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**District TRIM Coordinator**

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- Address general correspondence to Janet Ober Lambert.
- Direct inquiries about TRIM program requirements to Audrey Hollenberg-Duffey.
- Direct questions about TRIM academic records, transcripts and course enrollment to Francine Massie.
- Forward documentation for completion of TRIM units to your District TRIM Coordinator.



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IF YOU ARE UNWILLING TO HAVE YOUR PHOTO USED FOR THESE PURPOSES, PLEASE CONTACT [academy@bethanyseminary.edu](mailto:academy@bethanyseminary.edu) SO THAT YOU ARE NOT INCLUDED IN ANY OF THESE MEDIA.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### 1 - A

#### 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?**

Training in Ministry (TRIM) is an approved ministry training program for the Church of the Brethren that provides the educational component required for ordination. Courses are offered in conjunction with Bethany Theological Seminary, with many courses taught by Bethany faculty. Most courses are taught online, which allows students to study close to home. Depending on the extent of prior education, a student may complete TRIM in as few as three years. TRIM consists of a combination of biblical, historical, theological, and ministry studies.

#### **Partners in Training**

The Brethren Academy for Ministerial Leadership (Brethren Academy), a partnership of Bethany Theological Seminary and the Church of the Brethren, administers a variety of ministry training programs including TRIM, Education for a Shared Ministry (EFSM), Educación para un Ministerio Compartido (EPMC), Seminario Anabautista Hispano (SeBAH-COB), and Academy Certified Training Systems (ACTS). Direct funding for TRIM comes from the Church of the Brethren and Bethany Theological Seminary. When a student graduates from TRIM, they are considered alumni of Bethany.

In addition to the denomination and the seminary, the TRIM program works with the 24 districts of the Church of the Brethren. Districts make decisions regarding calling and credentialing of individual persons for ministry. All students enter TRIM with the approval and support of their district.

#### **District TRIM Coordinators**

Each district with students enrolled in the TRIM program appoints a District TRIM Coordinator who is 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.

Qualifications for the District TRIM Coordinator include:

- significant experience in ministry or in other leadership in the church
- well-grounded in the beliefs and practices of the Church of the Brethren

- has a heart for the future leadership of the church
- an encourager who is willing to be reflective and honest with students
- excellent communication skills, including online communication
- has the time to spend with students and to complete necessary paperwork
- willing to guide students toward the strengthening of their faith while leaving the exact shape that faith might take to God

The activities of a District TRIM Coordinator vary somewhat from district to district, but generally include:

- Advising students on coursework and other TRIM requirements
- Assisting in setting up the Supervised Ministry Internship
- Contacting students occasionally to maintain a good relationship
- Sending paperwork to the Brethren Academy office in a timely manner
- Keeping the district leadership up to date on the progress of students
- Confering with the Coordinator of English-Language Training Programs (Program Coordinator) as needed
- Attending periodic District TRIM Coordinator gatherings, which may be in person or by other forms of communication (phone, Skype, Zoom, etc.)

### **TRIM Program Requirements**

TRIM training features a flexible design; however, each student will complete a common set of requirements. All work is planned and completed in consultation with the District TRIM Coordinator. These common elements include both coursework and practical training experiences as summarized below:

#### **A. 20 units of coursework, at least 10 of which must be completed while in TRIM:**

10 units of Biblical, Historical or Theological Studies, including these required courses:

- Introduction to Biblical Studies\* (course begins at Orientation)
- Introduction to Hebrew Scripture
- Introduction to New Testament
- 2 Church of the Brethren Studies\* (history, theology, or polity)

10 units of Ministry Studies, including these required courses:

- Practical Ministry Colloquium\* (see below for more information)
- Leadership and Administration\*
- One course in either Preaching, Worship, or Pastoral Care
- One course in either Church Vitality and Evangelism, Spiritual Formation/Teaching and Learning in the Church

\*Must be taken from a Brethren perspective (TRIM, Bethany Theological Seminary, or ACTS – see policies for how to transfer credits from Bethany Theological Seminary and ACTS)

## **B. Five Required Experiences**

Ecumenical, Intercultural, or Interfaith Experience

Church of the Brethren Denominational Experience

Bethany Theological Seminary Experience (Orientation does not fulfill this requirement)

Annual Conference Experience

District Conference Experience

## **C. Practical Ministry Colloquium**

It is the goal of the Practical Ministry Colloquium (PMC) to engage reflectively and theologically on the practices of ministry in preparation for the Supervised Ministry Internship, with a focus on rituals and rites of the church, administration, and self-care. PMC is taken during the second year of the student's program, with the cohort the student started with in orientation. PMC satisfies one ministry studies unit.

Students are automatically enrolled in PMC and will receive notification about preparation for the course the summer prior. The fee for this course is covered by the entrance fee paid at the beginning of the program (this does not include books).

