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CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN STUDIES

Imagine Church Differently

Student Kit

for Diaconal Ministries students

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TIP: You see the date at the top right corner of the page? It tells you when this kit was last updated. The updates might be small (fixed a typo) or big (changed an assignment). It's a good idea to check if the draft you have downloaded is current.

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WELCOME to CCS

Whether this is your first year or your final integrating year, welcome! We are glad to have you as part of our learning community.

Hopefully this kit will provide you with much of the information you'll need as a student at the Centre for Christian Studies, but if you find mistakes here or things that could be clearer, please let us know. It's always a work in progress.

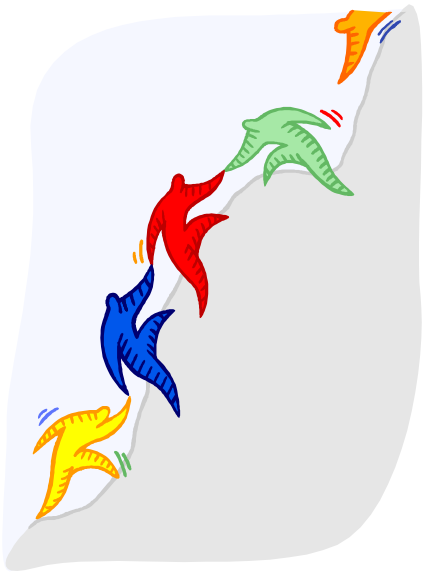
Note: For specific information about learning circles – e.g. schedules and agendas, assignment descriptions and deadlines, etc. – see the online moodle page for that circle.

Some things to keep in mind:

You are responsible for your own learning. You set your goals, you name your challenges.

Learning takes place in community. Nobody learns in a vacuum. (Unless they are a small bug or dust bunny, in which case the learning is: "Don't get so close to that vacuum!!") In community, we support each other, challenge each other, and learn from each other. *Community* means both the community of learners at CCS and your home community where you work and live.

Learning is a process of integration. At CCS we use an *Action-Reflection* model to help you connect your experience with theory, and your theory with experience. Learning should engage your whole person: intellect, emotion, spirit, body.



We are all learners and we are all teachers. Students share in leadership and Program Staff participate in learning activities.

Education can be liberating and transformative. We are all on a journey toward justice, striving to be transparent and fair in our power-sharing. We can be self-aware and self-critical as we explore the ways we are oppressors, the ways we experience oppression, and the ways we can be agents of change. We are open to God's grace and God's challenge.

HAVE A GREAT YEAR.

DATES and DEADLINES for 2026-2027

Note: Learning circle schedules, assignment descriptions and forms (where applicable) can be found in the appropriate course page of the CCS-moodle.

Date	Assignment or Event
June	**Registration for upcoming Learning Circles opens** (Deadline for learning circle registration is one month prior to the beginning of circle)
June 15	**Deadline to Register for upcoming year's Praxis and Field** (learning circles registrations are appreciated)
June 15	Field: Field Placement Form – *proposal* stage due (see Field section of Student Kit, email to Program Staff or submit on the Field 26-27 moodle)
June 15-26, 2026	LOP: **Learning on Purpose (in-person)** at Five Oaks, ON
July 7	LOP: Learning on Purpose spiral assignment due
July 31	LOP: Learning on Purpose written assignment due
August 1 *(for final year students)*	Integration: Learning Plan due
August 31	Praxis: Learning Plan due *(email drafts to Program Staff in August, submit final on Moodle)*
September	Field: **Field Orientation session** (date negotiated) ** Field Placement Form – *covenant* stage due prior to orientation.
September	Praxis: regular Mentoring sessions start (schedule negotiated)
September 10	Praxis: **Student Community gathering (online),** 4pm CDT
September 15	**First Term tuition due**
Sept 19-24, 2025	Integration: **Integration 1 circle (in-person)** in Naramata, BC
September 30	Praxis: Spiral Reflection assignment #1 due
September 30	Field: monthly Learning Log due
October 14-20, 2026	Theme: **Relationships (in-person)** (Spiritual Care)
October 22-28, 2026	Theme: **Living Scripture (in-person)** (Education & Worship)
October TBA	Integration: **Integration 2 circle (online)** start (schedule TBD)
October 31	Field: monthly Learning Log due

October 31	Integration: Credo assignment due
November 30	Praxis: Spiral Reflection assignment #2 due
November 30	Field: monthly Learning Log due
November 30	Theme: Relationships assignment due
December 15	Theme: Living Scripture assignment due
Dec 20 – Jan 3	Christmas break, CCS offices closed
December 31	Field: monthly Learning Log due
January	Field: Mid-Year Field Placement Review (date negotiated)
January 6	Praxis: **Student Community gathering (online),** 4pm CDT
Jan 15 – Apr 9, 2027	Theme: **Culture & Identity (online)** (Education & Worship) Sessions once/month
January 15	Integration: Diaconal Profile assignment due
January 15	Field: Mid-Year Field Placement Review Report due
January 31	Field: monthly Learning Log due
January 31	Praxis: Spiral Reflection assignment #3 due
by February 1	Praxis: mid-year check-in with Primary Staff Person
February 15	**Second Term tuition due**
February 28	Field: monthly Learning Log due
February 28	Integration: Diaconal Convictions assignment due
March 15	GPE: Integration assignment deadline for Integration students
March 28, 2027	Easter
March 31	Praxis: Spiral Reflection assignment due
March 31	Field: monthly Learning Log due
April 5-10, 2027	Integration: **Integration 3 circle (in-person)**
April 7-13, 2027	Theme: **Oppression & Resistance (in-person)** (Social Justice)
April 10, 2027	**CCS Annual Service of Celebration**
April 15-21, 2027	Theme: **Ministry as Listening (in-person)** (Spiritual Care)
April 30	Field: monthly Learning Log due
May 1	**Deadline to apply for CCS Scholarships** (eg. Myers, Rutherford)

May	Field: Year-End Field Placement Assessment (date negotiated)
May 15	Theme: Oppression & Resistance assignment due
May 12-18, 2027	Theme: **Power & Privilege (online)** (Social Justice)
May 31	Theme: Ministry as Listening assignment due
May 31	Field: Year-End Field Placement Assessment report due
June	Praxis: Evaluative Interview with Program Staff (date negotiated)
June 2	Praxis: **Student Community gathering (online)**, 4pm CDT
June 15	**Deadline to Register for upcoming year** (Praxis, Field, fall learning circles)
June 15	Field: next year Field Placement Form – proposal stage due
June 14-25, 2027	LoP: **Learning on Purpose** course
June 15	Theme: Power & Privilege assignment due
July 7	LOP: Learning on Purpose spiral assignment due
July 31	LOP: Learning on Purpose written assignment due
August 1 *(for final year students)*	Integration: Learning Plan due
August 31	Praxis: Learning Plan due *(email drafts to Program Staff, submit final on next year's Moodle)*

THE CCS PROGRAM

Diploma in Diaconal Ministries

Requirements:

- 1 **Learning on Purpose** circle
- 12 **Theme** Learning Circles
  - minimum 3 **Spiritual Care**
  - minimum 3 **Social Justice**
  - minimum 3 **Education & Worship**
- 3 **Field** Placements
  - maximum 2 in same setting
- 4+ **Diaconal Praxis** Years
  - for each active year in the program
- 8 **Academic** Courses (externals)
  - taken at a recognized educational institution
  - required courses:
    - Introductory Theology, Christian Scriptures, Hebrew Scriptures
    - Elective Theology, Christian Scriptures, Hebrew Scriptures
    - Christian Ethics
    - Church History
- 1 **Global Perspectives** Experience
    - includes pre- and post- trip learning
- 3 **Integration** Circles
  - taken in final year of the program

Certificate (in Spiritual Care, Social Justice, or Education & Worship)

- 1 Learning on Purpose circle
- 4 Spiritual Care, or 4 Social Justice, or 4 Education & Worship learning circles
- 1 Field Placement
- 1 Praxis Year (concurrent with Field Placement)

Certificate (Anglican Certificate in Diaconal Ministry)

- 1 Learning on Purpose circle
- 1 Ministering by Word and Example course
- 1 Spiritual Care, 1 Social Justice, 1 Education & Worship learning circles
- 1 Field Placement
- 1 Praxis Year (concurrent with Field Placement)
- **Diocese may have additional requirements*

Prerequisites

Course/Circle/Activity	Prerequisite
Learning on Purpose	no prerequisite
Diaconal/Vocational Praxis	Learning on Purpose or permission
Up to 4 Theme Learning Circles*	Learning on Purpose or permission * students must have Learning on Purpose to lead student-led sessions in learning circles
5th Theme Learning Circle	2 Academic Courses (externals)
1st Field Placement	Learning on Purpose
2nd Field Placement	3 Theme Learning Circles
Global Perspectives Experience	10 Theme Learning Circles
Integration I, II, and III	12 Theme Learning Circles + 3 Field Placements + 8 Academic Courses (externals) + Global Perspectives Experience

Registering for courses and circles

Students can register for courses and learning circles online at http://ccsonline.ca/admissions/register/ . (This link can also be found in the "Welcome" booklet on CCS Moodle homepage.) Diaconal Ministries students are asked to register for the upcoming year's Praxis and Field before June 15 so that you have time to prepare field proposals, set up placements, and prepare learning plans, before the fall. If you have questions about registering, contact the Registrar. You can add a learning circle to your registration, or withdraw from a circle without penalty, up to one month before the circle starts.

Tuition

Students are advised to consult the CCS website for current tuition rates. Tuition is set by the CCS Finance Committee and is usually updated in January for the upcoming school year.

- Tuition for Learning on Purpose is due by the beginning of the course. Tuition for term 1 learning circles are due by Sept. 15th, and for term 2 learning circles by Feb. 15th. Tuition for Field and Praxis components can be paid in two installments, due Sept. 15th and Feb. 15th.
- Non-payment of fees can result in suspension of studies. If you are unable to pay a term's tuition all at once, contact the Finance & Admin Coordinator to arrange a payment plan.
- Tuition does not include costs for travel, accommodations, meals, etc. Students who require marking of assignments outside the period of regular course marking are subject to an Extra Marking Fee of $75/assignment.

Withdrawal and Reimbursement of Fees

- Students who withdraw from the Learning on Purpose course more than one week prior to the beginning of the course will be reimbursed their full tuition.
- Students who withdraw from a Theme or Integrating learning circle or a Field or Praxis component prior to a tuition fee due date (Sept. 15 or Feb. 15) will be reimbursed any tuition paid for that term.

Bursaries and Student Aid:

- NEW: All students in the Diaconal Ministries program will receive a bursary (equivalent to about half their tuition costs) from the CCS Bursary Fund. Students who do not need the bursary support are invited to donate the bursary amount back, making it available to other students who might need additional funding throughout the year.
- Students may apply for emergency funding during the year.
- Students are encouraged to explore other sources of funding and support – for example, local churches or denominational bodies, service organizations such as Order of the Eastern Star or Royal Purple, Canadian or provincial student aid.
- Students receiving provincial or national student aid should inform these bodies if they are also receiving funding from other sources (e.g. a CCS bursary).
- Students will meet with the Principal at the beginning of their study to discuss finances - budgeting, repayment of loans, etc.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

Students enrolled in the Diaconal Ministries program are eligible to apply for Prior Learning Assessment. CCS can review a portfolio of a student's learning from previous education and life experience and adapt the program requirements accordingly. The cost of an assessment is roughly the equivalent of a learning circle. Contact the Program Coordinator for more information.

Student Status

Active – An active student in the Diaconal Ministries program is one who is doing at least a Praxis component, and may also be doing a field placement, taking part in theme or integration learning circles, working on external courses, or going on a Global Perspectives trip.

Conditional - If a student exhibits a pattern of behaviour that is hampering their own learning or the learning of others – e.g. consistent failure to submit assignments in a timely fashion, inability to provide constructive feedback to peers, etc. – or needs to do extra work to develop an expected level of competency in one or more areas of the program, they may be placed on "conditional status." Program Staff will review the behaviour with the student and make a plan for its correction, including a timeline and consequences. Consequences can include not being allowed to register for upcoming circles or courses until conditions are met, or removal from the program.

Inactive – An inactive student is taking a break from studies. They are not taking externals or doing a field placement or going to learning circles or connecting to CCS staff and students through praxis. They are still a student in the program, they just aren't registered or actively engaged at the moment. After three years of Inactive status, unless special arrangements have been made, CCS will consider the student withdrawn. (Students can request permission to take one learning circle or one external course during an Inactive year. If they are planning to do more than that they are considered Active and should be enrolled in Praxis.)

Withdrawn – If a student withdraws from the program (as opposed to taking an "inactive" break), they will be required to apply for re-admission if they choose to return to the program. Applications for re-admission will include some explanation of the reasons for withdrawing and an indication of what has changed since.

PRAXIS



What is "praxis?" It is action combined with reflection. It is how experiential learning happens. It is a chance to integrate what you're doing and learning in one area with what you're doing and learning somewhere else. It is the ongoing learning community for students across the country.

The skills and understandings that you gain through Praxis are ones that develop over time, which is why Diaconal ministry students do Praxis for every year they are active in the diploma program.

There are four main aspects of the Praxis component:

1. Reflection – Being able to reflect on your experience is a skill that deepens over time. The CCS Spiral tool will help you make connections between what you are learning (in learning circles, externals, elsewhere) and your experience. The more Spiral assignments you do over the years, the easier they get … until you realize that you can actually push yourself to deeper, more meaningful, reflection, at which point they get harder again. But after that they get easy again. And then harder. (Sorry about that.)
2. Intentional Learning – Knowing what you need to learn, and how to learn it, is an important skill for growth and for ministry. Each year you will set your own learning goals and draft your own learning plan in consultation with Program Staff and the CCS Learning Guidelines. You will check in with Program Staff during and at the end of the year to evaluate your progress.
3. Diaconal Formation – Regular meetings with a Diaconal Mentor will help you develop your understanding of diaconal ministry and your own personal ministry identity. Together you and a Mentor will reflect on key themes and ideas in diakonia. It's an opportunity to draw on the wisdom of someone else's experience, and to make connections with the vital and supportive diaconal community. (Non-diaconal students taking Praxis will meet with a vocational mentor who can offer wisdom from their experience in a relevant field.)
4. Learning-in-Community – Community doesn't just happen at learning circles. Learning partnerships and occasional online gatherings through the year allow students to offer and receive support.

Preparing for the Praxis component:

1. Find out who your primary program staff member will be. (If it hasn't been set yet, you can find out who to correspond with in the meantime, eg. your staff person from the previous year.)
2. Propose a Mentor for the year. If you know someone who would be an appropriate mentor, you can approach them about availability and interest, and then pass along contact information to program staff. If you don't know who would be suitable, program staff can advise.
3. Set your learning goals and create a learning plan for the year. You can submit draft versions to program staff during the summer for feedback and suggestions, and then a "final" version by the end of August. (Learning plans can be adapted and changed throughout the year, but you should have something in writing at the beginning of the year to set your direction.)
4. Figure out when and how often you will meet with your Mentor. There are a number of different mentoring "curricula" to structure your time together. Choose the one that is most appropriate and relevant for both of you.

Do I have to do Praxis every year?

Yes. Every year you are "active" in the diaconal program.

How many Praxis years do I have to successfully complete?

You must complete four to graduate from the diaconal program. After three successful Praxis years you can use your learning plan to customize your year, in consultation with Program Staff. (Eg. You might want to try an alternative to Spiral reflections, or a different approach to diaconal mentoring.) After five successful Praxis years (if you're still in the program) your Praxis tuition drops to half.

What if I'm not active? What if I'm taking a break, but then an external course that I really want to take comes along?

You can request permission to take <u>one</u> learning circle or <u>one</u> external course during an Inactive year.

Do I have to do Praxis in my final year (Integration)?

Yes, but with an even greater emphasis on self-directed learning. Integration Year students still connect with other students through online gatherings, but the IY cohort serve as each other's learning partners.

How do I get to the Carnegie Hall of diaconal ministry?

(sigh) Praxis, praxis, praxis. …There, are you happy now?

Primary Program Staff



Each student in a Praxis year will have a designated member of the program staff who is responsible for …

- offering advice and feedback on yearly learning plans and goals,
- providing suggestions of mentors if needed,
- checking in with students and with mentors during the year,
- receiving regular spiral reflections,
- offering feedback following learning circles on behalf of staff,
- approving external academic courses,
- writing reports to denominational bodies (eg. Candidacy Assessment Boards or Regional Office of Vocations),
- and working with students at the end of the year to evaluate their learning and make plans for the future.

Will I have the same Primary Program Staff for the whole time I'm at CCS?

Likely not. Primary staffing is determined each year. Sometimes it makes sense to maintain the same staffing arrangement from one year to the next, especially if there are complicated aspects or details of a student's studies or status. Other times it's good to change primary staff, so that the student can benefit from a different perspective.

Should I go to my Primary Program Staff with all my questions?

I wouldn't say *all* your questions. If it's about your student records, or a technical question about course materials or the CCS-moodle, ask the Program Coordinator (Scott). If it's about tuition and fee payment, ask the Office Administrator (Cheryl). If it's about CCS policy or governance, ask the Principal. If it's about geography or the name of that actor in that thing, ask Google. But questions related to your program, sure, ask your Primary Program Staff member.

Do Primary Staff mark learning circle assignments?

It depends on the learning circle and the assignment. But chances are good.

Interview with Primary Program Staff

At various time during the year program staff will check in with students in an intentional and focussed one-to-one time. This might happen in person at a learning circle or by phone/video. The goals of the interview are…

- to review the student's experience of learning circles (i.e. community relationships, student-led planning, readings, assignments)
- to discuss mentoring and field placement relationships
- to examine the student's progress in external courses (i.e. approval of courses, strategizing for future courses)
- to consult about the strength of the student's learning partnership
- to confer about the implications of the CCS program for other aspects of the student's life
- to offer the chance for the student to express feedback about the program and leadership to the staff
- to enable an occasion for staff to converse with individual students about their preparation and readiness for ministry
- to collaboratively evaluate the student's progress on learning goals and program requirements and to start future planning

Mid-Year Interview and Year-End Evaluative Conversation

Program staff will schedule a mid-year check-in and a year-end evaluative interview with each Praxis student. Students should review the appropriate interview preparation forms (available on the Praxis moodle). Prior to each of these interviews students should fill out and submit a Review of Learnings self-assessment.

