

Contextual Education Handbook

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school for the ministry

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Introduction

Contextual education at Starr King School for the Ministry serves the integration of theory and practice for students preparing for religious and social-change leadership. Under the supervision of dedicated religious and community leaders, as well as other practitioners, students advance in vocational formation through experiential learning. Active engagement in religious service and justice work is supported by intentional community reflection for the enhancement of one's self- understanding, professional competence, and critical faculties. Committed to education that counters oppressions, Starr King institutes cross-cultural and collaborative pedagogies to displace hierarchies of privilege and enable mutually beneficial and informative relationships between individuals and communities.

Contextual education is a “hands-on” mode of learning in which developing religious and social- change leaders engage practices of ministry and justice-making in various communities. These settings enable students to hone their professional skills and benefit from the insights of experienced mentors and supervisors. The main contextual opportunities at SKSM, which are detailed in this handbook, are Clinical Pastoral Education and the various forms of field education: Congregational/Community Field Work or Parish/Community Internships.

This manual explains Starr King School for the Ministry's policies and procedures regarding CPE and field education. These include the criteria for process of earning CPE credit, the criteria for selecting a work site, the requirements for enrolling in and completing a coursework, the expectations for students and mentors/supervisors, and the protocols for addressing violations of proper conduct. Helpful information and references to further resources are also provided to aid students and organizational leaders in cultivating an effective and meaningful formation experience.

Should you have any questions about the nature and practice of field education at SKSM, please contact the Director of Contextual Education:

Rev. Dr. Christopher Schelin
Starr King School for the Ministry
cschelin@sksm.edu

Association of Theological Schools Standards

The Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) has stipulated certain expectations and requirements for its member organizations. The following standards relevant to field education are cited from the *ATS Accreditation Standards*:

Student Learning and Formation

3.1 The school gives attention to the intellectual, human, spiritual, and vocational dimensions of student learning and formation in its institutional goals and its curricular and co-curricular offerings in ways that are consistent with the school's mission and religious identity.

3.3 The school demonstrates intercultural competency in student learning and formation by helping students understand, respect, engage, and learn from diverse communities and multicultural perspectives, inside and outside the classroom.

3.5 The school demonstrates an understanding of learning and formation as lifetime pursuits by helping students develop motivations, skills, and practices for lifelong learning.

3.7 The school demonstrates an intentionally collaborative approach to student learning and formation by developing a cohesive and holistic curriculum, regardless of modality, that involves faculty and, as appropriate to the school's context and degree programs, librarians, student services personnel, field educators, and others—both in designing and in evaluating the curriculum.

3.8 The school demonstrates that instructors and students have appropriate training and resources to engage well in each modality that it utilizes and that all necessary physical or technological resources are readily accessible, equitably available, adequately staffed, and appropriately maintained.

Master's Degrees

4.4 The Master of Divinity degree requires supervised practical experiences (e.g., practicum or internship) in areas related to the student's vocational calling in order to achieve the learning outcomes of the degree program. These experiences are in settings that are appropriately chosen, well suited to the experience needed, and of sufficient duration. These experiences are also supervised by those who are appropriately qualified, professionally developed, and regularly evaluated.

4.8 The Master of Arts degree has clearly articulated student learning outcomes that are appropriate to a graduate theological degree (including any specializations in that degree) and are consistent with the school's mission and resources. A degree that is primarily academically oriented typically has some form of capstone research project (e.g., thesis or extended research paper), while one that is primarily professionally oriented typically has some form of supervised practical experience that meets the requirements in Standard 4.4. Master's degrees that are oriented both professionally and academically have appropriate options (e.g., practicum, thesis, or other).

Clinical Pastoral Education

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is a professional clinical education for ministry with people in crisis. Though most accredited centers are in hospitals, there are CPE programs in hospice, long-term care facilities and prisons. CPE is not required for the MDIV or MASC degrees, but it is required by some denominations and conferences as part of their ordination requirements, including the UUA. Furthermore, CPE is required for professional training for a career in chaplaincy.

All training programs require a minimum of 400 hours of work on-site for one unit of CPE credit, and students registering with SKSM will also receive 10 academic credits. One CPE unit can be completed in a 10-12 week intensive program or also in an extended period.

You are *strongly advised* to enroll at a training site approved by a respected accrediting agency. The following are well-known and recognized as legitimate by SKSM:

- Association of Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) – www.acpe.edu
- College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (CPSP) – www.cpsp.org
- Center for Spiritual Care and Pastoral Formation (CSCPF) – www.cscpf.org

It is important to confer with your religious organization about its requirements concerning CPE accreditation.

