

PERSONNEL CONTACT INFORMATION

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- Direct inquiries about TRIM program requirements to Carrie Eikler.
- Direct questions about TRIM academic records, transcripts and course enrollment to Francine Massie.
- Forward documentation for completion of TRIM units to your District Coordinator.



# TABLE of CONTENTS

## 1. Information

A. <a href="#">Overview</a> .....	5
B. <a href="#">Competencies for Ministry</a> .....	8
C. <a href="#">Enrollment and Orientation Process</a> .....	11
D. <a href="#">Ministerial Ethics in the Church of the Brethren</a> .....	13
E. <a href="#">Financial Considerations of TRIM</a> .....	15
F. <a href="#">Financial Assistance Guidelines</a> .....	16
G. <a href="#">Financial Assistance Form</a> .....	17
H. <a href="#">Financial Award Agreement</a> .....	19
I. <a href="#">Recording Credit to the Transcript</a> .....	20
J. <a href="#">Transcript</a> .....	21

## 2. Orientation

A. <a href="#">Welcome and Purpose</a> .....	23
B. <a href="#">Orientation Follow-up</a> .....	24
C. <a href="#">Learning Covenant</a> .....	25
D. <a href="#">Evaluation Form</a> .....	29

## 3. Curriculum

A. <a href="#">TRIM Program Requirements</a> .....	31
B. <a href="#">Ministry Formation Group</a> .....	32
C. <a href="#">Coursework</a> .....	34
D. <a href="#">Suggested Activities and Topics for Study</a> .....	37
E. <a href="#">My TRIM Checklist</a> .....	39
F. <a href="#">Converting Course Credit to TRIM Units</a> .....	42
G. <a href="#">Academy Students in Graduate Courses</a> .....	43
H. <a href="#">Transferring ACTS into TRIM Credit</a> .....	44
I. <a href="#">College Level Examination Program (CLEP)</a> .....	45
J. <a href="#">Guidelines for Research Papers</a> .....	46
K. <a href="#">Plagiarism Policy</a> .....	48
L. <a href="#">Independent Study Units</a> .....	49
M. <a href="#">Independent Study Unit Contract</a> .....	51
Student Evaluation of Completed ISU .....	52
Supervisor's Evaluation of Completed ISU .....	53
N. <a href="#">Independent Study Unit Contract Sample</a> .....	55
O. <a href="#">Record of Hours for Independent Study Units</a> .....	61
P. <a href="#">Directed Independent Study</a> .....	62
Q. <a href="#">Five Required Experiences</a> .....	63
a. <a href="#">Church of the Brethren College Experience</a> .....	65
b. <a href="#">Bethany Theological Seminary Experience</a> .....	67
c. <a href="#">Annual Conference Experience</a> .....	68
d. <a href="#">District Conference Experience</a> .....	69
e. <a href="#">Ecumenical, Interfaith or Intercultural Experience</a> .....	70
f. <a href="#">Five Required Experiences Form</a> .....	73
R. <a href="#">The Church Online</a> .....	74
S. <a href="#">Leave of Absence Policy</a> .....	75

#### 4. Ministry Internship

A. <a href="#">Overview</a> .....	77
B. <a href="#">Writing Learning Goals</a> .....	81
C. <a href="#">Covenant</a> .....	83
D. <a href="#">Checklist</a> .....	87
E. <a href="#">Record of Hours</a> .....	88
F. <a href="#">Case Study Report Guidelines</a> .....	89
G. <a href="#">Case Study Report Form</a> .....	90
H. <a href="#">Preaching Response Form</a> .....	93
I. <a href="#">Worship Leader Response Form</a> .....	95
J. <a href="#">Teaching Response Form</a> .....	97
K. <a href="#">Intern's Evaluation Form</a> .....	99
L. <a href="#">Supervisor's Final Evaluation Form</a> .....	101

#### 5. Graduation

A. <a href="#">Congratulations, Graduate!</a> .....	103
B. <a href="#">Graduation Competencies</a> .....	104
C. <a href="#">TRIM Exit Exam</a> .....	105
D. <a href="#">Final Evaluation by Graduate</a> .....	107
E. <a href="#">Final Evaluation by District TRIM Coordinator</a> .....	108

**NOTE:** As an attendee of a Brethren Academy event, you may be included in still photos, video-tapes, news articles, informational brochures, or other media used to interpret the mission and purpose of Bethany Theological Seminary, the Church of the Brethren, Inc., and the Brethren Academy.

**IF YOU ARE UNWILLING TO HAVE YOUR PHOTO USED FOR THESE PURPOSES,  
PLEASE CONTACT FRAN MASSIE  
SO THAT YOU ARE NOT INCLUDED IN ANY OF THESE MEDIA.**

## 1-A

### AN OVERVIEW

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,  
“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”  
And I said, “Here am I, send me!”  
Isaiah 6:8*

#### **What is TRIM?**

TRIM is an approved ministry training program for the Church of the Brethren that provides the educational component required for ordination. TRIM is offered by the denomination, but districts make all decisions regarding ordination of people for ministry.

Ministry training in the Church of the Brethren has assumed a variety of forms across the years. In the historical “free ministry,” which is still the practice in a small number of congregations, the mode of training is basically an apprenticeship. Those called to ministry take their place in an existing body of ministers in a congregation and learn to minister as they serve alongside and under the guidance of elders. It is more common, however, to find other modes of training for ministry. This is a result of the move in many congregations from an unsalaried, free ministry to a professional ministry, which may be full-time or bivocational.

The recommended route of training today, authorized by Annual Conference, is to attend four years of college and three years of graduate-level training at the denominational seminary. At the same time, there is an increasing need for other ways of training ministers. On one hand, a growing number of congregations are finding it difficult, if not impossible, to provide compensation for a full-time pastor. On the other hand, a growing number of people who have gifts for ministry find it difficult to become full-time students for seven years in order to pursue an undergraduate and graduate degree. Given this situation, the church has responded by providing alternative ways of training for ministry.

TRIM, short for Training in Ministry, is a program authorized by Annual Conference. It is one alternative program of training that

1. offers the same scope of training as a seminary education, but
2. offers it in a more abbreviated and more flexible version, so that
3. the training can be completed closer to home and, depending on the extent of prior educational experience, in as few as three to four years.

Like the recommended professional training route of college and seminary, TRIM consists of a combination of 1) general education, 2) biblical and theological studies, and 3) practical training in ministry. It is a compact program that allows students to design their own package of courses and other learning experiences within a balanced structure of activities.

#### **TRIM Is Accredited**

If students wish to be ordained or certified for many professional positions, they must earn degrees or certification from universities, seminaries, and training programs that are “accredited,” that is, they are recognized by an authorized accrediting agency, such as the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools or the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). All

accredited institutions, such as Bethany Theological Seminary, are periodically reviewed and subsequently listed in the Higher Education Directory published annually.

### **Who Offers the TRIM Program?**

Four Church of the Brethren partners have joined together to co-sponsor TRIM:

- Bethany Theological Seminary
- Church of the Brethren, Inc.
- The 24 districts of the Church of the Brethren
- The six Brethren colleges

Representatives of these partners meet as a denominational Ministry Advisory Council to review policy for several special training programs, including TRIM. Direct funding for TRIM comes from the Church of the Brethren and Bethany Theological Seminary.

All students enter TRIM with the approval and support of their district. Students who move to a new district while enrolled in TRIM shall notify the Brethren Academy Office, the district coordinator from the previous district and the district coordinator of the new district. In order to continue in TRIM, a student must have the approval and support of the new district.

### **The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership**

The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership, a partnership between Bethany and the Church of the Brethren administers a variety of ministry training programs including TRIM, Education for a Shared Ministry (EFSM), Academy Certified Training Systems (ACTS), and Seminario Anabautista Hispano (SeBAH-COB). The Brethren Academy offers the Sustaining Ministerial Excellence Advanced Seminar, a continuing education program, and reviews and grants continuing education units (CEUs) for opportunities offered by the denomination, agencies and districts. A staff team implements the programs of the Brethren Academy. The Director of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership oversees all work of the BAML. Additional staff includes the Coordinator of English Language Ministry Training Programs, the Coordinator of Spanish Language Ministry Training Programs and the Administrative Assistant.

A network of district-appointed district TRIM coordinators oversee the program in each district, providing guidance and support to students enrolled in many parts of the country. As in any ministry training program, district executive ministers, district ministry coordinating teams and local congregations also play a necessary and vital role in the lives of participants.

### **Who Can Participate?**

Those committed to Jesus Christ and the church who

- sense a call to set-apart ministry in the Church of the Brethren and are willing to test that call.
- need to fulfill the basic education requirements for ordination or to upgrade previous training.
- show gifts for ministry, which the person, the congregation and the district have all discerned and affirmed.
- are eager to grow and have the self-motivation to pursue a disciplined course of study for ministry.
- come into the Church of the Brethren from other church backgrounds.

## **District TRIM Coordinators**

Each district with students enrolled in the TRIM program appoints a district TRIM coordinator who will be the “on-site” supervisor and mentor for TRIM students. These individuals are a source of information and encouragement for students as they proceed through the TRIM program.

The activities of a district TRIM coordinator vary somewhat from district to district but generally include:

- Advising students on coursework and other TRIM requirements
- Approving completed work (ministry internship forms, Independent Study Units, etc.)
- Contacting students occasionally to maintain a good relationship
- Sending paperwork to the Brethren Academy office in a timely manner
- Arranging and/or facilitating a ministry formation group meeting with students on a regular basis (determined by coordinator and students)
- Keeping the district leadership up-to-date on the progress of students
- Confering with the Coordinator of ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS as needed
- Attending periodic district TRIM coordinator gatherings, which may be in person or by other forms of communication (phone, Skype, ZOOM, etc.)

## Competencies for Ministry: A User's Commentary

The TRIM program has as its goal the preparation of individuals called to ministry. While no program can completely prepare one for the complexities that ministry involves, it should be the goal of every TRIM student to obtain a wide range of emerging and developed skills that will be a resource in the years ahead.

Below is a list of ministerial competencies as suggested by the Church of the Brethren Ministry Office in its Ministerial Leadership Manual. District TRIM coordinators and students are expected to observe these competencies as a guide for considering areas of study as well as a source of discussion in determining whether a well-balanced education program is being constructed and carried out that will provide a strong base for future learnings and solid ministry in the name of Jesus Christ.

### **1. Familiarity with the biblical sources of the Christian community and competency in interpreting those sources:**

*The Bible bears witness to God's deeds and guides the church in its quest to live as God's people.* It is thus important for ministerial leaders to know the writings that comprise the Bible and the story of the people of God out of which these writings arose. It is also important that they acquire skills in interpreting scripture more effectively, and that they understand how and why Christians interpret the Bible differently. It is especially important that they be able to use scripture appropriately in the various ministries of the church, and that they be able to facilitate the study and discernment of the biblical message on the part of the congregation as a whole.

### **2. Familiarity with and ability to reflect theologically on the history and social context of Christianity.**

*The story of God's people that begins in scripture continues on in the life and history of the church across the centuries.* It is thus important for ministerial leaders to be familiar with significant people, events, and issues in the ongoing story of the Christian community. It is also important that they understand how the church's story relates to and intersects with the wider world in which it develops. In addition to knowing the story, ministerial leaders need to be able to reflect on the story from the vantage point of faith: Where and how do we see God active in the church's story? Where and how do we see the church responding faithfully or unfaithfully as the people of God?

### **3. Awareness of the contextual character of particular Christian traditions, especially as found in the North American setting and in global settings of developing Christianity.**

*Christians have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, but the way they confess and practice their faith differs widely from age to age, from place to place, and from one society to another.* It is thus important that ministerial leaders understand the way in which the language, symbols, and practices of various Christian groups bear the imprint of their cultural context. It is important that they be familiar with significant features of the North American setting of most Brethren communities, including the growing cultural diversity in our midst. It is also important that they appreciate how and why believers elsewhere in the world may experience life differently and express their faith differently.

**4. Familiarity with and ability to reflect theologically on the heritage of the Believers' Church tradition:**

*Within the wider Christian story, Brethren are one of several groups that share a heritage known as the Believers' Church tradition. It is thus important that ministerial leaders be conversant with this historic movement, the movements out of which the Brethren and other Believers' Church groups emerged. It is important that they understand some of the characteristic themes and emphases of the Believers' Church, such as believer baptism and discipleship. It is also important that they be familiar with some of the particular people and events that shaped the history of the Brethren. And it is important that they be able to interpret the beliefs, practices, and polity of the Brethren in terms of their biblical basis, historical development, and significance for the church today.*

**5. Ability to articulate faith in language that is theologically informed and culturally persuasive.**

*As Christians, we celebrate the good news of God's love for us in Jesus Christ. All too often, however, we are unable to communicate that good news in a clear and convincing manner. It is thus important that ministerial leaders acquire and demonstrate skills in theological reflection. It is important that they be able to demonstrate how the convictions they hold relate to the Bible, the shared heritage of the wider church, and the beliefs and practices of the Brethren. It is also important that they be able to show how the Christian message engages and challenges the values of the dominant culture. And it is important that they be able to communicate the good news with clarity and credibility in a variety of settings, within and beyond the church.*

**6. An understanding of the congregation informed by both theological heritage and learnings from the human sciences:**

*The life of faith is a life in community, and the place where we experience community with other believers on an ongoing basis is the congregation. It is thus important that ministerial leaders be familiar with biblical images and models of the church as the people of God. It is important that they are able to describe key features of the Believers' Church view of the faith community and how they may be embodied in the life of a congregation. It is also important that they acquire a systemic understanding of the congregation and so be better able to deal with the dynamics at work in congregational life. And it is important that they be able to reflect critically on significant issues affecting the life and health of congregations at the present time.*

**7. Ability to articulate a vision of ministry congruent with one's sense of vocation and appropriate to the ministry context in which that vocation will be practiced:**

*Central to our understanding of ministry is the belief that ministry is not simply an occupation, but rather a vocation. It is thus important that ministerial leaders be able to describe the nature and development of their sense of calling. It is important that they be able to discuss how their sense of vocation relates to biblical models of ministry and to the understanding of ministry in the Church of the Brethren. It is also important that they be familiar with significant features of the ministry setting in which they are or will be serving, whether a congregation or other placement. And it is important that they be able to distinguish helpful and unhelpful understandings of the role of the ministerial leader.*

**8. Ability to nurture and reflect critically on the spiritual formation of self and others, including ethics for ministry and life in community:**

*The life of faith is more than believing and doing; it is an unending process of spiritual formation and transformation.* It is thus important that ministerial leaders be able to articulate their own spiritual autobiography and identify critical issues for continuing development. It is important that they be familiar with some of the classical disciplines for spiritual growth, including prayer and Bible study. It is also important that they be familiar with several contemporary models for understanding moral or faith development in individuals and groups. And it is important that they are aware of key issues in ministerial and congregational ethics as addressed by Annual Conference, and exhibit skills in processing concrete cases related to these issues.

**9. Skills in interpersonal relationships, in mediating conflict, and in building community:**

*Healthy congregations are places where people know how to relate to one another in constructive ways, even in the midst of conflict and controversy.* It is thus important that ministerial leaders understand how differing personality types and styles of interaction affect the life of a group. It is important that they have developed skills in listening and cultivating communication. It is important that they be familiar with resources from scripture, Brethren heritage, and conflict theory that can help persons deal with conflict in constructive ways. And it is important that they be able to apply conflict mediation skills to concrete situations, as demonstrated through role plays, case studies, etc.