For the Mid-Year interview they should bring their interview prep form and notes to the interview. In order to make the best use of time, students are encouraged to identify topics of discussion that are priorities for them and let Program Staff know.

For the Year-End Evaluative interview students should fill out the interview prep form and submit it prior to the interview. The purpose of this interview is to help both student and program staff get a good sense of how the student is progressing and to discuss appropriate next steps (learning goals, field placements, learning circles, externals, etc.)

Suggested Process

Preparation

- students are asked to prepare for the interview by reflecting on the questions provided on the interview form (online)

- we envision that this preparation will facilitate the conversation and allow students to prioritize the issues that are most urgent, in their mind, to discuss in a limited period of time

Centering (1 or 2 minutes)

- student is asked if there is anything they need before getting started (eg. silence, water)

Priority-setting (2 or 3 minutes)

- student is asked to identify the issues that it are most pertinent to discuss in this interview
- staff would indicate any areas that they want to discuss

Discussion (15 or 20 minutes)

- student shares perceptions and concerns about the issues identified as primary
- staff asks questions and discusses the situations with the student

Review (5 or 10 minutes)

- student quickly shares information about the other issues (not identified earlier as primary)

Closure (2 or 3 minutes)

- student is asked if there is anything they need to say before closing the interview

Diaconal Mentor

The role of the Diaconal Mentor is to assist with diaconal identity formation for the student. They …



- provide a diaconal model of ministry,
- assist the student in identifying their learnings from experience (in their field placements, learning circles, external courses, life, etc.),
- support the student in reflection on theological issues arising from their experience,
- encourage the development of diaconal perspective through intentional reflection, questions, and analysis, (CCS provides readings and session outlines to help with this.)
- may be supportive of the student in a field placement, particularly in relation to issues of team ministry, gender issues, and understanding of ministry, while respecting the role of the learning facilitator. They help to facilitate mid-year and final field placement reviews.

As a student, what should I look for in a Diaconal Mentor?

- clarity about diaconal/vocational identity (role, style, perspective)
- graduate from a diaconal preparation program or familiar with and supportive of diaconal ministry
- willingness to work collaboratively with the Centre for Christian Studies
- good listening skills
- ability to challenge appropriately and also to offer support and affirmation
- ability to engage in theological reflection and in deepening the spiritual life of the student and the spiritual dimensions of the mentoring relationship
- hopeful about ministry without denying negative experiences
- able to facilitate identification of learnings from experience

What's a "Vocational" Mentor?

A Vocational Mentor is like a Diaconal Mentor but not as, you know, diaconal. Students who are, for example, working on a Certificate in Education and Worship for the purpose of improving their skills for youth ministry, or working on a Certificate in Social Justice with an eye to community organizing, might be paired up with a mentor experienced in those fields. Mentoring sessions would focus less on diaconal history

and identity and more on the particularities and identity of another particular vocation.

How often do Mentors and students meet?

Once per month if possible, for 2-4 hours; recognizing that some of this time might be in the form of telephone and/or email conversations between meetings (about 8 or 9 meetings a year)

How long is the commitment?

The mentorship relationship is a one-year commitment. It is possible to extend the relationship to subsequent Praxis years if both people agree that this would be beneficial. There is value in relationships that build and deepen over a time; on the other hand, there is also value to the student in experiencing a variety of mentors over the course of their program.

What is the accountability to CCS?

Program staff will check-in with Mentors during the year, inviting their reflections and observations regarding the learning and the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship.

What is the Mentor's connection to a field placement?

Mentors are invited to take part in the Field orientations, to better understand the student's ministry context. Mentor's often facilitate mid-term and year-end field placement assessments. Why? For one, they usually have good process skills! Also, they may have an understanding of *diaconal* ministry that a learning facilitator doesn't. They can provide insight about the student's integration and the ways that what the student is learning impacts what they are doing (and vice versa) and the ways that both impact the student's ministry identity.

Can my mentor get a copy of the articles that students are reading in their learning circles?

Mentors will receive a complimentary enrollment in CCS's "Alumni Reading Circle". This will provide online access, via the CCS moodle, to all the readings assigned to the various learning circles and courses CCS has on offer that year. (Note: Not all students will be taking all learning circles.) Diaconal mentoring session outlines and readings can also be found here.

The Mentoring Process

The diaconal mentoring aspect of the Praxis component is intended to contribute to the development and nurture of diaconal identity for students involved in diaconal ministry. By diaconal identity, we mean a sense of self-understanding in ministry that is shaped by:

- knowledge and appreciation of, and identification with, the history of diaconal ministry,
- a perspective on ministry that is grounded in the historic and current experience of people engaged in ministries of education, service, and pastoral care.

The mentoring process is designed to offer an opportunity for shared reflection on diaconal identity, on issues in ministry and their particular significance for people in diaconal ministry. We hope that this process will be of value to both people involved - the student and the mentor - and that the opportunities for learning will be mutual. At the same time we recognize that the process is a requirement of the program for the student and is a volunteer contribution for the mentor. There will be times in the process where the conversation will appropriately focus specifically on the needs of the student; there will be other times when a greater degree of mutuality may be possible. It will be important to maintain clarity that while there may be mutual benefit, the intent is to meet the needs of the student. We hope that the mentoring process will encourage honest searching and reflective conversations.

CCS will be providing a number of different "diaconal mentoring curricula," with proposed readings and questions for reflection and discussion. (A dropbox link to the materials will be found on the Praxis page and the Alumni/Mentor Reading Circle page of the CCS moodle. Students are encouraged to make sure their mentor has access to these materials.)

Mentor and student should choose the series of sessions that seem most useful for their context. (For example, a first-year student with limited understanding of diakonia might need different conversations than a third-year student deeply engaged in a social ministry field placement.)

The proposed order of discussion topics in the mentoring materials is not prescriptive, nor are the questions intended to be limiting. Please structure your time together in ways that suit your particular circumstances. For example, it may be important to focus on a particular theme at a particular time in response to an issue that has surfaced in the student's work or studies. We believe that all of the topics are important but understand that covering a few in a thorough fashion is better than covering them all in a perfunctory way.

This is an example of a mentoring session one might use at the beginning of a mentoring relationship, when there will need to be some initial time to build trust with each other. (As mentioned above, other session outlines and materials can be found by students in their Praxis moodle.)

Session 1: Getting Acquainted

1. Introduce yourselves; talk about the ways in which you have been involved in the life of the church and what gives you energy and hope in this work. Reflect on how it feels to be part of/connected with the Centre for Christian Studies Program.
2. Decide when, where, how often you will meet and discuss a format for your meetings. Determine the focus for your next meeting. Set up an agreement or covenant that will guide your work.
3. What does the word "mentor" mean to each of you? How does your past experience influence the expectations that you bring to the role?
4. Discuss what you mean by the word "reflection." What do you understand "theological reflection" to mean to each of you? How are these words related?

   In order to generate discussion you may want to consider these interpretations:

   Reflection: taking time to think back over experience, interpret what happened, compare it to the theories you know, identify learnings.

   Theological Reflection: making meaning, relating issues or events to your understanding of God or life's purpose, identifying what gives life, finding God's presence or finding our role in acting with God; "Faith seeking understanding"(St. Anselm).

   Questions could include:

   - Who are we?: the nature of humanity (theological anthropology, sin, evil, place in creation, image of God, etc.)
   - What is our task?: our vocation (missiology (nature of mission), ecclesiology (role of the church), eschatology (understanding of the realm of God), ministry, etc.)
   - Who is God?: our perspectives on the divine (images, Christology, Pneumenology (Spirit), Sophia (Wisdom), spirituality, etc.)

Learning Goals and Learning Plans

The CCS Educational Stance states...

Learning is a process and discipline that encompasses the whole person.

Learners need to be intentional, take responsibility for engagement, reflection, self-direction, and goal setting.

Students who choose to study at CCS will soon become familiar with distinctive tools for learning that reflect these educational values:

1. **Setting Learning Goals** – a way to articulate how you want to grow and what you want to discover about yourself.
2. **Learning in Community** – coming together as equal co-learners, yet unequal in background, cultural formation, religious tradition and practice.
3. **Integration** – of learning and experience. The Spiral Reflection is a key tool for integration.

Learning Plan

CCS students are required to develop a Learning Plan at the beginning of each Praxis year. The Learning Plan is intended to identify four or five Learning Goals for the year that can be actively pursued through your…

- Field Placement
- Learning Circles
- External Courses
- Assignments
- Personal Exploration

Your Learning Plan should be sent in draft form to your CCS primary staff person for comment and consultation any time over the summer. A "final" version should be submitted on the theme year moodle by August 31. (You can still revise and update your goals throughout the year.)

Your Learning Plan then becomes a tool for sharing with others and getting the most out of your field placement, assignments, learning circles, etc. It creates the educational focus for your year. Yet it is also a living document to be adapted or expanded as new things come to light. For example, following a learning circle you might make changes or additions to your learning plan based on feedback you received in your Review of Learnings.

Setting Learning Goals

1. Self-Assessment – Take stock of your strengths and weaknesses and identify areas to work on.
2. Reality Check – Consult with others and review the CCS Learning Guidelines.
3. Articulate Goals – Strive to state your goals clearly and concisely, with a focus on where you are and where you want to be.
4. Options for Achieving your Goals – Brainstorm creative ways to help you reach your goals.
5. Make a Plan – for achieving your goals that is concrete, specific, and do-able.
6. Monitor and Evaluate – Ask, "What will I notice in myself, what will others notice in me as I progress toward my goal? How will I be accountable?"

STAGE 1: SELF ASSESSMENT

Step 1 – Long Range Goals

- What vision do you have for yourself in ministry?
- Where would you like to be in five years? For example:
  - in congregational ministry with a focus on education and shared worship with laypeople
  - educating church members about social justice
  - working in a regional or diocesan office.

Step 2 – Current Gifts and Skills

- What gifts, qualities, skills and knowledge are you aware of having right now? For example:
  - good communication and educational skills
  - passionate about others' exploration of spirituality
  - experience in social justice projects and networks.

Step 3 – Areas for Development

- What gifts, qualities, skills, knowledge do you need to develop at this stage in your learning? For example:
  - deeper understanding of youth ministry
  - familiarity with different models for developing lay ministry teams
  - confidence in how to engage middle class church members with social justice issues.

Step 4 – Blocks

- What fears and difficulties might block you from achieving your goals? For example:
  - fear that youth will not relate to someone older

- lack of experience with pastoral visiting
- resistance in a middle class congregation to prophetic witness.

STAGE 2: REALITY CHECK

Step 1 – Check with others

- Ask people you trust about their impressions:
  - What do you do well?
  - What gifts and skills for ministry do they see in you?
  - Where do they think you need to grow?

Step 2 – Review Learning Expectations and Guidelines

- Refer to these parts of the Student Kit and the CCS website:
  - CCS program outline
  - Learning circle descriptions and curriculum
  - CCS Learning Guidelines
  - Statements on Faith, Theology, Education, Justice.

STAGE 3: WRITING LEARNING GOALS

Learning goals are a way of articulating how you want to grow or what you want to discover about yourself or a given subject matter or area of competency beyond where you are now. There is a difference between learning goals and performance goals. Learning happens when something has shifted within yourself – you have more knowledge, or a new skill, or deeper understanding. Performance, by comparison, happens when you have produced something or done something.

The following guidelines will help you write four or five learning goals for your year in the CCS program. Your goals should identify what areas of growth you want to work on; they should not be a list of tasks.

Starting point – Assembling data

- With reference to your self-assessment, to feedback from others, and to CCS documents, what picture is emerging of your
  - areas of strong interest?
  - gaps in knowledge, skills, or experience?
  - things that feel scary or challenging?

Structure of a Learning Goal

- Use the infinitive – e.g. to integrate, to acquire a skill, to gain knowledge
- End with naming what you want to learn or accomplish.
- Examples:
  - to integrate my passion for justice into my preaching in an appropriate and accessible way;
  - to grow in my ability to listen to people experiencing grief and loss;

- to increase my knowledge of theology and my skill in theological reflection.

Verb choice

- Choose verbs that describe observable behaviour rather than internal experiences that others can't see. You may want to deepen, increase, enhance, grow in your ability to
  - describe, identify, name, define, give examples (knowledge)
  - distinguish, differentiate, compare, contrast (analysis)
  - compose, design, formulate, construct, organize (synthesis)
  - demonstrate, perform, use, point out, practice (skill)
  - show consideration, appreciate, respect, express point of view (attitude)

Clarity and focus

- A clear statement is one that expresses a single learning goal. Avoid making compound goal statements.
  - Instead of...

    "To practice confidentiality while engaging in pastoral ministry in order to communicate clear professional boundaries."

    try...

    "To practice confidentiality while engaging in pastoral ministry."

    "To communicate clear professional boundaries in pastoral relationships."
- Aim for a goal that is achievable and observable.
  - Instead of...

    "To create harmonious relationships with all members of my congregation."

    try...

    "To listen and speak respectfully to people whose opinions and values are different from mine."
- Strive for a goal statement that is clear and intelligible to others – in your Field Placement or Learning Circle.
  - Clear = *"To give concrete examples of different approaches to social justice such as outreach, advocacy, and empowerment."*
  - Less clear = *"To learn about different ways of doing social justice."*

STAGE 4: CREATIVE OPTIONS

Once you have identified your goals, use your imagination about specific ways you can address them. You have already done the work on the what. Now think specifically about the who, how, when and where.

1. Who – are the people you will work with to achieve your goal?
   - Learning Facilitator
   - Diaconal/vocational mentor
   - Local Committee
   - CCS staff
   - Learning partner
   - Student colleagues
   - Members of your congregation, parish, community agency
   - Members of Region, Diocese, etc.
2. How – what kind of activities or events will help to create learning opportunities?
   - One-to-one connections
   - Research and reading
   - Interviews and surveys
   - Study groups
   - Capacity-building
   - Workshops or training sessions
   - Designated journaling
   - Retreats, worship, spiritual disciplines.
3. When – and how often are the best times to focus on a specific activity or goal?
   - Daily, weekly, monthly
   - Seasonally
   - In a limited time period or one time only?
4. Where – are places you might focus your learning for the year?
   - Field Placement
   - Learning Circle
   - Assignments
   - External Course work
   - Personal or spiritual development.

STAGE 5: ORGANIZING A PLAN

You are now ready to pull these elements together into a plan for the year. This final stage will involve choosing priorities, focusing on details, and consulting with others. For example, check with your Learning Facilitator and Local Committee about what is do-able in your Field Placement. Review your Schedule of Assignments to see which ones might be a match for your learning goals.

1. As part of your Learning Plan, include a summary of the work and thought that went into Stages 1 to 4.
2. For each Learning Goal, identify the contexts where you will work on it, giving specific consideration to your Field Placement and Learning Circles.

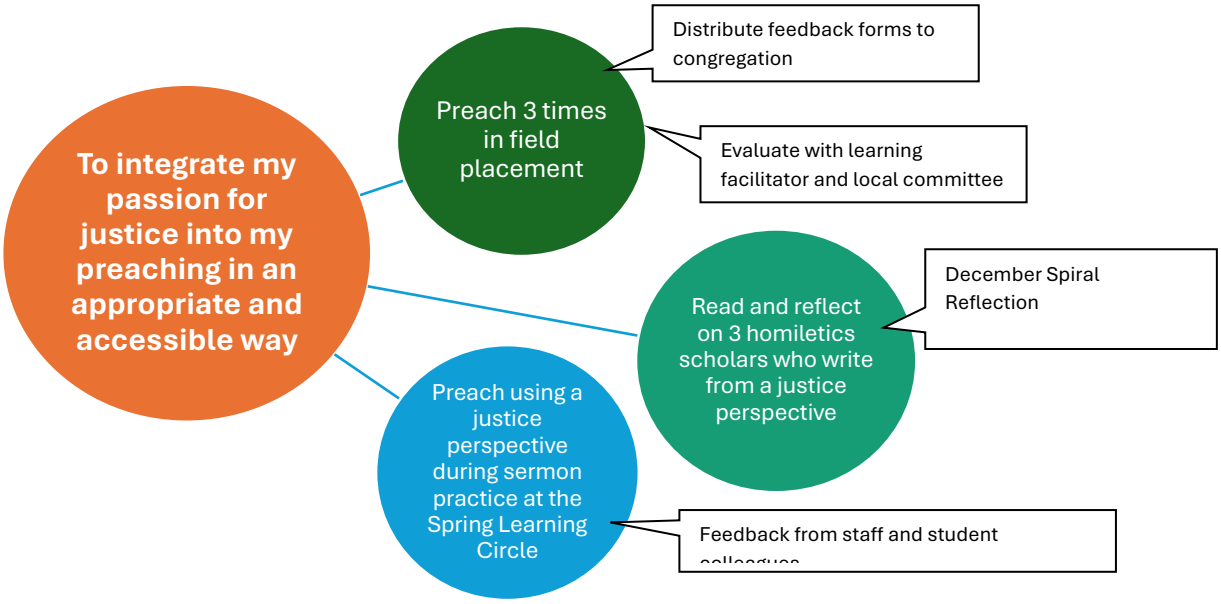
3. Add the details of the how and when for each context.
4. Read and review Stage 6, Monitoring and Evaluation, and enter information on how you will monitor and evaluate progress.

Some people might find a chart helpful. Others might prefer point form or a mind map.