## **D. Supervised Ministry Internship**

The supervised ministry internship takes place following the completion of at least 10 units of TRIM credit, five units of which must be completed while in TRIM, including Introduction to Biblical Studies, Practical Ministry Colloquium, and one Church of the Brethren Studies course. A plan for this 400-hour requirement must be submitted to the Brethren Academy for approval one month before beginning the supervised ministry.

## **E. Completion Process**

When a student has completed all coursework, a few final steps remain before a student is ready to graduate:

- The student will complete an Exit Exam.
- The student will complete a Self-Assessment based on the Competencies for Ministry as outlined in the most recent Readiness of Ministry document of the Church of the Brethren.
- The District TRIM Coordinator will complete an evaluation of the student's overall performance.
- The Brethren Academy will provide an evaluation of the student, identifying strengths as well as areas for further development. These results will be provided to the student and the District TRIM Coordinator. A summary of the results will be provided to the student's District Executive.

## 1-B

### 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 considerations whenever one embarks on an educational venture.

**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 Brethren Academy include a one-time enrollment fee and a bi-annual participation fee which is billed each January and July. Call the Brethren Academy for current rates.

**Costs for Units of Study:** Students themselves pay for courses. Costs vary depending on the type of course and whether the course is taken within TRIM or from another institution. Students who take courses consistently and who take two or more each semester, will spend less overall due to the opportunity for financial assistance.

**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 courses in which they enroll each semester. The maximum annual grant from the Brethren Academy is currently \$1,200. All scholarship funds awarded are paid directly to tuition.

**Funding Alternatives:** 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-C

### 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 Christian Scriptures and the contexts in which they were written and competency in biblical interpretation: *The Bible bears witness to God's deeds and guides the church in its quest to live as God's people.* Thus, it is 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 ministers 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.* Thus, it is 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 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.* Thus, it is 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 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, the Church of the Brethren is one of several groups who share a heritage known as the believers' church tradition.* Thus, it is important that ministerial leaders be conversant with 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 believers' 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.* Thus, it is 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.* Thus, it is important that ministerial leaders be familiar with biblical images and models of the church as the people of God. It is important that they be 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.* Thus, it is 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.* Thus, it is 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 that nurture the process of 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 be aware of key issues in ministerial and congregational ethics as addressed by Annual Conference and exhibit skills in processing concrete cases related to such 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.* Thus, it is important that ministerial leaders understand how differing personality types and styles of interaction affect the life of a group. It is also important to understand basic group dynamics. It is important that they have developed skills in listening and in cultivating communication. It is important that they be familiar with resources from scripture, Brethren heritage, and conflict theory that can help people 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 together.* Thus, it is 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 identify ways of calling forth and nurturing others' gifts for ministry. It is 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, evangelism, and administration. Church of the Brethren polity and practice guides our life together.

11. Ability to integrate biblical, historical, and theological understandings with the practice of ministry: *Understanding that is not embodied in practice is of little value. 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, historical, 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. Refer to additional expectations of training, practice, and accountability in the current

*\*Ministerial Competencies were developed by the Ministry Advisory Council in consultation with the dean and faculty of Bethany Theological Seminary and affirmed by the Council of District Executives in May 2000. Revised November 2018 by the Ministry Advisory Council.*

## 1-D

### **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 aware of the visible and honorable leadership 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. The complete document can be found on the Office of Ministry Page. The Church of the Brethren Office of Ministry provides clergy ethics training for licensed ministers several times each year and for credentialed ministers every five years.

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#### **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.





## TRIM PROGRAM INFORMATION

### 2-A

#### Enrollment and Orientation

The first step toward enrolling in TRIM is for the one who feels a call to ministry and/or has been identified as one with gifts for ministry to discuss ministry training options with their District Executive, or leadership equivalent. If it is determined that TRIM is the best ministry training option for the student, the District Executive completes a Prospective Student Profile. The Prospective Student Profile includes the completion of a criminal background check, initiated by the district, if the student has not had one in the past three years.

Once the Prospective Student Profile has been received by the Brethren Academy, the prospective student will receive an application. The student application, along with unofficial transcripts from all previous educational institutions and the enrollment fee must be received and approved by the Brethren Academy before a student can be officially enrolled.

Upon acceptance into the program, the student will attend TRIM orientation. Orientation is typically an in-person event, held over the summer, and hosted by Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Indiana. At the orientation, new students will:

- Attend the first session of an eight-week, online course called “Introduction to Biblical Studies.”
- Receive a detailed explanation of the TRIM program.
- Begin to create a Learning Covenant which will serve as the student’s roadmap to their individual program.
- Meet other students and church leaders for worship and conversation.

Following the on-campus orientation, new students will need to do the following:

1. Meet with their District TRIM Coordinator to complete the Learning Covenant. Students may not register for additional courses until a signed Learning Covenant is on file.
2. 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.”
3. Complete assigned work. You will receive credit for completing TRIM orientation once you have completed and received credit for “Introduction to Biblical Studies.”



