

MIDDLER REVIEW / GUIDELINES

A Middler Review is held after a student has earned 27 credits and before the completion of 54 (usually this is in the spring of the second year of full-time study). A student may not register for her/his final 27 credits until the Review has been completed.

I. PURPOSE

The Middler Review has a threefold purpose: 1) to assist the student as she/he prepares for the last half of seminary education by a review and assessment of the student's academic and vocational preparation; 2) to clarify the student's vocational direction; 3) to set the student's agenda and learning goals for the Senior Integrative Seminar

II. PREPARATION

Responsibility for gathering the panel, preparing and circulating review material, and scheduling the review lies with the student. All members should receive the entire packet of review material, but as listed below, each member of the panel has specific responsibility for assessing the materials.

A. THE PANEL. This review is most thoroughly and effectively done in a formal and inclusive process that joins faculty members and students with representatives from local communities of faith.

The panel is normally comprised of 5 or 6 persons selected for their expertise in one or another component of the review and for their experience with the student. The student should invite panel members at least a month in advance of the review, and involve them in the preparation of materials. This consultation may be carried out on the phone, in person, or by written correspondence, but should precede the circulation of materials to committee members.

- **A Faculty Advisor.** This panel member is a regular member of the PSR faculty. The faculty advisor reviews the transcript, vocational/academic plan and update, and degree worksheet with the student; and consults with the student regarding the theological statement. The faculty advisor also chairs the review.
- **Second Faculty Member.** This panel member is appointed by the Dean, in consultation with the faculty advisor. The member's primary role is that of second academic reader of the written essay and to provide additional academic response to the oral presentation.
- **A Field Education Supervisor.** This panel member is a minister, church leader, or agency administrator who is familiar with the student's work in a field setting for ministry. The field education supervisor reviews all materials distributed to the panel which reflect the student's practice of ministry. The Field Supervisor reviews the field report with the student. If the student does not have a current field education supervisor, any other professional who is acquainted with the student's work in a ministry setting should be invited.
- **Student Peer(s).** One or two students are selected as panel members. These students should know the student personally and should be able to offer personal critique. Student peers ensure that the middler is taped and may also take notes to supplement the taping.
- **A Denominational Representative.** This panel member is an ordained church leader who is familiar with the expectations and rules of the student's denomination. The denominational representative reviews ordination requirements and progress with the student.

OR

- **A Representative of a Professional Credentialing Body.** If a student is not pursuing ordination but is considering a vocation which has a professional credentialing body, a member of that body who knows the requirements and rules for admittance should be included in the panel.

B. THE MATERIAL. The student will gather or prepare the following material for circulation to all panel members prior to the review:

- Middler Review Guideline Sheet. A copy of this statement describing the Middler Review, to give panel members an understanding of the goals and procedures of the Middler Review.
- Transcript. A unofficial copy of the student's PSR transcript. Students are encouraged to use their most recent grade report, or a print out of grades from Student Web Advisor. If the student does not have access to a recent/current grade report, a copy may be requested from the PSR Registrar.
- Degree Worksheet. A "filled in" worksheet which shows how the student is meeting the M.Div. degree expectations outlined in the PSR Catalogue. (Panel members from outside the school should be given copies of the relevant Catalogue pages.)
- Vocational/Theological Statement. A carefully prepared written statement of 15-20 pages. Students should refer to the attached instruction sheet for guidance on preparing the paper.
- Self-Assessment Sheet, completed, which reflects the student's current personal and vocational development.
- Panel Member Student Assessment Guide which provides panel members with criteria on which to evaluate student's paper and presentation (the panel members will complete an assessment prior to the conclusion of the Middler Review).
- Field Evaluation. An evaluation is requested from the Field Education supervisor. The evaluation required for the field education can be used unless confidentiality concerns require a separate document be substituted.
- Ordination Requirements/Professional Accreditation. The student should meet with a representative of his/her denomination (or professional accrediting agency) for a consultation on the procedures and requirements which apply to the student. The student should include in the packet these procedures/requirements as well as detailed information that details where the student is in that process.
- Oral Presentation. This is not to be circulated in advance. The oral presentation is delivered at the beginning of the review itself. In it the student integrates her/his sense of call, theological studies and practice of ministry.

C. THE PROCEDURE. Attention to the Middler Review begins several months before the event itself. Here are the steps that the student needs to take during that time.

