



# FIELD EDUCATION AT PSR

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Your congregation or community agency can offer valuable Field Education experience for PSR students.

An important part of theological education at Pacific School of Religion is field education for students in congregations and community agencies. Field education integrates academic study, spiritual discipline, and the practice of leadership. It is the portion of the Master of Divinity (MDiv) curriculum that involves students in supervised work in spiritually rooted leadership for social transformation at approved placement settings.

## Criteria for placements

Field Education differs from field work, unsupervised church employment, and other employment because it requires:

- Involvement in significant learning opportunities for the full range of the work of leadership;
- Fifteen hours a week engaged in the formational work of leadership, ministry, and administration;
- Collaboration with student to develop a learning/serving covenant (learning objectives) at the beginning of each semester as the first step in the self-directed, self-reflective learning process;
- Regular reflection sessions, one-hour weekly, with an on-site mentor;
- Written evaluations by the mentor and the student that are submitted to the Field Education Office at the end of each semester;
- And, student participation in a weekly Tuesday or Thursday evening seminar throughout the academic year in which there is disciplined reflection on the practice of spiritual leadership.

Mentors are expected to participate in 1-2 scheduled meetings with Field Education faculty during the academic year, usually 1 in the Fall and 1 in the Spring. The Fall meeting is the Orientation Training for mentors together with students. This occurs in September, at the first meeting of the Field Education class. All participants can be supported with Zoom video conferencing and phone meetings.

## Frequently Asked Questions: Churches and Agencies

Q: What should we be thinking about in order to offer a good placement?

A: Students need an opportunity to prepare themselves for a leadership role and to stretch into areas that may be new to them. While the student's work may focus in a specific area, it is expected that they will be exposed in significant ways to the whole mission of the chosen setting. In offering a placement, it is helpful to reflect on all the elements of the work at your location and to be open to considering what ways a student may both learn and contribute. The student's work with you is shaped by the learning needs of the student as well as the needs of your congregation or agency.

Q: What is required of the mentoring role?

A: A mentor is expected to meet with the student for an hour each week. Those sessions are not staff meeting time, but rather time for theological/spiritual reflection on the work and the student's learning. Mentors are required to write evaluations of the student's work at the end of each semester. Meetings with Field Education faculty and other mentors provide training and support for those serving in this role.

Q: Do others in the congregation/organization also have a role?

A: The congregation or agency and the student develop ways for the student to receive feedback and input from the laity of the congregation or the staff and constituency of the agency. We recommend to the students that they have at least one significant conversation per semester with reliable observers to get input for their self-evaluations.

Q: How many hours of work are expected for a student work at our site?

A: Students are expected to spend an average of 15 hours per week which includes the hour of mentoring, any staff meeting time, and preparations needed for ministry (sermons, workshops, bible study, spiritual care, etc.).

Q: How much of a monthly stipend is expected to be provided to the student?

A: Congregations and agencies should be aware of the financial needs of Field Education students, given many have reduced their employment hours to make time for their field work. We recommend a steady monthly stipend for 15 hours/week at the local minimum wage (we do not expect hours to be tracked.) All financial arrangements are negotiated between the congregation or agency and the student. Nevertheless, we are also aware that many communities involved with social change and equity are themselves operating on limited budgets. PSR works to have supplemental stipend funds available. We ask placement partners to provide what they can, and we work to make sure our students are contributing to your work as well as learning from you.

Q: We've offered a placement, but no one has called. What should we do?

A: Students are encouraged to seek placements that further their own vocational goals. Given the group of students is different each year, it is difficult to predict what the interests and needs will be. There are always more placements offered than can be filled by students; however, a placement left open one year may be filled the next.

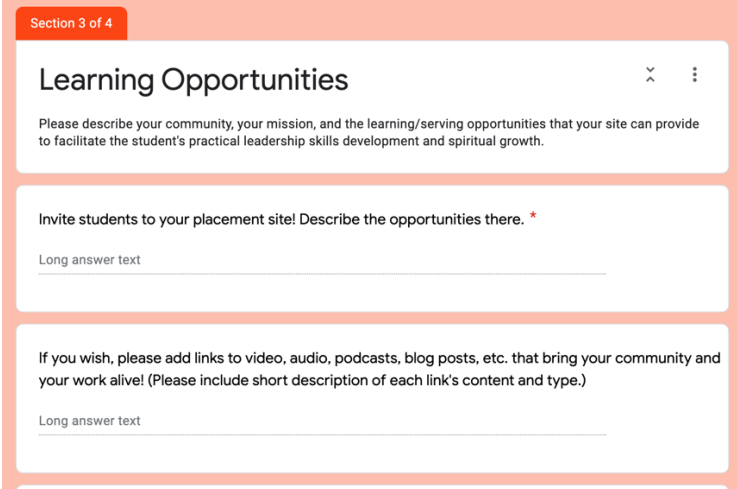
## Arranging a Placement: For Congregations and Agencies

Field education placements may be part time (concurrent) or full time (internship) during the academic year. As an elective option, students may receive academic credit for full time summer placements. We expect that any full-time internship would receive employee wages. We do not expect stipends to be paid for a student's elective option (although, if possible, a stipend would be welcomed.)

Congregations and agencies interested in offering a placement and able to provide the requisite mentoring should [complete the online form](#). This form will be sent to Community Engaged Learning (CEL). Please include a brief description of the setting, mission, constituencies served, and the needs and learning opportunities. Our office notifies students of available placements. Students are responsible for contacting and interviewing with placements suitable to their vocational goals. We request that interview(s) include the prospective mentor.

*This is the section of the online form to describe your site. We recommend that you pre-write this section for copy-&-paste.*

*This Google Form can also be saved and edited*



The image shows a screenshot of a Google Form titled "Learning Opportunities". The form is divided into three sections. The first section is a header with the title "Learning Opportunities" and a subtitle: "Please describe your community, your mission, and the learning/serving opportunities that your site can provide to facilitate the student's practical leadership skills development and spiritual growth." The second section is a text input field with the prompt: "Invite students to your placement site! Describe the opportunities there. \*". The third section is another text input field with the prompt: "If you wish, please add links to video, audio, podcasts, blog posts, etc. that bring your community and your work alive! (Please include short description of each link's content and type.)".

CEL faculty and staff are available for assistance and guidance in the placement process, but the final decision and acceptance is the responsibility of the congregation or agency and the student. Both parties need to be explicit about their expectations. These expectations need to be communicated clearly to members of the congregation or constituents of the agency and to appropriate denominational or organizational personnel and committees, identifying the student as engaged in in-field learning rather than an employee.

PSR is grateful for the partnership of congregations and agencies in preparing students for transformational and spiritually rooted leadership. We recognize and appreciate the commitment made to our students in providing mentoring and a learning environment for their development.

Community Engaged Learning office: [ggilliam@psr.edu](mailto:ggilliam@psr.edu) or 510-849-8238.