Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

CALLED INTO THE WORLD

2025-26
Master's Programs Manual

The 2025-26 Masters Programs Manual and the information it contains supersedes and replaces any earlier manual versions.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Table of Contents 2

Welcome from the Director of MDiv and MA Programs and Director for Candidacy 5

Section 1: Academic Information, Policies and Procedures 6

A. Introduction 6

B. Advisor/Advisee Relationship 6

i. Change of Advisors: 7

C. Faculty Availability: Supporting LSTC Students Academically, Emotionally, and Spiritually 8

D. Curricular Competencies 9

E. Course Planning and Course Load 19

i. Course Planning: 19

ii. Course Load: 19

F. Advanced Standing and Transfer of Credits 19

i. Advanced Standing: 19

ii. Transfer of Credits: 17

G. Transfer between Degree Programs; Shared Degree Programs 17

i. The Integrity of Degree Programs: 17

ii. Processes for Transfer: 18

iii. Shared Credit in Degree Programs: 20

H. Teaching and Learning 20

A. Conduct: 20

B. Course Requirements: 21

C. Grading Scale: 21

D. Pass/Fail Option: 21

E. Student Retention Profile: 22

F. Independent Studies, Theses, and Summative Evaluations 22

i. Independent Study: 22

ii. Thesis – Master of Divinity: 23

iii. Thesis – MAM Ministry Projects and MA Thesis (Summative Evaluation): 24

G. Concentrations and Emphases 25

i. Concentrations: 26

ii. Emphases: 26

H. Student Learning Assessment Process for MAM, MA, and MDiv Programs 26

i. First Year Student Assessment: 27
ii. Second Year Student Assessment: 28
iii. Third Year Assessment: 28
iv. Fourth Year Student Assessment (Candidates for ELCA Rostered Ministry): 29
v. Other Evaluative Resources and Review of Data: 29
Section 2: Contextual Education 31
A. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) 31
B. Ministerial Leadership II (Ministry in Context) 32
C. Internship 33
i. Pre-Internship 33
ii. During Internship 34
iii. Post-Internship 35
iv. Degree Specific Requirements for Completing Internship: 35
D. ELCA Word and Sacrament Internship 35
i. Definition 36
ii. Placement in an academic program 36
iii. Length 36
iv. Settings – 36
v. ELCA Horizon International 36
vi. Supervisors 37
vii. Lay Committee 37
viii. Finances 37
ix. Internship Assignment Process at LSTC 38
x. Orientation meeting 38
xi. Restrictions 38
xii. Workshop on Ministry I 38
xiii. Site interview process 38
xiv. Site assignment process 39
xv. Workshop on Ministry II 39
xvi. Sending service 39
E. ELCA Word and Service Internship 39
i. Length 39
ii. Settings 39
iii. Specialization 40
iv. Placement in an internship setting 40
v. Finances 40
vi. Supervisors 40

vii. Lay Committee 41
Section 3: The ELCA Candidacy Process 42
F. Candidacy at LSTC 42
i. Candidate: 42
ii. Candidate's Academic Advisor: 42
iii. Faculty: 43
iv. Candidacy Office: 43
G. Participants in the Candidacy Process 43
i. Candidate: 43
ii. Congregation: 43
iii. Synod: 44
iv. ELCA Seminaries: 44
v. Domestic Mission Unit: 44
H. Range of Decisions in the Candidacy Process 44
i. Grant: 44
ii. Postpone: 44
iii. Deny: 45
I. Steps in the Candidacy Process 45
iv. Endorsement: 45
v. Approve: 47
J. ELCA First Call Process 48
i. Phase 1: Preapproval Conversation with Candidate 48
ii. Phase 2: Preapproval — Regional Consultation 48
iii. Phase 3: Post-approval — Working the Plan 48
Appendix A: MSA Constitution 49

Welcome from the Director of MDiv and MA Programs and Director for Candidacy

Welcome to the 2025-26 academic year at LSTC! There are distinctive resources to help you keep information about LSTC and your degree program at your fingertips.

- The 2025-26 LSTC All-Students Handbook offers information that pertains to all students in all degree programs (e.g., offices and personnel, academic and financial policies and procedures, policies regarding conduct and student life).
- The 2025-26 LSTC Catalog contains the rationale and course requirements for the MAM, MA, and MDiv curricula oriented to serving a public church, as well information about other degree programs, photos and information about the faculty, and a list of frequently-offered courses.
- MyLSTC is where you will find information about registration, the latest course schedules and course profiles, tips about how to pay your student bill, and electronic copies of the All-Students Handbook & Programs Manuals, Catalog, ACTS courses, the LSTC Photo Directory, various kinds of student petitions, and other up- to-date materials.

This manual is particularly for MAM, MA, and MDiv students, and contains information that pertains especially to your degree programs: a description of the academic advising system; fuller information about academic emphases, concentrations, independent studies; the contextual education program and ELCA Candidacy; and the academic policies and procedures that are unique to the MAM, MA, and MDiv programs (see the table of contents for a complete list of matters covered in this manual).

As your Degree Program Director I work alongside your academic advisors to help you navigate academic life at LSTC. As the Candidacy Director, I will help you navigate the candidacy process for rostered ministry in the ELCA. It is my hope that you will find in this manual the resources you need in planning what your seminary process will look like for you. For questions or challenges related to either candidacy or degree requirements, please feel free to reach out to me. I am here not only to help navigate challenges, but also to celebrate steps in your academic and candidacy journey! Each of you is an important and valued part of this community, and I look forward to working with you.

Again, welcome (or welcome back!) to LSTC!

Brooke N. Petersen, MDiv, LCPC, PhD
Director of Master's Programs, Director of Candidacy
John H. Tietjen Chair of Pastoral Ministry and Associate Professor of Pastoral Care

Section 1: Academic Information, Policies and Procedures

A. Introduction

There are many people who stand ready to assist students with matters that require consultation. For questions about the curriculum, the first contact is normally with one's academic advisor. If academic advisors are not sure of the answer, they will contact the degree program director who would be most likely to know the answer, or with whom to speak to get the question addressed.

The Academic Cabinet, which bears responsibility for course planning and oversight of curricula, is composed of the Chairs of each Division, together with the Dean of Academic Affairs (hereafter "Academic Dean"), the Director of the MDiv and MA/MAM Programs/Director for Candidacy, the Director of Advanced Studies, and the registrar.

The 2023-24 Division Chairs and Program Directors are as follows:

- Dr. Karri Alldredge serves as Chair of the Bible Division (Division I).
- Dr. Marvin Wickware serves as Chair of Theology Division in which history, systematics, ethics, anthropology, mission, and world religions departments are housed (Division II).
- Dr. Christian Scharen serves as Chair of Ministry Division (Division III).
- Dr. Brooke Petersen serves as Director of the MDiv and MA Programs/Director for Candidacy.
- Dr. Mark Swanson serves as Director of Advanced Studies.

B. Advisor/Advisee Relationship

The advisor-advisee relationship is an important part of the student's relationship to LSTC. The general goals of the advising process include:

- Developing a course of study that takes into account the student's educational and ministry goals, as well as prior educational and work experience;
- Reviewing progress and/or obstacles toward attaining the degree and evaluating personal and professional growth and development;
- Offering guidance and support, helping students integrate their reflections on courses, field studies, vocational interests, spiritual formation, and personal growth; and
- Working collaboratively with others who may play pivotal roles in a student's educational process depending on the advisee's program of studies (e.g., the Director of Contextual Education, the Coordinator for Candidacy, the director of an academic emphasis chosen by the advisee,etc.).

Students, as adult learners, are expected to take responsibility for maintaining contact with their advisors, initiating appointments prior to registration days, attending registration workshops, and other meetings as necessary. Advisors, in their pastoral capacity, are expected to be attentive to the tenor of students' participation in classroom and community life and willing to follow up on questions and concerns expressed by their student advisees, faculty colleagues, or others.

Pivotal times in the advisor-advisee relationship include:

- An initial conversation, which is a time for deepening understanding of the student's background and goals; exploring the student's involvement in community life; reviewing language and writing recommendations, if any; and hearing any concerns that may have arisen. Students who are candidates for rostered ministry in the ELCA develop a plan for completion of both academic and candidacy requirements that is called the "Candidacy Accompaniment Plan."
- Consultations (in person and by email) in advance of/close to registration time, to review academic progress and consult about any concerns;
- The First Year Assessment;
- The Endorsement Interview for students in candidacy, at which the advisor participates as a supportive presence, knowledgeable about the student's development and academic work;
- The senior interview, during which students and advisors review and assess students' journeys through seminary and reflect on capstone experiences, including the master's thesis for MA students and field evaluations for students in professional ministry degree programs (MDiv and MAM). Advisors of candidates for rostered ministry in the ELCA prepare a report and recommendation for ministry called the "Form D."

i. Change of Advisors:

Advisors are assigned to all entering MDiv, MAM, and MA students by the Director of MDiv and MA Programs, who works collaboratively with the Academic Dean and the Director of Admissions to match students with faculty members.

Although advisors are assigned to all students initially, each student is expected to arrive at a mutual decision with the faculty member as to whether this relationship should continue or whether the student feels a greater affinity with another faculty member. Like each student, each faculty member is unique and has a particular style of advising that works well for many but not all students.

Faculty sabbaticals may also require temporary changes in advisor-advisee relationships. For the benefit of students and faculty members alike, a more or less equal distribution of advisees among the various faculty members is maintained, affected, in any given year, by sabbaticals and other leaves. Leaves and other workload issues may limit the ability of a faculty member to accept new advisees at a particular time.

Students and advisors may request a change in the advising assignment by completing the "Petition for Change of Advisor" form found on MyLSTC. Advisees desiring to change advisors secure the signature of their current advisor as well as the consent of a faculty member to become the new advisor. The former advisor will be asked to provide the new advisor with pertinent information about the student's situation. The completed form is submitted to Dr. Brooke Petersen, who forwards the form to Cheryl Hoth, Assistant to the Academic Dean, who shepherds the advisor/advisee database.

C. Faculty Availability: Supporting LSTC Students Academically, Emotionally, and Spiritually

Several people and processes are in place to support LSTC students in their academic studies, vocational discernment, and spiritual and mental health.

If you are struggling academically and/or need help deciding how to approach a professor to share a concern or ask for help, start with your academic advisor. Each faculty member cares deeply that students will thrive in their academic studies.
Supporting each advisor is a degree program director who may be contacted if your advisor is away or if the difficulty involves your academic advisor. Supervising the entire academic program is the Academic Dean, Dr. Linda Thomas. There are many sources of academic support at LSTC, and many people eager to help you.

All faculty members are expected to provide instructions about their office hours and about the best times to reach them. If faculty preferences are not clearly stated, it is appropriate to inquire how best to make contact. Email, voice mail, and campus mail are appropriate options for contacting faculty members to schedule an appointment.

If you encounter academic difficulty or have made choices that require disciplinary action (e.g., plagiarism or problematic behavior that puts your student status in jeopardy), your degree program director, working directly with you, your advisor, and others involved, will initiate consultation with the Academic Dean, who leads in making decisions regarding disciplinary matters according to LSTC's policies.

There are non-academic factors that can affect your ability to successfully complete your degree programs at LSTC. For additional support, please contact the following faculty/staff people:

Emergency Care: Dr. James Foster

International Student Services/(ISA): Marvis Hardy

Vocational Discernment/Candidacy: Dr. Brooke Petersen

Pastoral Guidance: Dr. Christian Scharen and Dr. Rafael Malpica-Padilla

Referrals for Therapy: Dr. Brooke Petersen

Referral for Spiritual Direction: Office of the Dean

Advising or Curricular Support, Assigned Advisor, and
Degree Program Directors:

- (MDiv/MA/MAM)-Dr. Brooke Petersen
- (ThM/PhD)- Dr. Mark Swanson

Students are also encouraged to deepen and develop relationships with leaders in their worshipping communities and to engage trusted mentors as they navigate their degree programs and discernment for future ministry.

D. Curricular Competencies

On the following pages the curricular competencies for each program are identified, providing guidelines that advisors will use in determining the progress of students through each program.

