training while helping to prepare faithful and effective leaders for the church.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS

The SD M.Div. comprises 30 credits (equivalent to 90.0 credit hours) taken over a minimum of four years. Students are normally required to complete 15 credits on campus in Halifax. Of these, 12 credits must be taken in person, with the remaining credits taken online through AST. On-campus courses are taken during the Summer Term, which runs for 6 weeks from mid-June to the end of July. All Summer Term courses are offered in a two-week intensive format, with students normally enrolling in 3 courses, for a total Summer Term duration of 6 weeks.

The following outline of courses is the standard program of study for Anglican and Episcopal students. Individual dioceses may require additional studies in fields beyond those listed below.

Foundations Courses (7 credits)

RM 1000	Research Methods and Practices
BF 1001	Biblical Foundations HB/OT
BF 1002	Biblical Foundations NT
PF 1001	Pastoral Foundations
PF 1002	Preaching Foundations

TF 1000 Theological Foundations
 WF 1000 Worship Foundations

Supervised Ministry Practicum (4 credits)

*MAP 1000 Ministry Action Program I
 *MAP 2000 Ministry Action Program II
 +SME 3000 Supervised Ministry Education I
 +SME 4000 Supervised Ministry Education II

United Church Formation (1 credit) **

DF 3000 Denominational Formation
 (Distributed throughout program. Register for this in final term of studies.)

United Church denominational courses (3 credits)

CH 2105 United Church History
 ST 3102 United Church Doctrine
 PT 2502 United Church Worship
 (Polity and Ethics is now included in United Church Formation)

Graduate Project and Seminar (taken in the final year of studies) (2 credits)

GS 3000A and GS 3000B

Electives (13 credits) ***

1 - Pastoral Theology courses (PT)
 1 - Preaching elective/Advanced Preaching course (PT)
 2 - Hebrew Bible/Old Testament courses (HB/OT)
 2 - New Testament courses (NT)
 1 - Ethics course (ET)
 3 - Systematic Theology, Church History, or Ethics courses (ST/CH/ET)
 3 - Unrestricted electives (any area)

* **MAP credits:** These courses require a paid or unpaid ministry placement under supervision, involving a minimum of 8 hours/week of service from September to April for 2 years. A practicum can be undertaken in one site in both years (preferred), or a different site in each year. Home congregations are normally not permitted, and full-time ministry appointments are discouraged, as students must reserve sufficient time for academic study.

United Church of Canada students should have had a successful Promise Interview with their Candidacy Board before they begin studies in the Summer Distance Program. If a student plans to fulfill the MAP requirements in a paid pastoral appointment, they must also have had a Suitability Interview and a Readiness for Appointment (outside of SME) interview prior to searching for a placement on the United Church of Canada Hub. The student, the Coordinator

of the Summer Distance Program, and the Candidacy Board should consult regarding appropriate placements.

+ **SME credits**: In addition to MAP 1000 and 2000, which are required for all students in the Summer Distance Program, SME 3000 and 4000 are required for United Church of Canada students seeking ordination. These two courses, which are required for ordination, integrate the learning that takes place in the student's Supervised Ministry Education (SME) and require at least a half time pastoral appointment in an SME approved Learning Site. The student must also have been declared ready for SME by their Candidacy Board. (See Appendix A)

** **Formation credit**: This credit is completed under the supervision of the student's denomination's designated authority. It provides the student with an extended opportunity to explore their identity as a minister, pastor, or priest within their tradition. The credit is recorded at AST as a Directed Study, and the supervisor is remunerated by AST.

*** **Elective credits**: Some denominations have specific requirements that may restrict the electives available to students.

NOTE: Students are encouraged to contact their denominational authorities and their faculty advisors to inquire about Formation requirements and denomination-specific courses necessary for their pastoral or ordination goals.

Important Financial Information

United Church of Canada students who are candidates for ordination or commissioning are eligible to receive a tuition bursary for up to 30 credits from Pine Hill Divinity Hall. Students who have had a successful Promise interview qualify for a bursary covering 6 credits.

For more information, please contact:

Brenda Munro, Executive Director of Pine Hill.

Email: pinehill@astheology.ns.ca

Website: <http://www.astheology.ns.ca/home/about/pine-hill/pine-hill-funding.html>

In addition, all students may apply for financial aid through AST.

Summer Distance M.Div. Handbook

Students enrolled in the field-based SD M.Div. program engage in an action-reflection model of learning that incorporates ministry practice with intensive academic and integrative reflection. Questions arising from ministry practice can frame attention to academic learning, and insights gained through academic learning can, in turn, deepen and inform pastoral experience.

FIELD-BASED LEARNING

Through this document, the term “Field-Based Learning” refers to a program that includes:

- Supervised Ministry Practicum appointments in Learning Sites
- Academic courses
- An emphasis on the integration of field-based and academic learning

SUPERVISED MINISTRY REQUIREMENTS

To sustain full correspondence between the Program and the on-campus M.Div., MAP 1000 and 2000 fulfill the Supervised Field Education (SFE) requirement. Students require an approved Learning Site, Educational Supervisor, and Lay Supervision Team. (See *Appendix A*)

The remaining SME credits (3000 and 4000) are taken by United Church of Canada candidates to fulfill denominational Supervised Ministry Education (SME) requirements.

