

Institute of Buddhist Studies

Field Education Handbook



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Introduction

As stated in the IBS catalog, the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program “prepares students to engage fully and with confidence in ministry, chaplaincy, and related professions as well as further academic work.” The program fosters a nuanced understanding of Buddhism in its aim to “develop skilled, thoughtful and effective leaders.” Field Education is critical to the aims of this program by providing an immersive approach to real world involvement. Field Education provides a platform in which theoretical study is integrated with practical application by way of a structured and mentored system. Regardless of your intended vocation, integrating Buddhist teachings while working in other institutions of service will enhance your skills and formation as a leader.

This handbook lays out the program, process, procedures, and policies of the IBS Field Education Program. You will find explanations, timelines, and information regarding site selection, registration, units, and Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) should you choose this route. You will find all the information you need to be successful. I wish you well as your journey unfolds and you go out into the world as a spiritual leader in the making.

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Field Education

Field education (FE) is an essential part of the Master of Divinity program. Ideally begun after several semesters of graduate work, field education allows students to test and integrate their learning through real-world engagement.

FE placement at IBS focuses on choosing suitable community-based settings for experiential learning. Being in a position where one is serving others and deeply engaged with human beings is ideal. Acceptable field sites offer regular and meaningful interpersonal contact as well as opportunities for personal growth. Common sites include religious congregations, healthcare settings, hospices, prisons, and non-profits. Some students may choose to designate their current or recently completed CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) site as their field site. All field sites must have an on-site supervisor who will provide oversight, guidance, and evaluation for the student.

Students complete FE work individually at their chosen field sites. Concurrently, they are supported by a community of IBS peers who are likewise engaged in FE placements of their own. During regular FE class times, students share about their work, reflect on interactions they had, and challenge each other in a supportive environment.

The theory behind field education is that of a complimentary relationship between our actions and our learning—the “action-reflection” model. Students spend a minimum of 100 hours in “action” at their field site placements. Through regular meetings with their onsite supervisor and the field education class, they are encouraged to reflect upon their actions. What was skillful? Where are some areas they could grow? How does this experience relate to their understanding of the Dharma? Students are encouraged to utilize these reflections to inform future actions. In this way, field education enables students to generate meaning making and self-understanding through service experiences.

Academic Credit

All students in the Master of Divinity (MDiv) program must complete at least 6 FE credits and no more than 9 FE credits to satisfy their degree requirements.

IBS recognizes that our students are diverse in life experience and professional background. Each person has individual interests and may be at differing points in their discernment process. As such, we offer multiple “routes” in which to fulfill the field education requirement.

One way to fulfill the FE requirement is by taking two (2) semesters of field education, during which students serve at least 100 hours at an approved field site.

- Register for FE-2401 “Introduction to Field Education” (3 FE credits)
 - Serve a minimum of 50 hours concurrently at field site

- Register for FE-2402 “Topics in Field Education” (3 FE credits)
 - Serve a minimum of 50 hours concurrently at field site

Another way to fulfill the FE requirement is by incorporating hours from a concurrent or recently completed Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program. A maximum of three (3) FE credits may be earned through CPE. Please note that participation in a CPE program does NOT completely fulfill the field education requirement for M.Div. students. CPE students must also register for at least one of the IBS Field Education courses (FE-2401 or FE-2402). More information on earning credit for CPE can be found in the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) section of this handbook.

Timeline for Completing FE

Meet with FE Director 1 year or 1 semester prior to anticipated Field Education

Meet with the Field Education Director to determine when is the best time to schedule field education and where you would like to serve. Come prepared to propose at least one potential field site and anticipated learning goals at that site.

- a. Consider whether to choose a site from the list of approved field sites or propose a new field education setting. A list of pre-approved sites for chaplaincy students and pre-approved BCA temple sites for ministerial students can be found on the IBS website or by contacting the FE Director.
- b. If students do not find that the pre-approved sites fit their purposes, a new field education site may be proposed. The work at the new field site should accommodate the learning goals of the student. In general, a new site should be an organization that engages the student in responsibilities that bring them in direct contact with the public, such as offering pastoral care, community support activities, or social activism. Examples: churches, temples, prisons, hospitals, nursing homes, college campuses; advocacy, environmental, and social change groups.