Master of Divinity Competencies:

LSTC-Master of Divinity Competencies				
Learning Competencies		**Beginning/Developing** **1 2 3**	**Adequate/Good** **4 5 6** **Building on competencies at Beginning/Developing**	**Exemplary/Excellent** **7 8 9** **Building on competencies at Adequate/Good**
1	**<u>Personal and Spiritual Formation</u>** **Conveys** a developed sense of being a person created and called to live ethically in community. (ELCA) **Conveys** a developed sense of being created and called to give witness to Jesus Christ, Trinitarian faith, care for creation, and community with human neighbors.	• **Articulates** basic understandings of the spiritual practices and theological accents of one's religious heritage; • **Describes** ways these practices and theological accents shape one's daily life and decisions; • **Assesses** one's spiritual gifts and vulnerabilities; • **Identifies** and **accepts** a call to some form of ministerial leadership; • **Connects** personal faith and public witness.	• **Interprets** human life through the narratives and concepts of one's religious heritage; • **Evaluates** strengths and limitations of one's own spiritual experiences and practices, and faith heritage; • **Describes** the spiritual experiences and practices, religious traditions, and/or denominational frameworks shared by others; • **Reflects** upon God's grace, justice, and mercy in one's own life and the life of the world.	• **Guides** and **supports** communal participation in activities that renew relationships, justice, truth, and wholeness in local contexts; • **Accepts** and **overcomes** challenges to accomplish goals; • **Practices** gratitude for the gifts of life and joy in doing ministry; • **Testifies** to God's particular call to ministerial leadership; • **Demonstrates** commitment to doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God.
2	**<u>Scripture</u>** **Draws** the wisdom of our forebears in the faith in Scripture into active engagement with emerging challenges.	• **Applies** basic information about the Bible (composition, key figures and narratives, other genres of scriptural literature); • **Discusses** the history of the Bible; • **Recognizes** the Bible's diverse genres and cultural contexts; • **Compares and contrasts** biblical texts/contexts with contemporary challenges/contexts.	• **Reflects** and **communicates** Bible content well and knowledgeably on the various genres and variety of perspectives in the biblical canon; • **Analyzes** the text within its original context using research tools and different interpretive methods; • **Relates** biblical texts/contexts to contemporary challenges/contexts.	**Draws** on the meta-narrative of Scripture to: • **Builds** the narratives of one's own life and communities; • **Expresses** one's faith in the language, imagery and narrative of biblical texts; • **Internalizes** and **expresses** the history of the biblical worlds and the complexity of biblical texts and practices of the Christian faith to exigent questions and issues in contemporary contexts.
3	**<u>History & Theology</u>** **Draws** the wisdom of our forebears in the faith in history and theology into active engagement with emerging challenges	• **Describes** key turning points, movements, events, debates, and institutional developments in the history of Christianity, as well as their social/ideological contexts; • **Locates** and **assesses** classical and contemporary theological and historical resources. ELCA Candidates: • **Incorporates** key tenets of the Lutheran confessional heritage and their meaning into one's life and the life of the world.	• **Connects** Christian tradition with contemporary knowledge and experience; • **Reflects** and **argues** the connection between Christian tradition and contemporary knowledge and experience; • **Creates** and **presents** oral/written presentations that interpret the Christian heritage and its Lutheran expressions in ways responsible to their central texts; • **Identifies** criteria/norms used in own analysis and assessment; • **Connects** past texts and contexts to present ones;	**Helps** persons and communities strengthen their faith formation, theological identity, and vocational clarity by: • learning and teaching, • preaching and presiding, • caring and administering, • engaging in public witness in ways that creatively relate the foundational theological texts, traditions and practices of the Christian faith to exigent questions and issues in contemporary contexts.

			• **Imparts** results of historical and theological analysis.	
4	**<u>Ministry Arts and Public Leadership</u>** **Guides** and **supports** communities that discern and develop the gifts of all people.	• **Demonstrates** promise and initial proficiency in the core practices of the ministry of word and sacrament; • **Appraises** the interrelationship between the arts of ministry; • **Specifies** the link between ministerial leadership, the Christian life, and God's great work.	• **Exhibits** confidence/gracefulness in exercising ministry; • **Articulates** a sense of self as leader; • **Demonstrates** understanding of own strengths and limitations that is congruent with feedback from others; • **Pronounces** a personal and communal/ecclesial call to ministry and basic vision for ministry, informed by theological studies and vibrant personal faith.	• **Oversees** the gifts and resources of the people of God in the service of the common good; • **Communicates** and **models** embodiment of the gospel in ways that are culturally sensitive, inclusive, and responsive to the personal and public dimensions of people's sorrows and hopes; • **Demonstrates** and **supports** a deep sense of the ministerial or pastoral vocation to which one has been called to shepherd the souls in one's care and to equip people to convey God's great work.
5	**<u>Cultural Context</u>** **Manifests** the ability to know, interpret, and affect particular situations, values, and meanings through methodologically grounded historical, socio-cultural, ethical readings/analysis of one's own denomination and broadly cultural-historical traditions within and around each of these competencies.	• **Examines** a neighborhood; • **Builds** local relationships; • **Empathizes** with the meanings and values others share; • **Develops** a pastoral/theological hermeneutic as a public theologian and leader through the use of resources of Christian/Lutheran traditions; • **Creates**, **implements**, and **progresses** a plan to increase level of cultural competence using the Intercultural Development Plan as a guide.	• **Analyzes** and **assesses** social locations and cultural/religious contexts; • **Speaks** theologically and pastorally about structural inequalities present in society; • **Recognizes** and **greets** difference with understanding while persuasively presenting the Christian heritage in multi-religious contexts; • **Discusses** and **assesses** progress on the Intercultural Development Plan.	• **Oversees** the gifts and resources of the people of God in the service of the common good. • **Articulates** and **models** faithful embodiment of the gospel in ways that are culturally sensitive and inclusive • **Internalizes, assesses**, and **reconstructs** contemporary and broadly cultural-historical traditions.

Ministry Arts and Public Leadership Competency Areas:

LSTC Student Learning Assessment Form Competency Area 4 by Ministry Area: Ministry Arts and Public Leadership				
Competency Area 4: Students demonstrate leadership skills for service in the following ministries:		**Beginning/Developing** **1 2 3**	**Adequate/Good** **4 5 6** **Building on competencies developed in Beginning/Developing**	**Exemplary/Excellent** **7 8 9** **Building on competencies developed at Adequate/Good**
1	**Worship**	• **Collects** and **applies** diverse denominational worship resources for planning worship; • **Correlates** the liturgical assembly, the Christian life, and wider horizons of human and creaturely existence; • **Illustrates** promise and initial proficiency in core practices of word and sacrament worship leadership.	• **Chooses** and **applies** denominational resources for planning worship with confidence; • **Evaluates** compelling connections between the liturgical assembly, the Christian life, and wider horizons of human and creaturely existence; • **Develops** a confident/graceful disposition and a solid repertoire of skills for worship leadership.	• **Examines**, **evaluates**, and **implements** denominational worship resources in lively, informed engagement with ecumenical partners, theological heritages, and diverse cultures; • **Synthesizes** (in academic and conversational discourse) profound connections between the liturgical assembly, the Christian life, and wider horizons of human and creaturely existence; • **Constructs** a depth and breadth of skill in the practices of worship leadership; • **Improvises** wisely and gracefully within Lutheran/ecumenical patterns of worship; • **Contributes to** liturgical leadership that clearly serves and empowers the assembly for the life of the world.
2	**Preaching**	• **Manifests** the spiritual and intellectual discipline required for faithful preaching; • **Employs** learning from courses in Scripture to create sermons that evidence growing skill in biblical interpretation; • **Exemplifies** poise and grace in sermon delivery; • **Identifies** own style of preaching and the contexts that have influenced that style.	• **Cultivates** a responsible method of sermon preparation; • **Interprets** Scripture in ways responsible to text and context; • **Proclaims** the gospel in Christ, or God-centered way; • **Composes** and **delivers** sermons that emphasize God's initiative and grace; • **Presents** the gospel as good news that addresses people's lives and are related to the liturgical year and the rest of the service; • **Delivers** sermons effectively; • **Demonstrates** comfortable with preaching task yet humble regarding call to represent the Gospel.	• **Claims** preaching as a call from God through the church that evokes joy and awe; • **Defines** and **displays** preaching as spiritual discipline/form of prayer; • **Interprets** scripture in ways that generate new insights into text and context; • **Expresses** the Gospel in sermons as good news that addresses people's lives in timely, particular way; • **Motivates** assembly to act and experiences Christ as present and active; • **Creates** and **preaches** a unified message that builds anticipation in hearers through artistically using story, image, and metaphor. • **Practices** diverse methods of delivery.

3	**Leadership for Mission**	• **Initiates** conversations with people; • **Shows** genuine interest in their lives; • **Extends** a warm welcome to newcomers to church; • **Invites** inactive members; • **Articulates** how their faith formation influences their understanding of evangelism/mission;	• **Cultivates** a genuine interest in others; • **Listens** and **empathizes** with personal and interpersonal dynamics in their conversations; • **Identifies** cultural and community dynamics as they impact the church and engage in dialog between church and culture;	• **Engages** and **converses with** others in significant conversations, particularly about their faith; • **Embodies** graciousness in welcoming and including strangers; • **Devotes** time to visit those who are estranged from or unfamiliar with the church;

		• **Identifies** their own vulnerabilities around interaction with the community; • **Organizes** own life as a student to meet classroom and fieldwork tasks and manage own finances.	• **Affirms** how their theological heritage informs their practice of evangelism, hospitality, outreach and mission; • **Responds to** varying levels of cultural interaction, a nuanced understanding of their own, and other people's vulnerabilities; • **Implements** own plan for cultural growth; • **Appraises** and **argues** key issues in administration and finance of local churches/NPOs.	• **Articulates** a compelling theology of evangelism, hospitality, mission and outreach; • **Commits** to hospitality and the diversity of their context; • **Interprets and navigates** varying levels of cultural interaction to identify other people's level of interaction and to help them identify a plan for growth; • **Assists** others to think strategically and to negotiate conflicts in life together.
4	**Pastoral Care**	• **Listens** and **provides** a ministry of graceful presence with those in need of care; • **Distinguishes** own needs/views from needs/views of others; • **Identifies** major life events and the sociocultural context(s) that have influenced own understanding of pastoral care; • **Formulates** how religious heritage influences practices of pastoral care; • **Displays** comfort with action/reflection processes; • **Discloses** vulnerabilities • **Implements**/**provides** constructive feedback from/to others.	• **Employs** ways of listening to lives/faith journeys of others which others describe as helpful; • **Earns** trust from others; • **Recognizes** relational, cultural, and systemic dynamics in groups; • **Distinguishes** how theological heritage and faith deeply inform the practice of pastoral care; • **Examines** one's own and others' pastoral care ministry; • **Discerns** appropriate levels of disclosure.	• **Establishes** an empathic imagination and presence; • **Describes** and **reflects** upon ministry situations; • **Acquires** trust as a skilled practitioner of pastoral care; • **Initiates** both collegial and helping relationships within and across diverse populations; • **Integrates** theological heritage/faith and the lived practices of ministry in a dynamic and reciprocal relationship; • **Offers** and **receives** collegial encouragement and constructive feedback.
5	**Education**	• **Utilizes** pedagogies from one's own experience; • **Describes** a variety of learning styles and intelligences; • **Selects** resources from religious, particularly denominational, publishers in a rudimentary gathering mode; • **Characterizes** the influence of contextual factors on teaching and learning; • **Explains** one's status and role as a teacher of the gospel.	• **Examines** and **utilizes** a variety of pedagogies with significant skill; • **Instructs** to a variety of learning styles and intelligences. • **Navigates** human, textual and internet networks and repositories to find needed resources [teachers, curricular materials, spaces, etc.]; • **Questions** adequacy and authoritativeness; • **Modifies** teaching to serve the needs of contextual factors; • **Embodies** the status and role of a teacher of the gospel in a variety of venues and occasions.	• **Integrates** a variety of pedagogical approaches creatively and effectively; • **Instructs** to a variety of learning styles and intelligences skillfully and spontaneously; • **Navigates** human, textual, and internet networks and repositories to find, evaluate and use these resources in teaching and learning about the gospel; • **Assesses** and **adjusts** teaching and learning to serve complex and evolving contexts; • **Convinces** all people to embody the status and role of a teacher of the gospel in a variety of venues and occasions.

Master of Arts in Ministry Competencies:

LSTC-Master of Arts in Ministry Competencies				
Learning Competencies		**Beginning/Developing** **1 2 3**	**Adequate/Good** **4 5 6** **Building on competencies at Beginning/Developing**	**Exemplary/Excellent** **7 8 9** **Building on competencies at Adequate/Good**
1	**<u>Personal and Spiritual Formation</u>** **Conveys** a developed sense of being a person created and called to live ethically in community. (ELCA) **Conveys** a developed sense of being created, justified, sanctified, and called to manifest faith in loving service by giving witness to Jesus Christ and the Trinitarian faith, fostering community with human neighbors, and caring for creation.	• **Articulates** basic understandings of the spiritual practices and theological accents of one's religious heritage; • **Describes** ways these practices and theological accents shape one's daily life and decisions; • **Assesses** one's spiritual gifts and vulnerabilities; • **Identifies** and **accepts** a call to some form of ministerial leadership; • **Connects** personal faith and public witness.	• **Interprets** human life through the narratives and concepts of one's religious heritage; • **Evaluates** strengths and limitations of one's own spiritual experiences and practices, and faith heritage; • **Describes** the spiritual experiences and practices, religious traditions, and/or denominational frameworks shared by others; • **Reflects** upon God's grace, justice, and mercy in one's own life and the life of the world.	• **Guides** and **supports** communal participation in activities that renew relationships, justice, truth, and wholeness in local contexts; • **Accepts** and **overcomes** challenges to accomplish goals; • **Practices** gratitude for the gifts of life and joy in doing ministry; • **Testifies** God's particular call to ministerial leadership; • **Shares** the gospel, or other religious perspectives; • **Demonstrates** commitment to doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God.
2	**<u>Scripture</u>** **Draws** the wisdom of the forebears in the faith in the Scriptures into active engagement with emerging challenges.	• **Applies** basic information about the Scriptures (composition, key figures and narratives, other genres of scriptural literature); • **Discusses** the history of Scriptures; • **Recognizes** Scriptures' diverse genres and cultural contexts; • **Compares** and **contrasts** scriptural texts/contexts with contemporary challenges/contexts.	• **Implements** scriptural content; • **Reflects** on the various genres and variety of perspectives in Scriptures; • **Analyzes** the text within its original context using scholarly research tools and various interpretive methods; • **Relates** scriptural texts/contexts to contemporary challenges/contexts.	**Examines** the meta-narrative of the Scriptures to: • **Build** the narratives of one's own life and communities; • **Express** one's religious convictions in the language, imagery, and narrative of scriptural texts; • **Internalize** and **declare** the history of the scriptural worlds and the complexity of scriptural texts and practices of particular religious traditions to exigent questions and issues in contemporary contexts.
3	**<u>History & Theology</u>** **Draws** the wisdom of the forebears in the faith in history and theology into active engagement with emerging challenges for the sake of transformational ministries of word and service in the church and the world.	• **Describes** key turning points, movements, events, debates, and institutional developments in the history of Christianity or other religious traditions within their social/ideological contexts; • **Locates** and **assesses** classical and contemporary theological and historical resources. ELCA Candidates:	• **Connects** Christianity, or other religious traditions, with contemporary knowledge and experience; • **Reflects** and **argues** the connection between Christianity, or other religious traditions, and contemporary knowledge and experience; • **Creates** and **presents** oral and written presentations that interpret particular religious heritages in ways responsible to their central texts;	**Helps** persons and communities strengthen their faith formation, theological identity, and vocational clarity by: • learning and teaching, • committing to a ministry of service in the church and the world, • caring and administering • ELCA Candidates: engaging in public witness of Christ and the Gospel in ways that creatively relate the foundational theological texts, traditions and practices of the