Most CPE units occur at agency-accredited centers where both the clinical hours and educational hours are earned on-site. However, many of our students may discover they live at a considerable distance from a CPE center. If that is your situation, you may wish to consider a distance-learning CPE program in which the educational hours are earned online and the clinical hours are earned at an approved setting that is conveniently located near you. Some known programs are [The Pacific Institute for Essential Conversations](#), [Community Care Chaplains](#), and [Sankofa CPE Center](#). Please contact the Director of Contextual Education for more information about distance-learning CPE.

Steps to Earning CPE Credit with SKSM

Interested students should:

- Discuss with their advisor if they are ready for the experience and when in the course of their studies CPE can be sustainably engaged (a particular semester or during the summer).
- Check all the information on CPE offered by the SKSM Student Handbook and this Handbook (video and handouts available, please contact the Director of Contextual Education, Dr. Christopher Schelin).
- Check the agency sites for updated lists of training centers. Additional announcements regarding CPE programs are posted regularly through SKSM media channels.
- Apply for programs.
- Communicate with Dr. Christopher Schelin and your advisor when you receive a supervisor's acceptance letter and decide to enroll in that particular program.
- During a given term, register for the CPE course under Dr. Schelin's name: PC-4000 – Faculty: Schelin. Please contact Dr. Schelin to confirm you are registering for the right number of credits.
- Send your CPE supervisor's evaluation to Dr. Schelin by last day of term.
- Please note that the academic calendar does not necessarily coincide with that of your CPE program. Should the CPE supervisor not be ready to write the final evaluation by the last week of the academic year, the student may take one of the following options:
 - If the CPE unit will conclude within the three weeks subsequent to the end of term, you must submit a Petition for Incomplete and then the evaluation upon receipt.
 - If the CPE unit extends more broadly across two terms, you may opt to register for credit only in the latter term, OR;
 - Split the credit across the two terms. In this case, in order to process the credits at the end of the first semester the CPE supervisor needs to provide either a midterm evaluation or an alternative statement about satisfactory work. The final evaluation can be presented in the second term.
- Please share your CPE evaluation with your advisor and discuss it at your next advising meeting
- A standard 400 hour CPE is 10 units. Psychology or Pastoral Care courses are not

required to enroll in CPE.

Ordination-track UU students: Candidates seeking Preliminary Fellowship must have completed one unit of CPE. It is highly recommended that an aspiring minister complete this requirement before meeting with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. The MFC may grant a CPE equivalency should the candidate demonstrate relevant experience and provide references. Please contact the Ministerial Credentialing Director for further information.

UU students may also apply to [the St. Lawrence Foundation for Theological Education](#) to offset the costs of CPE tuition.

Further Resources

An excellent FAQ for students: <http://www.acpe.edu/StudentsFAQ.html>

SKSM Video Introduction to CPE with Rev. Dr. Peter Yuichi Clark (in 10 parts):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZDAL1LwkJ8>

Ten Commandments of CPE Applications and Interviews

The Rev. Peter Yuichi Clark

1. ***Submitting a CPE application does not guarantee that you will be interviewed.***
While some centers can interview every applicant, many Bay Area centers simply do not have the time to interview everyone. Therefore they tend to be more selective. For example, we read every application (usually 50 or so) and interview roughly half that number to make up our group of 5 or 6 students.
2. The ACPE application includes several essay questions. ***Spend time on your responses to those questions;*** remember, you're trying to convince me that you'd be a good candidate to interview. Be as transparent as possible; average applications are 8 – 10 pages long, single-spaced.
3. ***Don't apply to only one center.*** You need to hedge your bets and you also need to give yourself options, in case you interview at a center and you sense that it may not be a good "fit" for you.
4. ***It's a two-way street.*** The CPE supervisor wants to learn about you, but this is also your opportunity to learn about the supervisor and the center. Come prepared to ask a few questions. Realize that the way the supervisor conducts the interview gives you some insight about her/his supervisory style. And if you leave the interview and you think to yourself, "It doesn't feel right," that's valuable information.
5. ***Make sure that the center is accredited.*** While there are good training programs in the Bay Area that are not accredited by ACPE, I cannot speak knowledgeably about them. I can say that ACPE accreditation assures you that your rights as a student will be respected and that there is a level of quality in the training program. Don't be afraid to ask a center or supervisor about their qualifications.
6. ***How you dress for the interview communicates something about you.*** If you show up at the interview in professional attire, looking like you're ready to step out onto the hospital floors and begin working, that is a positive message to me about your sense of motivation.
7. ***It is and it isn't a job interview.*** You may be surprised by the fact that CPE supervisors don't just want to hear about your achievements, successes, and competencies. Remember that this is an interview for educational training, and so we like it when applicants can clearly name their strengths and their limits. We also want to know if you can reflect on your experiences and learn from them, so make sure that you're ready to give examples of how you can do (or have done) that sort of process in the past.

