



# Master of Divinity

## FIELD EDUCATION HANDBOOK

### 2025-2026



**Santa Clara**  
Jesuit School of Theology

# Welcome

Dear Student,

Welcome to the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University (JST-SCU). Field education is an engaging and dynamic part of the JST-SCU Master of Divinity degree program and your ministerial formation. It is my privilege to direct the Field Education Program at JST-SCU and to work with you during your time at the School.

Field education provides students with the opportunity to engage in supervised ministry in the San Francisco Bay Area. JST-SCU's mission to serve the Church and society is expressed through M.Div. students' ministerial service in the local community.

This handbook provides an overview of Field Education at JST-SCU and a description of the School's Field Education courses, Field Education guidelines, requirements, and policies.

I look forward to working with you during your course of studies. Please feel free to contact me with questions.

Best wishes,

Deborah Ross, S.T.L., Ph.D.  
Senior Lecturer and Director of Ministerial Formation



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# JST-SCU Field Education Overview

Field education forms an essential component of ministerial formation at JST-SCU.

As described in the Master of Divinity Degree Program Handbook 2025-2026, the “M.Div. degree is guided by three interrelated formation goals, as follows:

- Ministerial Identity: Focus on students’ respective ministerial identities as lay ecclesial ministers, Jesuits, and other religious.
- Ministerial Praxis: Focus on pastoral praxis, supervision, and mentoring.
- Ministerial Integration: Focus on the integration of theology with ministerial and pastoral experiences.”

Throughout the M.Div. program, students are invited to reflect on the three interrelated goals, as they participate in field education. During the FE-2621 Theology of Ministry and Practice course and the FE-2151 Field Education Practicum, taught by Deborah Ross, Director of Ministerial Formation (DMF), students reflect on their respective ministerial identities. Ministerial identity is informed by praxis and its integration with academic studies. Reflection on the three goals occurs as an iterative process, much like a hermeneutical circle. The courses provide the opportunity for joint formation for Jesuit scholastics, other religious, and lay students, and include theological reflection, communal experience, study, conversation, and prayer. Ministerial integration is also addressed in the third year MDV 4401 Seminar, which focuses on preparation for the M.Div. Comprehensive Examination. This seminar is taught by the M.Div. Program Director, a responsibility that rotates among the full-time JST-SCU faculty members.

JST-SCU is committed to the culturally contextualized study of theology. M.Div. students undertake supervised field education in the San Francisco Bay Area. Field education provides the opportunity for contextual ministry in service of the people of God in non-profit agencies, parishes, prison ministry, healthcare ministry, and high school or university campus ministries.

M.Div. students participate in a yearly retreat morning or afternoon with their cohorts. The purpose of this reflection time is to focus attention on students’ common call to ministry and their efforts to live in faithfulness to that call. Students may also participate in JST-SCU ministerial skills courses and workshops designed to enhance ministerial skills.

The [\*Research Report on Lay Ecclesial Formation at the Jesuit School of Santa Clara University\*](#), authored by Deborah Ross (2018), explored the character of lay ecclesial ministry and opportunities to enhance lay formation at the school. A notable theme was the cultivation of a theology of friendship and collaboration among lay, Jesuit, and religious students (see p. 47):

“Theologian Bernard Cooke describes human friendship as the basic sacrament. Friendship, with its sacramental and hence revelatory dimension, that is expressive of God’s love, is a paradigm that JST students can be encouraged to live into as students

both lay and Jesuit, minister to one another and support each other's vocational call. ...the call to collaboration and dialogue between lay and those who will be ordained stems from shared liturgical life at the School and the shared life of the assembly. A theology of collaboration between lay and religious at the School, rooted in the celebration of the liturgy, may be expressed through a lived theology of friendship.”

Field education courses support the development of a theology of friendship among M.Div. students.



# Field Education

M.Div. students engage in ministry and theological studies and are encouraged to apply their knowledge and skills to interpret ministry experiences, shape their ministerial practices, and develop resources, as appropriate. This integration of learning and practice is enhanced through field education courses that provide opportunities for reflection.

