# Internship Handbook

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Note: This Internship Handbook is not exhaustive. Throughout one’s internship, both Luther Seminary’s student policies and the congregation’s employment policies apply.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) During Your Internship

Can I plan to take courses on internship? How many courses can I plan to take?

Yes. Students on internship are encouraged to take classes alongside their internship experience. Ideally, courses would intersect with work in the internship context as dynamically as possible. Students are expected to consult the office of Contextual Learning and their internship supervisor in planning and implementing a proposed course schedule and its interaction with the internship context, keeping in mind existing seminary, internship, and personal obligations. Other conversation partners may be one’s candidacy committee and seminary advising team. Contextual Learning strongly recommends a guideline of no more than 1.0-credit per term during a One-Year/Full-Time internship.

If you are interested in taking intensive coursework: You may use your congregation’s continuing education policy to participate in a short period of intensive coursework, but this opportunity is dependent upon (a) whether a continuing education option is available and (b) whether a continuing education option is approved by your supervisor. If a continuing education option is not available or approved, you will be obligated to use your vacation time to complete intensive coursework. If a continuing education option is not available and if you do not wish to use your vacation time, it is not expected that your congregation or supervisor will make time for you to attend intensive coursework.

What can I expect with regard to my pet(s)?

We understand that pets can be very important to an intern’s mental and emotional health. Therefore, Contextual Learning does not prohibit pets on internship. However, internship housing options are arranged by the congregation and because they are normally ongoing from intern to intern, it’s important to prevent allergic reactions and other health concerns for those who follow after you. As a result, internship housing often prohibits pets. If you do not wish to make other arrangements for your pet during your internship year, please anticipate that you may be responsible for additional housing costs. It is not expected that a congregation or supervisor will be able to make space for your pet. (Is your pet a licensed therapy or guide animal? See Contextual Learning for specifics.)

What is the policy with regard to social media?

The dual aim of Luther Seminary’s internship program is (a) a developmental process of vocational formation and (b) growth in competence in the various skills of ministry practice.

When learning to integrate vocation and identity, the intern should strive to unite their professional calling to public ministry with their identity as an individual. This kind of holistic, integrative attitude means that a Christian public leader’s professional remarks should be in harmony with their informal social media comments. As the intern pastor, what you say in the pulpit should likewise be supported by what you share on Snapchat.

By learning to cultivate competence in ministry practice, our hope is that the intern will hone
their skills in listening, empathy, and pastoral care. Key examples include learning to express concerns respectfully, provide feedback constructively, respect confidentiality, and appreciate privacy. In both face-to-face and online communication, it is important to ask yourself if you are practicing these skills. Would you be uncomfortable if your Facebook post were read aloud directly to your supervisor, committee members, or parishioners?

Is there some kind of contract that we’ll sign at the beginning of my internship?

Yes. You will be obligated to complete and submit a Confirmation of Internship Placement form within the first two weeks of internship; this serves as your opening contract. In addition, the Internship Site Application includes a detailed list of all financial and congregational expectations; the internship site will have retained a copy of this list for their records.

Can I submit my Learning Goals as a write-up or via paper copy?

No. Please complete the Learning Goals using the online Learning Agreement form.

Will my supervisor and I complete different Three-Month Evaluations?

You will each complete an online Three-Month Evaluation, although both evaluations do have similar prompts.

Who reads my evaluations?

You and your supervisor will have access to your evaluations, and your lay committee will have access to their own evaluations when it comes time to complete those. All submitted evaluations are reviewed by your internship point person at Contextual Learning and your Luther Seminary faculty mentor. You are responsible for sending signed copies to your adjudicatory body if required.

Does Contextual Learning send a copy of my evaluations to my synod?

No. You are responsible for sending signed copies to your own adjudicatory body for review.

When and where are the cluster meetings? Where can I find the schedule?

Each year, the cluster meetings are scheduled and facilitated by the local ELCA seminary in the region in which your internship site is located. Contextual Learning disseminates the locations and dates as we receive the schedule from each seminary. That information will be published in the Ministry in Context, so don’t forget to subscribe.
My congregation received an invoice in the fall, but the congregation already submitted a payment for the cluster meeting. What is this invoice?

Each annual site billing is for the travel pool and administrative fees. The travel pool fee serves the greater good of the community by helping to offset some of the travel costs for interns who must make lengthy and expensive moves for their internship. The administrative fees cover each seminary’s ability to craft internship placements each year. Both of these fees are set by the ELCA and collected yearly by each of the seminaries for their internship placements. Neither fee applies to cluster or workshop costs for you or your supervisor. Each site pays $1,500 unless the amount is reduced or waived by special arrangement with Contextual Learning.

Can I perform Holy Communion?

Interns are not expected to preside over Holy Communion. Permission from the bishop of your home synod and the bishop of the synod in which your internship is located is necessary if an exception is made for the good of the worshiping community in which you serve.

How will my internship connect with my candidacy process?

