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## Supervised Ministries at Yale Divinity School

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*Information for sites exploring hosting an intern*

The programs in supervised ministries help students gain professional competencies in the art and practice of ministry, build frameworks for addressing practical theological issues, acquire comprehensive and contextualized views of ministry in the Church and the World, discern and develop professional ministerial identities, and establish a foundation for pursuing lifelong learning individually and among peers.

Supervised ministry is one of the most important ways that YDS partners with churches, schools, nonprofits, and other institutions in the theological education and formation of individuals for ministry. While classroom instruction can meet many of the academic goals of a ministry degree, contextual learning and the practice of ministry are essential to successful preparation for a ministerial vocation.

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**

Each unit of supervised ministry requires a total of 400 hours, which includes task preparation, some commuting time for academic year internships (beyond 45 minutes each way), and time spent in the weekly Practicum. 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. Most often these roles are filled by a single supervisor/mentor, if the supervisor has had theological training.

The Supervised Ministry Internship with Practicum is 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](mailto:susan.olson@yale.edu).)* Each unit of supervised ministry carries six credits—three credits per semester for part-time internships. Students' grades are assigned by the Director of Supervised Ministries, 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.

### Weekly Practicum

In addition to their activities at the ministry site, student interns also participate in a weekly practicum at YDS. Their instructors are experienced practitioners trained to guide small groups of interns in practical theological discussions and mutual support. 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 (Thursday afternoon from 4:00-5:30pm for academic year internships; 2-hour weekly web meetings for summer internships).*

### Site Requirements

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.

Students receive a stipend of up to \$4,000 for supervised ministry. **Sites are not required to pay the student's stipend**, but they are encouraged to contribute what they can to the stipend, and to assist with the cost of transportation so that interns serving at a distance outside of New Haven are not penalized. If a site is able to contribute any amount to an intern's stipend, please communicate that to the Office of Supervised Ministries.

### Importance of the Supervisor/Mentor

The YDS program is built around the mentoring relationship between individuals. 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 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's or similar work to meet weekly with the intern for theological reflection. The supervisor will also 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

[supervised.ministries@yale.edu](mailto:supervised.ministries@yale.edu)

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