## 2 - B

### **TRIM LEARNING COVENANT**

TRIM is a program for discovering, exploring, and developing one's gifts through academic courses, supervised ministry, 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 plan for meeting one's goals.

#### **I. Personal and Ministry Discernment (150-300 words each)**

**1. What gifts do you have for ministry?** You may see these gifts in yourself, or they may be gifts that others have expressed seeing in you. Consider the areas of preaching and teaching, worship planning, scriptural interpretation, pastoral care, spiritual direction, prayer, organization/leadership, community engagement, and theological reflection, etc.

**2. What areas of growth do you feel you need to attend to while in ministry training?** Ministry training is meant to help you improve upon your gifts and 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?** What ministry do you feel called to? Describe how you see yourself applying your gifts in this specific context.

## II. Learning and Support Plan

**1. Coursework Plan** – The below plan does not obligate you to these courses, but helps you think about how you might complete coursework requirements. Keep in mind the courses that you transferred into the TRIM program (these are on your transcript) and make sure to include the following required courses:

Biblical, Historical or Theological Studies required courses:

- Introduction to Biblical Studies\* (course begins at Orientation)
- Introduction to Hebrew Scripture
- Introduction to New Testament
- 2 Church of the Brethren Studies\* (history, theology, or polity)

Ministry Studies required courses:

- Practical Ministry Colloquium\* (taken during second year of student's program)
- Leadership and Administration\*
- One course in either Preaching, Worship, or Pastoral Care
- One course in either Church Vitality and Evangelism, Spiritual Formation/Teaching and Learning in the Church

\*Must be taken from a Brethren perspective

<b>Biblical, Historical and Theological Studies</b>	
<b>Course</b>	<b>Dates Offered</b>

<b>Ministry Studies</b>	
<b>Course</b>	<b>Dates Offered</b>

**2. Required Experiences** - You are 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.

Required Experience	Possible date/location/event
1. Annual Conference	
2. District Conference	
3. Church of the Brethren Denomination	
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 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? YN

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

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?

Skype, Zoom, or other online platform  Monthly

in-person  Bi-Monthly

phone  Quarterly

district ministry formation groups

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.”

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Student Signature Date

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District TRIM Coordinator Signature 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 Audrey Hollenberg-Duffey by September 15th  
<mailto:holleau@bethanyseminary.edu>





## 2-C

### COURSEWORK

While in TRIM, students will take courses in the following areas:

#### **A. Biblical, Historical, and Theological Studies**

The purpose of *biblical, historical, and theological studies* is to become familiar with the biblical foundations of the Christian faith, the history of the church, and the church's reflection on and response to the biblical message. All students are required to take 10 courses in this area, including the following required courses:

1. Introduction to Biblical Studies\* (course begins at Orientation)
2. Introduction to Hebrew Scripture
3. Introduction to New Testament
4. 2 Church of the Brethren Studies\* (history, theology, or polity)

#### **B. Ministry Studies**

The purpose of *ministry studies* 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. All students are required to take 10 courses in this area, including the following required courses:

1. Practical Ministry Colloquium\* (taken during second year of student's program)
2. Leadership and Administration\*
3. One course in either Preaching, Worship, or Pastoral Care
4. One course in either Church Vitality and Evangelism, Spiritual Formation/Teaching and Learning in the Church

\*Must be taken from a Brethren perspective (TRIM, Bethany Theological Seminary, or ACTS course – see policies for how to transfer credits from Bethany Theological Seminary and ACTS).

#### **Accumulating Course Credit**

Every student will complete a total of **20 curricular units**. Of the 20 units, at least 10 must be completed while in TRIM. A curricular unit is defined as:

- One TRIM course offered by the Brethren Academy 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 Directed Independent Study Unit (DISU) offered by the Brethren Academy or Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center
- 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). 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 Program Coordinator with additional work completed under the supervision of the instructor.

## 2-D

### **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. 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. An ISU has a supervisor who may be the District TRIM Coordinator or another instructor/expert who can appropriately evaluate the work of an ISU. An ISU contract is required at least one (1) month prior to the beginning of coursework. The student and supervisor must sign off on the agreed upon ISU contract and then send it to the Program Coordinator for final approval.

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

#### **Types of ISUs**

Responsibility for designing a proposed ISU rests initially with the student. A student may go about crafting an ISU in a few ways:

1. The student will submit a draft proposal for an ISU independently and share it with the District TRIM Coordinator for revisions and approval. In this case, the District TRIM Coordinator serves as the supervisor for the ISU. Such options for a course may include:
  - study by video, DVD, webinars, etc.
  - research or practicum
  - a combination of workshops and other short-term events
  - Independent reading, interaction, and reflection that focuses on one of the required areas of study under “TRIM Program Requirements”
2. The student may arrange an ISU with an instructor. In this case, the instructor serves as the supervisor of the ISU. Such options for a course may include:
  - an Academy Certified Training Systems (ACTS) course with additional work
  - a TRIM course that was missed
3. The student may arrange an ISU with an expert in a particular component of ministry that they would look to explore more deeply. In this case, the expert serves as the supervisor of the ISU.