Students in the program are enrolled full-time at AST (6 credits per year), complete courses, and participate in the university’s online Supervised Ministry Practicum. They may serve as volunteers in local congregations or faith-based non-government organizations (NGO), or as designated ministry personnel (paid) within their denomination.

Students employed by their site hold a dual relationship of both support and accountability within their field education sites. They work with an Educational Supervisor and a Lay Supervision Team on all matters related to their learning. They relate to the governing structures of their congregation or organization on matters relating to their employment and working relationships.

Students in the program establish Learning Covenants, which are reviewed and renewed annually. These covenants include learning goals that serve as a framework for the year. (See *Appendix B*)

THE LEARNING SITE

A Learning Site for MAP 1000 and 2000 is typically a congregation or pastoral charge. However appropriate alternatives can also be a faith-based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) or a chaplaincy/spiritual care position. Students may be appointed to these roles either in a volunteer or paid, accountable ministry. For SME 3000 and 4000, the learning site must be approved by the student’s Candidacy Board as a Supervised Ministry Education Site and must be a minimum of ½ time.

All placements must be approved as a learning site by AST, including the Educational Supervisor to oversee the student's work. Confirmation of the Learning Site and Educational Supervisor should be completed no later than September 30th. (See *Appendix A*)

Though students may be appointed to a Learning Site on an annual basis, the normal term of service in a Learning Site ranges from 2–5 years. In some situations and localities, it may be to a student's advantage to serve in different Learning Sites during their time in the program, especially if the initial appointment is within a team ministry setting. It is recommended that students serve as pastoral leaders for at least half of their time in a Learning Site. Some Candidacy Boards mandate a change of Learning Site after a particular amount of time in an initial appointment. In some rural communities and smaller congregations, continuity of leadership for up to five years can be one of the significant benefits the program offers to a congregation or pastoral charge.

The potential for ongoing learning and growth in a Learning Site is paramount. In some cases, this may lead to a change of sites. For United Church of Canada candidates, it is important that the student and the Candidacy Board have clarity by the end of MAP 2000 about the type of SME required and the possible sites where that learning can happen. A student must be in an approved SME site to enroll in SME 3000 and 4000.

Learning Sites should see themselves as active partners in a student's learning process, supporting the student's full participation in academic courses and providing time for educational leave and holidays. Students, Educational Supervisors, and Lay Supervision Teams (LSTs) work together to formulate an initial Learning Covenant, which outlines the student's learning goals for the year. This covenant serves as a guiding framework and should be reviewed and updated regularly, and at least once annually, throughout the duration of the placement. (See *Appendix B*)

Students are appointed to a Learning Site with responsibilities as outlined in a Ministry Position Description, which typically includes worship leadership, spiritual care, and pastoral support for the congregational setting. Patience and flexibility are important as the student and Learning Site establish their relationship and clarify expectations. Learning Covenants articulate help support this process by providing shared goals and a structure for ongoing evaluation and growth. (See *Appendix B*)

EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISOR

Supervision is required in ALL years in which a student is engaged in pastoral ministry as part of the SD M.Div.

For **MAP 1000 and 2000**, an Educational Supervisor must be approved by the Coordinator of the Summer Distance Program.

In **SME 3000 and 4000**, a United Church Educational Supervisor is required and appointed by

the Office of Vocation.

In the final year of studies, United Church of Canada students who have successfully completed their SME requirements and are therefore no longer required to submit evaluations for the Candidacy Board, but who remain appointed to a pastoral charge, will be asked to identify a supervisor or mentor who can provide support and feedback on their Grad Project as it unfolds in the fall and winter, and support the upcoming transition from student to graduate.

Educational Supervisors often serve as an off-site supervisor at a distance from the Learning Site. An Educational Supervisor may function, at various times, as mentor, friend, colleague, model, coach, consultant, and co-learner, but the primary role is educational. Being a supervisor requires, among other things:

- Self-awareness and an awareness of one's learning style
- A commitment to mutuality in ministry
- A willingness to participate fully in an action-reflection learning process
- The ability to work with the student's identified learning goals
- A desire to cultivate the art of theological reflection

This adventure in intentional learning is rooted in relationship. Therefore, the Educational Supervisor must attend not only on the various tasks of ministry, but also on the intentional cultivation of relationship with the student. Such a goal is not easily achieved, especially amid the pressure of urgent ministerial tasks to be done. The Learning Site understandably holds legitimate expectations in this regard.

Yet, for vocational formation to be truly *educational*, it must provide breathing space for these relational and reflective dimensions as well. Drawing on situations brought by students, supervisors engage their intuitive, emotional, analytical, and theological understanding that they have developed over the years and encourages students to do the same. When each person sees the insight and experience the other brings, the learning process becomes genuinely enriching and fulfilling.

