

**Pittsburgh  
Theological  
Seminary**

**Field Education Manual  
2023-2024**



**Field Education Office**

**FieldEducation@pts.edu**

**PTS Field Education Manual  
2023–2024**

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## Welcome

Welcome to the Field Education program at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary! Our program lies at the confluence of students, ministry sites, and the seminary. It is where students develop ministry skills, practice theological reflection, discern their calls, and are mentored into professional ministries. It is where congregations and other organizations come alongside seminarians with welcome, feedback, support, discernment, and invitations into mutual ministry. It is where faculty and staff bring theological traditions and theories to bear upon the practices of ministry for the sake of the church and the world.

### **The Role of Field Education in a Student's Experience**

Field education complements the rest of the student's seminary curriculum in several ways.<sup>1</sup> First, in addition to studying how ministries operate in general, a student in field education works "in one specific [ministry setting] in a particular place at a given time." Second, while field education focuses on practical skills and knowledge, it also affords "constant ways of interacting with and interpret the greater story of the Christian faith." Third, through becoming involved in various areas of ministry and performing in them, students can test the calling to ministry that seminary is preparing them for. Fourth, field education helps students understand themselves better because they have chances to see how others outside the seminary community experience them. Fifth, field education lets students see how change really happens in the Church and how leaders lead change amidst the messy realities that often characterize ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **The Role of Field Education in a Site's Experience**

When congregations, agencies, organizations, or campuses host students in field education, they become part of the PTS community. They put flesh and bones, faces and stories, on a commitment to raising up the next generation of leaders. They serve as places where time-tested wisdom and tradition find their footing. At times, they also serve as laboratories of sorts for new and emerging ideas and practices. By receiving a student, whether someone known or previously unknown to their community, a site has a chance to shape that person's journey in ministry. Leaders also have occasion to reflect anew on their mission and their common life and work, thus finding themselves renewed and resourced as well.

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<sup>1</sup> See William B. Kincaid, *Finding Voice: How Theological Field Education Shapes Pastoral Identity* (Wipf & Stock, 2012). Quotes taken from pp. xv--xvii.

## **The Role of Field Education in the Seminary's Experience**

Field education fulfills the Seminary's mission to “equip people for ministries familiar and yet to unfold, and communities present and yet to be gathered.”<sup>2</sup> The scholarship and intellectual inquiry of the classroom is joined with the ministry that students observe and engage in at their site. Through relationships, tasks, projects, and events, students gain hands-on experiences of participating in God's ongoing mission in the world. Their understanding of the community of Christ is deepened and enlarged as they work side by side and reflect theologically with supervisors, peers, and others in ministries. They are resourced practically, skillfully, formationally, and theologically for the ministries awaiting them in the complex realities of the world that God loves.

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The Field Education Office continually explores new placement opportunities through which students may best fulfill their vocational and educational needs and through which creative and engaging supervisors and placement sites may offer their gifts in the formation of ministerial excellence for the Church and the world. Please know that we are available to support and encourage students as well as supervisors through the journey of field education. Please do not hesitate to contact us at [FieldEducation@pts.edu](mailto:FieldEducation@pts.edu).

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<sup>2</sup> See the seminary's full mission and vision statements [here](#).

## Components of Field Education at PTS

Though all students are welcome, two degree programs at PTS require students to complete a field education experience, the Master of Divinity (MDiv) and the Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies (MAPS). The MDiv degree is a professional degree program that prepares individuals for ordained ministry as well as other forms of leadership in congregations, campuses, faith-based nonprofits, chaplaincies, and other settings. The MAPS degree is a graduate-level, two-year degree program that equips women and men for ministry leadership in various settings. These degrees require one field education placement.

Students in field education serve ten hours a week in a placement and concurrently take a faculty-taught course for two consecutive semesters (FE210 and FE220). The total time demand of a field education experience thus approximates the equivalent of two courses so students should plan their schedule accordingly.

Our approach to field education seeks to integrate the theological and the practical in experiences that focus on the student as learner. This integration occurs through the contributions and interplay of the following components:

### **The Application and Matching Processes**

PTS invites interested ministers to consider becoming a supervisor. Supervision is no small commitment, so potential supervisors should have the time, energy, and backing of their congregation or organization. They should be willing to prioritize a student's learning over the needs of their site, as field education is primarily education rather than employment. Because they share in the education and formation of seminarians, supervisors ordinarily have theological degrees themselves and/or are ordained. They are expected to have served their site for at least one year prior to participating in the program. To avoid conflicts of interest brought about by dual roles, normally a supervisor is not also their student's pastor, employer, partner, or family member. Programs and offices of the Seminary are not sites.

Potential supervisors apply or update [a site application](#) early in the spring semester. They then interview students sent to them by the director and indicate their match preferences by the deadline in late spring.

Any students who have taken the prerequisite courses in the MDiv or MAPS curriculum (see below) begin the placement process by completing [a student application](#). They then meet with the field education director to identify up to three supervisors with whom to interview, go on all their interviews, and indicate their match preferences to the director by the deadline in late spring.

Some PTS students come to seminary already embedded in ministry sites. While new experiences in new places always promote learning, we recognize that learning is lifelong and that students can and do learn from reflection on ministry in their own contexts. Therefore, some students will not interview for a field education placement but use their own context as their placement. They must still identify a supervisor who must still complete an application. The deadline for confirming these placements is the same.

For more detailed information about how students and supervisors are placed, see Appendix A, *The PTS Field Education Placement Process*.

### **The Learning–Serving Covenant**

Once matched, the student and supervisor plan the field education experience together, keeping in mind the learning goals of the student, the needs of the site, the gifts of the supervisor, and the requirements of the seminary. The covenant:

- clarifies mutual expectations,
- focuses the student’s work around limited and realistic objectives,
- relates the student’s work to their specific educational needs and personal and professional goals, and
- provides a framework for supervision and evaluation of the activities in which students engage.

