

Master of pastoral care - Internships

The demands on pastors are high. They must have both academic competences and leadership skills. They are communicatively strong and are approachable on spirituality and developments in society and culture. On top of that, their profession is part of an organisation in transition. The church is changing with the times and this requires careful consideration of what should be preserved from the past and what should be abandoned or re-articulated and lived.

Pastor training demands a lot from the candidate, from the trainers - from the academy and practice - and from the church people involved. Such training is never finished. Preachers, like all professionals in these changing times, will need to continue to learn continuously in all areas of their profession where they are active.

The practical part of the training, which constitutes the graduation option pastoral care (Ma2), can be considered the first step on that path of ongoing development. After this first step, the candidate is able to start as a professional in church work.

The forms chosen for this master are in line with further professionalisation. The candidate is in charge of this part. He or she makes an analysis of the practice and confronts it with recent scientific literature. By comparing his or her own development with the competences to be achieved, a picture emerges of the tasks and assignments to be undertaken. The requirements for the candidate are articulated in those competences.

Guidance is provided by faculty trainers in close cooperation with professionals involved from practice. Deeper learning is envisaged by holding regular expert meetings, or forming a learning community.

The pastoral specialisation focuses on the one hand on sharpening theological competences in interpretation, mediation, guidance, assistance and reflection. On the other hand, the student gets to know the professional field and to act as a link and representative in it. Liturgical and homiletical skills, deontological demarcations and self-reflection also have their place.

General outline of pastoral placements

Workplace learning is designed in a cycle. Five steps are taken each time, recognisable as the stages of a design study:

1. Explore the context, providing an analysis of the determinants and questions.
2. Delving into recent scientific sources, which provides a theoretical framework that structures the work. Learning points are formulated based on steps 1 and 2.
3. Design and implementation of activities, providing a report and input for evaluation
4. Evaluation based on the learning points and with a critical review of exploration and theoretical framework.
5. Reporting and presentation. In it, learning outcomes and questions for further development and research are formulated.

First step in the internship is a systematic exploration of the internship site. (Religious) sociological data is collected. The history of this place is described. The vision from which work is done at this place is critically described and is compared with the referenced literature. Criticisms of this vision are also sought. Based on this inventory, a starting document is written that brings together the various analyses. Then, using a methodology (see appendix internship folder), the trainee makes a strength-weakness analysis of his or her competences for the chosen field of work. Based on the analyses in combination with the strength-weakness analysis, a personal learning plan is drawn up with a number of learning questions. Finally, these learning questions are linked to each of the competences of the internships.

With the learning objectives, a number of internship tasks are chosen in consultation with the trainers (practice and academy) that allow the learning objectives to be worked on. Each internship task involves a content preparation - the theoretical framework - that leads to a



number of focal points. These focal points are the basis for feedback, feedup and feedforward from the trainers. These focal points are also the basis for the trainees' reflection.