8. ***Think about what you'd want to learn.*** CPE is designed to teach you about spiritual caregiving, and toward that end we focus on ten Objectives and nine Outcomes. (They're listed in §309 and §311 of the ACPE *Standards*.) Look at those beforehand and see if you can formulate a goal that you might want to work on during your CPE training. That is another way of demonstrating to the supervisor that you're ready to engage this process.
9. ***Supervisors ask themselves four questions when they interview applicants.*** First, can I trust this person with the people I serve (patients, clients, residents, *et al.*)? Second, is there something I can teach this person—is she/he receptive to learning? Third, will I enjoy being with this person? And fourth, how will this person “fit” into the group?
10. ***You should be asking yourself four questions, too.*** First, is this an environment where I'd like to experience ministry? Second, does this supervisor seem to know something that I want (or need) to learn? Third, will I enjoy being with this person? And fourth, am I ready for what this opportunity has to offer me [the question of vocation]?
11. ***BONUS: A “no” can be a “yes.”*** What I mean by this is that sometimes being told “no” by a center you'd prefer can open the door to a different and good experience at another center. Don't get discouraged.

Clinical Pastoral Education Checklist

- _____ Researched CPE centers
- _____ Evaluated accreditation standards
- _____ Submitted application
- _____ Conducted interview
- _____ Informed SKSM of acceptance
- _____ Registered for credit
- _____ Submitted mid-term evaluation (if needed)
- _____ Submitted final evaluation

Earning Field Education Credit

Field education is not currently a requirement for earning a Starr King Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree. It is highly recommended, however, that MDiv students avail themselves of the opportunity to undertake intentionally-guided contextual assignments that serve their vocational discernment and formation. Unitarian Universalist students seeking ordination must earn some level of field education or CPE credit to achieve candidate status with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC). **UU students should review the standards for ordination listed in the [Rules and Policies of the MFC](#).**

Master of Arts in Social Change (MASC) students are required to complete 5 units of Community Internship and enroll in the Community Intern Reflection Class (1 credit) to receive their degree.

Types of SKSM Field Education

SKSM divides field education into the two categories of congregational and community-based settings and into the two levels of field work and internship.

Field Work is a less-structured field education experience involving a schedule of less than 15 average hours per week. Examples of field work include as volunteering for a non-profit, teaching a class over several weeks or serving on a committee. The field work student must benefit from the oversight of a mentor but weekly, formal meetings are not required.

Internship is a field education experience that entails a minimum of 15 average hours per week (up to 40), weekly formal supervision at the site, and registration in a reflection class offered by SKSM. There are two Intern Reflection classes. One is designed for those working in a parish setting and one is for those working in a community institution. Please see course descriptions online. These courses are available only in the Fall and Spring terms.

Steps to Earning Field Education Credit with SKSM

Students should:

1. Discuss desires and opportunities with their advisor and consult as to the

- feasibility of conducting field education at this point in their academic career.
2. Discuss desires and opportunities with Dr. Christopher Schelin, Director of Contextual Education, in the case of community field work/internships, or with Rev. Tera Landers, in the case of congregational field work/internships. At this point students can determine if they will propose a new field education setting or seek to engage an established setting.
 3. Submit a [Field Education Proposal Form](#) to either Dr. Schelin or Rev. Landers, detailing the nature of the work to be done, listing tentative learning goals, and providing a resumé/bio of the intended mentor/supervisor if this is the first time this person is serving in such a capacity. All mentors/supervisors must be approved by SKSM.
 4. Register for field work or internship during the appropriate term's registration period
 6. Submit the learning agreement within two weeks of the start of the term.
 7. Submit the midterm evaluation before Reading Week or at the designated midpoint of a summer assignment.
 8. Submit the final evaluation by the end of term in order for a grade to be issued. No credit will be granted without an evaluation and it is the responsibility of the student, not the supervisor, to ensure that evaluations are submitted on time.
 9. If you are interested in Field Work during the Summer, please consult with Dr. Schelin or Rev. Landers before the end of the Spring term.

