The Psychological Assessment Program

All M.Div. and most M.A. students participate in a psychological assessment early in their seminary program. This assessment gives students valuable insight into their own personality and relational styles. The psychologists used by the seminary have a very clear picture of the particular personal and relational capacities needed for effective ministry and write their reports accordingly.

Formation Group leaders receive their students’ psychological reports and work with students to follow up on psychologist’s suggestions or recommendations. Psychologists use the word *suggestion* for follow-up activities that will aid the student’s further growth and emotional development but require no accountability from the student on how he or she followed up on the suggestion. Psychologists use the word *recommendation* for follow-up activities that require student engagement and accountability. *Recommendations* involve areas of growth that are *crucial* for successful candidacy and ministry in the CRC. Students should work closely with their Formation Group leaders to understand these recommendations and to take appropriate action steps.

This document provides an overview of the kinds of follow up activities suggested or recommended by psychologists. These activities are available to *all students*, not just those seeking candidacy and we encourage students to take advantage of the extra support and services provided.

**Academic Support**

Academic Support by the Calvin College Center for Student Success ([https://calvin.edu/offices-services/center-for-student-success/](https://calvin.edu/offices-services/center-for-student-success/)) is available to students throughout the duration of their studies at CTS. Some resources available to students include: volunteer note-takers recruited from the class by the instructor, recording of lectures, proofreaders to assist in test taking and tutors provided by CTS, enlarged print materials provided by the instructor upon request, oral exams if necessary by the instructor, reserved front row seating, distraction-free settings for test taking, extended test times, requests not to penalize for spelling errors during in-class writing assignments, and closed-captioned films/videos. In addition, the Disability Service office also provides coaching and recordings of textbooks.

For recommendations about who provides these services, please contact the Associate Academic Dean, Dr. Mary Vandenberg (mvberg96@calvinseminary.edu). Any referrals may be from outside of the seminary (such as the Center for Student Success at Calvin College) and could include further non-seminary referrals, (e.g., professionally diagnosing of ADHD).

**Assertiveness Training**

The assertiveness training seminar helps students become more effective in relationships and ministry by teaching them the difference between assertive, non-assertive, and aggressive behavior. This seminar is offered to CTS students at a subsidized fee of $25.00 per student. These sessions are offered once every two years. The training will be publicized in the CTS news.
Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

**General Description**
Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is a professional, process-oriented educational experience that provides students with an opportunity to develop new awarenesses of themselves as persons and pastors, as well as the needs of those to whom they minister. As such, CPE is intensive and extensive, with a minimum time commitment of 400 hours.

**Basic Options for Participation**
CPE is typically packaged as a full-time summer experience or a part-time, concurrent experience during the academic year. The full-time (minimum of forty hours per week) basic unit of CPE typically takes place over the course of ten weeks during the summer.

CPE may also be engaged on a half-time basis (“extended” units/quarters) over the course of twenty weeks (minimum commitment of twenty (20) hours per week). The schedule for these extended quarters varies from one CPE center to another. The closest CPE Center, Pine Rest (PR), schedules their extended quarter from early-October to mid-March. This local center is often the most realistic venue for CTS students to complete an extended quarter. However, scheduling the same full-day off (usually on Thursdays) over the course of the fall semester, J-term, and spring semester can pose a significant challenge for many CTS students. Other CPE centers may offer different schedules during the academic year.

The schedule for full-time and extended units for all certified CPE centers can be found on the ACPE website (www.acpe.edu). Students are strongly encouraged to explore the possibility of participating at other centers—especially for full-time summer opportunities—in various locations around North America. The website is a great resource for exploring these possibilities.

**Description of the CPE Experience**
The focal points of the CPE experience are: 1) the CPE group (6 or 7 participants from other seminaries or a variety of ministry settings) led by a certified CPE supervisor; 2) “clinical work” (ministry) in an assigned/approved ministry setting/internship (e.g. hospitals, a variety of institutions, or congregations); and 3) individual supervision sessions with the CPE supervisor for processing of experiences in the group and assigned ministry setting. A significant amount of participants’ time (approximately 40%) is spent in a CPE group. The supervisor seeks to facilitate the group process in such a way that group members learn to offer and receive feedback from each other as ministry incidents and conversations are processed within the group. Approximately 50% of the CPE participant’s time is spent doing ministry in their ministry setting. At the conclusion of the experience, participants write a self-assessment and the CPE supervisor writes an evaluation.