		• **Demonstrates** a basic historical and theological understanding of the Diaconate; • **Incorporates** key tenets of the Lutheran confessional heritage and their meaning into one's life and the life of the world.	• **Identifies** criteria/norms used in own analysis and assessment. ELCA Candidates • **Identifies** and **explains** the history and theological foundations of the Diaconate.	Christian faith or other faiths to exigent questions and issues in contemporary contexts.
4	**<u>Ministry Arts and Public Leadership</u>** **Guides** and **supports** communities that discern and develop the gifts of all people.	• **Demonstrates** promise and initial proficiency in the core practices of the ministry of word and service; • **Appraises** the intersections of church and world; • **Formulates** a specific call to the ministry of word and service; • **Specifies** the link between ministerial leadership, the life of faith, and God's great work of bringing the world to abundant life.	• **Exhibits** confidence and gracefulness in exercising ministry; • **Articulates** a sense of self as leader; • **Demonstrates** understanding of own strengths and limitations that is congruent with feedback from others; • **Pronounces** a personal and communal/ecclesial call to ministry and a basic vision for ministry that is informed by theological study and a vibrant personal faith.	• **Oversees** the gifts and resources of the people of God in the service of the common good; • **Communicates** and **models** the Gospel, or other religious convictions, in ways that are culturally sensitive, inclusive, and responsive to the personal and public dimensions of people's sorrows and hopes; • **Demonstrates** and **supports** a deep sense of the vocation to care for God's people and to equip them to participate in God's great work of bringing the world to abundant life; • **Reflects**, **analyzes**, and **reevaluates** own call and ministerial gifts; • **Chooses** to lead a life of faithful service; • **Reinforces** the importance of community and collegiality in public ministry.
5	**Cultural Context** **Manifests** the ability to know, interpret, and affect particular situations, values, and meanings through methodologically grounded historical, socio-cultural, ethical readings/analysis of one's own religious community and broadly cultural-historical traditions within and around each of these competencies.	• **Examines** a neighborhood; • **Builds** local relationships; • **Empathizes** with the meanings and values others share; • **Develops** a ministerial/theological hermeneutic as a public theologian and leader through the use of resources of Christian/ Lutheran or other religious traditions; • **Creates**, **implements**, and **progresses** on a plan to increase level of cultural competence using the Intercultural Development Plan as a guide.	• **Analyzes** and **assesses** social locations and cultural/religious contexts; • **Speaks** theologically and empathically about structural inequalities present in society • **Responds** to the needs of those who are marginalized; • **Listens** to differences with empathy while persuasively presenting the Christian, or another religious heritage, in multi-religious contexts; • **Discusses** and **assesses** progress on the Intercultural Development Plan.	• **Oversees** the gifts and resources of the people of God in the service of the common good; • **Articulates** and **models** faithful embodiment of the gospel or other religious traditions in ways that are culturally sensitive and inclusive; • **Internalizes**, **assesses**, and **reconstructs** contemporary and broadly cultural-historical traditions; • **Identifies** ministerial opportunities that are on the boundaries between church and world, especially ministries affecting human need, and seeks to pursue those ministries in meaningful and relevant ways.

Master of Arts (Theological Studies) Competencies:

LSTC-Master of Arts Competencies				
Learning Competencies		**Beginning/Developing** **1 2 3**	**Adequate/Good** **4 5 6** **Building on competencies at Beginning/Developing**	**Exemplary/Excellent** **7 8 9** **Building on competencies at Adequate/Good**
1	**Personal and Spiritual Formation** **Conveys** a developed sense of being created and called to live ethically in community and to care for creation.	• **Recognizes** the need for care of self, others, and creation; • **Articulates** basic understandings of the spiritual practices and theological accents of one's religious heritage; • **Describes** ways these practices and theological accents shape one's daily life and decisions; • **Assesses** one's spiritual gifts and vulnerabilities; • **Connects** religious commitments, public witness, and academic pursuits.	• **Attends** to care of self, others, and creation in a flexible, balanced manner; • **Interprets** human life through the narratives and concepts of one's religious heritage; • **Evaluates** strengths and limitations of one's own spiritual experiences and practices and one's faith heritage; • **Describes** the spiritual experiences and practices as well as religious traditions of others.	• **Guides** and **supports** communal participation in activities that renew relationships and promote justice, truth, and wholeness in local contexts; • **Explains** the purposes, values, and convictions that are foundational for the academic study of theology; • **Demonstrates** commitment to doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God when relating to other human beings and the rest of creation.
2	**Scripture** **Draws** the wisdom of the forebears in the faith in the Scriptures into active engagement with emerging challenges.	• **Applies** basic information about the Scriptures (composition, key figures and narratives, other genres of scriptural literature); • **Discusses** the history of the Scriptures • **Recognizes** Scripture's diverse genres and cultural contexts; • **Relates** scriptural texts/contexts and contemporary challenges/contexts.	• **Reflects** and **communicates** scriptural content well and knowledgeably reflects on the various genres and variety of perspectives in the Scriptures; • **Analyzes** the text within its original context using scholarly research tools and a variety of interpretive methods; • **Compares** and **contrasts** scriptural texts/contexts to contemporary challenges/contexts.	**Draws** on the meta-narrative of the Scriptures to: • **Build** the narratives of one's own life and communities; • **Express** one's religious convictions in the language, imagery and narrative of scriptural texts; • **Internalize and declare** the history of the scriptural worlds and the complexity of scriptural texts and practices of particular religious traditions to exigent questions and issues in contemporary contexts.
3	**History & Theology** **Draws** the wisdom of the forebears in the faith in history and theology into active engagement with emerging challenges for the sake of scholarly endeavors in religious communities and beyond.	• **Describes** key turning points, movements, events, debates, and institutional developments in the history of Christianity or other religious traditions within their social/ideological contexts; • **Verbalizes** key tenets of own theological and religious heritage; • **Locates** and **assesses** classical and contemporary theological and historical resources.	• **Connects** religious traditions with contemporary knowledge and experience; • **Reflects** and **argues** the connection between religious traditions and contemporary knowledge and experience; • **Creates** and **presents** oral and written presentations that interpret particular religious heritages in their diverse expressions in ways responsible to their central texts; • **Identifies** criteria /norms used in own analysis and assessment; • **Connects** past texts and contexts to present ones; • **Imparts** results of historical and theological analysis	**Helps** persons and communities strengthen their faith formation, theological identity, and vocational clarity by: • learning and teaching, • committing to a ministry of service in the church and the world, • caring and administering • ELCA Candidates: engaging in public witness of Christ and the Gospel in ways that creatively relate the foundational theological texts, traditions and practices of the Christian faith or other faiths to exigent questions and issues in contemporary contexts.

4	**<u>Cultural Context</u>** **Manifests** the ability to know, interpret, and affect particular situations, values, and meanings through methodologically grounded historical, socio-cultural, ethical readings/analysis of the Christian or another religious heritage and broadly cultural-historical traditions within and around each of these competencies.	• **Examines** a neighborhood; • **Builds** local relationships; • **Empathizes** with the meanings and values others share; • **Develops** a theological hermeneutic as a public theologian and leader through the use of resources of the diverse Christian or other religious traditions; • **Creates**, **implements**, and **progresses** a plan to increase the level of cultural competence using the Intercultural Development Plan as a guide.	• **Analyzes** and **assesses** social locations and cultural/religious contexts; • **Speaks** theologically about structural inequalities present in society; • **Acknowledges** religious difference with understanding while persuasively **presenting** the Christian or another religious heritage in multi-religious contexts; • **Discusses** and **assesses** progress on the Intercultural Development Plan.	• **Oversees** the gifts and resources of the people of God in the service of the common good; • **Articulates** and **models** faithful embodiment of the gospel or another religious tradition in ways that are culturally sensitive and inclusive; • **Internalizes**, **assesses**, and **reconstructs** contemporary and broadly cultural-historical traditions.

E. Course Planning and Course Load

i. Course Planning:

A summary of course requirements and course descriptions for MA, MAM, and MDiv students is contained in the 2025-26 LSTC Catalog. The Catalog and other resources for course planning are available at orientation and on the LSTC website (http://www.lstc.edu).

Note: Faculty teaching schedules must be planned well in advance, and not every class can be offered in every term.

ii. Course Load:

MDiv students are expected to complete nine courses per year and generally only nine courses per year are eligible to be considered for financial aid. MDiv students frequently take four courses each semester and a J-Term course. Students may also take advantage of the summer term, a brief period post-graduation when a select number of intensive courses are offered. Thus, students might choose to take, for example, four courses in the fall, one course in the J-Term, three courses in the spring, and one summer intensive course, totaling nine courses. Students may take up to five courses per semester, provided that they have demonstrated strong academic work (3.0 GPA or higher) in their prior coursework. Taking five courses in one term is normally not recommended.

Students planning to graduate in May are not permitted to take a summer course for credit toward graduation—all courses must be completed in advance of graduation.

Full-time MA and MAM students take eight courses per academic year, either by taking four courses per semester or reducing the number of courses in one semester to three in order to take a course in the January term and/or summer term. Students may take up to five courses per semester, provided that they have demonstrated solid academic work (3.0 GPA or higher) in their prior coursework. Taking five courses in one term is normally not recommended.

F. Advanced Standing and Transfer of Credits

i. Advanced Standing:

Advanced standing with credit cannot be automatically granted on the basis of ministerial or life experience (ES.7.4.2, Degree Program Standards). Thus, students who desire advanced standing with credit must demonstrate competency through either an examination or evaluation process. The following constitutes the procedure for requesting advanced standing at LSTC.

1) If a student is requesting advanced standing for a particular course or in a

competency area, the student must first contact the Degree Program Director to request advanced standing. In consultation with the Degree Program Director the student will either:

a) Present a portfolio of work which clearly demonstrates competence in the course outcomes highlighted in the course description and syllabus (ie., Biblical Greek I, From Genesis to Revelation, etc), or which clearly demonstrates competence in the curricular area, as described in the Masters Program Manual (ie., History and Theology, Ministry Arts and Public Leadership, etc) to the Degree Program Director. After initial review by the director, the student may be asked to meet with a faculty person to reflect on their learnings and respond to questions about the portfolio.

OR

b) The student will sit for either an oral or written exam. In consultation with the Degree Program Director, a division chair or faculty person will evaluate the exam and determine whether the student has demonstrated competence in the course outcomes and if advanced standing is appropriate.

Before submitting a portfolio or requesting an oral or written exam, the student will consult with the degree program director, who will help them to determine which option is best for them. This consultation will be formalized by the student filling out an advanced standing request form which will be signed by the degree program director before the student assembles a portfolio or requests an exam. The degree program director, in consultation with the division chair, will determine which faculty person will best serve as an evaluator or examiner.

2) If the student is requesting advanced standing for a contextual education credit (ML-II), the student must consult with the degree program director and director of contextual education. Following this conversation, the student will:

a) Submit a letter of request to the contextual ed office stating how their previous ministry experience meets the competencies and outcomes of the Ministry in Context (ML-II) course.
b) Submit a portfolio of work that demonstrates competence with artifacts that support the history of ministry experience.
c) Submit a letter from their candidacy committee and/or candidacy relator stating their support of advanced standing being given for this degree requirement.
d) Submit an evaluation by a ministerial leader with whom they worked closely for a significant period of time. These evaluation forms are available through the contextual ed office.
e) Once all of these items are submitted, the contextual ed office, in consultation with the contextual ed committee and degree program director, will evaluate whether granting advanced standing for this course is appropriate.

A student may request advanced standing for more than one course, but no more than 25% of the degree program may be granted by advanced standing.

Additionally, LSTC has developed a policy regarding the potential acceptance of some undergraduate work or work finished in other degree programs. This policy may be obtained from the Degree Program Director, Dean of Student Services and the Director of Admissions, since it pertains to the process of admission to seminary.

ii. Transfer of Credits:

The Degree Program Directors in consultation with Academic Dean have responsibility to review requests and render decisions about transfer credits. Courses completed at another ATS-accredited institution may transfer toward one of LSTC's first theological degree programs and be credited for up to two-thirds of the credits of the LSTC degree, according to the following additional criteria:

- Each course for which a student seeks transfer credit is demonstrably related in subject matter to the work required for the LSTC degree. Students may be asked to submit syllabi for courses they seek to transfer in order to help determine their transferability.
- Students have demonstrated success in the courses they wish to transfer. A grade of B or above is accepted as an adequate record of success.
- Before transfer credit is awarded for any course, an official transcript from the school where the course was taken must be submitted to LSTC. These transcripts are normally submitted to the Admissions Office at the time of admission.

Eligible courses for transfer need to have been completed within the last decade.

G. Transfer between Degree Programs; Shared Degree Programs

i. The Integrity of Degree Programs:

Certain courses are required for all the Masters level degree programs at LSTC. However, each degree program has its own distinctive purposes and curricular logic.