An Educational Supervisor is expected to:

- Meet with the student to clarify their learning goals during the year in ministry (focusing on the period from September to April).
- Meet regularly with the student for the equivalent 1 hour each week to engage in discussion, analysis, and theologically reflection on ministry experiences that emerge from the Learning Site. These meetings can take place every other week for 2 hours or follow other equivalent format by mutual agreement. While virtual meetings (via phone or digital platforms) are permitted, face-to-face meetings should be prioritized whenever possible.
- Work with the student to establish a mutually agreeable time and place for reflection sessions and determine how materials for reflection will be shared (e.g. narrative

reporting, verbatim, journal writing, recordings).

- Be available to meet with the Lay Supervision Team (LST) upon invitation. The Educational Supervisor is not a regular member of the LST.
- Explore with the student various ways of analyzing and reflecting theologically on concrete experiences in ministry.
- Develop a mutually agreeable process for feedback and evaluation.
- Provide written evaluations as required by AST and/or the student's denominational body.

LAY SUPERVISION TEAM

A Lay Supervision Team (LST) consists of 3–6 people from the Learning Site who agree to meet monthly, from September through April, for approximately 90 minutes to 2 hours. The purpose of the LST is to meet for conversation and mutual reflection. The student is a catalyst in forming this group, yet the focus is not primarily the student. It is an opportunity for the student to listen and learn from the faith, views, contexts, values, and wisdom of a smaller group—a microcosm of the larger congregation.

The role of the LST is to accompany the student through the process of formation for the practice of ministry. This includes a commitment to regular meetings for exploration, discussion, and implementation of assigned work from the student's online seminar at AST that accompanies each year of the program, along with theological reflection and evaluation of all learning experiences. A successful group cultivates a sense of mutuality in sharing and discussion and a sense that everyone is learning together.

Who is a Member of the LST?

In a New Learning Site: When a congregation, parish, pastoral charge, or NGO agrees to become a Learning Site, it provides the names of at least three persons willing to be members of an LST. In some cases, students may be aware of these persons and their willingness to serve because conversations begin early in the process. In other situations, an LST may already be in place before any conversations with students begin. In some contexts, those who initially offered their names for the purpose of the application may wait to be approached again to confirm their LST participation. In every case, there should be openness to revisiting the initial membership and to allowing the student to invite others to join the LST.

In an Established Learning Site: A new appointment to an established site calls for the appointment of a new or intentionally renewed LST.

Some members may be chosen because of their knowledge of or connection to the student. However, a family member or partner of the student is not an appropriate member of the team. Members are expected to commit to 1 year, with the possibility of continuing their participant into the following year.

Ideally, the team reflects diversity in age, gender, skill, cultural or ethnic background, and

experience in the faith community. An Educational Supervisor may serve as a consultant where necessary but is not to be involved in the LST on a regular basis.

The student takes the initiative in inviting individuals to be part of the LST, doing so in consultation with their Educational Supervisor and with key congregational leaders. These members may include those initially assigned to the LST by the Learning Site.

One team member may be designated as Chair to work alongside the student in preparing for regular meetings. For ease of communication between the Learning Site and AST, designate one member of the group as the main contact person for AST, responsible for sharing evaluations and receiving further program information.

When the team has been established, it is helpful to have a covenanting liturgy during a worship service to recognize and celebrate the ministry of the student and LST. This celebration could include the Educational Supervisor, if possible. In this way, members of the Learning Site are made aware of the formation role of the LST in the student's learning process.

Role and Responsibilities of the LST

A Lay Supervision Team:

- Supports the vocational formation of someone preparing for the practice of ministry.
- Offers personal insights and perceptions of the ministry setting (e.g. through sharing stories / histories).
- Reflects on and engages complex issues in the practice of ministry as partners in the teaching-learning process.
- Develops a deeper understanding of the nature of Christian vocation for all God's people through conversation about lived faith.
- Provides constructive feedback to the student and AST regarding the traditions and practices of their ministry setting. *(See Appendix D)*
- Understands and respects diverse viewpoints and demonstrates a willingness to work through situations of disagreement or conflict.
- Provides written evaluations as required by AST or the student's denomination *(See Appendix E)*

EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Evaluations is an important part of the process. At the end of each academic year, evaluations are submitted by the student, the Educational Supervisor, and LST. The evaluation forms for MAP 1000 and 2000 are designed by AST and are incorporated into the coursework. These are shared with judicatories as appropriate. The evaluation forms for SME 3000 and 4000 are those required by the United Church of Canada and should be submitted to the United Church of Canada Formation Director at AST.

During all 4 practicum years, evaluations shall be completed. In MAP 1000 and 2000, the evaluation form used by the LST is provided by the course instructor and submitted directly to the course instructor. These evaluations are kept in the student's file and shared with the appropriate denominational judicatory as part of the student's ongoing formation and assessment process.

In SME 3000 and 4000, the evaluation process for Supervised Ministry Education is overseen by the United Church of Canada. Students are expected to be familiar with the expectations of their Candidacy Board as they complete the process. Completed evaluations should be shared with both the United Church Formation Director and the Coordinator of the Summer Distance Program at Atlantic School of Theology.