For candidacy checklists, information about ordained ministry and rostered leadership, information about entrance, endorsement, or approval, and candidacy advice and encouragement, please visit Luther Seminary’s Candidacy website at http://www.luthersem.edu/candidacy/. You may also contact Krista Lind at klind@luthersem.edu or 651-641-3435.

What is Early Approval? Am I eligible to be approved early?

Internship is expected to be completed, including the final internship evaluations received by Contextual Learning, before ELCA seniors are eligible for the faculty vote on their approval recommendation for ordination. Following faculty action, synodical candidacy committees make the final decision on all questions of approval. There are three possible exceptions:

1. In the case of concurrent/part-time internships, the above expectation is modified in the following way. When the first twelve months of the concurrent/part-time internship have been completed, a student may be considered by the faculty in the succeeding semester. Prior to a vote in a faculty meeting, summary paragraphs from the final internship evaluations must be submitted by the supervising pastor, the lay internship committee, and the intern. If faculty recommendation for approval is given, it will be contingent upon satisfactory completion of the internship.

2. For a residency internship, the first twelve months will meet the seminary and church requirement for internship. A resident intern may be considered by the faculty upon
completion of the first twelve months of the residency and the submission of final internship evaluations from the supervisor, the lay internship committee and the resident intern. Final approval can be given to the student while the residency internship continues.

3. Where any of the following circumstances apply, students may request early approval prior to the completion of internship in writing to Contextual Learning by December 1:
   - doing a final year internship,
   - affiliated and have completed their “Lutheran year” prior to internship, or
   - seniors returning for only one semester after internship.

Faculty consideration for those students whose request is approved will not occur until the summary paragraphs from the final evaluations have been submitted by the supervising pastor, the lay internship committee, and the intern; at least eight months of the internship have been completed; and all mid-point evaluations have been submitted and reviewed. If the request is granted, faculty recommendation for approval will finally be contingent upon the satisfactory completion of the internship.

Eligible interns will receive detailed instructions in the fall semester prior to the deadline.

After my internship, do I have to attend the Reflection Event?

Yes, we would like to encourage your attendance. In September following the year of internship, returning interns participate in a reflection event with members of the Contextual Learning staff. This event encourages interns to bring closure to the internship year, assess the meaning of the internship year, and inspire the student’s remaining time at seminary prior to ordination and call. This event also allows interns to share their Internship Project with their peers.

What Is Internship?

At Luther Seminary, Internship is a core integrative experiential learning component of the formation of Christian Public Leaders. Internship provides leadership experience under the supervision of a pastor or non-profit ministry leader who serves as a contextual educator. Its dual aim is (a) a developmental process of vocational formation and (b) growth in competence in the various skills of ministry practice.

In Internship, students take on the role of a Christian public leader, engage in the full range of ministry and professional experiences, hone knowledge and skills in proclaiming God's promise in a variety of ways, form new communities, and equip existing communities to love and serve their neighbors. As part of the Internship experience, students will complete a major project that deepens learning of particular leadership skills. These projects may include key leadership areas such as administration, leadership, stewardship, conflict resolution, revitalization, or many more.

Internship and Coursework
Students on internship are encouraged to take classes alongside their internship experience. Ideally, courses would intersect with work in the internship context as dynamically as possible. Students are expected to consult the office of Contextual Learning and their internship supervisor in planning and implementing a proposed course schedule and its interaction with the internship context, keeping in mind existing seminary, internship, and personal obligations. Other conversation partners may be one’s candidacy committee and seminary advising team. Contextual Learning strongly recommends a guideline of no more than 1.0-credit per term during a One-Year/Full-Time internship.

If you are interested in taking intensive coursework: You may use your congregation’s continuing education policy to participate in a short period of intensive coursework, but this opportunity is dependent upon (a) whether a continuing education option is available and (b) whether a continuing education option is approved by your supervisor. If a continuing education option is not available or approved, you will be obligated to use your vacation time to complete intensive coursework. If a continuing education option is not available and if you do not wish to use your vacation time, it is not expected that your congregation or supervisor will make time for you to attend intensive coursework.

**Internship Placement Process**

Contextual Learning arranges all internships. All students who request to restrict geographically are not eligible to receive housing support. Students who request to restrict geographically outside of the Twin Cities will not go through the open interview process with prospective supervisors in February and should not expect to receive a placement decision by mid-April.

**October:** Attend one Internship and Endorsement Information Session. Internship application form due.

**November:** Participate in preliminary interviews with Contextual Learning staff.

**January or June:** Internship Orientation Workshop

Participate in one of the on-campus Internship Orientation Workshop (two options: Saturday, Jan 16, 2016 8am – 5pm or Saturday, June 18, 2016 (8am – 5pm). Register for FE 0200 during either J-term or summer term.

**February:** Review Available Sites, Schedule Interviews, and Interview Supervisors

The process for students who are open to going away for internship or are restricting geographically to the Twin Cities is as follows:

- Students who have completed and submitted an internship application can view available sites and schedule interviews with supervisors.
- Viewing of available sites completed and all interviews with supervisors is scheduled.
- Interview schedules are confirmed and sent to prospective supervisors; for this reason, not further rescheduling will be possible (except in emergencies).
More sites may be added to the list of available sites as we receive their information; check your email for additional interviews with prospective supervisors as they become possible.