Some examples:

- The two LSTC Master of Arts programs each share many similar course requirements, but the MA degree is designed for students primarily interested in the academic study of theology and the MAM degree is designed for students pursuing lay rostered ministry in the ELCA or forms of ministry in other faith traditions. Each program has a unique discipline and focus, although both share a strong foundational core. The predominant number of courses for the MA should be in the RHS, RHTH, and CC competency areas (though some ML and SF courses are certainly permissible).
- ELCA candidacy students affirmed by their synods ("entranced") for theological studies choose the degree program that is best suited to their ministry goals. From time to time, students decide to alter their ministry plans, and sometimes this necessitates a change in degree programs. All ELCA candidates for rostered ministry undertake fieldwork and internships in order to develop competencies and to aid in formation for the particular ministry roster they wish to enter. However, a fieldwork or internship experience undertaken in preparation for

one roster cannot be assumed to substitute for a fieldwork program that prepares one for another roster. Each road to rostered ministry has its own purposes and integrity.

These are examples to demonstrate the distinctiveness and integrity of the different degree programs students may pursue at the master's level. In short, transfer is possible, but not every course or requirement completed in one academic program or candidacy process automatically transfers to another. According to ATS Standards, not more than half of the credits required for one completed degree program may be transferred to another degree program (ES.7.3.1).

Students considering a change in their degree program are advised to first contact their academic advisor and the director of the degree program into which they desire to transfer.

ii. Processes for Transfer:

Transfers involve different processes, depending on the situation of the student. Step-by-step "to do lists" are provided below for a number of situations.

a) Transfer from the MDiv to MAM or MA Programs:

- After the initial consultation with your advisor and the Director of MDiv and MA Programs/Coordinator for Candidacy, complete the "Petition for Change of Degree Program," which also requires the signature of the Director of Contextual Education and the Dean of Student Services before it goes to the Dean's Office.
- If you are an ELCA candidate for ordination, attach a copy of the communication you sent to your candidacy committee that specifies whether you seek to (a) continue candidacy through completing the MAM program designed for candidates for lay rostered ministry, or (b) withdraw from candidacy. If you wish to continue in candidacy, documentation of support from the candidacy committee for this change is expected to accompany the Petition for Change of Degree Program. If you are withdrawing from candidacy, a copy of the email/ letter communicating to the candidacy committee your decision to withdraw from candidacy and, if possible, the committee's written response to your communication, will suffice.
- If the petition is approved, the Registrar will notify you and the Director of the MDiv and MA Programs/Coordinator for Candidacy will formally assign transfer credit.

b) Transfer from the MAM or MA Program to the MDiv Program:

Entranced or endorsed ELCA candidates for the Word and Service roster who seek to transfer into the MDiv—ELCA ordination track program:

- After the initial consultation with your advisor and the Director of MDiv and MA Programs/Coordinator for Candidacy, complete the "Petition for Change of Degree Program, which also requires the signature of the Director of Contextual Education and the Dean of Student Services before it goes to the Dean's Office.

- Attach to this petition notification of the candidacy committee's support for this change.
- If the petition is approved, the Registrar will notify you and the Director of the MDiv and MA Programs/Coordinator for Candidacy will formally assign transfer credit.

Newly-entranced candidates for rostered ministry in the ELCA:

- After the initial consultation with your advisor and the Director of MDiv and MA Programs/Coordinator for Candidacy, complete the "Petition for Change of Degree Program," which also requires the signature of the Director of Contextual Education.
- Attach the notification of your candidacy committee's positive entrance decision to the petition.
- If the petition is approved, the Registrar will notify you and the Director of the MDiv and MA Programs/Coordinator for Candidacy, who will formally evaluate your transcript and assign transfer credit.

c) Transfer from MAM or MA program to the MDiv Program:

- Apply to the Admissions Office for admission to the MDiv Program.
- If accepted, the Admission Office will notify you and the Director of the MDiv Program/Coordinator for Candidacy, who will then formally evaluate your transcript to assign transfer credit to the MDiv Program.

ELCA candidates for rostered ministry who lose candidacy status through denial at the endorsement interview or at any other stage in the candidacy process:

- Students admitted to an ELCA candidacy track degree program may no longer continue in that particular MDiv or MAM program track.
- Students who face this challenge will contact the Director of MDiv and MA Programs/Coordinator for Candidacy, who will convene a consulting team that includes the academic advisor and, Director of Contextual Education, as well as any peer or faculty member or administrator whom students desire to be with them to discuss options.

ELCA candidates for rostered ministry who are postponed at entrance or endorsement:

- Students who face this challenge will contact the Director of MDiv and MA Programs/Coordinator for Candidacy, who will convene a consulting team that includes the academic advisor and Director of Contextual Education, as well as any peer or faculty member or administrator whom students desire to be with them to discuss options.
- It is vital to engage in this consultation because continuing studies without the candidacy committee's support for this choice and a clear plan of action that involves the partnership of seminary and candidacy committee may work against students' hopes for a future positive entrance or endorsement decision by the candidacy committee.

ELCA candidates in good standing who choose to put candidacy on hold and wish to continue their studies:

- Students who want to make this decision will contact the Director of MDiv and MA Programs/Coordinator for Candidacy, who will convene a consulting team that includes the academic advisor and Director of Contextual Education, as well as any peer or faculty member or administrator whom students desire to be with them to discuss options.
- It is vital to engage in this consultation because continuing studies without the candidacy committee's support for this choice and a clear plan of action that involves the partnership of seminary and candidacy committee may work against students' hopes for a future positive entrance or endorsement decision by the candidacy committee.

iii. Shared Credit in Degree Programs:

Some students may consider earning two master's degrees while at LSTC. For example, students pursuing the MDiv degree might seek to enroll in a Master of Arts program in order to develop a much larger cadre of coursework in a particular area of interest (e.g., interfaith studies, religion and science, environmental ministry, Bible) in preparation for a possible advanced studies degree or specialized ministry. "Students may be either simultaneously or sequentially enrolled in two master's programs as long as each degree program has a clear integrity and meets the stated standards. The programs may in some instances use the same resources and be overlapping. The total time required will be determined by the demands of the two degrees combined but must conform to the stipulations on shared credit in degree programs in section ES.7.3.1" (ATS Standard ES.7.3.2). An example of shared credit in degree programs is the longstanding dual degree program that LSTC offers in partnership with the University of Chicago Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice.

H. Teaching and Learning

A. Conduct:

As the All-Students Handbook sets forth in more detail, instructors and students exercise mutual accountability in classroom teaching and learning. Practices of hospitality, mutual respect, confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation are an integral part of life together and impact the tone and conduct of life inside and outside the classroom.

LSTC expects of all its students conduct befitting ministerial leadership. Conduct unbecoming to a Christian may be grounds for dismissal from the seminary or may lead the faculty not to approve the granting of a degree.

B. Course Requirements:

Instructors will inform students of all course requirements, standards of assessment, and what can be expected in the way of feedback for students' work in writing, normally before the second week of the course. This is usually accomplished by the syllabus for the course which provides course rationale, outcomes/competencies, strategies, and assessments (ROSA). If occasion for complaints should arise in this connection, they should be taken up first with the instructor. Students are encouraged to contact the Degree Program Director if help or advice is needed in these matters. The Academic Dean, in consultation with the Academic Cabinet, is the final arbiter of academic complaints.

C. Grading Scale:

A+ or A = 4.0	C+ = 2.25
A- = 3.75	C = 2.0
B+ = 3.25	C- = 1.75
B= 3.0	D = 1.0
B- = 2.75	

Courses must be passed with a grade of C- or better. No student may graduate with a GPA of less than 2.0.

D. Pass/Fail Option:

Unless a student is on academic probation, an MA, MAM, or MDiv student may request to be granted a Pass/Fail grade (P/F) instead of a letter grade in any course. Students who wish to be evaluated on this basis must go to the Registrar's office no later than the end of the second week of classes and record this decision in their registration file. The Registrar does not inform faculty members which students are taking their courses for grades and which are on a Pass/Fail basis. If a student has chosen the Pass/Fail option, the Registrar will automatically change the professor's grade into the appropriate Pass/Fail mark.

Some faculty members have chosen to offer a particular course on a Pass/Fail basis. Students participating in such a course may, if desired, communicate to the professor the request to receive a letter grade. It is best that such communications are made in writing no later than the second week of the semester.

Pass grades do not affect the grade point average, which is based on those courses in which the student has received a letter grade. Fail grades are counted as an F and impact the grade point average accordingly. Students contemplating study for a further degree may find it to their advantage in applying to graduate schools if they have taken many courses for a letter grade. All course grades turned in to the Registrar are final and cannot be changed unless there was an error in calculation.

E. Student Retention Profile:

One of the purposes of theological education is to assist students to discern their calling to ministry. "Attrition" that is in the service of greater vocational clarity is not perceived as a negative result of the investment of time in the educational process. LSTC maintains Retention Profiles of LSTC MDiv, MAM, and MA Students, containing statistics about students who begin and graduate from the MDiv, MAM, and MA programs at LSTC. This report fulfills certain United States Department of Education requirements regarding the school's participation in the Stafford Loan Program. See "Graduation Rates" may be found at this site:
https://lstc.edu/about/resources/disclosures/

F. Independent Studies, Theses, and Summative Evaluations

i. Independent Study:

An independent study may be arranged between a student and a faculty member on any subject appropriate to the theological curriculum that is not dealt with in a regular course. The privilege of taking independent studies (reading courses) is reserved for students with a Grade Point Average of 3.0 or better.

Independent studies are not offered over material covered in the basic required courses. Students wishing to study these subjects outside the normal class framework should register for Credit by Examination.

Independent studies require exceptional initiative on the part of a student, who identifies and refines a subject of interest, develops a bibliography, has explored the biographical material on faculty available on the LSTC web site to identify faculty members whose areas of expertise coincide with the student's interest, and can articulate the purpose of the study before seeking a faculty member's support. In essence, a student is engaged in designing a course for one person that meets the time requirements of a full semester course.

Forms for Independent Study proposals are available on MyLSTC. The form requires the student and faculty supervisor to state the ways they will work together (number of meeting times, etc.) and describe the product that will be
received for evaluation. Once prepared and signed by the advisor and the faculty supervisor, the proposal is submitted for approval. Independent studies for MAM, MA, and MDiv students are approved by the respective Program Directors.

Except by special permission, a student may not register for more than one independent study per semester and may not undertake another independent study in a subsequent semester if the work for the previous term's independent study remains incomplete.

There are two options for independent studies at LSTC:

1) Reading course: A reading course is an independent study in which the primary work is focused on reading and research, and normally culminates in a major paper or project. A reading course is planned in advance of the term for which it is registered, and a substantial bibliography, study plan, and agreement about the material that will be submitted for evaluation is required at registration. The course is undertaken for a specified time (usually one semester) for one course credit.

2) Field research course: With the assistance and supervision of a faculty instructor, a student (or group of students) may design a course that utilizes contact hours (gained from workshops, seminars, or other forms of experiential learning) in conjunction with reading and reflection over an extended period of time. For example, students may undertake to engage in pericope studies over an extended period of time, supplementing the contact hours gained from such language study with other exegetical workshops and a project or paper. Students interested in exploring the role of church music in theological expression and community life may seek to combine contact hours gained through participating in faculty/staff- supervised musical groups with reading or ministry practice with a particular form of music, culminating in a project or paper. Students interested in the relationship between theology and ethnography may desire a field research project in which some of the skills of ethnographic study (participant observation, field research notes/journals, interviews, cultural description and reflection) are practiced under faculty guidance and supervision. Only one course credit may be earned through pursuing Independent Study Option 2.

All such field research independent study courses, however they are designed, must have a faculty supervisor who is responsible for monitoring the construction of the initial proposal, working with the student to ensure that the project has been approved by the committee that monitors all proposals for research on human subjects, and for insuring that the student has completed sufficient hours (no fewer than 117 hours) of work for course credit. Unlike the reading course, the student works with the faculty supervisor until the faculty supervisor believes that the project is close to culmination, and the Independent Study form for Field Research is submitted during registration for the term in which the course will be completed.

ii. Thesis – Master of Divinity:

Master of Divinity students may write a thesis in fulfillment of curricular requirements under the following guidelines:

- The thesis will count as the equivalent of one elective.
- The topic of the thesis may be a specialized subject of research in any theological discipline or may have an interdisciplinary character.
- A thesis proposal is to be prepared and submitted on a form available for this purpose. This calls for a clear statement of the topic, the method of inquiry to be used, and the resources available.

- The advisor will normally serve as the student's principal source of advice and guidance concerning the thesis. With the advisor's approval, the student may select another faculty member to serve as thesis director or second reader and secures this person's consent to serve, with the advisor indicating whether or not he/she will serve as a second reader.
- The thesis must use scholarly methods of research and must measure up to acceptable standards of excellence.
- The expected length of the thesis cannot be stated precisely; however, it would normally approximate 30-40 typewritten pages.
- A *Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian (paperback, University of Chicago Press), or the *Chicago Manual of Style*, latest edition, is the authority on all questions of format and mechanical preparation of the thesis.

The following deadlines apply for the (optional) MDiv thesis:

- Mid- October: Proposal submitted to the student's faculty advisor, and, if determined after consultation with the advisor, another faculty member who will serve as thesis director or 2nd reader, on a form available from the Registrar's office.
- February: Preliminary copy of entire thesis submitted to advisor/thesis director (and 2nd reader, if any).
- March: Advisor/thesis director (and reader) returns thesis with any suggestions for improvement.
- April: Student submits final copy to advisor/thesis director (and reader, if any).
- May: Commencement

iii. Thesis – MAM Ministry Projects and MA Thesis (Summative Evaluation):

Master of Arts in Ministry students engage in summative reflection on their professional and academic work through supervisory and self-evaluation of their supervised ministry experiences. Processes for that work are outlined in the Contextual Education section of this manual.

MA students compose an academic thesis as the Summative Evaluation of their degree program. Successful completion of this paper is a prerequisite for graduation and will result in one course credit.