## Field Education Courses

M.Div. students complete nine Field Education (FE) credits through the following course sequence:

### **FE-2621 Theology of Ministry and Practice (three credits)**

This three-credit course explores a contemporary theology of ministry to equip students to serve as reflective ministerial practitioners. Students will consider their ministerial vocations and ecclesial identities and the call to be missionary disciples within the context of a global Church. In addition to ecclesiological themes and models of ministry, the course addresses topics in ministerial ethics, including collaborative leadership. Students will be introduced to various ministerial opportunities in the San Francisco Bay Area to assist with their selection of field education placements commencing in the Spring 2026 Semester.

### **FE-2151 Field Education Practicum (six credits)**

During the spring semester of year one through the fall semester of year three, M.Div. students will complete two FE credits per semester (for a total of six FE credits across three semesters). A student may undertake field education in the fall semester of his/her third year, pending approval.

Within the FE-2151 Practicum, M.Div. students will engage in supervised field education ministry at their respective sites in the San Francisco Bay Area, write theological reflection papers integrating themes from their JST-SCU courses, and attend theological reflection sessions and cohort classes. Students are encouraged to practice collaborative leadership, self-care, and ministerial boundaries at their ministry sites. See below for field education requirements.

Field education courses are guided by the three ministerial formation goals – Ministerial Identity, Ministerial Praxis, and Ministerial Integration – and various M.Div. degree Student Learning Objectives, particularly Objectives four, five, and six:

“M.Div. students will...

- develop practices of prayer and discernment appropriate to their circumstances, with a particular grounding in Ignatian principles and spirituality (Student Learning Objective 4).
- demonstrate strong professional/ministerial ethics, including collaborative leadership, self-care, and clear ministerial boundaries (Student Learning Objective 5).

- articulate a deepening sense of their ministerial identity that emerges in their prayer and theological reflection on pastoral experience (Student Learning Objective 6).”

## Selecting a Field Education Placement

M.Div. 1 students will begin supervised field education placements in Spring 2026. During the Fall 2025 Semester, students are invited to explore field education placement options. See page eight for JST-SCU M.Div. Field Education sites.

Theological Field Education supports ministerial formation by helping students:

- Understand their roles as public ministers, while deepening their ministerial identities.
- Address challenges that surface in the process.
- Cultivate and enhance ministerial skills, dispositions, and theological reflection skills.
- Continue to discern God’s call, especially as mediated by the People of God.

When selecting future field education placements students are invited to:

- Develop new skills or hone existing skill sets.
- Pray about placement options and discern possibilities with their spiritual directors.
- Select supervisors who are experienced mentors to support their learning.
- Consider partnering with a cohort peer to engage in collaborative ministry.
- Select placements within a 30-minute travel radius from JST-SCU (maximum 20 miles). Exceptions apply for SCU Mission Campus placements.
- Lay students are requested to consult the DMF about potential travel reimbursements; approved placements may also serve as paid employment.

JST-SCU may, in certain cases, terminate a Field Education placement. In these circumstances a student will need to find another field education placement.

## Field Education Approval Process

Field Education placements are a collaborative process between the student, JST-SCU, and the ministry site. To ensure a timely start, M.Div. 1 students are requested to undertake the following:

- Meet at least once with the DMF during the Fall 2025 Semester to discuss options.
- Obtain approval from the DMF and, if applicable, the JST-SCU Rector or superior.
- Demonstrate readiness for ministry (see “Readiness for Ministry” policy, pages 9-10).
- For ministry at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center, complete clearance procedures before starting.
- For non-traditional or secular field education activities, submit a two-page paper to the DMF, addressing:
  - The ministerial nature of the placement.
  - Criteria for assessing ministerial activities.
  - Anticipated learning and development of ministerial skills.