**10. Ability to provide effective leadership in congregational and other church-related arenas of ministry:**

*The quality of leadership frequently determines whether a group will be able to carry out its mission.* It is thus important that ministerial leaders be able to articulate an understanding of leadership informed by biblical, theological, and sociological perspectives. It is important that they be able to identify their own leadership style and assess the particular strengths and weaknesses of that style. It is also important that they be able to demonstrate skills in the various arenas of ministry related to their vocation, skills in preaching, worship, pastoral care, teaching, and administration. And it is important that they be able to identify ways of calling forth and nurturing others' gifts for ministry.

**11. Ability to integrate biblical and theological understandings with the practice of ministry:**

*Understanding that is not embodied in practice is worthless. Practice that is not guided by understanding is shallow.* The overarching competency therefore that ministry education seeks to achieve is the ability to practice ministry in a biblically and theologically informed manner. One of the marks of this competency is an ability to bring biblical and theological understandings to bear on concrete ministry situations, whether in actual practice or in case studies. Another is the ability to respond in discerning ways to the questions of peers and teachers regarding the meaning and practice of ministry. However assessed, integration of understanding and practice is the crucial test of competency for ministry.

## STUDENT ENROLLMENT and ORIENTATION

If you are enrolling in TRIM, you are doing so by invitation of your district. A district executive minister determines whether to recommend a person for TRIM, preferably in consultation with the district TRIM coordinator, so someone has already identified you as a person with gifts for ministry and affirmed your own sense of calling to serve the church as a minister. First, however, you must meet the requirements for enrollment.

A high school diploma or GED is a prerequisite for entrance into the TRIM program. The application and acceptance processes into TRIM are as follows:

- The district executive minister must complete the “Profile on Prospective Student” form, sign the form, and mail it to the Brethren Academy office. Districts must also secure a criminal background check on prospective students.
- When the Academy office receives a profile on a prospective student, the director mails or emails a TRIM application and the TRIM fact sheet.
- The student completes the TRIM application and mails it to the Academy office with the current enrollment fee, presently established at \$360. Districts differ in their determination of who pays this enrollment fee. As a courtesy, the Academy office mails a copy of the completed application form to the district.
- As an application is considered, Academy staff may wish to interview the student by telephone.
- A letter will be sent from the Coordinator of English Language Ministry Training Programs (hereafter in this section referred to as Coordinator) to the student and districts regarding the acceptance of the student.

Students who are accepted into the TRIM program are required to attend a four-day orientation program at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Indiana. All expenses during orientation are paid for by the Academy, but students are responsible for travel expenses to and from Richmond, Indiana, and for the books required for an online course. Orientation registration deadlines are strictly observed. Please contact the Brethren Academy for upcoming orientation dates.

Prior to orientation, students must request transcripts from all previous educational institutions and have them sent to the Brethren Academy office. These transcripts need not be official and may be copies. This is an essential resource for determining the trajectory of the student’s program, and will determine the number and types of courses needed to complete the program.

At the orientation, new students will

- Have completed required reading prior to arrival for the course “Servant Leadership.” A complimentary copy of this book or books is sent to each enrolling student. Students will write a paper about the book(s) following orientation.
- Attend the first session of an eight week, online course called “Introduction to Biblical Studies.”
- Receive a detailed explanation of the TRIM program.
- Take the Biblical Theological Awareness Inventory, a required exam for all students entering the program.

- Have opportunities to meet other students and church leaders for worship and conversation.

Immediately following the on-campus orientation, new students will meet with their district TRIM coordinator (face-to-face or by phone) to complete the Learning Covenant. The Learning Covenant must be signed by the district TRIM coordinator and sent to the Coordinator for approval within six weeks following the on-campus orientation.

## MINISTERIAL ETHICS in the CHURCH of the BRETHREN

We live in a time when the wider church has been greatly damaged by those in leadership who have not taken their role as ethical leaders seriously. While we are all humans who make mistakes, those called to ministry need to be very aware of the visible and honorable place they occupy in the church.

To be clear about ethical boundaries for ministers, included in your TRIM manual is a section of the code of ethics from the current Church of the Brethren Ethics in Ministry Relations paper that was adopted by Annual Conference in 2008 (For the complete document, please see “Ministerial Ethics,” [http://www.brethren.org/ac/ac\\_statements/](http://www.brethren.org/ac/ac_statements/)). In addition, each of the Church of the Brethren districts provides ethics training on a regular basis which pastors are required to take periodically.

### **CODE OF ETHICS FOR MINISTERIAL LEADERS**

We believe that we have been called by God, through the church, to the set-apart ministry in the Church of the Brethren. It is our calling and our function to lead and facilitate the church in its mission to obey and serve Christ and to witness to the good news of the gospel. We are committed to fulfilling the trust the church has placed in us by maintaining a high standard of Christian conviction, by sincerity of purpose, by nurturing and sharing our gifts, and by integrity of our character. We are dedicated to upholding the dignity and worth of every person who seeks or is reached by our care and proclamation. In order to uphold our standards we, as ministers in the Church of the Brethren, together and individually covenant to live out the following:

#### **Integrity of the Ministerial Life**

- A. I will be true to the Judeo-Christian scriptures in my preaching, teaching, and manner of living.
- B. I will be true to Christian convictions as revealed in the Bible and interpreted, taught to, and nurtured in me by the church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- C. I will live with integrity, upholding my commitments to God, to others, and to the church.
- D. I will exercise a lifestyle consistent with the teachings of Jesus, giving serious attention to Annual Conference statements.
- E. I will assume responsibility for my physical and emotional health and for my spiritual growth and enrichment. I will strive to maintain reasonable expectations for myself and not allow others' unreasonable expectations to endanger my well-being.
- F. I will treat members of my family with Christian love and respect.
- G. I will treat my congregation and parishioners with Christian love and respect.
- H. I will be a good steward of all of my resources, managing them to live within my income.

#### **Integrity of the Ministerial Call**

- I. I will support the basic beliefs and practices of the Church of the Brethren as determined by Annual Conference.

- J. I will respect the privacy of individuals and will not divulge information obtained in confidence without expressed permission. When an individual is a danger to self or others, however, I will take appropriate action, even when this breaks confidentiality.
- K. I will report all cases of suspected child abuse. I will be knowledgeable of and act in accordance with the mandated reporting requirements of professionals within my state.
- L. I will not exchange or tolerate scandalous, malicious, or inaccurate information concerning others.
- M. I will give credit for all sources quoted or extensively paraphrased in sermons and prepared papers. I will honor all copyrights.
- N. I acknowledge that education is a lifelong process, and will seek out opportunities to continue to grow spiritually and in ministry skills.
- O. I will honor the ministry of clergy colleagues in our denomination and in the larger Christian community, striving to work with them in a collegial manner. I will not proselytize people from other churches. I will only perform ministerial services, such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, anointings, pastoral counseling, and critical pastoral care, in another congregation at the request of the current pastor and that build up the ministry and mission of the body of Christ in that place.
- P. I will honor the ministry of pastors in my former parishes. It is inappropriate to be involved in the pastoral ministry of a congregation after leaving it or upon retirement, or to perform ministerial services, or to cultivate such relationships with former parishioners, if it hinders the ministry of the congregation and pastor. I will only perform ministerial services, such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, anointing, pastoral counseling, and critical pastoral care, in a former congregation at the request of the current pastor.
- Q. Whenever serving in another category of ministerial leadership (i.e., chaplain, professor, denominational leader, retired, etc.) than pastoral/congregational ministry, I will honor the ministry of my pastor and congregation by being aware of my informal authority. I will not exert undue influence in the internal workings of my congregation.
- R. In the event of a complaint against me, I will participate in the denominational process for dealing with complaints of ministerial misconduct.

#### **Integrity of the Ministerial Relationship (Fiduciary Responsibility)**

- S. I will not misuse the trust placed in me and the unique power inherent in my role by exploiting in any way those who seek my help or care.
- T. I will not use my office or authority to apply influence upon a parishioner or others in order to secure bequests, gifts, loans, or financial gain that would personally benefit me.
- U. I will not expect nor seek financial favors or gratuities because of my position.
- V. I will be responsible and honest in the management of all resources and funds entrusted to my care in the course of my employment.
- W. I will not enter into “dual relationships” with parishioners that result in a “conflict of interest” that could personally benefit me.
- X. I will not engage in pastoral counseling that extends beyond the limits of my training and experience. I will use appropriate consulting and referral services.
- Y. It is unethical to take advantage of the vulnerability of any person by causing that person to engage in sexual activity or conduct with me. I will not engage in sexual activity with any person other than my spouse. Such behavior would be especially egregious within the church or ministry agency I serve.
- Z. I will not engage in any form of child abuse—sexual, physical, or emotional.

## FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS of TRIM

*“Count well the cost,” Christ Jesus says, “when you lay the foundation.”* So begins the hymn whose translated words were written by the first leader of the Church of the Brethren, Alexander Mack. Entering TRIM students are encouraged to take these words to heart, for a ministry training program requires time, thought, and a strong commitment of one’s life to Jesus Christ. In addition, there are financial costs whenever one embarks on an educational venture. While God does provide in miraculous ways, TRIM students often have many financial responsibilities in their lives, and so this financial aspect of enrolling in the program is one to consider carefully.

**Application and enrollment fees:** TRIM calls for a substantial investment of resources, some of which come from supporting agencies and some of which come from the students themselves. The direct payments a student makes to the Academy include a one-time enrollment fee and a yearly participation fee, half invoiced in January and half invoiced in July. Call the Brethren Academy for current rates.

**Costs for Units of Study:** Students themselves pay for courses and other units of study. In the end, costs will vary by student because the cost of units varies widely. Students will pay less overall if they enter TRIM having already earned academic credit or completed units of study at another institution that count toward TRIM certification. While enrolled in TRIM, some students will pay more for credits earned at outside institutions and applied to the TRIM program. Also, full-time enrollment is more costly than part-time, but full-time students are eligible for more financial assistance than part-time students. In the end, the total net cost could end up being less for full time students.

**Financial Assistance:** All participants in TRIM are eligible to apply for financial assistance in the form of covenantal grants. TRIM grants do not have to be repaid. In accepting grants, however, applicants commit themselves to supporting the Church of the Brethren in the future through their ministries, contributions to the Church of the Brethren and Bethany Theological Seminary (which supports the Brethren Academy), and their total stewardship of life and resources. The amount of the grant for which a student is eligible is contingent on the number of units the student is enrolling for the year. The maximum annual grant is currently \$1,200. Some additional scholarship funds may be available for those students who take courses through Bethany Seminary. All scholarship funds awarded are to be used for tuition.

**Funding Alternatives:** District TRIM coordinators work with each entering student to determine costs and funding alternatives to help cover expenses. Some districts and individual congregations are also willing to provide funding for ministry training programs. Students should have a conversation with the appropriate person in the district and congregation about this matter.

## 1-F

### GUIDELINES for REQUESTING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE through TRIM

1. TRIM students may request and receive one award in the fall semester and one award in the spring semester, totaling no more than two awards for the academic year in which the student is enrolled. The fall semester is July 1-December 30; December 1 is the deadline for applying for financial assistance. The spring Semester is January 1-June 30; June 15 is the deadline for applying for financial assistance. Awards are reported as taxable income
2. The amount of an award is determined by the number of units the student plans to complete during that semester to fulfill TRIM credits and by the estimated expense of those units:
  - A. Students enrolling for the minimum required 2 units per semester (on-site, online, or DISU courses) are eligible for an award of up to \$300 or current cost of one course.
  - B. Students enrolling for 3 or more units per semester (on-site, online, or DISU courses) are eligible for an award of up to \$600, or the current cost of two courses.
  - C. Since “Orientation/Servant Leadership” and “Introduction to Biblical Studies” are units of study funded by the Brethren Academy, they cannot count toward total enrolled courses.
  - D. Since students are not charged for Independent Study Units, they cannot count toward total enrolled courses.
3. TRIM financial assistance awards may only be used for tuition.
4. Requests for financial assistance will be submitted on the appropriate TRIM form to the district TRIM coordinator, who in turn will submit the form with his or her recommendation. Submission must take place before the semester ends. The fall semester deadline is December 1; the spring semester deadline is June 15. These deadlines will be strictly observed.
5. Each time after the first time that a student requests financial assistance, the student’s transcript will be examined to verify that coursework funded by a grant in the previous period was completed.
6. The Coordinator of English Language Ministry Training Programs of the Brethren Academy will notify the applicant after approving the assistance request.
7. Once the applicant has returned the financial assistance form to the Brethren Academy Office funds will be distributed.
8. The applicant is responsible for all accounting of awards received for tax purposes. Awards received are taxable income.

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership  
REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Fall Semester: July 1—December 31, 2019**  
Deadline for application: December 1, 2019

**Spring Semester: January 1—June 30, 2020**  
Deadline for application: June 15, 2020

**Student name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Anticipated Study Program:**

- Space is provided below for you to list event(s), course(s) and Directed Independent Study Units you expect to do during the year for which financial assistance is requested.
- List courses or other units by name.
- Enter the dates that each unit of study will take place.
- Enter the TRIM unit value of each course (One 3-hour semester or one 4-hour quarter course = one TRIM unit).

College/Seminary Courses	Place	Date	TRIM Hours	Units
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Academy Level Courses	Place	Date	TRIM Units*
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*\*Since "Orientation" and "Introduction to Biblical Studies" are funded by the Brethren Academy, they may not be included in requests for financial assistance.*

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Directed Independent Study Units	Place	Date	TRIM Units
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**Total Estimated Tuition Cost for course(s)/event(s) listed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL Course Units Listed** \_\_\_\_\_

**TRIM Covenant Grant Guidelines: (Please check one.)**

- Up to \$300 per semester requested for the minimum 2 units  
 Up to \$600 per semester may be requested if you are completing 3 or more units

**Financial Assistance is given directly to an educational institution or for an event registration. If taking more than 1 unit, tell us how to apply your award.**

Make check out to: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \$  
Mail check to this address:

Make check out to: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \$  
Mail check to this address:

**Statement by Student: The information provided on this form is as accurate and complete as possible, and there is financial need for the financial assistance requested.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

**Statement by district TRIM coordinator: I have worked with the student in preparing this Covenant Grant request, concur with the information included on this form, and recommend a Covenant Grant.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of district TRIM coordinator

**SEND COMPLETED REQUEST TO:**

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership  
615 National Road West  
Richmond, IN 47374  
[academy@bethanyseminary.edu](mailto:academy@bethanyseminary.edu)

## TRIM FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AWARD AGREEMENT

To:

From: Director, Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership

Having reviewed your financial assistance request and your anticipated program of study, we are pleased to offer you financial assistance from the TRIM program budget for the academic semester \_\_\_\_\_ in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_. These funds will be applied toward tuition for the course(s) you have designated.