If the student is unsure whether an ISU will work, some helpful questions to consider 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?

**Evaluation of an ISU**

The student and supervisor of the ISU provide written evaluations of the unit when the work of an ISU is completed. If, upon assessing the work of the student, the supervisor finds weaknesses they may make recommendations for follow-up reading or training experiences to build on the work of the unit. When the work is acceptable to the supervisor, they send it to the Program Coordinator who will then sign the evaluation and submit it to the Brethren Academy Office.

2-D(a)

**INDEPENDENT STUDY UNIT (ISU) CONTRACT**

Student: District TRIM Coordinator:

Subject Area of Unit:

Time Period Projected for Unit: Unit amount: \_\_ 1 Unit \_\_ .5 Unit

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

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

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

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

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

**Means of Evaluation:**

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

---

Student Signature

Date

---

Supervisor of Independent Study Unit Signature

Date

---

Coordinator of English-Language Programs Signature

Date

## 2-D(b)

### INDEPENDENT STUDY UNIT (ISU) CONTRACT (SAMPLE)

**Student:** John Kline **District TRIM Coordinator:** Anna Mow

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

**Time Period Projected for Unit:** January 1 - March 30 **Unit amount:**  X  1 Unit   .5 Unit

#### **Learning Objectives for Unit:**

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:**

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 the congregation to consider traveling to a disaster project site to experience this kind of ministry firsthand 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

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.

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Student Signature Date

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Supervisor of Independent Study Unit Signature Date

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Coordinator of English-Language Programs Signature Date

2-D(c)

**STUDENT EVALUATION OF COMPLETED INDEPENDENT STUDY UNITS**

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

**Subject Area of Unit:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time Period Projected for Unit:** \_\_\_\_\_

Overview of my experience:

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?

2-D(d)

**SUPERVISOR'S EVALUATION OF COMPLETED INDEPENDENT STUDY UNITS**

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

Subject Area of Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





## 2-E

### **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 the 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**

- 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 Program Coordinator.

## 2-F

### **FIVE REQUIRED EXPERIENCES**

Many TRIM students have been active in the Church of the Brethren and are 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 an:

- Annual Conference Experience
- District Conference Experience
- Church of the Brethren Denominational Experience
- Bethany Experience
- Ecumenical, Intercultural, or Interfaith Experience

Plan ahead for these required experiences. Most TRIM students are in the program for at least three 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.

#### **The Process**

1. Each paper must be completed no more than three months following the experience.
2. Give the completed paper to your District TRIM Coordinator for approval.
3. If approved, the District TRIM Coordinator forwards the paper to the Brethren Academy office.
4. The Brethren Academy office will record the credit for the experience on the TRIM transcript.

#### **Format**

1. Title the paper with the experience that you have completed.
2. Include the name and date of the event.
3. Remember to include your name at the top of the paper.

## 2-F(a)

### **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 in your 2-3 page paper:

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.

## 2-F(b)

### **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 your 2-3 page paper:

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. How is the District budget prepared and how is it met in a given year?
5. What biblical and theological principles are shared at District Conference?
6. In what ways do you see your district relating to the larger church through the District Conference?
7. Reflect on the worship services during District Conference.
8. Offer other personal reflections and responses to District Conference.

## 2-F(c)

### **CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN DENOMINATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

One of the requirements for graduation from TRIM is student participation in a Church of the Brethren Denominational Experience.

The purposes of this experience include:

1. To gain insight into the Church of the Brethren denomination and its ministries.
2. To learn about the rich history of the 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 denomination.

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

1. Attend a Mission and Ministry Board meeting
2. Visit the church of the Brethren General Office to learn about their work
3. Visit the New Windsor Service Center and learn about their work
4. Volunteer at a Church of the Brethren camp
5. Participate in a Disaster Ministries or denominationally sponsored workcamp
6. Participate in any of the general conferences as a participant or volunteer (such as National Youth Conference, National Young Adult Conference, National Older Adult Conference)
7. Serve on a denominational board, committee, or as staff
8. Serve on your district board

Note: Bethany Theological Seminary courses or educational events, 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?

## 2-F(d)

### **BETHANY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY EXPERIENCE**

One important requirement for a student's successful completion of TRIM is participation in a Bethany Seminary Experience beyond orientation. 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. Participate in one of the intensives, on-site classes, or travel seminars, taught by a Bethany instructor.
3. Invite a Bethany faculty member to lead a seminar or workshop in your area of the country.
4. 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 "Brethren 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 Theological Seminary and Brethren Academy staff to be sure you understand your status as a TRIM student in a Bethany Seminary course.

#### **Questions for Reflection on Bethany Theological Seminary 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?

## 2-F(e)

### **ECUMENICAL, INTERFAITH, OR INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCE**

One of the requirements for graduation from TRIM is participation in an ecumenical, interfaith, or 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 is 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?