The Learning–Serving Covenant is due no later than September 1, 2023 and must be signed by both student and supervisor. Once the director has reviewed and signed it, the covenant formally establishes the field education placement. For comprehensive guidance, see Appendix B, *Developing a Learning–Serving Covenant*.

The covenant spells out practical arrangements regarding dates, hours, time use, and compensation, according to the following requirements.

#### Dates and Hours

PTS offers field education during the academic year (two consecutive semesters, both of which must be completed to earn credit).

Students serve 10-12 hours a week for 29 weeks from the beginning of September through mid–May. In 2023–24, the start date should be no later than September 10, 2023, and the end date no earlier than May 17, 2024. The field education placement generally follows the PTS academic calendar (see *Appendix F*); however, supervisors and students can covenant to certain specifications within it. They should pay special attention to decisions regarding whether the student will serve during the weeks of

January term, religious holiday weeks that the PTS academic calendar observes as breaks, reading and exam weeks, and civic holidays when the seminary is closed.

### Time Use

- One hour is to be set aside for supervision at least 20 of the 29 weeks.
- Time spent in staff meetings, preparation for work, and travel for work purposes *does* count toward the student's time on site, but time for travel to and from the site does *not*.

### Compensation

Students normally receive a stipend for their service—either directly from the site, from the Pittsburgh Presbytery, or through the Field Education office at PTS. The stipend is considered taxable income and is subject to Social Security withholding. Depending on the site's ability, students may also receive reimbursement for travel expenses related to their service, though not normally for commuting to the site.

### **The Supervisory Relationship**

The key to a good field education experience is the relationship between supervisor and student. They covenant together, as Ken Pohly put it, to “reflect critically on their ministry as a way of growing in self-awareness, ministerial competence, theological understanding, and Christian commitment.”<sup>3</sup>

The supervisory hours are to assume an atmosphere of support, mutual accountability, honesty, trust, self-awareness and freedom. While the focus of these regularly scheduled conversations will ordinarily be on what the student is learning through their ministry at the site, supervisors and students also often discuss the student's professional and relational skills, pastoral presence, and personal spirituality.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation is an ongoing part of the supervisory relationship in the sense that supervisors provide students feedback on a regular basis during supervision hours. However, specific times are also set aside for formal evaluations, which are based on the Learning-Serving Covenant. At the mid-point, students and supervisors meet to evaluate how well they are living into the covenant they established at the beginning of the experience. At the end, they meet again to evaluate students' progress toward their learning goals and other progress made during the year. These evaluations are written, co-signed, and submitted to the office of field education. It is the student's responsibility to submit the forms in a timely manner and completing them is necessary for meeting their graduation field education requirement.

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<sup>3</sup> Ken Pohly, *Transforming the Rough Places: The Ministry of Supervision* (Wipf and Stock, 2016), p. 75.



The office of field education will share the student's final evaluation with their sponsoring judicatories, or other parties that the student names, if the student provides written consent.

### **The Concurrent Courses**

FE210 (fall) and FE220 (spring) are required of all MDiv and MAPS students. The courses invite students into the postures, habits, and practices of theologically reflective ministry. Interdisciplinary in nature, they pay particular attention to the integration of student experiences in their sites with work in contextual analysis and theological reflection (FE210), and communication and missional leadership (FE220). This course sequence earns students three credits per semester. Completion of both semesters is normally required to receive credit for either.

The curricular prerequisites for FE210/220 are as follows: *Students need to be simultaneously enrolled in, or previously have taken, OT210, OT 220, NT210 or BI210, NT220 or BI220, TH210, PR210, and PC210. Students also need to have completed CS110.* While not required, completion of WS110 prior to field education is also recommended.

According to the curricular plans for the MDiv and MAPS degrees, at the completion of these courses, students will be able to

- integrate experiences in field placement sites with coursework in Contextual Analysis, Christian Theology, and Caring Ministry (FE210) and with coursework in exegesis, Preaching and Communication, and Missional Leadership (FE220);
- assess the fittingness and faithfulness of a Christian practice in a local context, drawing on biblical, theological, and historical resources (FE210) and lead a fitting and faithful Christian practice in a local context, including the work of communal discernment (FE220);
- demonstrate the practical use of sociological and anthropological tools to offer a thick description of a ministry context, while reflecting on its particularity in terms of God's mission (FE210);
- interpret a biblical text in context while deploying effective preparation and communication skills (FE220);
- offer evidence of a growing self-awareness, congruent with how the student is perceived by others, and progress in relational competencies;
- exhibit a growing ability to understand, discern, and reflect theologically upon the needs of persons and communities and determine appropriate responses, taking into account issues involved in organizational dynamics and group processes; and
- articulate an emerging understanding of the nature and range of Christian ministry and the relationship between this understanding and the student's own gifts and calling to participate in God's mission.

## Summary Responsibilities of the Field Education Partners

The PTS field education program relies on relationships of trust with its sites, supervisors, and students. In that spirit, these expectations and responsibilities help keep these relationships in good working order.

### **The field education office will:**

- run an effective process to match students with supervisors (see above);
- provide an orientation for students and supervisors at the beginning of the academic year;
- offer supervisor training sessions each year on various topics in supervision;
- assist students and supervisors in preparing their Learning–Serving Covenants and evaluations;
- visit all new sites;
- address any concerns that arise between students and supervisors.

### **The student will:**

- serve 10–12 hours per week on site according to the schedule negotiated with the supervisor;
- provide any necessary documentation for employment and secure any required clearances as instructed by the supervisor;
- submit the Learning–Serving Covenant, Mid–Point Evaluation, and Final Evaluation in a timely manner;
- complete both FE210 and FE220;
- participate faithfully in regular supervisory conferences;
- fulfill all responsibilities faithfully, professionally and to the best of their abilities; and
- communicate and consult with the director of field education about any problems in the placement.

### **The site will:**

- provide opportunities for the student to engage in meaningful ministry;
- ensure the student receives any agreed–upon stipend and travel reimbursement in a timely manner;
- assist the supervisor in orienting the student to the site and making introductions;
- provide space to work and any site–specific resources the student will need (e.g., vestments, worship resources, books and materials, access to trainings).