This financial assistance is in the form of a covenantal award and as such does not have to be repaid. In accepting the financial assistance award, however, you commit yourself to future support of the Church of the Brethren agencies sponsoring TRIM through the ministries in which you will serve, through financial contributions in support of the Brethren Academy, and through your total stewardship of life and resources.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### STATEMENT OF ACCEPTANCE:

I hereby accept the financial assistance offered in this award and agree to the terms of the grant outlined above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of TRIM Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please return a signed copy to:**

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership  
615 National Road West, Richmond, IN 47374  
[academy@bethanyseminary.edu](mailto:academy@bethanyseminary.edu)

## RECORDING CREDIT to the TRANSCRIPT

Courses and activities for TRIM credit may be earned at other institutions; however, files for all active students are housed at the Brethren Academy office in Richmond, Indiana. Therefore, reports of all completed work must be sent to:

Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership  
615 National Road West  
Richmond, IN 47374-4019

Student transcripts are updated twice each year and sent to students and district TRIM coordinators in the fall and in the spring.

For TRIM credit, a grade of “C” or better is required in accredited coursework. Either a grade report or a transcript from the college or seminary where the coursework has been completed is needed for documentation. This includes classes taken at Bethany Seminary.

The instructor of the course reports work completed in Brethren Academy-sponsored courses directly to the Brethren Academy office. Evaluations and papers are returned to students.

To record Independent Study Units on the transcript, a completed contract (page 51), signed by the district TRIM coordinator and Coordinator must be received in the Brethren Academy office. Any work sent electronically from a district TRIM coordinator to the Brethren Academy office is considered “signed.”

### **Program Expectations**

The TRIM program is designed to be completed in two to five years. In special cases permission to extend a program of study will be granted by the Brethren Academy staff upon request of the student and recommendation of the district TRIM coordinator. Such requests and recommendations will provide an adequate rationale for the extension. Students may remain enrolled in the TRIM program a maximum of ten years without incurring penalty. After ten years, students will begin losing TRIM credits, beginning with the first year of their enrollment. They will lose one year of credits for each year they remain in the program.

To avoid this penalty, a student may take an official Leave of Absence for up to 4 sessions or 2 academic years if faced with health, family, professional, financial or other concerns that interfere with their studies. A student must apply for a Leave of Absence using the form provided on the Brethren Academy website and follow all aspects of the Leave of Absence policy. Leave time granted may not total more than 4 sessions or 2 academic years per TRIM student.

In any given academic year, a student must complete a minimum of one unit (or supervised ministry experience) to remain in good standing. Each fall a summary report is sent from the Academy office to each participating district for their use to determine student progress in TRIM. If a student fails to make adequate progress, their district may decide to remove a student from the program. This is to be done in consultation with the district TRIM coordinator, the student, and at times the Coordinator of the English-Language Ministry Training Programs of the Brethren Academy.

If a student finds that TRIM is not the appropriate ministry training for themselves and chooses to withdraw, the student must notify their district and report the decision to the Brethren Academy Office.

**Training in Ministry (TRIM)  
A Ministry Training Program of the Church of the Brethren  
Student Transcript**

**Date of the Last Addition to Transcript: 05/08/17**

<b>Student Information</b>	
Name: _____	District: _____
Congregation: _____	Coordinator: _____

<b>Enrollment Record</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Date</b>
Application Rec'd & Approved:	_____	Transcript Received: _____
Enrollment Fee Rec'd:	_____	Learning Contract Rec'd & Appr'd: _____
Orientation Date	_____	Completion By: _____

**Assessment of Previous Training and Training Requirements in TRIM**

	General Education	Bible/ Theology	Ministry/ Ministry Skills	Total
<b>Minimum Units Req'd by TRIM</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>
Unit Value Previous College Courses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Unit Value of Previous ALCs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Unit Value of Previous ISUs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Units To Be Done In TRIM	10.00	10.00	10.00	30.00

Note: At least 10 of the 30 units required by TRIM must be accredited college or seminary courses.  
Therefore, at least 10.00 of the 30.00 units need to be college or seminary courses.

Note: At least 10 of the 30 units required by TRIM must be Academy Level courses.  
Therefore, at least 10.00 of the 30.00 units need to be Academy Level courses.

**TEST RESULTS:** BTAI Entrance: out of 125.00      BTAI Exit: out of 125.00

<b>Program Requirements:</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Date</b>
General Education Units Completed: _____	CoB College/Connection Experience: _____
Bible/Theology Units Completed: _____	Bethany Seminary Experience: _____
Ministry Skills Units Completed: _____	Ecumenical/Intercultural Event: _____
Five Required Experiences Completed: _____	Annual Conference: _____
Exit BTAI Completed: _____	District Conference: _____
Ministry Internship Completed: _____	Final Evaluation - Student: _____
Recognized at Bethany Luncheon: _____	Final Evaluation - Coordinator: _____
	District Graduation Event: _____

Intro B.S. Orientation Intro N.T.	Intro O.T. Brethren Studies
---	--------------------------------

<b>Ministry Formation Group</b> Nature of Group: _____ Location: _____ Date Group Entered: _____	<b>Ministry Internship</b> Contract Approved: _____ Location: _____ Supervisor: _____ Dates: _____ Final Student Eval: _____ Final Supervisor Report: _____
---	---

**Curricular Units to Be Completed in TRIM**

General Education		Total Units Req'd:	10.00					
Title of Course	College/Seminary	Date	Previous Training Units			Units Completed in TRIM		
			College Course	ALC Unit	ISU Unit	College Course	ALC - DISU	ISU Unit
<b>Total G.E. Units Still Needed:</b>		10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bible & Theology Study		Total Units Req'd:	10.00					
Title of Course	College/Seminary	Date	Previous Training Units			Units Completed in TRIM		
			College Course	ALC Unit	ISU Unit	College Course	ALC - DISU	ISU Unit
<b>Total B/T Units Still Needed:</b>		10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ministry/Ministry Skills		Total Units Req'd:	10.00					
Title of Course	College/Seminary	Date	Previous Training Units			Units Completed in TRIM		
			College Course	ALC Unit	ISU Unit	College Course	ALC - DISU	ISU Unit
<b>Total M.S. Units Still Needed:</b>		10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Minimum College Courses Required:		10.00	General Education Units Still Needed:		10.00			
Total College Courses Still Needed:		10.00	Bible/Theology Units Still Needed:		10.00			
Minimum Academy Level Courses Required:		10.00	Ministry Skills Units Still Needed:		10.00			
Total Academy Level Courses Still Needed:		10.00	Total Units Required:		30.00			
			Total Units Still Needed:		30.00			

Please note: In some cases, more than the minimum number of units may be essential to cover the subject areas in which TRIM students must achieve competency.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE RECORD				
Date				
Units Projected:				
Assistance Eligibility:				
Assistance Allotted:				

## WELCOME AND PURPOSE

Welcome to Bethany Theological Seminary and the central offices of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership. There is also a satellite office at the Church of the Brethren General Offices in Elgin, Illinois. It is the prayer of the staff of the Academy that you will find this orientation both inspirational and challenging. May you feel God's presence in a special way during these beginning days of your TRIM program.

The staff of the Academy is here to support you as you learn about the program in detail and get started on your path to ministry. At the end of orientation, you will fill out an evaluation form. We value your thoughts about this experience and do consider your comments as we plan future orientation sessions.

### **The Purpose of Orientation**

The basic purpose of orientation is to help you understand the details of TRIM. During these sessions we will discuss the process, the requirements, and the expectations of the program. Much of the information covered in orientation is also contained in this TRIM manual. It will become a valuable resource to you as you proceed through your program of study.

In addition to the “nuts and bolts” of the TRIM program, we hope you will find rich fellowship and support among your student peers who are entering this program with you. You will also learn about the role of the district TRIM coordinator and the guidance he or she will provide for you. At orientation, you will meet some of the staff and faculty of Bethany Theological Seminary and be introduced to the possibilities for training through Bethany that might be open to you. You will also begin a Ministry/Ministry Skills course about servant leadership and begin a Bible/Theology course called “Introduction to Biblical Studies” that will develop your confidence in online learning as well as give you a taste of professional training in set-apart ministry.

Finally, it is the hope of those planning this orientation that in many respects you will find your time here to be a retreat. By coming to orientation you have placed yourself apart from your busy life, allowing for the possibility that God may speak to you in a new way. As you leave this orientation, may you be filled with anticipation and enthusiasm about the possibilities that lie ahead and sense even more deeply than you have in the past that God walks with you on this journey.

## 2 - B

### ORIENTATION FOLLOW UP

When orientation ends, some people feel a sense of let down or a sense of being overwhelmed by all that needs to be done. The following list will set some direction for the weeks following orientation and help you get started.

1. Allow for some down time upon returning home. Be gentle with yourself. One important aspect of any ministry is balance, so while training is vital, rest is also important. You have been exposed to many new ideas and lots of information during this time. Take some time to think about the orientation experience before plowing into the work.
2. Meet with your district TRIM coordinator within one month following orientation either face-to-face or in a phone conversation. This time together should include:
  - A review of your orientation experience.
  - A discussion of a ministry formation group.
  - Completion of the Learning Covenant due six weeks following on-campus orientation.  
Once it is complete and signed by your district TRIM coordinator, mail it to the Brethren Academy Office.
3. Make a time management plan. You will be more successful in any class you take if you set aside some time each week for study. Once you get behind, it is very difficult to catch up. Learn to pace yourself with “Introduction to Biblical Studies.”
4. Complete assigned work. You will receive credit toward completion of TRIM for the orientation experience once you have completed the written assignment(s) for the class on servant leadership. Please e-mail or mail that paper to the instructor on or before the due date you were given.
5. Return your completed Learning Covenant to the Brethren Academy office within six weeks. Students may not register for additional courses until a signed Learning Covenant is on file.

**TRIM LEARNING COVENANT  
submit to the Brethren Academy  
by October 31st**

The TRIM program is a program for discovering, exploring, and developing one's gifts and calling through academic courses, a supervised internship, ongoing ministry formation, and individual discernment and reflection. As such, this learning covenant is a tool for noticing and naming gifts as well as exploring areas of growth. It will also help outline desired outcomes and identify a process in order to meet one's goals.

While a portion of this learning covenant will best be completed by individual, prayerful reflection, it is intended to be a jumping-off place for conversation with your district TRIM coordinator. Additionally, it will be a guidepost to help you on your way, as you seek direction while in the program, and as you reflect on your growth at the completion of the program.

**I. Personal and Ministry Discernment**

(please attach answers to this document)

**1. What gifts do you feel you have for ministry?** (150-300 words) You may see these gifts you see in yourself or there may be gifts that others have expressed seeing in you that you may not have fully realized or claimed yet. Consider the areas of preaching and teaching, worship planning, scriptural interpretation, pastoral care, spiritual direction, prayer, organization and leadership, community engagement, and theological reflection, just to name a few.

**2. What areas of growth do you feel you need to attend to while in ministry training?** (150-300 words) Part of ministry training is not just to improve upon your gifts, but also to strengthen areas in which you feel less competent. Again, consider the areas of preaching and teaching, worship planning, scriptural interpretation, pastoral care, spiritual direction, prayer, organization and leadership, community engagement, and theological reflection, etc.

**3. What is your vision for your personal ministry?** (150-300 words) To what context, area, or situations do you feel called to utilize your ministry training? Describe how you see yourself applying your gifts in this specific context.

**II. Learning and Support Plan**

**1. Coursework** - What courses do you anticipate taking within the first year of your ministry training? Building on the momentum of orientation, it is helpful to outline a strong plan for the first year. This can help you start ministry training on solid, confident footing. Given the courses offered through the Brethren Academy (see

“Upcoming Courses” listing in your TRIM manual) what are 1-4 courses you would like to take? (Note: this does not obligate you to take these courses, but is simply helping you thinking of how to jump start into your program)

<b>Courses I would like to take this year:</b>	<b>Dates</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

**2. Required Experiences** - As identified during orientation, you will be required to complete five (5) experiences. Some of these take advanced planning, others can be more spontaneous but first require a vision. Consider the dates and/or opportunities that would work well for your calendar and interest.

<b>Required Experience</b>	<b>Possible date/location/event</b>
1. Annual Conference	
2. District Conference	
3. Brethren College/Connection	
4. Ecumenical/Intercultural/Interfaith	
5. Bethany (a course with BTS faculty member or on Bethany campus counts, and does not include Orientation)	

**3. Supervised Ministry Internship**

Consider possible supervised ministry internship locations. Is there a qualified supervisor in service at this location or will you need support in identifying a qualified supervisor? (Please see Supervising Pastor section of the TRIM manual)

Possible setting: \_\_\_\_\_ Possible supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

If setting is a congregation, are you a member at this congregation?      Y      N

If setting is a congregation, are you currently serving this congregation in a pastoral/ministerial capacity? Y      N

If NOT a congregation, please describe the nature of this setting:

**4. Ministry/spiritual formation support in your district**

Where are you in the district credentialing call process?

- approval for licensing in the Church of the Brethren
- licensed in the Church of the Brethren
- credentialed in another denomination (please list credentialing)
- other (please describe)

Are you part of a calling cohort?                      Yes                      No

Please describe:

In addition to your district TRIM coordinator, is there a mentor or spiritual friend with whom you are discerning your call to ministry?      Yes                      No

Please describe:

Do you feel clear about the credentialing process within your district and the steps you need to go through in order to become credentialed in the Church of the Brethren?  
    Yes                      No                      Somewhat

What questions do you have?

**5. In conversation with your district TRIM coordinator, outline a plan of communication and support.**

What is the best way for you to meet?	How often will you meet?
<input type="checkbox"/> Skype, Zoom, or other online platform	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
<input type="checkbox"/> in-person	<input type="checkbox"/> Bi-Monthly
<input type="checkbox"/> phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly
<input type="checkbox"/> district ministry formation groups	
<input type="checkbox"/> combination (please explain)	

*Please indicate other issues or plans for communication and support you have discussed with your district TRIM coordinator.*

### III. Covenant Summary and Signatures\*

By signing this covenant, we (TRIM student and district TRIM coordinator) agree to the goals, outcomes, and plan named above.

In this relationship focused primarily on the student, we agree to a relationship marked by:

- **Honesty** - We will speak the truth in love.
- **Confidentiality** - We will not share issues and concerns outside this relationship without permission except when someone is in danger or is being hurt.
- **Safety** - We will honor personal and professional boundaries within a safe environment and relationship.
- **Vulnerability** - We will share conversation about life, ministry, and development issues.
- **Punctuality** - We will be prompt for appointments and calls out of respect for each other.
- **Preparedness** - We will come prepared to each meeting.

“Before God and each other we commit ourselves to this relationship”

TRIM student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

District TRIM coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Appreciation is given to our colleagues in the Journey program at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary for providing the model on which this covenant is based.

Return to Carrie Eikler by October 31<sup>st</sup>  
eikleca@bethanyseminary.edu

## TRIM/EFSM ORIENTATION EVALUATION FORM

As the staff of the Brethren Academy, we hope this time of orientation has been helpful to you in a number of ways. To help us continually refine the orientation for maximum usefulness, please fill out this evaluation as frankly as you possibly can. Circle a number on the continuum for each of the items below (5 is a superior rating, 1 is a poor rating). Space is provided after each question for written comments.