NOTE: All students in the SD M.Div. must send a copy of an up-to-date Police Records Check (which includes a vulnerable Persons Check/Level II) to AST prior to the commencement of a practicum placement.

SITE VISITS

The Coordinator or another AST representative will normally conduct a site visit for all students enrolled in MAP 1000, as well as for those who have moved from one Learning Site to another. During these visits, the representative will meet with students, their Educational Supervisor, and, if possible, their LSTs. These visits provide an opportunity for all partners in the student's learning journey to meet together. The representative will offer guidance in the application of the SD M.Div. processes and gather first-hand impressions of the learning site. Site visits may be conducted in person or through digital technology.

EXPECTATIONS OF SUPERVISED MINISTRY EDUCATION

Expectations for students serving as ministry personnel are set by the appointing denominational judicatories, in consultation with the leadership of the Learning Site and the Program Coordinator. These expectations should be clearly outlined in the Position Description for the pastoral charge. AST strongly discourages full time appointments to ensure students have adequate time for academic work. Balancing ministry responsibilities with study, family life, and personal well-being is an ongoing challenge.

Ministry work can sometimes feel endless. There is always another sermon to review, another person to visit, or another meeting to attend. It is essential that responsibilities be determined reasonably and be congruent with the hours of work for which the student is being paid. Students must take time not only for their studies, but also for spiritual and vocational development. Constant overextension of time and energy is unsustainable in a program that is both demanding and rewarding.

Balancing work and study carefully support a holistic approach to life—one that values time with family and the practice of spiritual disciplines such as prayer. God's call encompasses our whole lives, including emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development, relationships with

family and friends, and leadership responsibilities. Balancing time also includes planning for time away from the Learning Site for holidays and for the annual Summer Term on the AST campus in Halifax. Field-based learning is demanding and involves academic coursework (online and on-campus) and ongoing ministry responsibilities throughout the year.

Taking time away from Learning Site responsibilities requires advance planning and preparation to ensure that pastoral care and leadership continue uninterrupted. Opportunities to collaborate with colleagues throughout the year can offer valuable support and insight for this planning.

Students are required to attend the 6-week Summer Term on the AST campus. The student and the Learning Site must negotiate how Continuing Education and vacation time will be used. For United Church of Canada candidates, 3 weeks of Continuing Education leave and 1 month of vacation are the MINIMUM required terms of the Candidate's appointment as Student Supply. Learning Sites are encouraged to provide 6 weeks of Continuing Education leave, allowing students to fulfill on-campus course responsibilities and still have a full period of vacation. Creativity and genuine compromise are required to provide the time students need for both study and rest.

Additional time away from the Learning Site may be required for denominational-sponsored events, such as annual orientation gatherings for those fulfilling their field-based learning requirements (e.g. SME) Attendance at such events may be helpful, especially for students serving in remote areas, and is strongly recommended by AST during the first year of the program.

To participate fully in the program and all courses, each student must have a reliable computer and high-speed internet access at their Learning Site. As students often perform secretarial duties as part of their placement, a computer is also essential to their ministry work.

TERMINATION AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE

At any point, a student may withdraw or be withdrawn from the program. Resuming studies will require a new application process.

A one-year leave of absence may be granted upon written request under extraordinary circumstances. However, a leave of absence may delay the completion of the program by up to 4 years in order to complete the cycle of coursework.

If a student's appointment at a Learning Site is terminated through no fault of the student, the appropriate courts and committees of their denomination, in consultation with AST, will identify a second site or an alternative method for field-based learning and the accumulation of the required ministry experience.

WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM AND APPOINTMENT STATUS

If a student is withdrawn, suspended, or terminated from the academic program, AST will notify

the student's denominational judicatories. Students who withdraw from the academic program while under appointment may be eligible to continue in their appointment at the discretion of the appointing bodies.

TRANSFER BETWEEN SUMMER DISTANCE AND ON-CAMPUS M.DIV. PROGRAMS

Summer Distance Program students who wish to transfer to the on-campus M.Div. program, or on-campus students who wish to transfer to the Summer Distance M.Div. Program, should contact the Academic Dean before the end of the current academic year.

LEARNING COVENANT AND PORTFOLIO

Beginning in MAP 1000, each student will develop a Learning Portfolio. Students should review their portfolio on a yearly basis with the appropriate judicatory overseeing their educational process. The Learning Portfolio will include:

- The Learning Covenant established for each year of Practicum, including student's Learning Goals for that year. First-year goals may include those identified by the student based on their own perceived needs or those recommended by denominational bodies, referees, and other mentors.

The Learning Covenant should be reviewed each year and amended as necessary (e.g. updating the names of new LST members, changes in the intended pattern for Educational Supervision, etc.).

As a living document, the Learning Covenant will be updated when feedback and evaluation are offered through self and peer assessment, as well as input from LST, Educational Supervisor, church courts, the Coordinator of the Summer Distance Program, and instructors. All this information will shape future directions for learning.