For interviews with prospective supervisors, please note the following:

- **Appointments**: Please do not contact the supervisor directly to set up your interview. Sign up for an interview using the Appointments tool.
- **Selections**: Students who have indicated that they intend to geographically restrict to the Twin Cities Metro area will interview with Twin Cities area supervisors only.
- **Contact**: If you have any questions or concerns after interviewing with a supervisor, please be in touch with your Contextual Learning contact person. Please be aware that while we know that every prospective intern wants to reach out in kindness, hospitality, and desire to connect, we also want to ensure that all prospective interns have the best interview experience possible. So, we ask all interns to avoid contacting supervisors directly. We’ve instituted this policy partly to streamline interview scheduling, but also to create a level playing field for all prospective interns. If some applicants develop communication with pastors independently, then other applicants will not be able to enjoy the same level of communication as decisions are made.
- **Schedules**: Whenever possible, select interview times that do not conflict with your classes. If there are no interview times available for a supervisor with whom you wish to interview, please contact Contextual Learning about adding additional interview times.

**March**: Submit Preferences

As prospective interns and supervisors complete the placement interviews, both interns and supervisors will notify Contextual Learning of their placement preferences online.

Please note the following:
- In the placement preferences form, interns and supervisors will be asked to rank their choices with accompanying rationale. Space will be available for reflection on each supervisor interviewed.
- You will also be able to indicate if a site won’t serve you well for internship.

**April**: Placements Completed

Contextual Learning will take into consideration your placement preferences, the prospective supervisors’ reflections, and knowledge of students and sites to make decisions regarding optimal placements for the entire internship class. Students and supervisors will be notified of internship placements via email from Contextual Learning by mid-April.

**Background Check and Boundaries Maintenance Workshops**

The background check is required prior to the start of internship. Please note: this is different than the check completed for entrance into candidacy and/or Luther Seminary and is paid for by Contextual Learning.
The Boundaries Maintenance Workshop is required prior to internship. If you’ve not completed a Boundaries Maintenance Workshop, three to four are offered each year at Luther Seminary.

**Internship Orientation and Boundary Maintenance Workshops**

Luther Seminary students are required to attend one Internship Orientation Workshop (FE 0200) during the year prior to Internship. As the Internship Orientation Workshop happens on-campus, we are offering two times to accommodate different groups of students: an all-day workshop on a Saturday in January and June.

- Because the workshops are scheduled in proximity to the January and June intensives, our expectation is that all future interns will attend one of the two workshops on-campus.
- FE 0200 is not credit-bearing.
- FE 0200 is a prerequisite for internship.

Luther Seminary students are also required to attend one Boundary Maintenance Workshop prior to Internship. Contact the Dean of Students office for available dates.

**Key Assignments**

Ongoing feedback and evaluation enable the interns to learn how others view their ministry, and to identify their strengths and weaknesses. While feedback is a constant process throughout the year, formal feedback occurs in the form of evaluations that are completed online.

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<td>Within first 2 weeks of</td>
<td><strong>Confirmation of Internship Placement.</strong></td>
<td>Intern</td>
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<td>the internship</td>
<td>Confirms contact information, supervisor and</td>
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<td>lay committee chair, and financial agreements.</td>
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<td>Within first 3 months of</td>
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<td>committee, if required. Evaluations and</td>
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<td>Within first 6 months of the internship</td>
<td>Project Proposal. Feedback should be solicited from both the supervisor and the Lay committee in the development of this document. This form may be updated even after it has been submitted, to allow for changes in the project focus.</td>
<td>Intern</td>
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<td>At mid-point of the internship (6 months for a 1-year/full-time, approximately 10 months for a 2-year/part-time)</td>
<td>Mid-point evaluations. It is the intern’s responsibility to mail a hard copy of the evaluations, with signatures, to their candidacy committee, if required. Evaluations and signatures are submitted electronically to Contextual Learning.</td>
<td>Intern Supervisor Committee</td>
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<td>At the conclusion of the Internship (9 to 12 months for a 1-year/full-time, approximately 18 to 24 months for a 2-year/part-time)</td>
<td>Final evaluations should be completed before the intern leaves the site. It is the intern’s responsibility to mail a hard copy of the evaluations, with signatures, to their candidacy committee, if required. Evaluations and signatures are submitted electronically to Contextual Learning.</td>
<td>Intern Supervisor Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>At the conclusion of the Internship</td>
<td>Project Report. When the project is completed, the intern should complete this online form.</td>
<td>Intern</td>
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**Learning Goals**

The purpose of the “Learning Goals” is to outline clear hopes and objectives for your internship. Recall that the dual aim of Luther Seminary’s internship program is (a) the developmental process of vocational formation and (b) growth in competence in the various skills of ministry practice. Please keep the cultivation of vocation and skills in mind as you prepare your Learning Goals.