### 1. Design/Organization of the week

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

**Comment:** What did you wish there was more time for? What could have been eliminated or emphasized less?

### 2. Advance Information and Arrangements

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

**Comment:** Did this experience meet your expectations? If not, how could we have prepared you better?

### 3. Worship/Devotions/Prayer Session

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

**Comment:** We weave a variety of worship/devotions/prayer times through the days. In the context of an orientation geared toward your education, how would you rate this aspect of the orientation?

### 4. TRIM/EFSM Training Sessions

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

**Comment:** This experience is meant to be a springboard for your work with your district TRIM coordinator/EFSM Supervisor. While you will not leave with all the answers to questions that will arise, do you feel you have received enough information to move ahead? If not, what are you uneasy about?

**5. Other Group Sessions**

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

**Comment:** To prime the pump for learning in the area of ministry, we have included a variety of sessions lead by various individuals addressing a range of topics in ministry. Which session(s) were particularly intriguing to you? Was there something missing that you anticipated or wished would have been planned?

**6. Spiritual Discernment Class**

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

**Comment:** The Church of the Brethren expects a different style of leadership from its ministers than many other denominations. Do you feel you have a good basic understanding of this expectation?

**7. Academy Staff Leadership**

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

**Comment:** We want you to get to know our staff through Orientation. How well did that happen for you?

**8. Accommodations and Meals**

5                      4                      3                      2                      1

**Comment:** We hope you were comfortable in a “retreat” setting. Our intent is to give you time away from your normal activities. Do you have observations that would help us plan for other groups?

**9. General comments.** Thank you for your time not only to be with us at orientation, but also to give us your feedback. Are there other areas that you would like to comment on?

## 3-A

### TRIM PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

TRIM training features a flexible design; however, each student will complete a common set of requirements. These common elements include both coursework and practical training experiences as summarized below:

**A. Ministry formation group** participation

**B. 30 units of coursework**, at least 10 of which must be completed while in TRIM:

- 10 units of Biblical or Theological Studies, including:
  - Introduction to Old Testament
  - Introduction to New Testament
  - Church of the Brethren Studies (history or theology)
- 10 units of Ministry Skills
- 10 General Education Units

Note: In the completion of these 30 hours, *students are expected to work at their next level of academic achievement.*

**C. Five Required Experiences**

- Ecumenical, Intercultural, or Interfaith Experience
- Church of the Brethren College Experience or Brethren Connection Experience
- Bethany Theological Seminary Experience in addition to Orientation
- Annual Conference Experience
- District Conference Experience

**D. Ministry Internship** (Pre-requisite): Completion of at least 20 units of TRIM credit, five units of which must be completed while in TRIM. A plan for this 400 hour requirement must be submitted to the Academy for approval one month before beginning the internship.

**E. Graduation Preparation**

- Final Biblical/Theological Awareness Inventory Exit Exam
- Final Student and District Coordinator evaluations

*\*All work is planned and completed in consultation with District Coordinator.*

*\*\*Students pay an annual participation fee to the Brethren Academy each year they are registered in the program and are billed each January beginning the January following attendance at orientation.*

*\*\*\*TRIM transcripts are mailed twice each year to the student and his or her district TRIM coordinator. A copy of the fall report is mailed to the student's sponsoring district and includes a summary report of the student's progress.*

## 3 - B

### PARTICIPATION in a MINISTRY FORMATION GROUP

From our early history as a church, Brethren have believed in the importance of “calling.” A call in the Church of the Brethren is not simply a personal inclination; it is an individual urge that is also recognized and affirmed by the church community. An authentic calling combines a strong personal sense with the strong corroboration of the congregation. You are already enrolled in TRIM because you and the church recognize your talent for ministry. However, to formalize this process of calling, TRIM requires that each student work with a ministry formation group whose purpose is to provide opportunities for shared reflection on, evaluation of, and support of the student’s faith journey, to discuss issues arising out of study, ministry experience, and topics important to growth as persons and as leaders.

Apart from coursework, all TRIM students will participate regularly in a supervised group experience called a “ministry formation group.” Ministry formation groups may be organized in two ways: a calling cohort as outlined in the 2014 Ministerial Leadership Paper or with a district group of TRIM students. The structure of the group is dependent on the district.

Ministry formation groups provide an excellent setting in which to reflect on every facet of training in TRIM.

Most often the ministry formation group is led by the district TRIM coordinator. It is also possible for a pastor appointed by the district to lead the group. This person will report to the district TRIM coordinator.

The agenda of a typical group meeting might consist of several of the following:

- Informal sharing of significant experiences in members’ lives
- Cultivation of personal and spiritual disciplines and practices
- Discussion of a book the group has agreed to study as a common discipline
- Review of a case study or verbatim from a specific ministry experience prepared by one of the group members.
- Review of progress on current TRIM units and discussion of issues or topics growing out of those units.
- Role plays of ministry situations, real or hypothetical, with group reflection on the process.
- Exploration of a specific topic the group has agreed to focus on for one or more meetings.
- Bible study, conducted either for its own sake or as an occasion for reflecting together on how we approach and use the Bible.
- Use of tests and other inventories (e.g., Myers-Briggs) that help us understand ourselves and what we bring to ministry.
- Sharing and reflecting together on statements of faith that members of the group develop.
- “How to” sessions, including how to write learning objectives, how to use journaling effectively, how to develop a position description for pastoral ministry, how to fill out financial assistance forms, how to plan one’s supervised ministry experience, and how to write evaluations for course-equivalent units.

These are suggestions, not restrictions. The important thing is that groups structure their time together in a way that proves helpful to all participants. Where the formation group includes people other than TRIM students, questions related specifically to the TRIM program will need to be cared for in another setting.

The district TRIM coordinator, the district ministry coordinating team, and the student will plan this important aspect of the program. The recommended length and frequency of meetings is monthly for 90 minutes to two hours. Where geography makes monthly meetings impossible, a group may decide to gather every other month for a three-hour session. If face-to-face meetings are not possible due to geographic distance, a conference call or video conference must take place in lieu of meeting in person. Whatever mode the meeting is held, it should be convenient to the participants and suited for the work the group will be doing.

No matter who actually leads the formation group, it is the responsibility of the district TRIM coordinator to see that the group is launched, to clarify the purpose and agenda of the group, to ensure that new trainees are warmly incorporated into the group, and to monitor the group's work. Where a limited number of students or geographical distances make it impossible to set up a district group, the Coordinator will solicit the counsel of the district ministry coordinating team, district executive minister, and Coordinator of English Language Ministry Training Programs to explore alternatives.

It is the responsibility of the district TRIM coordinator to make progress reports on the development of the ministry formation group in his or her district. If questions arise that are not covered by the guidelines above, the district TRIM coordinator should contact the Coordinator of English Language Ministry Training Programs.

## 3 - C

### COURSEWORK

Participants in TRIM take college-level or seminary-level courses in three basic subject areas: general education, biblical and theological studies, and ministry skills.

#### **A. General Education**

The basic objective of *general education* is to become more familiar with the broad areas of knowledge important for understanding ourselves and the world in which we live. Specific units of recommended study in this area include language and communication skills, computer skills, literature, the arts (including music), philosophy, history, economics, psychology, sociology, and natural science. Other fields of general education are possible, depending on the interest of the student. Substitutions may be made with the approval of the Coordinator of the English Language Ministry Training Programs.

#### **B. Biblical and Theological Studies**

The purpose of *biblical and theological studies* is to become more familiar with the biblical foundations of the Christian faith and with the church's reflection on and response to the biblical message throughout its history. All students are required to take a minimum of one unit in each of three areas:

1. Introduction to Biblical Studies (taken at orientation)
2. Introduction to Old Testament
3. Introduction to New Testament
4. Church of the Brethren studies (such as Brethren history and Brethren theology) *Be aware that requirements vary by district regarding which type of courses are mandatory for ordination. Check with your district office for requirements.*

Other recommended units of study in this area include biblical interpretation; study of particular sections of scripture; basic Christian beliefs; theology; church history; Christian ethics; and peace studies.

#### **C. Ministry Skills**

In the study of *ministry and ministry skills*, the goal is to become familiar with the nature and scope of the church's ministry, to articulate how one's calling relates to that ministry, and to exhibit increased competency in the various skills for ministry.

Specific units of recommended study in this area include spiritual formation, prayer; conflict resolution; the congregation as a context for ministry; specific types of preaching and worship; church administration; COB polity and practices (perhaps a district requirement); pastoral leadership; pastoral care; teaching and nurturing; evangelism and church growth; missions; church music; cross cultural ministry; campus ministries; camping ministry; work with particular populations; communication in the church; group dynamics study; and sociological issues affecting ministry.

## Accumulating Course Credit

Every student will complete a total of **30 curricular units**. A curricular unit is defined as:

- One TRIM course offered by the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership or Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center
- One Directed Independent Study Unit (DISU) offered by the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership or Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center
- A **3-hour course in a fourteen-week semester or a 4-hour course in a ten-week quarter** at the college or seminary level
- One Independent Study Unit (ISU), which is a combination of learning experiences, each broadly equivalent to a 3 semester-hour course (75-90 class hours total). “See Independent Study Unit page 54”. No more than one-sixth of units taken while in TRIM can be fulfilled by ISUs.
- An Academy Certified Training Systems (ACTS) course may be taken for TRIM credit with approval of the Coordinator with additional work completed under the supervision of the instructor

Credit may be granted for units of study completed prior to participation in TRIM **if the student can provide acceptable certification for this work**. For work at accredited colleges or seminaries a copy of the student’s final transcripts or grade reports are required. A minimum of half of the remaining credits required for completion of TRIM must be completed through Brethren Academy classes or Bethany Theological Seminary courses.

The number of curricular units that may be transferred to TRIM from other structured academic settings that are not accredited must be negotiated with the Coordinator. This negotiation is based on a fair assessment of the actual hours invested in the course. One course at an unaccredited institution may be worth one quarter, one third, or one half of a TRIM unit, but no more than half a unit. Or the coordinator may award one unit of credit for several courses in the same area of the curriculum, such as Biblical and Theological Studies.

Up to half of the credits needed to complete the TRIM program may be transferred in from other institutions (that is, institutions other than the Brethren Academy or Bethany) **while in TRIM**. This does not affect the number of credits that can be transferred into TRIM when beginning the program.

## Distribution of 30 Curricular Units

**A minimum ten units** will be acquired through courses offered by a college accredited by a regional agency of the U.S. Department of Education or a seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools.

**A minimum ten units** will be acquired through academy-level (or higher) courses. The Brethren Academy is authorized by Annual Conference but is *not* accredited.

Up to, but not exceeding, half of the credits needed to complete the program **while in TRIM** can be obtained by a combination of units from ISUs and/or outside institutions. (Note: No more than one-sixth of units taken while in TRIM can be fulfilled by ISUs)

## **Residency Requirement**

To earn a graduation certificate from TRIM, every student must complete **at least ten curricular units** while in the program. No more than 20 credits may be transferred to the program from other institutions. While in the program, TRIM students must also

- Participate in the five required events
- Successfully complete a ministry internship
- Receive an acceptable score on the Biblical Theological Awareness Inventory
- Complete the required paperwork for all of the above, working in consultation with the district TRIM coordinator
- Be in good financial standing with the Brethren Academy
- Participate in a ministry formation group

## **Transcripts**

TRIM transcripts are sent to students and coordinators two times each year, in the fall and in the spring. The work shown on the transcript reflects all work completed through the Academy or received by transfer at the Brethren Academy Office as of that time.

## 3 - D

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AND TOPICS of STUDY

The following activities, resources, and topics are offered as starting points and suggestions for TRIM ministry formation groups or individual students wanting to structure an Independent Study Unit.

You will find many of these resources online at the Brethren Press and Church of the Brethren websites ([www.brethrenpress.com](http://www.brethrenpress.com) and [www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org)). Many of the decisions of Annual Conference are also online and would provide good background material on a number of subjects.

#### **Bible Study/ Helps**

Use Biblical sections of the BTAI as discussion starters

Use BTAI as the basis for selecting texts to study

Memorize key Biblical passages, such as:

I Corinthians 13:1-13

Matthew 5:1-12

Psalm 23

John 1:1-13

Romans 12:1-21

Do a "group" Independent Study Unit on types of literature in the Bible, such as:

Wisdom literature

Minor prophets

Paul's travels

Study and portray a series of Bible characters

Become familiar with the lectionary

#### **Church of the Brethren**

Plan and lead the following: A service of anointing, baptism, child dedication, interment,  
Love Feast

Read and discuss the Ministerial Leadership Manual

Read and report on articles in *Messenger*

Volunteer as a camp leader; discuss the experience

Discuss the congregational, district or denominational structure and its effectiveness

Preach on simple living, stewardship, social justice, family issues, faith in the workplace,  
inner peace and world peace, technology and faith

Invite a representative from the denomination, the district, or COB agencies:

Outdoor Ministries Association

Mission and Ministry Board

District Board

Mutual Aid Association

On Earth Peace

Brethren Benefit Trust

Annual Conference

Study Annual Conference reports/ queries/ business items

Read and discuss Annual Conference statements on congregational ethics and ethics in  
ministry relations

## **Pastoral Care**

Consider issues of pastoral care, such as divorce, grief, mental health issues, family crisis, human sexuality, stress and over-activity, incurable illness, disabilities, end of life issues, still birth/loss of a child/ abortion, child and spouse abuse, preparing to marry, remarry  
Preach a sermon and invite a group to critique it

## **Technology as an Educational Tool**

Become familiar with Church of the Brethren websites  
Search the Internet for information on religions topics  
Learn to use online indexes to journals (EBSCOhost, JSTOR)  
Bookmark your favorite websites to find them easily  
Logon to Facebook to enter the online community that many in the COB are a part of. Or create a Facebook community with other TRIM students or your ministry formation group.  
Watch the Dale Brown series on church beliefs  
Watch the Bill Eberly series on church history  
Watch the “Journey in Jesus' Way” video series  
Watch contemporary movies with a moral or religious theme  
Check Brethren Press for resources  
Check your district office for resources

## **Guest Presenters and Community Resources Personnel**

Talk to a medical doctor, mental health provider, funeral director, hospice nurse, nursing home administrator, social worker; nursing home, hospital or hospice chaplain; missionary, area pastor from another denomination, priest or rabbi or leader from another faith tradition, district executive minister, divorce mediator, retired pastor from the denomination, religion professor, religion columnist for a newspaper. Tour an area facility, such as a hospital, jail, AIDS clinic, or mental institution

## **Ministers' Self-Care**

Meet for a meal with a group of spouses of ministers  
Discuss the pastor's appropriate use of humor in preaching  
Share resources for personal spiritual growth/ devotions  
Consider local resources for times of spiritual renewal  
Discuss/discover what “sabbath rest” means to you

## **Expectations/Encouragement/Support**

Spend time affirming, praising, supporting one another  
Share deeply personal feelings, inasmuch as members of the group are comfortable doing this  
Share your theology with other students, your support group, or a Sunday school class  
Encourage individuals to participate locally as Sunday school teachers or service volunteers  
Attend an ecumenical or interfaith event as a group  
Use the case study method to deal with real situations in ministry  
Set up and discuss personal goals in ministry  
Discuss what qualities make an excellent pastor  
Share stories of “Christians I admire”

3 - E

**STUDENT TRIM CHECKLIST**

Fill in date of completion for each requirement on the line provided to keep track of progress. Keep in mind that all work is planned and completed in consultation with the district TRIM coordinator.

