

Covenant Presbytery's Internship Program

(07/11/1995)

Program of Theological Training for Candidates for the Gospel Ministry

(09/02/1996)

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RATIONALE

We of Covenant Presbytery believe that men entering into the gospel ministry should receive the best possible training in all those areas, personal and professional, spiritual and academic, that will render him an effective servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that Scripture directs us as Elders to directly oversee the training of Teaching Elders, for Paul said, "And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). We therefore assume the responsibility of and take an active part in helping candidates for the gospel ministry that they may not neglect the spiritual gift that is within them (1 Timothy 4:4).

SCOPE

Covenant Presbytery intends to oversee the candidate for the gospel ministry in all stages of his development from the time that he submits himself as a candidate under care until he completes his trials for ordination to the office of Teaching Elder. The scope, then, of this oversight includes any pre-seminary years as a candidate, the academic years of seminary, the periods of practical experience, and the trials for licensure and ordination. At all stages of development, Presbytery will endeavor to meet the standards of the Uniform Curriculum (Minutes of the General Assembly, 1978, pp. 86, 214-217; 1979, pp. 190-191).

OBJECTIVES

- A. To insure that all candidates for the gospel ministry meet the requirements of the **Book of Church Order**, chapters 18 and 19.
- B. To encourage candidates to attend seminaries whose programs of study are consistent with the Uniform Curriculum of the PCA.
- C. To provide for each candidate whose seminary education does not meet all the criteria of the Uniform Curriculum, an opportunity for additional study under the supervision of Presbytery, and to assist candidates who need tutorial help in any area(s) of the Uniform Curriculum.
- D. To insure that each candidate has confirmation of his calling to the gospel ministry.
- E. To demonstrate to the satisfaction of Presbytery the gifts of each intern through a supervised program of practical oversight.

ORGANIZATION

A. Academic Work

As a part of his application for coming under the care of Covenant Presbytery, the applicant will provide the Candidates Committee with any transcripts of completed seminary academic

work and any other relevant completed academic work together with specific plans concerning future academic work as a candidate under care. If the academic work is not finished, the Candidates Committee will give the candidate guidance in how best to meet the requirements of the Uniform Curriculum through his on-going seminary studies. If certain criteria cannot be met at the student's chosen seminary or if the candidate has completed his seminary study and certain criteria have not been met, the Candidates Committee will provide a plan of study to correct any deficiencies. If the candidate is an intern, his official Supervisor should also be consulted in formulating the plan. The plan of study will be reported to Presbytery for its approval. Until the candidate under care has completed the academic requirements of the Uniform Curriculum to the satisfaction of Presbytery, he will report to the Candidates Committee at least once a year and be responsive to the Candidates Committee's counsel and guidance.

B. Supervisor

Each applicant for internship must find a Teaching or Ruling Elder who will agree to serve as his Supervisor under the oversight of the Candidates Committee. The Supervisor must be approved by the Presbytery.

C. Academic Weaknesses

If any applicant for internship shows significant weakness in any area covered by the academic requirements of the Uniform Curriculum, the Candidates Committee can, with Presbytery's approval, formulate a plan of study just as if the areas of academic weakness had not been covered in the applicant's seminary program.

D. Responsibility of Intern

It is expected that each intern will participate fully in the training program established by these guidelines. It is the responsibility of the intern to fulfill the requirements of this program. It is recognized, however, that candidates and interns may be received in various stages of training and that every effort will be made to cooperate with presbyteries from which candidates or interns may transfer. Each intern will report to the Candidates Committee and be responsive to the Candidates Committee's counsel and guidance.

E. Reports to Presbytery

The Candidates Committee should report once a year on the academic progress of each candidate who has not completed his academic requirements (BCO 18-6). The Candidates Committee should report to Presbytery when they believe the candidate has met the academic criteria of the Uniform Curriculum. The Candidates Committee should report to Presbytery at each stated meeting the progress of each intern (BCO 19-12).

F. Experience Requirement

The equivalent of a year of on-the-field experience as an intern is required. Various

combinations of full and part-time ministries may apply toward the fulfillment of this requirement at the discretion of the Candidates Committee, but in such cases a minimum of six months of full-time experience is required of each intern. Combinations must be the equivalent of one year of actual time spent in ministry.

G. Equivalent Previous Experience

Where circumstances warrant, Presbytery may approve previous experience as equivalent to internship through a three-fourths majority vote. The Presbytery should use the following criteria in granting such equivalent experience approval to a candidate for ordination:

- a) he has at least one year of experience in comparable ministry;
- b) he has satisfactorily performed the full scope of ministerial duties;
- c) he has the manifest approbation of God's people in a local church as having the requisite gifts for the pastoral ministry.