**Goals**

Goals are inclusive, far-reaching, and visionary. Effective goals highlight your long-range plans for Christian public leadership. Examples goals might be:

- “I would like to become a better chaplain.”
- “I would like to become more familiar with stewardship leadership.”
- “I would like to become more skilled and comfortable as a preacher.”
- “I would like to work on my talents for leading committees.”
- “I want to work on faith-based community organizing in a nonprofit.”
Objectives

Objectives flow from your goals, but focus on transforming those goals into concrete tasks for your internship. Effective objectives are specific, achievable, measurable, and possible. A dimension of risk or challenge is optimal! Example objectives might be:

- “I will incorporate pastoral care for homebound parishioners into my internship.”
- “I will become involved in planning the congregation’s upcoming capital campaign.”
- “I will preach once a month.”
- “I will become part of a congregational committee.”
- “I will develop a list of tips from other faith-based community organizers in my area.”

Strategies and Resources

Strategies and Resources specify how an objective will be achieved. Strategies are activities, techniques and tools. Resources are people and materials (media, curriculum, books).

Example strategies might be:

- “I will visit three homebound parishioners each month.” (an activity)
- “I will develop the budget sheet for the capital campaign.” (an activity)
- “I will preach without notes three times in my first semester.” (a technique)
- “I will serve as the communications person for the food shelf committee.” (a technique)
- “I will host a breakfast once a week with a faith-based community organizer.”

Example resources might be:

- “I will revisit my CPE material to prepare for my home visits.” (a curriculum)
- “I will read Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace by Miroslav Volf (2012) as I work on my new budget sheet.” (a book)
- “I will record myself preaching without notes, then review the recording using my laptop.” (media)
- “I will use Prezi to prepare my presentations about the food shelf.” (media)
- “I will read Leading Change in the Congregation: Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders by Gilbert Rendle (2007) as I work on my conversations with local community organizers.” (a book)

Evaluation Parameters

Evaluation parameters determine how you will know the goals have been achieved. Consider also how evaluation will be done: questionnaire, comments from parishioners, verbatims, observation from supervising pastor and peers, etc. You may use any appropriate format in developing the Learning Goals.

- “I will ask my homebound parishioners to write feedback for me in my binder, with dates.”
- “I will share my new budget sheet with the congregation for evaluation in February.”
- “I will ask my lay committee to complete the Sermon Listener’s Feedback Guide in response to my sermons.”
• “I will share my presentation about the food shelf with a local aid agency, and request their comments for improvement”
• “I will use my list of tips from faith-based community organizers in my Internship Project, with special responses from my supervisor.”

Process

The intern makes any necessary changes to the draft and submits the Learning Goals within the first four weeks of the Internship. These are living documents, and every intern should return to them to re-evaluate and re-frame as needed throughout the semester.

Three-Month Evaluations

The ELCA requires interns and supervising pastors to complete a 3-month evaluation of the internship. Lay committees are not involved in this process. The 3-month form is different from the mid-point and final evaluation form.

Project Proposal

In Internship, students take on the role of a Christian public leader, engage in the full range of ministry and professional experiences, hone knowledge and skills in proclaiming God’s promise in a variety of ways, form new communities, and equip existing communities to love and serve their neighbors.

What is the project?

As part of the Internship experience, students will complete a major project that deepens learning of particular leadership skills. These projects may include key leadership areas such as administration, leadership, stewardship, conflict resolution, revitalization, or many more. Traditional leadership areas have been “evangelism,” “stewardship,” “lay ministry,” and “ecumenism,” but you are welcome to select any key leadership area. The intern’s project proposal and report are useful items to incorporate into one’s Luther Seminary portfolio.

How do I decide what key leadership area I might use for my project idea?

All students on internship are encouraged to take coursework alongside their internship experience. All students are expected to take Leading Christian Communities in Mission before, or at the latest, during their first semester of Internship. This course provides the theological and sociological tools for getting to know contexts, congregations or organizations, and provides a structured process for thinking theologically about specific missional leadership initiatives one might undertake for the required internship project.

The intern might also consider making use of the Learning Goals. Recall that the purpose of the “Learning Goals” is to outline clear hopes and objectives for the internship. These goals and objectives may be of assistance in determining the key leadership area for the project.
Please note: The internship project must be predicated on deep listening and intentional relationship with the context of your internship site. The intern’s LCCM coursework may set the project idea in motion and the intern’s Learning Goals may help to develop the project idea in a more concrete way, but the project itself must serve your internship site in meaningful, positive, and sustainable ways. In order to give time for this preparatory listening and observation, the project proposal is due by the sixth-month mark.

Additionally: It is also important that this project be new to both the intern and the life of the congregation. Crafting the project for the first time will give the intern an opportunity to exercise initiative and to take responsibility for a project or program that has not been developed at that context previously.

What are some good project ideas? What are some poor project ideas?