Submit FE Proposal Form the semester before you start FE

- a. Students are responsible for applying to their chosen field site and/or seeking permission to serve there.
- b. Complete the Field Education Proposal Form, which can be found on the IBS website. On this form, students are asked to describe their responsibilities at the chosen field site and anticipated personal learning goals. Students who are using CPE for field education hours should submit the Academic Credit for CPE Form.
- c. Submit your signed and completed form by the last day of class in the previous academic semester. (Ex. Students wishing to begin FE in Fall 2024 must submit their form by the last day of class Spring 2024. Students who wish to begin FE in Spring 2025 should submit by the last day of class Fall 2024.)

Register for the Appropriate FE Class

- a. IBS currently offers the following FE courses, which count towards satisfying the FE requirement. Course descriptions can be found in the Academic Catalog. Questions about the appropriate course to register for can be answered by the FE Director.
 - FE-2401 Introduction to Field Education (3 credits)
 - FE-2402 Topics in Field Education (3 credits)
 - FE-3400 Advanced Field Education-CPE (3 credits)
 - FE-2400 Concurrent Field Education (3 credits)
- b. Check with the FE Director and/or Registrar to ensure you have submitted all the necessary forms prior to registering for a FE course. IBS registration deadlines apply here, just as in registering for other IBS classes.

Tuition

Tuition for all Field Education courses is billed at a reduced rate compared to other IBS courses. See the IBS academic catalog and/or the IBS website for the most current tuition rate.

Crafting Learning Goals for FE

Field education is a vital component of pastoral formation and requires the student to deeply and honestly assess their strengths and areas for improvement. This is a matter of dharmalogical, vocational, and personal reflection in their process of discernment and development. The intention is for the student to develop an understanding of how they personally manifest the teachings of their tradition in the work of serving other human beings from a variety of backgrounds. With this framework, it is incumbent upon the student to lead the process of crafting goals with the advice and assistance of the Field Education Director. The student and Field Education Director meet to produce a proposal so that the parameters of the agreement all coalesce to achieve the learning goals of the student at this particular place and time in their formation.

Pragmatically, the forming of learning goals sets into shape what the student wants to learn and how they intend to learn it. The student needs to consider what outcomes they want from this experience and how the chosen site will help facilitate these goals. The Field Education Director is there to help the student tease out their strengths and “growing edges” by exploring the student’s fears, limits, apprehensions, and how the goals meet the student’s personal development. Ultimately, the learning goals need to be realistic, achievable, and measurable with direct correlation to the work being done at the chosen site. Keep in mind that your self-evaluation at the end of the field education experience is based largely upon how you are meeting your learning goals.

Evaluating the FE Experience

What distinguishes field education from other work experience is the nature and focus on intentional goal setting and evaluation. By doing self-evaluation and sharing that experience through written expression with the Field Education Director, the student exposes their personal development to a witness and guide. This process deepens and solidifies the developmental understanding of the student's own pastoral role and leadership. Through honest and supportive dialogue with the Field Education Director, the student can assess how they are or are not meeting their goals, how these goals might change after experiential insight, and what clarity has been gleaned in terms of future vocational pathways. Ideally, the content related to the development of pastoral identity is related in some degree to the work taking place at the field site.

A student final self-evaluation, as well as a site supervisor final evaluation, are required to earn academic credit for all field education placements. In terms of self-evaluation, the student is encouraged to meet with the Field Education Director to discuss their findings prior to writing and submitting the work. The evaluation is a time for honest and forthright dialogue to determine if and how the student is meeting their goals and/or how the goals might change given what has been learned at that point. The evaluation should reflect the culminating formation and conclusions resulting from the field education experience. In terms of supervisor evaluations, the student emails a copy of the evaluation to their site supervisor along with the email address of the FE Director. The site supervisor emails the completed evaluation directly to the FE Director to ensure confidentiality and honest feedback.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is intentionally designed to provide the participant with the direct, hands-on, clinical experience of providing spiritual care to individuals, families, and/or staff members in the context of an interfaith setting. Primarily established in the healthcare field, CPE can also take place in prisons, jails, military units, and other locations.

A cornerstone of CPE is the educational component involving peer group work, supervision, and reflecting on clinical encounters. In the process, students encounter personal challenges that become points of examination and insight into the competency of serving others. This is meant to be intensive work that promotes the development of pastoral identity and spiritual care. Integral to this formation is examining one's tradition within an interfaith setting and learning to articulate how the teachings in your tradition apply to spiritual caregiving for people across multiple backgrounds.