Example A – Point form:

> Goal 1. To integrate my passion for justice into my preaching in an appropriate and accessible way.
>
> - In my Field Placement: Preach three times, in Advent, Epiphany, and Lent. Use feedback forms with learning facilitator and local committee.
>
> - In my Assignments: Read and reflect on 3 homiletics scholars who write from a justice perspective. December Spiral Reflection. Work with Primary staff persona and learning partner.
>
> - In the Learning Circle: during required sermon practice at the Spring Learning Circle, preach using a justice perspective. Seek feedback from staff and student colleagues.

Example B – Mind Map:



Example C – Learning Plan Chart:

Learning Goal	Specific Tasks or Activities to help you work on your goal				Monitoring/ Evaluation
	Where	Who	How	When	
1. To integrate my passion for justice into my preaching in an appropriate and accessible way.	Assignment	Program staff Learning partner	Read and reflect on 3 homiletics scholars who write from a justice perspective	December Spiral Reflection	*See Stage 6 below.*
	Field Placement	Learning facilitator Local Cttee	Preach in field placement and distribute feedback forms	In Advent, Epiphany, and Lent	
	Learning Circle	Staff, Student colleagues	Focus practice sermon on a justice perspective	Spring Learning Circle	

STAGE 6: MONITORING/EVALUATION

How will you hold yourself accountable for making progress toward your learning goal? How will others hold you accountable?

At CCS you are expected to develop the habit of reporting on your progress and soliciting feedback from others as you prepare for ministry. CCS places a high value on evaluation as a normative practice that is open, shows commitment to your own and others' growth, is nurturing and supportive, yet shows willingness to risk and challenge, "speaking the truth in love."

When preparing this part of your Learning Plan, you will want to identify:

- Who will be giving you feedback?
- What kind of feedback will you invite?
- What indicators of progress will you look for?
- How will you receive or collect feedback?
- Where and when will you seek feedback?

Several formal evaluative processes are incorporated into the CCS program throughout the year:

- Theme and Integration Learning Circles
  - student led session evaluations
  - Review of Learnings
- Assignments and/or Spiral Reflections
  - from Staff
  - from Learning Partner
- Field Placement

  - Orientation (feedback on Learning Plan)
  - Mid Term Review
  - Year End Review
- Report to Candidacy Assessment Board or sponsoring Diocese
- Year-end evaluation with Primary Program Staff

Other possibilities for seeking feedback include:

- Learning Facilitation sessions
- Mentoring sessions
- Local Committee sessions
- Check in with primary instructor
- Learning Circle small groups – e.g. case study.

Spiral Reflections

"The Spiral" is a tool for action and reflection that has been used by the Centre for Christian Studies for over forty years. It was developed from the works of theorists like Freire, Solberg, Kolb, and Frye, and has evolved over time.

It is a tool for making meaning, with the understanding that meaning is not just intellectual, but also emotional, experiential, and active.

Here's how it works, in a nutshell:

1. Choose a significant and current experience that you want to understand better.
2. Reflect on your internal reactions and responses to the experience.
3. Think about how this connects to theories, ideas, theological frameworks, and/or patterns that you know.
4. Take action based on the implications.

Using the spiral reflection model can help to deepen learning emotionally, analytically, theologically, spiritually, and can lead to insight about how you might respond more effectively to a similar situation another time. Using it on a regular basis can help you to integrate reflection as a habitual part of your practice of ministry.

As a tool the Spiral is somewhat flexible. A Spiral Reflection can be long or short, depending on how much detail you want to include and how deep you want to go. Also, because the spiral leads to action, and actions can create new experiences (which elicit new reactions and connect to new ideas, suggesting new courses of action, etc.), a spiral reflection can lead to another spiral reflection.

During the Praxis year you are asked to submit **4 Spiral Reflections**, each about **1000-1500 words** (3 or 4 pages). You will submit them to your Primary Program Staff and to your Learning Partner.

What kinds of experience would make for a good spiral?

It should be personal to you, feel significant, and be relatively current. It could be…

- an encounter from your field placement that is troubling you or intriguing you
- an issue in yourself or your personal life that is affecting your ministry work or identity
- something you've read or seen (perhaps in an external academic course or at a learning circle) that is having a profound impact on you

Where do I start?

The diagram on the upcoming page includes some questions to help you reflect. You don't have to respond to every question, and you aren't limited to those questions. But the questions will help you work through the four areas of the spiral reflection.

Concrete Experience – This is the event or incident you want to reflect on. What actually happened? Focus on the relevant details. As Joe Friday said in the old *Dragnet* TV show, "Just the facts."

Reflective Observation – Take a step back from yourself and ask, How did this incident make me feel? How did I react? What is it doing to me?

Abstract Conceptualization – This is where you can start interpreting. What does this incident *mean*? What patterns do I see? How does this incident connect to bigger social, political, or theological themes or questions? Does this remind me of ideas and theories I've encountered in learning circles or academic courses?

Active Experimentation – So what am I going to do about it? Has my reflection so far led me to a new behaviour, or a theory that I want to test out, or a question that I want to intentionally reflect more on? What's your plan?

Note:

As you get practice doing Spiral reflections they should get easier. The first few you do may take a bit longer as you figure out the form, but eventually it will be a habit. Many students and graduates use the Spiral process to prepare for sermons or academic assignments. Others use it as a way of working through difficult or confusing problems in their life.

If you need a refresher on using the Spiral, there is an online mini-course you can access.

Occasionally program staff may offer the option of a different action/reflection activity in place of a particular Spiral assignment.

The CCS Spiral Model of Action and Reflection

DESCRIBE AN EXPERIENCE
(Concrete Experience)
- What happened? A specific meaningful incident, activity or moment
- Who did/said what?
- What was the context?

EXPLORE EMOTIONS & SENSES
(Reflective Observation)
- How did/do I feel or react?
- What did I see and hear in the environment of the setting?
- How do I perceive others in this experience and how do they see themselves?
- What are the tensions in me/others/the situation?
- How does this experience affirm or challenge my prior assumptions /ideas/ skills/ experience/ knowledge?
- What images express my feelings/observations?

IDEAS, PATTERNS AND CONNECTIONS
(Abstract Conceptualization)
- What does this experience "mean"?
- Explore:
  - theoretical readings, articles, scholarship/research
- biblical connections, stories, images, teachings
- theological reflections: sin, grace, presence of God, hope & resurrection, incarnation, mission, ecclesiology, etc.
- social analysis questions: who is benefiting, who is missing, etc.
- ministry implications: boundaries, mutuality, role power

HOW CAN I ACT?
Active Experimentation
- What now?
- Are there follow-up actions I need to take (e.g. addressing conflict)?
- How would I change my behaviour or actions in the future?
- How can I test my new insights/ understanding?
- What supports action here? What blocks it? What alternative strategies are there?
- What are the implications of *not* taking action?
- What more do I need to learn? What skills do I need? How will I get them?.. future reading, research, training, resources ?

Learning Partner



During the Praxis year you will be part of a learning partnership with one or two other students. Your primary function as a learning partner is to participate intentionally in another student's learning journey, and to invite their intentional participation in your learning journey during a Theme Year.

Responsibilities:

Forming the partnership:

- Spend some time, either in person at a learning circle or remotely by phone or video-conference, getting to know each other, beginning to develop trust, and sharing your hopes for the learning partnership. It may be helpful to share parts of your faith journey with each other.
- Decide how the learning partnership will function, e.g. how you will communicate, expectations for feedback, type and timing of responses to assignments, confidentiality, working styles…
- Share and discuss your learning plans for the Praxis year. Discuss your needs for support and accountability related to your learning plans.

Throughout the year:

- share learning (new ideas and/or experiences that brought insight)
  - include reflection on learning circles, readings, assignments, external courses, field placements…
  - explore new ideas in a way that is mutual
- share and review each other's spiral reflections and assignments.
  - respond with affirmations, questions, and reflective feedback intended to deepen learning.
  - responses to Learning Partner assignments do not need to be shared with staff
- share and encourage spiritual growth
- articulate affirmations and encouragements for each other.

Participating in a learning partnership is a form of ministry. Effective ministry in a learning partnership requires a commitment to:

- mutual learning
- empathetic and active listening
- requesting, giving, and receiving feedback
- offering encouragement and challenge
- intentional monitoring of learning goals

- respectful relationships

Qualities that enhance learning partnerships:

- intentionality
- ability to raise questions
- willingness to deal with feelings
- pastoral sensitivity
- analytical skills
- insight in theological reflection
- ability to reflect on biblical themes/images/motifs
- ability to challenge and deal with conflict directly and respectfully
- ability to offer affirmation and support
- clarity about boundaries

In your mid-year and year-end check-in with Program Staff you will be asked to comment on your Learning Partner relationship.

Student Community



The CCS student body is made of a number of overlapping communities, and the practise of engaging in a learning community is an important part of CCS education.

In a given Praxis year, some students will be attending in-person theme learning circles, while others will be doing external academic courses, and others still will be in a final Integration Year.

Three times a year we will try to gather all the Praxis students on-line for a time of community-building, discussion, and reflection.

There are other ways in which CCS students connect to each other. There is Student Forum, where students discuss issues of importance to them. There is also a Facebook group for students. Both of these are administered by the students themselves.

FIELD



The field placement is where you learn by doing… and then reflecting on the doing… and then doing differently based on the reflection. (Remember that whole Action-Reflection spiral thing?)

You are responsible for setting up your field placement (in consultation with Program Staff). You're looking for a setting that will…

- provide an opportunity to engage directly in experiences related to:
    - Spiritual Care – eg. congregational setting, experience with funerals and support to people in grief, visiting, counselling
    - Christian Education & Worship – eg. congregational setting, working with children or youth, adult education or bible study, experience preaching and worship leadership
    - Social Justice – eg. organizational setting, involvement with a marginalized population outside student's own experience
- be a stretch for you, personally and professionally
- further your learning goals as described in your Learning Plan
- run for approximately 8 months, with 330 hours of work over the course of 32 weeks (approx.. 10-12 hours per week)
- be open to having a ministry student offering leadership and will understand that you are required to be away from the field occasionally during the year for school obligations
- and be committed to sharing in your education

Some students, because of geography and circumstances, will have a number of options for their field placements. Other students will be more limited in their opportunities. All students need to work with what is available and possible. We also need to stress that a field placement is intended to be a time of growth and reflection.

Preparing for the Field Component

1. Check out potential site(s). (You can consult with CCS staff about ideas for potential field placements.) Ask yourself:

- Where do I lack experience and/or what work would represent a growing edge for me - especially in the theme areas? What will be challenging and engaging for me in this site? What kind of work does the ministry/congregation/parish/agency do?
- Ask for literature that describes the agency/parish/congregation/ministry.
- Consider how you will fit with the site and how the site will fit with you. You might want to consult again with CCS staff.

2. Talk to people in potential sites about their willingness to be a field placement or learning facilitator. (Note: In your conversations with people please convey that staff approval is required before any placement can be finalized, and that you are initially exploring possibilities. It is essential that the status of your conversations is clear.) You might want to get a sense of…
    1. How would the potential site understand the role of a student in their midst? (e.g. a valued resource, an unpaid person to fill in the blanks in the leadership...)
    2. What are the possibilities for, and understanding of, learning facilitation? Is there someone onsite who could be a Learning Facilitator, or would you need an offsite facilitator?
    3. What is the ethos of the place? How do they regard the people with whom they work? How do they understand the faith and represent it in the community? Will there be opportunities to participate in worship leadership?
3. Develop a **proposal** as you prepare to consult with your primary staff person, using the "Field Placement Form", available in the Field section of the CCS moodle. At the proposal stage, be sure to include:
    - contact information
    - a description of the purpose and workings of this setting
    - how you see your learning goals being met working with this setting
    - what theological perspective is represented in this ministry
    - what options for a learning facilitator are available.
4. Submit your field placement proposal to your primary program staff person in June, so they can be in contact with potential facilitators and/or sites to discuss suitability. Program staff may have suggestions for how to revise your proposal before approving it.
5. Once a field placement has been approved, negotiate with the potential placement what work you will be doing during your 10-12 hours a week, how you will start and how work will be negotiated, and the weeks you will be away because of school commitments. Try to meet those with whom you will be working. Share a bit of who you are and why you are present. Let people know what you hope to be doing and how long you expect to be with them. Check out the norms and practices in relation to things like:
    - office space and supplies, break and lunch practices

- who to check with if you want to suggest changes in the way things have been done
- expectations about changing plans (arrival times, departure times, changing days when you will be present, etc.)
- confidentiality
- possibility of a covenanting with the placement setting

6. Recruit a Learning Facilitator (if you haven't already as part of setting up the field placement site). A Learning Facilitator who will be able to meet with you for the equivalent of an hour a week to reflect on the practice of ministry (or issues related to work of the placement) and who is available on-site or close by to provide support, direction and helpful feedback. (See the section on Learning Facilitators.) Let them know the time commitment, goals, requirements for field, dates of learning circle commitments and orientation session
7. Recruit a Local Committee. These four or five people will meet with you at least six times during the course of the field placement to offer support and challenge. (See the section on Local Committees)
8. Update the Field Placement Form, now at the covenant stage, with a fuller description of the details of your placement, including contact information for all support volunteers, anticipated activities related to your learning goals, plans for accountability, etc. Indicate your agreement to the covenant at the end of the Field Placement Form and resubmit it. It will be made available to your learning facilitator, a representative of your field placement (eg. a board chair), and to CCS program staff. This is to ensure that everyone involved in your field placement has the same understanding of what you're doing there and agrees to support you. (Part of the covenant is a confirmation that everyone has read CCS's Violence and Harassment Policy. So if you haven't yet, read it, and make sure your volunteers have seen it too.)
9. Set a date for a Field Orientation in consultation with CCS staff, your facilitator and mentor, and some members of your local committee. In most instances, the orientation will be facilitated by CCS staff.

The Role of CCS Staff in Field



CCS program staff provide on-going support to the volunteers and student in the field placement. Their role includes:

- assisting the student in the set-up of the field placement (suggesting names for sites, mentors, facilitators, etc.)
- receiving and approving the field placement proposal
- ensuring that orientation to the field placement process occurs for each setting
- contacting the Learning Facilitators at least twice during the year (once before the mid-term review and once before the final assessment)
- receiving the reports of the mid-term review and the final assessment
- connecting with other CCS staff regarding the student's progress
- reviewing the recommendation of the final assessment and approving the successful completion of the field placement in consultation with other Program Staff and/or the Principal
- responding to questions or concerns from students or field placement volunteers at any time by phone or email. In critical and special circumstances, a CCS staff person may be available to visit the field placements in order to address difficult situations or to provide for conflict mediation.

Assumptions of the Staff re: the Field Placement

- to operate in a consultative, respectful fashion
- to share information in a clear and direct fashion
- to maintain supportive contact with student and volunteers, as appropriate
- to raise questions, offer insights, and challenge students and volunteers for learning and growth
- to receive feedback about the program and staff connection to the field placement.

Confidentiality

Staff are committed to a norm of holding as much information in confidence as possible, and being transparent about our understanding of confidentiality.

Within these principles we will:

- make every effort to remember to ascertain if information disclosed by an individual may be shared with others

- consult with other staff about student progress and readiness for ministry but not about personal or private circumstances
- restrict discussion of financial information of students to staff responsible for bursaries and tuition (unless authorized by the student)
- as necessary, test with other staff approaches and feedback to students or volunteers without revealing names or circumstances and monitor ourselves around the appropriateness of these conversations
- in some circumstances, seek outside consultation with professionals to test appropriateness of staff responses and behaviour
- if there is risk to self or others, take steps to ensure safety.

The Role of a Diaconal Mentor in Field

- See the Mentor section of the Student Kit. Essentially, the Mentor takes part in field orientation to better understand the student's placement context, helps the student make connections between field experience and diaconal identity, and helps to facilitate mid-year and final field placement reviews.

Learning Facilitator



The relationship with the Learning Facilitator is crucial for the student's growth and ministry formation. At the Centre for Christian Studies we use the terminology "Learning Facilitator", as opposed to terms like supervisor, in order to indicate that the relationship is:

- primarily about the student's learning and centered in the student's goals and not about providing another worker for the ministry or agency setting
- involves facilitating learning within an atmosphere that permits mistakes, room for growth, and is not a competitive or boss-employee hierarchy.

Many students will have on-site facilitators with experience in the process of reflective learning and will be able to give direct feedback. In other situations, arrangements will need to be made for an off-site Learning Facilitator.

Where there is an off-site Learning Facilitator, the student and Learning Facilitator will need to spend time deciding how they will work together. We encourage off-site Learning Facilitators, where possible, to be or become familiar with the setting in which the student is working and to find opportunities to be able to work with or observe the student in the field placement setting. Where this is not possible, the facilitator and student together will need to determine how experiences from the field placement will be reported. We encourage the use of case studies, verbatim reports, videotapes, etc. as a basis for reflection from time to time. (See Resources for Reflection section.)

It is our anticipation that the Learning Facilitator will be someone who:

- is engaged in the work of ministry
- brings a faith-based perspective
- is willing to support and guide a student in their learning
- will raise critical questions of both practice and analysis
- encourages a person to be responsible for their own learning
- listens carefully and with care
- is willing to offer support, clear feedback, and challenge as appropriate
- brings skill in theological reflection
- brings skills in social analysis
- is committed to learning and exploring mutual learning
- maintains appropriate professional boundaries.

The work of facilitation includes

- participation in fall CCS orientation session
- working with the student in setting and/or clarifying their learning goals
- developing a learning covenant with the student
- assisting the student to reflect on their learning goals and adjust as needed
- providing time for the student to reflect on the work that has been happening as the student identifies learnings, anxieties, questions, concerns
- offering feedback as appropriate and challenge as needed
- providing direction as appropriate
- participating in the mid-term and final reviews
- providing support as the student works through issues and problems related to their work
- consider having their own learning goals to work on over the year
- reflecting theologically.