## 2-G

### **SUPERVISED MINISTRY INTERNSHIP**

Each model of ministry training in the Church of the Brethren includes a ministry training experience. According to Donald Durnbaugh, “While Brethren placed great importance upon the equality of all persons under God, they were also concerned about conducting their communities in good order. For this reason, from the beginning they ‘set aside’ those of their number to carry out ministerial duties” (*Fruit of the Vine*, 110-111). 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 and Jeff Bach, eds., *Lines, Places and Heritage*, 142).

Broadly defined, the goal of the Supervised 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 ongoing ministry.

#### **Selecting a Supervisor**

Students are required to choose a supervisor to guide them 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 them to reflect with the student about what is being learned in both study and their supervised ministry setting.

In situations where the student 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 short, following the best of our Brethren tradition, the supervisor should be

- A minister possessing broad perspective, experience and oversight
- A challenger who asks tough questions that require deep thinking
- A mentor who encourages the student’s talents and demands accountability
- A sounding board for ideas and one who gives honest feedback
- A wise person who helps students think through the issues of ministry
- A minister with an M.Div. or higher degree (a qualified and skilled supervisor who does not meet this requirement may be considered and approved by the Program Coordinator).

#### **Description of the Supervised Ministry Internship**

A student spends at least 400 hours in supervised ministry. This includes preparation time for tasks, actual involvement in ministry, and reflection on and evaluation of the experience. Except in special circumstances, supervised ministry internships should be completed over the period of one year, allowing students to become more seasoned than a shorter time frame

allows. In a one-year experience, a student 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 that students 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 Supervised 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 10 units of study must be completed before beginning the Supervised Ministry Internship (at least 5 of those must be completed while in TRIM).

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

### **Possible Settings**

While ministry occurs in many settings, TRIM is primarily a program established to train pastors. Therefore, students 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
- A ministry experience in a ministry setting other than a congregation (this requires both district and Brethren Academy approval).

Settings other than a congregation include:

- Chaplaincy, preferably under the supervision of a Board-Certified Chaplain. 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 steps for planning and carrying out supervised ministry are as follows:

1. The District TRIM Coordinator and the student will have already discussed options for the Supervised Ministry Internship as they work on the Learning Covenant following orientation. A tentative proposal for the Supervised Ministry Internship is listed in the plan.
2. If the student is not already functioning in a regular ministry setting, the District TRIM Coordinator will assist in arranging a setting in which the supervised ministry can take place. The District TRIM 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 District TRIM Coordinator and/or student 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 2-G(a).
4. At least one month before the supervised ministry begins the student and the District TRIM Coordinator will prepare a Supervised Ministry Internship Covenant. A copy of this Covenant will be submitted to the Program Coordinator. The Covenant form is in section 2-G(b) of this manual. (The Brethren Academy office will send all relevant materials to the Supervisor once the Supervised Ministry Internship Covenant has been received and approved).
5. Supervision normally includes a combination of on-site observation of the student's ministry, critical feedback on materials prepared by the student and regularly scheduled in-depth conversations.
6. In addition to goals and learning experiences, the student will prepare at least three case studies, reporting on specific ministry experiences. It is recommended that these be focused in the areas of preaching or leading worship, teaching, pastoral care, and a transformational experience.
7. The District TRIM Coordinator will keep the Brethren Academy staff informed of the student's supervised ministry. This may be done by meeting with the Program Coordinator or by sharing any report with the Brethren Academy Office this given to the District. When someone other than the District TRIM Coordinator is serving as the supervisor, the District TRIM Coordinator will consult with the supervisor to monitor progress.
8. At the conclusion of the Supervised Ministry Internship, the student and supervisor will write evaluations of the experience using the forms provided in sections 2-G(j) and 2-G(k), and the supervisor will determine whether the student 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.
9. The District TRIM Coordinator will send copies of the evaluations and the four case studies to the Program Coordinator who will note completion of the Supervised Ministry Internship requirement on the student's transcript.

## 2-G(a)

### **WRITING LEARNING GOALS FOR THE SUPERVISED MINISTRY INTERNSHIP**

When students apply for the Supervised Ministry Internship, they will identify specific learning goals. 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 supervised ministry,” 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-C) 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 from 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.

2-G(b)

**SUPERVISED MINISTRY INTERNSHIP COVENANT**

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

Name of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Contact Information

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Time Frame:

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? Include a schedule for on-site observation and a plan for periodic conversations between you and your supervisor.

**Case Studies:** While in your supervised ministry, you will choose events to write about in case studies. Keep aware of situations that may make for good case studies. The Case Study Guidelines and related forms can be found in 2-G(e, f, g, h, i) of this manual.