- Copies of all evaluation forms.
- Copies of academic transcripts provided annually by the Registrar.
- Other documents as required by the student's Formation Director or judicatory.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Theological reflection is at the heart of the practice of ministry. In addition to academic courses, books read, and wisdom shared, the experience of ministry offers continual surprises. The question of where God's Spirit is leading the people of God is essential to growth in ministry. This question becomes more complex when experiences are analyzed through the lenses of theology, pastoral ministry, biblical witness, church history, faith, contextual frameworks, denominational polity, and so on. Theological reflection will be a constant aspect of all learning.

One of the Educational Supervisor's key tasks is to engage with the student in shared theological reflection. The Educational Supervisor must also feel free to challenge the student to go deep, to pursue serious questions, and to question any easy answers the student may

quickly grasp.

During supervision, theological reflection offers an opportunity to examine both the theological foundations of practice and the theological questions arising from practice. Meetings with the Lay Supervision Team will also include theological reflection as a process of discernment process regarding the meaning and purpose of ministry.

Theological reflection within a group usually begins with personal storytelling. Responses to questions such as “Where is God in this?” or “What is the Spirit saying to us?” often express deep feelings. Genuine theological reflection values affect and experience as first steps on a deeper journey of questioning and exploration. Students will often be initiators and leaders of theological reflection or will provide a model for lay leaders. Every member of the group must feel free to speak, and to ask of anyone else, “Tell me more. I don’t understand.” A leader must not be afraid to ask of any and all, “Now that we have discerned this, what do we do?”

It may be helpful to have in mind what is sometimes called “Wesley’s Quadrilateral.” The *experience* that frequently first shapes our reflection is but one tool of discernment. As Christians we also look to *scripture*, *tradition*, and *reason* as we discern meaning and trace the Spirit’s movement. (See Appendix C)

Appendix A

Setting Up Your Placement for MAP 1000 and 2000

As practicum courses, Ministry Action Program (MAP) 1000 and 2000 fulfill the field education requirements for the M.Div. degree. Each student must have a paid or unpaid supervised ministry placement, with a minimum of 8 hours/week from September to April for 2 years. In order to take MAP 1000 and 2000, students must have a supervised ministry placement.

A placement can be undertaken at the same site for both years (preferred) or at a different site each year. Students cannot complete their placement in home congregation. The student will develop learning goals, and all parties (student, supervisor and Lay Supervision Team) will complete evaluations at the end of the winter term. The Educational Supervisor is appointed by AST in consultation with the appropriate Judicatory and the student.

If the ministry placement is a paid appointment, the appropriate judicatory must approve the appointment. Full-time appointments are strongly discouraged to ensure sufficient time for academic studies. Annual evaluations will be shared with the appropriate judicatory.

In MAP 1000 and 2000, agreements are arranged between AST and the site to facilitate student learning. It is important to begin this process well in advance of the start date for the course, following these steps:

1. Read the Summer Distance Handbook and schedule a conversation with the Program Coordinator to discuss the process and available options.
2. Research potential placement sites—either unpaid or as a pastoral appointment—and identify a possible Education Supervisor. Make sure that any judicatory that needs to provide approval is kept in the conversation.
3. Email your suggested placement to the Summer Distance Coordinator, who will contact the site and speak to the potential supervisor about what the placement entails and the role of the Supervisor.
4. Once the site and supervisor have been approved, the student is responsible for completing the Practicum Agreement Form and submitting it to the Summer Distance Program Coordinator, Wing Yi Wong (Wing.Yi.Wong@astheology.ns.ca). The student must also have a Police Records Check on file at AST.

**Atlantic School of Theology Practicum Site Agreement
MAP 1000/2000**

This site agreement must be completed and signed by both the student and the Educational Supervisor and submitted to AST before the placement can begin. Please email the completed form to the Summer Distance Program Coordinator, Wing Yi Wong at Wing.Yi.Wong@astheology.ns.ca. and to the Academic Dean, Susan MacAlpine-Gillis, at Susan.MacAlpine-Gillis@astheology.ns.ca.

Student Name:

Course: ☐ MAP 1000 or ☐ MAP 2000

Office of Vocation Minister:

Region:

Placement Name:

Placement Address:

Placement Details

Is this a Paid Student Appointment or a Volunteer Position?

How many hours per week? (Minimum 8hrs/wk)

Are you in a team ministry or solo position?

Educational Supervisor

Name:

Email:

Phone:

General Agreements

We hold the following understanding for our work together in MAP 1000/2000:

- If the placement is a volunteer position, the student commits a minimum of 8 hours a week at the placement for 13 weeks each term, to be planned in consultation with the supervisor.
- Normally, the student and the Educational Supervisor will meet weekly for 1 hour, or biweekly for 2 hours. This time is dedicated primarily to theological reflection on current pastoral experiences arising from the student's placement and connected to the student's learning goals.
- The student will meet 2–3 times each term with the LST.
- The student and the supervisor agree to prepare evaluations for submission to AST as outlined in the course syllabus, using the evaluation form provided by the instructor.
- Should conflict or difficulties arise that threatens the learning potential of the student at the Learning Site, all parties agree to first work together to resolve or clarify the situation. If the situation cannot be resolved on site, then either the student, the Educational Supervisor, or both together will approach the MAP Instructor and the Coordinator of the Summer Distance Program for consultation and assistance.
- A Learning Covenant with agreed-upon learning goals will be submitted to the MAP 1000/2000 instructor(s) of in accordance with the scheduled outlined in the course.