- During the spring semester of their first year of study (or while completing their eighth course), students, in consultation with their academic advisor and the Director of MDIv and MA Programs, choose a faculty supervisor and a topic for the Summative Evaluation. Students may also request other consultants and readers to assist them in their work.
- Specific guidelines for each project are determined in consultation with the advisor of the Summative Evaluation.

Students register for a summative evaluation research course (course titles will vary) in the Fall Semester of their final year, using a form provided by the Registrar. They will receive grades for this course after the Summative Evaluation is written, usually in the Spring Semester.

MA students fulfill the Summative Evaluation requirement by registering for a summative evaluation research course in the fall semester, meeting with their advisor and First Reader to identify a topic and bibliography; thereafter writing a thesis of between 30 and 40 pages. The paper may be written in any academic field represented by the LSTC faculty. With the guidance of a faculty First Reader, students refine the topic, develop an appropriate bibliography and complete their research during the fall semester of the final year of study. Since the summative evaluation is a major research paper, the general scholarly expectations for a research paper are operative. Kate Turabian or the latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* serve as resources for footnotes, bibliography, etc. The paper will be graded by the First Reader. A student may ask a faculty Second Reader to be involved in thesis process, usually a consultant on a specific portion of the paper, or as a reader and responder to the final draft. The Director of the MDiv and MA Programs may be consulted in the evaluative process.

The following dates apply for the Summative Evaluation:

- Fall Registration: Students register for the summative evaluation research course in the Fall Semester of their final year, using a form provided by the Registrar. They will receive grades for this course after the Summative Evaluation is written, usually in the Spring Semester.
- September: Proposal submitted to the First Reader and, if applicable, to a Second Reader or other consultants. October 12 is the latest the proposal may be submitted.
- End of January/early February: Preliminary copy of entire thesis submitted to the First Reader. February is the latest the preliminary copy may be submitted. 2-3 weeks following student's submission of the preliminary copy – First Reader returns paper/project with any suggestions for improvement. March 15 is the latest return for suggestions for improvement.
- March: Student submits final copy to First Reader, Second Readers (if applicable), and Director of the MA Programs (or faculty member designated by the Director). Late March is the latest the final copy may be submitted. The Director of MDiv and MA Programs files the Summative Evaluations in the student portfolios.
- May: Commencement

G. Concentrations and Emphases

LSTC's curriculum allows freedom and flexibility for students in MA, MAM, and MDiv programs who desire to focus their study in areas of personal interest while preserving a well-rounded program of theological study. An emphasis is more formalized and more structured than a concentration.

i. Concentrations:

Students may develop a concentration in a particular discipline (e.g., preaching, ethics, history) or a particular ministry interest that draws on multiple disciplines (e.g., how resources from different theological disciplines contribute to a vibrant youth and family ministry). The professor or professors in a specific field determine which courses are essential for a concentration in that field and identify pertinent related courses, usually six courses. At least four of these courses must be electives at the 400 level or above.

ii. Emphases:

LSTC has developed particular curricular emphases, which are faculty-approved integrative programs of study in a given field of inquiry. Students who choose an emphasis will be supervised by faculty member(s) and will work with other interested peers in a more structured program of studies. Each emphasis delineates course requirements, field education/ practicum ideas, and optional features that will enhance the growth in perspective and competence of the student. A student's advisor can help students explore and settle on an emphasis, if appropriate. Here is an overview of current emphases:

- LSTC's curricular offerings in biblical studies provide unique opportunities for students who desire to do concentrated study in Bible from beginning to advanced levels.
- Four multicultural ministry emphases—Hispanic, African Descent, Asian, and American Indian/Alaska Native—prepare Masters students for ministry in specific cultural communities. Students are introduced to the whole range of the religious and theological experience related to a particular culture.
- LSTC is one of the leading seminaries in the United States for the study of religion and science and environmental ministry.
- An interfaith emphasis equips students who desire to develop knowledge about and skills for interfaith dialogue and relations. LSTC's special strength is Muslim Christian relations.
- LSTC's rich urban, multicultural environment makes it an ideal place to explore and gain skills for the practice of urban/metropolitan ministry.

For information about a particular emphases, please review the Academic Catalog, or a student may contact their advisor or the Dean's office for further information.

H. Student Learning Assessment Process for MAM, MA, and MDiv Programs

LSTC bases student learning assessment on the seminary's mission/vision/values statement, the strategic plan, and learning outcomes for each degree program. The Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) guides the learning assessment process for

LSTC.

The assessment process is required of all students at LSTC. To minimize duplication and foster a sustainable assessment process, elements of the ELCA candidacy process have been incorporated into the assessment process. Regular interaction between students and their assigned faculty advisors is an important part of the assessment process. Students and faculty advisors are encouraged to meet and discuss students' progress as often as necessary but at a minimum once per semester. The advisor guides and monitors the student's academic progress and spiritual and leadership formation.

i. First Year Student Assessment:

The student assessment process begins with a first-year student review at the end of the first semester. The Director of the MDiv and MA Programs will review student progress with faculty members who teach courses for first-year students to assess any concerns about student progress. The Director will communicate with academic advisors or others as appropriate.

All first year MAM, MA, and MDiv students are required to participate in a process of assessment regarding their initial year of full- time studies at LSTC or, for part-time students, after completing approximately six courses. A completed First-Year Assessment is required before classes may be taken the next fall.

ii. Second Year Student Assessment:

- Initial planning for the Summative Evaluation Project is required of all MA students once they have completed 8 courses. For complete information on the Summative Evaluation, see above (page 28).
- Prior to internship, MDiv and MAM students in the candidacy process will have an Endorsement interview with their Endorsement panel (a subset of the candidacy committee from the synod with which the student is affiliated, with the student's faculty advisor). The Endorsement interview will review: 1) the Completed Endorsement essay, 2) the student's transcript, and 3) the Clinical Pastoral Education evaluation.
- The Endorsement form is completed for students in the ELCA candidacy process.

iii. Third Year Assessment:

MDiv students engage in a program review and assessment process that includes their advisor and one other faculty member of their choosing and is focused on their academic accomplishments/assessments and field assessments from CPE and Ministerial Leadership II/MIC. This normally takes place in the fall of the third and final year of studies unless students have requested to undertake an internship according to the expectations of their denomination or their own professional development plans.

For ELCA Candidates for Rostered Ministry:
A distinctive feature of Lutheran theological education for candidates for ordained ministry is a 12-month internship, usually taken in the student's third year of a four-year program. The goals of the internship experience are to:

- help students fine-tune the discernment of their call by identifying strengths and weaknesses of their preparation;
- explore various models and styles of doing ministry;
- determine what should be emphasized in the final year of study.

For MDiv students who are candidates for the deacon roster, the internship requirement for that roster substitutes for the internship that focuses on preparation for ordained ministry.

The internship year provides an external review process for students. At the completion of the internship year, an evaluation report on each student is received from the internship supervisor and internship committee.

iv. Fourth Year Student Assessment (Candidates for ELCA Rostered Ministry):

For students who complete internship in year three of their MDiv program, Approval and assignments take place during the student's senior year. A final essay is submitted to the candidacy committee by September.

In order to enter the assignment process in the ELCA, students must receive a positive evaluation of their internship work by the Field Education Office and a majority vote affirming their readiness for ministry from the seminary faculty. Candidacy committees conduct Approval interviews after the faculty decision and make recommendations regarding approval for ordination.

Approval Process:

- The senior interview takes place with the faculty advisor and an additional faculty member who discuss:
    - The student's Approval essay (includes sermon, exegetical statement, and theological reflection on questions provided by the ELCA);
    - The internship final evaluation reports from the intern, supervising pastor, and lay committee, and the internship project report The senior interview results in the "Form D" – a report that goes to the faculty for acceptance and serves as the student assessment form for fourth year MDiv students in candidacy.
- The Approval interview takes place with the candidacy committee from the student's synod.

v. Other Evaluative Resources and Review of Data:

d) Course Evaluations:

Each student is required to complete an anonymous course evaluation for each course taken. Each faculty member receives a summary of the course evaluations for the class along with any comments students might have included. A summary document of key highlights is reviewed by the Faculty Academic Assessment Committee. The summary document will be used to track and analyze course effectiveness over a period of years. Plans are being developed for a faculty review process of course evaluations. Course evaluations will also be compared with trends in student course enrollment figures to track possible correlations.

e) Exit Interviews:

Graduating students in the first-masters degree programs and in the Advanced Studies degree programs are invited to a group exit interview, in which they share with faculty members what has been most valuable in their education at LSTC and what

improvements might be made. This information is compiled and shared with the Academic Cabinet and the rest of the faculty as a tool to continuously improve the curricula and courses offered by LSTC.

Section 2: Contextual Education

The Department of Contextual Education's role is to coordinate and oversee four programs: Clinical Pastoral Education, Ministerial Leadership II (Ministry in Context), and Internship/Field Studies.Every MDiv and MAM student will at some point take part in one or more of the programs of Contextual Education depending on their degree requirements. These programs are also open to other LSTC degree students (including MA, ThM, PhD), provided they have successfully completed the requirements for entry into them and, if an International student, have received the approval of the Advanced Studies Department.

A. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

Clinical Pastoral Education is a supervised experience of pastoral ministry. Although commonly located in a hospital or medical center, CPE centers are also located within social service programs, hospices, prisons, parishes, and other agencies. Within the CPE experience, students undertake direct ministry with a defined group of people, reflect on, report, and evaluate these experiences, and receive feedback from peers and supervisors in a small group environment.

The CPE unit (no fewer than 400 hours) is typically completed during the summer following the first year of seminary. In the Chicago area there are also opportunities for students to take a full-time unit or an extended unit during the academic year. An extended unit requires fewer hours per week but is extended over a six to nine-month time period. Students may not take any classes during a full-time CPE unit or take more than two classes during an extended unit without written permission in advance from the Director of Contextual Education (CE) and their degree program director, and the approval of their CPE supervisor. Students are discouraged from doing CPE and Ministerial Leadership II (Ministry in Context) at the same time because of the heavy time commitments in both field experiences.

There are over 300 accredited CPE centers across the country. Any alternative programs or equivalencies outside of these accredited centers should be evaluated and approved in advance by the seminary and, in the case of ELCA Candidacy students, by the student's candidacy committee and the Domestic Mission Unit.

Early each fall semester, the CE Office will offer a CPE Orientation session. At that session, students will receive an overview of the CPE process, a sample application form, and instructions on where to find the online directory of accredited centers.

To prevent disruption at the end of a Spring semester, students may not apply to any summer CPE program that begins before May 15 unless granted permission by the Academic Dean.

In the semester following the completion of a CPE unit, students will debrief the experience with the CE Director. The student is responsible for setting up a debriefing conversation of approximately one hour in length at a time mutually acceptable to the

student and the Director. At least two business days prior to that appointment, the student will provide the Director with a copy of the CPE supervisor's final evaluation and the student's final report. During the debriefing, the student and Director will discuss the learning that took place and identify continuing education and ministry development goals for the student to pursue in the future. A record of the debriefing, along with the CPE reports, will be kept in the CE Office and the Director will notify the Registrar that a unit of CPE has been successfully completed. Depending on your degree and the number of units you complete, CPE will satisfy a requirement, count toward internship hours or fulfill one elective class for which you will be charged tuition.

Degree Specific Requirements that a unit of CPE fulfills:

- MDIV - fulfills a degree requirement
- MDIV ELCA CANDIDACY – fulfills a degree and ELCA ecclesial requirement
- MAM – may be used to fulfill the degree requirement of a 400-hour internship
- MAM ELCA CANDIDACY – fulfills the degree and ELCA ecclesial requirement (**Note**: as a required course in the 16-course curriculum students enroll for it as a course and pay tuition for it.)

B. Ministerial Leadership II (Ministry in Context)

Ministerial Leadership II (Ministry in Context) is a course that consists of a field placement (normally in a congregation) and a three-hour monthly seminar under the supervision of the Director of Contextual Education. It is open to students in any degree program but is required for all MDiv students. Students in other degree programs may take ML II (Ministry in Context) for one elective credit or hours toward their field studies.

ML II (Ministry in Context) requires seven hours per week of the student's time in the parish (not including commuting time) in addition to any classroom work and reading assignments. This course follows a two-semester schedule (Fall and Spring) but counts as one course credit. Students are strongly encouraged to be at their ministry sites during the December/January break between semesters, although it is not required. Being absent from your MIC congregation for this length of time makes it hard to keep relationships current while December is the center of the Christian liturgical year and January brings the end-of-year congregational meeting.

The Contextual Education Committee, consulting the preferences of students and supervisors, makes the assignments to ML II (Ministry in Context) sites. A list of participating churches is posted on MyLSTC and students are invited to visit them prior to assignments. When listing preferences students should take into account family needs as well as new learning possibilities.

Please note that students are not usually assigned to sites in which they, or members of their families, hold membership or have been employed without prior permission from the Contextual Education Committee. Also, students should not approach congregations or pastors directly about being a ML II (Ministry in Context) site/supervisor but instead let the CE Office know so that they can approach the site.

Suggestions or requests for a specific site are to be made in writing to the CE Office for consideration.

The church experience is supervised by the pastor and students regularly meet with the pastor and the members of the lay committee. The CE Office recommends that students and supervisors meet weekly as a group for a one-hour supervisory session, and the students and lay committee meet as a group 3-4 times throughout the year. Students are also encouraged to give feedback to one another.

Degree Specific Requirements Fulfilled by Completing ML II (Ministry in Context):

- MDIV - fulfills the degree requirement and may be used to meet an ecclesial body's ministry experience requirement by increasing the number of weekly hours completed.
- MDIV ELCA CANDIDACY – fulfills the degree requirement
- MAM – may be completed for one class credit or MIC hours can be applied towards the degree requirement of a 400-hour internship.
- MAM ELCA CANDIDACY – may be completed for one class credit or MIC hours can be applied towards the degree and ecclesial requirement of a 1000- hour internship.