- Consult your Faculty Advisor. Your faculty advisor will help you plan for the Middler Review and think about your panel. The name of your second faculty member will be given to you at the Middler Orientation, or can be obtained from the Associate Dean's office.
- Recruit a Panel. Each member of the panel is important in order to insure the comprehensive nature of the review. Invite panel members to participate in the review. Also, invite them to consult with you prior to the review as you collect and prepare material. In certain cases, it may be desirable to invite a distant panel member to participate through conference telephone facilities. This should be discussed with your faculty advisor.
- Set a Time and Reserve a Place. The Middler Review should be scheduled for two hours. The PSR Conference Room should normally be used for Middler Reviews because participants can sit comfortably across from one another, see one another, and have a place to take and review notes. (Reserve the Conference Room—as well as conference call equipment--through the PSR Receptionist.) Reserve parking for panelists who are visitors to the PSR campus at the Reception desk.
- Submit Summary Sheet. As soon as the date, time, place, and participants for the Middler Review have been set, return the Middler Review Summary Sheet (attached) to the Associate Dean so the date of your review can be recorded. The Faculty Advisor should receive a copy of the summary sheet as well.
- Consult with Panel Members. Each panel member can help you prepare yourself for the review, and sharpen you material so all panel members will find it helpful. Use the faculty members to help you complete your degree worksheet and to read a draft of your theological statement. Use your field supervisor to help you articulate your experience in the practice of ministry. Use your denominational representative to help you understand the personal and professional skills you need to be a minister in the denomination of your choice. You should remind your student peers to ensure that the interview is taped. A few days before the review, consult with your faculty advisor to decide details of format and procedure. If a conference telephone call is anticipated, this must be confirmed.

- Distribute your Material. There is a DEADLINE for the circulation of material to your panel. **Panel members and the Associate Dean must receive your completed Middler packet ten (10) working days before the review.** If the deadline is not met the Faculty Advisor may cancel the review.
- The Panel Member Student Assessment Guide Please bring copies of this form (the one with the ratings scale) for each member of your panel. This will be distributed by your advisor at the conclusion of the question and answer period.

III. THE REVIEW

The Middler Review is organized around three steps: getting under way, structured conversation, and summary statements.

A. GETTING UNDER WAY. Most Middler Reviews bring people together who do not know one another. Care needs to be taken to help panel members get acquainted and feel comfortable.

- Gathering. The student needs to arrive a minute or two ahead of time to see that the place is in order and to greet panel members as they arrive.
- Introductions. When the faculty advisor calls the meeting to order, the student will be asked to introduce members of the panel, giving a word or two about their role and why they were selected. At this time, it will be noted whether a recording device has been set-up, or if a student peer will be taking notes.
- Setting the Agenda. With the student excused from the room, the faculty advisor will invite panel members to state questions and concerns they want to raise during the review. The faculty advisor designs the flow of the review so that each element of the review will receive the time it needs, and so that the review participant with special competence in an area is given an opportunity to pursue that area with the student. This is a time for panel members to test with one another their perception of the student and of the task of the review. This time is to help all members of the review panel understand the agenda and anticipate the process.

B. STRUCTURED CONVERSATION. The bulk of the session is spent in conversation with the student. The faculty advisor is responsible to see that all component areas of the review are addressed and that there is room for the questions and concerns of panel members. The primary task of panel members is to ask questions which will press the student to think about and respond to the areas under consideration. Speeches by panel members usually are reserved for the summary section of the review.

Oral presentation. After the student returns to the room she/he is invited to give a carefully prepared 5-10 minute oral presentation, integrating his/her sense of call, theological studies and practice of ministry. Panel members may use this presentation as a beginning point for their questions.

Questions. Questions are asked to:

- evaluate the student's theological understanding and ability to articulate her/his faith.
- consider the relationship of the student to the church or agency and its assumptions about ministry.
- assess the adequacy of the Vocational Academic Plan and what the student has done at PSR to move toward his/her chosen ministerial goals.
- evaluate the goals of the student in view of student's self-assessment
- counsel the student as to vocational clarity and fit
- create goals for the student's work in the Senior Integrative Seminar

C. SUMMARY STATEMENTS. After the time for questions has been spent, the student will leave the room while the faculty advisor calls for the preparation and presentation of summary statements by panel members to the student. At this time, the faculty member will hand out a new copy of the Panel Member Student Assessment form which includes a ratings scale. Panel members will use this tool to consider their summary statements and will hand in the form to the faculty member at the conclusion of the middler (to be shared at a later time with the student—the faculty member will return these forms to the Associate Dean's office).

Statements should identify both strengths and weaknesses panel members discern in the student from their work with her/him and from the review itself. Summary statements should be as direct, brief and memorable as possible.

The student will return to the room. Panel members will speak their summary statements. The faculty advisor will then make a final remark, thank the participants and draw the review to a close.

D. MIDDLEL REPORT. Following the review, the student creates the Middler Review Report, drawing on notes from the middler, feedback, and assessment forms.

