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**Learning Covenant Template and Guidelines**

Due by Wednesday, August 10, 2023

1. **What is the Learning Covenant?**

The Perkins Intern Program approaches Interns as “adult learners,” namely, as intelligent, responsible, and mature persons whose effort and initiative directly contribute to the overall experience and quality of learning derived from the Internship. For this reason, Interns are charged with writing, and periodically revising, a document that will serve as a type of job description called the Learning Covenant.

The Learning Covenant should map out short-and-long-term objectives called Learning Goals and delineate day-to-day activities called Tasks (see section below). In this way, you (the Intern) can chart the trajectory for your own Internship experience.

1. **Writing Learning Goals & SMART Tasks**

Learning Goals can be formulated as a **set of skills**, **leadership role**, **responsibility**, or **spiritual practice** in which you want to gain proficiency. Keep in mind that Learning Goals must relate directly to at least one of the Competencies (see Sample Learning Covenant).

SMART Tasks are **specific**, **measurable**, **achievable**, **realistic**, and **timely** activities that should enable you to achieve a Learning Goal. Tasks should clearly relate to at least one Learning Goal. Aim to write **at least two** Learning Goals per Competency and **at least two** SMARTTasks per Learning Goal. Use this formula as a general guide: **1 Competency = 2 Learning Goals = 4 SMART Tasks**

To determine whether a Task meets the criteria, ask yourself: “if someone asks me whether I have completed activity X, would I be able to give a definitive, time-specific answer? **Examples**: Yes, I finished yesterday; no, I will start next Friday; I am 50% done but I should finish tomorrow. If you would not be able to give such a response, then the Task probably needs some revision to be a SMART Task.

Keep in mind you will need to explain to your Mentor Pastor, Lay Teaching Committee, and Faculty Supervisor how each SMART Task will enable you to achieve a Learning Goal and how, in turn, each Learning Goal relates to a Competency. If you can’t explain this, then you probably need to spend more time thinking through and revising your Learning Covenant. Input from your Internship Team can be helpful in this process. Make sure to send draft Learning Covenants to your Faculty Supervisor, Mentor Pastor, and perhaps even to your LTC Chair with enough time to incorporate feedback.

1. **Revisions**

There will be three formal Evaluation meetings during the course of the Internship. At these meetings, your Internship Team will discuss and address whether they believe you accomplished what you set out to do. In other words, they will evaluate and provide feedback on your capacity to complete SMART Tasks and accomplish Learning Goals as delineated in your Learning Covenant.

Know that you have two opportunities to submit a revised Learning Covenant: once after the 9th Week Evaluation (mid-Oct) and again after the Mid-point Evaluation (Feb). With each revision, you may choose to make slight changes or replace entire Learning Goals or SMART Tasks altogether.

*Do I have to revise my Learning Covenant?* The short answer is no. If the original version is working fine, feel free to keep using it or to make minor modifications. The majority of Interns, however, decide to expand, significantly alter, or even cut-down their original Learning Covenant after a few months. Our advice: strive to find ways to maximize the Learning Covenant by challenging yourself as time goes on. Usually, conversations with Mentor Pastors and Lay Teaching Committees are instrumental in this regard.

Consider writing the original Learning Covenant with the Evaluations in mind. For instance, you may set out to accomplish a Learning Goal in the first eight weeks (by the 9th Week Evaluation). After doing so, you could then replace the original Learning Goal with a new one, which you aim to complete by the Midpoint Evaluation. Similarly, you my leave a Learning Goal in-tact, but decide to replace the original SMART Tasks with ones that are more challenging or reasonable based on your context.

1. **Getting Started: Two Approaches**
2. **From Competency à Learning Goal à SMART Task**

Begin drafting Learning Goals with the phrase “I will learn…” This approach can help define an objective by pressing you to identify precisely what you want to learn. Use the following questions to stimulate your thinking:

* 1. What do I need to do in order to feel that I am truly mastering this Competency?
  2. Am I already familiar with aspects of this Competency? If so, how can I build on my existing knowledge to deepen my familiarity with the central lesson?

1. **From SMART Task à Learning Goal à Competency**

Begin by making a list of your ideal or assigned ministry responsibilities. Break them down into Tasks (**specific**, **measurable**, **achievable**, **realistic**, and **timely** activities). Then, ask yourself, “What do I hope to learn from doing these activities? What leadership qualities, pastoral impact, or theological insights am I seeking? Use your answers to formulate Learning Goals. Finally, match up each of your Learning Goals with the appropriate Competency. Complete this exercise by making final edits to the Learning Goals and SMART Tasks (see Writing Learning Goals and SMART Tasks above).

**Learning Covenant**

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| **AREA I: BE AWARE** | | |
| **COMPETENCIES** | **LEARNING GOALS** | **TASKS** |
| 1. Demonstrate the ability to implement **regular practices**, grounded in love of God, self, and neighbor, for a **sustainable life** of Christian service in the following areas:    * daily spiritual disciplines    * consistent self-care that addresses physical, emotional, and relational needs    * ethical inter-personal boundaries |  |  |
| 1. Demonstrate the capacity to grow in **self-awareness** by discussing with the **Internship Team** how **presuppositions** and/or **theological convictions** inform **ministry practices**. |  |  |
| 1. Demonstrate the ability to **receive and integrate constructive feedback** from the Internship Team regarding **communication** and **leadership practices** by revising the Learning Covenant. |  |  |
| 1. Demonstrate the ability to complete **required meetings and assignments** on time in order to cultivate the **professional work habits** that are necessary to thrive as a Christian leader. |  |  |
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| **AREA II: THINK THEOLOGICALLY** | | |
| **COMPETENCIES** | **LEARNING GOALS** | **TASKS** |
| 1. Demonstrate the capacity to **describe** and **assess** the **theological rationale underlying** **ministry practices** (Tasks) in **Theological Reflection Papers**. |  |  |
| 1. Demonstrate the ability to draw on the **intellectual resources of the Christian tradition** in the execution of ministerial responsibilities (i. e. preaching, teaching, worship, outreach, pastoral care). |  |  |
| 1. Develop a comprehensive **Theology of Ministry**, as part of the Final Self-Evaluation, that integrates the **Internship experience** and **seminary journey** with their **long-term vocation.** |  |  |
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| **AREA III: LEAD FAITHFULLY** | | |
| **COMPETENCIES** | **LEARNING GOALS** | **TASKS** |
| 1. Demonstrate the ability to **recruit, organize, and collaborate** with a team to implement new **leadership projects** with **clear goals** and a **robust theological vision.** |  |  |
| 1. Demonstrate the capacity to **plan** and **lead services** with a **worship team** and to **discuss** **the** **theological dimensions** of **worship**. M.Div. students are required to preach at least four sermons over the course of the academic year. |  |  |
| 1. Demonstrate the ability to **organize and balance** their schedules effectively in order to meet **Internship, self-care, family, and academic responsibilities**. |  |  |
| 1. Develop the ability to conduct a focused **Ministry Context Study** that can assist the placement site in its mission. **\*This competency is not required for M.A.M. students.**    * **Optional**: Submit a written report, based on the Ministry Context Study, to the Lay Teaching Committee or other relevant parties (as appropriate). |  |  |

STATEMENT OF COVENANT

I will seek out and rely on my Mentor Pastor, On-site Supervisor (if applicable), Lay Teaching Committee, and Faculty Supervisor for support, guidance, counsel, and evaluation during my internship.

*Intern Signature Date*