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

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

---

Supervising Pastor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

Coordinator for English-Language Ministry Training Programs Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

2-G(c)

**SUPERVISED MINISTRY INTERNSHIP CHECKLIST**

This checklist is for your convenience. Fill in the date you completed each step of the Supervised Ministry Internship.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Completed Covenant in with District TRIM Coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Covenant sent to Brethren Academy Office
- \_\_\_\_\_ Covenant approved
- \_\_\_\_\_ Supervised 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
- \_\_\_\_\_ Supervised Ministry Internship ending date
- \_\_\_\_\_ Final Evaluation completed and shared with Supervisor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Final Evaluation given to District TRIM Coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Supervised Ministry Internship completed



## 2-G(e)

### CASE STUDY GUIDELINES

A deep engagement in ministry requires not only completing activities but reflecting on them. To facilitate this reflection on the Supervised Ministry Internship, the student is required to prepare four case studies to discuss with their supervisor. You will prepare a case study for each of the following areas—preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and a transformational experience. As you move through the Supervised Ministry Internship, be alert to experiences that will lend themselves to these topics. Then write the case studies as soon as possible after the experience so your thoughts will be fresh in your mind.

Do not write the case study on a transformational experience until the final weeks of the Supervised Ministry Internship; however, you may want to keep a list of defining moments to refer back to when you are ready to write.

- 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 in section 2-G(f). 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 7-8, double-spaced, typed pages and written in a narrative style on the forms provided.** Each section of the form has a recommended word count to give you a sense of how in-depth your answers should be. After the student and the supervisor discuss the case study, the supervisor will give a copy of the signed report to the Brethren Academy office for your 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 students, 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. Students who do their Supervised 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? Write a case study about an experience that you feel will deeply impact your ministry in the future.

2-G(f)

**CASE STUDY REPORT FORM**

Four case studies are required during the supervised ministry internship. Use this form to report on one case study. Each case study should be typed and meet the word requirements for each section.

Name of student:

Congregation or other ministry setting:

Date of experience: \_

Ministry experience (check one):

\_\_\_\_\_ Preaching/worship leading

\_\_\_\_\_ Teaching

\_\_\_\_\_ Pastoral care

\_\_\_\_\_ A transformational experience (required for all students)

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

**1. Introduction (500-600 words)**

- 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), a lesson plan, a short bibliography of readings you used to prepare, or a powerpoint file.
- F. Describe the method of evaluation you used to decide whether this incident/event met the goals you hope for.

**2. Self-Awareness (300-400 words)**

- 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?

**3. Spiritual Reflection (300-400 words)**

- 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.

**4. Theological Reflection (200-300 words)**

- 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?

**5. Conclusion (200-300 words)**

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?

**7. Comments by the Supervisor**

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

Date the report form was completed: \_

\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date



5. Was the sermon topic supported by other elements in the worship service, such as hymns, prayers, or litanies? What were they?

6. What illustrations or stories do you remember? How were they related to the main point?

7. What suggestions do you have for improvement?

8. What would you particularly like to affirm about today's student preacher?





5. What do you consider to be this person's strongest qualities as a worship leader? In what ways did he or she facilitate or aid your worship?

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?





2-G (i)

**STUDENT'S FINAL SELF-EVALUATION  
OF THE SUPERVISED 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 Supervised Ministry 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.

---

Student Signature

Date



2-G(k)

**SUPERVISOR'S FINAL EVALUATION  
OF THE SUPERVISED MINISTRY INTERNSHIP**

Name of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

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

1. What areas of growth did you see in the student? Did the student work adequately at achieving his or her learning goals?

2. Where does the student need to stretch his or her understanding and practice of ministry?

3. How was this experience for you as a supervisor?

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

---

Supervisor Signature

Date

**Note: Send a copy of the completed form to the student and another to the District TRIM Coordinator.**



## COMPLETION PROCESS AND GRADUATION

Once the curricular, experience, and supervised ministry requirements are met, TRIM students will enter the completion phase of their program. This phase includes the submission of three items that are either provided by the Brethren Academy office or in this manual:

1. Student Self-Assessment (in which the student evaluates their growth, experience in the program, and competencies for ministry)
2. District TRIM Coordinator Evaluation (in which the District TRIM Coordinator evaluates the overall performance of the student)
3. Exit exam (a series of essays developed based on the Church of the Brethren Office for Ministry “Competencies for Ministry”; the essays include case studies, biblical exegesis, and questions about Church of the Brethren history, polity, and practices.)

All these items must be submitted to complete the program.

Once these three items are submitted, Brethren Academy evaluation committee will meet to evaluate the student’s overall performance in TRIM, taking into consideration the student’s coursework, supervised ministry experience, attention to administrative tasks of the program, and exit exam. The evaluation will identify strengths as well as areas that can be further developed through continued education. A copy of the evaluation will be shared with the student and their District TRIM Coordinator. A summary of the results will be provided to the student’s District Executive.

When all requirements have been completed the Program Coordinator of the Brethren Academy will inform the student’s District Executive. 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.

3-A

**FINAL EVALUATION BY DISTRICT TRIM COORDINATOR**

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

- 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.

