

Practical Ministry

Description

ETS seeks to balance academic excellence, spiritual formation, and practical experience. Practical experience is invaluable to the student as it enables the integration of classroom learning with actual Christian ministry. The student will be expected to observe, participate, and share leadership in the various ministries of a local church. The Director of Practical Ministries has the responsibility to coordinate and oversee the various ministry activities.

Objectives

Supervised Christian Ministry during the time of studies at ETS serves the purpose of:

1. Providing a practical experience of church ministries, in a local congregation, through evangelism or missions
2. Challenging students to integrate theological studies with practice
3. Helping students to discover and unfold their areas of spiritual gifting and to apply this for the benefit of Christ and the Church

Students are placed under the direct supervision of a local mentor at the place of their internship or practicum with whom they should meet regularly. They also report to the ETS Director of Practical Ministries who will also stay connected with the mentors.

Format

There are three main types of Practical Ministry undertaken by students at ETS, described as follows:

SUPERVISED FIELD MINISTRY

Regular attendance at a local place of worship is required for all students; often this provides an opportunity for an ongoing Christian ministry through the semester, assisting in the regular worship services, Sunday School etc. Some students may engage in a regular ministry, in a place other than their normal place of worship, or on a day other than Sunday (e.g. Cell Groups, Children's Clubs, Teenager's Meetings etc.). All such services should be agreed upon by the Director of Practical Ministries and be guided and overseen by an on-site mentor. This ministry should not exceed a time commitment of more than 4½ hours per week during the Semester.

PRACTICUM SEMESTER

A further eight weeks of full-time ministry are required during the months of January and February, or with permission in the summer. Individual students may have specific opportunities outside this period and may require special permission from the Director of Practical Ministries (e.g. requests to minister during the Christmas/New Year Period, or Easter). These may also count towards the eight weeks of the Practicum Semester.

PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIP

The Professional internship linked to the area of concentration of a student can be undertaken following the three years on-campus. It may serve as the one year of practical internship or work experience needed to access the post-graduate programs offered at ETS. The requirements are shown below.

Evaluation

Competent preparation for ministry demands a dynamic, ongoing supervision and assessment process. Students receive academic credit for their supervised ministry and are evaluated on the basis of the regular reports of both mentors and students. The Director of Practical Ministries must approve all ministry for which ETS grants credit and/or a committee set up by the Seminary. Competent, approved church workers must also supervise practical ministries and internships.

The evaluation of student performances in Christian Ministry is an on-going process under the responsibility of the Director of Practical Ministries. It is based on the regular reports of both students and mentors, as detailed below. Credit is awarded on a Pass/Fail basis.

1. Supervised Field Ministry - requires regular reports from the student during the academic year. Mentors are asked to sign an agreement, which will set out the type of ministry and commitments expected of the student, and to provide an evaluation at the end of each semester.
2. Practicum Semester - requires a report from the student and the mentor for the eight weeks, or each part of this time if ministry is engaged in separate locations. Normally each student will complete this ministry in an eight-week block.
3. Professional Internship - A proper contract is signed setting out areas of responsibility, students report on a bi-monthly basis and must attend two meetings at ETS during the year, mentors report on a six-monthly basis and complete ministry evaluations. The student also submits a final paper as a theological and personal reflection based on their ministry experiences during the senior internship. This is read and evaluated by two faculty members. The final evaluation is an Oral Examination at the end of the professional internship.

Guidelines for the Professional Internship

INTRODUCTION

Students at European Theological Seminary are required to undertake Professional Internship, under the supervision of a Mentor. Normally, this follows three years of study and is a vital addition to the student's education, combining theory with praxis and allowing an integration of ministerial philosophy with ministerial practice. It is necessary for all German students in receipt of BAföG to complete this internship; and fulfil the requirements in order to graduate. It may be pursued in different fields of ministry which should reflect the student's concentration e.g. Pastoral, Missions, Music, or Youth and Christian Education. Other types of ministry are also possible, but this would be negotiated with the Director of Practical Ministries. Each student has the responsibility of finding a placement, but he or she can request assistance from the school; it is essential that an on-site mentor be guaranteed.

DURATION

The professional internship is to begin on September 1st and last until August 31st of the following year (full-time internship), based on a forty-hour working week. Five weeks a year are permitted for vacation. The internship can be extended into two years (part-time internship) if the intern is involved in another occupation during the internship period, requiring fifteen hours of ministerial work per week. This will also last from September 1st to August 31st two years later.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE INTERNSHIP

REGULAR REPORTING

The Director of Practical Ministries will conduct orientation sessions with all students before the Internship. The students will be acquainted with all report forms required from them and their on-site mentors, and of the due dates.

INTERN MEETINGS

During the course of the year two intern meetings will take place at the school. The interns and faculty tutors must attend those meetings. In special cases exceptions to this rule can be granted, upon written request to the Director of Practical Ministries.

SENIOR PAPER

During the professional internship the intern must write a 40 - 60 pages Senior Paper on a specific aspect of the internship. It should focus on a specific aspect of ministry and should include a biblical or theological reflection about one's calling or ministry, integration of theory and praxis, and application of theological understanding to issues and problems. It must follow the guidelines set out in the Style Manual, and interns and tutors should respect the submission deadlines. Students are required to register for a one-hour course during their last semester at ETS that is designed to prepare them for the writing (and assigned readings) of the Senior Paper. Deadlines for the Senior Paper must be followed.

ORAL EXAMINATION

In the month of September after the professional internship the intern will be subject to an oral examination. The oral examination will take place at ETS and prior to graduation. The Director of Practical Ministries must receive applications for exceptions to this rule no later than 31st May of the respective year. The examination panel will normally consist of three senior members (e.g., the President, the Academic Dean, the Director of Practical Ministries).

SUPERVISION OF THE INTERNSHIP

The professional internship is the final part of ETS studies. It is important that each intern be given close supervision during the internship. The intern will report to basically three people. The Director of Practical Ministries has the overall responsibility and will coordinate with the intern and other supervisors. Each intern will be assigned a member of the ETS faculty who will act as personal tutor. The local on-site Mentor has a very important role in providing day-to-day supervision. It is expected that each supervisor will make a regular commitment to pray for the intern.

ETS PRACTICAL MINISTRIES DIRECTOR

1. Conduct orientation sessions with all interns before they leave ETS about the internship, reporting procedures, writing the Senior Paper, supervision, examination and graduation requirements Approves all Internships, and on-site Mentors
2. Provides, receives and processes reports from interns and mentors d) Oversees the progress of the senior paper with the assistance of the tutors
3. Liaise with the faculty tutors and on-site mentors
4. Maintain regular contact with the interns and mentors
5. Arrange two interns' meetings at ETS each year, and the oral examination

SUPERVISING TUTOR

1. The tutor is the primary point of contact for the intern, and will receive copies of both interns' and mentors' reports
2. When possible, make two on-site visits during the course of the year
3. Maintain contact by telephone with both the intern and mentor
4. Supervising the writing of the Senior Paper, encouraging the submission schedule to be followed, and responding quickly to inquiries
5. Attend the interns' meetings at ETS
6. Liaise with the Practical Ministries Director in all areas concerning the internship, the oral examination and graduation

ON-SITE MENTOR

1. Provide guidance, advice and opportunities to the intern to develop ministry skills
2. Meet weekly, or at least once every two weeks, with the intern, to discuss and evaluate progress
3. Submit two half-yearly reports, and evaluations of preaching and other ministries

4. Negotiate a contract with the intern, which sets out clearly the requirements, responsibilities and provision for the intern during the internship

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