### **The supervisor will:**

- update their application annually if continuing in the program;

- interview all students sent to them by the director and submit their match preference(s) by the deadline;
- help the student develop appropriate learning goals and tasks;
- attend the program orientation at the beginning of the academic year;
- attend two supervisor training sessions of their choice during the year;
- meet with their student regularly for an hour of supervision;
- submit the Learning–Serving Covenant, Mid–Point Evaluation, and Final Evaluation in a timely manner;
- communicate and consult with the director of field education about any problems in the placement.

**Benefits for supervisors** during each year they serve in the program include:

- library privileges at PTS;
- auditing privileges, pending faculty approval, for courses in the PTS curriculum;
- participation in most offerings of the PTS Continuing Education program;
- a community of colleagues and a chance to change a life.

## **Policy and Procedure for Resolving Problems in Field Education**

When a problem in the placement or breakdown in the supervisory relationship occurs that student and supervisor are unable to resolve through informal consultation with each other and the director of field education, the following procedure shall be followed:

- The student, supervisor, and director will all meet to discuss the problems and attempt to identify a resolution that will ensure the student's learning while retaining the integrity of the placement.
- If a resolution is reached and the supervisor and student mutually decide to continue, the director will outline any modifications to the Learning–Serving Covenant and all three will sign a modified version. The director will follow up with both parties within a reasonable amount of time.
- If the supervisor and student mutually decide to terminate the placement, the director will outline any steps needed to bring closure, and will follow up individually with both parties. The director will notify the academic dean.
- If no mutually agreeable decision can be reached, the director will make the decision about continuing or terminating the placement.
- If the director determines that the student's actions were the primary cause of a termination, the director will write a letter to that effect explaining why the student failed to complete their field education requirement. This letter will be placed in the student's permanent academic file.
- If the director deems the supervisor's actions were the primary cause of the termination, the director will reevaluate the supervisor and site with respect to participating again in the field education program. If sufficient time remains in the academic year to make a new placement feasible, the director will work with the student to find a match with a new supervisor and/or site so that the student may complete their field education requirement.
- If the director of field education is unable to negotiate or make a decision, the matter will be referred to the Dean of the Faculty.

## **PTS Sexual and Racial Harassment and Title IX Policies**

Field education is an educational program of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and is thus covered under PTS policies addressing conduct occurring on campus property and off. Reproduced here are the introductions to the Sexual and Racial Harassment Policy and the Title IX Policy. For the full text of these policies, including the complaint procedures, please see the PTS Student Handbook.

### **PTS Sexual and Racial Harassment Policy [excerpt]**

#### **Preface**

It is the policy as well as the responsibility of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, as an institution preparing men and women for leadership roles in the church, to establish an environment of trust in which the dignity and worth of all members of the institutional community are respected. Therefore, the Seminary will not condone or disregard incidents of sexual or racial harassment.

Both sexual and racial harassment occur typically but not always in situations where unequal power and authority relations prevail between those who harass and those who are harassed. It creates confusion and an uncomfortable, hostile and intimidating environment in which to work and study. It destroys opportunities for students, faculty and staff to develop and affirm strong, positive self-concepts and the sense of self-confidence and mutual respect which are essential both to the educational process and to the excellence of a well-functioning institution.

As a Christian community the Seminary does not wish to condone any form of harassment. If you have a harassment complaint that is not covered by this policy, you should make your complaint known to the Dean of Student Affairs or to one of those authorized to hear harassment complaints.

#### **Definition of Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment, which may involve the behavior of a person of either sex against a person of the opposite or same sex, is defined as any unwelcome, inappropriate, and offensive sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic advancement.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions or academic evaluations affecting that individual.

3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive social, academic, or working environment.

This definition of sexual harassment is understood to include but is not limited to the following: sexual innuendo; sexual remarks about a person's clothing, body, or activities; the trivialization of persons because of sex; role stereotyping by sex or according to a person's sexual orientation; unwelcome and unnecessary physical contact; inappropriate display of sexually suggestive or pornographic materials; subtle pressure for sexual activity; and physical assault.

Not every act that might be offensive to an individual or a group necessarily will be considered as sexual harassment. In determining whether or not an act constitutes sexual harassment, all circumstances pertaining to it and its context must be carefully reviewed and due consideration given to the protection of individual rights, freedom of speech, academic freedom and advocacy. All terms contained herein shall be construed according to the standards of a reasonable person within the seminary community.

### **Definition of Racial Harassment**

Racial harassment is racial prejudice expressed as inhumane social behavior. It is intended to coerce, manipulate, intimidate, take advantage of or demean persons who belong to a particular race. This includes: verbal behavior, i.e., racial slurs, demeaning remarks and jokes; physical behavior, i.e. assault, impeding or blocking movement or any interference with normal work or movement, and stalking; and visual behavior, i.e., derogatory posters, cartoons or drawings. Incidences of racial harassment may occur that are not covered by this list.

Not every act that might be offensive to an individual or a group necessarily will be considered as racial harassment. It is recognized, and must be dealt with appropriately, that racial insensitivity may have the same effect as actual harassment. In determining whether or not an act constitutes racial harassment, all circumstances pertaining to it and its context must be carefully reviewed and due consideration given to the protection of individual rights, freedom of speech, academic freedom and advocacy. All terms contained herein shall be construed according to the standards of a reasonable person within the Seminary community.

[For continuation of this policy, see the *PTS Student Handbook*.]

## **Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Title IX Policy and Procedures [excerpt]**

### **Notice of Nondiscrimination**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 states that “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.”

Title IX includes protections against sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination, and sexual violence. Definitions of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence are set forth in Section IV of this policy. Further information about Title IX and how it may affect you can be found at the Department of Education website: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/ocr/sex.html>.