**Entrance Process**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Attend orientation at Bethany Theological Seminary
- \_\_\_\_\_ Successfully complete “Introduction to Biblical Studies” course online
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mail “Servant Leadership” paper to instructor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Discuss and complete Learning Covenant with district coordinator within six weeks of orientation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Receive approval of Learning Covenant from the district TRIM coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ District TRIM coordinator mails Learning Covenant to the Brethren Academy office

**Program Requirements (check completed items)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Join an ongoing ministry formation group. Date joined: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Completed 30 units of work, at least 10 of which were completed while in TRIM. In the completion of these 30 hours, *students are expected to work at their next level of academic achievement.*

**List of Units**

Designate each unit below as CS (college or seminary), A (academy level)

**10 Units of General Education**

<u>Course</u>	<u>Date Completed</u>	<u>Level of Instruction</u>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

**10 units of Biblical or Theological Studies**

<u>Course</u>	Date	Level of
<u>Completed</u>	<u>Instruction</u>	
1. Introduction to Biblical Studies		
2. Introduction to the Old Testament		
3. Introduction to the New Testament		
4. *Church of the Brethren Studies (history or theology)		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

**10 units of Ministry Skills**

<u>Course</u>	Date	Level of
<u>Completed</u>	<u>Instruction</u>	
1. Orientation		
2. *Church of the Brethren Studies (polity and practices)		
3.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

**\*Only one Church of the Brethren Studies course is required. The course taken will determine which section it falls under. Check with the district for ordination requirements.**

**Five Required Experiences** (one form completed for each experience, signed by coordinator)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Bethany Theological Seminary Experience beyond orientation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Church of the Brethren College Experience or Brethren Connection Experience
- \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Conference Experience
- \_\_\_\_\_ District Conference Experience
- \_\_\_\_\_ Intercultural, Ecumenical, or Interfaith Experience

**Ministry internship: 400 hours** (Pre-requisite: completion of at least 20 units of the TRIM program, at least 5 of which are earned while in TRIM)

Location of ministry internship: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of participation

- \_\_\_\_\_ Received approval from the district TRIM coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submitted my plan to the Academy office for approval (at least one month before the beginning of the internship)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Received approval for the plan from the Academy office
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of internship
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submitted my final student evaluation of the internship experience

**Dates for Graduation Process**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Mailed the exit exam to the Coordinator of English Language Ministry Training Programs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submitted my final student evaluation
- \_\_\_\_\_ TRIM student recognition at Annual Conference (attendance optional)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation certificate presented at District Conference or other event

Students pay an annual participation fee to the Brethren Academy each year they are in the program beginning with the January following attendance at orientation.

TRIM transcripts are mailed twice a year to the student and district TRIM coordinator. The fall mailing includes a summary report on each student to the district executive minister for the district ministry coordinating team.

## 3 - F

### CONVERTING COURSE CREDIT TO TRIM UNITS

#### **How is course credit converted to TRIM units?**

Students must earn a grade of “C” or better in all courses accepted for TRIM credit, including those completed prior to admittance to TRIM and those courses taken while enrolled in the TRIM program. Incomplete or audited courses do not meet the requirements for an accredited course.

If a TRIM student wishes to transfer credits earned at the seminary level, he or she must show that the credits were earned at an institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS).

If a TRIM student wishes to transfer credits earned in any university, four-year college, junior college, community college, Bible school, or other institution of post-high school education, he or she must show that the credits were earned at an institution recognized (accredited) by one of the eight regional accrediting agencies that follow the requirements of the United States Secretary of Education. All such accredited institutions are periodically reviewed and subsequently listed in the annual Higher Education Directory.

#### **Conversion of credit hours**

<b>Semester Hour System</b>	<b>TRIM Unit</b>	<b>Quarter Hour System</b>	<b>TRIM Unit</b>
4	1.33	5	1.25
3	1.00	4	1.00
2	.67	3	.75
1	.33	2	.50
		1	.25

#### **Transferring ACTS credit to TRIM units**

Students enrolled in the TRIM program may take ACTS (Academy Certified Training System) courses for TRIM credit. To receive TRIM credit, additional reading and projects, negotiated with the instructor, must be completed. Student’s participation in the class for TRIM credit must be approved by the Coordinator of English Language Ministry Training Programs. The student will initiate a conversation with the Coordinator who will outline the process and expectations for transferring ACTS credit to TRIM units.

### 3 - G

## ACADEMY STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN GRADUATE COURSES

Academy students have the option to take graduate level courses through Bethany Theological Academy students may take graduate level courses through Bethany Theological Seminary. These courses may be taken for credit toward their Academy program or for graduate credit.

### **Brethren Academy students who wish to enroll in Bethany Seminary graduate courses for Brethren Academy credit (TRIM, EFSM/EPMC, SeBAH, ACTS) will**

Obtain permission to take the course from the Instructor, the Academic Dean and the Director of the Brethren Academy.

Apply to Bethany as an **Auditor** and pay the \$350 fee. (The \$50 application fee will be waived.) and

Successfully audit the course by

- Meeting the attendance requirement
- Complete the assigned reading
- Engage in the course through participation
- An auditor is not required to complete any assigned papers or exams. However, any auditing student who completes papers or exams can expect feedback from the instructor.

Students who successfully audit a graduate course for Academy credit will receive one credit toward the student's program. In order for this credit to be applied, the instructor must notify the Brethren Academy in writing.

### **Brethren Academy students who wish to enroll in Bethany Seminary graduate courses for graduate credit (to be applied to a graduate transcript), will**

Obtain permission to take the course from the Instructor, the Academic Dean and the Director of the Brethren Academy,

Apply to Bethany as an **Academy Student for Graduate Credit** and pay the \$500 fee. (The \$50 application fee will be waived.) and

Successfully complete the course by fulfilling all the requirements set forth by the instructor.

Students who successfully complete a course for graduate credit will receive three credits on their graduate transcript and one credit on their Academy transcript. In order for Academy credit to be applied, the instructor must notify the Brethren Academy in writing

## 3 - H

### TRANSFERRING ACTS INTO TRIM CREDIT

Students enrolled in the TRIM program may take ACTS (Academy Certified Training System) courses for TRIM credit if the following additional components are addressed. The negotiation for additional work rests primarily between the student and the instructor of the course.

1. Student's participation in the class for TRIM credit must be approved by the Coordinator of English Language Ministry Training Programs. The student will initiate a conversation with the Coordinator.
2. The student will pay the full fee for a TRIM course, payable to SVMC.
3. The student will complete a minimum of 500 pages of reading. If the reading assignments assigned to the class do not reach this minimum, the instructor will assign additional reading in order to meet this minimum.
4. The student will have a minimum of 20 contact hours. Most ACTS courses are 15 or 16 contact hours. We don't expect the instructor to have more face-to-face time with the student, therefore, students will complete an additional paper/ project that engages them with the subject matter. The topic of the paper/project will be made with approval of the instructor, who will also evaluate the paper/project
5. Instructor of the ACTS course must agree to these additional components as well, including assigning additional reading and evaluating additional work.
6. Student evaluations will be forwarded to the Brethren Academy from the SVMC office.

## COLLEGE LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM (CLEP)

A TRIM student may meet general education requirements by successfully completing examinations through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) rather than taking courses. CLEP offers 35 exams in five subject areas. Accepted by many educational institutions around the country, these tests, administered by the same organization that administers the SAT, are offered in many subjects.

**Composition and Literature:** American Literature, Analyzing and Interpreting Literature, English Composition, English Literature, Freshman College Composition, Humanities

**World Languages:** French, German, and Spanish Languages (Levels 1 and 2 available in each language)

**History and Social Sciences:** American Government, Human Growth and Development; Introduction to Educational Psychology; Principles of Macroeconomics; Principles of Microeconomics; Introductory Psychology; Introductory Sociology; Social Sciences and History; U.S. History I: Early Colonizations to 1877; U.S. History II: 1865 to the Present; Western Civilization I: Ancient Near East to 1648; Western Civilization II: 1648 to the Present

**Science and Mathematics:** Calculus, College Algebra, Precalculus, College Mathematics, Chemistry, Natural Sciences

**Business:** Information Systems and Computer Applications, Principles of Management, Principles of Accounting, Introductory Business Law, Principles of Marketing

As is the case with many colleges, the Brethren Academy does not allow CLEP credit for any exam that covers the same subject matter as a course the student took at the college level from an accredited educational institution. So, for example, if a student has already taken Sociology 101 at LaVerne, TRIM would not accept CLEP credit in sociology.

The fee for each CLEP test is \$80.00. At the time a test is taken, the student should request that the score be reported directly to the Brethren Academy office. In order to receive credit, the student test score must be at least as high as the recommended score listed on the CLEP website. In an effort to ensure that TRIM students study a broad range of general education subjects, no more than two units of credit will be given for any one subject area. Three semester hours of CLEP credit equals one TRIM unit.

## GUIDELINES FOR WRITING TRIM RESEARCH PAPERS

Much time has passed since many students were required to write research papers. These guidelines will provide help in knowing how to format a paper and how to structure its content. Of course each instructor will have requirements for papers you must follow, but some rules are general in nature and apply in most cases.

### **Format**

Most research papers are typed in a 12 point font, double-spaced, with standard 1-inch margins. All quotations are to be footnoted, and quotations longer than three lines should be placed in a block quote, indented from both the right and left margin and single-spaced. A bibliography of sources cited should appear at the end of the paper. For footnotes and endnotes, refer to a style guide, such as Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* or the *Chicago Manual of Style*, as the authority on form.

#### **Sample Footnote:**

Carl Desportes Bowman, *Portrait of a People: The Church of the Brethren at 300* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 2008), 83.

#### **Sample Bibliography Entry:**

Bowman, Carl Desportes. *Portrait of a People: The COB at 300*. Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 2008.

### **Content**

Each paper needs a clear thesis statement around which the paper is organized. After choosing a broad topic, do some introductory reading. Start by looking at the bibliography in a textbook that addresses your subject. Where did the author get his or her information? In addition, check reference works such as Bible dictionaries and commentaries. Get a feel for the issues that scholars are debating in relation to the topic and see their suggestions for further reading. Then begin to narrow and fine tune the issue you would like to write about. How many ways could you break down the topic? Perhaps just one of these finer points is a more manageable topic. Remember that depth is usually more valuable than breadth in a research project. Above all, a research paper should clearly indicate what you have learned as a result of your research.

Academic research papers should have an *introduction*, a *body*, and a *conclusion*. The *introduction* should set up the problem or issue you're writing about and conclude with a single sentence that states clearly what the focus of the paper will be. This is called your thesis statement. Get right to the point in the *introduction*. No need to beat around the bush.

*Sample introductory paragraph and thesis statement:* In John 13:13-15, Jesus commands his disciples, who were all men, to wash one another's feet. Would the story have been different if the disciples were women? In this paper, I will investigate the role of gender in shaping one's perspective on feetwashing, gathering information from historical, biblical, and theological sources.

The **body** of the paper makes the full-blown case for the statement the student has made in the thesis; that is, the body presents the reasons for thinking the thesis is true. It is also in the body of the paper where the writer uses quotations and references to support or demonstrate the points he or she is making.

The **conclusion** moves from the arguments themselves to the result. Given everything you've learned, what do you conclude? Or, what do you conclude from the evidence and arguments?

Even after a research project is underway, you may need to adjust your topic in light of your studies. Keep the instructor informed of any major changes. Don't hesitate to consult with an instructor if you have questions. Such questions will be welcome and a sign that you're serious about your research, especially if they come in a timely manner rather than at 5:30 the day before the research paper is due.

### **Resources for Writing and Citations**

Core, Deborah. *The Seminary Student Writes*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000.

This very easy to read book outlines practical guidance for beginning students. Core offers helpful information on choosing and researching a topic; outlining, writing and editing a paper; and proper formats for citation.

Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean. *Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

This book explores in more depth research (definition, planning, thinking), finding sources, choosing a topic, bibliographies, papers (organizing, writing, formatting), and research (biblical exegesis, descriptive, program development, case study).

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

This is the definitive resource for advanced research papers and projects. *Turabian Style: Quick Reference Guide for Students* is available online as a downloadable pdf at the Bethany Theological Seminary website.

## POLICY on CITATION STYLE and PLAGIARISM

### **Citation policy**

The standard citation style can be found in the most recent edition of Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press). Instructors have the option of specifying a different style, and they will state the required style on each course syllabus. Faculty may require students to rewrite an assignment that fails to conform to the specified style.

### **Plagiarism policy**

Integrity is central to life in community. In the academic community, integrity means giving proper credit to people for the ideas and information we receive from them. It also means that the work we submit and represent as our own is really work we ourselves have done.

Plagiarism is using the work of other people without giving them credit, whether in written assignments or formal oral presentations. A glaring example of plagiarism would be submitting an entire essay written by someone else and claiming it was your own. It is also plagiarism to use, without giving credit, someone else's ideas or phrases. This definition applies to words and images, to manuscripts, and to ideas gleaned from spoken communication. For further examples and appropriate ways to cite, please see the most recent edition of Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), especially sections 4.2.3, 7.9, and 25.1.

The consequences for plagiarism will vary according to the extent of the offense, but even "minor" instances are considered serious enough to incur penalties. These may range from rewriting the assignment, non-crediting the assignment, or non-crediting the course, up to dismissal from the program. Any instances of plagiarism will be reported by the instructor to the student, the student's program coordinator, the district coordinator, the Academy Director, as appropriate.

Students sometimes ask whether they can submit in one course the work they have done for a prior course. The general answer is no, though it is always good to speak with the instructor about this issue.

(Adapted from *Bethany Theological Seminary Student Handbook, 2018-19*, p. 78. See also the Church of the Brethren 2008 Annual Conference Ethics in Ministry Relations Paper, Part III. The Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders states: "*I will give credit for all sources quoted or extensively paraphrased in sermons and prepared papers. I will honor all copyrights*" (p. 8, letter M).

## 3-L

### INDEPENDENT STUDY UNITS

An Independent Study Unit (ISU) is broadly equivalent to a college or seminary course in the quantity and quality of learning it expects. The ISU should be as rigorous as a traditional course but allows students more flexibility. For instance, a student can “design” courses that will better meet the requirements of TRIM and, for example, combine a topic with a competency requirement. In most cases, TRIM students will spend on average *75-90 hours* on an ISU. Included in this figure will be time spent studying, attending lectures or events, reading, writing, and evaluating the work done in the ISU.

No more than one-sixth of units taken while in TRIM can be fulfilled by ISUs.

#### **Sample Independent Study Units**

- An online course or independent study by video, DVD, webinars, etc. instruction
- Independent research or practicum
- Correspondence course
- A combination of workshops and other short-term events
- An Academy Certified Training Systems (ACTS) course with additional work approved by the Coordinator.
- Independent reading, interaction, and reflection that focuses on one of the required areas of study under “TRIM Program Requirements”

#### **The Process**

##### **1. Responsibility for designing a proposed ISU rests initially with the student.**

- a. The student will submit a draft proposal for an ISU to the district TRIM coordinator at least a month *in advance* of the time when the unit is scheduled to begin.
- b. The Coordinator will review the proposed unit contract, offer feedback and input, negotiate revisions where appropriate and submit the proposal and suggestions to the Coordinator. The Coordinator will review the proposed unit contract, and return the contract with accumulated suggestions to the student or approve the unit design as it stands.
- d. If changes are needed, student will revise the proposal and submit a final version on the contract form provided in the next section (3-L) to the Coordinator for approval.

