

THE DCE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

1. GETTING INTO INTERNSHIP

INTERNSHIP MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the internship is to provide a prospective DCE graduate with a positive learning experience which will enable him/her to become more familiar with, gain insights about, and acquire some actual experience in doing the ministry of a Director of Christian Education in a Lutheran parish.

INTERNSHIP TERMINOLOGY

INTERNSHIP SITE - A congregation, camp, or other setting which has been visited by Concordia personnel and declared eligible as an intern training site.

ON-SITE INTERN SUPERVISOR - A staff person, pastor or DCE, who has been designated by the internship site to provide supervision for the DCE intern.

UNIVERSITY INTERN SUPERVISOR - A person identified by the Director of DCE Ministries to supervise the student's internship experience. Concordia faculty members as well as certified field DCEs participate as university supervisors.

DIRECTOR OF DCE MINISTRIES - The Concordia faculty member who coordinates the entire DCE internship program.

INTERNSHIP SITE COORDINATOR - The Concordia faculty member who coordinates the DCE Internship program.

SELECTION OF INTERN SITE

The type of congregation given prime consideration as an intern site meets the following criteria:

1. The on-site intern supervisor is willing to:
 - a. enter into a significant relationship with the intern;
 - b. make himself/herself available for mutual planning, sharing, and problem solving;
 - c. exercise patience and understanding regarding expectations of the intern;
 - d. share the congregational ministry with the intern as s/he develops competence; and,

- e. engage in regular prayer, sharing and study with the intern.
2. The congregation is willing to:
 - a. support the educational ministries (adult, youth, children, family) of the parish;
 - b. develop governing structures that can be supportive of the need to maintain, improve, and develop new ministry programs;
 - c. financially support the intern program; and
 - d. provide the student with an office suitable for a full-time worker (phone, computer Internet access).

The actual process by which an intern site is identified and selected normally involves the following steps:

1. Congregation notifies Concordia-Seward of interest in having an intern (c/o Director of DCE Ministries) (402)643-7437, (402)643-7425
2. Congregation returns completed Congregational Application and Financial Agreement Form (February 1 - Summer internship, September 1 - January Internship). Forms available upon request.
3. Intern Site Coordinator visits congregation.
4. Intern Site Coordinator notifies congregation of availability of intern.
5. On-site supervisor attends Matching Conference (orientation and initial meeting) with intern.

Every effort is made to place a student in a setting which will provide maximum learning opportunities, while assisting the host congregation receiving help with its programmatic needs. Assistance from both the student and the congregation are sought in determining the most helpful and satisfying assignment.

MATCHING INTERN AND CONGREGATION

The process of matching the intern to the intern site normally involves a meeting between the Intern Site Coordinator and the student once the student has been granted approval to go interning. During this meeting, information is gathered regarding the following key criteria for compatible matching:

1. The intern's personality make-up and theological orientation;
2. The type of pastor with whom the intern hopes to be matched;
3. The intern's abilities, interests and passions;

4. The kinds of experiences and responsibilities the intern would ideally like to have while on internship;
5. The desire of the intern to remain in a congregation upon completion of the internship;
6. Important concerns relating to intern site such as geographical location, type of community, size of church, etc.; and
7. Other intern needs, such as spouse's job, health concerns, etc.

ON-SITE SUPERVISOR/DCE ORIENTATION AND MATCHING CONFERENCE

Prior to the internship commencing, a one-day orientation and matching conference is held on Concordia-Seward's campus. The hoped-for outcomes of this event are that:

1. A warm, positive relationship between on-site supervisor/intern will begin to develop.
2. The on-site supervisor's questions/concerns will be addressed.
3. Some preliminary data regarding kinds of help that the intern needs from the on-site supervisor will be shared.
4. Information regarding realistic intern and on-site supervisor expectations of each other will be shared.
5. An understanding of supervision tools, such as goal-setting and giving/receiving feedback.
6. Clarity among on-site supervisors/DCEs regarding the assessment forms they are responsible to complete.

2. ASSUMPTIONS AND GOALS OF INTERNSHIP

OPERATING ASSUMPTIONS FOR INTERNSHIP

STARTING TIME - It is most helpful for a student to begin his/her internship during the summer, beginning between June 15th and August 1st. A smaller number of students begin internship sometime in January. Special efforts must be taken in these situations to more fully integrate the intern into programs already in progress.

If at all possible, an internship is not to begin while the on-site supervisor is on vacation. Mid year internships should start no later than February 1st. Special efforts should be made to allow the intern the appropriate learning curve when starting an internship in January.

If an internship begins on June 15th, the intern and congregation may expect that their ministry together will conclude on June 14th the following year. If for some reason the congregation or the student wishes to extend or shorten the termination date, please contact the Director of DCE Ministries.