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is committed to modeling ways of being with one another that exemplify the recognition that we are all created in the image of God and are to be treated with dignity and respect. Our community, just as the larger world, contains diversity in many forms. For the sake of the unity of the church and our witness to the world, we are committed to embodying respect across differences. Therefore, in accordance with the witness of holy scripture and the Christian tradition, as well as Title IX, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary forbids discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary likewise prohibits retaliation for raising a concern or complaint of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual violence and is committed to helping to provide protection, help, and safety to anyone who raises a concern or complaint under this policy.

This policy is intended to provide more information about how the Seminary addresses issues of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence and to describe the Seminary’s process for responding to complaints about violations of this policy in a manner that is prompt, fair to all parties, pastoral, and mirrors the Seminary’s commitments to gender equality and to an environment that is free from harassment and discrimination.

### **Community Commitment and Scope of Policy**

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (the “Seminary”) is an educational institution that forms and equips persons for ministry, with a commitment to scholarship. It seeks to be a generous and hospitable community that fosters intellectual inquiry, theological reflection, reconciliation, and justice. Gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence are contrary to the Seminary’s mission and vision and will not be

tolerated within the Seminary community. Therefore, all students, faculty, employees and vendors are subject to this Title IX policy.

Learning and a free exchange of ideas cannot occur where there is discrimination, harassment, or violence. Likewise, living fully into the Seminary's Vision of the Seminary as a place that teaches reconciliation and justice requires all within the Seminary's community to speak out whenever another member of the community is belittled, threatened, or discriminated against. Anyone within the Seminary community, including students, faculty, and employees, who witness any violation of this policy must report the violation as outlined in Section VI below. Prompt disclosure of any violation of this policy places the Seminary in the best position to support any persons harmed by a violation of this policy and to remedy any situation or conduct that undermines the safety and integrity of the Seminary community.

The procedure for raising a complaint under this policy is not intended to be a substitute for any other right or remedy that might be available. The Seminary has a limited ability to force cooperation in the investigation of any complaint under this policy, and full redress for certain conduct that violates this policy may only be found by using a court of law. The Seminary strongly encourages anyone who believes that s/he is a victim of sexual violence to notify law enforcement immediately, because the criminal justice system offers remedies that are unavailable under this policy.

The Seminary shall also communicate its Title IX policy, offer appropriate bystander and other training under it, and strive to eliminate gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence from its educational programs and activities. The Seminary shall also offer educational programs and 85 communications designed to prevent violations of this policy.

This policy applies to conduct that occurs (i) on Seminary property or (ii) off Seminary property, if the conduct was either in connection with a Seminary or Seminary-recognized program or activity or the conduct may have the effect of creating a hostile environment for a member of the Seminary community.

[For continuation of this policy, see the *PTS Student Handbook*.]



## Ethical Principles for Students in Field Education

In the course of fulfilling the requirements for field education at PTS, students serve in ministry sites and occupy ministerial roles. Therefore, while they may not yet be ordained or credentialed ministers, ethics standards do apply to them in their work. What follows are principles addressed specifically to the field education context but which also apply to continuing service in ministry.

Note: Students practicing ministry within a structure of institutional or denominational accountability shall also be accountable to their respective governing bodies and shall adhere to the structures, policies, and ethical codes affirmed by those bodies. In addition, the congregations, agencies, or institutions where students are serving may have their own codes of professional ethics.

### **The Principle of Pastoral Responsibility**

- Practice the disciplines of study, prayer, reflection, worship, stewardship, and service as you strive to be responsive to God's will.
- Use your knowledge and professional standing for the benefit of people.
- Provide ministry only for those problems, issues, or conditions that are within the reasonable boundaries of your competence. At those times when you are unable (or unwilling for appropriate reasons) to provide professional help, take initiative to locate other professionals or appropriate persons and agencies for continuation of ministry. Become well acquainted with the community's pastoral ministries and social service agencies.
- Regard all people with equal respect and concern as beloved children of God. Avoid discriminating against or refusing opportunities to or from anyone on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disabilities, age, or any other human condition.
- Be truthful and honest in your relationships with others.
- Do not engage in abusive, addictive, or exploitative behavior, and if it occurs, seek help in ending it.
- Avoid dual relationship with parishioners and clients (e.g., business or close personal relationships) that could impair your capacity to minister with integrity to all.
- Do not engage in sexualized behavior or sexual relationships at your site, even if another person invites or consents to it.
- Do not use personal funds for site-related duties or site funds for personal use.

### **The Principle of Self Care**

- Seek out and engage in collegial relationships.
- Manage your personal life in a healthful fashion and seek appropriate assistance for personal problems or conflicts.
- Prioritize your spiritual life through practices of worship, spiritual discipline, mentoring, or direction.
- Honor self-improvement, continuing education, and physical well being.

### **The Principle of Confidentiality**

- Respect the privacy of all persons.
- Refrain from engaging in gossip.
- Maintain confidentiality at your field education site in the following manner: Your supervisor is included in your circle of confidentiality. In other words, if you start to receive a confidence from someone at your site (parishioner, client, staff, other minister), and its content rises to an important or sensitive level, tell the individual that, as a supervised student, you will have to share the confidence with your supervisor. Share such confidences with your supervisor alone. If the person sharing the confidence *is* your supervisor, then the director of field education is in your circle of confidentiality.
- Maintain confidentiality in your field education course in the following manner: Your group will maintain confidence about the specifics of what is said and heard in class. However, the director of field education is in each group's circle of confidentiality, so important information shared in class about a student, site, or supervisor should be shared with them. General wisdom coming out of class, though, can be shared! Follow the adage that 'what's heard here stays here; what's learned here leaves here.'

Note: Students may or may not be mandated reporters by state law, that is, persons bound to disclose to authorities evidence of violence, abuse, or neglect. In any event, students must share such evidence with their supervisor, who is likely to be a mandated reporter. The director of field education is a mandated reporter.

### **The Principle of Stewardship**

- Be a faithful and accountable steward of any property or funds entrusted to you in the course of your work at your field education site.
- Participate in conserving the assets (financial, human, and natural) of your site according to the stated goals and priorities of its governing body, the community of which it is a part, the wider church, and wise creation care.
- Refrain from incurring indebtedness that compromises your ministry.
- Practice effective time management.