A good project idea might develop as follows: “In my LCCM course, I learned that listening carefully to the needs of the congregation was really important. So, as soon as my internship began I started spending time at the local coffeeshop where I knew members the neighborhood gathered. I asked them some questions about what they would most like to see happening at the church. Some folks expressed interest in an informal, judgment-free zone where they could ask questions about God, faith, and belief without feeling like they must be experts on the Bible. Meanwhile, I know one of my Learning Goals includes wanting to become a better events coordinator and one of my objectives is to facilitate a successful missional event for the community. Now that I’ve spent a couple of months getting to know the community, maybe it is time to put these ideas together? What if I held a Coffeeshop Theology event on Wednesdays at 5:00pm, right before everyone leaves for the weekly high school football game at 8:00pm? I’ve never done it before, so I think it will be really challenging and scary for me!”

A less successful project idea might be: “Because I really like the classes I’ve taken on the Pauline epistles, I am pretty sure that the people in my congregation would like to gain advanced knowledge on that subject, too. I don’t really know the congregational members’ schedules, so I’m just going to host the program at the church on Wednesdays at 8:00pm, because that date and time seems to work. My Learning Goals are mostly about serving on committees and becoming a better preacher; while I think the project has value, I’d prefer to focus more on my goals. Since I’ve done adult forums on Paul before, I think I can get this going pretty well.”

How do I know if my project proposal will succeed or fail?

The supervising pastor and the lay committee are expected to review and approve the proposal on its appropriateness for the development of the intern and the congregation. The completed project is to be evaluated as to (a) whether the intern demonstrated initiative and organizational skills, and (b) whether the project resulted in significant new learnings for the intern. It is possible, therefore, for an intern to have a “successful” project even though it was a programmatic failure. If the intern took initiative, organized well, was later able to see why the project failed, and can articulate what they learned for future ministry, then it will be deemed a successful project.
How do I begin my project proposal?

The intern should write a specific project proposal and solicit the feedback of both the supervisor and lay committee. Use the online form to compose a first draft. After getting feedback from the supervisor and committee, return to this form to make changes and submit the proposal to Contextual Learning. Students may return to this project proposal throughout the internship year to refine it, accommodating changing circumstances as they occur.

What happens when my project is finished?

When the project is completed, it is to be reviewed by the supervisor and the lay committee, and a report submitted to Contextual Learning, using the online form.

Mid-Point and Final Evaluations

The Mid-Point and Final evaluation forms ask the same questions at two different points during the internship. This allows interns, supervisors, and lay committees to mark the intern's progress and growth.

Supervisors and committee chairs will be able to fill out the forms online and print copies for themselves from their browser windows. Interns will be able to respond to the evaluations online.

Lay intern committees also participate in the evaluation process. It is the responsibility of the committee chair to submit the online evaluation form on behalf of the committee, twice a year. However, the entire committee is expected to participate in the evaluation process by giving the chair their opinions on the evaluation questions.

You are responsible for making sure all three evaluations are submitted online to Contextual Learning by the mid-point and/or end of the internship. Hard copies need to be sent directly to your synod.

Project Report

Remember: It is possible for an intern to have a “successful” project even though it was a programmatic failure! If the intern took initiative, organized well, was later able to see why the project failed, and can articulate what they learned for future ministry, then it will be deemed a successful project.

The Project Report includes a summary of the project as well as a discussion of what
worked, what did not work, what the intern would do differently, and what the intern will carry into future roles of Christian public leadership.

Internship Projects will be shared at the reflection event scheduled for the September following the internship year (see “After my internship, do I have to attend the Reflection Event?” in the FAQ).

**Major Components of the Internship Experience**

**Lay Committee**

The lay internship committee is a small group of five to eight people, meeting monthly (or every other month in a concurrent internship) with the intern, who have agreed to develop a supportive relationship with the intern. The intern and lay committee will learn and grow together as they help each other develop their unique ministries.

The Lay Committee Guide and a helpful instructional video are available online for the Lay Committee.

**The Cluster Meeting**

Twice per year in the fall and spring, all Internship supervisors and pastoral interns around the country are hosted by the nearest ELCA seminary for a cluster meeting. At the cluster meeting, supervisors and pastoral interns enjoy a chance to meet, talk, ask questions, provide feedback, and learn from other partners in the Internship experience. These are valuable sessions and they contribute greatly to the Internship in both semesters. (They are also a fun way to get to know Internship teams at the other seminaries!)

Schedules will be made available in the Fall and Spring via our *Ministry in Context* newsletter.

**Stipend**

The stipend is $1,600 per month for a one-year/full-time internship and $800 per month for a two-year/half-time (concurrent) internship. As the intern is considered an employee of the congregation, their stipend is taxable. Congregations are required to pay the employer’s portion of FICA.

**Housing and Utilities**

(For geographically restricted internship sites, the following housing or a housing allowance requirements are waived. Contact the Office of Contextual Learning if you have questions about this provision.)

The congregation will provide adequate furnished housing and utilities (including Internet) or a housing allowance that provides for both housing and utilities. Separate, private housing
is expected. *The intern is not to be housed together with a parishioner.*

If housing is not secured in advance by the congregation, the congregation will assist the intern in locating housing and will pay a monthly housing and utility allowance directly to the intern.