TIME OF INTERNSHIP DURING STUDENT'S ACADEMIC WORK - The vast majority of students will begin their internships after the completion of their senior year. Occasionally, a student will either request or be asked to go interning after his/her junior year. Such requests are granted if it appears that the student can benefit from an internship at this point in his/her life and certain coursework has been completed.

SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT OF THE INTERN - The intern deserves to receive sensitive and timely support during internship from both lay and professional people. To this end, a university supervisor visits at least twice during internship. In special situations, the supervisor may opt to visit a third time. In addition, the intern has an on-site supervisor (i.e., pastor or DCE) who works with him/her on a daily basis.

OVER-ARCHING GOALS FOR INTERNSHIP

The eight over-arching goals of the internship, which give direction to the kinds of experiences the student needs, include:

1. A final opportunity to clarify his/her professional commitment: "Yes, DCE ministry really is for me."
2. An increased level of self-confidence: "I feel I really have something to offer."
3. A demonstrated capacity to be a DCE: "People respond to me positively and we can be in ministry together."
4. A thorough exposure to the workings of a congregation: "I now understand the relationship between a board and its work, and how it relates with the church council."
5. The development of a capacity to work in a team relationship: "I'm finally beginning to understand how a pastor feels and thinks."
6. When possible, an exposure to a DCE role model: "After being around him/her, I think I know more about my own style of working."

7. A clarification of future learning needs: “I really need some help with developing a confirmation curriculum.”
8. A modest contribution to the ongoing ministry of a congregation: “I think I’ve been able to stabilize the parish’s ministry to its youth during this year.”

INTERNSHIP ADMINISTRATION

The DCE internship program is administered by the Director of DCE Ministries in consultation with the DCE intern supervisors and DCE advisors.

TRAVEL TO INTERN LOCATION

The sponsoring congregation covers the cost of the intern’s move to the site. These should include the costs of truck rental, gas and any meals and lodging costs from Seward to the intern site.

If the intern, in the course of his/her experience, receives a call either to the congregation s/he is presently serving, or a call to another congregation, the responsibility for further travel expenses becomes that of the calling congregation.

INTERN “SUBSISTENCE” ALLOWANCE AND HOUSING ALLOWANCE

Interns who participate in internship are eligible for both a subsistence and a housing allowance, based upon the minimum recommended allowances identified on the “Student Intern Financial Agreement” form. These monthly allowances are to cover meals, housing, and normal living expenses. Continuing education monies, are to be over-and-above these figures.

Only the congregation knows living costs in their area. Consideration should be given to providing remuneration that will enable the intern to cover modest living costs in the congregation’s unique area.

INTERN MILAGE ALLOWANCE

When an intern is participating in a congregational activity with his/her car, the congregation should reimburse the intern for mileage. The congregation may simply prefer to give the intern a monthly car allowance. If an allowance is provided, then the intern needs to be encouraged to maintain a log of his/her work-related travel. The recommended minimum allowance is found on the “Financial Agreement” form, but should be adjusted upward if the intern is required to travel a great deal.

INTERN “START-UP” FUND

Since most students arrive at their internship site with very little money, the congregation is encouraged to help them with various “start-up” costs, particularly related to housing. In particular, the congregation may wish to provide the student with money for utility deposits and the rental advances needed to obtain an apartment. These monies may/may not be reimbursed at the end of the internship. It is the responsibility of the congregation to convey the expectations for reimbursement at the start of the internship.

INTERN HOUSING

The intern and on-site supervisor can discuss housing needs at the Matching Conference. After the conference, the on-site supervisor and congregation are encouraged to pursue possible housing in their area. Interns should not be expected to stay with another person during the internship.

RELATION OF INTERN TO LOCAL STAFF

Each intern has an on-site supervisor. This individual is always a member of the parish staff, usually a pastor or a DCE. In addition to this key person, the DCE intern will undoubtedly be relating to a congregational board (i.e., education, youth, elders, etc.) Major direction and coordination of the student’s activities are the responsibility of the on-site supervisor unless other arrangements have been agreed upon by the congregational leadership.

As an intern, the student is to be treated as a member of the full-time professional staff who is still in training, somewhat like a pastoral vicar.

It is particularly important that the on-site supervisor establish and communicate the relationship lines between the intern and other staff people, such as the parish secretary and custodian. The intern needs to be informed of what kind of assistance they can expect to receive from other staff members, especially the church secretary.

AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT AT WORK

The number of clock hours which a student spends in work-related activity is a discretionary matter. Normally, the intern spends between 50-60 hours a week “on the job.” More importantly the intern should learn to pace him/herself and concentrate upon qualitative rather than simply quantitative contributions to the ministry of the congregation.