## Liturgical Resources

You may use these resources at the beginning and/or end of a student's time in the field education site.

### A Liturgy of Commitment<sup>4</sup>

#### Greeting

Church Representative: Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, the head of the church.

#### Recognition

##### Church Representative

*Addressing the congregation*: Today we enter into a covenant with Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and [name of seminarian] as s/he prepares for ministry by pursuing theological education. The commitment to receive a seminarian and to serve as a place for a seminarian's practice of ministry is one way we affirm a person's call from God to prepare for leadership in Christ's church.

*Addressing the student*: Your intention to prepare yourself for ministry will require diligent and prayerful work. We promise to assist you in that work and in your pilgrimage of learning. We covenant with Pittsburgh Theological Seminary to provide opportunities for you to minister to us, teach us, and learn from us. We pledge to be a partner in your formation for ministry by helping you develop competencies in the skills for ministry, the practical wisdom you will need as a minister, and the spiritual formation that will strengthen your service. With you, we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit as the future opens before you, and we invite you to call on us wherever we may be helpful to you in your preparation and study.

#### Promises

##### Church Representative:

*Addressing the seminarian*: As you enter this covenant with us, do you promise to seek our guidance and wisdom, to receive our support, and to minister to us faithfully?

##### Seminarian:

I do, with God's help.

##### Church Representative:

*Addressing the congregation*: Do you, the members of this congregation, as you enter this covenant with [name of seminarian] and with Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, pledge

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<sup>4</sup> Borrowed from Lexington Theological Seminary

to support [name of seminarian] as s/he continues the pilgrimage of learning? Do you agree to receive his/her preaching, teaching, administration, care, and leadership, and do you promise to sustain him/her with encouragement, and support?

Members of the Congregation:

**We do, with God's help.**

#### Prayer

Church Representative:

Let us pray.

All:

**God, giver of gifts for the body of Christ,  
we thank you for those in our generation  
who hear and answer your call to prepare for ministry in your Church.  
We thank you for institutions of learning that nurture their call and prepare  
them for service.**

**Grant your Holy Spirit to [name of seminarian]  
that s/he may grow in faith,  
be filled with courage,  
and increase in wisdom.**

**Grant that we, too, may grow in faith  
as we learn to support his/her theological education  
and become a partner in his/her formation.**

**Amen.**

#### Declaration

Church Representative:

In the name of Jesus Christ, I declare that [name of congregation], [name of seminarian] and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary have entered into a covenant of formation for ministry.

All:

**Thanks be to God!**

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## A Litany of Welcome<sup>5</sup>

- Leader: We come from different places, bringing our varied concerns, and gather here as a community of faith to worship the living God.
- People: **God has blessed us as individuals and as a community, and has called us into service.**
- Leader: God continues to bless us in many and specific ways. As a sign of blessing, today we celebrate the coming of [name of seminarian] into our midst to join us in our life together.
- Student: I give thanks to God for this opportunity to serve and learn within this community of faith.
- People: **Our homes, our hospitals and nursing homes, our classrooms and programs, our sanctuary, and our lives are open to you.**
- Student: As one preparing for a life of service as a minister of Jesus Christ, I seek to earn your trust.
- Leader: Let us pray. O God, for the sacredness of teaching and learning your purposes, we thank you. We ask you to guide and nurture this new colleague in ministry whom we welcome today. As [name of seminarian] has come to serve with us, we seek also to serve with him/her. May the experiences we share enrich our life together. Grant us all the courage to risk honesty, the patience to understand each other, and the faith to follow you. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray.
- People: **Amen.**

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## A Litany of Thanksgiving<sup>6</sup>

- Leader: There are different gifts, but it is the same Spirit who gives them.
- People: There are different ways of serving God, but it is the same Lord who is served.
- Leader: Each of us is given gifts by the Spirit to use for the common good.

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<sup>5</sup> Adapted from the PCUSA *Worshipbook*

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from the PCUSA *Worshipbook*

People: **Together we are the body of Christ, and individually members of it.**

Leader: Though our gifts may be varied, together we are a ministry of reconciliation led by the risen Christ. We work and pray to make God's church a useful servant in the world. Let us pray.

People: **We thank you for your servant [name of seminarian], whom you have called to serve among us. We thank you for blessing him/her with special gifts for ministry, and pray that you will guide him/her as he/she continues to prepare for service in your church.**

Student: I thank you, O Lord, for these, your people, who have welcomed me into their lives and taught me through our life together. Thank you for the faith they have shared and for their continuing witness in this place.

People: We thank you for [name of seminarian]'s service among us.

Student: I thank you, Lord, for what I have learned about your church and the world. I am grateful for the challenges we have shared, the memories we have created, and for the richness of shared ministry.

All: Though we now go our separate ways, keep us forever in your loving care. These things we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

\*

### **A Prayer for the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary<sup>7</sup>**

O God, hear our prayer.  
 We live in a little world  
 Hemmed in by mountains  
 And laced with rivers.  
 Too often our eyes cannot see beyond our mountains;  
 Too often we drink only the waters of our native streams;  
 Too often we sit complacently  
     While the whole world burns, thirsts,  
     Cries out for want of thee.

O God, teach us  
 That our little world of books and papers,  
 Of prayers and hymns,

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<sup>7</sup>Ford Lewis Battles, Pittsburgh Seminary Professor of Church History and the History of Doctrine, 1967--1978

Of eating and sleeping and talking,  
Is but the door through which we pass  
To the great world,  
The arena of thy redemption,  
The world that daily sets thy cross on Calvary,  
Yet, in the mystery of thy grace,  
Receives the benefit of that cross.

O God, hour by hour, and day by day,  
Make us better, wiser, more eloquent advocates  
of thy Gospel.  
Kindle our minds with truth,  
Open our hearts to love,  
Inspire our lips,  
Strengthen our arms and feet.