Learning Facilitation Sessions

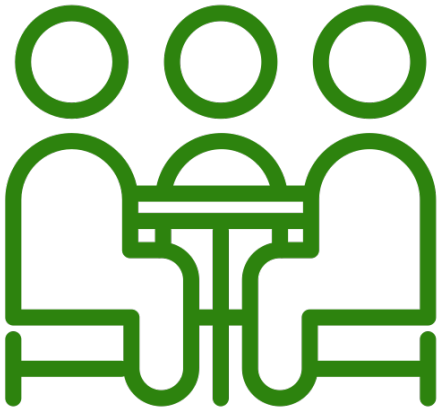
The timing and format of facilitation will

- be the equivalent of one hour per week, either on a weekly or bi-weekly basis
- begin in September and run for the duration of the field April
- include agenda items that the student brings from their experience in the work (concerns, experiences, dilemmas, questions)
- include agenda items brought by the facilitator in terms of pressing for depth or analysis as well as in terms of observations or feedback on the student's work
- include theological reflection.

Note: In any instance where a serious conflict arises between student and learning facilitator, a third party may be called on to facilitate a process of conflict mediation. There are often local professionals (in the church or the wider community) who offer these services. The student's primary staff person should be advised of the conflict and may be part of the decision about its resolution.

Local Committee

Members of the local committee have an important role to play in a student's preparation for ministry. The field placement provides a learning environment in which students can both engage in the practice of ministry and reflect on their involvements. The local committee's responsibility to provide care and support for the student runs concurrently with the responsibility to provide honest and compassionate evaluation of the student's abilities.



Criteria for Committee Members

The Local Committee consists of four or five people, normally all of whom are connected with the field placement ministry setting in some way, who:

- have interest and experience in the particular focus of your placement (eg. social justice, spiritual care, education, or worship)
- value ministry in the church and the world
- are interested in their own learning and growing
- are reflective about experiences
- are willing to discuss issues of theology
- bring a mutual approach to learning together
- are able to offer feedback in a manner that is constructive and non-judgmental
- are representative of different ages, genders, races, cultures
- are available for team meetings and follow up

For students who have already completed a field placement, it may be helpful if at least one member of your former Local Committee can continue to serve on your current field placement Local Committee.

Recruitment of the Committee:

It is the student's responsibility to recruit the Local Committee. The student:

- could consult with the staff and key volunteers at the placement to get suggestions
- should not ask people who may be in conflict of interest (e.g. friends of the student, personnel committee members in settings where the student is employed)
- could write a letter to invite volunteers to become part of the committee
- might follow up with a phone call or visit
- should provide orientation about CCS program and student's field placement

Responsibilities of the Committee:

- meet every four to six weeks (6 times during the course of the field placement)
- support the student and offer challenge where appropriate
- provide clear feedback on their observations of the student's leadership and learning
- monitor student's goals and suggest situations where these goals can be pursued
- provide history and context as needed
- be co-learners with the student in relation to this task
- provide resource ideas and assistance
- at least one person is to represent the Local Committee at the fall CCS led orientation session and should be willing to share information with others on the committee
- at least one person is to represent the Local Committee at the student's mid-term and year-end assessments
- interpret the CCS program to the congregation/parish/ministry/agency and ensure that they are informed about student's role

Field Orientation Session



The purpose of the field orientation is to provide an opportunity for Learning Facilitators, Diaconal/Vocational Mentors, representatives of Local Committee and students to become familiar with CCS's program, and to clarify theme year requirements. At the orientation session in September, a CCS staff member will connect via videoconference (or in person if possible) to facilitate.

The goals of the orientation are:

- to become familiar with CCS's program and educational approach
- to become familiar with the expectations for students for the Theme Year
- to become familiar with the roles and expectations for Learning Facilitators, Diaconal/Vocational Mentors and the student's Local Committee
- to share and experience some models for reflection with students
- to provide an opportunity for volunteers from the field placement to reflect together and with the student
- to share and discuss our understandings of diaconal ministry

Participants

The orientation is designed for:

- Student
- Learning Facilitator
- Local Committee members (at least one member, preferably more)
- Diaconal/Vocational Mentor (if appropriate, to get a sense of the student's work context and provide a diaconal perspective)

Preparation for the Orientation Session

Students are expected to:

1. Arrange the time and location of the orientation, in consultation with CCS staff and participants:
    - check first with CCS staff for available dates. Staff have a lot of orientations to fit into a relatively short time

- check availability of learning facilitator, local committee members, and mentor
- schedule **three hours** for orientation. (It might not be that long, but it might.)
- encourage participation in the entire session; early departures and late arrivals are disruptive of group dynamics and education process. Students are expected to participate in the entire session
- book a suitable location for people to meet. If staff are connecting via videoconference, ensure things like a computer with webcam, internet connection, power source, etc.

2. Communicate with participants:
   - Distribute, in advance, the filled-out Field Covenant form to the facilitator, mentor, and CCS program staff so they have time to review it before the orientation
   - distribute, in advance, relevant sections of the Student Kit to the facilitator, mentor, local committee members and any other participants who may be in attendance at the orientation
   - ask participants to bring the kits (or relevant parts) to the orientation, along with questions for clarification or concern
   - ensure that all participants are clear about the date, time and place of the orientation (in previous years participants have appreciated lots of notice for these dates!)
   - consult with and confirm with CCS leadership about arrangements
3. Make local arrangements:
   - book the space for the meeting
   - provide name tags for the participants
   - supply materials for the workshop that may be requested by the staff person (e.g. markers, flip chart, masking tape, etc.)
   - arrange for necessary worship resources that may be requested by the staff person (e.g. candle, bible, hymn books)
   - organize for refreshments and a simple meal (suggestion: coffee and muffins, soup and/or sandwich fixings)
4. Share learning goals:
   - isolate from your learning plan the learning goals related to the field placement
   - bring these learning goals to the session (photocopied for distribution)
   - be prepared to work through at least one of the learning goals during the orientation session
5. Model theological reflection method:
   - choose an incident or concrete experience which will be used to practice the spiral reflection method during orientation session. (Perhaps something arose in the set up or first weeks of your field placement might be a good choice for this

spiral. This incident will only need to be shared verbally as part of the Concrete Experience of the spiral. The student might do some preliminary thinking in preparation for being facilitated through the other aspects of the spiral (Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization and Active Experimentation) with the participants in the orientation.

Please communicate with CCS leadership confirming all arrangements for the orientation.

Field Covenant

The Field Placement Form includes a covenant – an agreement between the student, the field placement site, the learning facilitator, and CCS – that everyone is familiar with the Field expectations in the Student Kit and CCS's Violence and Harassment Policy, agrees to the field placement as outlined by the student in the Field Placement Form, and promises to support the student's learning as best they can. It is important that this form be submitted by the student before the field orientation so that everyone involved understands the terms of the placement. The field orientation is a good place to make sure everyone has seen and agreed to the information outlined on that form so that the field placement can be official.

Resources for Reflection

Reflective learning on experience is an important part of sessions with Learning Facilitators, Local Committees, or Mentors. There are various tools that can be used to aid in this. The Spiral tool for action and reflection is one. Other resources, available on the CCS website (http://ccsonline.ca/resources/student-resources/), include:

- Critical Incident Report
- Developing a Case Study
- Journaling and Journal Summaries
- Questions for Theological Reflection
- Time Log Samples
- Verbatim Report
- Wesley Quadrilateral
- Preaching Response Form

These tools provide concrete methods for:

- Reporting and being accountable
- Deliberating and examining areas for consideration
- Focusing and naming new learning.

Learning Logs



Each month, submit a Field Placement Learning Log. You should also send a copy to your Learning Facilitator and Local Committee. The Learning Log has two parts:

1. A time log where you track your time and any work/activities/meetings related to your field placement
2. A brief "naming" of 4 or 5 learnings from your field experience.

How do I track my time?

- Put your name and the field placement site at the top of the page
- For each activity, list
  - the date
  - the name of the activity/work/meeting (and a description, if it's not obvious from the name
  - the time (eg. 2 hours)
- At the bottom of the log, list the total number of hours and the average number of hours per week.

Example of tracking time:

Name: Jane Finch
Field Placement: St. Cul-de-sac United

Date	Activity	Time
10/2/16	Worship	2 hrs
10/4/16	Visited at care home	3 hrs
10/5/16	Met w learning facilitator	1.5 hrs
10/5/16	"Rock Out" youth retreat planning group	2 hrs
….		
Total hours		50 hrs
Average hours per week:		12.5 hrs/week

How do I name my learnings?

Learning happens when something has shifted within yourself – you have more knowledge, or a new skill, or deeper understanding. What do you know now that you didn't know before?

Example of naming learnings:

> *"I learned that when I get excited in a sermon I start to speed up, and then people can't hear me."*
>
> *"I learned that sometimes people know more than I expect; I should ask more questions and check my assumptions before I start to explain something."*
>
> *"I learned that the protocols and traditions among First Nations peoples are very different depending on tribe and geographical location."*

Field Placement Reviews



At the mid-point and near the end of the field placement, the student, the Learning Facilitator, the Diaconal/Vocational Mentor, and representatives of the Local Committee will review the field experience. The purpose of the mid-term review is to assess the direction of work to date, the quality of the working relationships, and the sense of satisfaction for all concerned. The purpose of the year-end review is to identify the major accomplishments and learnings that have taken place over the year of the field placement, to name the ways in which these learnings have been integrated into an understanding and practice of ministry, and to make a recommendation about credit for the field placement.

Forms for these reviews are available on the CCS website or in the Field section of the CCS-moodle. During the mid-term review, the student might have to provide some active leadership to help the team work through the review process and prepare the report. By the year-end review the team should be able to lead the process themselves, with the student as a participant.

Participants and roles include…

- Student – make arrangements for this review to happen and to ensure that the report is submitted to CCS staff.
- Learning Facilitator – offer feedback on field placement
- representative(s) of the Local Committee - offer feedback on field placement. Either the facilitator or a member of the local committee should act as recorder.
- Diaconal/Vocational Mentor – facilitate the review and/or provide diaconal perspective



The review session will last approximately one and one-half hours for the mid-year review and two hours for the year-end review.

A signed report of the mid-year review should be submitted by mid-January.

A signed report of the year-end review should be submitted by mid-May.

Mid-Year Review

At the mid-point in the field placement, you will meet with your learning facilitator, your diaconal/vocational mentor, and representative(s) from your Local Committee to review the field experience to date. Together you will assess the direction of work, the quality of the working relationships, and the sense of satisfaction for all concerned, and submit a report to CCS.

The goals of the mid-year and year-end reviews are…

- to assess areas where learning is happening
- to identify and assess learnings related to learning goals
- to identify areas where changes need to be made so that the experience can be meaningful for both the student and those with whom the student works

Who: The Mid-Year Review Meeting is attended by the Student, Learning Facilitator, and at least one member of the local committee (preferably all or most). The Diaconal/Vocational mentor attends as a support person and facilitator of the meeting.

When: The Mid-Year Review meeting should happen early in the 5th month of Placement. For students who begin in September, this means early January. Reports are due January 15th (or on the 15th of the 5th month of placement).

How: Prior to the meeting, the student should circulate the Mid-Year Review Report form (downloadable from the student's Field moodle) so that all participants have time to reflect on their answers (or write notes if they wish). The student is expected to bring written answers to the meeting. During the review meeting, each question is discussed, and answers from the group are recorded by a note-taker onto one copy or screen. Comments may be shared from previous individual reflection, or come up spontaneously in conversation.

The Review Questions:

The Mid-Year Review form asks for details about the placement and the review meeting (date, participants, etc.) It also asks for responses from both the student and the field team (facilitator, local committee) to the following questions…

Learning Experiences:

- What have been the major areas of new learning in the first four months?
- Of these new learnings, which of them relate directly to the placement's Theme Focus?
- When have you observed increased comfort or confidence in the student/self? When have you observed challenge or anxiety?

- Where and how is theological reflection happening?
- How many times has the local committee met, and which topics have been covered?

Learning Goals:

- Which learning goals have been worked on the most, and how?
- Are there learning goals that have been sufficiently achieved, such that they are no longer a priority?
- Are there learning goals that need increased time or attention? If so, what is the strategy to prioritize them?
- What changes might be helpful at this point in the placement with regard to areas and/or levels of responsibility?
- Are there any other changes to learning goals or learning plan?

Team Dynamics and Functioning:

- Comment on the working relationship between Student and Learning Facilitator. Is there a need for increased support, feedback, or direction?
- Comment on the working relationship between Student and Local Committee. Is there a need for increased support or feedback? Have there been any changes in local committee membership, or need thereof?
- While the Mentoring and Field Placement are not necessarily connected, in what ways have the field placement work and the Diaconal/Vocational Mentoring relationship informed or impacted each other?
- If placement hours are combined with a ministry appointment or paid contract, please comment on the functioning of this relationship, and share any concerns.

Future Planning:

- In which areas of ministry would it be helpful for the student to have more experience or practice, in the second half of this placement or in future placements?
- At present, are there any concerns that would warrant the intervention of the CCS Field Placement Coordinator, or that might jeopardize or delay the completion of the placement as scheduled?

In Closing:

- Any other comments

Suggested Process for the Review

- welcome, review of purpose and agenda
- check-in: an opportunity for participants to get to know one another and/or share present personal celebrations and concerns
- worship and prayer

- review of questions, section by section
    - student distributes written notes and reviews responses offering comments and explanation
    - other participants ask questions for clarification and offer comments and feedback
- evaluation of session: a chance for participants to reflect on the experience and name insights or concerns
- closing prayer

How should the Mid-Year Review Report be submitted to CCS?

Once the meeting is finished, the Learning Facilitator or a member of the local committee will proof-read the document, circulate it (electronically or by paper) to all who participated, and submit it to the CCS Field Placement Coordinator. It should be uploaded on Moodle via the student, or submitted by email. (Please include the student's name in the file name, e.g. JesusCFieldMidYr2017.doc)

The mid-term field review can be submitted on moodle. If the electronic version does not include scanned signatures, a follow-up hard copy can be mailed to CCS.

Year-End Review

Near the end of the field placement, you will meet with your learning facilitator, your diaconal/vocational mentor, and representative(s) from your Local Committee to identify the major accomplishments and learnings that have taken place over the year of the field placement and to name the ways in which these learnings have been integrated into an understanding and practice of ministry. Your review team will make a recommendation about credit for the field placement, and you will submit a report to CCS.

The goals of the year-end review are…

- to name learnings and understandings related to the focus of the field placement
- to identify and list the student's major accomplishments in the field placement
- to identify strengths and gifts for ministry
- to identify areas for growth and areas for further exploration in the preparation for ministry

Preparing for the Year-End Review

In preparation for the review, the student needs to respond to the following questions in writing and share copies with the participants on the review team. As well, the Learning Facilitator and representative of the Local Committee need to consider these questions in advance. (Use as a basis for this work: your learning goals, your journal entries and written reflections, the mid-term review, comments from your Local Committee and Learning Facilitator, the CCS Learning Guidelines, and your own insights. Remember, the assessment is only 2 hours long; try to identify the most significant learnings and areas for further work.)

1. What have been the major learnings over the course of this field experience?
    - about self?
    - others?
    - diaconal ministry?
2. What have been the major accomplishments over the course of this field placement?
3. In what ways were learning goals met?
4. In what ways has learning been enhanced in spiritual care, education and worship, or social justice (depending on the focus of the field placement)?
5. What areas can be identified for future work and preparation for ministry?
    - personally? (e.g. balancing personal life and vocational demands, fear of conflict, assertiveness)

- theologically? (e.g. clarify understanding of humanity as created in the image of God, work on concerns about atonement and Christology, integrate theology of grace into a ministry based on justification by works)
- theoretically? (e.g. read scholarship related to alternative dispute resolution, research authors who have written about group process, do a future assignment on the theories of congregational revitalization)
- in the future years of the CCS program?

Suggested Process for the Review

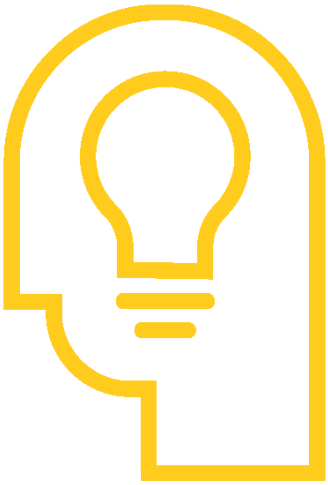
- welcome, review of purpose and agenda
- check-in: an opportunity for participants to get to know one another and/or share present personal celebrations and concerns
- worship and prayer
- review of questions *(1-5 as listed above)*, section by section
    - student distributes written notes and reviews responses offering comments and explanation
    - other participants ask questions for clarification and offer comments and feedback
- Recommendation
    - student leaves the room as other participants decide whether to recommend "credit", "credit with condition" or "no credit" for the field experience
    - student returns and is informed of the recommendation that the participants will make to CCS staff
    - Note: An assessment of "no credit" or "credit with condition" should not be a surprise to the student (or CCS staff) but is an integrated part of the on-going feedback. Nevertheless, if this is the recommendation, the review team still needs to convey this decision with pastoral sensitivity and inform and involve CCS staff immediately.
- evaluation of session: a chance for participants to reflect on the experience and name insights or concerns
- closing prayer

How should the Year-End Review Report be submitted to CCS?

Following the review session, the student will compile a report including their responses to the review questions (1-5) and the review session recorder's notes. The report should be labeled "Year-End Field Placement Review" and include the student's name, field placement site, date, and be signed by the student and the review session recorder (or designate).

The year-end field review can be submitted on moodle. If the electronic version does not include scanned signatures, a follow-up hard copy can be mailed to CCS.

LEARNING ON PURPOSE



"Learning on Purpose: Changing Leadership for a Changing World" is the Centre for Christian Studies' 2-week intensive leadership development module. It is a practical, holistic, hands-on, learning community experience.