BCO 19-16

Granting equivalent previous experience approval instead of requiring a year's internship is not the normal route to ordination. If the Candidates Committee considers the candidate's previous experience to be equivalent to all the internship requirements except for a few specific deficiencies, the Presbytery may approve his previous experience pending the satisfactory completion of certain assignments designed to correct these limited deficiencies.

General Internship Requirements

1. Supervisor

While the total resources of the whole Presbytery will be made available to accomplish Biblical ministerial training, the daily work of supervision in ministry will be delegated to the Supervisor approved by the Presbytery. The Supervisor must be a Teaching or Ruling Elder. Normally, the Supervisor will continue in that role for the full term of the internship.

2. Resources of Presbytery

The Supervisor may seek to use the full resources of Presbytery in providing training for the intern, but the Supervisor always maintains the primary supervision of the intern, under the oversight of the Candidates Committee and ultimately of the Presbytery.

Specific Internship Requirements

1. Assignments

The Supervisor will assign specific ministerial training activities to meet the specific requirements of the internship program. Where possible, the intern should learn through actual

participation in ministry activities. The Supervisor should personally observe enough of these ministerial training activities in every area to insure that his evaluations are reasonably accurate. The Supervisor can also assign others to observe the ministerial training activities on his behalf. Where actual participation is not possible, the intern can learn through observation of ministry by others, through mock ministry activities, such as moderating a mock meeting of presbytery or performing a mock wedding, and through study and detailed discussion with the Supervisor. These secondary options should not be used to the exclusion of actual participation when actual participation is a viable option.

2. Training Log

The Supervisor will evaluate these activities and record his observations in the intern's training log. This log will be the record of the internship which will be the Candidates Committee's basis for recommending that Presbytery approve or disapprove the internship at its completion. The training log will be kept by the Supervisor, not the intern.

3. Training Log Record Format

Each record of an assigned ministerial training activity in the training log should give the following information:

- a. The date.
- b. A description of the ministerial training activity.
- c. A description of the ministerial principles which were learned or reinforced by the activity.
- d. A description of any changes the intern would make in how he accomplished this task. If the assignment was to observe another perform a ministerial task, a description of what the intern would emulate and what he would do differently.
- e. A self-evaluation of the intern's progress in this area of the ministry.
- f. The Supervisor's observations and evaluations.

4. Meetings with Supervisor

The Supervisor should meet with the intern at least once a month for specific evaluation and planning. At that time, the intern's training log should be reviewed and the Supervisor's evaluations brought up to date. More frequent meetings for prayer and informal discussion are desirable.

5. Progress Reports

The Supervisor should send a progress report based on the training log to each stated meeting of the Candidates Committee.

6. Areas of Assignments

The assignments given by the Supervisor should cover the following areas:

- a. **English Bible:**

The candidate should be given opportunities to apply his knowledge in live teaching situations. The intern should be doing some sort of preaching or Bible teaching on a regular basis during his internship period. He should include in his training log, the occasions, texts and general message and application of all such teaching. Frequent Bible teaching and/or preaching is a necessary requirement of the internship program.

b. Devotional Life:

The intern should have regular times of prayer with his Supervisor. The intern should keep a brief record of his devotional life for the Supervisor to include in the training log.

c. Worship:

The intern should be given opportunities to conduct worship services and to preach. Practical training in the conduct of baptisms, the Lord's Supper, weddings and funerals must be given.

d. Presbyterian Polity:

The intern should attend at least two stated meetings of Presbytery. The intern should be given opportunity to sit in on a stated meeting of at least two of the permanent committees of Presbytery, and, if possible, he should attend a General Assembly as an observer. He should develop a working knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order, the Book of Church Order and the Standing Rules of Presbytery. He should be exposed to good local church administration during his internship, including the preparation of a church budget. He should visit sessional meetings and, if possible, diaconal meetings and a congregational meeting.

e. Visitation / Counseling / Evangelism:

As often as possible, the intern should be a partner with his Supervisor in the work of visitation and personal counseling. This should include as many of the following situations as practically possible: hospital calls, jail visits, calls on delinquent members, visits to new people, and the pastoral care of active members. These opportunities should be carefully discussed afterward to enhance the training value. The intern should know how to share the gospel during visitation when the opportunity arises.

f. Christian Education:

The intern should also have an opportunity to work with at least two of the following: a Sunday school program, a communicants class, a new members class, a teacher training course, catechism instruction, a church youth program.

g. Missiology:

The intern should develop a working knowledge of the missionary programs of the PCA. A visit to a church missions conference and/or a church planting situation would be desirable.