Signatories

Student:

Date:

Educational Supervisor:

Date:

Appendix B

Guideline for Developing Learning Covenant and Learning Goals

The Learning Covenant clarifies for AST, the student, the Educational Supervisor and the Lay Supervision Team (LST) the specific commitments and responsibilities undertaken during a field education placement. This statement, to be signed by all parties, is a way of holding each other accountable during their time working together in relation to the ministry site. Although many other aspects of learning will occur for all involved, the goals and undertakings named in the Learning Covenant form the basis for evaluation in meeting the curricular goals of MAP 1000/2000 as part of the students' M.Div. program.

Because each student has unique areas of experience and inexperience, learning goals tailor the curriculum emphases to the particular student and site. Clarifying specific learning goals helps the student develop pastoral skills, pastoral identity, and confidence in the ministry they plan to pursue. Goals, drafted by the student, are discussed with the Educational Supervisor and the LST in the fall and should be reviewed in January to identify any new goal that may have emerged from the Fall Term's experiences.

The following guidelines and examples can help the student prepare learning goals and can help the Educational Supervisor and LST clarify those goals and articulate ways of working towards them.

Learning Goals are most helpful when they:

- Are concrete and specific
- Include the opportunity for observation by both the student and others
- Are intentional, time limited and invite specific feedback and evaluation
- Address both pastoral identity and skill development
- Are realistic within a given context and time frame.

Action plans for learning goals should:

- Name concrete and specific occasions, functions, and programs through which objectives may be tried, experienced over time, or practiced
- Be developed in consultation with others at the ministry site, taking into consideration the planning and permission that may involve other people or groups
- Propose the nature of supervision, consultation and evaluation that will help the student to measure progress on the goal
- Include the kind of tool(s) to be used for reporting or reflecting on events

Evaluation of learning goals should

- Be experienced, worked on, and reflected upon within a particular context by both the student and others
- Take place at agreed-upon times and in previously agreed-upon ways
- Be undertaken in a spirit of trust, openness and mutual respect, knowing that learning is a lifelong process, and that perfection is not a measure for ministry.

Sample Learning Goal

Learning Goal: To offer pastoral care to people I don't know very well, facing situations outside my experience, and to overcome my shyness to praying aloud

Action Plan: I will

- Be assigned specific individuals with whom to connect and visit
- Practice active listening skills and asking open-ended questions
- Talk with my LST about their experiences of pastoral prayer and how they pray with and for others
- Talk with my supervisor about when and why I feel shy, and engage in theological reflection on how I understand God's presence and care in pastoral situations
- Write up verbatim reports of my visits to discuss with my supervisor
- Talk with my formation director about expectations around prayer and pastoral care in my church

Evaluation: I will

- Request feedback from my supervisor and LST about the prayers I lead
- Request feedback from those I visit
- Get feedback on a case study from one of my visits presented in class
- Get feedback from classmates on my prayer leadership in chapel

Resources: Books on pastoral care; my Formation Director, Educational Supervisor, LST, classmates and pastoral faculty at AST

MAP Learning Covenant

Please submit the completed learning covenant, including learning goals, to your MAP instructor in accordance with the course syllabus

Student:

Email:

Learning Site:

Supervisor:

Email:

Contact for LST:

Email:

We hold the following understanding for our work together in Map 1000/2000:

- If the placement is a volunteer position, the student commits a minimum of 8 hours/week to the placement for 13 weeks each term, planned in consultation with the supervisor. In a congregational site, weekly participation in worship is expected.
- Normally, the student and the supervisor will meet weekly for an hour, or biweekly for 2 hours, for supervision and theological reflection on current pastoral experiences arising from the student's placement and connected to the students' learning goals.
- The student will meet 2–3 times each term with the Lay Supervision Team.
- The student and the supervisor agree to prepare evaluations for submission to AST as outlined in the course syllabus using the evaluation form provided by the instructor.
- Should conflict or difficulties arise that threatens the learning potential of the student at the learning site, all parties agree to first work together to resolve or clarify the situation. If a situation cannot be resolved on site, then either the student, the Educational Supervisor, or both together will approach the MAP Instructor and the Coordinator of the Summer Distance Program for consultation and assistance.

Signatories

Student:

Date:

Supervisor:

Date:

LST Representative:

Date:

Appendix C

A Model for Theological Reflection

Adapted from the work of The Rev. Dr. Abigail Johnson

Introduction

Briefly describe the ministry in which you are engaged.

Name the Experience

Think of several experiences, events, or situations in your current situation where you have played a significant role. Select ONE, preferably one with which you were challenged or about which you have some questions or concerns.