- How the site supervisor will support theological reflection.
- Students without a year of prior ministry experience are requested to choose a placement with a supervisor known to JST-SCU who has previously supervised a JST-SCU student.
- Students are requested to promptly notify the DMF if their potential site supervisor has not previously supervised a JST-SCU student.

In addition:

- M.Div. students engaging in spiritual direction as a field education activity are required to have completed prior training in spiritual direction.
- International M.Div. students should submit a Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Request to SCU's Global Engagement office each semester before starting field education.

As part of the school's placement process, JST-SCU is required to receive a completed SCU Community Engagement Agreement and Certificate of Insurance from a field education site before a student may start his or her placement.

### **FE-2151 Field Education Practicum Requirements**

The following are requirements for beginning and continuing field education placements:

- M.Div. 1 students are required to complete a Field Education Learning Agreement in consultation with the site supervisor and DMF, describing ministerial activities, goals, and the supervision schedule.
- During each semester of field education, M.Div. students will regularly communicate with their respective on-site supervisors, the DMF, and the JST-SCU Field Education Supervisor.
- As students work toward a total of 250 hours of field education ministry during the M.Div. degree program, students are requested to complete five to six hours of ministry per week during the semester. This includes preparation time, and meetings with site supervisors; travel time is excluded.
- Students are requested to log their hours via Google Drive spreadsheets.
- Students are requested to attend theological reflection sessions and write two theological reflection papers per semester, as described on the FE-2151 course syllabus. See the "Theological Reflection" section on page 12.
- Students will participate in one meeting per semester with both the JST-SCU Field Education Supervisor and their on-site supervisor. These meetings, and a site visit by the JST-SCU Field Education Supervisor, will occur unless otherwise indicated.
- M.Div. 2 students will be asked to complete a brief Ministerial Self-assessment before the end of the year two spring semester.

# JST-SCU M.Div. Field Education Sites

M.Div. students are requested to select placements from the following sites:

## Healthcare Ministry

- Kaiser Foundation Hospital San Leandro – ACPE Program

## Non-profit Agencies

- [Faith in Action East Bay](#), Oakland
- [Oakland Catholic Worker](#)
- [The Healing WELL](#), San Francisco

## Parish Ministry

- [Newman Hall-Holy Spirit Parish](#), Berkeley
- [St. Elizabeth Parish](#), Oakland
- [St. Felicitas Church](#), San Leandro
- [St. John Vianney Church](#), Walnut Creek
- [St. Mary Magdalen Church](#), Berkeley

## Prison Ministry

- [San Quentin Rehabilitation Center \(SQRC\)](#)

## Teaching and High School Ministry

- [Bishop O'Dowd High School](#), and the [Living Lab | Center for Environmental Studies](#), Oakland
- [St. Mary's College High School](#), Berkeley

## University Ministry

- Santa Clara University, [Division of Mission and Ministry](#):
  - [Campus Ministry](#)
  - [The Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education](#)
- [The Joan & Ralph Lane Center for Catholic Social Thought & the Ignatian Tradition](#), University of San Francisco
- [University Ministry](#), University of San Francisco

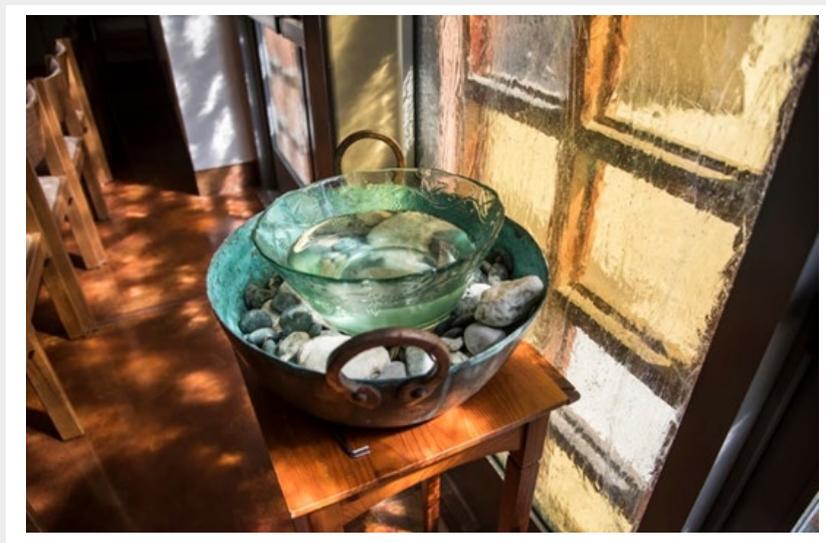
# JST-SCU Policy for Determining Readiness for Ministry