The Learning on Purpose course is an introduction to many of the key themes and skills in the Diaconal Ministries program, including…

- learning in community
- self-awareness
- the Spiral model of action/reflection
- giving and receiving feedback
- planning in groups
- dealing with conflict
- thinking about theology, scripture, worship, spiritual care, education, and social justice
- CCS learning guidelines
- Review of Learnings process

Learning on Purpose students do a Spiral Reflection assignment and a Research Paper on a topic of their choosing.

The Learning on Purpose course is one of the accepted pre-requisites for other CCS theme learning circles as well as Praxis and Field components. It is also required before one can plan and lead a student-led session as part of a theme learning circle.

On alternating years Learning on Purpose is held either in Winnipeg or in another city in Canada.

Woodsworth House and Winnipeg



The CCS "campus" is a two-storey house in Winnipeg. It is a former home of social gospel minister and labour activist J.S. Woodsworth. Most CCS learning circles (including Learning on Purpose when it is in Winnipeg) are held here. Occasionally, if a learning circle is particularly large or has space requirements that can't be accommodated at the offices, we will rent space at a nearby location.

The Centre for Christian Studies
Woodsworth House
60 Maryland Street
R3G 1K7
204-783-4490

The CCS offices are situated, with gratitude, humility, and respect, on Treaty One land, the traditional territory of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation.

Note: Woodsworth House is a nut-free and scent-free zone. We attempt to accommodate the special needs of staff, students, and volunteers who might be meeting at CCS as much as possible on a case-by-case basis, but we know that nut allergies and scent sensitivities are common enough that it's easier to just say, if you're coming to Woodsworth House, please don't bring nuts and avoid perfumes, colognes, or heavily scented shampoos, laundry soap, etc.

Where can I stay during learning circles in Winnipeg?

You are welcome to make any accommodation arrangements that you wish (friends, hotel, etc.) and are responsible for making your own reservations. If you're unfamiliar with Winnipeg and want a place to start, here are some nearby possibilities. The University of Winnipeg Housing office, Ivey House and International Guest house are all aware of the Centre's programs and will try to group you with other CCS students. **(Contact locations personally for availability and up-to-date rates.)**

We are attempting to create a list of local friends of CCS who might be willing to billet a student while they are in town for a learning circle. It would be the student's responsibility to contact a potential billet to make inquiries.

There are many Bed and Breakfast homes in Winnipeg. You can find a list at www.bbcanada.com (a national site, follow the links to Winnipeg).

Booth University College - https://boothuc.ca/hospitality/guest-accommodations/ - and the University of Winnipeg McFeetors Hall - https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/event-services/accommodations.html - often have dorm rooms available, depending on the season.

Transportation in Winnipeg

You will be responsible for getting to your accommodation and to the Learning Circle meeting space on your own.

Winnipeg has an international airport (www.waa.ca). The Greyhound bus terminal is also located at the airport. Taxis are available from the airport (about $20).

Bus Fare on Winnipeg Transit is $3.45 per trip for adults and schedule information is available at www.winnipegtransit.com. You can also purchase a pre-paid Peggo bus card at 7-11 or Shoppers Drug Mart.

A map of the area is enclosed.

Parking

There is some street parking near Woodsworth House, but it is time-limited (and cars parked on Maryland during rush hour will get towed). Occasionally during learning circle we get the parking limit lifted on a nearby block. (Check with Robyn.)

Meals

You are responsible for getting your own meals. There are a number of restaurants and grocery stores in the area. (See partial list below.) As well the Booth College dining room has lunches and dinners. Occasionally CCS students have the opportunity to gather for a shared meal.

Coffee/tea/snack breaks

There will be breaks each morning and each afternoon during Learning Circles. There is a common pot to cover the costs of coffee/tea/snacks, and responsibility for set-up and clean-up is shared throughout the Learning Circle.

Grocery Stores

- Food Fare - 115 Maryland (at Westminster)
- Food Fare - 905 Portage (between Arlington and Burnell)
- DeLuca's -950 Portage Avenue

- Safeway - Sargent (between Sherbrook and Maryland)

Restaurants

• Shorty's Pizza	53 Maryland St. (at Wolseley)
• The Nook *(diner)*	43 Sherbrook St. (at Wolseley)
• Subway	100 Sherbrook (at Westminister)
• Banza Noodle House	102 Sherbrook (at Westminster)
• Next Door	116 Sherbrook
• Bistro Dansk *(Danish)*	63 Sherbrook (between Wolseley and Westminster)
• Hudson Bagel's	79 Sherbrook (between Wolseley and Westminster)
• Charisma *(East Indian)*	83 Sherbrook (between Wolseley and Westminster
• Thom Bargen's Roasters	64 Sherbrook (between Wolseley and Westminster)
• McDonalds	644 Portage (at Sherbrook)
• Palatal Express (stirfry)	288 Sherbrook
• Tim Horton's	255 Maryland (just south of Portage)

If you have questions, contact Scott Douglas (204-783-4490 or sdouglas@ccsonline.ca).

THEME LEARNING CIRCLES

Note: Schedules, session agendas, and assignment descriptions and due dates can be found online in the specific moodle for each learning circle. The information in this Student Kit deals with learning circles in general.



A learning circle is a 6-day community learning intensive on a specific topic related to Spiritual Care, Social Justice, or Education and Worship. We offer two back-to-back in the fall and two back-to-back in the spring. We also offer online learning circles, either six weeks long with two 3-hour video sessions per week or 6-day online intensives.

Theme Learning Circles will typically include…

Assigned Readings – available online through moodle before the circle. It is expected that students come to circle with their readings done.

Community-building – Each learning circle will be a slightly different constellation of people, each bringing their own context and learning objectives. Most will be diaconal ministry students, some may be continuing studies students. Because theme learning circle can be taken in any order, among the diaconal students in any given circle there will be some who are just beginning their studies and some who are nearing the end. It's important to figure out "who's in the room" at the beginning of each circle. Students might be asked to bring case studies as part to share with each other as part of community-building.

Worship and Check-in – Each morning typically begins with a half-hour worship and check-in time to help students ground themselves in the holy and be fully present. Worship and check-in times are led by students.

Sessions – Planned and facilitated by Program Staff, this is the opportunity to learn concepts, discuss themes, explore ideas, and develop skills. Program staff use a variety of approaches to help students engage the material, including field trips, guest speakers, skits and games, individual and group activities, etc.

Student-led Sessions – For each learning circle, some students will volunteer to plan and facilitate a session on a specific topic. Most planning will happen prior to the learning circle (via phone, email, or videoconference), with some last-minute planning once

they arrive at circle. Student-led sessions are an opportunity for facilitating students to develop their leadership skills and engage material on a deeper level, and for other students to experience a peer perspective on the content.

Evaluation – Each session usually ends with a time of evaluation, allowing students to note aspects of the session that especially enhanced their learning or made it challenging. This feedback can be useful to facilitators (program staff and student-led) in the planning of future sessions.

Review of Learnings – Each student is part of a small group (5 or 6 students) who will offer feedback to each other at the end of the circle. Taking note of each students learning goals for the circle and the CCS learning guidelines (see appendices) they will offer written and verbal affirmations and encouragements.

Closure – Each circle ends with the dispersal of that particular learning community, and preparations for moving into or returning to different communities.

Preparing for a Theme Learning Circle

1. Do your readings. Take note of questions, connections, and insights as you read. It is up to you if you choose to print hard copies of readings to bring with you to circle, or if you bring a laptop or tablet. (Note: Wifi is sometimes spotty. You may want to download documents you'll want access to, rather than relying on an internet connection during a session.)
2. Moodle around. Check the learning circle's moodle for other resources, handouts, agendas, video clips, etc. that may have been provided to help you prepare. Use the discussion forum to engage other participants in conversation prior to the circle. Take note of any announcements or special instructions from program staff. (eg. "Bring a symbol that represents your context for the community-building session.") If there are assignments or forms that you need to hand in at the learning circle, bring those with you.
3. Set learning goals for the circle. They will likely relate to your learning goals and learning plan for the year, but relate specifically to your time in the circle. (eg. "During this circle I want to push myself to initiate conversations about faith and doubt with other students", or "I want to stay present during the sessions on death and dying, even though the topic scares the heck out of me.") You may be invited to share your goals with others, especially your review of learning group, during the circle.
4. Pack. Bring a notebook and journaling or note-taking. Bring a range of clothing; Winnipeg weather can be unpredictable, as can the environmental controls in meeting spaces. Bring anything you think you'll need to be comfortable.

A Note on the Readings

Each learning circle will include approximately 500-600 pages of assigned reading, available through the moodle for a given circle. Readings may include a chapter from a book, a journal article, a webpage or blog post, a video, a podcast, or, in some cases, a whole text. Readings are chosen by Program Staff to provide useful information related to a theme and/or to inspire further thinking and conversation.

Within each set of readings you will come across experiences, stories, ideas, and arguments that are fun, liberating, enlightening, maybe even world changing. But you will also likely come across stories and ideas that are conceptually challenging, that are emotionally painful (potentially triggering), and which utilize language or concepts that may seem antiquated. Perhaps you will even disagree outright with certain arguments some authors present.

We want to be clear that assigning a reading for study does not mean automatically that we (as instructors or as a school) endorse all the ideas or language expressed therein. That is why we ask students to read the materials with openness and with a critical hermeneutic. We suggest you have the Critical Thinking Cheat Sheet near you as you read.

It should also be said that staff choose readings conscientiously. We believe each of these texts will enrich your understanding of and experience of theology, ministry, and society – even more so when these texts are discussed within a community of intentional learners.

Here are some of the criteria Program Staff use when choosing a set of texts (in no particular order):

1. Are they current, relevant, and related to the module theme?
2. Do they, or did they, reflect an ethos and theology of prophetic justice in their context?
3. Are they scholarly?
4. Do they offer wisdom and analysis that students can integrate into their ministry practice or their spiritual formation?
5. Do they offer robust and informed explanations, defenses, and critiques of doctrine, culture, and worldviews?

Not every reading will match all of these criteria. Some will be more or less current. Some will be more or less academic. Some will be more or less practically applicable. Etc.

CCS also fully expects and encourages students to offer suggestions and resources for future sessions as part of their own responsibility to share their wisdom and experience with the learning community.

2026-2027 Theme Learning Circles

Oct 14-20, 2026	Relationships (SC03)	(in-person)
Oct 22-28, 2026	Living Scripture (EW03)	(in-person)
Jan 5 – Apr 9, 2027	Culture & Identity (EW04)	(online)
(Jan 5, Feb 12, Mar 12, Apr 9) aka Intercultural Leadership for Educational Ministry		
April 7-13, 2027	Oppression & Resistance (SJ03)	(in-person)
April 15-21, 2027	Ministry as Listening (SC01)	(in-person)
May 12-18, 2027	Power & Privilege (SJ02)	(online)

A full-time course load/year = Praxis, Field, 4 learning circles, 2 external courses

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF FUTURE LEARNING CIRCLES

2027-2028
Fall: SJ04 Eco-Justice / SC02 Grief & Loss
Online Jan/Feb: SC03 Relationships
Spring: EW05 Worship / SJ01 Ministry as Community-building
Online May: EW01 Ministry as Storytelling

2028-2029
Fall: SC05 Spiritual Practice / SJ05 Right Relations
Online Jan/Feb: EW03 Living Scripture
Spring: EW02 Ages & Stages / SC04 Health, Pain, & Trauma
Online May: SJ03 Oppression and Resistance

2029-2030
Fall: SJ02 Power & Privilege / SC04 Heath, Pain, & Trauma
Online Jan/Feb: SC05 Spiritual Practice
Spring: EW01 Ministry as Storytelling / SJ05 Right Relations
Online May: EW02 Ages & Stages

2030-2031
Fall: SC03 Relationships / EW03 Living Scripture
Online Jan/Feb: EW04 Culture & Identity
Spring: SJ03 Oppression & Resistance / SC01 Ministry as Listening
Online May : SJ02 Power & Privilege

Learning Circle Norms and Assumptions

The following norms have been developed by CCS students and staff over the years, and are updated on occasion…

1. We are a learning community. We will treat each other with care and respect. We will value our own contributions and encourage the contributions of others. (This might include monitoring our own "air time" in discussions.)

2. We each bring unique gifts and needs. Diversity is acknowledged, welcomed, and respected.

3. We are life-long learners. We are committed to challenge and be challenged. We are each responsible for naming our learnings and discerning our own areas of growth.

4. We recognize that barriers to full participation impact us differently. We work together to make the class as accessible and safe as possible.

5. We are all co-learners, responsible for our own learning and for contributing to the learning of others. We are all responsible for the health of the group and process facilitation. We will work as collaboratively as possible.

6. Staff people have power related to their responsibilities that others in the group do not have. Within that framework, we will attempt to operate in as mutual a fashion as possible without violating boundaries.

7. We will honour the mind/body/spirit connection; we will work intensively but at a pace that honours our humanity. We will respect start and end times and come to sessions prepared to fully participate. We are accountable to staff for all work or sessions missed.

8. We learn from, and share, our personal experiences. We respect requests for confidentiality. Where stories or images might be triggering we provide content warnings as appropriate.

9. We attempt to operate within a liberative non-hierarchical theological perspective. We bring this perspective and analysis to all our work. We use language and tone that is inclusive, expansive, and respectful.

10. As part of Creation, we make choices with an eye to reciprocity and our interconnection with the Earth.



(Note: Some of norms extend beyond learning circles and are part of CCS policy and procedure. See http://ccsonline.ca/about-ccs/policies/ . See also CCS's Violence and Harassment policy in the Appendices.)

CCS's Educational Stance…

Learning is a process and discipline that encompasses the whole person. Learners need to be intentional, taking responsibility for engagement, reflection, self-direction and goal setting. Education is enhanced when individual uniqueness is honoured and respected within community.

Community models of education are enabled when a climate of co-operation and collaboration, interdependence and mutuality is fostered, and all see themselves as co-leaders and co-learners. Learning needs to respect diversity by offering variety in approach and style, by honouring differences in background and viewpoint.

Learning is challenging and needs to anticipate and acknowledge the painful prospect of struggle and transformation, the probable resistance to change and transition, and the potential feelings of loss. Learning also needs to be supportive within an atmosphere of empowerment and affirmation, safety and trust where self-esteem is enhanced, questions are encouraged and potential is appreciated.

Learning for diaconal ministry needs to be formative, preparing women and men for lives of servant leadership and social transformation. Experiential learning models incorporate academic study and concrete experience, action and reflection. This learning needs to be integrative, valuing theory and practice, ideas and feelings, past, present and future.

Learning needs to be open to the possibility of education in every situation and to the promise of surprise and new insight. Learning makes and reveals meaning. This process is enriched by the experience and expertise of the larger community that surrounds and includes the learners. Learning needs to be relevant and stretching, connecting the broader church and world with learners in a way that informs, inspires and equips.

CCS's Justice Stance…

Because we believe that creation is holy and sacred, we commit ourselves to speaking and acting in ways that will promote wholeness and peace. We desire community that is constructive and inclusive, loving and inspiring. We confront language or behaviour that disrespects groups or individuals based on any real or perceived status: people who are young, old, ill, poor, disabled, indigenous, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, trans-gender, refugees, victims of violence, and those who experience racism.

We act out of a model rooted in diakonia, liberation theology and feminism. We hear a call to justice that motivates us to work and struggle for right relationship. We prepare one another for leadership in church and world by evaluating and critiquing the powers and

principalities operating in the world and in ourselves. We are committed to creating a climate of respect for all people and to protecting the physical, spiritual, emotional and intellectual environment. We stand in the present, looking to our history and tradition to envision a future with hope and passion.

Student-Led Sessions

Learning circles will typically include one or more of "student-led" sessions.



Students who opt to do a student-led will work with a planning team to prepare and lead a 2.5 hour learning session for other participants. Planning teams will be working at two levels simultaneously: Task and Process.

Task. Each planning team will be responsible for facilitating a session of the learning circle in a specific subject area. They are expected to demonstrate a grasp of the material and to make a presentation that is competent and educationally sound.

Process. Each planning team is also expected to show awareness of group dynamics and leadership issues. They will be asked to offer their peers feedback that gives insight into their unique styles and gifts for diaconal ministry.

When do we plan the student-led session?

You will connect with your planning team and do most of your planning prior to the learning circle. Planning with people remotely via telephone or computer will undoubtedly present challenges of communication and group dynamics, but as navigating and learning from that challenge is part of the work. You may choose to schedule some planning time during the learning circle for last-minute details. Here is a suggested planning schedule:

Planning Session #1 – Community building, first round of articulating purpose and goals, considering resources and strategizing for further research and resource-gathering.

Planning Session #2 – Agree on purpose and goals and finish a rough outline of the process design.

Planning Session #3 – Work out details, roles, and logistics.

Planning Session #4 – Last minute details

When scheduling planning times, be mindful of people's energy and self-care needs.

Preparing for Planning

Once you know the topic of your student-led session…

- Research your topic, using readings provided as a starting point
- Brainstorm resources for the learning session, i.e. music, videos, visuals, handouts, invited resource people;
- Assemble and preview resources
- Make contact with others on your team to schedule planning time
- Reflect on what you want to learn about the subject matter, about the planning process, about taking a leadership role
- Invite those who will be participants in the student-led session (using the Discussion Forum in the course moodle) to share any of their learning goals related to your student-led topic which might be incorporated into your planning

Plan

Roles - One person will serve as facilitator of team meetings. Another will serve as recorder or memory keeper. The planning team will decide among themselves who will take on which role.

Team Building – Take time to check in with one another. Talk about feelings, assumptions, and biases about the topic. Share any perspective or expertise you have to offer. Remind each other of your intention and needs to be supportive, challenging, and mutually accountable. Discuss your observations and learnings from the background readings for this topic, and anything you particularly want to highlight.

Think about the Learners – Discuss any expectation the group brings to this topic. (answer the question who – what learning styles are in the group? how this will inform your design? what responses to the topic do you anticipate (interest, anxiety, boredom)?