Determining a Work Site

Starr King students may matriculate either as high-residency students who live in the Bay Area during their course of study or as low-residency students who complete the majority of the program via online classes. Consequently, Starr King does not generally practice the traditional “placement” model of field education, in which students apply for assignments at predetermined settings. While a select number of internships and field work opportunities with local partner organizations are available, the majority of our degree-program participants must self-initiate their field sites. In such case, students will seek approval for a work site by completing a Field Education Proposal Form.

What constitutes a valid work site? As a rule, it should be a religious or community organization that grants the student worker direct ministerial or leadership responsibilities, such as planning worship, offering pastoral care, program development

and management, and social activism.

Examples of field education settings include churches, prisons, health care facilities, college campuses, legislative advocacy committees, environmentalist groups, and social change collaboratives. Field work opportunities may consist of independent “projects” not tied to a specific organization, so long as the student receives guidance from a competent mentor.

The work performed during a field education experience must meaningfully support growing competency in one or more of the eight threshold areas specified by Starr King’s educational model. A proposed internship will be rejected if it is to be conducted at an appropriate site but not with the appropriate level and type of responsibility; i.e., serving as an administrative assistant in a church or agency office.

Any proposed mentor or supervisor must demonstrate relevant credentials and experience to oversee a student’s work and facilitate a student’s intentional reflection process. The mentor/supervisor and work site must agree to uphold the standards of supervision and personal conduct as stipulated by this manual.

The Director of Contextual Education or Congregational Coordinator will gladly assist students who request help in identifying and developing a field education assignment. A record is kept of previously-utilized field work and internship settings and around the country.

Students may find this record helpful by stimulating ideas for new assignments or by encouraging contact with a setting known to be supportive of field education. An interactive map of locations is available at the [Contextual Education](#) page of the SKSM website or at [Google Maps](#).

Determining Academic Credit

Earned academic credit is based on the number of hours the student commits to the field education experience. These hours include both “on site” activity as well as preparation time (e.g., lesson planning). One unit of SKSM credit is equivalent to approximately 40 hours of work. Credit will be calculated based on either a) the average number of work hours per week over a period of ten or more weeks; or b) the total number of expected work hours within a shorter timeframe.

Crafting a Learning Agreement and Learning Goals

At the outset of an assignment, the student and mentor/supervisor meet to formulate and assent to a learning agreement that defines the parameters of the field education experience. The field site and its leadership, the student, and Starr King form a covenant with one another to accept particular responsibilities and support specific learning goals. The student and the mentor/supervisor outline the structure of duties to be assigned and negotiate logistical and administrative details such as compensation, sick leave and vacation time, work hours, etc. More significantly, the student takes the lead to discern, with the assistance of the mentor/supervisor, a set of learning goals that address certain “growing edges” in the student’s theological, vocational, and personal development.

Learning goals shape the student’s work as a formative exercise by articulating what the student wants to learn and how the student will learn it. To identify learning goals, a student should ask, “What do I wish to achieve from this experience?” The student may also assess strengths and weaknesses in conversation with the mentor/supervisor, exploring limits, gaps, hesitations, and openings in one’s personal, spiritual, and professional growth. The student’s developmental needs are brought into relation with the work site’s aims and purposes to construct realistic and specific goals. To evaluate success, the student and mentor/supervisor should discuss and name the distinctive *tasks* that foster these goals and *criteria* for measuring progress.

Two valuable acronyms for crafting learning goals are **NICE** and **SMART**. The former helps you brainstorm possible goals while the latter helps you shape them into concrete and realizable objectives.

NICE: Personal learning goals stem from the following dimensions of your developing professional identity:

N – *Needs*. What skills do I need to develop?

I – *Interests*. What are my areas of interest that can be explored further?

C – *Concerns*. What is uncomfortable or concerning about my developing

professional identity? E – *Expectations*. What do I expect to experience or encounter at this field site?

SMART: Excellent learning goals will demonstrate all of the following

traits: S – *Specific* (detailed, focused, tied to observable behavior if

possible)

M- *Measurable* (the results are quantifiable or otherwise recognizable to

others) A – *Attainable* (with the resources available in the field education assignment)

R – *Relevant* (applicable to the work, your vocational goals, and SKSM thresholds)

T – *Time-limited* (the term sets an obvious limit, but perhaps some goals can be met at different points during the field education assignment)

In your learning agreement, please briefly indicate what actions will enable you to achieve your learning goals.

