
Supervised Ministries at Yale Divinity School

Information for sites exploring hosting an intern

Summer Ministry Intensive Internship

The **Summer Ministry Intensive**, a program of Yale Divinity School, allows our Master of Divinity and other interested students the opportunity to gain concentrated ministry experience in community organizations or lively congregations during their summer break from academic coursework. Our ministry internships are among the most important ways that YDS partners with churches, schools, and community organizations in the theological education and formation of individuals for ministry in the world.

In current times, the shape of ministry takes many forms and is located in surprising places. Sites participating in the supervised ministry program represent a broad range of denominations, theologies, and missions. They include parishes, campuses, and both faith-based and secular community organizations. Students participating in the program are an equally diverse group. As an educational program of Yale University, internship sites must provide a positive learning environment for their student interns regardless of sex, race, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation. The Office of Supervised Ministries helps students negotiate a supervised ministry experience that will develop or enhance the skills and practical wisdom required for the ministry to which they are drawn. Our role is to work with students and supervisors/mentors to facilitate effective and mutually fulfilling educational experiences.

Goals of Supervised Ministry

- to allow students to test directly their vocational commitments;
- to bring together theological thinking and action (theory and praxis);
- to enable students to gain personal confidence, identity, and authority as pastoral theologians;
- to broaden the base of empirical knowledge and to encourage students in their critical reflection;
- to stimulate the discovery and the lifelong cultivation of learning and competence requisite for ministry in varying situations;
- to provide skilled supervision that will support personal and spiritual formation, critical reflection, lifelong learning, shared ministry, and professional competence;
- to develop within students an ongoing self-assessment process, utilizing self-perceptions and feedback from others, for the purpose of stimulating further growth.

Description

Supervised Ministry is a 6-credit course (equivalent to 2 masters level courses) and is a requirement of the M.Div. program. In the summer program, students must spend at least 400 hours with an organization or congregation over a summer period of 10-12 weeks. Weekly peer group meetings via the Internet augment this practical experience. These groups become a model for professional peer groups that students are encouraged to seek or develop to help sustain their ministries in the future. *It is imperative that students attend Practicum, and supervisors are expected to ensure that internship responsibilities do not conflict with Practicum meetings.* Each site has an experienced supervisor who directs and supports the student's experience, and a theologically trained mentor who engages in regular theological reflection with the student about

that experience. Often these roles are filled by a single supervisor/mentor, if the supervisor has had theological training.

As a course in the YDS curriculum and should not be construed as a job. (*If a site would like to employ a YDS student, please contact Susan Olson, Director of Career Services, at susan.olson@yale.edu.*) Students' grades are assigned by the Director of Supervised Ministries and are based on students' and supervisors' evaluation reports and feedback from their Practicum instructor. Specific responsibilities are set out in a Learning Agreement developed by the intern and the supervisor prior to the internship. The Summer Intensive begins with a 2-day class on campus in the middle of May, and then students must start at their sites no earlier than May 25 and end no later than August 15. Each student and site will agree on an individualized schedule within that time frame.

Site Requirements

We try to locate sites that will offer students the kind of robust experiences that they need to develop important professional identities and skills. **There is no cost to a site to host a YDS student intern.** A supervised ministry site must be able to:

- Give a student an opportunity to work with people on meaningful issues;
- Provide significant tasks that a student can accomplish and learn from on a part-time and short-term (less than one year) basis;
- Provide a stable, welcoming environment with consistent direction and oversight of a student's activities;
- Enable a student to function in roles appropriate to their status as students in formation;
- Provide opportunities for the intern to gain new knowledge and experience rather than simply practice what they already know;
- Facilitate a student's learning through ongoing conversation and reflection.

Importance of the Supervisor/Mentor

The YDS program is built around the mentoring relationship between individuals. Committed and effective supervision is crucial to the success of supervised ministry. The importance of this relationship explains how potential supervisors are chosen: they have the qualities of a good mentor, they have extensive experience or participate in training in supervision, they commit to meeting weekly with interns, and they collaborate in regular assessment. The supervisory relationship is definitely the heart of the educational and formational process for interns. This is not to discount the importance of the tasks interns perform, nor of the value to them of being exposed to sites where ministry is flourishing; it simply means that the learning all comes together in the supervision they receive.

Supervisor Qualifications and Requirements

Supervisors must have these *qualifications*:

- Theological education equivalent to a Master of Divinity*

- A minimum of three years of experience in a professional position that qualifies them to supervise masters-level students;
- At least one year in their current long-term position (rather than interim), and at least three years experience in their field of work;
- No history of professional misconduct.

They must meet these specified *requirements*:

- Provide a structure that is challenging and educational in a non-hostile learning environment;
- Have ample time to observe the intern's practice of ministry and provide concrete feedback on it throughout the internship;
- Meet weekly with the student for supervision and theological reflection*;
- Demonstrate expertise in supervision, or participate in orientation and training in the skills of supervision;
- Submit a final report at the end of the internship, co-written with the student, giving feedback about skills the intern is developing.

Because we expect the supervisor to have direct supervision of the activities and skill building of the intern, some site arrangements might include a co-supervisor.

*If the intern's direct supervisor is not theologically trained, we will arrange for a theological mentor who is familiar with your organization or similar work to meet weekly with the intern for theological reflection. The supervisor will still meet weekly with the intern for reflection on practice.

Problems and questions

All questions and concerns should be directed to the Director of Supervised Ministries *At any time*, please feel free to contact me by phone or e-mail:

Lucinda Huffaker
203-436-5703
lucinda.huffaker@yale.edu

Additional information can also be found on our website at <http://divinity.yale.edu/supervised-ministries/office-supervised-ministries>.