Think about the Session –

- we treat one another with care and respect
- Give it a purpose (answer the question why – why is this important, why do people need this?).
- Identify goals (answer the question what – what do we want people to know, what do we hope they will do?)
- Design the program (answer the question how)
    - share resources
    - brainstorm ways of engaging
    - consider possibilities
    - decide on what you will do
    - assign responsibilities
    - anticipate problems and how you will address them.

Check it out – At some point in your planning, check in with Program Staff about your goals and plans for the session. You will want to wait until you have a fairly good sense of your

ideas and intentions, but not so late that you can't integrate staff suggestions or "go back to the drawing board" if you find that you've significantly missed the mark.

Lead

Lead the learning session. Share leadership in ways appropriate to your learning goals. Be prepared for unforeseen eventualities (technological glitches, discussions running over time, etc.)

Evaluate

Participants are invited to offer written feedback following the session. Further evaluation will happen in a meeting with a staff person and the planning team. Here is a suggested format:

1. Centering – a time for silence and prayer.
2. Check in – students take turns sharing their assessment of the session:
    - How well did it meet your purpose and goals?
    - How did it meet your personal learning goals?
    - How effective was it? What went well?
    - What went less well? What might you do differently next time?
    - What did you need to do or learn in order to do it differently?
3. Check in – students take turns sharing their assessment of the planning:
    - what dynamics were present in the planning process? In the session leadership?
4. Peer feedback:
    - comment on gifts and areas for further work they see in themselves, in their colleagues
5. Staff feedback – staff offer observations on the session and leadership.
6. Centering – a time for silence and prayer.
7. Written evaluations from colleagues.

After the student-led session your group will submit…

- an outline for the session, including proposed timing and leadership for each component or activity
- a brief annotated bibliography of your research (including any relevant research you may have done but that was not apparent in the session)
- Two or three learnings from each planning team member. Learnings could relate to the content of the session or to the process of planning and leading.

Review of Learnings

Typically each Learning Circle ends with a Review of Learnings process. You will be assigned to a Review of Learnings group to give and receive feedback, encouragement and challenge with other students.

The purpose of the Review of Learnings/Peer Assessment component of the program is to provide an opportunity for each student to:

- identify some of their key learnings from the course
- identify areas for further work in order to enhance effectiveness in ministry
- offer feedback to other students on gifts and skills for ministry within the framework of the CCS "Learning Guidelines"
- offer encouragement to other students to pursue particular areas of work that will enhance their effectiveness in ministry
- develop a plan for acting on the feedback that has been received with particular emphasis on areas for further work

Preparing for the Review of Learnings

Do some **self-assessment**

- Review your learning goals for this learning circle, journal notes where you have identified learnings or areas of work/learning to pursue, and feedback you have received (formally or informally) from other students, resource people, staff.
- Review the CCS "Learning Guidelines" (see appendices) noting areas where you have grown and areas for further work
- Identify **three or four major learnings** from the time at the learning circle.
- Identify one or two **areas for further work** for yourself
- Connect these learnings and areas of further work to the competencies articulated in the CCS "Learning Guidelines"
- On the form, "Review of Learnings - Self Assessment" (found in the circle moodle) print your learnings and areas of work with their corresponding "Learning Guideline" (in full)
- **Have a copy** (either on paper or digitally) that you can read from during the Review of Learnings session (and then upload to the appropriate folder on moodle).

Prepare **feedback for others** in your Review of Learnings Group,

- Review the CCS "Learning Guidelines" (see appendices) while thinking about your experience of your student colleague,
- Fill out a "Review of Learnings Feedback" form (available on the circle moodle) for each student in your group…

  - **two or three of the gifts and skills for ministry** that you have observed
  - **one or two of the areas of work** that you would encourage your student colleague to consider seriously for further attention
  - in each case please cite:
    - specific examples to illustrate your observation and
    - the statement from the CCS "Learning Guidelines" to which you connect your comment
- Focus on being as clear and specific as possible. Keep in mind the principles for giving feedback. Consider carefully the group context in which the feedback is being offered (some feedback is more appropriately offered one-to-one).
- If you are filling out the form by hand, please make your writing as legible as possible; this feedback in incorporated into the official documentation for each student.
- **Have a copy** (either on paper or digitally) that you can read from during the Review of Learnings session (and then upload to the appropriate folder on moodle).

TIP: Keep a Review of Learning form handy throughout the learning circle so you can jot down specific observations about members of your review group.

Review of Learnings Process

The review of learnings groups will meet on the last day of the Learning Circle, with four or five students. Staff will provide feedback in written form. The time allocated for each student will be approximately 30 minutes.

Part A - Group Sharing – Time-keeping and facilitating of this part of the Review of Learnings Process will either be done by staff or shared on a rotational basis by the group members.)

Time of Centering (2 mins) – The facilitator will offer the person whose review/assessment it is to begin with a verse of a hymn, a prayer, a reading or a time of silent centering.

Sharing - Key Learning and Areas of Growth (15-20 mins) – The person whose review of learnings/assessment time it is will…

- share the key learnings from the Learning Circle and areas identified for further work
- offer "Learning Guidelines" connections to these learnings and areas for further work
- be prepared to respond to questions and comments

Time of Feedback and Response (5 - 10 mins) – The person whose review of learnings/assessment time it is will…

- receive feedback (gifts/skills and encouragement for further attention to a particular area) from the group within the framework of the "Learning Guidelines"
- respond to any of the feedback (if desired); acknowledge feedback with thanks.

Closing (2 mins) – The person whose review of learning/assessment will choose a verse of a hymn, a prayer, a reading or a time of silent centering to conclude their session and make transition.

Part B – Submit Documentation – These documents must be uploaded to the appropriate folder on moodle following the Review of Learnings session. Do this a soon after the session as possible, as they constitute part of the **student's permanent record**. Students are then strongly encouraged to download and store their…

- Self-assessment Form
- Feedback Forms received from each student colleague in the Review of Learnings Group
- Feedback Form received from staff

These forms can be useful for future integration, allowing you to track growth over time.

ASSIGNMENTS

Note: Descriptions and deadlines of specific assignments can be found online in the moodle for each respective circle or course. The Student Kit contains information about assignments in general.

CCS uses a variety of assignments to help students deepen, integrate, and demonstrate their learning. The Praxis component and Learning on Purpose make use of Spiral Reflection assignments to encourage reflective thinking/acting. Integration circles use credo, conviction, and diaconal profile assignments to help students understand and claim their diaconal identity. Theme learning circles use assignments appropriate to the content of the circle, such as…

- Research Papers
- Community Projects
- Annotated Bibliographies
- Verbatims
- Sermon Presentations
- Etc,

Generally there will be one assignment connected to each learning circle.

What if I'm doing a student-led session?

The planning and leading of a student-led session for a theme learning circle is considered the equivalent of an assignment. At some point prior to a specific learning circle, program staff will invite expressions of interest in leading a student-led. Members of the planning team for that student-led session would not have to do the written assignment associated with that learning circle; instead they would plan and lead the student-led session and submit their session outline, summary of their research for the session, and reflections on their learning.

Could I go through the entire Diaconal Ministries program just doing student-leds?

Over the course of your educational program you will want a mix of written assignment work and session planning and facilitation work. The precise balance will depend on your learning goals, and should be negotiated with your primary program staff member. For example, if you did four learning circles in a year and you did written assignments for all of them, your program staff person might ask if you were anxious about facilitating for your peers, and if so might suggest that you push yourself to take on more student-leds in the future. Likewise, if it looked like you were shying away from written assignments, you might challenge yourself to develop those skills of research and writing.

Assessment and Marking

Assignments are marked by program staff (or a designated marker). They are graded on a complete/incomplete scale. "Complete" means the student has fulfilled the requirements of the assignment. Assignments marked "Incomplete" will be returned with suggestions or clarifications. Student can make arrangements with the marker to revise and re-submit the assignment until it is deemed complete. Assignments must be complete for the student to receive credit for the related learning circle or course.

Some things that markers look for in an assignment:

- ability to engage the issues presented
- good grasp of the content
- ability to discern the theoretical, theological, biblical, social and ministry implications of the topic
- ability to integrate theory with practice
- openness to and engagement with new learnings; personal and professional challenge and growth
- cohesion, comprehension and clarity of expression
- ability to synthesize and do analysis
- organizational ability
- ability to meet deadlines

CCS recognizes that students will differ in background and ability, depending, for example, on whether English is a first language, or whether learning ability is an issue. As a guideline, most assignments are expected to show evidence of competency in these major categories:

1. Fulfillment of assignment: How well were the basic requirements of the assignment fulfilled? Did the content of the assignment actually conform to the instructions given? Aim to follow instructions!
2. Content: How well were content and presentation handled, including clarity, originality, and style? Aim for a paper that:
    - has a coherent sense of purpose (to persuade, inform, express to the reader)
    - shows a mature level of thought
    - is appropriately tailored to the audience/reader
    - is clear and readable (sentences are complete, flow of thoughts is sequential)
3. Organization: How well do the ideas connect with one another? Does the writing show structure (a beginning, middle and end)? Does it develop the content and theme? Aim for a paper that:
    - begins with an introduction, makes clear transitions, ends with a good conclusion

- presents a clear theme, is reasonably developed, and is well supported by concrete details, examples, and careful reasoning.

4. Development over drafts: How much attention was given to the drafting, editing and revising process? Aim for a polished paper.
5. Grammar and presentation: Does the paper follow basic rules of grammar, punctuation and spelling? Is it neatly presented and written in a respectful, semi-formal tone? Aim for a paper that:
   - contains few errors in Standard English
   - makes good use of style.
   - makes adequate use of documents and acknowledges sources.

Writing Expectations

Citation. You are expected to document other people's work appropriately. CCS staff prefer the Chicago/Turabian school for style and format: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Language. The CCS Justice Stance states

> *We confront language or behaviour that disrespects groups or individuals based on any real or perceived status: people who are young, old, ill, poor, disabled, indigenous, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, trans-gender, refugees, victims of violence, and those who experience racism.*

Our aim at CCS is to promote the practice of using language inclusively, in a way that demonstrates sensitivity and shows respect for others.

Plagiarism. Students at CCS are not permitted to submit work that includes material taken from other sources without acknowledgment of the source. Any student discovered to have plagiarized work will be sanctioned. Go to: http://www.ccsonline.ca/Resources/policies/plagiarism_policy.pdf

Artificial Intelligence. Students who use AI support in their research or writing must be transparent, indicating how they have used AI, checking the original sources where possible for accuracy, and demonstrating their own critical thinking and decision-making. Use AI with caution.

Submitting Assignments

Most assignments can be submitted on the moodle for a specific circle or course. Assignments on moodle are often assigned a due date, and the assignment description page will display how long you have before (or since) the due date. This is for your own information. You can still submit your assignment after the clock ticks down.

Written assignments should be submitted in a .doc or .docx format. Program staff often use "tracking" to add feedback comments to your paper before returning it. Marked papers are posted on the moodle. You can find and download them from the same assignment description page you used for submitting.

It is recommended that you keep a copy of your assignments (and returned assignments with staff feedback) for your own records

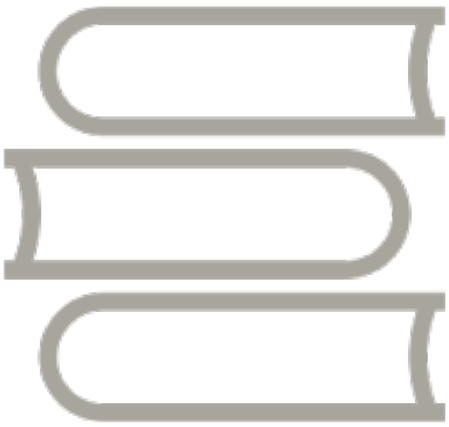
Deadlines

Missed deadlines can adversely affect one's work schedule. This is true of students, who can find assignments piling up and bumping into each other, and it is true of program staff, who need to finish responding to one set of assignments so they can move on to the next. In order for program staff to be able to provide timely feedback, assignments submitted more than seven days after the posted due date may be set aside for marking at a later date. This might involve the assignment being passed off to an external marker, or simply marked "complete" or "incomplete" without any written feedback, or simply postponed to a more convenient time.

What if the assignment is <u>really</u> late?

Failure to submit an assignment for a learning circle or field component by the end of the term in which it was assigned will result in an "incomplete" on the course unless prior arrangements have been made with program staff. If such arrangements involve assignments being marked outside of regular marking time, an "extra marking fee" may apply. Failure to meet assignment deadlines on a regular basis may result in a student being put on conditional status.

ACADEMIC COURSES (EXTERNALS)



Students must take eight academic courses to complete the Diploma in Diaconal Ministries program. These courses are often called "Externals" because they are taken at an educational institution other than the Centre for Christian Studies. You should start taking external courses as early in your program as possible so you have the opportunity to integrate your learnings during learning circles and field education.

External academic courses:

- provide opportunities for students to experience a wider variety of learning and teaching styles,
- provide an opportunity for students to bring experiences of other teaching styles into the integrative process in CCS courses,
- provide opportunities for students to learn from a variety of theological perspectives and to practice articulating their perspective in dialogue,
- provide opportunities for students to learn together with people preparing for other expressions of ministry,
- enable other communities of learners to benefit from the experience of students in an integrative process of learning,
- provide opportunities to draw on resources that are available in the wider geography of Canada,
- increase the accessibility and reduce the cost of the program,
- enhance the resources and expertise among CCS staff, complementing the skills of CCS staff,
- further demonstrate CCS commitment to the value of scholarly work and affirms the importance of intellectual resources.

External Categories

Eight semester long courses (3 credit hours) are required for the Diploma program, from each of the following categories…

- Introduction to Christian Scriptures - an overview course of the content and context of the Christian Scriptures which introduces methods in biblical criticism; in

some situations these courses are in two parts (semesters), one part is sufficient, but then the Christian Scriptures Theme should be complementary.

- Introduction to Hebrew Scriptures - an overview course of the content and context of the Hebrew Scriptures which introduces methods in biblical criticism, in some situations these courses are in two parts (two semesters), one part is sufficient, but then the Hebrew Scriptures: Theme or Focus should be complementary.
- Introduction to Theology - an overview course that introduces theological concepts and methodology in theological thinking.
- Christian Scriptures: Theme or Focus - a specific course (generally would require a prerequisite introductory course) and where appropriate and possible, at a second or third year level, that concentrates on a book or books, a writer, a theme or issue.
- Hebrew Scriptures: Theme or Focus - a specific course (generally would require a prerequisite introductory course) that concentrates on a book or books, a writer, a theme or issue.
- Theology: Theme or Focus - a specific course (generally would require a prerequisite introductory course) that concentrates on a theological topic or particular school of theological approach.
- Church History - a survey course of church history: a complete overview of early church to modern era is strongly recommended, an overview from early church to reformation, and an overview from reformation to modern era may be used in some situations.
- Christian Ethics - an overview of methods in ethical thinking and approaches, not a "professional ethics" course.

Preparing for an External Academic Course

1. Familiarize yourself with the externals categories. A course on preaching, for example, wouldn't fit within the externals categories. A course on Paul's epistles probably would. Check with the CCS program administrator if you're not sure what externals categories you've fulfilled and what you still need.
2. Decide what format of course you are looking for. Can you do a term course once a week at a nearby university or theological school? Can you do a one-week intensive course in another city? Can you do an online course?
3. Research potential schools and courses. These are some schools recognized by CCS: Atlantic School of Theology, Carleton University, College of Emmanuel-St. Chad, Emmanuel College, Huntington University, Huron College, Iona College, Laurentian University, McMaster University, Queen's College (Nfld), Queen's Theological College, Queen's University, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, St. Stephen's College, St. Andrew's College, Trinity College, Thornloe College, United Theological College, University of Toronto, University

of Regina, University of Waterloo, University of Calgary, University of Winnipeg, Vancouver School of Theology, Western University, Wycliffe College, York University

4. Check with other students about potential courses. The CCS-moodle has a designated forum for discussions of academic courses. Increasingly, theological schools are willing to set courses up in response to a request when there are sufficient students. Initiative among students to determine course needs in common and identify dates for courses that would work is encouraged.
5. Request approval from CCS. Your primary staff will need to give approval before an external course can be counted, so make your request as far in advance of the registration deadline for the course as possible. Courses which are taken without prior approval may or may not be approved. Whether or not a course has been started will not be taken into account in the approval process.
6. Contact the theological school or university about the process of enrollment.
7. Inform the Registrar/Program Administrator. Once your external course has been approved by Program Staff, make sure that Scott knows and has it recorded in your student records. If a theological school or university requires a letter of permission to enrol you in a course, Scott can send you one. (It's particularly important to let Scott know about your external courses if you are applying for student loans, as banks or governmental bodies may ask for confirmation of your student activities.)
8. After you have completed your course and received a final mark, inform Scott so he can update your records. Make sure to include
    - the institution where you took the course (e.g. St. Stephen's College)
    - the course number and name of the course (e.g. THEO5230 Intro to Theology)
    - the year you completed it
    - the grade you received
    - which member of program staff approved the course

Transcripts

In order to graduate from CCS, we need official transcripts for all your external courses. (With many institutions you'll need to fill out a request form and pay a transcript fee.) We don't need official transcripts until your Integrating Year. Prior to that, a photocopy or an email will suffice. Provide CCS with course numbers and names, final marks, year you completed the course, and the name of the recognized educational institution.

Your external courses are part of your CCS student record and are included in your transcript. (An asterisk on your CCS transcript indicates that we have received an official transcript for your external course.)

Joint Degree Programs

CCS has agreements with St. Stephen's College in Edmonton and St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon, allowing for CCS courses to be counted for credit toward a Masters degree. If you are interested in a joint degree should apply with St. Stephen's or St. Andrew's by your second year at CCS, and should plan to do the majority, if not all, of your external courses with that institution.

For more information about the joint degree programs, contact CCS, St. Stephen's or St. Andrew's.

Integrating Year



The final year of the Diaconal Ministries program is called an "integrating year" because it asks students to pull together all they've learned over their years of study and to prepare for a life of leadership in the church and the world.