Considerations for CPE

IBS does not offer a CPE program. It is the student's responsibility to seek out and apply to CPE programs outside of IBS. We strongly recommend choosing a program accredited through the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), which will ensure that you have a qualified educator, curriculum oversight, and professional recognition for the training. Your ACPE certified educator will guide individuals and the group through the action-reflection-action model using a group process and individual direction.

Students choose to participate in a CPE program for many reasons. Some are in discernment about professional chaplaincy and want to "try it out." Others come to CPE seeking personal growth, ministerial training, or as preparation for other fields. Each CPE unit requires approximately 300 hours of clinical practice and 100 hours of educational activities. You can complete one unit of CPE through a 10-12 week intensive summer program or through a part-time program known as an "extended unit."

Those students seeking full-time, salaried employment as healthcare chaplains need to accumulate at least four (4) units of CPE to be competitive in the job market. Four units of CPE is also one of many requirements for becoming a board-certified chaplain through the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC). These units can be earned through a one-year paid residency or piecemeal through summer internships and extended unit programs.

Academic Credit for CPE

It can be challenging to fit CPE into a Master of Divinity program. Traditionally, seminary students would complete 1 unit of CPE during the course of their graduate training. These days, however, some students come to IBS having already participated in CPE. Others do not complete CPE at all or begin their CPE training after the M.Div.. Still others begin CPE during their academic studies and complete more CPE after graduation. The ideal time for CPE is different for each individual. Students are encouraged to consult with the Field Education Director if they are unsure about the best timing for CPE.

IBS students seeking academic credit for a recently completed or future CPE program may be eligible to receive 3 FE credits.

To receive credit for CPE, students should:

- Consult with the Field Education Director to determine if their CPE program is eligible
- Complete and submit the Academic Credit for CPE Form
- Register for FE-3400 "Advanced Field Education-CPE" (3 credit course)

Credits from FE-3400 count towards the 6 FE credits required of M.Div. students. CPE students must complete at least one other IBS field education course (FE-2401 or FE-2402) to fully satisfy the M.Div. Field Education requirement.

CPE Checklist

- Meet with the FE Director to determine whether CPE is right for you and when the best timing might be. If you have already completed CPE, determine whether you are eligible for academic credit.
- Research accredited CPE centers near you <https://profile.acpe.edu/accreditedcpedirectory>
- Attend the annual GTU CPE fair in October to hear from and speak with program supervisors in California.
- Read Peter Yuichi Clark's "10 Commandments for Applying to CPE." Students are encouraged to speak with other IBS students who have completed CPE and/or the FE Director for advice on navigating the application process.
- Submit your [CPE application](#) to all sites at least 4-10 months in advance of desired start date. Ask for references from appropriate people.
- Interview at CPE sites to determine the best program for you.
- Once a program accepts you and you have decided this is where you wish to enroll, notify the IBS Field Education Director. Discuss academic credit possibilities.
- Complete the [Academic Credit for CPE Form](#) (available on IBS website).
- Register for FE-3400 "Advanced Field Education-CPE."
- Submit copy of CPE final supervisor evaluation and final self-evaluation to FE Director.

Expectations of the Field Education Student

Students are expected to self-initiate and give their field education participation and placement thoughtful consideration. Students should read through the field education handbook and relevant material in the IBS catalog. After this is done, students are expected to meet with the Field Education Director to share thoughts and ideas about FE participation and when might be an appropriate time and placement. Filling out of all the forms needed and in a timely manner is solely the responsibility of the student. This includes articulating the nature of the work to be done, the formulation of goals, the adjustment of goals, final self-evaluations, and assuring the fulfillment of supervisor evaluations. As in any professional environment, students are expected to behave in a professional manner when engaging their responsibilities and relationships within field education.

This will include:

- Ownership and embodiment of goals from their infancy, through their evolution, and to their conclusion
- Cultivating a mutually beneficial relationship with site supervisor and co-workers, soliciting and engaging in constructive feedback
- Adhering to professional standards of confidentiality
- Adhering to professional and personal boundaries
- Engaging in constructive criticism and encouragement with maturity and integrity
- Identifying, articulating, and engaging in self-care practices
- Communicating to your Field Education Director about concerns in the workplace and appropriate responses

Institutional Policies

Students and the sites they serve are bound by the policies outlined in the IBS catalog. These standards should be reviewed by all students. We are dedicated to the safety and support of our students and all of our relationships are guided by these policies as well. While we are confident in the professionalism and mutual respect engendered in our relationships, these policies are our commitment in the rare instance of unprofessionalism.