

Clinical Placement & Preceptor

Clinical Pastoral Education takes place through both structured education and the practice of spiritual care. Each CPE unit includes **100 hours of education and supervision** and **300 hours of clinical spiritual care practice**.

Community-Based Clinical Practice

GISCE practices **community-based CPE**. Students complete their clinical spiritual care practice within a setting where they have meaningful access to persons, families, or communities in need of spiritual care.

A clinical placement does not need to be a traditional hospital chaplaincy department. What matters is that the setting provides sufficient opportunity for the student to practice spiritual care throughout the unit, develop sustained relationships where appropriate, and complete the required **300 clinical practice hours**.

Potential clinical settings may include:

- Hospitals and healthcare settings
- Hospice and palliative care
- Senior living communities
- Correctional settings
- Shelters and community agencies
- Congregations and faith communities
- Mental health or recovery settings
- Other settings where spiritual care is meaningfully practiced

Students are encouraged to think creatively about where spiritual care already happens—or where there is a population whose spiritual and emotional needs call for attentive care.

All clinical placements are reviewed with the ACPE Certified Educator to determine whether the setting can adequately support the student's CPE learning.

Securing Your Clinical Placement

Students are responsible for identifying and securing their own clinical placement.

You do not need to have every detail finalized before beginning a conversation with GISCE. If you have a possible site and are unsure whether it can support your CPE practice, we encourage you to discuss it with your Certified Educator.

GISCE offers guidance in discerning the suitability of potential clinical placements, clarifying site expectations, and completing the agreements necessary for the CPE unit.

Once the student, preceptor, and ACPE Certified Educator agree that the placement can support the student's learning and required clinical practice, a **Clinical Placement Agreement** is completed to establish the framework for the unit.

Your Preceptor

Every student completing CPE through a community-based clinical placement is required to identify a **preceptor** connected to the clinical setting.

The preceptor is a contextually appropriate professional who knows the setting, understands the student's role within it, and can observe or remain sufficiently connected to the student's practice to provide meaningful feedback.

The preceptor helps the student:

- Become oriented to the clinical setting
- Understand the expectations and boundaries of practice
- Navigate the culture and systems of the organization
- Reflect on their professional functioning within the setting
- Receive feedback on their spiritual care practice
- Maintain accountability to the clinical site throughout the unit

A preceptor should have appropriate experience, education, professional standing, or recognized authority within their area of practice. GISCE and the Certified Educator will review the proposed preceptor as part of the clinical-placement approval process.

Preceptor and Certified Educator: Different Roles

The **preceptor supports the student's practice within the clinical setting.**

The **ACPE Certified Educator provides CPE supervision and education.**

The Certified Educator is responsible for the student's CPE educational process, including individual and group supervision, clinical reflection, curriculum, assessment of learning, and evaluation of the student's progress within the CPE program.

The preceptor contributes an important view from the clinical setting: how the student functions, relates, practices spiritual care, receives feedback, and develops professionally within that particular context.

Together, the student, preceptor, and Certified Educator create a bridge between **clinical practice and reflective education.**

Clinical Placement Approval

Before the clinical placement is finalized:

1. Identify a potential clinical site

The setting should provide sufficient opportunity for 300 hours of meaningful spiritual care practice.

2. Identify a preceptor

The preceptor should be connected to the clinical setting and able to support and provide feedback on the student's practice.

3. Review the placement with GISCE

The student and Certified Educator discuss whether the proposed site and preceptor can adequately support the learning goals of the CPE unit.

4. Complete the Clinical Placement Agreement

Once the placement is approved, the necessary agreement is completed to establish expectations and accountability for the unit.

Need Help Thinking Through a Placement?

You are responsible for securing your clinical site and preceptor, but you do not have to discern their suitability alone.

GISCE offers guidance on potential clinical placements, preceptor expectations, and the agreements needed to support your CPE practice.

If you have a possible site in mind, bring it into conversation with us.