Eternal Father, we do not ask  
That this seminary have a long existence,  
Rather, we ask that thou mayest number  
Its years in spiritual usefulness,  
In faithfulness to thy Word,  
In devoted service.  
For when we forget thee,  
Neither we nor the institutions we frame  
Deserve to endure.

Accept this, we pray thee,  
Our sacrifice of praise,  
To thine eternal glory and majesty,  
And to the abiding presence in our midst  
Of thy only-begotten Son  
Through thy Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

## Appendix A: The PTS Field Education Placement Process

### Introduction

The field education program at PTS uses a system whereby field education students and field education sites simultaneously “match” to find every student a placement. While a matching process does not eliminate all disappointment, it makes all opportunities open to all students and sites at the same time. It lets all parties rank their preferences. Every student is matched with a site and they usually all get their top choices. Therefore, most students experience matching as a less competitive process than a traditional interview-offer-acceptance process. This is appropriate for field education because it is education rather than a job. Supervisors, too, benefit because they usually all get their top choices.

### How it works

Supervisors apply to the program first. The director reviews and approves all applications. Once the field of sites available to students is determined, students study their options and complete their own applications. These will eventually be shared with potential supervisors. Students then consult with the director during an appointment. By the end of that appointment (or a subsequent one if necessary), students will have selected up to three supervisors with whom to interview.

The field education office sends the student’s application to the supervisors. It is then the student’s responsibility to contact the supervisors and arrange the interviews. Students must contact their potential supervisors within one week of their appointment with the director. (The interviews don’t have to take place within one week, but they must be on the calendar within one week.) We strongly recommend face-to-face interviews that take place on site.

Once students and supervisors have completed all their interviews, they submit Field Education Match Preference Forms to the director via email. All forms from all parties must be received by the director by Match Day. The director announces the matches on Match Day. The matched student-supervisor pairs then get to work on their Learning Covenants, which are due no later than the first day of the Fall semester.

### The Spring 2023 schedule (as an example of the process)

Friday, March 17 10:30am	Field Education Student Orientation (on campus)
Tuesday, March 21 7pm	Field Education Student Orientation (on Zoom)
Monday, March 20	Application to be a Supervisor due



Monday, March 20	Student appointments with Director; applications due at time of appointment
Monday, March 20 through Wednesday, May 10	Interviews
Thursday, May 11 noon	Deadline to submit preferences
Friday, May 12	Match Day

**Placements outside the match process**

Some PTS students are already embedded in ministry sites when they come to seminary. While new experiences in new places always promote learning, we recognize that learning is lifelong and that students can and do learn from reflection on ministry in their own contexts. Therefore, some students will not interview for a field education placement but use their own context as their placement. They must still identify a supervisor who must still complete an application. The deadline for confirming these placements is the same as Match Day.

## Appendix B: Developing a Learning–Serving Covenant

### What is a Learning–Serving Covenant?

The covenant articulates a triadic relationship between the student, supervisor/mentor, and the seminary’s Office of Field Education. Like any covenant, it is a choice freely entered to join in mutual commitment, pursuits, responsibilities, concern, and learning. It outlines mutual expectations and goals.

### Why Learning–Serving Covenants?

- They help you take responsibility for the direction and progress of your learning process. Creating a covenant is sort of like mapping a route—while you may eventually detour from it to go new places, your journey will be the better for having set a course at the beginning.
- They allow us freedom to bring our whole selves into expression through our unique gifts and values. A covenant does not limit you simply to tasks and responsibilities but also to broader commitments about how you want to grow.
- They provide other people with a meaningful guide in supporting your learning. Knowing what you have covenanted to with your supervisor helps other colleagues join you and support you in your journey.
- They clarify and challenge your commitment to learning. Looking back at a covenant reminds you why you entered the relationship in the first place and keeps your goals before you.

### Structure

During your first meeting with your supervisor, you’ll want to hammer out some of the practical details and structures of your covenant so that you’ll be free to focus on what you hope to learn and how you hope to serve. Resolve these sorts of questions:

- What will your title be? (How will you be introduced to people?)
- When will you meet for supervision? (day, time, place)
- What specific schedule will you work?
- What weeks between September and May will you be off?
- Which holidays (civic and religious) will you take off?
- How will you be paid?

Also during an initial meeting, clarify the general areas of ministry in which you will be involved:

- Administration and leadership
- Community organizing
- Curriculum building
- Ecumenical/Interfaith/Interagency work
- Evangelism

Faith formation  
Fundraising and development  
Pastoral care  
Program planning and evaluation  
Social witness and advocacy  
Teaching  
Worship, including special services

## **Learning and Serving**

Whether you realize it or not, you have already given some thought to what will go in your covenant by completing your application. Revisit your motivations for field education and spend some time with the following questions.

*Identify what motivates your learning*

### Hope

- What would I be like if I were fulfilling my hopes?  
(Professional/Personal/Vocational characteristics)
- What do I and others most enjoy about me that can be strengthened and used?
- What dreams have brought me to this point? Are they still valid?

### Inquiry

- What am I curious about?
- What do I need to know to be engaged in leadership?
- What resources are available to me while in my field of interest?
- What do I already know that can be a resource to my development of ministerial identity and authority?

### Discomfort

- In what situations do I commonly struggle?
- What behaviors commonly get me into trouble? How can I change them?
- How do I want my life in ministry to be different?
- How do I want to be and act differently a year from now?

## **Identify your goals**

Next, start to be specific about how you want to grow through field education in three areas: **thinking**, **doing**, and **being**.

At Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, we are committed to your growth and development as a theologian who can learn about people and communities, think theologically about what is going on with them, and discern what God is calling them toward. To that end, we encourage you to identify one or two **thinking goals**. For

example, a student in a jail or prison setting might commit to learning about how past traumas can affect inmates' faith and spirituality, and therefore how she might serve them. A student in a congregation might want to better understand how a year of being "together, apart" during the pandemic will affect the congregation's practices of gathering that he will be leading.