The Integrating Year includes three learning circles – 2 in person and one online…

Integration 1 – a 6-day circle focusing on theology, personal faith statements and official creeds, diaconal/vocational/ministry identity.

Integration 2 – a 6-session online connection focusing on denominational identity and polity.

Integration 3 – a 6-day circle focusing on preparation for active ministry.

Integration learning circles will contain many of the same elements as theme learning circles – readings, staff-facilitated and student-led sessions, review of learnings, etc, though they may be adapted to better suit the specific needs of the final year students.

The Integrating Year, like every year in the diaconal program, includes Praxis. There is a real emphasis on your learning plan in the final Praxis year, and space for more self-directed learning. Integration Year students still connect with other students through online gatherings, but the Integration Year cohort serve as each other's learning partners.

The Global Perspective Experience is often considered part of the Integrating year, as most students will take a GPE trip just prior to their Integrating Year and will still be integrating that experience as they enter the IY.

Global Perspectives



Toward the end of their program, diaconal ministry students will take part in a 10-14 day study trip to another part of the world with a recognized partner organization. The Global Perspective Experience (or GPE) provides an opportunity to step outside of one's comfort zone, make theological, social, political, and economic connections between Canadian and global contexts, and deepen one's understanding of accompaniment and solidarity.

Depending on where you travel to, the GPE can cost a couple thousand dollars, so budgeting and/or fundraising is in order.

The Global Perspectives "course" involves orientation and preparatory reflection prior to a trip, and intentional integration and action following.

GPE steps:

1. Check your prerequisites. You need to have completed 10 theme learning circles before going on a Global Perspectives trip.
2. Register for the GPE. This will give you access to the GPE moodle which has resources to help with your planning and preparation as well as assignments for integration. There is a tuition fee for the GPE in addition to any costs involved with the actual trip.
3. Talk to your primary Program Staff person about possibilities and plans. You may want to have conversation with other students about going together on a learning trip.
4. Do the prep. This involves practical details (like booking flights) as well as educational preparation (such as readings).
5. Go. Experience. Learn.
6. Integrate. The GPE moodle includes assignments, activities, and readings to help you make meaning of your global experience and integrate it into you ministry and action. (There is no set deadline for the GPE Integration project and assignment, as it will vary with each student's schedule. However, if you are doing this during your final year of the program, the assignment must be submitted far enough before your proposed graduation date to allow for marking.)

APPENDICES

How to Give and Receive Feedback

What is Feedback?

When people tell how another's behaviour is affecting them, what they are communicating is feedback. The technical term comes originally from the field of automation. (For example, the thermostat gives feedback to a furnace on how well the furnace is heating the thermostat.) It's a term that applies equally well to what goes on in groups.

Feedback may emerge in a number of ways…

- *Conscious:* nodding assent; or *unconscious*: falling asleep
- *Spontaneous:* "Thanks a lot"; or *solicited:* "Yes, it did help"
- *Verbal:* "no"; or *nonverbal:* leaving the room
- *Formal:* evaluation form; or *informal:* hand-clapping

Feedback can have the following helpful effects:

> Reinforces - Feedback may confirm behaviour by encouraging its repetition. "You really helped then when you clarified that."
>
> Corrects - Feedback may help bring behaviour in line with intention. "It would have helped me more if you had stood up to talk."
>
> Identifies - Feedback may help identify persons and their relationship. "Joe, I thought we were enemies, but we're not, are we?"
>
> Source: *Don't Panic: The Essential Youth Ministry,* Diocese of Niagara, pages 52 & 53

Feedback is best when...

•it is descriptive, rather than judgmental. By describing one's own reaction, it leaves the individual free to use it or not to use it as they sees fit. By avoiding judgmental evaluative language, it reduces the need for the individual to react defensively.

•it is specific, rather than general. To be told "you did a great job" is too general to be useful. Say, for example, "The way you organized the agenda really helped us to make decisions."

•it is appropriate, by taking into account the needs of both the receiver and giver of feedback. Feedback can be destructive when it serves only the needs of the one who gives the feedback and fails to consider the needs of the person on the receiving end.

It needs to be tailored to the situation, to be considerate of the circumstances of the receiver, and to be given in a supportive way.

•it is usable, rather than out-of-reach. Feedback needs to be directed toward behaviour which the receiver can do something about. Frustration is only increased when a person is reminded of some short-coming over which s/he has no control.

•it is well-timed. In general, feedback is most effective when it is given at the earliest, appropriate opportunity after the action or behaviour has been observed. Timing also includes a sensitivity to the person's readiness to hear it and to surrounding circumstances. For difficult feedback, ensuring that there is support available may be important.

•it is clear and honest. Feedback is not helpful when it is given so carefully and cautiously that the point is lost. Giving it straight out is the best policy. That way, the receiver does not need to second-guess what is being said and why it is being said. One way of checking to ensure that the communication has been clear is to ask the receiver to rephrase it to see if the feedback received corresponds to what the sender had in mind.

•it is requested, rather than imposed. Feedback is most useful when the receiver formulates a specific question or solicits a response. Of course, through the very act of placing oneself in a learning situation the receiver indicates that feedback is both essential and welcome.

•it represents a commitment to growth. Feedback is best when it is offered out of a commitment to the **person**. The intention of feedback is to help the other learn and grow. This means that the giver of feedback needs to be prepared to relate on an ongoing basis and offer further comments to indicate improvement over time.

Source: *adapted from: Andover Newton Theological School Field Education Program*

How to Give Feedback

A frequent error in giving feedback is to be too general. Helpful positive feedback needs to be clear and concise.

1) Introduce the Conversation
   e.g. "I would like to give you some positive feedback about the children's time you led in last week's service. Is now a good time for that?"

2) Describe the Behaviour and Context
   "I noticed that you had the children's attention throughout. Your voice was inviting and animated without being patronizing or overly dramatic. Your sincerity and affection for the children were evident in the way you offered them

eye contact and took their questions seriously. And you were able to be firm but kind when you asked the young boy not to bang his feet because it made it hard to hear and it was distracting."

3) Share Impact of the Behaviour
"I can relax when you offer leadership for the children's time. I know that you are confident and can handle the spontaneity of the children without being flustered or overwhelmed. I am deeply grateful that you treat them respectfully and listen to them. I think that is a great model for all of us who take our turn doing the children's time."

Supportive Climates

All of us need positive feedback. In the best case scenarios, the field placement setting will establish supportive climates. A supportive climate is characterized by:

1) Feedback is descriptive, not evaluative or judgmental. Events are described in objective terms.

2) Feedback is not an issue of control or imposing of one's own view but focuses on the problematic behaviour not on the person.

3) Feedback tends to be spontaneously expressed in a straight forward, honest fashion. People are open about their viewpoints and opinions and don't have hidden agendas or secretive motives.

4) Feedback is respectfully offered with empathetic attention to the other person's feelings, problems and value system. The other person's worth is affirmed.

5) Feedback is not a matter of "pulling rank" and is not offered in a competitive atmosphere which sets up comparisons in ability and status.

6) Feedback is tentative in nature. It is not overly certain of its correctness or its point of view.

Intercultural Considerations

Feedback is most constructive when it takes intercultural considerations seriously. Each individual brings their own cultural norms to a feedback conversation. As well, there may be an organizational culture with its own norms, often unexamined.

In some cultures, regular positive feedback is expected. In others, only extraordinary accomplishments would be acknowledged with feedback. A conversation about cultural norms is important at the beginning of a relationship which will include feedback. Is oblique feedback considered polite and direct feedback rude? Is saving

face important in the context? How does age or status impact offering and receiving feedback? Some learning may be required to gain cultural fluency.

Resource: Cross Cultural Communication from Professional Communications, Authors: J.R. Dingwall; Chuck Labrie; Trecia McLennon; and Laura Underwood

Preparing to Give Feedback

Before giving feedback, especially when it is critical or difficult, it is crucial to do some reflection in preparation.

1) Determine the best time and place

2) Identify the readiness of the person to receive feedback

- Was the feedback requested explicitly or implicitly?
- Was the feedback not requested?

3) Reflect on your motivation

- Am I interested in the other person's well-being? growth? future?
- Am I angry? seeking revenge? wanting my own way?

4) Reflect on intercultural considerations

- What do I know about the cultural background and norms of the person?
- What are my cultural norms about feedback?
- What adaptations do I need for effective cross-cultural communication?
- Who can mentor me in cultural fluency?

5) Reflect on the power dynamic of the situation

- In what ways is the other person vulnerable?
- In what ways do they have power over me?

6) Prepare yourself to match the tone, style and language of the other person

- Develop strategies so that the other person can hear and understand your feedback

7) Identify how you will introduce the conversation

- "I want to give you feedback about ..."
- "What I have noticed is..."
- "I would like to share my observations about last week's worship..."

8) Describe the behaviour without judgement

9) Practise

- if necessary, write out what you will say face to face
- rehearse by yourself or with a trusted colleague

How to Receive Feedback

There are helpful and less than helpful ways to respond to feedback.

The steps described below provide some appropriate guidelines for receiving feedback with maturity and grace.

1) Check Out the Comments

- repeat back the feedback and your understanding of the problematic behaviour

2) Ask Clarifying Questions

- make sure that you have understood to the satisfaction of the one who offered the feedback

3) Do Self Talk

- tell yourself that you can handle criticism
- wonder about the situation and practise being curious
- prompt yourself to listen and not interrupt

4) Thank the Person

- demonstrate appreciation for the commitment to relationship and learning
- remind yourself that this is likely a stressful situation for the other person too; it may have taken considerable courage to offer feedback

5) Identify Next Steps (if any)

- promise to think about the feedback
- be clear about what is being requested of you
- brainstorm alternative approaches or behaviours
- consider making appropriate changes

Do not...

- over-explain. Clarify in a sentence or two but learn to stop
- use this as an opportunity to give your own feedback. It may become escalating retaliation

- become silent or shut down. Which may be perceived as petulance or resistance
- blame others. Accept your responsibility
- make excuses. It only appears defensive and as if you are not taking the feedback seriously

Note: There is a CCS mini-course on giving and receiving feedback, if you need a refresher.

Confidentiality

Some Guidelines for Students

1. As in all areas of ministry, the people you meet and work with in your field placement and in learning circles are to be shown care and respect.
2. Each of us has our own story; our stories are ours to tell. Just as we would not want someone else to share our story casually, we need to trust and empower people with whom we work to tell their own stories.
3. If you are describing someone's life situation for an assignment, such as a case study or spiral reflection, take care to change any information that would identify the person *unless* you have that person's permission to include it.
4. When you are sharing with friends or family the new things you are learning in your field placement, take care to speak of people and their context respectfully, and not to share the particulars of their lives in a way that violates the trust and confidence they have shown you.
5. Discuss with all ministry/staff personnel and volunteers who have designated responsibilities in your placement setting what the norms are for sharing information about persons whom the ministry/agency/congregation/parish serves.
6. Become familiar with what the law requires in terms of reporting suspected abuse/neglect.

Violence and Harassment

The Centre for Christian Studies is committed to providing safe environments for work, worship and study, free from harassment and violence. Harassment in any form or manner will not be condoned or tolerated by our community that values mutual respect, dignity and the individual contributions of its employees, students and volunteers.

All complaints of harassment or violence toward anyone within the learning community—including staff or students, and elected members or volunteers—will be taken seriously and dealt with in a spirit of compassion and justice.

These are some excerpts from the CCS Harassment Policy (which can be found on the website). It applies to all aspects of your CCS work (field, learning circles, etc.). You, your learning facilitator, and your mentor will need to sign a form acknowledging that you've seen this policy.

It is everyone's responsibility to raise concerns about harassment, violence, and discrimination. It is also everyone's responsibility to take steps to address harassment, violence, and discrimination.

THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

The Centre for Christian Studies seeks to be a community of learning characterized by relationships of mutual respect, free from violence, exploitation, harassment, discrimination and abuse. We believe that such relationships are a reflection of God's intention for human community. We affirm the right of all persons to dignity and freedom from fear of violation.

Violence, exploitation, harassment, discrimination and abuse distort relationships and lead to alienation and distrust between individuals and within communities, regardless of the intention of the actions. These actions are sinful and perpetuate injustice. The church is called to denounce injustice and to uphold a vision of faithful living and right relationships.

DESCRIPTION/DEFINITIONS

Harassment is defined as any unwanted physical, sexual, or verbal conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwanted, and is a form of discrimination. Harassment may involve a wide range of behaviour, from verbal innuendo and subtle suggestions to overt demands and physical abuse, and it includes psychological harassment.

Sexual harassment is defined as any attempt to coerce an unwilling person into a sexual relationship, to subject a person to unwanted sexual attention, or to punish a refusal to comply.

Violence is defined as the attempt or exercise of physical force by a person against a worker in a workplace that causes or could cause injury. It also includes statements or behaviours that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in the workplace, that could cause physical injury.

What is Harassment?

There are two main types of harassment. One type includes inappropriate conduct in any form about a person's:

- age, race
- creed, religion
- gender, sex, sexual orientation
- marital status, family status, economic status
- political belief, association or activity
- disability, size, weight, physical appearance
- nationality, ancestry or place of origin

A second main type relates to what is sometimes referred to as "bullying" behaviour that may involve:

- repeated humiliation or intimidation that adversely affects a person's psychological or physical well-being
- a single instance so serious that it has a lasting, harmful effect

Harassment may be written, verbal, electronic, physical, a gesture or display, or any combination of these. It may happen only once, but often happens repeatedly.

What is not Harassment?

Reasonable feedback and actions by staff to help manage, guide or direct students in their learning are not harassment. Appropriate assessment, feedback, reporting, or change of student status decisions are not harassment.

Please consult the full "Violence and Harassment Policy" on the CCS website *(*http://ccsonline.ca/about-ccs/policies/) and/or contact the Principal if you have concerns.

Computer Requirements

CCS students will need

- Frequent access to a computer with an up-to-date internet browser and email capacity. Course information, plus readings and other materials, will be delivered through an online platform (which currently is an online program called Moodle). Online posts in course announcement and discussion forums are often forwarded to students' personal email.
- Students should be able to participate in occasional video conferencing (eg. for online circles, learning community gatherings, field orientation with local committee and program staff via Zoom, etc.)
- Capacity to open and read PDF documents. Adobe Reader is a free program, but there are others, paid or free, some of which allow students to edit or make notes on PDFs. It is up to student whether they print a hard copy of their readings, agendas, handouts, etc. Some students simply save them to their laptops or tablets for on-screen reading.
- Ability to create electronic documents in a .doc (Word document) or .rtf (Rich Text Format) format. Familiarity with a presentation program (eg. PowerPoint) will also be useful.
- Ability to print electronic files that the student wants to have handy or forms and assignments that need to be submitted or distributed in hard copy form.
- Ability to submit files online (via online platform) and to attach electronic files to email messages.
- Students are not required to but may bring a laptop or tablet with them to learning circle for readings, assignments, research, etc.
- Students are encouraged to set up a cloud-based file storage account (eg. Dropbox, OneDrive, etc.) to store assignments or share large files. It is strongly suggested that students have a plan for regularly backing up electronic files. (Eg. assignments in a Dropbox are also saved on a home computer; assignments on a laptop are regularly copied to an external hard drive; etc.)
- Students should be comfortable with various forms of electronic communications. Eg. One-on-one emails with program staff, participation in online course forum discussions, optional social media participation (eg. CCS student Facebook group).

- Students are not required but encouraged to subscribe to CCS's Common Threads email newsletter and visit the CCS website for information and news about the wider CCS community.

If you have any issues computer issues, you can contact Scott - sdouglas@ccsonline.ca. He doesn't promise to be able to help, but he can be sympathetic.

CCS Library



The library is a resource for CCS Program Staff and students. CCS students can borrow materials for up to 6 weeks. Upon request, library materials can be mailed out to you, with a pre-paid mailing label so you can return them by mail as well.

Materials can be renewed by emailing the librarian (Scott). There are overdue fines for late returns.

The CCS library is part of a partnership with the University of Winnipeg library, the Canadian Mennonite University library, William & Catherine Booth College library, the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, and the Institute for Urban Studies. Our students and staff can borrow from their libraries, and their students and staff can borrow from ours. E-books from the University of Winnipeg are not available to non-UW students (but can be accessed if you are physically in their library.)

Search the online catalogue at http://ccsonline.ca/resources/library/

The CCS-Moodle Frequently Asked Questions

Moodle is an open-source software platform for education. The name Moodle has two meanings. First, it's an acronym for **Modular Object Oriented Developmental Learning Environment**. Moodle is also Australian slang that means "to toss around an idea in your head for a while to look at different aspects of it."

The CCS Moodle is where you'll find your course readings. It's where you'll submit your assignments. It's where you can find announcements and take part in conversation among students. During a learning circle you might also find session agendas and handout materials in the Moodle.

Hopefully you'll find it easy to use. If you run into problems, feel free to contact Scott, the Program Coordinator.

How do I log into the CCS-Moodle?

- Go to the moodle at https://ccsonline.ca/moodle/
- The link to the login page is usually in the top right corner of your window. (If you see your picture or initials in the top right corner, you're already logged in.)
- Enter your username and password and click "Log in"
- If you don't have a CCS-Moodle account yet, contact the Program Coordinator
- If you've recently been added to the moodle, there might be an email from the CCS-Moodle in your email inbox or junkmail folder with your login credentials.
- Once you're logged in, your picture or initials should appear in the top right corner of the window and the home page will list your CCS courses and learning circles

What if I forget my login credentials?

- On the login page you can click the "Lost password?" link.
- Enter your username or the email address, and click "Search". If Moodle recognizes your username or email, you will receive an automated message with instructions for resetting your password.
- If this doesn't work, contact the Program Coordinator. He can reset your password manually.

I don't see a course I was expecting on my home page. What now?

- It could be because you haven't registered yet. Do that.