C. Internship

Internship is a contextual experience designed to enhance the learning competencies identified in the student's degree program. Students are matched with an appropriate congregation or agency, a supervisor is determined, learning goals are set, a project is planned and carried out by MDiv degree interns and evaluations are gathered. Consultation with the Contextual Education Office in setting up an internship is key.

i. Pre-Internship

- Complete an LSTC Healthy Boundaries Workshop – this "workshop" consists of reading and completing exercises in the Faith Trust Institute's Boundaries Handbook and then turning in a reflection on the material covered. Students in the MDiv and MAM degree programs must complete this requirement before their internship can begin.
- Complete a certain number of classes – depending on your degree program and the timing of when you want to do internship, a specific number of classes must be completed before you start internship and your transcript must be clear of incomplete classes. Questions about course completion should be directed to the Degree Program Director and Contextual Education Director.
- Completion of CPE and ML II (Ministry in Context) – depending on your degree program, if CPE and ML II are required or you choose to complete them, you need to complete them before your internship can start.
- Clearance from the Finance Office and JKM Library -a reminder that finances must remain in good order to proceed through LSTC. This is in keeping with seminary policy that students may not register for a new semester of study until the indebtedness from the previous semester has been resolved. It also applies to JKM Library to prevent outstanding dues or balances on borrowed books.

Comprehensive lists of internship pre-requisites including classes for the MDiv degree

are posted on *My*LSTC under Contextual Education/MDiv Degree Program with ELCA .We strongly encourage students to participate in anti-racism training before internship. Anti-racism trainings are sometimes offered during the school year by Chicago Regional Organizing for Antiracism (CROAR) through LSTC's connection with them. You might also check the offerings of your home synod, our local Metropolitan Chicago Synod or the ELCA Churchwide.

ii. During Internship

- Forms - It is the student's responsibility to keep the internship paperwork up-to-date. Forms for all MDiv and MAM internships can be accessed on MyLSTC under Contextual Education. Past experience says that it is most helpful to go over all of the forms with your supervisor and lay committee early-on so they know what to expect. At that meeting put dates on the calendar for when you will meet to exchange and sign off on each other's forms. Copies of all paperwork completed during the internship is turned in to the CE Office and the student's ecclesial body, if necessary.
- Staying Connected - Past experiences demonstrate that staying connected is very important for the student's emotional health so stay in touch with family and friends. Be in contact with other students that are also on internship and reach out to clergy in your area. Social media is a good way to stay connected and update friends and family about how you are doing during internship but please remember to keep appropriate boundaries around the information that you make public.
- Problems - We expect that problems of a varying degree will come up on internship. What is important is not that problems come up, but the manner in which the student chooses to handle them. When in doubt, call the CE Office early so that we can coach and support you through the next steps. Early attention to difficulties can turn problems into learning opportunities.
- Site visit – Due to restricted budgets, site visits will only happen if the intern experiences problems with their supervisor or site which can't be resolved over the phone or on a Zoom call. Monitoring of the internship experience is done in other ways such as short Zoom check-ins, careful reading of evaluations and communication from the intern and supervisor.
- Ending - Before students leave their internship site, they should make sure that all of the Final Evaluation forms (from the Intern, the Supervisor and the Lay Committee) have been signed and sent to the CE Office. Students should keep copies for themselves and submit copies to their ecclesial body, if necessary.
- Leave taking - One important skill a student should practice on internship is how to say good-bye in a healthy manner. Be sure to take the time and opportunity to appreciate the internship experience. One of the most helpful ways to do this is to share with those persons most important to you all that your time there has meant—both positively and negatively. Remind your site that, in keeping with good professional leadership practice, you will not be returning to that site to visit until after you have received your first call. Also, since you are no longer one of their identified leaders, you may not do any pastoral acts in the congregation or participate in the direction and scope of their ministry. A service of Farewell and Blessing is very appropriate for the conclusion of the internship year.

iii. Post-Internship

- Successful completion/approval of the Internship – Successful completion of an internship is based on learning and growth, both in terms of skills and professional identity. This "approval" is determined through the Final Evaluation reports submitted to the CE Office from the Intern, Supervisor and Lay Committee. If major issues impacting readiness for ministry were identified at the site or during a requested site visit, they will need to be addressed before the student moves forward for approval with the LSTC faculty. Addressing of any major issues will be done in consultation with the student, the student's advisor, and the Director of CE. If the student disagrees with the assessment, the student may file a formal appeal through the Academic Dean's Office to be heard by the Academic Cabinet.
- LSTC Senior Interview - After students successfully complete their internship requirement, the CE Office will set up a Senior Interview which is one hour in length and conducted by two faculty members, one of whom must be their advisor. Material needed for this interview are the student's three Final Evaluation Reports, written Project Report (if project was required), and, if ELCA Candidacy, the written Candidacy Approval Essay, which you will have previously submitted to the CE Office. Unless major issues impacting readiness for ministry have been identified previously, the Senior Interview usually provides an affirming opportunity for reflection on the internship experience(s) and for conversation about the student's gifts and sense of calling for future ministry.
- Approval from the LSTC Faculty – After the Senior Interview takes place, the Director of Candidacy will bring the student's name to the next LSTC Faculty meeting for a vote of approval. Getting this approval means you are ready academically to graduate and/or move forward in your ecclesial process.

iv. Degree Specific Requirements for Completing Internship:

- MDiv – Not required for the degree. Check with your ecclesial body about ministry experience they may require beyond ML II (Ministry in Context).
- MDiv ELCA Candidacy – degree requirement of 12 months, full-time (40-50 hours/week) and ecclesial requirement of a minimum of 2000 contact hours for internship. See Section D for details about an ELCA Word and Sacrament internship.
- MAM – degree requirement of a 400-hour internship which may be completed through one unit of CPE, ML II (Ministry in Context) and an additional field assignment or one field assignment for all 400 hours.
- MAM ELCA Candidacy – degree and ecclesial requirement of a minimum of 1000 contact hours internship which can be fulfilled sequentially and or concurrently. See Section E for details about an ELCA Word and Service internship.

D. ELCA Word and Sacrament Internship

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) requires its candidates for Word and Sacrament to satisfactorily complete a minimum of 2000 contact hours, or one year, of internship. Internship provides candidates with educational experiences that will solidify pastoral identity and teach and adapt ministry skills in a site different from other sites of which the student may have been a part. To facilitate the internship

program, the ELCA Domestic Mission Unit has adopted standards and guidelines. (See separate document: ELCA Candidacy Manual, for a complete listing.)

i. Definition

The standard internship required by LSTC is full-time (40-50 hours per week) for twelve months done in the third year of seminary study at an ELCA parish. Note: Any other circumstances require agreement from all of the partners. Please stop and talk with the C*E* Office about any other options or plans you are considering BEFORE beginning discussions elsewhere.

ii. Placement in an academic program

Normally, internship is done between the second and the fourth year of a four-year academic program. Due to the processing and reflection time required to enable internship to be a successful learning experience, LSTC expects students to return to the seminary campus for a minimum of one semester of study following internship. Internship done as the Final Year of the degree program requires prior approval from the Contextual Education Committee and the student's Candidacy Committee. Please note that in keeping with LSTC policy, students may not work or take classes during the internship year unless their internship is part-time or they have received permission from the CE Office and their supervisor.

iii. Length

For LSTC, internships are one year in length (full-time, twelve months) stretching from summer to summer. In very rare circumstances the seminary may accept an internship of nine, ten, or eleven months but only with prior permission of the student's candidacy committee, the LSTC faculty, and the internship site. Although it may be helpful in academic planning, January to December internships are rare and require rationale from the student requesting it. Under certain circumstances (illness, family concerns, etc.) a student can petition for a concurrent or part-time internship which would take place over two years. A student must get prior approval from the Contextual Education Committee and their candidacy committee for this to be put in place.

iv. Settings –

Internships are done in ELCA parishes located domestically and sometimes in international contexts. They can be rural, urban, town and country, suburban, or occasionally a mission congregation. Some sites are half-time parish and half-time agency (elder care, CPE, shelter, campus ministry, etc.). A student should get approval from their candidacy committee at the time of Endorsement if they desire to serve in such a context. All sites must be open to all of our students. All sites are reviewed and evaluated each year by the seminary in consultation with synodical bishops. Students may nominate sites for consideration, but the CE Office must do ALL negotiations.

Students are not eligible for internship assignment to any site in which they have been a member, held employment, or done their CPE or Ministerial Leadership II (Ministry in Context) work without permission from the Contextual Education Committee.

v. ELCA Horizon International

For the ELCA Horizon International Program, students apply directly to the ELCA Global

Mission Unit and interviews are done at the ELCA Churchwide Ministry Offices. Matching a student with an international site is done by the Global Mission Unit so students must be open to serving anywhere. Application material for the Horizon International Program is located on the ELCA website. A copy of your completed Horizon application should also be submitted to the Contextual Education Office at the same time that it is turned in to the ELCA. Because this process moves faster than the LSTC internship process, CPE needs to be debriefed before the end of the fall semester in which you are applying for an internship. The LSTC Student Data Placement Form also needs to be filled out and submitted by the deadline listed on the Middler Calendar, with advisor and MIC supervisor signatures signifying readiness for internship. If a student applies to this program but does not receive an assignment, they will then interview with the LSTC internship sites. Internship sites of the International Program have their own financial funding formula, which covers transportation, adequate housing, a pro-rated stipend, and ministry expenses. Please note that if you are seeking an international assignment, you must have the summer preceding internship free in order to participate in the missionary orientation sponsored by the Global Mission Unit.

vi. Supervisors

A supervisor is normally an ordained ELCA pastor who has served a minimum of three years in a parish and at least one year in the internship setting (Candidacy Manual, pg. 97). Only in rare circumstances will exceptions be granted to these minimum candidacy requirements. LSTC strives to have a good ethnic and gender mix in its pool of supervisors. Pastors new to supervising an intern will receive access to LSTC's supervisor material and then have a one-hour conversation with the CE Director..

vii. Lay Committee

While internship may take place in a variety of settings, it must include an internship committee. This committee should be about 5-8 people in size and represent the diversity of the congregation.

viii. Finances

All domestic unrestricted sites must meet ELCA financial guidelines. Unrestricted sites are responsible to pay a monthly stipend to the student (currently at $2,000), provide adequate housing (own kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping room that can accommodate a married couple) and utilities (gas, electric, water, garbage, internet and cable), and pay a one-time fee of $2,000 to LSTC to cover the seminary's administrative costs and student travel to/from the internship site, Travel money is not provided at the end of an internship if the student is completing a Fourth Year Internship. Housing may be a pre-arranged site covered by the congregation or it may be in the form of a cash payment with the student responsible for finding their own living site. Both the stipend and housing are taxable. Many sites will not accept pets. If a student plans to take pet(s) on internship, they should not interview at sites whose applications state NO PETS. Historically, this has proven to be a non-negotiable item for these sites because they are providing a parsonage and do not want pets inside. Sites will pay mileage connected to ministry tasks, but not home to church commuting expenses.

Sites for students who are restricting geographically are asked to provide all or at least part of the $2,000 a month stipend and reimburse mileage for ministry. Housing or a housing allowance is typically not covered. Students requesting a restriction for

any reason should understand that their site might be completely unfunded because the site we are negotiating with may not have the extra finances to support an intern.

ix. Internship Assignment Process at LSTC

The entire internship assignment process takes about one school year, usually Fall to Spring semester of the middler year (middler means two years of full-time classes have been successfully completed). There are several required Zoom workshops which are offered only once during the year. Students will receive the dates of these required sessions at the beginning of the school year. It is the student's responsibility to pay close attention to their personal calendars.

x. Orientation meeting

The MDiv Internship Orientation for Middlers preparing for internship takes place in mid-September over Zoom and is presented twice in one day with a lunch time and evening choice for attendance. Spouses are welcome to attend. To make the meeting successful, students and spouses should come to the meeting with a list of questions they would like answered regarding internship and the internship process.

xi. Restrictions

Students requesting a restriction of any kind must file a Restricted Data Form (available online on MyLSTC under Contextual Education or by requesting a copy be sent over email) with the Contextual Education Office by the end of November. Students will then meet one-on-one with the Director of CE to discuss their restriction and their internship learning goals. A student requesting a restriction for any reason must understand that their site may be unfunded (no stipend, no housing allowance and no travel money).

xii. Workshop on Ministry I

All students must attend this required Workshop which is held in early February. At this workshop, we discuss goals of the internship year, review interviewing techniques/skills and confirm readiness for the internship year.

xiii. Site interview process

All unrestricted internship site applications will be posted on one website so that students from all of the ELCA seminaries can read over and choose interviews with the places that interest them. During the last two weeks of February, the CE Office coordinates Zoom interviews with internship supervisors and students. During the interview there will be an opportunity for students to get their questions answered as well as to respond to questions from the supervisor.