Sample Learning Goals

- To develop my skills as a preacher.
 - I will preach three sermons this semester and receive input through conversation with my supervisor and a sermon feedback form completed by the laity.
- To explore systemic issues resulting in homelessness and poverty.
 - I will interview the staff and clients of this agency to glean their insights on homelessness and will integrate these findings with research on local socioeconomic factors.
- To learn how to build coalitions among diverse communities and faith groups.
 - I will participate in organizing meetings initiated by my supervisor, taking notes and reflecting on observations made. During the second half of the internship, I will facilitate meetings myself, inviting attendees and developing a collaborative agenda.

Participating in Reflection Classes

Students enrolled in Community and Parish Internships simultaneously register for the matching reflection classes taught by SKSM faculty. These seminars are an integral component of field education, fostering theo-ethical reflection that links students' experiences with their course of study and their vocational formation. Entering a safe

space and drawing upon the support of peers and the mentorship of the instructor, participants explore their personal development, deepen their personal and professional best practices, and integrate insights from multiple sources of wisdom and knowledge. The reflection process unfolds by means of group dialogue, case studies, analysis of texts, and other pedagogical practices. These classes are a vital tool for growing into one's identity as a minister or community leader.

Community interns must enroll in the minimum of one semester of the reflection course. They may re-enroll if the internship extends beyond one semester or if they undertake additional internships, but this is not required. Congregational interns must participate in the reflection course through the entirety of their assignments. Additionally, students serving in churches are expected to attend the Starr King Intern Gathering in the middle of an academic year.

Evaluating a Field Education Experience

Evaluations set apart field education as an exercise of intentional learning for the whole person. Through constructive and meaningful dialogue with the mentor/supervisor, a student deepens one's understanding of the practices of ministry and community leadership, articulates personal strengths and weaknesses and assesses how they are shifting, and achieves intensified clarity as to potential paths toward a vocational future.

Formal evaluation of a student's progress occurs at the midpoint and conclusion of a field education experience. Student and mentor/supervisor sit down together to reflect on this particular developmental journey and to complete the formal midterm and final evaluations. These documents are available on the *Student Forms* page of the SKSM website. During a spring or fall assignment, the midterm evaluation is due on the Friday before Reading Week and the final evaluation is due at the end of the semester. For internships lasting an entire academic year, the midterm evaluation is due at the conclusion of the fall semester and the final evaluation at the close of the spring semester. For summer field work opportunities, the evaluations will be submitted on dates designated by either Tera Landers (Congregational Field Work) or Christopher Schelin (Community Field Work).

At the heart of an evaluation meeting, the student and mentor/supervisor review the goals stated in the Learning Agreement, discussing how they have been met and how the goals and tasks might be modulated for the second half of the assignment. At its best, the conversation engages broader themes and issues pertaining to the student's work and development. Mentors/supervisors should be cognizant of the inherent power dynamics of such conversations in order to avoid the exercise of dominance over the student, intentional or otherwise. It is imperative that they offer respectful space for the student to voice concerns, constructive criticisms, and honest appraisals regarding the conduct of the mentor/supervisor and other leaders, the design of the field education assignment, and the characteristics of the organization and/or field setting.

Using SKSM Field Education Forms

All required paperwork for earning field education credit is available at the [Student Forms](#) page of the SKSM website. There you will find the Proposal Form as well as the learning agreements and evaluations for each level and type of field education. Most of these documents have been crafted as fillable PDFs, which means that it is not necessary to print and physically complete them; you may type all information into the documents digitally, save them, and email them to either Dr. Schelin or Rev. Landers. The forms are set up for typed-in e-signatures, which are legally-valid signatures according to the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act of 2000. To confirm the supervisor/mentor's assent to the contents of a learning agreement or evaluation, the student must copy the supervisor/mentor on the email submission of the document.

Please check to make sure you are using the *correct* form for your level and category of field education.

Field Education Checklist

- _____ Discussed field education plans with advisor
- _____ Submitted Field Education Proposal Form OR
- _____ Applied for an MFC Internship with a UUA Teaching Congregation
- _____ Received permission and registered for credit
- _____ Registered for reflection class (if needed)
- _____ Completed and submitted learning agreement within first two weeks
- _____ Completed and submitted midterm evaluation
- _____ Completed and submitted final evaluation

Expectations of the Student

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and responsible manner throughout the entire process of earning field education credit. This first entails that they will educate themselves on the policies and practices by which SKSM manages these contextual learning experiences. Before undertaking any assignment, students should read through this field education manual and direct any remaining questions to the Director of Contextual Education. They should consult with their advisor about the suitability of engaging such work at this point in their academic tenure. Finally, it is the student's responsibility, in the case of a self-initiated assignment, to document the nature of the work site, the credentials of the mentor/supervisor, and the duties that will be performed.

