

# **FIELD EDUCATION SUPERVISOR INTRODUCTION**

## **With students from The Methodist Theological School in Ohio**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Supervision is a crucial part of students' education for ministry. Each year, over 50 students are placed throughout the 6-state area to experience "hands-on" ministry in a variety of church, agency, correctional care, hospital or camp settings. Urban, rural and suburban opportunities are available for students based on the quality of supervision a student can receive there.

### **BASIC ASSUMPTIONS**

There are certain assumptions upon which MTSO's program is built:

- Professional ministry is best learned by integrating studies and practice in the field
- One significant aspect of learning is to adopt an apprentice model
- Action in the field can be reflected upon in the framework of biblical, theological and ethical disciplines
- Issues of call will continue to be addressed through students' action-reflection learning

### **COMPONENTS**

The Field Education Program at MTSO requires:

- A structured ministry experience from September – May after the student has completed 1/3 of his or her credits, including core courses
- Weekly supervisory meetings in the field
- Field Education classes using teaching, case study method and integration principles to integrate the experience with seminary learning

### **GUIDE FOR FIELD EDUCATION SETTING SUPERVISORS**

1. What is Supervision?  
Supervision is a process of mentoring and reflecting on ministry, through a covenant between a supervisor and student(s). Critical reflection, growth in student self-awareness and professional competence, theological understanding and Christian commitment are goals of the Supervisor.

2. Who is the Field Education Supervisor?  
Only persons who desire to play a critical role in the formation of the next generation of professional Christian leadership are to be invited to be FE Supervisors.

The Field Education Supervisor is the professional person within the Field Education setting who has primary supervisory and teaching responsibility to the student intern. This role is fundamental for the learning/serving process for the student and the placement setting.

3. Qualifications for Supervisors:  
Possession of a degree the same or equivalent to the student seeking a degree. In agencies, persons with degree-work other than from a theological background will need to supplement supervision with an off-site supervisor who has formal theological education.

Supervisors will need more than 3 years of church experience or experience in an agency setting in their field. If the student is pursuing ordination, the supervisor must be ordained for 3 years or more.

4. Qualities Field Education looks for in a supervisor:
  - Enthusiasm for his or her calling to a professional ministry
  - Ability to articulate ministry in effective theological and biblical models, with conviction
  - Maturity to allow the student to grow and excel without being threatened or “controlling”
  - Permission-giving so that the student has freedom to succeed as well as fail (within limits)
  - Recognition of authority resting in laity for vital decision-making and leadership
  - Holds a positive relationship with MTSO and is willing to work with the Field Education office as needed
  - Has skills such as: listening, recognizing one’s own feelings, compassion, openness to different lifestyles, asking the right questions, sensitivity to the student’s current stance with knowledge about when to challenge and when to wait, reflection on process between supervisor and student, group leadership.
5. The supervisor is responsible for:
  - Negotiating the placement process with the student, the placement, and the FE office
  - Submitting a profile of the setting
  - Attending Supervisory Orientation in late summer/early fall
  - Assisting the student with questions about housing, salary and other specific arrangements with the placement
  - Providing office space and connecting student with other staff

- Selecting 4-6 persons to serve on the Field Education task group in the placement setting (Lay Committee) in conjunction with the student
- Working with the student on the Learning/Serving covenant goals and methods
- Planning for an arrival/welcome date and event
- Making available time for weekly supervisory meetings
- Being available as a mentor on a regular basis
- Participating in two evaluation processes that will take place during the year: the mid-year evaluation and the final evaluation
- Being familiar with the degree-program and requirements of the student
- Completing all paperwork required by the FE Office

6. Supervisory meetings:

These **uninterrupted** conversations are scheduled on a weekly basis, for one hour or more. The purpose is for the student and supervisor to explore meanings of ministry, think theologically about ministry events, increase self-awareness individually and as a team, and grow with faithfulness together. Sensitive feedback is appropriate. The Learning/Serving Covenant will serve as the reference point for each meeting.

Some tools which might be used for supervision (optional):  
Journal, calendar, verbatim or case study.

No style is “right” for supervision. Some supervisors may choose a collaborative style, others a listening/feedback style, or possibly a teaching style.

The supervisory conversation needs to incorporate the following elements at some level:

- Information: getting an accurate picture of role, patterns and players in an event/situation.
- The real issue: what is the core element of the situation? What is the student’s emotional response and future expectations?
- Problem resolution stage (if necessary): finding alternative possibilities, or a number of “right answers” for the situation. What does the student want to happen? What is the student’s role in this change? Is the situation resolvable or simply manageable?
- Theological awareness: what insights have come from situation about God, human nature, the church and the world? How does the Gospel connect with the experience? What emerges as the real issue for the student? How does ministry address the issue?
- Commitment: choosing a response. How does this situation teach about anticipating future situations? What is a healthy response?

What resources does the student need? What is the next step?  
What faith response will there be?  
-Prayer

7. Supervision beyond the setting:  
A student is under supervision not only in the FE setting, but from other sources – the Field Education office, Field Education class, support groups, denominational judicatories/annual conferences, and a lay committee from the local setting. This network should form a supportive basis for student growth and reflection on ministry.
8. If the FE Supervisor cannot carry out these elements necessary for effective supervision, she or he may:
  - Terminate the internship, in consultation with the FE office at MTSO
  - Secure a substitute supervisor, in consultation with the FE office at MTSO