If a supervisor declines a student's possible assignment to their parish, we will notify the student as soon as possible in order that additional interviews may be added and, if necessary, to practice their interviewing skills. It is possible that a student could be repeatedly declined by interviewing supervisors and not be accepted for an assignment

to a parish. Under those circumstances, the CE Office will work with the student to determine their future course of action.

xiv. Site assignment process

After the completion of the interview process, the Contextual Education folks from the ELCA seminaries will gather to match students with internship sites. The proposed matches will be taken to the faculty for their approval. Barring unforeseen difficulties, the assignments are shared privately with the students via mailboxes or at a specifically planned worship service. No composite list is posted at that time and students are given a period of time to accept or decline their assigned internship. Students may naturally experience the assignment process as a stressful time so we encourage students to be in touch with the CE Office anytime they have questions or concerns. Those students with restrictions for their internship will work with the director one-on-one to identify sites, set up interviews and discern assignments.

xv. Workshop on Ministry II

During the required Workshop on Ministry II held in mid- April, we discuss the supervisory relationship, strategies for a healthy internship, paperwork to be completed during the year and seminary expectations.

xvi. Sending service

During a Wednesday Eucharist at the end of the Spring semester, the CE Office will conduct a sending rite for those students heading on internship.
Students are encouraged to invite their Ministerial Leadership II (Ministry in Context) pastor and lay committee, CPE supervisor, mentors, spouse, friends, family, and upcoming internship supervisor to join in this event.

E. ELCA Word and Service Internship

Ministers of Word and Service serve at the interface of church and society. As a result, they must understand the dynamic relationships within and between congregational and societal systems, providing leadership in connecting these systems. Internship placements should reflect the range of diaconal purpose and still be specific to the candidate's unique characteristics and specializations. Each internship assignment must also include a significant engagement in a congregational context. With all these pieces, there must be flexibility on the part of all the partners in choosing and approving internship sites (ELCA Candidacy Manual, pg. 98).

i. Length

An internship will normally consist of a minimum of 1000 documented contact hours. Various ministry experiences may be arranged sequentially and/or concurrently to achieve these hours.

ii. Settings

Seminaries may structure the Word and Service internship in a variety of ways and may use more than one setting. Settings such as agencies, ELCA parishes, hospitals, etc. can be employed but the overall internship must include a significant engagement in a

congregational context and be specific to the candidate's specialization and various ministry experiences.

Placement in an academic program

In the past, an internship experience was engaged after a student had been endorsed by their candidacy committee. Now some candidacy committees allow the internship experience to begin before the step of Endorsement.
Students should contact their candidacy committee to inquire about their policy for when internship hours can begin. This means that an internship could start during the second year of a degree program while taking classes or saved for the third year following the completion of classes. Discussions with the CE Office about the student's interests/specialization and plans for carrying out the degree requirements can start as early as the first year of seminary but should definitely be started by the beginning of year two. For LSTC, CPE must be done before a student can begin their internship hours and it is usually expected to be completed before meeting with their candidacy committee for the step of Endorsement.

iii. Specialization

The ELCA requires students under Word and Service to identify one area of specialization which they will explore more fully during internship. Identifying this area of specialization normally comes at the step of Endorsement with the candidacy committee.

iv. Placement in an internship setting

Students will work with the CE Office and their candidacy committee to ensure quality internship placements and supervision. The structure of the internship should take into consideration previous work experience and specialization(s). The configuration of an internship may vary according to the candidate and site circumstances, including the following possibilities:

1. A full-time internship (40 hours per week) in a site for a minimum of 6 months.
2. A part-time internship (10-20 hours per week) during the academic year and completed over two to three years.
3. Part-time work during the school year combined with a full-time summer position.

v. Finances

We believe that students in Word and Service should be compensated monetarily for their internship hours so the CE Office will work with the identified internship setting to negotiate a monthly stipend of $2,000 for full-time internships. This stipend will be taxable as you will be considered an employee of the internship site. Any benefits considered necessary in addition to a stipend need to be negotiated by the CE Office with the internship setting.

vi. Supervisors

If the internship supervisor is an ELCA pastor, they must have been ordained for a

minimum of three years and have served at the internship setting for a minimum of one year (Candidacy Manual, pg. 97). Only in rare circumstances will exceptions be granted to these minimum candidacy requirements. If the chosen site supervisor is not an ELCA pastor (such as the director of an agency), the student needs to identify an ELCA rostered minister (a Deacon is optimal) as a mentor and schedule regular sessions during the internship for theological reflection. When a student begins significant engagement in a congregational context where an internship project will be carried out, the identified supervisor must be an ELCA pastor.
A pastor or director of an agency that is new to supervising an intern will receive access to LSTC's supervisor material and then have a one-hour conversation with the CE Director.

vii. Lay Committee

While internship may take place in a variety of settings, it must include an internship committee. The committee is composed of four to six persons who have a particular interest in the ministry of Word and Service and the candidate's area of specialization (such as rostered Deacons), and may include representatives of the sites and congregations related to the service of the candidate.

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Section 3: The ELCA Candidacy Process

This section was prepared by the Rev. Dr. Brooke Petersen, the Director of MDiv and MA Programs/Director for Candidacy, and reviewed by the Rev. Ramie Bakken, Former Region 5 ELCA Candidacy and Leadership Manager.

Candidacy in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is the churchwide process of preparation and formation leading to approval for the public ministries of the church.

The candidacy process is essentially the same for persons seeking admission to either the Office of Word and Sacrament (pastors) or the office of Word and Service (deacons). All persons seeking rostering are expected to fully participate in all steps of this process. Most candidacy documents are also available in Spanish. The webpage where the candidacy manual and other resources may be found is https://elca.org/resources/candidacy

F. Candidacy at LSTC

At LSTC, work with the candidacy process is understood to be a collaborative enterprise involving the candidate, the candidate's academic advisor, the entire faculty, and the Candidacy Office. Although each of us has our own tasks, it is understood that our goal is to participate collegially in the process so that we can prepare the best ministry leaders possible.

i. Candidate:

The candidate is the one most involved and most affected by the process. Expectations of a candidate include:

- Familiarization with the candidacy process
- Participation in each step of the process
- Contact with candidacy committee *at least quarterly*
- Openness to suggestions for areas of growth made during the candidacy process
- Filing paperwork in a timely fashion
- Attendance at candidacy events
- Collaboration with advisor, Candidacy Office, and synodical Candidacy Committee regarding any issues or concerns involving the process.

ii. Candidate's Academic Advisor:

Academic advisors are responsible for shepherding students through the candidacy process. Expectations of an academic advisor include:

- Familiarization with the candidacy process
- At least semi-annual review of student's progress in candidacy and in seminary
- Be present at the student's endorsement panel
- Be present at the senior interview and prepare the Form D
- Collaboration with the candidate, Candidacy Office and Candidacy Committee regarding any issues or concerns involving the process.

iii. Faculty:

The faculty's support of the candidacy process and LSTC students in candidacy is crucial for the partnership to work. Expectations of the faculty include:

- Familiarization with the candidacy process
- Speak well of the process
- Participation in endorsement panels and senior interviews as well as Theological Review Panels of candidates ordained in other church bodies and TEEM candidates
- Provide students with honest feedback in a timely manner
- Serve on synodical candidacy committees if at all possible
- Collaborate with the candidate, the candidate's advisor and the Candidacy Office about any candidacy concerns
- Allow adequate time and appropriate venues for discussion of candidacy matters.

iv. Candidacy Office:

- Know the candidacy process and all its fine points, especially any updates or changes mandated by the ELCA Candidacy Process of the ELCA Churchwide Organization.
- Maintain a candidacy file for each candidate.
- Periodically review with each candidate their progress in the candidacy process.
- Provide annual workshops on each step of the candidacy and assignment process for candidates.
- Provide workshop opportunities for faculty around the candidacy process.
- Establish and maintain good working relationships with all of the candidacy committees with which our students' work.
- Organize the on-campus endorsement process.
- Organize review panels for candidates ordained in other church bodies and TEEM candidates when requested.
- Collect Form Ds from faculty advisors and send the forms to synod offices.
- Provide faculty representatives serving on candidacy committees with updates on our students before each meeting.
- Advocate for our candidates at the ELCA Assignment Process.
- Collaborate with the candidate, the candidate's advisor, and the candidacy committee regarding any issues or concerns involving the process.

G. Participants in the Candidacy Process

i. Candidate:

A deep personal faith and a commitment to Christ must be at the heart of one's decision to serve in rostered ministry. The candidate should involve others in a process of discernment and reflection about gifts, abilities and passions for a particular ministry. All candidates must be willing to serve in response to the leadership needs of this church, wherever that call may be.

ii. Congregation:

It is the congregation's responsibility to uplift and identify persons for ministry. Each candidate needs to be registered by an ELCA congregation. That congregation is asked

to maintain a relationship with the candidate throughout the entire time of the candidacy process and, wherever possible, provide financial assistance.

iii. Synod:

On behalf of the ELCA, each synod constitutes a candidacy committee which has the responsibility of making decisions about the public ministry of candidates from their synod. To do this, they rely upon church wide standards, requirements and expectations. Each candidacy committee can establish its own guidelines within this framework. In some regions, synods join together in multi- synodical committees to share the responsibility of decisions for the endorsement and approval steps. Each committee is made up of laity, clergy, and a seminary faculty representative along with the synod staff member who has candidacy oversight in their portfolio. The synodical bishop and the ELCA Candidacy Manager from the respective region are ex officio members.

iv. ELCA Seminaries:

ELCA seminaries provide evaluative materials and make recommendations to candidacy committees in the endorsement and approval steps of the candidacy process. Students from non-ELCA seminaries are required to participate in structured Lutheran learning and formation through affiliation with an ELCA seminary.

v. Domestic Mission Unit:

Members of the ELCA Candidacy Team of the Domestic Mission Unit of the ELCA are responsible for the development and management of candidacy standards, procedures, and policies. They receive written reports of all decisions and recommendations taken by a candidacy committee, and they are the final arbitrators of an appeal of a candidacy committee decision.

H. Range of Decisions in the Candidacy Process

Each decision in the candidacy process has three possible outcomes: to grant, postpone, or deny. Candidacy decision appeals are made to the ELCA Candidacy Team and can be based only on the grounds of unfair process. Guidance for handling a disagreement with a candidacy decision can be found in the candidacy manual. Each outcome is explained below:

i. Grant:

To indicate that a candidate has met the requirements for that step of the candidacy process, the committee acts to grant (entrance, endorsement, or approval) This decision includes a statement about the candidate's identified gifts as well as recommendations for growth. Candidates are provided a written copy of all decisions and recommendations.

ii. Postpone:

To indicate that a candidate demonstrates gifts and abilities but lacks sufficient readiness, the committee acts to postpone (entrance, endorsement, or approval). In acting to postpone, the committee will identify developmental or situational issues that

need to be addressed and/or conditions that must be met before the candidate may be reconsidered. The candidate is asked to develop a plan for addressing the issues. The committee and the candidate will then determine how the plan is to be monitored, when reconsideration may be scheduled, and what procedures will be followed for reconsideration.

iii. Deny:

Denial at any step of the candidacy process indicates that the individual is no longer deemed an appropriate candidate for rostered ministry. Reasons for this decision must be clearly stated. A minimum of one year must pass before a person who was denied may reapply. Consultation with the ELCA Candidacy Team is required for all reapplications to determine the point of re-entry.

I. Steps in the Candidacy Process

ii. Entrance:

Entrance is a process which identifies an individual's potential for rostered ministry in the ELCA. The key components leading to an Entrance decision are discernment and readiness. Individuals begin the entrance process by establishing contact with a synodical candidacy committee. This decision is required before a candidate may be fully accepted at an ELCA seminary. Although those who have not completed the Entrance process may be provisionally entranced by a seminary, this provisional entrance is withdrawn if the process is not completed by the end of the first term of study or special permission is given by the candidacy committee. A positive entrance decision does not guarantee admission to a seminary.

The components of an Entrance Decision include:

- The applicant's home congregation completes a Congregational Registration Form based on active ELCA membership for a minimum of one year.
- The applicant completes a Candidacy Application Form and writes an Entrance Essay.
- The applicant participates in a psychological evaluation.
- The Candidacy Committee requests a background check for each applicant.
- The Candidacy Committee conducts an Entrance interview with the applicant.
- The applicant completes a Personal Health Assessment.
- The applicant prepares a financial worksheet.
- The Candidacy Committee receives copies of all post-secondary education transcripts and continuing education certificates.

iv. Endorsement:

Endorsement is a second major point of discernment for both a candidate and a Candidacy Committee. Endorsement focuses on the type of rostered leadership for which a candidate is best suited and a candidate's readiness to complete candidacy successfully. The areas of development addressed in the endorsement process are:

- Understanding of call to ministry
- Spiritual growth and faith commitment
- Educational and theological ability

- Personal and interpersonal skills

Normally, a candidate is granted endorsement before participating in an ELCA internship.

The final decision concerning endorsement is made by the synodical or multi-synodical committee. However, the initial recommendation concerning Endorsement of candidates attending an ELCA seminary comes from an endorsement panel composed of two candidacy committee members, at least one from the candidate's home synod, and an ELCA seminary faculty person. Since COVID-19, meetings have taken place via Zoom or other electronic platforms.

At LSTC, the dates and times of the endorsement panels from any given synod are negotiated between the Coordinator for Candidacy and the synodical candidacy committee. The Coordinator then notifies candidates and they notify their advisors. If the advisor is unavailable at the established time, the student and advisor will collaboratively choose another faculty person to sit in on the endorsement Interview. At times it is possible to change times of the interview to accommodate faculty schedules, but not always. Some candidacy committees may accommodate special requests for an endorsement panel at another time of the year to assist candidates in moving through their seminary education in a smooth and timely manner.

Generally, candidates are expected to go through endorsement when they have completed a minimum of nine classes. Some candidacy committees require that a candidate complete their CPE prior to endorsement. The Candidacy Office offers a brief workshop on the endorsement panel process every spring semester.

Candidates seeking endorsement must supply their candidacy committee with a copy of their endorsement essay, CPE final reports from both the supervisor and the candidate (if CPE has been completed), and a current transcript reflecting all academic work **by the start of the semester in which they are seeking endorsement.** (For example, By September 1 for a fall semester endorsement, by Feb. 1 for a spring semester endorsement). Also, candidates with special requests about internship must have filed a letter of request with their candidacy committee and the Candidacy Office. The Candidacy Office will provide a letter of response.