During the course of a field education assignment, students will complete all required forms according to directions and submit them within the specified deadlines. The student will also demonstrate a professional approach to one's duties and relationships with the mentor/supervisor and colleagues. This will include:

- Taking responsibility for developing, assessing, and reworking learning goals
- Soliciting specific and constructive feedback from the mentor/supervisor, committee, fellow ministers/staff, and constituents/clients
- Honoring standards of confidentiality
- Recognizing and maintaining personal boundaries
- Accepting and offering constructive criticism as well as encouragement
- Practicing self-care
- Practicing appropriate sexual ethics, abstaining from sexual harassment or from sexual contact with the mentor/supervisor, congregational members, or clients
- Voicing concerns to the mentor/supervisor and/or SKSM leadership as needed

Expectations of the Field Setting

Field sites are teaching centers where seminarians engage in contextual learning. These settings may introduce students to congregational ministry or social action at a level they have never before experienced, or they may allow students to explore aspects of such work they have not encountered previously. Field education is a vital component in the development of the student's self-understanding and direction as a religious and social leader.

It is Starr King's desire that mentors/supervisors and other staff and leaders will be excited about their mission, hospitable to the participation of the student, and mindful of their role as instructors and mentors. Because of Starr King's counter-oppressive commitments, we call upon all field sites not only to resist systemic evils of patriarchy, racism, etc., but also the temptation to patronize, underestimate, or exploit the student. The seminarian must also be treated equitably as a valuable colleague whose insights and skills will meaningfully contribute to the goals of the organization.

Financial Remuneration

Starr King School for the Ministry does not require that field workers/field interns be paid by the communities or organizations they serve. We understand that our students typically self-initiate assignments in locations around the country as they determine appropriate venues for developing their vocational identity, and that these settings will often lack the funding to provide equitable salary or wages. We do recommend, whenever possible, the provision of a stipend that demonstrates the site's appreciation for the seminarian's contributions.

Negotiating payment for services is a matter for discussion between the seminarian and the leadership at the site. Determination of pay rates and schedules should be made prior to the start of the internship. It is expected that the site will cover expenses related to required travel or conference fees. The student must be aware that any payment, including a stipend, is taxable income.

Should the field site agree to provide travel reimbursement for the student's use of an automobile, the site will utilize the standardized IRS rate. Please check IRS.gov for the current standard.

Supervision

By agreeing to oversee the student's field education experience, the mentor/supervisor has made a covenant with the student and with Starr King to help shape a future religious or community leader. This critical function requires thoughtful preparation, careful attention, and the intentional cultivation of leadership and advisory habits. Mentors and supervisors must possess a depth of experience, a balance of confidence and openness, and skills in dialogical communication.

Prerequisites of a Mentor/Supervisor

- Pastors and other religious leaders must be fully ordained or have received an equivalent commission or designation from their religious community.
- Mentors and supervisors must demonstrate relevant education and/or experience for the type of work the student will perform.
- There should be no conflicts of interest created by accepting a field worker or intern.
- Mentors and supervisors must be located on-site and able to observe the student engaging in assigned duties
- Supervisors must have served in their present setting for a minimum of one year.

Responsibilities of a Mentor/Supervisor

The mentor/supervisor should:

- Possess working knowledge of SKSM's field education requirements and practices
- Interpret SKSM field education to setting's constituents and ensure the student is appropriately welcomed and oriented
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities of the student in relation to the mentor/supervisor and other ministers/staff
- Practice open and collaborative communication with the student and SKSM staff
- Treat the student as a respected colleague-in-training who contributes distinctive gifts and perspectives to the setting and the supervisory relationship
- Complete and sign the required documents: learning agreement, midterm evaluation, and final evaluation
- Meet weekly with the student, at a minimum of one hour, to facilitate critical reflection on the student's work and experience (required for internships only)

Expected Skills of a Mentor/Supervisor

The mentor/supervisor will be:

- Truthful, impartial, and compassionate
- An active listener
- Adept at handling interpersonal dynamics and attentive to power differentials
- Practiced in the art of asking good questions
- Experienced in setting and evaluating realistic goals
- Capable of offering both encouragement and compassionate critique
- Observant of the student's developing skills as well as areas of growth
- A facilitator and guide, not an authoritarian manager
- Respectful of confidentiality
- Cognizant of healthy boundaries and the need for self-care
- Accepting of one's own limits and receptive of feedback

Administrative Policies and Procedures

A. Navigating Assignment Challenges

Tension and conflict arise in ministry and social change settings just as well as in other environments. During the course of a field education experience, relationships between the student, the mentor/supervisor, and other parties in the setting can be strained or broken due to disagreements, contrary expectations, or even malicious intent. Other factors apart from interpersonal issues can threaten the integrity of a field education assignment. Examples include financial issues, personal crises, or natural disaster impacting the student and/or the setting.