---

District TRIM Coordinator Signature

Date

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

## POLICIES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### 4-A

#### TRANSFERRING COURSES INTO TRIM

##### **Transferring Credits from Previous Educational Institutions**

If a student believes they have taken courses prior to beginning TRIM that would fulfill the requirements of a TRIM unit, the student can request that the Program Coordinator review previous transcripts to determine if the course can transfer into TRIM. Courses will only be transferred in from 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. Accredited schools can be found at <https://www.ed.gov/accreditation>. 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).

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.

##### **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

##### **Receiving Credit for External Courses During TRIM**

While in TRIM, up to half of the credits needed to complete the TRIM program may be transferred in from non-Brethren institutions unless this number hampers the student’s ability to complete the required subjects and those that must be taken from a Brethren perspective. All courses a student seeks to transfer (into or within the program) must be relevant to either Biblical, Historical and Theological Studies or Ministry Studies.

Brethren Academy students may enroll in a **Bethany Theological Seminary** graduate courses for TRIM credit with permission from the instructor, academic dean, and the director of the Brethren Academy. In addition, the course must meet the following:

1. Students must apply to Bethany as an Auditor by filling out the application and writing the application essay.
2. Applicants must be approved by the Admissions Committee before enrolling in the course. Once admitted, pay the \$350 Auditor fee (the \$50 application fee will be waived.)
3. Successfully audit the course by meeting attendance requirements, completing the assigned readings, engaging in the course through participation, and completing reduced assignments that may be required by the instructor.
2. Successfully auditing a graduate course for Bethany Academy credit results in one credit toward a student's program. In order for this credit to be applied, the instructor must notify the Brethren Academy in writing.

Brethren Academy students may enroll in **Bethany Theological Seminary** graduate courses for graduate credit (to be applied to a graduate transcript with permission from the instructor, academic dean, and the Director of the Brethren Academy. In addition, the course must meet the following requirements:

1. Student must apply to Bethany as an Occasional Student, select "Brethren Academy student for graduate credit," and complete the application essay.
2. Once admitted, pay the \$500 fee (the \$50 application fee is waived).
3. Successfully complete the course by fulfilling all the requirements set forth by the instructor.
4. Students who successfully complete a course for graduate credit will receive three credits on their graduate transcript and one credit on their Brethren Academy transcript. In order for Brethren Academy credit to be applied, the instructor must notify the Brethren Academy in writing.

Brethren Academy students may take **ACTS (Academy Certified Training System)** courses for TRIM credit, with the permission of the course instructor and Program Coordinator. In addition, the course must meet the following requirements:

1. The student will pay the full fee for a TRIM course, payable to the ACTS program.
2. 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.
3. 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
4. The instructor of the ACTS course must agree to these additional components as well, including assigning additional reading and evaluating additional work.
5. Student evaluations will be forwarded to the Brethren Academy from the ACTS office.

## 4-B

### **TIME PARAMETERS AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY**

The TRIM program is designed to be completed in three 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 a 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 (LOA) 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 or from the Brethren Academy website and follow all aspects of the Leave of Absence policy. Leave of absence status includes the following arrangements, privileges, and fees:

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

#### **Progress Status**

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 Brethren 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 the Program Coordinator of the Brethren Academy.

#### **Withdrawal/Transferring Districts**

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. Students who move to a new district while enrolled in TRIM must notify the Brethren Academy Office, the District TRIM Coordinator from the previous district, and the District TRIM Coordinator of the new district. In order to continue in TRIM, a student must have the approval and support of the new district.

## 4-C

### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES AND REQUEST FORM**

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. Requests for financial assistance will be submitted by the student on the appropriate TRIM form to the Brethren Academy office. Submission must take place before the semester ends. 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. These deadlines will be strictly observed.
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 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 are eligible for an award of up to \$600, or the current cost of two courses.
  - C. Since "Introduction to Biblical Studies" and "Practical Ministry Colloquium" are 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. 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.
5. The director of the Brethren Academy will notify the applicant after approving the assistance request.
6. Once the applicant has signed and returned the financial assistance form to the Brethren Academy Office funds will be distributed.
7. The applicant is responsible for all accounting of awards received for tax purposes. Awards received are taxable income.

## REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

An online, fillable form is available at the Brethren Academy webpage.

**Fall Semester: July 1—December 31 (of current year)**

Deadline for application: December 1

**Spring Semester: January 1—June 30 (of current year)**

Deadline for application: June 15

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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). Since "Introduction to Biblical Studies" and "Practical Ministry Colloquium" are funded by the Brethren Academy, they cannot count toward total enrolled courses.

Course	Place	Date	TRIM Units
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

**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.**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**SEND COMPLETED REQUEST TO:**

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



## 4-D

### 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.

## 4-E

### **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 Program Coordinator, the District TRIM Coordinator, and the Brethren 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).