DAY-OFF

The exact day and frequency of an intern's "day-off" are matters to be worked out by the intern and the on-site supervisor. It is important to maintain at least one regular day off each week, which is acknowledged and respected by the members of the congregation.

MID-YEAR INTERN GATHERING

All of the interns return to campus for a four day gathering that is designed to help them reflect upon their current ministry and to gain renewed enthusiasm for the remaining months of internship. In addition, students spend time in placement interviews, completing graduation details, sharing experiences in DCE classes, and fellowshiping with peers. The congregation is responsible for the cost incurred related to the Mid Year gathering. Interns should keep detailed records of expenses for reimbursement.

PASTORAL VACANCY

The university's policy is to not assign a student to a congregation in which there is a pastoral vacancy. Occasionally, a pastoral vacancy occurs during the course of an internship. Depending upon the point in the internship during which the vacancy occurs, plus the maturity level of the student and the stability of the congregation, a decision will be made by the university supervisor and Director of DCE Ministries regarding whether to continue the internship at the original site.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Interns are not automatically covered by a university group insurance plan. Many traditional aged interns might be covered under their parents' insurance. If an intern is not covered under any insurance program it is expected that the sponsoring congregation provide some degree of coverage, perhaps just major medical coverage.

The intern is responsible for all doctor and hospital expenses whenever such expenses are incurred. Concordia University and the internship congregation assume no responsibility for doctor and hospital charges assessed to any student.

Those students who will not be returning to school at the conclusion of their internship are eligible for the Concordia Health Plans at the beginning of his/her internship. If a student is desirous of such coverage s/he will express that interest to the on-site supervisor during the matching conference, at which time financial arrangements can be worked out. Students may be eligible for all other Concordia benefits depending upon the congregation's Plan package. It is best to speak to a Concordia Health Plan representative.

IRS RESPONSIBILITIES

Since a September 12, 1976, IRS ruling revoking vicar exemption for federal income tax and Social Security tax, interns must pay federal taxes on their subsistence allowance. In addition, the intern is not eligible to claim “minister of religion” status regarding his/her housing.

The congregation is responsible for paying 7.65% of the student’s subsistence and housing allowances, while deducting another 7.65% from the student’s earnings to cover the F.I.C.A. tax. The congregation should also deduct the appropriate federal, state and city taxes. For additional information, the congregational treasurer can request Circular E from the IRS at (800) TAX-FORM. The treasurer and intern can meet during the first few weeks of internship to clarify how deductions will be withheld.

REQUESTING ANOTHER INTERN

If a parish wishes another intern it is strongly encouraged to make such a need known to the Director of DCE Ministries no later than February 1st for June interns or September 1st for January interns. It is Concordia’s policy to continue to respond to the staffing needs of a parish in which it has or has had an intern, assuming that the congregation can provide a positive learning experience. Congregations are encouraged, however, to evaluate their staffing needs annually to consider a full-time called worker. A long series of temporary works can limit ongoing ministry opportunities. One intern can usually help a congregation understand the ministry of a full-time called DCE.

CALLING AN INTERN

Many internship sites choose to extend a call to its intern. A designated call can be extended (about ½ way into the internship) and accepted during the internship **if the calling congregation understands that all university requirements for internship and graduation must be fulfilled before the student can officially make the transition from intern to fulltime, called church worker.** Installation cannot take place until the necessary requirements have been completed.

IF THE CONGREGATION DOESN’T CALL THE INTERN

Interns who do not receive calls from their internship congregation need to be able to interview at potential placement congregations. Be aware that the intern may need to be away from the parish on weekends.

3. INTERNSHIP EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

During the internship year, Concordia University assumes the responsibility to:

1. Visit each new congregation to determine its eligibility for an intern.
2. Select the congregations that are to become intern sites.
3. See that all contracts and agreements are initiated and finalized with the intern site.
4. Arrange with the congregation's on-site supervisor all plans that may be necessary to ensure that the internship contributes to the effective development of the congregation members, the welfare of the parish community, and the professional growth of the intern.
5. Prepare, select, assign, and orient the student for participation in the internship program.
6. Host a "matching" conference in which the pastor and the DCE intern are introduced to each other.
7. Arrange for at least two university supervisor visits while the intern is serving the congregation.
8. Provide an on-campus mid-year intern reflection conference for all interns. (Mid-year for winter interns will be determined each year)
9. Respond promptly to congregational and intern requests for information or other kinds of assistance.
10. Evaluate the work of the intern, in consultation with the on-site supervisor, on the basis of written reports and on-site visits.
11. Re-assign an intern if his/her presence works to the detriment of the congregation or if the student's opportunity to learn is jeopardized.
12. Debrief the intern once the internship has concluded (if s/he returns to campus for further schooling.)
13. Facilitate the development and forwarding of the intern's file to the placement office.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTICIPATING CONGREGATION