The Jesuit School of Theology three-year Master of Divinity degree is an academic and professional degree. The degree meets the needs for both the academic training and pastoral formation of students preparing for ministry in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. JST-SCU M.Div. students should possess the personal maturity and faith commitment commensurate with preparation for full-time ministry. JST-SCU admits students to the M.Div. program who have demonstrated prior experience of ministry, having completed at least one-year of post-College ministry experience. Some M.Div. degree students will have less prior ministry experience than others.

Throughout their studies, students are expected to display professional behavior in the classroom, and at the School, demonstrating collaboration with others and awareness of personal boundaries. Additionally, as part of the degree, students are provided with the opportunity for supervised experience in pastoral ministry. M.Div. students will work and collaborate with the Director of Ministerial Formation. The School will assess students' readiness for beginning field education placements during the first semester of the M.Div. degree. The DMF, together with the JST-SCU Associate Dean, will determine students' readiness to proceed to their field education placements.

Given the School's dedication to preparing future ministers for the Church, we take seriously students' readiness for ministry. Prior to commencing field education placements, students' readiness for ministry will be assessed as follows. Students will:

- Demonstrate personal maturity and interpersonal behavior in the classroom and in conduct at the School;
- Complete the FE-2621 Theology of Ministry and Practice course requirements; and
- Participate in a meeting with the DMF in the fall semester of the first year.



These requirements must be completed before a student's enrolment in a supervised ministerial placement is approved. If needed, the DMF may also consult with a student's course instructors about whether the student's maturity, faith commitment, and professional behaviors are suitable for full-time ministry. If the DMF is provided with information indicating a student's lack of readiness for participating in a field education placement, including failure to complete any of the above requirements, a student may be denied, or may be required to delay, enrollment in a field education placement. In these circumstances the student will be advised on an appropriate course of action. A student may be required to seek opportunities for further professional and personal growth, to apply for a field education placement at a later stage, and/or to consider transferring to another degree program.

If a student disagrees with any additional JST-SCU requirements he or she may request a review by the Associate Academic Dean, Professor Jerome Baggett, Ph.D. The Associate Dean will review the information presented and consult with the student, the DMF, the Assistant Dean of Student and Community Life, and professionals in the SCU Dean of Students Office.



# Ministerial Assessment

As referenced in the Master of Divinity Degree Program Handbook 2025-2026:

“In addition to assessment of students’ supervised field education experiences, students will be assessed on ministerial competency. This assessment will be done for students in religious communities by the appropriate formation authority in the community (i.e., Superior, Rector, or Formation Director). During the spring semester of second year of the M.Div. degree lay students will be assessed through the ‘Interim Review’ process. This will include an interview with the Director of Ministerial Formation (DMF) and assessment based on other relevant input brought to the attention of the DMF by faculty and administration. Students are assessed on their ministerial formation particularly, but not exclusively, in the following areas:

- Capacity for collaborative leadership
- Integration of service and learning, and of faith and justice
- Knowledge of and commitment to professional ministerial ethics.”



# Theological Reflection

Theological reflection is a method to help people learn from their meaningful experiences. It is action-oriented and change-oriented. Theological reflection helps a person to look at experience in light of the person's religious understanding and beliefs. It seeks to help individuals to discover God's presence in experience. As this happens, theological reflection asks the person and/or group to consider what difference God's presence makes and what God expects as a result. The integration of action and experience is what makes theological reflection theological. To have its full effect, it is a skill that must be regularly practiced.