## 4-F

### **POLICY FOR CREATING A CULTURE OF RESPECT IN THE CLASSROOM**

Courses are designed to be settings of mutual respect in which:

- Scripture, as the authoritative and inspired word of God, is the foundation of our work together.
- Training for ministry occurs through topic presentation and dialogue among instructors and students.
- We respect and hear one another even though our views may differ.
- We work within the framework of Church of the Brethren Annual Conference statements.
- Online etiquette will be observed.

#### **Classroom Expectations**

##### **Privacy**

Given the content of the courses taught by the Brethren Academy, it is likely that some students may share situations in their lives or ministries that directly relate to the content of the class. All conversations in the classroom should be considered private (except under circumstances where the safety or well-being of the student, faculty, or others may be in question) and remain solely referred to in the context of the class.

##### **Respect**

Student learners are at various places in their studies as well as their faith journeys. Some have clear opinions about certain topics. Some prefer to hear various perspectives before expressing their own views. Some struggle to find their voice at all as they weave together what they knew coming into the course, what they have personally experienced, and what they are learning. The combination makes for a dynamic classroom.

We do not expect everyone to agree with every statement made by another student or the instructor. We do, however, expect that there will be respectful discourse in the classroom. When there is disagreement, students and instructors will address the content of the statement rather than the speaker.

Often students will share aspects of their lived experiences. These kinds of statements are personal and, by nature, subjective. One person's experience of something may be very different than someone else's. While it is acceptable to discuss generalities or question theories, individual experiences are to be respected.

There is no place for ridicule, condescension, or any other disrespectful communication in the classroom. If such communication is noted, appropriate action will be taken (see "Process for submitting a grievance" below)

## **Language**

One of the drawbacks to online learning is the loss of face-to-face interaction and the ability to interpret tone, body language, even humor and sarcasm. Be aware of how your words may or may not convey negative connotations or aggression. If you are confused by what someone has written, write to them and ask to clarify. Online learning is a new skill set for many that will take patience to acquire.

Additionally, the Brethren Academy invites all students and instructors to work toward the consistent use of language that is inclusive of all people, and struggle against the repeated and exclusive use of speech that limits our understanding of God. We encourage students to be open to multiple images in thinking and speaking about God, while also respecting the choices of other students.

Below are some additional guidelines for successful online communication.

### **Successful Online Communication and Etiquette**

When taking a course online, it is important to remember several points of practice that will foster communication between the students and their instructors.

#### **1. Avoid language that may come across as strong or offensive.**

Language can be easily misinterpreted in written communication. If a point must be stressed, review the statement to make sure that an outsider reading it would not be offended, then post the statement. Humor and sarcasm may easily be misinterpreted as well, so try to be as matter of fact and professional as possible.

#### **2. Your language should also be appropriate for the setting.**

While online learning may provide a sense of informality, language use must be clear, professional, and correct both grammatically and in regard to spelling. Students should avoid using slang (such as “wassup?”), abbreviations (such as “u” for “you” or “lol”), emoticons/emojis (☹), or ALL CAPS (as it can be interpreted as yelling). Avoiding overly informal language is also good practice.

#### **3. Keep writing to a point and stay on topic.**

Online courses require a lot of reading, both assigned works and posted lectures and comments. When writing, keep sentences on topic and brief so that readers do not get lost in wordy paragraphs and miss the point of the statement. Also, try not to introduce new topics; it may confuse the readers.

#### **4. Read first, write later.**

It is important to read all posts or comments of students and instructors within the course

discussion before personally commenting to prevent repeating commentary or asking questions that have already been answered.

**5. Review, review, then send.**

There is no taking back a comment that has already been sent, so it is important to double-check all writing to make sure that it clearly conveys the intended message.

**6. If possible, keep attachments small.**

If it is necessary to send pictures, change the size to an acceptable 100k.

**7. Inappropriate material is prohibited**

Do not forward virus warnings, chain letters, etc. to classmates or instructors. The sharing of pornographic material is forbidden.

**Process for submitting a grievance**

1. If a student feels that interactions are taking place that violate the Policy of Creating a Culture of Respect in the Classroom, that student will privately notify the instructor with the grievance.
2. The instructor will be required to address the student(s) involved and will report the action to the Brethren Academy.
3. If the situation does not improve, the student submitting the grievance should notify the Program Coordinator in which they are enrolled. The Program Coordinator will take appropriate action, which may include additional conversations with the instructor, offending student(s), Director of the Brethren Academy, and/or the offending student's (or students') District TRIM Coordinator, and District Executive.
4. If disciplinary action is needed due to persistent disregard for the Policy of Creating a Culture of Respect in the Classroom, it will be determined in conversation with the Brethren Academy and the student's district.

**Acknowledgements:** The policy introduction is adapted from Susquehanna Valley Ministry Center's *Policy on Creating a Culture of Respect in the Classroom*. The sections regarding classroom and online etiquette were created in consultation with Matthew Boersma, Instructor for *Introduction to Biblical Studies* and *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* for the Brethren Academy.

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