Questions the student, district TRIM coordinator, and Coordinator will want to ask in this process are:

- Does the unit contribute to the overall training needs of the student as identified in his or her Learning Covenant?
- Does the contract spell out clear and measurable learning objectives?
- Are the events and experiences to be incorporated in the unit academically and theologically appropriate?
- Is the amount of work projected both sufficient and reasonable?
- Are there adequate and clearly defined means of evaluating the completed work?

**2. By terms of the ISU contract, the student and District Coordinator will complete written evaluations of the unit when the work of an ISU is completed,** and will secure the evaluation of any other leader, if necessary. *If the work is acceptable,* the Coordinator will then sign the evaluation and submit it to the Brethren Academy Office. Any work submitted by email from a district TRIM coordinator is considered “signed.”

Written evaluations should address each of the following questions:

- Where did significant growth occur during the unit? Can you identify several learnings that stand out?
- How have the various objectives for the unit been fulfilled? If some have not been fulfilled, why?
- How has the overall design of the unit worked or not worked? What was helpful? What was less helpful?

If, upon assessing the work of the student, the district TRIM coordinator finds weaknesses, he or she may make recommendations for follow-up reading or training experiences to build on the work of the unit. In such a case, the District Coordinator’s final evaluation will be withheld until the student makes additions and revisions to the work.

## Independent Study Unit (ISU) Contract

**Name of Student:**

**Name of District TRIM Coordinator:**

**Subject Area of Unit:**

**Time Period Projected for Unit:**

**Learning Objectives for Unit:** (What will student know or be able to do when ISU is completed?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Learning Events or Experiences Making Up Unit:** (What will student read, attend, explore, study in order to reach objectives?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Person(s) Who Will Evaluate Unit:**

\_\_\_\_\_ District TRIM Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please identify \_\_\_\_\_)

**Means of Evaluation:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**District TRIM Coordinator signature** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Coordinator of English-Language Programs signature**

## Student Evaluation of Completed ISU

(Typing space will expand with text)

**Name of Student:**

**Subject Area of Unit:**

Overview of my experience:

What went well?

What I wish I had done differently:

My most significant learning(s):

## Supervisor's Evaluation of Completed ISU

**Name of Student:**

**Subject Area of Unit:**

---

Signature

---

Date

**Certification of Unit for Credit:**

Area in which student receives credit: (check one)

General Education

Bible/Theology

Ministry

**Number of TRIM units student receives: (check one)**

1 Unit (75-90 hours)

.67 Unit (50-60 hours)

.50 Unit (40-45 hours)

.33 Unit (25-30 hours)

---

Signature of district TRIM coordinator

---

Date



## ISU CONTRACT (sample)

**Name of Student:** John Kline                      **Name of Coordinator:** Anna Mow

**Subject Area of Unit:** Brethren Disaster Ministries

**Time Period Projected for Unit:** January 1 - March 30

**Learning Objectives for Unit:** (What will student know, or be able to do, when ISU is completed?)

1. Will be able to articulate an understanding of the theology behind the Brethren emphasis on being a servant to others, citing not only ideas about God and faith, but also scriptures that are relevant
2. Will become familiar with the history of Brethren Disaster Ministries and with the written resources available for volunteers on site.
3. Will develop strategies to encourage others to participate in a Brethren Disaster Ministry project, including being able to speak from personal experience. This participation could be on site or offering support in other ways.
4. Will evaluate how I can personally best use my gifts in this kind of ministry.

**Learning Events or Experiences Making Up Unit:** (What student will read, attend, explore, study in order to reach objectives?)

1. Participate as a volunteer for at least one week at a disaster ministry site.
2. Volunteer to lead one of the devotional times for the group during that week.
3. Interview the site coordinators and other experienced volunteers to learn of their motivation and experiences. Record these interviews, either on paper or with a recording device.
4. Keep a daily journal from the time of leaving home until returning to record not only activities, but reflections on how this experience might impact and shape one's ministry. Take notice of what personal gifts I have that can contribute to this kind of ministry.
5. Read "*Brethren Disaster Ministries Volunteer Handbook*," "*Here I Am Brethren Disaster Ministries Devotional Guide*," "*Light Our Way: A Guide For Spiritual Care In Times Of Disaster*," "*A Cup of Cold Water: The Story of Brethren Service*" by J. Kenneth Kreider, Write a one page paper on each publication, describing what I learned, who else might find this book helpful, and a basic description of the content.
6. Create and lead a worship service in two locations in which the theme is Brethren Disaster Ministries in order to share information and inspire others to serve. Make a PowerPoint presentation. Also share at least two examples from personal experience of how I saw God working in this experience. Include specific opportunities for congregation to consider traveling to a disaster project site to experience this kind of ministry first hand or support disaster ministry in another way. Give at least eight people attending a feedback form to fill out.

**Person(s) Who Will Evaluate Unit:**

X District TRIM Coordinator

X Other (please identify) On Site Project Director

**Means of Evaluation:**

1. Observing participation as a volunteer on a disaster ministry site.
2. Read Journal to evaluate its depth and completeness.
3. Read papers on books read to consider their detail and self-reflective qualities.
4. Either attend or read a complete manuscript of the disaster ministries worship service.
5. Read the feedback forms to further information of the effectiveness of this service.

## Student Evaluation of Completed Unit (sample)

**Name of Student:** John Kline      **Subject Area of Unit:** Brethren Disaster Ministries

**Overview of my experience:** I have always wanted to serve at a disaster site. This unit of training was a good balance of experiential and practical experiences along with thoughtful reading and self-reflection. Through my experience, my vision was expanded about the many ways in which God can touch the lives of people. At times this was an exhausting experience, both physically and emotionally, but it was one of the most meaningful experiences I have ever had in my life. Now that I have had this experience, it will be easy for me to encourage others to think about volunteering.

There were so many aspects of my experience that stretched me and put me in a better place to minister to others. I was away from home, which both freed me to experiment with new ways of doing things, but also at times felt uncomfortable. I was ministering to those who were in deep need, having come myself from a place where I have a comfortable home. I learned a great deal from both watching and listening to the disaster response site coordinators. An added learning that I did not anticipate was the skills one needs to work closely with a group of people who one does not know. And of course, in any group, not everyone is always easy to get along with or understand. So I tried hard to fit in, and to be loving and kind.

The books covered a wide range of subjects that were very helpful to me in terms of my preparation for this experience. The discipline of keeping a journal helped me to remember things that I would have forgotten otherwise. I don't know if that is a practice that I will continue, but I certainly saw the value of it. This experience drew on many other skills that I have been learning as a minister in training. For instance, I found myself often in situations of pastoral care where a ministry of presence, listening, warmth, and practical support was very important.

**What I wish I had done differently:** I wish I had not waited so long to volunteer on a disaster response site! But I guess better late than never! I also was rushed to finish the reading before I left for the site. I wish that I would have had more time to digest the valuable information before embarking on this intense experience. I anticipated doing some of that on the van ride (2 days) to the site, but I quickly learned that in a van load of people headed to an experience with a common goal, there is a lot of conversation and relationship building. But all that was good, and possibly more important than any self-reflection I could have done.

**What went well:** I wondered whether I was going to be physically able to do the work that is needed on a disaster site, but I discovered that even someone like me who has few construction skills and is not young can be very helpful. I felt those who were the leaders encouraged me through their pleasant attitudes and their enthusiasm for everything that was done, regardless of the task. I thought about how I might try harder to do that for others, regardless of the ministry setting I am in. I learned a lot, but at the same time I felt that I offered some of my gifts to the process too, and together God used all that was available.

**My most significant learning(s):** Many situations of ministry require one to take a deep breath and try to listen without offering too many answers. It is better for the one in the dilemma to find the answer, although I might offer suggestions. As I met new people, I learned that it takes

practice and discipline on my part not to be judgmental of people or too “bossy.” I learned that anyone who is willing to offer to serve can not only be helpful, but with the right encouragement, feel needed and receive a blessing.

**Supervisor's Evaluation of Completed ISU (sample)**

**Name of Student:** John Kline  
Ministries

**Subject Area of Unit:** Brethren Disaster

**Evaluation of Completed Unit by District TRIM Coordinator:** Anna Mow

In addition to the attached feedback from the disaster ministries staff, I would like to add that it appeared to me this was a transformational experience for John. He was open to new learnings, he ventured into new territory, he prepared as best he could, and he was thoughtful and enthusiastic in his response.

**Certification of Unit for Credit:**

Area in which student receives credit: (check one)

General Education

Bible/Theology

Ministry

**Number of TRIM units student receives: (check one)**

1 Unit (75-90 hours)

.67 Unit (50-60 hours)

.50 Unit (40-45 hours)

.33 Unit (25-30 hours)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of District TRIM Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





## 3-P

### Directed Independent Study Unit

A Directed Independent Study Unit (DISU) is a hybrid of an instructor-led course and an Independent Study Unit (ISU). The DISU differs from an ISU in that an instructor, rather than the student, structures the initial learning experience, may connect with students throughout duration of the study period, and assigns the learning objectives, requirements and means of evaluation. The student then completes the requirements during a specified time as determined by the instructor.

In most cases, TRIM students will spend on average *75-90 hours* on a DISU. Approximately six to eight hours of instruction will begin the DISU. The remaining time will be time spent studying, reading, writing/preparing projects, and evaluating the work done in the DISU. Every DISU will be structured to the discretion of the instructor and will vary from course to course.

All DISUs are organized by the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership or Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center (SVMC).

#### **Directed Independent Study Units may be available during the following experiences**

- Pre-Annual Conference Ministers' Association continuing education event
- SVMC Academic Symposium
- Denominational or seminary events as announced.
- For a list of upcoming DISUs, visit the Brethren Academy webpage.

#### **The Process**

1. Students will register for a DISU through the Brethren Academy or Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center.
2. Students will be charged a \$115 fee for each DISU, in addition to other registration fees for the event.
3. The DISU will begin with a six to eight hour event with an additional two hour conversation with the DISU instructor. Upon registration, students will receive requirements for the course, assigned readings and projects, and due dates for assignments. The instructor may choose to assign reading or other work prior to the face-to-face meeting.
4. The instructor will submit an evaluation for each student participant.
5. Students will need to complete a self-assessment of their work for this DISU that will be submitted to the Coordinator.

## FIVE REQUIRED EXPERIENCES

Many TRIM students have been very active in the Church of the Brethren and are very familiar with denominational events, but most have attended these events as observers or delegates. TRIM requires each student to take part in events in a new way—as a leader in training. As future leaders, TRIM students will look at these experiences in a different way and gain new perspective on church life.

Every student in TRIM will participate in at least five experiences, including:

- One learning experience taking place on a college campus or taught by a Brethren college instructor OR one experience in a Church of the Brethren affiliated ministry/agency outside of the local congregation
- One Bethany class or another class taught by Bethany faculty
- One Annual Conference
- One District Conference
- One ecumenical, intercultural, or interfaith training experience

Plan ahead for these required experiences. Most TRIM students are in the program for at least two years. Be in touch with congregational leaders as soon as possible to arrange to represent your church at Annual Conference or District Conference. If possible, serve as a delegate. Also, the Academy organizes classes around the country periodically that are taught by Bethany faculty and faculty members of Brethren colleges. Watch for these opportunities to complete your required experiences, especially if you live a long distance from the seminary or a Brethren college.

### **The Process**

1. After each experience, complete the appropriate Five Required Experiences Form that follows. **DUE NO MORE THAN THREE MONTHS following the completion of the experience.**
2. Give the completed form to your district TRIM coordinator for approval.
3. If approved, the district TRIM coordinator forwards the approval to the Brethren Academy office. Note: A form that is emailed from a district TRIM coordinator to the Brethren Academy Office is considered “signed.”
4. The Brethren Academy office will record the credit for the experience on the TRIM transcript.



### 3 - Q(a)

## CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN COLLEGE or BRETHREN CONNECTION EXPERIENCE

One of the requirements for graduation from TRIM is student participation in a Brethren College Experience or Brethren Connection Experience.

### **Church of the Brethren College Experience**

The purposes of this requirement are several:

- It provides a context for Brethren formation of pastors who enter TRIM with experience in other denominations;
- It affirms the value of high quality, liberal arts education as preparation for ministry;
- It actively facilitates a trainee's sense of loyalty to the Church of the Brethren denominational family;
- It represents one part of the inherent cooperation among various partners in ministry training.

For purposes of TRIM, a Brethren College Experience may be completed in one of the following ways:

1. Attend, with satisfactory academic standing, one of the six Brethren colleges for at least one semester prior to beginning the TRIM program. The experience will then be recorded as "completed" on the student's first official TRIM transcript.
2. Attend one regular, on-campus class offered by the college and complete it with satisfactory academic standing.
3. Attend and complete one off-campus, online, or extension class offered by the college or the Brethren Academy and taught by a Brethren college professor.
4. Participate in an educational experience sponsored by the college, on or off-campus. Examples include a lecture series with outside speakers, or special programs and workshops offered for the community. (The TRIM student may or may not elect to build an Independent Study Unit around such an experience.)
5. Invite a Brethren college professor to plan a series of lectures or workshops in a TRIM student's local area. Use the faculty resources from a Brethren College to meet one of the three subject-area requirements in TRIM.
6. Attend and complete one Brethren Academy class offered on a Brethren college campus.

**Questions for reflection paper (2-3 pages, double spaced, standard size/font/margins)**

1. Describe the event(s) that took place.
2. Recall the four purposes of the Brethren College/University experience. Choose one and Briefly reflect how your time on campus met this purpose.
4. Reflect on the experience by noting any questions, affirmations, moments of insight you had during your time.

**Brethren Connection Experience**

If it is not feasible to visit a Brethren College in one of these ways while in TRIM, a student may choose to create an experience that connects them with the larger Church of the Brethren denomination and its various ministries.

The purposes of this experience include:

1. To connect with a Church of the Brethren institution and understand the role it plays in the broader ministry in the Church of the Brethren.
2. To learn about the rich history of Church of the Brethren outreach and mission, and how these institutions have changed and adapted over time.
3. To encourage students to find ways to connect congregations with ministries and other groups within the Church of the Brethren.
4. To foster a sense of connection beyond one's own congregation and ministries, seeing it as part of a larger denominational whole.

Some possibilities include: attend a Mission and Ministry Board meeting, visit the New Windsor Service Center, volunteer at a Brethren camp, attend a Disaster Ministries or denominationally sponsored workcamp, attend any of the generational conferences as a participant or volunteer (such as National Youth Conference, National Young Adult Conference, Nation Older Adult Conference), visit a Brethren nursing home or care facility, etc. Visit the Church of the Brethren website ([www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org)) for possibilities.

**Note: Bethany Theological Seminary courses or forums, Annual Conference, and District Conference may not be counted for this experience.**

**Questions for reflection paper (2-3 pages, double spaced, standard size font/margins)**

1. Describe the event or location that you visited including significant people you spoke or worked with in order to better understand the meeting/program/institution.
2. Give some background to the context: When did the meeting/program/institution begin? What was its original purpose? How has it changed? Who does it serve? What is its mission?
3. How does this ministry contribute to the larger ministry and identity of the Church of the Brethren in the wider world?
4. Reflect on the experience by noting any questions, affirmations, moments of insight you had during your time.
5. How do you see this experience informing your ministry within the Church of the Brethren?