We also assume that there are practical skills, tasks, and competencies in which you as a student wish to become proficient. For example, a student in a faith-based social service agency might want to get better at communicating with a particular constituency. A student in a congregation might want to use opportunities for preaching or corporate prayer to experiment with more spontaneity in his delivery. A student on a campus might set a goal of planning, implementing, and evaluating a program of her own from beginning to end. Students' goals around the **doing** of ministry will be shaped by their own interests as well as the needs of their sites.

Finally, since ministry is as much about who you are as what you can do, we encourage you to set some goals for how you want to grow in your ministerial identity. You might be discerning your call to ministry. You might struggle to claim your authority around people older than you, or people who are cradle churchgoers, or people who have known you in another context. You might be wondering how and whether you have to choose between your deeply held commitments to justice and caregiving. Field education is not therapy, but it is a place where you can attend to your **being**.

Thinking, doing, and being are often interconnected, and you may find a particular goal popping up in several places on the chart. That's ok! Additionally, some goals, especially in the "being" category, may seem like they will take your lifetime to achieve. Try to phrase them with the entire placement period in mind, asking yourself 'How am I being called to think, act, and be different at the end of this experience?'

### **Identify what specific activities will help you meet your goals**

Goals are not just lofty ideals. To reach them, you have to be engaged in specific tasks and carry out specific responsibilities. You'll need to negotiate with your supervisor in identifying the responsibilities you'll assume and match them to your goals.

The rest of the covenant chart invites you to make the road map as specific as you can to help you reach your goals. Don't worry; you will be invited to revise the covenant at mid-point so you won't be held to it for all time! The column for supervisor responsibilities will help your supervisor identify what they have to do to facilitate your tasks and responsibilities. For example, they may need to sign you up or invite

you to some event, obtain resources for you, introduce you to people, train you in certain skills, etc. Finally, some goals have a time frame, e.g., seasonal activities, so that's what the Dates column is for. Other goals you'll work on continuously so you may leave the Dates column blank for those.

## Appendix C: Learning–Serving Covenant for 2023-24

### Student Contact Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_@pts.edu  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Supervisor Contact Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Site Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Physical address \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing address, if different \_\_\_\_\_

### Dates

The field education calendar follows the PTS academic calendar (Appendix F), but supervisors and students can covenant to certain specifications within it. The student must serve 10 hours a week for 29 weeks from the beginning of September through mid–May.

Start date (no later than September 10, 2023):

End date (no earlier than May 17, 2024):

Weeks off:

Holidays on:

Holidays off:

### Supervision

Students and supervisors meet for one hour a week for at least 20 of the 29 weeks. Our schedule for supervisory conferences will be:

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	<b>Learning Goals</b>	<b>Student Responsibilities</b>	<b>Supervisor Responsibilities</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<b>Thinking</b>				
<b>Doing</b>				
<b>Being</b>				

Your signatures below indicate consent to the following:

*We will submit a Learning Covenant, a Mid-point Evaluation and a Final Evaluation in a timely manner.*

*We will communicate and consult with the director of field education about any challenges or concerns in supervision or other problems.*

*We will abide by all policies on harassment and discrimination of PTS and the site.*

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix D: Mid-Year Evaluation Form

Through this mid-year evaluation, students and supervisors have an opportunity to evaluate their joint progress in addressing the goals identified in the Learning Covenant. Supervisor and student should discuss their responses to the questions below before signing and submitting the form. They may, however, submit the form separately.

Name of Seminarian:

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Name of Supervisor:

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1. Review the goals on your Learning Covenant and then describe the tasks and activities in which the student has engaged to fulfill the Learning Covenant, i.e. write what the student has actually **done** towards fulfilling each goal.

Student:

Supervisor:

2. Describe the student's formation so far: skill development, sense of vocation, knowledge of ministry, etc.. What has surprised you and how has this helped or hindered learning?

Student:

Supervisor:

3. What changes will you make to your Learning Covenant?

Student:

Supervisor:

We have discussed together the content of this evaluation. **(Signatures required.)**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E: Final Evaluation Form

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Site \_\_\_\_\_

This field education experience took place from (month/year) \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructions:

1. You will both review Part III of the Learning Covenant you created for the year. Because other experiences and opportunities for learning arise in field education as well, you will additionally reflect on the questions in this evaluation form (below). Set aside some time for reflection and note-taking for this review.
2. You will meet one-on-one to compare and discuss your review of the year. Please schedule one uninterrupted hour for this conversation and bring your notes to it.
3. Taking the conversation into account, the supervisor will then write an evaluation, including examples and illustrations as often as possible.
4. The supervisor will share the evaluation with the student and both will sign it. The student may write an addendum to the supervisor's evaluation if they wish, either to include or submit separately from the supervisor's evaluation.

**This evaluation is due May 21, 2024 (9:30 A.M.) for graduating students or May 24, 2024 for continuing students.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure its submission to the Office of Field Education by the due date. Credit for FE210/220 and completion of the student's field education degree requirement are contingent upon timely submission of this evaluation.

This evaluation, and any addendum, will be saved in the Office of Field Education. It will only be released upon the student's written request. See the release form, below.

### SUPERVISOR'S EVALUATION

1. How well did the student achieve Learning Goal #1?

Learning Goal #2?

Learning Goal #3?

[additional goals]

2. In what ways has the student grown in vocational discernment  
  
self-understanding  
  
and a life of prayer and worship?
3. What has been discovered during this field education experience about the student's emerging sense of pastoral identity (leadership, authority, authenticity, boundaries, etc.)?
4. In what ways has the field education experience informed the student's theology (nature and mission of the church, God, bible, etc.)?
5. What are the student's strengths for ministry, and how have those been identified this year?
6. What future steps does this field education experience indicate for the student (e.g., further coursework, training, personal and professional development)?

**SIGNATURES**

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT ADDENDUM** (optional)

Student's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**RELEASE FORM** (optional)

Note:

The Office of Field Education at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary releases the Final Evaluation for purposes of ordination, employment, and further education if the student has given permission. This form lets the student grant that permission in advance.