See Robert L. Kinast, *Let Ministry Teach: A Guide to Theological Reflection* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996) viii-x.

Theological reflection models employed in field education assignments and group meetings include:

- The Pastoral Circle: Developed by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, SJ, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1984), this model incorporates “social analysis” and invites students to examine cultural, religious, social, and economic influences at their ministry sites. As JST-SCU's signature theological reflection model, it supports the school's commitment to culturally contextualized theology.
- Case Study model: Based on Barbara Troxell et al, *Shared Wisdom: A Guide to Case Study Reflection in Ministry*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), this model invites students to present case studies based on encounters at their sites, applying wisdom from the Tradition, and personal and professional experiences, to their cases.
- “Theology in Four Voices”: As described in Helen Cameron, et al, *Talking About God in Practice: Practical Theology and Action Research* (London: SCM, 2010), this model invites students to employ various voices to reflect on their ministries and engage in a conversational style of theological reflection:
  - Normative theology – scripture, and Church teachings.
  - Formal theology – academic and theological voices.
  - Espoused theology – the theology embedded within a particular group's beliefs.
  - Operant theology – the lived theology of practice.

When employing each theological reflection model, students are encouraged to consider their ministerial experiences in light of their academic courses and Ignatian spirituality. Theological Reflection Group meetings provide the opportunity for peer support and shared insights. Students are encouraged to share reflection papers with their site supervisors. Theological reflection skills are intended to inform students' future respective ministries.

# Supervision

“Pastoral supervision is a method of doing and reflecting on ministry in which a supervisor (teacher) and one or more supervisees (learners) covenant together to reflect critically on their ministry as a way of growing in self-awareness, ministering competence, theological understanding, and Christian commitment.”

Kenneth Pohly, *Transforming the Rough Places: The Ministry of Supervision*  
(Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016), 107-108.

Supervision is an essential component of field education. Site supervisors are expected to model good practice, accompany JST-SCU students as they engage in ministry, support enhancement of their ministerial skills, and provide students with insightful guidance and feedback. Site supervisors are requested to maintain timely communication with the DMF and JST-SCU Field Education Supervisor.

Field education site supervisors may be experienced supervisors, or may be new to the role, each bringing a unique approach to supervision. Several supervisory models exist; five aspects of supervision, as described by Kenneth Pohly, are summarized below. Students and supervisors are encouraged to reflect on these aspects of supervision and discuss how they may shape their supervisory relationship.

## **Supervision is Pastoral**

- Supervision is a pastoral function and a ministry of shepherding and care-giving.
- Both supervisor and supervisee engage in this pastoral function.
- “The giving and receiving of care is something in which all supervisory participants engage.”

## **Supervision is a Way of Doing Ministry**

- Supervision is a ministry, a style, and a method.
- Supervision provides participants with the opportunity to engage as colleagues and coparticipants.
- Supervision is formative and an integral part of ministry.

## **Supervision is Covenantal**

- Supervision occurs in a covenantal context.
- It involves mutual agreement: “this is what we will do together and for which we will hold one another accountable.”
- Supervision is a dynamic process in which the covenantal agreement may be reshaped as people grow and needs change.
- Within the supervisory relationship priorities are set, structures established, and boundaries exercised. Procedures for ministry and evaluation are identified through mutual negotiation.

## Supervision is Reflective

- Supervision includes conversations and critical reflection on ministry practice.
- These organic conversations comprise sharing ministerial life experience and stories to inform faith responses.
- Supervisors “assist the supervisees in seeing themselves and their ministry more accurately, clearly, and creatively.”

## Supervision is Intentional

- Supervision is growth oriented.
- It assists with cultivating self-awareness and enhancing ministerial competencies.
- Supervision helps with honing and clarifying theological understanding.
- Supervision sessions are structured, goal-oriented, and regularly scheduled.

Adapted from Kenneth Pohly, *Transforming the Rough Places* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016), 108.