### 3 - Q(b)

## BETHANY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY EXPERIENCE

One important requirement for a student's successful completion of TRIM is participation in a Bethany Seminary Experience beyond orientation. Some TRIM students may acquire *more* than one course at Bethany; however, every student is asked to build *at least one* Bethany opportunity into their program, via an on-site or online course, or a Directed Independent Study Unit

The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that a student has at least one experience with the denomination's only graduate school of theology. This requirement also affirms the value given to the high-quality education offered by the denomination's only seminary, one of the partner agencies in ministry training.

For purposes of TRIM, the Bethany Seminary experience may be credited in one of the following ways:

1. Enroll as an occasional or special student and complete one course (or more) on the Richmond campus, offered by Bethany and taught by a Bethany instructor.
2. Enroll as an occasional or special student to complete one regular course (or more) offered by the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center of Bethany Theological Seminary and taught by a member of the Bethany faculty.
3. Participate in one of the intensives, on-site classes, or travel seminars, taught by a Bethany instructor.
4. Invite a Bethany faculty member to lead a seminar or workshop in your area of the country.
5. The online classes of Bethany and the Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center taught by Bethany faculty offer increasing possibilities for TRIM students.

As you plan this experience, please take careful note of the information in this TRIM manual entitled "Academy Students in Graduate Courses" to avoid misunderstandings about how your experience will be interpreted in TRIM. Do not hesitate to ask questions of Bethany and Academy staff to be sure you understand your status as a TRIM student in a Bethany Seminary course.

### **Questions for Reflection on Brethren College Experience (2-3 pages)**

1. Briefly describe your experience during the Bethany Theological Seminary experience including the course, professor, size of class, mode (online, intensive, travel, etc.).
2. What expectations or assumptions did you have when entering into a Bethany Theological Seminary course? How were those assumptions challenged or affirmed?
3. What is the role of higher education in the preparation of ministers in the Church of the Brethren?

### 3 - Q(c)

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

The purpose of this exercise is to gain an understanding of the larger church, and how the local church and individuals relate to it. Below find some areas for exploration and development.

1. Give a brief description of Annual Conference officers, how they are chosen, and what their duties are.
2. Look at Annual Conference committees and organizations, such as Standing Committee and the Mission and Ministry Board. What are their functions? Who represents your district on Standing Committee? Who is the current board chair?
3. Describe the query process; origin, steps, and disposal of business items.
4. Describe and evaluate the worship experience(s) you participated in.
5. Attend several insight sessions. What did you find helpful in the sessions?
6. Briefly describe the age activities that were available.
7. Name some of the biblical and theological principles at work in the Annual Conference structure.
8. Offer your personal reflections and responses to study papers being considered by Annual Conference delegates.

### 3 - Q(d)

## DISTRICT CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

District Conference is a shorter, more local experience than Annual Conference, but crucial in the way the church functions. Examine some of the areas below for this experience.

1. Give a brief description of the District Conference officers, their duties, and how they are chosen.
2. Tell how the district is organized. Who makes up the board? Who are the staff members? What functions and responsibilities does each have?
3. How do the business items arrive at District Conference?
4. A major item at District Conference is the district budget. How is the budget prepared and how is it met in a given year?
5. In what way is the District Conference like a family gathering?
6. What biblical and theological principles become evident in District Conference?
7. In what ways do you see your district relating to the larger church through the District Conference?
8. Reflect on the worship services during District Conference.
9. Offer personal reflections and responses to the District Conference you attended.

### 3 - Q(e)

## ECUMENICAL, INTERFAITH, OR INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCE

One of the requirements for graduation from TRIM is participation in an ecumenical event, an interfaith event, or an intercultural event. The purpose of this requirement is to broaden a student's training beyond his or her own ecclesial or cultural world. We need to be able to see our Brethren experience of the church as part of a larger communion of churches linked together in a common mission. Beyond that, each person needs the opportunity to see the fascinating mix of cultures with which Christians share the world.

### **Ecumenical and Interfaith Events**

For the purposes of TRIM, an ecumenical event will be an experience through which the student learns how the Church of the Brethren works together with other Christian bodies in the larger church. An interfaith experience is an experience through which the student learns how Christians relate to people of other religions. Here are examples of events that qualify:

1. A meeting of an interdenominational council of churches, whether worldwide, national, statewide, or local.
2. Participation in the planning and carrying out of a special interfaith gathering at the local or regional level.
3. Participation in the development and implementation of a cooperative, interchurch or inter-religious ministry in one's community (e.g., food pantry, shelter for the homeless, etc.).
4. Spending a day at New Windsor to tour the facilities and learn how churches and religions work together in Church World Service, Interfaith Medical Assistance, and other agencies.
5. Participating in the activity of a local pastors' association (assuming such a group not only gathers for fellowship, but also develops cooperative programs and events).

### **Intercultural Events**

In a similar manner, an intercultural event will be an experience through which the student's perception of life is expanded by exposure to different cultures and values. Some examples of intercultural events include the following:

1. Study in another country, whether for a regular term of study or for a short-term intensive experience.
2. Participation in a study tour of another part of the world and reflection on that experience.
3. Participation in an international work camp and reflection on that experience.
4. Taking part in a seminar or workshop specifically designed to provide participants with cross-cultural enrichment.
5. Participation in a BVS assignment or similar undertaking to familiarize oneself with a different culture, whether in the United States or abroad.

The lists above are suggestive, not restrictive. You may propose other ideas to the district TRIM coordinator.

**Questions for Reflection on Ecumenical, Interfaith, or Intercultural Experience (2-3 pages)**

1. Describe the nature of the event, including location, structure, and partners involved.
2. What were some assumptions you had going into this experience?
3. How were those assumptions challenged, changed, transformed, or deepened?
4. Describe the positive experiences and outcomes of this project as well as the more challenging ones.
5. In what ways has your faith and ministry training been affected by engaging in this activity?



3 - Q(f)

FIVE REQUIRED EXPERIENCES FORM  
Due within three months of completing experience

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: Reported:

- |                          |                             |                          |  |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Bethany Experience          | <input type="checkbox"/> | District Conference                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Brethren College Experience | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ecumenical/Interfaith/<br>Intercultural Experience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Annual Conference           |                          |  |

Name of Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of College, Experience, or Conference:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Experience:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Attach 2-3 page reflection (questions found on specific experience page)

Certification for Credit:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of District TRIM Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## THE CHURCH ONLINE

Online resources are abundant for people preparing for ministry. Each TRIM student is required to be familiar, at least at a basic level, with computer technology and the Internet and, over time, become familiar with techniques for searching libraries, websites, and databases for information. “Introduction to Biblical Studies,” which each entering TRIM student takes, is designed to help students increase their competency in educational technology.

To keep up with the latest news in the Church of the Brethren, the Academy recommends that students subscribe to *Newsline*, a free, bi-weekly newsletter sent only to those requesting a subscription. To receive it by e-mail, subscribe at [www.brethren.org/newsline](http://www.brethren.org/newsline).

### **Valuable Church of the Brethren Web Sites:**

- **The official web site of the Church of the Brethren:** <http://www.brethren.org>. Here you can link to the agencies of the Church of the Brethren, find many past Annual Conference statements, and locate resources from Brethren Press. Spend some time exploring this site so that you are familiar with the information it can provide. The “short-cuts” link at the top of the home page is very helpful to find specific information.
- **The Brethren Academy web site:** <http://www.bethanyseminary.edu/brethren-academy/>. Here, among other things, you will find the latest Academy news including the most recent issue of the *Scroll*, the Brethren Academy newsletter, and information about upcoming courses.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

A student may take an official Leave of Absence for up to two calendar years (four academic sessions) if faced with health, family, professional, financial or other concerns that interfere with their studies. A student must apply for a Leave of Absence using the form provided or from the Brethren Academy website and follow all aspects of the Leave of Absence policy. Leave time granted may not total more than two calendar years/four academic sessions per EFSM student.

The BAML may at its discretion, grant leave of absence status for professional or personal reasons. Leave of absence status includes the following arrangements, privileges, and fees:

1. Will continue to receive communications from the BAML office, such as newsletters, course brochures and other announcements via email
2. District fees and routine BAML processes apply during the LoA year. Student and Congregational fees will be waived during the LoA year.

### **Withdrawal**

If a student finds that TRIM is not the appropriate ministry training for themselves and chooses to withdraw, the student must notify their district and report the decision to the Brethren Academy Office.



## MINISTRY INTERNSHIP

Each model of ministry training in the Church of the Brethren includes a requirement for practical experience called “internship.” This is a historic practice for Brethren. While Brethren placed great importance upon the equality of all persons under God, they were also concerned about conducting their communities of faith in good order. For this reason, from the beginning they “set aside” those of their number to carry out ministerial duties (Donald Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 110-111). According to James E. Miller, historically

No one [among the Brethren] had formal training; however, ministers were put through a system of mentoring and “learning by doing” under the presiding elder and ministers. (Stephen Longenecker, ed., *Lines, Places and Heritage*, 142)

Broadly defined, the goal of the ministry internship is to provide “called out” ministers with a structured opportunity to learn *about* ministry in the process of *doing* ministry. It is an action/reflection model of learning, one that supplements the learning that occurs through TRIM coursework and the experiences of the ministry formation group.

### Selecting a Supervisor for the Internship

Students are required to choose a supervisor to guide ministry interns through this system of mentoring and “learning by doing.” The supervisor is **selected in consultation with the district TRIM coordinator** and in some cases, with the district ministry coordinating team. The Supervisor is one who has formal ministry training, enabling him or her to engage the intern in reflection about what is being learned in both study and the current ministry setting.

In situations where the intern is already supervised by someone in a ministry setting, effort should be made to secure a different person to provide supervision for this experience to enrich the feedback received.

In situations where the intern is already supervised by someone in a ministry setting, such as part-time pastoral ministry, effort should be made to secure a different person to provide supervision for this the internship to enrich the feedback received. In short, following the best of our Brethren tradition, the supervisor should be

1. A proven and tested minister possessing broad perspective, experience and oversight
2. A challenger who asks tough questions that require deep thinking
3. A mentor who encourages the student in his or her talents and also demands accountability
4. A constructive critic who offers a soundboard for ideas and gives honest feedback
5. A counselor who helps students think through the issues of ministry
6. A minister with an M.Div or higher degree. If qualified and skilled potential supervisors do not meet this requirement, they must be approved by the Coordinator.

## **Description of the Internship**

An intern spends at least **400 hours** in ministry internship. This includes preparation time for tasks, actual involvement in ministry, and reflection on and evaluation of the experience. Except in special circumstances, internships should be completed over the period of one year, allowing interns to become more seasoned than a shorter time frame allows. In a one-year experience, an intern averages about eight hours a week in a ministry experience. A time log is provided to keep track of time spent. This tool will assure interns that they are spending adequate time in this experience and provide them with a self-monitoring system they can use in the future to help balance the time they spend at work with other activities in life.

The ministry internship is planned in consultation with the district TRIM coordinator and the supervisor. It takes place near the end of the TRIM program so that coursework and other educational events can undergird the experience. At least 20 units of study must be completed before beginning the internship (at least 5 of those must be completed while in TRIM, prior to the internship).

*A Covenant between the student and supervisor for this internship must be submitted to the Coordinator at least one month in advance of the beginning of the internship to allow time for any adjustments that might need to be made to the plans.*

## **Possible Internship Settings**

While ministry occurs in many settings, TRIM is primarily a program established to train pastors. Therefore interns may choose one of three recommended options for fulfilling this requirement:

- A ministry experience in a congregation a student is already serving
- A ministry experience in a congregation that the student has not served before
- In some instances, with the approval of the District Ministry Commission or district executive minister as well as the Brethren Academy Coordinator, the ministry internship may take place in a ministry setting other than a congregation.

Settings other than a congregation include:

- Chaplaincy, preferably under the supervision of a Board Certified Chaplain Chaplaincy. Training is available in a medical setting or Brethren retirement home through Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Possible locations are listed at [www.acpe.edu](http://www.acpe.edu)
- Disaster Response Ministries ([www.brethren.org](http://www.brethren.org))
- Church of the Brethren Camps (Outdoors Ministry Association of the Church of the Brethren, [www.cob-net.org/oma.htm](http://www.cob-net.org/oma.htm))
- Established programs for the training of Spiritual Directors

## Planning the Experience

The planning and carrying out of the ministry internship is as follows:

1. The district TRIM coordinator and the intern will have already discussed options for the ministry internship as they work on the Learning Covenant following orientation. A tentative proposal for the ministry internship requirement is listed in the plan.
2. If the intern is not already functioning in a regular ministry setting, the district TRIM coordinator will assist in arranging a setting in which the ministry internship can take place. The Coordinator will also assist in making arrangements for supervision, preferably helping to negotiate with another qualified person to assume the role on behalf of the district, but in some cases assuming the role of supervisor. The coordinator and/or intern should also be in communication with the district executive minister to determine appropriate placement.
3. The supervisor and the student meet to formulate a set of learning goals. Instructions for writing learning goals are found in section 4-B.
4. At least one month before the ministry internship begins the intern and the district TRIM coordinator will prepare a Covenant for the ministry internship. A copy of this Covenant will be submitted to the Coordinator. Find a Covenant form in section 4-C of this manual.

**NOTE:** The Brethren Academy office will send all relevant materials to the Supervisor once the ministry internship covenant has been received and approved

5. Supervision normally includes a combination of on-site observation of the intern's ministry, critical feedback on materials prepared by the intern and regularly scheduled in-depth conversations.
6. In addition to goals and learning experiences, the intern will prepare at least three case studies, reporting on specific ministry experiences. It is recommended that these be focused in the areas of
  - a. preaching or leading worship
  - b. teaching a class or small group
  - c. providing pastoral care

All interns will prepare a **fourth case study**, reflecting on a transforming experience that has occurred during the ministry internship.

7. In addition to these written reports, the intern will lead a session with his or her ministry formation group, reflecting orally on the internship experience and inviting group members to enter into the reflective process with him or her.
8. The district TRIM coordinator will keep the Brethren Academy staff informed of the student's ministry internship in his or her annual report. When someone other than the district TRIM coordinator is serving as the supervisor, the coordinator will consult with the supervisor to monitor progress.

9. At the conclusion of the ministry internship, the intern and supervisor will write evaluations of the experience using the forms provided, and the supervisor will determine whether the intern will receive credit for the experience. If the supervisor is someone other than the district TRIM coordinator, the supervisor will send copies of the evaluations and the four case studies to the district TRIM coordinator.
10. The district TRIM coordinator will send copies of the ministry internship evaluations and the four case studies to the Brethren Academy Coordinator who will note completion of the ministry internship requirement on the student's transcript.

## WRITING LEARNING GOALS for the MINISTRY INTERNSHIP

When students apply for a ministry internship, they will identify specific learning goals they aim to achieve. When writing goals, consider the areas of ministry in which you feel you need the most improvement and write goals to challenge yourself in those areas. Be sure to frame the goal as an “outcome” and not merely an activity. For example, instead of saying “I will preach three times during my internship,” say, “In preaching I will become more proficient with resources such as commentaries and concordances.” In addition to the guidelines in this section, the document “Competencies for Ministries” in the TRIM manual (section 1-B) is a good resource for ideas about possible goals.