Starr King School for the Ministry commends the following process in the event of severe assignment challenges:

1. The student and mentor/supervisor should first meet in person to discuss the issue(s) undermining the assignment. This includes a situation of conflict between the mentor/supervisor and student, *except* for cases in which either party is accused of deliberate and serious harm to the other; i.e., harassment or verbal, physical, or sexual assault. In such instances, the Director of Contextual Education must be contacted immediately. The vast majority of conflict situations will not require this step, however. ***Note for UU ordination candidates: UUMA Guidelines for the Conduct of Ministry specifically state that an intern should speak directly with the supervisor about a conflict between the two of them rather than addressing this concern to the intern committee.***
2. If a resolution has not been achieved, the Director of Contextual Education must be contacted immediately. The Director will confer with the student and mentor/supervisor (separately if needed) to assess the nature of the concern.
3. The Director of Contextual Education will offer a plan for conflict mediation or for adapting the assignment in the light of changed circumstances. Any meetings for the purpose of conflict resolution must take place away from the field setting.
4. If the challenges remain insurmountable, the field education assignment will be terminated.
5. If the student is suffering trauma due to field site challenges, the Director of Spiritual Services will meet with the injured party and identify resources for counseling and care.

B. Termination of a Field Education Assignment

The process of terminating a field education assignment will operate according to the nature of the challenges that have undermined the educational experience.

1. Mutual agreement resolution – If the steps for resolving the problem or conflict have been followed in good faith by all participants, and it is agreed that the assignment should be ended, then the Director of Contextual Education will draft a letter explaining the reasons for termination. The student and mentor/supervisor will sign the letter and it will be placed in the student's file. The Director of Contextual Education will determine how much, if any credit, can be awarded for the extent of field education experience that has occurred. The student will then complete an SKSM Change of Enrollment form to reflect this determination.
2. Student misconduct resolution – If the termination is brought about due to improper conduct by the student, AND if a mutual resolution process cannot be conducted, the student will receive a failing grade. The Director of Contextual Education will draft an explanatory letter and place it in the student's file.
3. Supervisor/field site misconduct resolution – If the termination is brought about due to improper conduct by the mentor/supervisor, such that mediation cannot be conducted, the Director of Contextual Education will draft an explanatory letter. It will be signed by the Director and the student and placed in the student's file. The Director will assist the student in finding an alternative field site if attempting another placement is viable and desired by the student. Otherwise, the Director will determine what credit may be awarded for the extent of field education experience that has occurred.

C. Non-Discrimination and ECO Commitment

SKSM does not permit discrimination or harassment in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, gender identification or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, medical condition, veteran status, marital status or any other characteristic protected under law.

But our goals extend well beyond disallowing inappropriate behavior. Starr King’s mission and educational philosophy are oriented according to a distinctive mandate: **Educating to Counter Oppressions and Create Just and Sustainable Communities.**

We seek to embody just and loving human community, in which people are free to be fully themselves, in which people engage one another in respectful, welcoming ways, and in which no one is rejected, silenced, or exploited. To that end, we foster prophetic witness, counter the perpetuation of patriarchy and white supremacy assumptions, and work for the common good of all peoples and of the natural world.

To learn more about our ECO vision, please visit our [website](#).

D. Sexual Misconduct and Harassment

Starr King School for the Ministry (also referred to as “SKSM”) is committed to maintaining its campus and programs free from all forms of sexual misconduct. To help achieve this goal, SKSM has developed these policies and programs which are designed to help protect all students from experiencing any form of sexual misconduct, including sexual and gender-related: violence, assault, harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

Title IX Statement

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”) is a federal law that prohibits harassment on the basis of sex (or gender) of students at educational institutions that receive federal financial assistance. Sexual misconduct is a form of illegal harassment based on sex (or gender).

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...” 20 U.S.C. §1681.

The Title IX Coordinators are the persons designated by SKSM to oversee this Policy and to whom anyone with questions about this Policy may be referred.

Title IX Coordinator at SKSM:

Rev. Dr. Christopher Schelin
414 13th Street
Suite 700
Oakland, CA 94612
cschelin@sksm.edu

Title IX Deputy Coordinator at SKSM:

Rev. Dr. Meg Richardson
414 13th Street
Suite 700
Oakland, CA 94612
mrichardson@sksm.edu

Prohibited Behavior

SKSM prohibits all forms of sexual misconduct, which includes sexual and gender-related violence of any form: assault, harassment, any form of non-consensual sexual contact, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Each of these terms encompasses a broad range of behavior.

