

Guidelines for the portfolio – students in Year 1

This protocol applies to Ordination students in Year 1 in the academic year: 2008-9

Last revised: September 2007

Not to be used by students until after the briefing session at the first residential weekend.

The portfolio consists of the following:

- i) the local church/community profile
- ii) the observation placement
- iii) the assignment on ministries observed at Easter School
- iv) the report on preaching and leading worship
- v) the learning journal, consisting of reports on the weekends and Easter School, & annotations on them
- vi) linking text and overall self-assessment

Note: in what follows a range of word-count is indicated. The lower end of the range represents the typical word-count recommended. There is however no penalty for writing up to the maximum word-count indicated.

Elements i) – iv) will be marked as free-standing assignments. The assessment criteria are available on request. The local church/community profile consists of:

- the two page introductory flyer, welcoming a stranger to your church, plus
- the sociological analysis of the church within its community (this may contain pictures, statistics and maps), plus
- an account of a key story of your church's life (perhaps in terms of a certain defining moment in its life) plus
- an account (in terms of a diagram) of the power relations in your church.

This assignment should be 2500-4000 words, and counts for 40% of the total mark for the module.

The observation placement should be 1500-2000 words and counts for 20%. In it you should give an account of how the placement church *differs* from your home church in its sociological profile, what you discern to be its defining 'story', and what you glean (from interviewing the minister and two laypeople) about its power relationships, the collaboration between clergy and laity, and the potential for change.

The assignment of observing ministries at Easter School is a 2000-2500 word essay which counts 30%. Further details will be given in the briefing you will receive before Easter School.

The report on preaching and leading worship is a 1000-1500 word assignment and counts for 10%. Each of the assignments i) to iv) must be passed for the module to be passed.

The learning journal (v) consists of a 750-900 word response to certain set questions about each weekend, and to Easter School, in the areas of faith and spirituality, theology, and ministerial skills. The set questions are at *****(web address)****. (A different format applies to the journal at Easter School.)

We would like you to develop the habit of writing these responses within a day or two of completing the weekend. There will then be an opportunity to discuss each report with your personal tutor. You will then want to annotate the report to reflect your continued consideration of your learning.

One way to compile this sequence of annotated reports is to word-process the initial report, and then insert annotations in a different font. This means doing the whole exercise on the computer. **As we shall be looking at the development of your insight you will need to date every annotation you make.** The portfolio is to be handed in at the end of the sixth weekend, so that report will have to be handwritten.

It is most important to realise that we are not looking either for some brilliant series of set answers, nor are we looking for ways to fail you! Rather we are providing a way in which you can *integrate* your experience of the weekends into the rest of your study, work, prayer and life. We are also looking to instil reflective, self-critical habits in you which can continue through the process of lifelong learning that we hope your ministry will be. Some will find the reporting hard at first – that is why we have provided such a structured set of questions. To some it will come more easily – indeed some will already be keeping some form of journal. We will provide advice for those interested in developing the habit of journaling.

However, it is most important to stress that these reports and annotations are not a private journal which we insist on seeing, but a part of your formally assessed work. Because the issue of confidentiality and self-disclosure is a very important one, both in training and in ministry, we offer some more detailed guidance on this:

You should be as open in the reports as you feel comfortable in the context of a formal document. There might however be reactions to the course material, or personal problems thrown up by it, which seemed to you so serious – in terms of your own psychological or spiritual stability – that they are properly approached through a face-to-face meeting with your staff tutor or spiritual director. In that case they should not be discussed *in detail* in your report. You may want just to

use some phrase such as 'I found this very hard.', then if questioned, explain that you have sought help with it. But if you do withhold what you know is an important reaction, make sure you *do* address it with an appropriate confidant. (This process of deciding where to seek help, and being sure to seek it, models good professional practice for any worker in a pastoral profession.)

Again, it is good practice to have to sift through your reactions to others. It is entirely valid to comment that a presentation by an instructor was baffling or unhelpful, or to say that you found it difficult to profit from working with a particular group of students. That is a comment about yourself, in relation to content and to others, which can then be explored. However, negative reactions to or judgments of teachers or fellow students *as people*, as opposed to reactions to their roles as teachers or supervisors or co-workers, are not appropriate to include in the weekend-reports (or indeed in the placement report). Again, a personal difficulty which you consider is really obstructing your growth or training should be taken up with an appropriate member of staff.

It is important to use the learning journal to focus on your own reactions to sessions, rather than to judge those sessions objectively as pieces of teaching. The latter is the function of the review times we have and the student evaluation sheets. Thus, a session may spark off a strong reaction in you because it was taught in a particular way. Perhaps it was not taught appropriately in your view (evaluation), but perhaps also your reaction tells you something about yourself, your own theological position, your own strengths and vulnerabilities (reflective learning). We don't want either process to be missed out!

We ask you not just to bind up assignments i) to v) in a single portfolio but to provide some overall linking comments. These will look back on what you have written and help us to see how you have responded to the experience as a whole. Comments might be brief, e.g. 'my observation placement report follows. Largely it speaks for itself, though in retrospect I wish that I had said more about ...' or more extended if you see particular connections between that assignment and other work you have done, and want us to know that you see them. For example, you might have completed your first two assignments, and then find a passage of scripture, either in your university study or in your church, which suddenly illuminated your comments about power relationships. We would rather you build on what you have written before, through a linking comment, than go back and change your previous work.

You may also want to comment on what you learned most from, and why that might have been. Again the stress is not on our trying to catch you out but on building up self-aware, self-critical learning practice in tomorrow's ministers. We also ask you, between weekends 5 and 6, to review the portfolio as a whole and make a candid self-assessment as to your own

learning and development over the period of the portfolio. This self-assessment is not part of the assessed element of the module, though it will inform our end-of-year report. Further guidance will be provided on this.

*The learning journal is the key tool by which we want to see you integrate insights gained from the weekends with other learning, in particular the work you do at the University, but also in the tutor group programme, in your own personal devotional study, and in everyday life(!) Please be thinking after every weekend about what **connections** you saw between your learning at the weekend and your other learning.*

To emphasise the importance of these connections, and to enable us to see your pattern of learning as a whole, we ask you to include in your final portfolio copies of all the assignments you have submitted to the University, together with marksheets where available.

Elements v) – vi) of the portfolio are ‘formative’ – that is to say they do not receive a mark, but they must be completed satisfactorily for the module to be passed.

Although double-marking is not standard at Level 1, all the assignments in the portfolio will be double-marked to ensure that the assessment criteria are being rigorously followed.

We also encourage you to keep a ‘clipboard’ of comments and insights which do not yet seem connected to the other material of the portfolio. They may well find their place in the 2nd or 3rd year portfolios! If you do this, please indicate clearly what section of the portfolio is the clipboard. This will not form part of the formal assessment.

SPECIMEN PORTFOLIO FORMAT

MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT MODULE I

PORTFOLIO

NAME:

CONTENTS:

The local church/community profile: (name of church/community)

- **the introductory flyer, welcoming a stranger to your church, plus**
- **the sociological analysis of the church within its community (this may contain pictures, statistics and maps), plus**
- **an account of a key story of your church's life (perhaps in terms of a certain defining moment in its life) plus**
- **an account (in terms of a diagram) of the power relations in your church.**

Comments

The report on the observation placement (name of church)

Comments

The observation of ministries at Easter School

Comments

The report on preaching and leading worship

Comments

The learning journal - reports on the weekends and Easter School, with annotations

Comments

The self-assessment

Plus 'the clipboard' – not for assessment

Plus: Copies of your University essays, with marksheets