Reflect on the Experience

- What happened?
- Who was involved?
- What was my role?
- Where were my reactions?
- How did others respond?
- Where did it leave me?

Analyze the Experience

- What factors were at work in the situation? (e.g. attitudes, emotions, assumptions, social and cultural issues, power dynamics, etc.)
- What was at stake for me? (how does it connect with my own history, family and/or life experience, convictions, values, etc.)
- How was I enriched or challenged by this experience?
- What did I discover about myself?
- What do I want to remember or let go of from it?
- What questions or concerns remain with me?

Make some Theological Connections

- What images, symbols, or concepts of God does it evoke?
- Who/where is God in this situation, for you and for others? Where does God appear absent?
- What biblical, historical, literary or other stories does it call to mind?
- What Christian doctrine or practice is relevant to it?
- What learnings from our faith tradition are applicable?
- How does it relate to other faiths, cultures, or traditions?

Reflect on Your Learning

- How has your understanding of Christian discipleship been enriched or challenged?
- What have you learned or discovered about the practice of ministry?
- How does this reflection relate to your learning goals?

Pray

As you conclude your reflection on this situation—giving thanks for the learning arising from this situation, letting go of hurts and concerns, and greeting new opportunities for pastoral depth and sensitivity.

Conclusion and Discussion

Using this experience and your reflections on it, suggest some open-ended themes or questions that might open up broader discussions on the theology and practice of ministry for discussion in a group or with a mentor.

Resources for Theological Reflection

Johnson, Abigail. *Reflecting with God: Connecting Faith and Daily Life in Small Groups*. Alban, 2004.

Killen, Patricia O'Connell and John de Beer. *The Art of Theological Reflection*. Crossroad, 1994.

Appendix D

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Adapted from *Reflecting with God*, by Abigail Johnson

Giving and receiving feedback can be one of the most challenging areas of community learning. Offering feedback can feel invasive, treading on tender areas of self-esteem. People frequently say, “Who am I to offer my thoughts to another person?” In particular, people in ministry settings feel reluctant to offer feedback to ministry candidates because they feel less able to speak about theology, faith or God. However, each person has unique insights, life experience and observations that provide valuable input in the learning journey.

Receiving feedback can be just as challenging. Hearing feedback from others might challenge our assumptions or create concerns about whether we are loved, appreciated or valued. Some feedback is not useful, or the timing is not right, so it can catch us off balance creating confusion. On the other hand, feedback is a valuable learning tool, giving us insight about our actions, our context, and ourselves. The process of feedback helps us learn how to hear, receive and act on what is being offered in order to gain self-awareness and deeper insights about ministry.

The following are a few suggestions to assist the purpose and process of giving and receiving feedback.

Timely

Choosing the right time to offer feedback is important. Beginning an in-depth analysis of a sermon while shaking hands with the minister at the door after worship is too close the event for effective conversation and feedback. Scheduling a conversation at a pre-arranged time when the immediacy of an event has passed, creates a better space to look back and reflect on what took place.

Useful

Following a teacher evaluation, I once received the feedback, “If only you were a little taller, you would offer a better presence to the class.” Since I could not do anything about my 5 feet of height, I did not find this to be useful feedback. Finding ways to offer constructive suggestions for improvement gives useful ways for someone to improve.

Descriptive

Offering feedback may take a little effort to think about what you did and did not like and why you responded in the way you did. For instance, saying, “I just didn’t like it,” does not give any clear indications of where another person might improve or increase awareness of their actions. More description feedback is helpful, such as “When you stood in the pulpit at the beginning of worship, your voice was so soft, and you looked down at your notes. I did not feel welcomed into worship.”

Positive and Growing Edges

When giving feedback, it is often helpful to name gifts and positive areas as well as identifying areas for improvement. However, try not to fall into the formula of saying, "You were great . . . but". Often, people do not fully hear the positive comments and instead wait for the "real" feedback or the learning edge comments.

Intentional

When looking for feedback, it may be helpful to arrange or organize ways to solicit it intentionally. For instance, handing out feedback forms prior to a service is a proactive way to encourage response from the congregation about preaching. Asking for feedback can be difficult because it is a vulnerable moment. Yet it helps us focus on areas where we want to improve in relation to others. Feedback is usually given in a general way such as, "I really enjoyed your sermon." While it is wonderful to have such affirmation, you may want to hear more specific comments about a particular area. Learn to ask specific questions such as "I was attempting to make a connection between the biblical story and our daily lives. How did I do?" Or, when asking for specific feedback, it might be helpful to ask people your question ahead of time so they can be attentive to the area you are trying to improve. Be careful not to ask questions that only require a "yes" or "no" answer, such as "Did you enjoy my sermon?" Perhaps you can rephrase the question to, "What did you enjoy about my sermon?" to invite more specific feedback.

Negotiate

It may be useful to discuss, as a group, how you wish to receive and offer feedback. Feedback may be easier to hear when it has been requested, rather than hearing unsolicited advice. When someone has clearly stated, "I want to hear your thoughts about my presence in the hospital as I visit," it is easier to jump in with thoughts.