In addition, the Office of Contextual Education explicitly prohibits romantic and sexual relationships between a field education student and the mentor/supervisor, between the student and a member of the internship committee or advisory board, or between the student and a client of the agency where the student is placed. Intimate relationships between students and church/organization staff or between students and parishioners are also strongly discouraged, as these all hold the potential of jeopardizing the work environment and educational experience. Such relationships are also strictly prohibited in UUA internship settings (see [UUMA Guidelines for the Conduct of Ministry](#)).

Reporting an Incident

If you have been the victim of or witness to sexual misconduct, please seek assistance from a medical provider and/or law enforcement as soon as possible after an incident. Prompt reporting is the best option to ensure preservation of evidence and for the identification and location of witnesses.

SKSM also encourages you to make a report of the incident(s), providing it to the Director of Contextual Education as well as the designated officers above. Making a report means telling someone in authority what is known or believed to have happened. You should indicate the date, time, and location of the incident, the names of the persons involved and of any witnesses to the incident. Please submit a written report to SKSM or complete an online form [here](#).

SKSM will promptly review and thoroughly consider all reports of incidents that may be sexual misconduct. SKSM will take prompt action to prevent, correct and discipline behavior that is found to violate this policy, where appropriate, in the judgment of SKSM.

The filing of a report under this policy is independent of any criminal investigation or proceeding that may take place by governmental authorities or law enforcement, and both SKSM and criminal investigations may be pursued simultaneously.

Anonymous reports, or reporting without disclosing the reporter's name, can be made, but anonymous reporting is not the preferred way. Depending on the information received, SKSM's ability to respond to an anonymous report may be limited. The Title IX Coordinator will review anonymous reports received by SKSM and determine whether an investigation and response is appropriate.

If a person would like to discuss the details of an incident of possible sexual misconduct, without making a report or record of the incident, or in an otherwise confidential manner, the person should speak with persons who hold a relationship with the person of which there is a legal duty of confidence, such as with their physicians, mental health therapists, priests, or clergy. These persons generally will maintain confidentiality if they are acting in their capacity as your physician, mental health therapist, or clergy member, except in extreme cases of immediacy of threat or danger, or abuse of a minor.

The faculty and administrators of SKSM, even if they are ordained clergy or pastoral counselors, are not acting in their capacity as members of the clergy and do not have such a relationship with SKSM students, and thus, they are required under this Policy to promptly forward all reports of possible sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator for consideration and response.

The complete Starr King policy concerning harassment and sexual misconduct is available [here](#).

Recommended Resources

Books

- The Art of Theological Reflection*, Patricia O'Connell Killen and John de Beer
(Crossroad Publishing, 1994)
- The Call to Care: Essays by Unitarian Universalist Chaplains*, Karen
L. Hutt, ed. (Skinner House Books, 2017)
- Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*, 2nd ed., Kerry
Patterson, et. al. (McGraw-Hill Education, 2012)
- Engage: A Theological Education Toolkit*, Matthew Floding,
ed. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017)
- Experiencing Ministry Supervision: A Field-Based Approach*, William T. Pyle and Mary
Alice Seals, eds. (Broadman & Holman, 1995)
- Pedagogies for the Non-Poor*, Alice Frazer Evans, Robert A. Evans, and William Bean
Kennedy (Orbis: 1987)
- Shared Wisdom: Use of the Self in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Pamela
Cooper-White (Augsburg Fortress, 2004)
- Supervision of Ministry Students*, Regina
Coll (Order of St. Benedict, 1992)
- Worlds within a Congregation: Dealing with Theological Diversity*, W.
Paul Jones (Abingdon Press, 2000)

Websites

*Clinical Pastoral Education and
Chaplaincy*
[Association of Clinical Pastoral Education](#)
[Association of Professional Chaplains](#)
[Center for Spiritual Care and Pastoral Formation](#)
[College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy](#)
[Forum on the Military Chaplaincy](#)
[Military Chaplains Association](#)
[The Chaplaincy Institute](#)

Unitarian Universalist Ministry
[Becoming a Unitarian Universalist Minister](#)

- [Guidelines for Ministerial Student Internships](#)
- [MFC Requirements for Preliminary and Full Fellowship](#)
- [Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association](#)
- [UUMA Guidelines for the Conduct of Ministry](#)