E. ADVISOR MEETING. Before the student and the faculty advisor leave the Review, the faculty advisor should arrange with the student a time to share and sign the Middler Review Report. Normally this process should be completed within two weeks of the Middler Review session.

IV. FOLLOW UP

A draft of the middler review is prepared by the student. The Report will include the student's goals for the Senior Integrative Seminar. The student and the advisor discuss the Report, revise it as needed, and both sign it. The student then transmits a copy of the Report to the Associate Dean, along with supporting documentation.

Revised 11/06

PANEL MEMBER STUDENT ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Panel members are encouraged to use this too, based on the core competencies of the PSR MDiv (Critical Engagement with Texts and Tradition, Leadership Formation, Contextual Learning, and Communities of Accountability) to help assess the student and provide critical feedback during the Middler.

Knowledge of theological traditions

Knowledge of church history

Understanding of ethics

Ability to interpret and use Scripture

Clarity of vocational direction

Skill in using the arts in communication

Ability to reflect on theological, historical and cultural issues related to providing spiritual guidance

Ability to reflect on theological, historical and cultural issues related to planning and implementing religious education

Ability to reflect on theological, historical and cultural issues related to pastoral theology and care

Ability to reflect on theological, historical and cultural issues related to leading an organization/parish

Ability to reflect on theological, historical and cultural issues related to thinking and preaching theologically

Ability to reflect on theological, historical, cultural, and esthetic issues with regard to planning, conducting, and evaluating worship.

Ability to write clearly

Comfort with role and authority

Practice of spiritual disciplines

An understanding of one's own social location

Ability to explore new issues independently and develop one's own point of view

Appreciation for what is intellectually unfamiliar or novel

Ability to think critically and grasp and analyze new ideas

Understanding dynamics of social and economic class

Ability to discern issues of justice in context

Knowledge of and sensitivity to racial justice and cross-cultural competency

Knowledge of and sensitivity to g/l/b/t issues

Knowledge of and sensitivity to those who are differently-abled

Knowledge of and sensitivity to other faith traditions

Knowledge of one's own religious tradition, its polity and history

Ability to seek out relevant and appropriate resources

Ability to be accountable and responsible to particular communities

Ability to work cooperatively across community lines

Student's Communities of Accountability (Name/description of community/ies: _____)

Other concerns or affirmations related to this persons fitness for ministry:

PANEL MEMBER STUDENT ASSESSMENT GUIDE

At the conclusion of the middler, panel members are asked to use this tool to help assess the student and provide critical feedback and information for the student's future academic plans. Please evaluate the student in the following areas by circling a number 0-10, with 0 meaning "not prepared" and 10 meaning "well-prepared." If you do not have information or experience with the student related to the knowledge or skill set, mark "n/a". Please return this form to the advisor before leaving the middler.

	Not Prepared	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Well Prepared	n/a
Knowledge of theological traditions	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Knowledge of church history	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Understanding of ethics	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to interpret and use Scripture	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Clarity of vocational direction.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Skill in using the arts in communication.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to reflect on the theological, historical, and cultural issues related to:													
Providing spiritual guidance.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Planning and implementing religious education	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Pastoral theology and care	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Leading an organization/parish	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Thinking and preaching theologically	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to reflect on theological, historical, cultural, and esthetic issues with regard to planning, conducting, and evaluating worship.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to write clearly.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Comfort with role and authority.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Practice of spiritual disciplines.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
An understanding of one's own social location.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to explore new issues independently and develop one's own point of view.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Appreciation for what is intellectually unfamiliar or novel.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to think critically and grasp and analyze new ideas.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Understanding dynamics of social and economic class	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to discern issues of justice in context	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Knowledge of and sensitivity to racial justice and cross-cultural competency	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Knowledge of and sensitivity to g/l/b/t issues.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Knowledge of and sensitivity to those who are differently-abled ..	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Knowledge of and sensitivity to other faith traditions.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Knowledge of one's own religious tradition, its polity and history ..	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to seek out relevant and appropriate resources	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to be accountable and responsible to particular communities	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to work cooperatively across community lines.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

Communities of Accountability (Name/description of community/ies: _____)

Other:

Other concerns or affirmations related to this persons fitness for ministry:

MIDDLER SELF ASSESSMENT

Please indicate your vocational growth and development in the following areas by circling a number 0-10, with 0 meaning "not prepared" and 10 meaning "well-prepared." If you have not yet taken a course or had ministry preparation related to the knowledge or skill set, mark "n/a".