No Surprises

Offering thoughts, insights and feedback as time and opportunity allow is very important in the learning relationship. Saving up feedback until the end of a learning experience does not give people time for trying different styles, skill, or methods. Offering feedback along the way is preferred, with a final evaluation being a summing up of the whole experience.

There must be no surprises in a final evaluation.

Appendix E

Beginning the Learning Process: Suggestions for LSTs

Adapted from *Reflecting with God*, by Abigail Johnson

In this small group process, begin by creating a Group Covenant. Share stories of groups that have been effective and those that have been less effective. What values and common understanding are important as you form a group that is respectful, mutual, and confidential?

Other aspects of the group covenant may include:

- Clarifying the purpose of the group
- Agreeing to respect personal confidentiality
- Supporting each other in ministry and learning
- Being willing to offer constructive feedback (*See Appendix D*)
- Being faithful in attending meetings

Suggestions for a First Meeting

- Allow time for introductions, greetings, and storytelling
- Share a significant early-life experience of church, either negative or positive
- Invite each participant to share why they agreed to become a member of the group
- Clarify the purpose and the process of a LST using this Handbook
- Invite members to bring an object or symbol that is personally meaningful and explain its significance

Suggestions for Subsequent Meetings

- Incorporate spiritual enrichment through readings, prayer, Bible study, an opening or closing or centering ritual, and times of silence
- Discuss experiences and issues in ministry brought by the student or other members
- Reflect on each person's understanding of ministry
- Use a story or an event to focus discussion on a particular ministry issue, including issues arising from the student's weekly reflection reports or classroom presentations
- Use of a book, article, current event, or issue in the news to guide discussion
- Engage in theological reflection—individual or as a group—using the appended model (*Appendix C*) or other available models
- Share and explore of ministry issues and themes relevant to the student's learning goals
- Explore important and relevant themes in ministry, such as the meaning of faith, styles of leadership, the power of prayer, boundaries in relationships, dealing with grief and loss, anger at God, the challenges of justice-making, etc.
- Use resource materials such as books, articles, videos on ministry issues
- Include intentional closure: celebration is an important part of community life, and so is saying goodbye!

Suggested Meeting Format

- Opening prayer, reading, or hymn
- Check-in (How is everyone doing since the last meeting?)

- Presentation of a theme or issue for discussion (may be assigned in the student's SMP course)
- Time for discussion
- Wrap-up (How did you feel about this meeting? What was helpful or not helpful? What might we do differently next time?)
- Closing prayer, reading, or hymn

Group Facilitation

To encourage a sense of shared responsibility within the group, the LST is encouraged to rotate leadership or facilitation of sessions, though there could be one continual chairperson overseeing the entire year's process. Using the above meeting outline, the role of the facilitator is to monitor discussion. Discussion should be a blending of voices with time to hear from everyone. Invite quieter people to speak and gently suggest that more eager speakers to remain mindful of those who have not yet shared. Some ways to do this:

- Have speaking go around the circle so everyone has a turn. If someone has nothing to say, they can say "pass."
- Have a few minutes of discussion in pairs, with pairs bringing thoughts and ideas back to the group. This allows quieter people to offer their thoughts.
- Have a time of silence for a minute or so for people to reflect and gather their thoughts. This allows introverts a few moments to collect their thoughts.

Remember **that this is a learning experience for everyone**, where mutuality means being able to hear from everyone. Also, the student needs to learn to listen to the faith, values, and concerns of others to learn how in order to walk with people as a spiritual leader.

Appendix F

Roles of Ministry and Personnel Committee and LST
 Adapted from Peter Kingsbury, Conference Personnel Minister,
 London Conference, September 2009

	M & P Committee	LST
Purpose	Facilitates healthy pastoral relationship to maximize ministry.	Helps the student learn from the ministry experience.
All about . . .	. . . job performance	Learning, Education, Vocational Formation
Accountable to	Church Board/ Congregation	UCC through the Office of Vocation
Prime Functions	Recommends actions, maximizes ministry, "Does the doing"	Provides reflection and feedback maximizes learning, "Facilitates learning"
Receives input from congregation and . . .	. . . recommends action, addresses problems.	... helps student reflect on and learn from it, serves as a catalyst for growth.
Role	Part of governance structure making ministry happen in this context.	Part of educational structure helping student reflect on and learn from how ministry happens in this context.

Appendix G

Supervised Ministry Experience (SME) 3000/4000 Information 2025/26

Please email the completed form to the Coordinator of the Summer Distance Program,
Wing Yi Wong (Wing.Yi.Wong@astheology.ns.ca)

Student Name:

Candidacy Board:

Regional Council:

SME Site:

SME Site Address:

Placement Details:

How many hours per week? (SME sites must be ½ time*)

Are you in a team ministry or solo position?

Educational Supervisor

Name:

Phone:

Email:

*AST does not encourage students to take full time appointments to ensure sufficient time for academic study.