If housing has been secured but is unfurnished or under-furnished, moving expenses between the internship site and the seminary will be provided by the congregation. Please note: This additional moving expense is not intended to be covered by the travel pool. While mileage support is paid to the intern for travel to and from the internship site, it will not cover all moving costs.

Alternative housing arrangements must be negotiated with the Office of Contextual Learning.

**Expenses**

**Car/Mileage Expenses**

Business-related travel expenses are to be reimbursed to the intern at the IRS standard mileage rate or as a monthly car allowance.

**Work Expenses**

The congregation will reimburse the intern for approved expenses incurred in his or her work.

**FICA**

All stipends are subject to income tax and FICA. Since the intern is considered an employee of the congregation, the congregation is also subject to FICA. Income tax and FICA will also need to be paid on the housing allowance or fair-rental value of housing that is provided. Thus, the financial implication for a congregation hosting a full-time intern is the payment of 7%-plus-percent per month FICA on the stipend and housing allowance. The congregation may assist the intern by paying the employee's portion as well.

**Travel Pool**

- Travel reimbursement is based on the number of miles between the home seminary and the site, and the number of dependents accompanying the student. Interns receive checks at the beginning and end of the internship. Minimum reimbursement has been set at $150.
- If a married couple serves internship together, each spouse is eligible to receive a mileage allowance unless only one travel pool fee has been paid by the internship congregations or institutions. When both are interns, neither can be claimed as a dependent. Dependent children are reimbursed under only one intern's travel pay.
• Congregational payment for the travel pool is set by the Vocation & Education unit of the ELCA at $500.
• Students not returning to Luther Seminary may request return reimbursement unless they receive a call to a congregation which pays for all moving expenses. The return mileage is based on the distance between the site and final destination or the site and the seminary, whichever is less.
• If the situation at a site results in a student being reassigned during the summer, additional mileage will be paid to cover travel to the new site if the distance is greater.

Extra time is allowed for students interning in excess of 500 miles from the seminary for return travel. Thus, for example, interns in Florida should be allowed three days, in addition to their vacation time, to travel back to St. Paul. Contact Contextual Learning if you have any questions.

Internship Administration

All internship sites are responsible for the $1,000 administration fee, set by the Vocation & Education unit of the ELCA, and will be billed, along with the travel pool fee near the beginning of the internship year. Concurrent internship sites will be billed $500 at the beginning of both internship years.

Moving Expenses

• If a congregation provides unfurnished housing, the student is entitled to some assistance in moving furniture and personal possessions. Normally this means the congregation will pay for the rental of a trailer or a truck. The student is responsible for negotiating this agreement with the congregation.
• If the congregation has provided furnished housing, the congregation bears no additional responsibility to assist with moving costs for furniture or other personal items.
• Any agreement regarding reimbursement of moving expense to or from the site must be in writing with a copy provided to Contextual Learning. All negotiations should be completed before the student leaves for the site.

Vacation Time and Other Compensation

Vacation Time

Full-time (12 months) and part-time 2-year concurrent interns will receive one day off per week and two weeks of paid vacation (including two weekends) per year. For a nine-month internship, the intern will receive one day off per week and 10 days of paid vacation (including one weekend).
A note regarding vacation time: If you are interested in taking intensive coursework, please recall that Contextual Learning’s coursework guidelines encourage no more than 1.0-credit per term for a One-Year/Full-Time internship. You may use your congregation’s continuing education policy to participate in a short period of intensive coursework, but this opportunity is dependent upon (a) whether a continuing education option is available and (b) whether a continuing education option is approved by your supervisor. If a continuing education option is not available or approved, you will be obligated to use your vacation time to complete intensive coursework. If a continuing education option is not available and if you do not wish to use your vacation time, it is not expected that your congregation or supervisor will make time for you to attend intensive coursework.

Workman’s Compensation

Workman’s Compensation benefits are State regulated. The congregation is encouraged to inquire about any obligations surrounding coverage for the intern.

FMLA

The Family and Medical Leave Act is federally regulated. Currently the regulation states that an employee is eligible if the employer employs 50 or more employees and the employee must have worked at least 12 months in the past year for the employer. This would mean most interns are not covered under the Family and Medical Leave Act. An extended illness or leave of the intern can become problematic for an experience of such relatively short duration as an internship. In such situations a careful balance must be maintained assuring fairness to the student as well as to the parish. When questions arise with respect to such situations, the following guidelines can apply.

Sick and Parental Leave

Congregations having sick leave policies for its paid staff should seek to apply that same policy to the intern. In the absence of an operative sick leave policy, the following is offered to the intern and the congregation as counsel and advice.