	Not Prepared	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Well Prepared	n/a
Knowledge of theological traditions	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Knowledge of church history	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Understanding of ethics	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to interpret and use Scripture	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Clarity of vocational direction.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Skill in using the arts in communication.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to reflect on the theological, historical, and cultural issues related to:													
Providing spiritual guidance.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Planning and implementing religious education	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Pastoral theology and care	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Leading an organization/parish	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Thinking and preaching theologically	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to reflect on the theological, historical, cultural, and esthetic issues with regard to planning, conducting, and evaluating worship.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to write clearly.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Comfort with role and authority.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Practice of spiritual disciplines.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
An understanding of one's own social location.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to explore new issues independently and develop one's own point of view.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
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Knowledge of and sensitivity to g/l/b/t issues.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Knowledge of and sensitivity to those who are differently-abled ..	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Knowledge of and sensitivity to other faith traditions.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Knowledge of one's own religious tradition, its polity and history ..	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
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Ability to be accountable and responsible to particular communities	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Ability to work cooperatively across community lines.....	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

Communities of Accountability (Name/description of community/ies: _____)

Other:

The Middler Review Vocational/Theological Statement

One of the key elements of the Middler Review is the preparation of a Vocational/Theological statement, which is approximately 15-20 pages in length. This essay, carefully prepared by the student in advance of the Review, is read critically by all panelists and forms the basis for much of the conversation that occurs in the Review.

The goal of this portion of the middler is to demonstrate 1) your facility with critical theological tools, and 2) your ability to integrate your knowledge of scripture, the history of Christian thought, and Christian communities and practices in a project of constructive theology.

Develop your essay by giving a critical reflection on your experience of life and faith, using theological and sociological categories. You may have written about your experience or journey before, but in this paper you are expected to bring to bear newly acquired tools of analysis, including awareness of your social location and a critical assessment of not just *what* you know or experience, but *how* you know and experience. You may want to consider your experience critically in light of academic disciplines to which you've been exposed, texts and thinkers you have encountered, and contexts that have helped you test your experience against that of other individuals and communities.

In your essay, you should give specific attention to the following areas, indicating your current understanding of them. On this basis your committee can more helpfully recommend areas of further study and reflection.

- Define your social location. How does your race, gender, sexual orientation, faith affiliation, economic class, etc, impact the way you relate to others, particularly those who are different from your own location?
- Articulate your theological statement in a way that is integrative of your faith, life and practice. What is the ultimate reference/source/grounding of your faith? How is your faith manifest in life? How is it related to the historical formulations of faith (God, Christ, Spirit, Scripture, Church, Sin)? How does your faith find a place in a community of accountability? How do you understand your responsibility as a person of faith? What is the role of theology in your life and ministry?
- How does your theology inform your relationship to neighbors (individually, globally, ecologically)? How is your commitment to justice and peace/prophetic stance expressed in regard to the relational nature of life? How do you propose to cope with the destructive forces that alienate one from another (evil, injustice, etc.)? Where does your theological position fit in the unfolding historical story of faith? Are there any useful references in the historical formulations of these issues and what are they? What theological thinkers have helped you and why?
- How does memory, history, locality, and future/hope play in your understanding of faith?
- Where are the growing edges in your continuing growth in faith? Who are the conversation partners? What are your theological questions?

Include in your essay a one-to-two page self-assessment of your competencies in ministry. How have life experiences, the MDiv curriculum, and field work assisted you in the development of your skills for ministry? Utilizing the Middler Self-Assessment tool, what are your limitations? What areas do you need to address to strengthen your role as a religious leader? How can you use the resources of the MDiv curriculum and programs of the school to further your vocational development? What are ways you can utilize the Senior Integrative Seminar for your development? What other resources do you need and how can you find them?

You may find it helpful to consult with your advisor as you prepare your essay.

MIDDLER REVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

Student _____	
Address, phone _____	PSR Box _____
Date of Middler Review _____	Time of Review _____

Location _____

Review Participants

Faculty Advisor _____

Second Faculty Member _____

Field Education Supervisor _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Student Peer _____ Box _____ Phone _____

Student Peer _____ Box _____ Phone _____

Denominational Representative _____

Address _____

Conference Calls _____ yes

Please indicate which participant will be present via telephone and telephone number

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE ASSOCIATE DEAN AS SOON AS YOUR MIDDLER REVIEW DATE IS SET.

For Office Use

Report received

Follow up

MIDDLER REVIEW REPORT

Student _____ Date of Middler Review _____

Address, phone _____ PSR Box _____

Review participants/Relationship to student and/or Role in Review:

STRENGTHS:

AREAS FOR GROWTH:

SENIOR SEMINAR OBJECTIVES:

YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE REVIEW:

Signature of Advisor/Review Committee Chair

Student Signature

Date: _____

Date: _____

RETURN TO THE ASSOCIATE DEAN'S OFFICE