- It could be that the moodle page for that course hasn't been created yet or your enrollment hasn't been activated yet. Check with the Program Coordinator.

How do I contact the Program Coordinator?

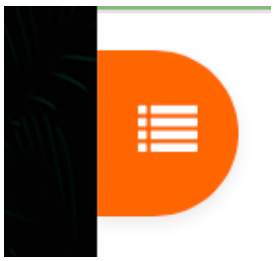
- There's an email address and phone number in the header and footer of the moodle window.

How do I find my way around the CCS-Moodle?

- If you click on any of the courses listed under "My Courses" on your homepage, you'll go to the page for that course.
- If you click the Centre for Christian Studies logo at the top of any page or the "Home" link near the top right corner of your page, you'll go back to your homepage.
- The top right corner also has links for "Dashboard" and "My courses" (see below)



- Somewhere on the right side of your window you'll likely find an orange tab (or green if you hover over it) that you can click to open a "block drawer". This sidebar has a navigation block that will help you jump to a particular page on the CCS-Moodle (or even a particular item on a page if you want to be really fancy). You can click on the "X" at the top of the block drawer to push it back out the way.



- If you're in a course page, there's a similar tab on the left side of your window. This "course index" is like a table of contexts listing all the items that are included on the course page. (Or you can just scroll down the page.) Like the block drawer, you can close the course index by clicking the "X".
- Course pages often have sections (eg. "Readings" or "Sessions"). The section titles are usually coloured. If you click the section title it will either open up to show the contents of that section, or close to hide them. If you close sections you don't need at the moment, you can save yourself some scrolling.
- If you're way down near the bottom of a moodle page and you want to jump back to the top, there's a little green up button, probably in the bottom right corner of the window, that will take you to the top. Or you can just scroll.

The Moodle looks different than the last time I was here. Why?

- It might be because there was an update from one version to another. Updates sometimes include changes of layout, addition or removal of certain functions,

etc. If some of these FAQ comments don't seem to match the Moodle you're looking at, that might be why. Hopefully they're close enough to be helpful.

How do I change my email address, hometown, picture?

- Click your photo or initials in the top right corner of the window. Select "Profile".
- Click "Edit Profile" and make the changes you want. The "City/Town" field usually includes a province abbreviation (eg. ON or BC), unless you are from outside of Canada, in which case it might also include your country.
- If you're changing your email address, please let the Program Coordinator know so it can be updated for other non-Moodle communications.
- First name, last name, and email address are required, and City/town is helpful. Other information is optional. A picture is nice too, but not required.

Do I have any assignments due soon?

- If you check your block drawer when you're on the homepage, or if you visit your Dashboard, you'll find a calendar that will show upcoming assignment due date. The block drawer also shows the same info in an "Upcoming events" block.
- If you check your block drawer when you're on a course page, it will show you any upcoming events *for that course*.
- You can also check the Assignments section of your various course pages.

How do I submit my assignment?

- Click on the title of the assignment or the assignment icon. This will take you to a description of the assignment. (There might also be an attached PDF with further information.)
- Under the description there should be a green button that says "Add submission". (Note: Some assignment don't require you to submit anything, for example something that you might be bringing or doing in-person at a learning circle.) Below the "Add submission" button there's a section that tells you if you've already submitted something, if it's been marked, how long you have until the assignment is overdue, etc.
- Click "Add submission". You'll find a box into which you can drag your assignment. We recommend giving your file a name that indicates who you are. (eg. "LoP Spiral – Sharon"). Once you see your assignment load you can click the orange "Save changes" button.

Critical Thinking Cheatsheet

Want to exercise critical thinking skills? Ask these questions whenever you discover or discuss new Information. These are broad and versatile questions that have limitless applications!

WHO

… benefits from this?
… is this harmful to?
… makes decisions about this?
… is most directly affected?
… have you also heard discuss this?
… would be the best person to consult?
… will be the key people In this?
… deserves recognition for this?

WHAT

… are the strengths/weaknesses?
… is another perspective?
… is another alternative?
… would be a counter-argument?
… is the best/worst case scenario?
… is most/least Important?
… can we do to make a positive change?
… is getting In the way of our action?

WHERE

… would we see this in the real world?
… are there similar concepts/situations?
… is there the most need for this?
… in the world would this be a problem ?
… can we get more information?
… do we go for help with this?
… will this idea take us?
… are the areas for improvement?

WHEN

… is this acceptable/unacceptable?
… would this benefit our society?
… would this cause a problem?
… is the best time to take action?
… will we know we've succeeded?
… has this played a part In our history?
… can we expect this to change?
… should we ask for help with this?

WHY

… is this a problem/ challenge?
… is it relevant to me/others?
… is this the best/worst scenario?
… are people influenced by this?
… should people know about this?
… has it been this way for so long?
… have we allowed this to happen?
… is there a need for this today?

HOW

… is this similar to __ ?
… does this disrupt things?
… do we know the truth about this?
… will we approach this safely?
… does this benefit us/others?
… does this harm us/ others?
… do we see this In the future?
… can we change this for our good?

Source: The Ultimate Cheatsheet for Critical Thinking, globaldigitalcitizen.org

CCS Learning Guidelines

CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN STUDIES
Imagine Church Differently

Introduction

The Centre for Christian Studies uses the "Learning Guidelines" as a means of determining whether a student demonstrates increasing competence in each of the areas identified as essential for functioning effectively in ministries of education, pastoral care, and social justice. These guidelines are used by student colleagues and Program Staff in the Review of Learnings/Assessment process at the end of the Leadership Development Module, during each of the Learning Circles in the theme years, and in the Integrating Year. They are also used by Program Staff in the final year-end review for the Theme Years and Integrating Year. We believe that an acceptable degree of competence is essential in each category of the guidelines in order for a student to progress from one year to the next and to complete the program. Students will normally be assessed on their individual competence for ministry based on a combination of institutional expectations as stated in these guidelines, their own learning goals, and demonstrated cumulative progress from year to year. We believe that every person always has more to learn.

The Centre for Christian Studies has a particular responsibility to certify to The United Church of Canada that, upon graduating from CCS, a student has met the testamur/educational requirements for commissioning as a Diaconal Minister as prescribed in *The Manual of The United Church of Canada*. These Guidelines are the primary resource used for making that determination.

Guidelines (amended and approved by CCS Central Council, May 2013, reordered in 2014)

1. Formation

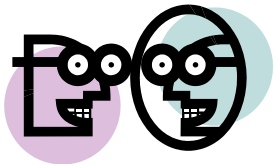
1.1 Spirituality

- Understands and tends one's own spirituality.
- Lives out of a sense of gratitude and hope.
- Respects a variety of spiritual understandings and practices.
- Encourages others in their spiritual journeys.



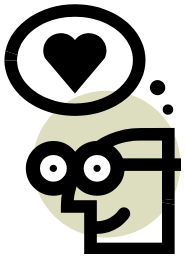
- Articulates one's own understanding of prayer and how that is related in ministry.
- Accepts different understandings of prayer.

1.2 Self Awareness/Self Understanding



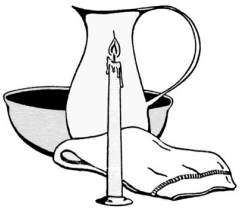
- Has a realistic sense one's strengths and weaknesses.
- Is gracious toward oneself and practices self-care.
- Stretches and challenges oneself appropriately.
- Understands and accepts of one's own sexuality.
- Acknowledges the diversity of one's gifts in ministry.
- Is able to be self-directed in one's work.
- Discerns when to be serious and when to be playful.

1.3 Self in Relation to Others



- Holds others with respect and positive regard.
- Recognizes, and appropriately monitors, one's own privilege, power, and vulnerability,
- Develops and sustains respectful relationships in a variety of ministry contexts.
- Works effectively in a variety of team configurations.
- Is aware of differences of race, class, age, sexual orientation, gender, culture, language, abilities and religion and understands the implications for ministry.
- Demonstrates interpersonal skills for ministry.
- Understands, and is committed to, appropriate boundaries in ministry.
- Exercises good judgment and understands how one's words and actions affect others.

1.4 Diaconal Identity



- Understands and values the history of diaconal ministry - biblically and within Church tradition.
- Is familiar with diaconal networks - denominationally, regionally, and internationally.

- Understands and is committed to diaconal perspectives on education, pastoral care, and social justice.
- Identifies and articulates one's own role and identity in diaconal ministry.

1.5 Integrated Understanding of Ministry

- Is grounded and centred in one's own value and worth, perspective and world view, faith and vision.
- Acknowledges one's own gifts and skills for ministry.
- Understands one's vocation as related to the whole church.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the importance of accountability in ministry.
- Integrates one's knowledge, understanding, attitudes, skills, and self-awareness in ministry.
- Demonstrates the ability to integrate theologically and theoretically; prophetic, pastoral, educational, spiritual, administrative and liturgical elements of the practice of ministry.
- Understands oneself as minister and can relate to others within that role.
- Understands the significance of global perspectives for ministry and for the life and work of the church.
- Understands how life transitions affect self and others and is able to implement personal strategies to cope effectively with transition and change, including developing support networks.

2. Christian Heritage

2.1 Theology



- Explores and articulates one's theology.
- Demonstrates understanding of Christian doctrines.
- Discerns how doctrine is integrated into one's faith.
- Respects a variety of theological perspectives.
- Facilitates others in reflecting on their own theological beliefs.
- Sustains a theology of hope and vision in a variety of situations.

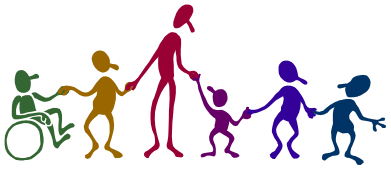
2.2 Faith and Church Tradition



- Understands the history and diversity of the Christian tradition, both denominationally and ecumenically.
- Can identify one's own theological, spiritual, and cultural roots in Christian tradition.
- Understands how theology informs one's faith and relates to one's worldview.
- Demonstrates skills in biblical interpretation and theological reflection.
- Demonstrates theological beliefs which confront hierarchy, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, classism, racism, ableism, militarism, religious and cultural discrimination, and anthropocentrism[1].
- Demonstrates a theology and spirituality of respect for creation.
- Values a variety of theologies of the church and understands the strengths and limitations of each.
- Understands the polity and the ethos of one's own denomination.
- Functions effectively within church structures.
- Is familiar with the basic structures of both the Anglican Church of Canada and The United Church of Canada.

3. Context and Culture

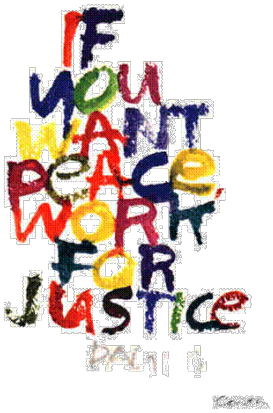
3.1 Diversity



- Appreciates a variety of cultural, social, political and religious perspectives.
- Has knowledge of and understands denominations and faith traditions other than one's own.
- Willing to enhance ecumenical and interfaith relations.
- Acknowledges and respects cultures other than one's own.
- Demonstrates a readiness for nurturing intercultural connections.
- Understands the historical place of aboriginal peoples in Canadian society and the impact of colonialism, racism and residential schools, and demonstrates a willingness to respectfully engage these concerns.

[1] a perspective/assumption that human beings are more important than the rest of Creation

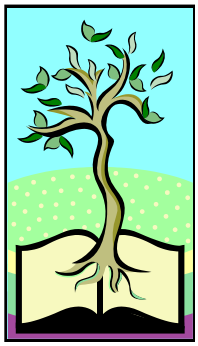
3.2 Social Ministry



- Understands the historical and contemporary mission of the church in the context of justice.
- Understands social analysis, is able to use different models of social analysis, and can facilitate others in doing social analysis.
- Understands structures and their impact on people's lives.
- Functions in a variety of institutional structures.
- Understands how socialization and ideological perspectives influence worldviews, theology, and perceptions of injustice/justice.
- Has an analysis of, and can make connections amongst sexism, heterosexism, racism, ageism, ableism, classism, militarism, and environmental degradation,
- Understands globalization, its impact, and the implications for ministry.
- Understands the similarities and differences between social service and social change.
- Understands the complexities of, and is committed to, solidarity.
- Demonstrates skills in developing strategies for transformation using community and church networks.
- Understands advocacy and is able to advocate for self and others, individually and systemically.
- Understands spirituality as an integral element of social ministry and spiritual health as a source of hope.
- Encourages others to offer their gifts and skills in social ministry.
- Is committed to social ministry as an essential part of the ministry of the faith community.

4. Ministry Leadership

4.1 Learning



- Understands learning as a life-long process and commitment.
- Approaches learning as an educator/co-learner.
- Knows and understands one's own preferred learning style.
- Understands a variety of learning styles and their implications for ministry.

- Values self-directed learning and is able to learn as a self-directed learner.
- Sets and articulates intentional goals for learning.
- Demonstrates skills in, and appreciates the value of, effective research.
- Integrates theory and experience for effective ministry.
- Assesses and evaluates one's growth and performance.
- Seeks and utilizes support for learning.
- Learns from positive and critical feedback.



4.2 Group Process

- Understands self as leader/facilitator.
- Demonstrates awareness of how one's needs and behaviour affect group dynamics.
- Analyzes context, process, and dynamics in order to help groups function more effectively.
- Utilizes a variety of leadership styles.
- Envisions, initiates, designs, plans, implements, and evaluates in a variety of group contexts.
- Nurtures spiritual health in group life in a variety of ways.
- Facilitates the participation and leadership of others.

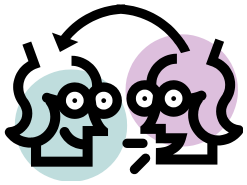
4.3 Leadership

- Demonstrates ability to provide leadership that is visionary, prophetic, spiritually grounded and compassionate.
- Discerns what kind of leadership is necessary in various contexts, to take appropriate initiative, and to encourage and support others in taking leadership.
- Understands transition in the context of ministry and is able to offer effective leadership.

4.4 Communication

- Demonstrates ability to listen attentively and with comprehension.
- Gives and receives feedback appropriately.

- Deals with conflict effectively and engages others appropriately in conflict situations.
- Speaks with confidence in small and large groups.
- Communicates clearly orally and in written form.
- Understands the importance of context in communication.



- Demonstrates an ability to use oral and written communication that is appropriate.

4.5 Organizational and Administrative Skills

- Understands and values administration as an aspect of ministry.
- Plans, organizes, sets priorities and manages time effectively.
- Demonstrates a consistent ability to meet deadlines.
- Demonstrates administrative skills such as budgeting, organizing meetings, and supervision.

4.6 Pastoral Care

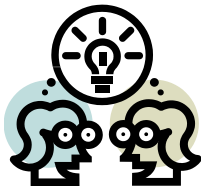
- Has an awareness and acceptance of one's roles and responsibilities in pastoral care.
- Is a non-anxious, compassionate presence.
- Understands the theory and theology of pastoral care.
- Offers effective and appropriate pastoral care in a variety of situations.



- Works effectively in pastoral situations that may be stressful and uncomfortable.
- Demonstrates analysis and understanding of diversity and its implications for pastoral care.
- Demonstrates understanding of, and commitment to, responsible pastoral ethics.
- Understands how pastoral care can be offered and experienced through worship and advocacy.
- Understands the differences and connections amongst pastoral care, pastoral counselling, and spiritual direction.
- Understands one's own expertise/limitations in pastoral counselling, when to refer, and how to set up a network of qualified people for referrals.
- Understands how dynamics of power and vulnerability affect pastoral care.

- Understands an appropriate attention to one's own and others' spiritual needs as essential in pastoral care.
- Encourages others to offer their gifts and skills in pastoral care.
- Is committed to pastoral care as an essential part of the ministry of the faith community.

4.7 Education in the Faith Community



- Understands educational theory and has educational skills grounded in theology and ministry.
- Determines and applies educational theories appropriate to various situations.
- Plans learning experiences relevant to life issues and the global context.
- Finds, creates, adapts resources and curriculum.
- Nurtures the faith of others and facilitates their learning.
- Enables others to deal with differences within a faith community.
- Encourages others to offer their gifts and skills in educational ministry.
- Is committed to educational ministry as an essential part of the ministry of the faith community.

4.8 Liturgical Ministry



- Provides liturgical leadership, being aware of one's own gifts, strengths/weaknesses, and preferred leadership styles.
- Understands the connections in liturgy with education, pastoral care, and social ministry.
- Demonstrates understanding and appropriate sensitivity of diversity and its implications for liturgical ministry.
- Demonstrates an appreciation for ritual in relation to life experiences.
- Designs and leads liturgy that is responsive to a diversity of spiritual needs and expressions.
- Supports others in identifying their liturgical and ritual needs.
- Develops, finds, and adapts liturgies and rituals to meet different needs.
- Prepares sermons that are appropriate to a variety of contexts.

- Supports and empowers others to create and lead in liturgy.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the theology of sacraments and is able to offer leadership in the sacramental ministry of the church.

4.9 Learning in Community

- Interacts effectively with others to form and sustain an intentional learning community
- demonstrates commitment over time to one's own and others' learning in community
- accepts and appreciates one's own and others' discomfort and vulnerability as part of learning in community
- shows awareness of and takes responsibility for how one's emotions impact on group process
- creates and contributes to an environment conducive to risk-taking and openness to learning in community
- develops and shares meaningful goals for learning in community
- demonstrates skills of analysis, critical thinking, and conceptual awareness while leading in team and learning in community
- is receptive, through reading and study, to voices beyond the immediate learning community
- facilitates learning with others (listens actively, encourages and supports emerging ideas, probes beneath the surface, seeks more information, clears up confusion, shares solutions, includes others, makes links, holds silence when appropriate)
- integrates discoveries and insights arising from an action-reflection model of learning
- respects the unique strengths, gifts, styles and learning edges of others when leading in team
- respects and attends to the lived experiences of marginalization in oneself and others
- makes connections in community between one's own and others' spiritual practice and faith experience