The synod will mail this material along with the Entrance Decision and other file materials as appropriate to each member of the endorsement panel. The endorsement panel generally meets with the student for about an hour. Following the meeting the panel informs the candidate of their recommendation to the committee. Immediately following the panel, the candidate provides an initial copy of the decisions and recommendations to the Candidacy Office. A copy of the synodical or multi-synodical committee's final recommendation will be sent to the candidate and the seminary. If the decision differs significantly from the panel recommendation, the Candidacy Office will contact the candidacy committee chair for details and notify the advisor. A consultation will then be set up with the office, the candidate and the candidate's advisor.

v. Approve:

When a Candidacy Committee grants Approval, it is acknowledging that a candidate is qualified and competent to serve under call in a specific rostered ministry. While the candidate's complete file is available for review, the following material is of primary importance for the Approval Decision:

- The Approval Essay
- The Report of the ELCA Seminary Recommendation (Form D)
- The Report of Internship or Supervised Field Experience (Form D)
- Academic Report
- CPE Reports, especially if completed after Endorsement date

The Approval Essay is prepared each year by the ELCA Candidacy Team in consultation with lay and ordained candidacy committee members and seminary representatives. Although the specific questions may change each year, the basic components are Scripture, theology, the practice of ministry, and the person in ministry. The questions carry a different emphasis for persons from the different rosters. Candidates preparing for an approval interview should be prepared to supply their candidacy committee with a copy of their approval essay, CPE final reports from both the supervisor and the candidate (if this has not been provided at endorsement), and a current transcript reflecting all academic work **by the start of the semester in which they are seeking approval.** (For example, By September 1 for a fall semester interview, by Feb. 1 for a spring semester interview).

An ELCA seminary faculty is responsible for recommending each candidate for rostered ministry. This faculty approval Interview (the Senior Interview) is a time for candidates and seminary faculty representatives to reflect on the whole of the seminary experience. This conversation focuses on the candidate’s personal, spiritual, vocational, theological, intellectual, and professional development during the seminary years and offers a space to debrief the internship experience. At LSTC each candidate works with the Contextual Education Office to schedule an hour-long conversation with the advisor and another faculty member chosen by the candidate. Following the conversation, the advisor writes the Form D and clears it with the second faculty member and the candidate. A copy of the Form D is then given to the Candidacy Office so it can be submitted for vote by the entire faculty. After the faculty vote, the Candidacy Office sends a copy of the Form D to the candidate's candidacy committee and the original is sent to the ELCA Department for Leadership for Mission.

After the candidacy committee receives the Form D, they meet with the candidate for a final Approval Interview. The committee sends the meeting report to the ELCA Candidacy Team. A candidacy committee approval is good for one year. If the candidate has not received and accepted a call within one year the candidacy committee must renew the approval decision. If three years have elapsed without the acceptance of a call the candidate makes a request for re-approval. Minimally, re- approval involves writing a new approval essay and taking part in another Approval Interview. Approval may be withdrawn by action of the candidacy committee at any time prior to the receipt of a call if the committee believes the candidate is no longer qualified to serve in Rostered Ministry.

J. ELCA First Call Process

In 2021, the Conference of Bishops and the ELCA Candidacy Team adopted a new process for the assignment of candidates to regions and synods. The following is information taken from the ELCA First Call process form, which can be found on the ELCA Candidacy Resource page:

i. Phase 1: Preapproval Conversation with Candidate

Trusting that the Holy Spirit works through candidates as well as through synods and churchwide bodies, synod bishops and/or synod staff meet individually with each candidate a few months before approval. The purpose of this conversation is to share with candidates the number of first-call opportunities throughout the church and to listen for candidates' needs and concerns regarding their first call so that bishops can enter the regional consultation knowing what can work for each candidate.

ii. Phase 2: Preapproval — Regional Consultation

The purpose of the Preapproval Regional Consultations is to seek the workings of the Holy Spirit for the missional needs of the church along with the intersection of the availability of calls and the hopes of candidates. Bishops and/or designated synod staff members for candidacy and mobility and the CALM for the region will meet on a regular basis.

These regional consultations will help to clarify the pathway forward for each candidate. There will be three possible outcomes from these consultations:

a) The candidate would be open to serving in the wider church.

b) The candidate would remain available for call within the synods of their home region.

c) The candidate would remain available for call in their home synod.

iii. Phase 3: Post-approval — Working the Plan

Upon approval by a synod candidacy committee and preferences being agreed upon by the regional consultation, all candidates (including Mission Development and TEEM candidates) will be available to begin call processes. The candidate cannot accept a call until the bishop has verified with the seminary the candidate's successful completion of their studies.

All candidates will be connected to a region for their first-call process. Should a candidate be connected to a region other than their home region, the receiving region's consultation should agree on a priority process for call interviews. Normally, first-call candidates can be in the process within only one region at a time.

Home-synod bishops are responsible for the care of each candidate of their home synod until their candidates are called and rostered in a synod. At that time, candidates join the roster of the synod their call.

Appendix A: MSA Constitution

I. Name: The name of this organization shall be Masters Student Association (MSA).

II. Purpose
    a. MSA exists to serve the Master's level students and their families by:
        i. Promoting community among the students, faculty, staff and administration;
        ii. Providing a forum for the expression of student concerns;
        iii. Advocating for concerns of the student body to the faculty, staff and administration;
        iv. Distributing student activities fees;
        v. Assisting in organizing student groups.
    b. MSA in fulfilling its purpose of addressing student concerns shall work with the faculty, staff and/or administration including but not limited to the Office of the President, the Office of the Academic Dean, and the Office of Community Life.
    c. MSA in fulfilling its purpose of community building will work primarily with the Office of Community Life.

III. Membership
    a. MSA shall consist of twenty-two voting members: Three from each M. Div. class, three from the Special/MA student body, two spouse representatives, two student representatives of from the LGBTQA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Asexual) community, two representatives of commuter students, two representatives student from of the community of students who have a disability and two representatives of students from the communities of color. With the exception of spouse representatives, all voting members of MSA shall be Master's level students.
        i. The class conveners shall be included in the three representatives from each class.
        ii. Student representatives from each class shall be elected during a class meeting according the following guidelines:
            1. The Junior class shall elect its representatives no later than the first two weeks of the fall semester. These elections will typically take place in a meeting at the end of the new student retreat.
            2. The Middler class shall elect its representatives during the spring semester of their Junior year. At least one of these representatives should have previously served on MSA. The returning MSA member(s) shall convene the new Juniors and facilitate their elections.
            3. The Senior class shall elect its representatives no later than the first two weeks of the fall semester.

iii. Representatives of the Special/MA class, spouses, commuters, LGBTQA community, community of students who have a disability, and students of color shall be elected at meetings of those students no later than the first two weeks of the fall semester.
iv. During elections, classes should seek diversity. This includes, but is not limited to, gender, ethnicity, nationality, age, sexual orientation, persons with disabilities and commuter students.
v. Advisory members may be appointed by the MSA President to represent specific concerns or students who are not represented on MSA. Advisory members shall have voice, but no vote.
vi. Should a vacancy occur, the electing class or body shall fill the position within two weeks of the vacancy's occurrence.

b. Members of MSA shall be responsible for the following:
    i. Commitment to the goals of MSA (see Article II).
    ii. Regular attendance at MSA meetings.
        1. Members with three unexcused absences from meetings shall be removed from MSA.
    iii. Serving as a liaison to the various student committees and groups at LSTC
        1. Member shall be given the opportunity to volunteer for which group or committee they wish to work with. In the event that no volunteers are found, MSA shall assign its members as liaisons.
        2. Each liaison shall be responsible for maintaining open lines of communication with his or her respective group.
        3. Liaisons will be expected to periodically report on the current status of their groups at MSA meetings.

IV. Officers
a. MSA shall have four officers: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
b. These officers shall be elected by MSA.
    i. No student may simultaneously hold the positions of class convener and MSA president.
    ii. At the end of each year, MSA representatives shall serve over the summer and lead the class meetings in the fall where new representatives are elected.
c. Responsibilities of Officers
    i. President
        1. Prepares agenda and chairs MSA meetings
        2. Calls for agenda items from the community prior to forming the agenda. Posts an agenda on bulletin board no later than the day before MSA meetings

3. Serves as a liaison between MSA and the faculty and administration
4. Appoints advisory members to MSA
5. Ensures the Constitution of MSA is followed

ii. Vice President
1. Collects agenda items
2. Posts the agenda on the bulletin board
3. Chairs meetings in the absence of the President

iii. Secretary
1. Records minutes of each meeting
2. Distributes minutes to MSA members and Office of Community Life
3. Posts minutes on MSA bulletin board
4. Looks over old minutes at beginning of year to follow-up on unfinished business
5. Updates archives with MSA minutes
6. Publicizes MSA news and events to the community (i.e. The Door, bulletin boards, email lists, etc.)
7. Prepare summary of the year report at the end of the academic year

iv. Treasurer
1. Presides over budget meeting
2. Keeps up-to-date records of all MSA accounts
3. Prepares a monthly financial report for meetings
4. Receives reports from the Office of Community Life about the status of the Emergency Loan Fund
5. Replenish request forms
6. Update archives for the next year
7. Reports back to students requesting funds regarding MSA's decision on that request
8. Attend financial meetings with finance office personnel when necessary

V. Conduct of Meetings
a. Meetings shall be held at least once a month, starting with the first month of classes in the fall. Returning members of MSA shall convene the first MSA meeting. If there are no returning members, the Conveners of the returning classes shall convene the first meeting.
b. The President of MSA shall lead MSA meetings and set the agenda.
c. Meetings are to be open to all members of the community.
d. A quorum is necessary to conduct official business. A quorum is one more than a simple majority of the official members. At least one member
from each class is required for a quorum.

e. As often as possible, decisions shall be made by consensus. When consensus is not possible, a motion may be won by a simple majority vote. If there is a tie vote and further discussion does not break the tie, the issue is tabled until the next meeting.
f. If a non-MSA member wishes to make a presentation to MSA, he or she should contact the President to be put on the next meeting's agenda. Non-MSA members' presentations should be scheduled early in the meeting but may be given a time limit.
g. MSA will report back to students voicing concerns within six weeks of receipt of the concern.

VI. Budget and Finances

a. MSA is financed through the LSTC Student Activity Fee, a fee collected by the business office from all regularly enrolled students. This fee can be changed by referendum of two-thirds vote of the enrolled students. The moneys collected for this fee are credited to MSA's account.
b. MSA is charged with distributing or spending its finances according to the purposes outlined in Article II.
c. Students and other community members or groups may apply to MSA for funds.
d. MSA will advertise and hold a budget meeting at the end of the second month of each semester. At the budget meeting, MSA will review all financial requests and earmark funds accordingly. All community members are invited and those requesting funds should be present to answer questions about the financial request. MSA may reserve a portion of the available funds to grant requests later in the semester.
e. Requests for funds should generally be made by the end of the second month of classes each semester in order to attend the budget meeting and insure that adequate funds will be available for consideration.
f. Financial request forms should be made available in visible places on campus, such as the MSA bulletin board or other convenient locations. The name and contact information of the treasurer, or other member of MSA responsible for receiving financial requests, should appear with the request forms.
g. Money collected from student fees in previous years and not spent by MSA shall be administered separately in accordance with the following guidelines:
    i. Funds are to be used on projects that will benefit the student body over several years.
    ii. Funds are to be used on projects that benefit a wide spectrum of the student body.

VII. The Emergency Loan Fund

a. The Emergency Loan Fund is a separate account established yearly from MSA's operating budget to assist students in time of need. MSA shall budget funds so as to:
    i. Bring the total of the account to $2,500 or

ii. Equal 10% of MSA's operating budget, whichever is the least expensive.

b. Loans drawn upon the account are granted at the discretion of the Dean of Students based upon guidelines approved by MSA and the Office for Community Life. Guidelines shall be given to MSA each year before budgeting. These loans remain confidential. It is the Office for Community Life's responsibility to relay the terms for repayment of the loan and send out reminders at least once a year.

c. MSA shall receive a report from the Dean of Students at the beginning of each semester outlining loans granted, payments received, loans outstanding and loans converted to grants.

VIII. Board of Directors

a. MSA shall from time to time pass resolutions to be presented to the Board. Resolutions may address issues relevant to concerns of the student body and MSA.

b. Every other fall, MSA shall hold elections for a student representative and alternate to the board. This representative and alternative shall be full- time Master's level students able to fulfill obligations of a two-year term.

i. All Master's level students shall be eligible to vote. Provisions shall be made to insure that students on internship may participate in the election.

ii. The student representative will attend the MSA meeting preceding and following any general meetings of the Board.

iii. If the elected representative and/or alternate does not or is unable to fulfill their obligations, elections shall be held to fill the vacant post for the remainder of the term.

IX. The Constitution: The Constitution shall be printed in the Student Handbook [Masters Programs Manual] each academic year.

X. Amendments to the Constitution

a. Students may propose amendments at any time. Ratification of student proposals requires a two-thirds majority of votes cast in a student body referendum administered by MSA. MSA shall consider all amendments and present those that they deem appropriate for referendum.

b. In the case of updating the Constitution in order to align it with LSTC changes, which have already been implemented by the administration without ratification by the student body, MSA shall approve such changes without the required two-third's majority of the student body's vote.

Spring 2014: Increased number of Voting Members from 18 to 22; added Vice President's job description.

Fall 2013: The format of outline was updated.

Spring 2013: Budget meetings held at end of <u>second</u> month of semester.

Fall 2012: Name change from CORE to <u>MSA.</u>

Spring 2007: Revised and updated

Lutheran School *of* Theology *at* Chicago

CALLED INTO THE WORLD