- Definition: For the purposes of this policy, "sick leave" may be granted for any intern absent from duty because of accident or illness, including any illness resulting from pregnancy or childbirth.
- Short term illness - up to two weeks - shall not affect the stipend or housing arrangement.
- Long term illness or disability - more than two weeks - may necessitate adjustments as negotiated by the Contextual Learning, the intern, and the congregation. A long term illness extending beyond a month may necessitate a review of the internship by Contextual Learning.
- An extended sick leave may interfere with the intern’s ability to meet the one-year requirement of the ELCA. There is normally some flexibility allowing for negotiation for an absence of a maximum of three months. For instance, an intern may surrender his or her vacation time or negotiate a reduction of stipend or even waiver
of stipend if that seems appropriate. On occasion, interns are able to fulfill a portion of their pastoral duties by working part-time, permitting them to achieve some of their educational goals. The internship requirement should be fulfilled with a balance of integrity and compassion for one who is ill.

- Parental Leave Policy: Standard policy following the birth of a child while on full-time internship is six consecutive weeks of leave for a mother, and four consecutive weeks for a father, divided as follows:
  - 2 weeks paid leave (mother only)
  - 2 weeks standard paid vacation time (mother or father)
  - 2 weeks unpaid leave (mother or father)
  - Housing support continues during this time.

- Note that parental leave includes the paid vacation time required as standard for all internships. Understanding the limited duration of pastoral internships, these are to be considered reasonable, if basic, amounts. Congregations may choose to accommodate additional parental leave, in consultation and agreement with the intern, Contextual Learning, and the intern's candidacy committee.

- Note: When pregnancy occurs prior to the start of internship, the internship plan will be reevaluated by all parties. Intern, site, seminary, and candidacy committee will together determine the suitability and timing of the internship.

Special Circumstances of the Internship Experience

Pastoral Acts

Interns are restricted in some pastoral functions either because of church policy or state law.

Holy Communion

Interns are not expected to preside over Holy Communion. Permission from the bishop of your home synod and the bishop of the synod in which your internship is located are necessary if an exception is made for the good of the worshiping community in which you serve.

Baptism

In emergencies, an intern may perform a baptism as may any lay person. However, any non-emergency situation is governed by the policies of the ELCA which call for an ordained person to preside at baptism.

Wedding

In most states an intern may not legally officiate at a wedding service. Although there are exceptions to the general rule, they are rare and interns ought not to assume the right or privilege of performing a wedding while on internship.
Funeral

Unlike weddings, neither church policy nor state law insists that funerals be conducted by an ordained person. Therefore, interns are free to conduct funerals with the consent and guidance of the supervising pastor.

Pastoral Vacancies

If a pastoral vacancy occurs in a congregation to which an intern has been assigned, an automatic review of the assignment occurs. If the vacancy occurs before the internship begins, the intern will usually be re-assigned. If the vacancy develops after the internship begins, every effort will be made to continue the internship by seeking to find alternate forms of supervision either with the assistance of an interim pastor or a neighboring pastor, or, on rare occasions, taking advantage of supervisory expertise that may be exercised by lay people within the congregation.

When Internships Become Problematic

Reminder: Throughout one’s internship, both Luther Seminary’s student policies and the congregation’s employment policies apply.

Occasionally internships experience more difficulty than expected. When an internship begins to struggle, there are usually warning signs. For example, one might look for the following:

- One participant, supervisor or intern, is working far harder at the relationship than the other.
- One participant is feeling forced to assume some behavior that seems inappropriate (for instance, when a student is expected to be the pastor's best friend or expected to cover for the pastor, or vice versa).
- Communication is poor and people operate on the basis of assumptions. Regular meetings and sessions are not held.
- Real encounter is avoided and negative feelings are not expressed. Games are played to keep the other at a distance.
- No words of appreciation, thankfulness or encouragement are spoken.
- One participant alone is in charge of the agenda or the relationship. A dependent relationship develops.
- One participant feels controlled. Trust is not evident.
- One participant feels manipulated. Secrets are kept.
- One participant assumes responsibility for what is clearly in another person’s job description and gives unsolicited advice.
- One participant delegates what is his or her duty to another to avoid responsibility or work.
• One participant feels that boundaries have been violated (pursuant to Luther Seminary Boundary Workshop learning, Luther Seminary student policy, and/or congregational workplace and/or sexual harassment or employment policy).

When one or more of these issues becomes problematic, please contact your internship point person or the office of Contextual Learning.

Even staying attentive to these issues, notifying Contextual Learning, and working to address problem areas will not always lead to a satisfactory resolution. When that is the case, it may be necessary to end an internship before its scheduled time has been completed.

Any decision to end an internship early is the responsibility of the Contextual Learning staff following consultation with those involved including the intern, supervising pastor, and at times, the internship committee. Additional consultation with the intern's synodical candidacy committee, intern's faculty mentor, and other faculty members may also be helpful.

Internships can be ended early for a variety of reasons. Whatever the reason, there is a need for both congregation and intern to process what has happened and the Contextual Learning staff will attempt to make sure that opportunity is provided.

• Intern, supervisor and internship committee will each be asked to submit a report within one month of the conclusion of the internship detailing their perspective on the internship and the reasons for its early termination. These reports will be made available to the Contextual Learning staff and the student's candidacy committee.

