

ACTh Fieldwork Policy

Aims:

- (a) To enable candidates to begin to develop a theology of ministry and to reflect on theological and biblical issues as candidates come to the tasks of ministry;
- (b) To equip candidates to being to integrate their various unit studies with actual ministry in different situations.
- (c) To expose candidates to the ways of ministry is conducted and modelled and give them opportunity to experience a variety of ministerial tasks;
- (d) To provide opportunities for candidates to perform ministry tasks under supervision;
- (e) To facilitate candidates' learning of skills pertinent to ministry;
- (f) To help candidates identify their own abilities in ministry, explore possible ministry vocations and further spiritual and personal growth.

Content:

Fieldwork is a learning process that takes place through practical experience in a ministry setting. Placement will be carried out in a variety of settings, providing students with preparation for the specific kinds of ministry and vocation for which they believe they are being called. Ministerial candidates will do most of their fieldwork in a congregational setting. For some this will be in local churches as student observers, youth or children's leaders, associate pastors, and so on. For others it may mean fulfilling a chaplaincy role, cross cultural ministry, working in a community project, a parachurch organisation or mission agency.

Fieldwork experiences normally take place within the same timeframe as other curriculum requirements. The program should permit freedom in scheduling major time commitments so that the student can coordinate fieldwork with academic responsibilities.

An example of how this could operate follows:

Year	Classwork	Fieldwork	Field Hours	Supervision
1	PC301 Ministry Formation EM324 Evangelism Principles	Church setting (observer/participant)	200	10 hours with supervisor
		Partnership Mission	1 week	Group supervision sessions
2	PC444 Practical Ministry Field Education	Church setting (participant)	250 hours	20 hours with supervisor
		Reachout	1 weekend	Group supervision sessions
3	PC402 Foundations for Pastoral Care EM427 Church Dynamics & Growth	Church setting (participant)	250 hours	20 hours with supervisor
		Additional placement (eg school chaplaincy)	10 days	Group supervision sessions

Assessment:

Normally, assessment will take the following format:

- not less than 200 hours' experience (with supervision) in a local ministry setting; or
- a period of continuous residence (with supervision) of not less than six weeks' duration in a local church/parachurch/ministry organisation.

In either case,

- (a) Approximately 120 hours are to be spent in actual ministry;
- (b) Approximately 60 hours are to be spent in preparation, and writing up verbatims for supervisors;
- (c) Approximately 20 hours are to consist of reflection upon practical experience, at least 10 hours on an individual basis, with an approved supervisor.

Each unit should also entail approximately 12–14 class hours, at an introductory level only.

Students are required to keep a reflective journal as a means of ongoing reflection on their experience. The reflections should consider the following: the development of his or her ministry competencies and skills along with observations of the issue and dynamics in congregational life and ministry and the culture and society in which they minister and its impact on ministry.

Fieldwork also entails attendance at seminars organised by the student's enrolled college which assist in the reflection process.

Placements:

Where possible the ministry setting should be related to the student's vocational intent. The ministry setting and the student's ministry is to be approved by the Director of Field Education at the affiliated college through whom the student is enrolled. The placement process will allow students to indicate their preferences regarding the type of placement as well as a specific placement.

Ministry involvement should not extend beyond an average of eight hours per week for full time students, including preparation time. This is to ensure that the student does not take on too great a ministry burden. Part time students, especially those who are employed in a ministry situation, are allowed to have a greater time commitment. However, the Director of Field Education must approve the final placement details.

Fieldwork is not employment and the ACTh does not expect that students will be paid for their ministry involvement.

Recognition of Prior Learning:

The normal ACTh policy on RPL applies to fieldwork units. Such an application must demonstrate not only ministry experience, but adequate, active and competent supervision. This should be demonstrated by the provision of reports or similar documentation by a trainer as well as by the student. Recognition will only be granted when a student can demonstrate a reflective and supervised learning experience. Applications can be made for part or all of a fieldwork unit.

Supervisors:

Normally, supervisors should:

- be a competent practitioner in the area of training, with appropriate qualifications, recognition and experience
- have at least three years ministry experience in the area of speciality;
- be in a current ministry experience;
- have undertaken relevant training in ministry supervision, or be willing to undergo such training as provided by the ACTh affiliated colleges;
- give evidence of competence in ministry skills and relational aspects of ministry;
- be prepared to make a full commitment to the fieldwork program of the student.

Normally a fieldwork supervisor will supervise no more than two students at any given time.

A fieldwork supervisor is expected to:

- arrange regular meetings with the student for reflection. These meetings should normally be held at least once every fortnight, and at least half should be individual meetings with the student (the others can be held in a group setting)
- give the student accurate and fair feedback during the placement;
- be reasonably available to the student during the placement;
- respect the confidentiality of the student at all times;
- where possible attend annual trainer updates;
- actively develop his or her own skill in ministry training and supervision.

Legal issues:

All students undergoing fieldwork will be subject to a child protection police check, or be in the possession of one not more than three years old.

The affiliated college of the ACTh will accept legal responsibility if the student can show that the blame rests on the college for the incident. Such issues could cover, but not be limited to, omissions, lack of proper training, failure to provide support or sufficient and clear guidelines, etc.

Colleges are not required to provide malpractice insurance for students on fieldwork. Such matters are the responsibility of the student. Where a placement is made at an organisation or other institution, students should check with the individual organisation as to whether accident or injury cover is provided and what, if any, insurance cover they may have while on fieldwork.