The congregation is responsible to:

1. Complete the “Congregational DCE Intern Application” and “Financial Agreement” forms.
2. Develop a “job description” or list of expectations for the intern. (This may be done in conjunction with university personnel.)
3. Host the Internship Site Coordinator’s initial visit to determine the congregation’s eligibility as an intern site.
4. Provide travel and expense money for the on-site supervisor to attend the orientation/matching conference at Concordia.
5. Provide the intern with a one-way moving allowance.
6. Set aside “startup” monies for items such as utility deposits, apartment down-payment, etc.
7. Welcome the intern and thoroughly orient him/her through congregational boards, staff, and individual members.
8. Provide an ongoing support system for him/her through congregational boards, staff, and individual members.
9. Provide the intern with livable subsistence and housing allowance.
10. Provide for the intern’s social security benefits.
11. Reimburse the intern for his/her mileage while traveling on congregational activities.
12. Pay the university an annual administrative fee.
13. Reimburse intern for travel expenses to and from the mid year gathering at Concordia.
14. Clarify with the university, by February 1st (or by Sept. 1 for January intern), whether it is the intention of the congregation to extend a call to the present intern.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ON-SITE SUPERVISOR

The intern's on-site supervisor, whether DCE or pastor, is in a position to exert a very positive influence upon the intern through day-to-day involvement with the DCE in-training. In developing this relationship, it is the supervisor's responsibility to:

1. See that the various internship application and financial agreement forms are completed and returned to the university.
2. Host the Internship Site Coordinator who is determining the congregation's availability and eligibility as an intern site.
3. Provide evangelical and constructive assistance in determining the expectations and responsibilities of the intern.
4. See that the congregation understands the internship program and welcomes the intern into its midst.
5. Attend the orientation/matching conference at Concordia.
6. Assist in making arrangements for the intern's housing needs.
7. Orient the intern regarding parish activities, educational agencies, office procedures, publications, records, budget, and physical facilities.
8. Guide the student in the preparation of selected learning situations, administrative tasks, leadership functions, planning and evaluation processes.
9. Occasionally observe the student as s/he teaches or leads meetings and topics, providing him/her with helpful feedback on his/her performance.
10. Systematically (at least weekly) schedule time for reflection and supervision. Focus of these conferences would be upon concerns of the intern, responsibilities completed, goals for the coming week, areas needing improvement, the supervisor's schedule/goals, and overall staff concerns.
11. Systematically set aside time for personal sharing and prayer.
12. Advise the university of any circumstances negatively affecting the internship situation and make helpful suggestions for improving the same.
13. Mail in the "Bi-Monthly On-Site Supervisor's Evaluation" forms to the university supervisor at the end of the 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th months of the internship.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR

The responsibilities of the Concordia Supervisor are to:

1. Request student to inform supervisor once s/he has arrived at intern site.
2. Make arrangements for at least two supervisor visits (at least one month in advance).
3. Clarify the hoped-for outcomes of each visit.
4. Spend from 6-10 hours at the congregation during each visit.
5. Be as sensitive as possible to the hopes, fears, frustrations, and joys of the intern during this supervisory visit.
6. Spend needed time with student, supervising DCE/pastor, youth, and key laypeople regarding mechanics/content of internship and possible problem areas.
7. Respond to intern or on-site supervisor's correspondence/calls as promptly as possible.
8. Monitor, and when necessary, remind both intern and on-site supervisor of their responsibilities regarding the various reports and appraisal forms they are to send to the university.
9. Read and respond to the student's monthly overviews and quarterly goals, plus the on-site supervisor's forms.
10. Share the university supervisor's report forms with the intern either during or after the visit.
11. Relay completed supervision report forms to the Director of DCE Ministries office within one week of the visit.
12. Request that the supervising DCE and/or pastor complete the placement assessment form. (If a letter is also sent, it should focus upon major intern activities, accomplishments, and the strengths/limitations of the intern for DCE ministry.)
13. Debrief with the Director of DCE Ministries regarding the viability of the intern site for a future intern assignment.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INTERN

The intern's responsibilities are to:

1. Make travel arrangements to/from the congregation.
2. Inform the on-site supervisor of arrival time in the parish.
3. Inform university supervisor once arrival at the parish as happened.
4. Participate as fully as possible in the life of the congregation.
5. Work diligently to fulfill the expectations of the parish.
6. Send in the monthly Intern Overview report.
7. Make arrangements for university supervisor visit, in consultation with the on-site supervisor.
8. Attend the mid-year reflection conference. (Special arrangements will be made for Winter Interns)
9. Complete a brief evaluation of the supervisory relationship experienced during the internship (due at the mid-year reflection conference).
10. Complete quarterly goals sheet and send to university supervisor.