• With respect to the student whose internship has been ended prematurely, experience indicates that there is invariably a need for time and space to review what happened, attend to the variety of emotions involved and consider realistic options for the future. Accordingly, it is not advisable to seek an immediate re-assignment.

• Resuming seminary course work may be an option for some students, but in most instances a student is better served by stepping back from the process entirely for at least one month, or more.

• An automatic Leave of Absence (LOA) is granted and strongly recommended for the remainder of the semester in which the termination takes place. If more time is needed, a longer LOA could be requested from the Dean of Students Office.

• Termination of an internship may result in a “Fail” grade if the internship is being taken for credit.

• It may be recommended that a panel be convened to review the early ending of an internship experience, including any reports or related documents. This panel may consist of the intern, Luther Seminary staff, the faculty mentor, and others, as deemed appropriate and helpful to the process.

Any decision with respect to an internship re-assignment will involve consultation with student, candidacy committee, and advisor. A prematurely ended internship is likely to mean an unanticipated extension of the student's academic program.
In situations where the internship was not completed, the necessity of extending the academic program may seem unfair. On the other hand, if the goal is primarily to learn and grow while taking one’s experience into account, an extended program may be better educationally than not taking enough time to work with the issues that are present. The point is that students need to learn and grow from their experience and not allow anxiety or security concerns to move them too quickly into another placement process.

Students will routinely be expected to take advantage of the services of the North Central Ministry Development Center (for Luther students) or similar agency provided at seminary expense. An additional resource to assist students in reflecting on their experience is the opportunity to participate in a small group experience. Experience has demonstrated the value of being part of a group of colleagues and peers in which students can tell their story honestly and openly and know they will be heard.

Opportunity to become part of such a group is on-going with assistance for the cost for participation provided by the Contextual Learning Office. Financial assistance can also be provided for individual counseling if that is deemed appropriate by the student. Support will be extended to the student (and family) during and after an internship termination.

This can include:
- Provision for the counseling noted above.
- Continuation of internship stipend for one month.
- Transportation and relocation expenses will be arranged in conversation with Contextual Learning.

After Internship

Sending of Final Evaluations

You are responsible for making sure all three evaluations are submitted online to Contextual Learning by the end of the internship. Hard copies need to be sent directly to your synod.

Reflection Event

We know the return to campus can be rough. We know you've grown in your leadership, and have lived into the role of pastor through the experiences you've had on internship. We want to offer you an opportunity to continue reflecting on your pastoral leadership, a practice both conducive to your growth and learning now as well as a fruitful practice to continue in the years ahead. We'll certainly not exhaust all the great stories you have to share during this one afternoon. However, we want to get at the really powerful, meaningful stories and experiences.

We host an opportunity to continue reflecting on your pastoral leadership, a practice both conducive to your growth and learning now as well as a fruitful practice to continue in the years ahead. We'll certainly not exhaust all the great stories you have to share during this
one afternoon, but it’s a great way to start processing your internship experience with colleagues, staff and faculty. Our hope is that it sets the stage for much more informal conversation and sharing in the weeks following.

Approval

The seminary faculty, upon recommendation of Contextual Learning, determines whether or not the completed internship meets the requirements of the seminary and the church. A successfully completed internship is a requirement for both graduation and ordination.

Usually an internship is considered a "Pass" when the supervising pastor recommends the student for ordination without reservation, and the internship committee agrees.

If the supervising pastor or internship committee identifies serious difficulties in ministry, i.e. the student remains unwilling to grow and learn or manifests inadequacy as a pastoral theologian or the student does not receive an unconditional recommendation from the supervising pastor or internship committee, a Contextual Learning Committee will be appointed to review the situation and make recommendations for addressing the identified issues. Additional supervised involvement in ministry may be necessary in order to meet expectations that will qualify a student for entering the approval process.

Follow-Up

Contextual Learning files are primarily records indicating the growth of students in ministerial competence and shall be kept in Contextual Learning. These files contain statements, reports and material for the periodic review of the individual students. At significant points in the education of each student, she or he should review these files in the presence of a member of the Contextual Learning staff (e.g., after internship). Students are encouraged to include in their file a response to any evaluations they question or challenge, after sharing the same with a member of the Contextual Learning staff.

The student’s Contextual Learning file remains in Contextual Learning during the student's final year(s) at seminary. The files are treated as confidential and permission to share any of the material contained therein with persons outside the seminary community must be granted by the student in writing.

Students use the material in their Contextual Learning file as they help to create dossiers for their synodical conversations.

Members of the seminary faculty have access to these files in order to respond to requests for information about or evaluation of a particular student. The Contextual Learning staff has the right to designate other appropriate persons to examine a student's file for educational and approval purposes only (e.g. the Registrar, the Academic Dean, the student's faculty mentor). Anyone, other than the above, desiring access to the file must have the student’s written permission.
At the conclusion of the student's seminary career, the student's file is available to him or her. Student files not picked up by the student in accordance with procedures outlined by Contextual Learning will be destroyed after three years.