### Examples

**Learning Goal 1:** I seek to expand my preparation techniques in writing sermons and to become more aware of how my sermons are received.

**Evaluation:** I will ask for sermon feedback from at least 10 people in the congregation using a response form. I will keep a journal to reflect on these methods and the reactions of listeners.

**Learning Experiences for Goal #1:** I will preach at least 6 sermons. As I do this, I will try three different styles of preparation:

1. use the lectionary scripture (or the scripture highlighted by the Brethren bulletin)
2. begin with a topic and support it with scripture
3. work with a small group for input

**Learning Goal 2:** As I minister to youth, I would like to develop strong connections between the activities I plan and the needs of youth and parents.

**Evaluation:** I will ask for feedback from parents and youth on a questionnaire.

**Learning Experiences for Goal #2:** I will visit each member of the youth group in his or her home, and have a conversation with the youth, parents or caregivers to discern what is the most meaningful aspect of congregational life, both to the youth and the adults present? I will then incorporate that idea into a prayer at some point during the visit. To follow up, I will make a list of ideas that emerge from both youth and adults. I will write a note to each youth affirming their participation in our church and specifically mention the aspect they said they found most meaningful. Taking the information I have gleaned, I will plan one activity for the youth group, providing response forms for youth and parents.

**Learning Goal #3:** Having spent most of my adult life in one Brethren congregation, I would like to broaden my view of what ministry is like in different congregational settings.

**Evaluation:** I will write a reflection paper on what I think it would mean for me to be the pastor of a congregation that is different from the one I am used to.

**Learning Experiences for Goal #3:** I will attend worship at a Brethren church I have never attended before, preferably one very different than my own. I will observe the congregation, and take note of aspects of worship that are new or different for me. I will schedule a time to interview both the pastor and one congregational member, talking about what I have observed and asking about the traditions of that congregation.

4 - C

MINISTRY INTERNSHIP COVENANT

Name of Intern:

Name of Supervisor:

Supervisor Contact Information:

Telephone:

Email:

Mailing address:

Congregation(s) or other ministry setting(s) for internship:

Time Frame for internship:

Identify three or four specific and measurable **goals** you hope to achieve through this experience. In each case, tell how you will evaluate your performance. Also identify several **learning experiences** that will help you arrive at the goal. For most students, three of these goals must relate to the ministries of preaching, teaching and pastoral care.

**Goal 1:**

**Learning experiences:**

A.

B.

C.

**Plan for evaluation:**

**Goal 2:**

**Learning experiences:**

A.

B.

C.

**Plan for evaluation:**

**Goal 3:**

**Learning experiences:**

A.

B.

C.

**Plan for evaluation:**

**Goal 4:**

**Learning experiences**

A.

B.

C.

**Plan for evaluation:**

**Description of Supervision:** How will your supervisor relate to the ministry internship? Include a schedule for on-site observation and a plan for periodic conversations between you and your supervisor.

**Case Studies:** You cannot complete this section of the covenant before you begin the internship. The incidents about which you will write have not yet happened. During the internship, as you choose events to write about in case studies, list them on this form and ask the supervisor to initial them to certify they have been completed. Keep in mind, however, that you need a case study for each area of the internship: preaching/worship, teaching, and pastoral care. For those concentrating in ministries other than pastoral ministry, alternative topics are possible.

1. Preaching/worship:

2. Teaching:

3. Pastoral Care:

4. Transforming experience:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
District TRIM Coordinator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Coordinator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

4 - D

## MINISTRY INTERNSHIP CHECKLIST

This checklist is for your convenience as you and your supervisor make your way from the application for the internship through its completion.

Fill in the date you completed each step of the ministry internship.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Completed Covenant in consultation with district TRIM coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Covenant sent to Brethren Academy Office
- \_\_\_\_\_ Covenant approved
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ministry Internship beginning date
- \_\_\_\_\_ Case Study Report #1 completed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Case Study Report #1 discussed with Supervisor and forwarded to district TRIM coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Case Study Report #2 completed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Case Study Report #2 discussed with Supervisor and forwarded to district TRIM coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Case Study Report #3 completed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Case Study Report #3 discussed with Supervisor and forwarded to district TRIM coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Case Study Report #4 completed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Case Study Report #4 discussed with Supervisor and forwarded to district TRIM coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ministry Internship ending date
- \_\_\_\_\_ Final Evaluation completed and shared with Supervisor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Final Evaluation given to district TRIM coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ministry Internship completed



## 4 - F

### CASE STUDY GUIDELINES

A deep engagement in ministry requires not only completing activities but reflecting on them. To facilitate this reflection on the internship, the intern is required to prepare four case studies to discuss with his or her supervisor. You will prepare a case study for each area of the internship—preaching, teaching, and pastoral care—and a fourth case study that focuses on a transforming experience in the internship. As you move through the internship, be alert to experiences that will lend themselves to these topics. Then write the case studies as soon as possible after the incident so your thoughts will be fresh in your mind.

Do not write the fourth and final case study until the final weeks of the internship; however, it is important to keep a list of possible experiences to refer back to, defining moments for your formation as a minister.

**1. You will present your case studies to your supervisor at regular intervals and present only one case study at a single meeting.** A reporting form is provided for writing case studies (4-G, H, I). Depending on the nature of the event, the report form might need to be modified in consultation with your supervisor. At the end of the session the form should be signed and dated at the bottom by both you and your supervisor.

**2. Each case study will be 8-10 single-spaced, typed pages in length and written in a narrative style on the forms provided.** A longer case study is acceptable, keeping in mind that depth, not length, is the goal. After the student and the supervisor discuss the case study, the supervisor will give a copy of the signed report to the district TRIM coordinator for your ministry internship file.

**3. Write three “activity” case studies.**

For the first three case studies, choose one event for which you have primary responsibility. Be sure this is an event you either planned and carried out or were a vital part of. For most interns, it is recommended that the three activity case studies are written about one event in each of the following areas: preaching/worship, teaching, and pastoral care. Interns who do their ministry internship in areas that do not lend themselves to these kinds of activities will consult with their supervisors about alternative topics.

**4. Write a fourth case study about a transforming experience in ministry.** For this case study, consider one area in which you have grown in your view of ministry. How were you transformed? What surprised you about yourself during this trial run at ministry? Write a case study about a stretching, transforming experience in your ministry internship that you feel will deeply impact your ministry in the future. For this case study, write briefly on numbers 1-3 in the report form provided, but focus your attention and reflection on numbers 4-6.

## CASE STUDY REPORT FORM

NOTE: Submit four case studies, one case study per form. Each case study will be 8-10 pages in length, typed, double-spaced, in 12 point Times New Roman or Arial font, with 1" margins. It should be written in a narrative style on the form provided. A copy of this form can be found on the online manual found on the Brethren Academy website.

Name of student:

Congregation or other ministry setting:

Ministry experience (check one)

\_\_\_\_\_ Preaching and leading worship

\_\_\_\_\_ Teaching a class or small group

\_\_\_\_\_ Providing pastoral care

\_\_\_\_\_ A transforming experience (required for all interns)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of experience:

### **I. Introduction**

- A. Describe what took place in this ministry experience/event? What was the setting? Who was present? What were your expectations? What were the expectations of others?
- B. Describe your planning process for this incident/event.
- C. Name at least two goals you set out to accomplish and to what extent you accomplished them.
- D. For each goal you name, describe an activity that you hoped would lead to the goal. To what extent did the activities you planned help you reach your goals? If they did not, why?
- E. Summarize the content of this experience/event. Include, for example, a sermon manuscript or notes (or recording) if your coordinator was not able to be present, a lesson plan, a short bibliography of readings you used to prepare, or a power point file.
- F. Describe the method of evaluation you used to decide whether this incident/event met the goals you hope for.

## II. Verbatim Account

- A. Choose a brief, poignant conversation or exchange from the event or incident. As accurately as possible, write down the actual words spoken—yours and others’—during this key moment. A verbatim account for a preaching case study could include comments made to you following worship. Use the following format:

**P** = parishioner

**M** = minister

P1: Can you give me a few minutes?

M1: Of course. Come into my office.

P2: It’s about my daughter. She’s thinking about leaving her husband again.

M2: Please, sit down. I’m sorry to hear this. I know you’ve been concerned about her.

- B. If there were oral or written evaluations submitted by participants, include those here.

## III. Self-Awareness

- A. What was the mood at the time of the incident? What were your immediate hunches about the effect of your ministry on those involved?
- B. How were you affected in the course of this conversation or incident? What personal issues did this incident/event raise for you?

## IV. Spiritual Reflection

- A. What spiritual transformation did you see in people as this incident or event unfolded?
- B. According to James Fowler’s *Stages of Faith* or similar developmental scale, how would you characterize the stage of faith exhibited by one or two people in this incident?
- C. Did you see any change in people? Describe the changes you saw.

## V. Theological Reflection

- A. Name one or two assumptions about God, the Bible, or the Church that you brought with you to this incident. How, if at all, did your assumptions change?
- B. What assumptions did others bring to this incident? How, if at all, did their assumptions change?

**VI. Conclusion**

How did this incident help you to grow as a minister? How would you evaluate your performance? What did you do well? What could you have done better? What would you do differently next time?

**VII. Comments by the Supervisor**

- A. What was your role in this incident? Observer? Participant? Coach?
- B. What feedback do you have for the intern?

Date the report form was completed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Intern's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Signature







6. What do you consider to be this person's weakest qualities as a worship leader?

7. In what ways did he or she hinder or interrupt your worship?

8. What words describe how you felt at the end of this worship service?





4-K

INTERN'S FINAL SELF-EVALUATION  
Of the MINISTRY INTERNSHIP

Reflect on your experience. Were your learning goals helpful to your growth in ministry? What did you learn unexpectedly? When in the course of the internship did you feel most successful as a minister? Least successful? Did you identify other areas of ministry to explore and strengthen in the future? What do you wish you had done differently? Share your completed form with your supervisor and the district TRIM coordinator.

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Intern's signature

---

Date





4. Checklist for Case Study Reports

\_\_\_ Report on preaching/worship incident submitted on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Report on teaching incident submitted on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Report on pastoral care incident submitted on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Report of transforming experience submitted on \_\_\_\_\_

Certification of Experience for Credit

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Note: Send a copy of the completed form to the intern and another to the district TRIM coordinator.**

## CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATE!

You felt a call. You responded. You have studied, practiced, and prayed.

This final section of your TRIM manual prepares you for graduation from this ministry training program. It includes:

- A. A reminder of Graduation Competencies
- B. Instructions for the exit exam
- C. Final evaluation forms for both the student and the district TRIM coordinator

You have reached an important milestone in your preparation for set-apart ministry, one we hope will serve as a launching pad to further training in ministry. After all, training for ministry never ends. The skills you have learned in TRIM will equip you to enter the ministry but also to grow in the ministry with time and experience.

When all requirements have been completed for graduation, the Coordinator of English Language Ministry Training Programs of the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership will inform the district executive minister of your district. Districts are encouraged to recognize TRIM graduates by presenting them with their graduation certificate at District Conference. TRIM graduates are also recognized at the Bethany Seminary/Brethren Academy luncheon at Annual Conference, at which time you become an official alumnus/a of the seminary.

Each TRIM graduate receives a certificate indicating completion of an approved Church of the Brethren program of ministry training. For those seeking credentialing, this certification verifies that the educational requirements for ordination or commissioned status in the Church of the Brethren have been fulfilled.

## 5 - B

### DETERMINING COMPETENCY in PROSPECTIVE GRADUATES

A TRIM student approaching graduation from the program is expected to be competent in three categories:

- general education,
- biblical and theological studies, and
- ministry and ministry skills.

The Ministry Advisory Council of the Church of the Brethren has determined that competency in these various areas will be demonstrated as follows:

#### **1. General Education**

- Satisfactory completion of coursework in the various areas of general education designated for TRIM students

#### **2. Biblical and Theological Studies**

- Satisfactory completion of coursework and other units in the related subject areas designated for TRIM students
- A satisfactory score on the exit exam.

#### **3. Ministry and Ministry Skills**

- Satisfactory completion of coursework and other units in the related subject areas designated for TRIM students.
- A satisfactory evaluation of the ministry internship experience.

When competency has been demonstrated in the areas above, the student and district TRIM coordinator complete the Final Evaluation forms found in sections 5-D and 5-E of the TRIM manual. Completed forms are mailed or emailed to the Brethren Academy Office for review by the Coordinator of English Language Ministry Training Program.

## 5 - C

### TRIM EXIT EXAM

The last component of the student's program, along with final evaluations, is the completion of the Exit Exam. This exam is a series of essays that will allow the student to demonstrate the "Competencies for Ministry" as described in the *Readiness for Ministry Program*, developed by the Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry. These same Competencies are outlined at the beginning of this manual.

Through successful completion of the core requirements, electives, supervised ministry internship, and ministry formation, students should have a solid foundation on which to complete the exam. The essays include case studies (exhibiting various ministry skills), biblical exegesis, as well as questions about Church of the Brethren history and the contemporary church, Church of the Brethren ordinances and practices, and spiritual disciplines.

When the student enrolls in their final course, the Brethren Academy will send the exam. The student may complete the exam at their own pace and do any additional research that seems necessary to answer the questions successfully. The exam may be submitted any time after the conclusion of the final course. A student will not be able to complete their program (TRIM or EFSM) until the exam has been evaluated.

Evaluations of Exit Exams are done by staff members of the Brethren Academy. The evaluation committee meets monthly. Evaluations will identify strengths as well as areas in which the student needs continued growth. General results will be provided to the student, the district coordinator or supervising pastor, as well as the student's district executive.



5 - D

**FINAL EVALUATION**  
**TRIM Graduate**

Using this form on the computer, respond to the three questions below. As you write, consider including topics such as

- The quality of members' participation in the ministry formation group
- Completion of various levels of coursework
- Personal and spiritual growth that was particularly memorable
- Work with your district TRIM coordinator
- Work with your district ministry leadership
- The Coordinator of English Language Ministry Training Programs of the Brethren Academy
- Other general comments.

Please make your evaluation the length it needs to be to adequately assess your experience.

1. How has your TRIM program gone for you?
2. Where were you stretched?
3. What do you wish had been done differently?

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Graduate's signature

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Date

To complete your file prior to graduation, please submit this evaluation to your district TRIM coordinator and the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership.

5 - E

**FINAL EVALUATION  
District TRIM Coordinator**

Final evaluations by the student and the coordinator complete a student's file prior to graduation. Use this form on the computer to assess your experience as coordinator and the performance of the student. You may touch on these topics and others:

- Ministry formation group leadership
- The experience of mentoring the student through the TRIM process
- Particular gifts seen in this student, including those that were strengthened in the process
- Evaluation of the support for the process from your District Ministry leadership and/or from the Brethren Academy staff
- Other general suggestions

Please make your evaluation the length it needs to be to adequately assess the experience.

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District TRIM Coordinator's Signature

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Date

To complete the student's file prior to graduation, please submit this evaluation to the Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership.