



# **Master of Divinity**

## **FIELD EDUCATION HANDBOOK**

### **2026-2027**



**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 (MDiv) 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 MDiv 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, requirements, and policies.

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

Best wishes,

Deborah Ross, STL, PhD  
Teaching Professor and Director of Ministerial Formation



# Table of Contents

|             |                                                              |           |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>I.</b>   | <b>JST-SCU Field Education Overview</b>                      | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>II.</b>  | <b>Field Education</b>                                       | <b>6</b>  |
|             | Overview                                                     |           |
|             | Field Education Courses                                      |           |
|             | Selecting a Field Education Placement                        |           |
|             | Field Education Approval Process                             |           |
|             | FE-2151 Field Education Practicum Requirements               |           |
| <b>III.</b> | <b>JST-SCU MDiv Field Education Sites</b>                    | <b>10</b> |
| <b>III.</b> | <b>JST-SCU Policy for Determining Readiness for Ministry</b> | <b>11</b> |
| <b>IV.</b>  | <b>Ministerial Assessment</b>                                | <b>13</b> |
| <b>V.</b>   | <b>Theological Reflection</b>                                | <b>14</b> |
| <b>VI.</b>  | <b>Supervision</b>                                           | <b>15</b> |



# I. JST-SCU Field Education Overview

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

As described in the MDiv Program Handbook 2026–2027, the “MDiv degree is guided by three interrelated formation goals:

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

Reflection on these three goals occurs as an iterative process, much like a hermeneutical circle, and is woven throughout the MDiv program. Students engage these goals especially through Field Education. In the FE-2621 Theology of Ministry and Practice course and the FE-2151 Field Education Practicum, both taught by Deborah Ross, Director of Ministerial Formation (DMF), students reflect on their respective ministerial identities, informed by praxis and the integration of academic studies. These courses provide the opportunity for joint formation for Jesuit scholastics, other religious, and lay students, and include collaborative learning, theological reflection, synodal listening, conversation, and prayer. Ministerial integration is also addressed in the third year MDV-4401 Seminar, which focuses on preparation for the MDiv Comprehensive Examination. This seminar is taught by the MDiv 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. MDiv 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 nonprofit agencies, parishes, prison ministry, healthcare ministry, and high school or university campus ministries.

MDiv students participate in a yearly retreat session with their cohorts. The purpose of this reflection time is to focus attention on students’ common call to ministry and their ongoing response to that call. Students may also participate in JST-SCU ministerial skills courses and workshops designed to further develop their ministerial capacities.

Students are encouraged to cultivate a “theology of friendship” during their time at JST-SCU. This theme is referenced in Deborah Ross’s 2022 article in *The Way*, which draws on findings from her 2018 *Research Report on Lay Ecclesial Formation at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University*. The *Research Report* emphasized the fostering of mutual collaboration among lay, Jesuit, and other religious students. Notably, the theologian Bernard Cooke described “human love and friendship” as the basic sacrament. Understood in this sacramental and revelatory way, friendship expresses God’s love and models how students can support and

minister to one another's vocational callings. This perspective conveys how God's grace is experienced through human relationships and encounters. Nurtured by the liturgical life of the School and the shared experience of the gathered assembly, collaboration between lay and religious students finds expression through a lived theology of friendship. See Deborah Ross, "Ignatian Spirituality and Action Research: Exploring Lay Ecclesial Ministerial Formation," *The Way*, 61/2, April 2022, 106-107.

Field Education courses support the development of a theology of friendship among MDiv students, forming them in the relational and collaborative practices essential to a synodal listening Church.



## II. Field Education

### Overview

MDiv students engage in both practical ministry and theological studies, integrating knowledge and skills to interpret their experiences, shape ministerial practices, and develop pastoral resources. This synthesis of learning and practice is enhanced through Field Education courses that provide opportunities for reflection.

### Field Education Courses

MDiv students complete nine Field Education (FE) units through the following course sequence:

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

This three-unit course explores a contemporary theology of ministry to equip students to serve as reflective ministerial practitioners, incorporating a synodal pedagogy. Students will consider their ministerial vocations, ecclesial identities, and call to be missionary disciples within the context of a global synodal 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 2027 semester.

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

MDiv students typically complete two FE units per semester across three terms: spring of year one, fall of year two, and spring of year two (six units total). A student may undertake Field Education in the fall semester of year three, pending approval.

Within the FE-2151 Practicum, MDiv 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 regular reflection sessions and cohort classes. Students are encouraged to practice collaborative leadership, self-care, and ministerial boundaries. See below for Field Education requirements.

Field Education courses are guided by the three ministerial formation goals – Ministerial Identity, Ministerial Practice, and Ministerial Integration – and the Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) for the MDiv degree, particularly SLOs 4 to 6:

“MDiv students will:



- Develop practices of prayer and discernment appropriate to their circumstances, with a particular grounding in Ignatian principles and spirituality.
- Demonstrate strong professional / ministerial ethics, including collaborative leadership, self-care, and clear ministerial boundaries.
- Articulate a deepening sense of their ministerial identity that emerges in their prayer and theological reflection on pastoral experience.”

## **Selecting a Field Education Placement**

MDiv 1 students will begin supervised Field Education placements in Spring 2027. During the Fall 2026 semester, students are invited to explore Field Education placement options. Given JST-SCU’s relocation to the Mission Campus in the Fall 2027 semester, Santa Clara-area Field Education sites – in addition to those listed in this handbook – are in development. As new sites are approved, they will be added to the list of available placements. Students are also encouraged to consider placements in the southern region of the Diocese of Oakland, which will be similarly accessible from both the Berkeley and Mission campuses.

Field Education supports ministerial formation by helping students:

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

When selecting future Field Education placements, students are invited to:

- Consider developing new skills or honing existing ones.
- Pray about placement options and discern possibilities with their spiritual directors.
- Select supervisors with whom they can build a supportive mentoring relationship.
- 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).  
In anticipation of JST-SCU’s relocation to the Mission Campus, students are also encouraged to consider Santa Clara-area placements beginning as early as Spring 2027, in addition to placements in the southern region of the Diocese of Oakland.
- Lay students are requested to consult the DMF about potential travel reimbursements; approved placements may also serve as paid employment.

## **Field Education Approval Process**

Field Education placements are a collaborative effort among the student, JST-SCU, and the ministry site. To ensure a timely start, MDiv 1 students are requested to undertake the following:

## **Preparation and Approval**

- Meet at least once with the DMF during the Fall 2026 semester to discuss options.
- Obtain approval from the DMF and the JST-SCU Jesuit Community Rector, or superior, as applicable.
- Demonstrate readiness for ministry (see “Readiness for Ministry” policy in this handbook).
- International MDiv students must submit a Curricular Practical Training (CPT) Request to SCU’s Global Engagement office each semester before Field Education begins.
- For ministry at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center, complete clearance procedures.
- Students with less than one year of ministry experience will work with the DMF to select a placement with a supervisor experienced in mentoring JST-SCU students.
- MDiv students engaging in spiritual direction as a Field Education activity are required to ensure they have completed prior training in spiritual direction.
- For non-traditional or secular placements, submit a two-page paper to the DMF addressing the ministerial nature of the placement, assessment criteria, anticipated learning, and supervisor support for theological reflection.

## **Administrative Requirements**

- JST-SCU must receive an SCU Community Engagement Agreement and Certificate of Insurance from the Field Education site before students may begin their placements.
- JST-SCU may, in certain circumstances, need to terminate a Field Education placement. If this occurs, the student will work with the DMF to identify an alternative placement.

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

The following are MDiv student requirements for beginning and continuing Field Education placements:

- Complete a Field Education Learning Agreement in consultation with the site supervisor and the DMF, describing ministerial activities, goals, and the supervision schedule.
- Complete five to six hours of ministry per week during each semester – including preparation time and site supervisor meetings, but excluding travel – to work toward a total of 250 hours of Field Education ministry during the MDiv program.
- Log Field Education hours in Google Drive spreadsheets.
- Attend theological reflection sessions and write two theological reflection papers per semester, as described on the FE-2151 Practicum course syllabus. See the “Theological Reflection” section in this handbook.
- Regularly communicate with their respective site supervisors, the DMF, and the JST-SCU Field Education Supervisor.
- Participate in one meeting per semester with both the JST-SCU Field Education Supervisor and their site supervisor. A site visit by the JST-SCU Field Education Supervisor will occur unless otherwise indicated.



- Complete a brief Ministerial Self-Assessment before the end of the spring semester of their second year (MDiv 2 students).

### Field Education Units for Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

MDiv students may receive Field Education (FE) units for completing a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) unit at approved sites. Unit-hour alignment will be evaluated when mapping CPE hours to FE requirements, as an extended CPE unit (typically 300 hours) exceeds the standard JST-SCU requirement of 250 Field Education ministry hours (six FE units).

A CPE unit may be applied in two ways:

1. **FE-2151 Unit Allocation:** FE units will be determined as appropriate on a case-by-case basis. For example, a CPE unit may count as four FE units when paired with the FE-2151 Field Education Practicum. Additional hours may be recognized through a 1.5-unit ministerial skills course or Special Reading Course (SRC).
2. **Special Reading Course (SRC):** CPE hours may be applied to an SRC (for example, a summer CPE unit) when the SRC option provides equitable recognition of clinical hours. Unit allocation will be determined on an individual basis.

FE unit distribution for CPE will be determined in each instance by the Associate Dean and the DMF, in consultation with the MDiv Program Director.



### III. JST-SCU MDiv Field Education Sites

MDiv students are requested to select placements from the following approved sites. Students will receive a description of ministry activities available at each site.

Additional Santa Clara-area Field Education sites will be added as JST-SCU prepares for relocation to the Mission Campus. Additional placements in the southern region of the Diocese of Oakland may also be added.

#### Healthcare Ministry

- Kaiser Foundation Hospital San Leandro—ACPE Program

#### Nonprofit Agencies

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

#### Parish Ministry

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

#### Prison Ministry

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

#### 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

## IV. JST-SCU Policy for Determining Readiness for Ministry

The JST-SCU three-year MDiv 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 MDiv students should possess the personal maturity and faith commitment commensurate with preparation for full-time ministry. JST-SCU admits students to the MDiv program who have demonstrated prior experience of ministry, having completed at least one year of post-college ministry experience. Some MDiv 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. As part of the program, students engage in supervised pastoral ministry. MDiv students will work and collaborate with the Director of Ministerial Formation (DMF) throughout this process. The School will assess students' readiness for beginning Field Education placements during the first semester of the MDiv 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 enrollment 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, the student may request a review by the Associate Academic Dean, Professor Jerome Baggett, PhD. 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.



## IV. Ministerial Assessment

As referenced in the MDiv Program Handbook 2026–2027:

“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 the second year of the MDiv program, 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.”



## V. Theological Reflection

Theological reflection is a method to help individuals and groups learn from their meaningful experiences. It is action-oriented and change-oriented. Theological reflection invites participants to look at experience in light of their religious understanding and beliefs. It helps them discover God's presence in experience. As this happens, theological reflection invites individuals or groups to consider God's role in the ministry situation. 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, in *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.
- **The Case Study Model:** Drawing from 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 arising from encounters at their sites, integrating wisdom from the Tradition and personal and professional experiences.
- **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. The four voices of theology are:
  - 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 engaging 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 may also share reflection papers with their site supervisors. Theological reflection skills are intended to shape and sustain students’ future ministries.

## VI. 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 accompany JST-SCU students as they engage in ministry, model good practice, support the 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 the JST-SCU Field Education Supervisor.

Field Education site supervisors may be experienced or 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 caregiving.
- Both supervisor and supervisee both engage in this pastoral function: “The giving and receiving of care is something in which all supervisory participants engage.”

### **Supervision is Ministerial**

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

### **Supervision is Covenantal**

- Supervision occurs in a covenantal context.
- Supervision 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 experiences 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.
- Supervision 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*, 108.