**Anticipated Gains in Formation for Ministry**
CPE teaches and employs a clinical learning model. Students who participate in CPE may anticipate that they will develop a clearer sense of pastoral identity and become more aware of ways in which their person and ministry is experienced by others. CPE also assists students in developing a greater awareness of how their attitudes, values, emotions, assumptions, strengths/weaknesses, etc. affect the effectiveness of the pastoral care they offer. By way of participation in the CPE group, students may anticipate growing in their ability to engage in providing and receiving support, confrontation and clarification regarding their interactions with others. Students will be challenged and helped by the group and supervisor to begin integrating their learning’s from CPE into their personal and
pastoral functioning. Students may also anticipate that they will develop an ability to make effective use of their religious/spiritual heritage, theological understanding, and knowledge of the behavioral sciences in their pastoral care of persons and groups.

**Capacity, Costs, and Credits**

CPE centers typically accept six to eight participants per group. Currently, the Pine Rest center has the capacity to offer two summer and one or two extended units. However, space in this program is limited, since Pine Rest also serves other seminaries, chaplains, individual pastors, dioceses, etc. Like most CPE centers, Pine Rest strongly values building diversity into the CPE group. For these and other good reasons, CTS strongly encourages students to research possibilities for full-time summer sessions with CPE centers outside of West Michigan and around North America.

The typical cost or tuition for participating in CPE varies greatly. Tuition is usually paid directly to the CPE center. The West Michigan CPE center at Pine Rest has a special arrangement with CTS in which Pine Rest bills CTS for the cost of the program $1,000. The balance (which may be reduced further if students qualify for a need-based scholarship from Pine Rest) is billed to the student on their student account.

CTS supports all students completing CPE at any accredited center by way of granting 4 hours of credit for their Vocational Formation internship program. CTS will include this credit on the student’s transcript. There is no additional per credit hour tuition charge for these credits.

**Granting of CPE Credit**

In order to receive credit for completing CPE, students must:

1. **Submit a copy of their CPE Supervisor’s Report as an e-mail attachment** (if possible) to the Vocational Formation Office (VFO) at vocationalformation@calvinseminary.edu, and to their Formation Group course in Canvas. Students are advised to request that their supervisor include a grade in their report. If it is not possible for the supervisor to provide this report as an e-mail attachment, the student must submit a hard copy to the VFO. This hard copy will be kept on file for review by the student’s Formation Group leader.

2. **Submit a copy of their self-reflection/evaluation report as an e-mail attachment** to the VFO vocationalformation@calvinseminary.edu, and to their Formation Group course in Canvas.

3. Only when both reports have been submitted will credit be granted.

For further information or clarification please contact Geoff Vandermolen (gav016@calvinseminary.edu) at CTS. For more information on our local CPE center at Pine Rest please visit their website [www.pinerest.org/education/workshops/cpe.asp](http://www.pinerest.org/education/workshops/cpe.asp)

**Leading with Emotional Intelligence**

This seminar unpacks the personal qualities necessary for successful leadership. i.e., the basics of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, initiative, flexibility, persuasiveness, and social skills. This seminar is offered to CTS students at a subsidized fee of half of the cost. These sessions are normally offered at least once every two years. The training will be publicized in the CTS news.
Group Counseling
Group Counseling at CTS consists of 10 sessions. Groups are offered at least once a year. Groups are organized on a sign-up basis and are limited to 10 students. The cost for a group counseling experience is $350, of which $175 is subsidized by the seminary. It is our hope that through these group counseling experiences students will gain more self-awareness, improved emotional well-being and open feedback from peer interactions. Group counseling opportunities will be publicized in the CTS news.

Individual Counseling
Students seeking individual counseling should first determine if their health insurance will cover the cost. If not, there are several counselors who have agreed to provide care for our students at a reduced rate. The seminary also contributes, leaving the students to pay a small co-pay. For more information, please contact Joan Beelen at jrb44@calvinseminary.edu