*I hereby give my permission for the PTS Office of Field Education to release (check all that apply)*

\_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor Evaluation

\_\_\_\_\_ Student Addendum

*to the following person:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address Line 1:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address Line 2:  
\_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX F**  
**PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
**2023-2024 Academic Calendar**

<b>SUMMER</b>	<b>JUNE 5- AUGUST 11, 2023</b>
2 June	Spring 2022-23 grades due
5 June	Summer Term Begins
5 June	Summer I Language Classes begin
5-30 June	Doctor of Ministry Cohorts
5-16 June	Missional Leadership
5-16 June	Reformed Focus @ University of Edinburgh
5-16 June	Intergenerational Black Church Studies
19-23 June	Creative Writing/Public Theology
9 June	Last Day to Add/Drop Summer I classes without penalty
9 June	Deadline to complete Financial Aid Refund Opt-In/Out form
16 June	Last Day to Add/Drop Summer I Classes at 50% tuition
19 June	Seminary closed in observance of Juneteenth
23 June	Financial Aid Refunds
28 June-1 July	AIM 2023-24 Cohort - AIM 01
3-4 July	Seminary closed in observance of Independence Day
7 July	Summer I classes end
10 July	Summer I grades due
10 July	Summer II classes begin
14 July	Last Day to Add/Drop Summer II classes without penalty
21 July	Last Day to Add/Drop Summer II Classes at 50% tuition
28 June	Financial Aid Refunds
31 July-13 October	Doctor of Ministry/Creative Writing & Public Theology
11 August	Summer II Classes end
14 August	Summer II grades due
25-26 August	Orientation
28 August-8 September	Doctor of Ministry Eastern Christian Cohort
<b>FALL SEMESTER</b>	<b>September 5- December 22, 2023</b>
1 September	PC(USA) Ordination Exam: Bible Content
1 September	Last day to register without \$75 late fee
4 September	Seminary closed in observance of Labor Day
5 September	CLASSES BEGIN
7 September	CONVOCATION
7-9 September	Hybrid Program Gathering Days
8 September	Last day to add/drop Fall classes without penalty
8 September	Deadline to complete Financial Aid Refund Opt-In/Out form
20-23 September	AIM 2023-24 Cohort/AIM 02
21-23 September	PC(USA) Senior Ordination Exams
22 September	Financial Aid Refunds
28 September	PC(USA) Ordination Exam: Exegesis Exam Deadline
6 October	Last day to drop classes at 50% tuition
12-14 October	Hybrid Program Gathering Days
16-20 October	Mid-Term Reading Week
23 October	J-Term and Doctor of Ministry Registration Opens

## PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY 2023-2024 Academic Calendar

14-15 November	Board of Directors Meeting
18-21 November	AAR/SBL Conferences
20-24 November	Student Thanksgiving Break
23-24 November	Seminary closed in observance of Thanksgiving
<hr/>	
4 December	Spring Semester Registration Opens
15 December	LAST DAY OF CLASSES/Fall Semester
15 December	Extension requests due
18-22 December	Fall Reading/Final Exams week
22 December	All Fall Semester course work completed
23 December-5 January	Student Christmas break
23 December-2 January	Seminary closed for Staff in observance of Christmas
<hr/>	
<b>JANUARY TERM</b>	<b>JANUARY 8- JANUARY 31, 2024</b>
1 January	Seminary closed in observance of New Year's Day
5 January	Fall Semester Grades Due by Noon
8 January	J-TERM CLASSES BEGIN
8 January-2 February	Doctor of Ministry Winter
8-19 January	Missional Leadership
22 January - 3 February	Intergenerational Black Church Studies
12 January	Last Day to Add/Drop J-Term Classes without penalty
15 January	Seminary closed in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
19 January	Last day to drop J-Term classes at 50% tuition
24-27 January	AIM 2023-24 Cohort/AIM 03
25-27 January	PC(USA) Senior Ordination Exams
26 January	LAST DAY OF J-TERM CLASSES
29-31 January	J-Term Reading & Exams
31 January	All J-Term coursework completed
31 January	Last day to register for Spring Semester without \$75 late fee
1-2 February	J-Term Break
1-2 February	Spring Semester Orientation for New Students
2 February	PC(USA) Bible Content Exam
<b>SPRING SEMESTER</b>	<b>February 5 - MAY 17, 2024</b>
<hr/>	
5 February	J-Term grades due
5 February	SPRING SEMESTER CLASSES BEGIN
8-10 February	Hybrid Program Gathering Days
9 February	Last day to Add/Drop Spring classes without penalty
9 February	Deadline to complete Financial Aid Refund Opt-In/Out form
TBA	PC(USA) Ordination Exam: Exegesis
TBA	PC(USA) Ordination Exam: Bible Content
23 February	Financial Aid Refunds
<hr/>	
7-9 March	Hybrid Program Gathering Days
11-15 March	Student Mid Term Reading Week
18 March	Summer and Doctor of Ministry Registration Opens
22 March	Last day to drop Spring classes at 50% tuition
25-29 March	Student Easter Break

**PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
2023-2024 Academic Calendar**

29 March	Seminary closed in observance of Good Friday
31 March	EASTER
10-13 April	AIM 2023-24 Cohort /AIM 04
25-27 April	PC(USA) Senior Ordination Exams
2 May	PC(USA) Ordination Exam: Exegesis Exam Deadline
6-8 May	Fall Registration 2023-2024
17 May	LAST DAY OF SPRING SEMESTER CLASSES
17 May	Extension Requests Due
20-24 May	Spring Reading/Final Exams Week
21 May	Senior coursework due by 9:30 a.m.
<b>22 May</b>	<b>Final grades due for graduating seniors by close of business</b>
24 May	All Spring semester coursework completed/non-graduates
29-30 May	Board of Directors Meeting
27 May	Seminary closed in observance of Memorial Day
31 May	228th Commencement
7 June	Spring Semester grades due
	<i>Final 3/31/2023</i>