



Policy Manual

High Desert School for Ministry Dioceses of Eastern Oregon and Idaho

A member of the Iona Collaborative

Seminary of the Southwest



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Introduction

Welcome to this journey of formation with the High Desert School for Ministry!

This is a 3-year formation program for persons who are in a process toward ordination. Based on materials from the Seminary of the Southwest and principles for formation of the Iona Collaborative, our program is designed specifically to attend to the needs of persons who are to be formed locally, and are, for various reasons, unable to attend a seminary elsewhere. As you enter HDSM, I hope that you will hear repeated use of the word “formation.” This experience that we will have together will both expand your minds and open your hearts. The program is balanced with extensive academic work and also practical wisdom that will be needed as you live into ordained ministry.

While leading a congregation is important, formation through HDSM is tailored to work with the ministry to which you are called—whether in a congregation, a specialized ministry, a chaplaincy, mission-based ministries, and other ministries that you may just be becoming aware of.

A large component of your formation experience will be this journey that you will have with a community of people who, like you, are in the ordination process. By sharing in discussions, reflecting on deep spiritual and personal aspects of your journey, and worshipping together, you will hold each other in a holy space. In many ways, this is a pilgrimage—not a journey toward an end, but a walk together. It is this walk together that is the point of HDSM.

Know that as you are in this process of formation, you will be held in prayer—by your congregation, in your ministry experience, with your fellow pilgrims, by your Commission on Ministry, your Bishop, your family and friends. I hope that you will feel this support and God’s love for you as we engage in this very holy journey.

In Faith,

The Rev. Canon Lucinda Ashby
Dean of the High Desert School for Ministry



Iona Collaborative

Through the Iona Collaborative, a program of Seminary of the Southwest, multiple Episcopal dioceses have joined resources to develop a high-quality, standardized program for educating and forming priests and deacons for the Church. The program is designed to be locally adaptable to meet the needs of each individual diocese.

The model for the educational experience is based on the Iona School for Ministry of the Diocese of Texas. This is a three-year formational program that includes academic education; class sessions on ministry; congregational development; liturgy, social justice and spirituality topics; fieldwork experience; and a synthesis paper.

Iona Vision Statement: The vision of the Iona Collaborative is a vital church in which dioceses are equipped to form visionary leaders.

Iona Mission Statement: The mission of the Iona Collaborative is to provide resources for high quality theological education at the local level.

Iona Core Values:

Educational Excellence – provides superior academic courses that rigorously meet canonical requirements along with a variety of useful practical classes.

Local Adaptability – provides dynamic materials that are flexible and value local choices

Collaboration – strengthens the Church by sharing and learning from each other at every level

Visionary Leadership – imagines a different Church, bringing a new vibrancy, vitality and an entrepreneurial spirit

Community – fosters a dynamic community, connecting on many levels

Transformation – joyful holistic formation that evolves and changes students, dioceses and the Church

Eastern Oregon/Idaho partnership for local formation

The EDEO/ID partnership was formed in the Spring of 2018. Based on our geography and the similarity of our contexts, our two dioceses share a need for local formation that is both inspirational and practical. Many of our congregations exist in small towns with significant distances between Episcopal clergy.

To that end, we agreed that our clergy need training that not only meets the academic standards required of ordained persons, but also addresses the needs and varieties of ways in



which we serve in our vast rural western contexts. As Episcopalians, our ordained leaders need strength, relational abilities, and adaptability to local circumstances.

This mutual agreement regarding the nature and scope of our partnership is delineated in a Letter of Agreement, signed by the Bishops of Eastern Oregon and Idaho.

By agreement, students from neighboring dioceses may be admitted, if the student meets the same requirements and HDSM provides the appropriate academic and practical formation as needed for that particular student.

Ascension Camp and Conference Center, Cove, OR

<http://www.coveascensionschool.com/>

“Ascension Camp and Conference Center in Cove is an essential ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon. Established early in the last century, Ascension School’s complex of buildings are located in a park-like setting of green lawns and shade trees, in the expansive Grande Ronde Valley. Structures include historic Ascension Chapel and Barton House, both built in the 1870s, as well as more modern dorms, a dining hall, an arts and crafts building and Kimsey Commons Conference Center, which opened in 1998.”

From the website for Ascension Camp and Conference Center

Ascension is the agreed upon home base for the High Desert School for Ministry. Because of its location, and facilities, Ascension provides equal access to students from both dioceses, as well as a comfortable and functional space for the activities of HDSM.

The facility provides rooms with single beds for two students, a full kitchen with a chef for meals and snacks, outdoor space for reflection and exercise, and a classroom equipped with necessary technology for learning and discussion. Additionally, there are several areas where students and mentors may gather to participate together in community life.

Academic Program

The Iona Collaborative provides a comprehensive three-year program of study for students in the ordination process. Based in the Seminary of the Southwest, students have access via Google to video-taped modules created by professors at the Seminary and in the Collaborative. The videos are divided into Academic curriculum and Practical curriculum. The former contains foundational coursework in specific focus areas each year, emphasizing the canonical areas



required for ordination. The Practical curriculum attends to administration, polity, multiculturalism, finances, pastoral care and other areas essential to clergy leadership.

Year One Focus: Biblical Studies, Homiletics, Cultural Competency

Liturgy and Music, Pastoral Care, Spiritual Practices, Theory and Practice of Ministry

Year Two Focus: Church History, Anglican Studies, Polity and Administration,

Liturgy and Music, Pastoral Care, Spiritual Practices, Theory and Practice of Ministry

Year Three Focus: Theology and Ethics, Congregational Life and Leadership

Liturgy and Music, Pastoral Care, Theory and Practice of Ministry

Attendance

A primary, yet often unstated benefit of HDSM is the formation that occurs because of being a part of a learning, worshipping community. Having all members present ensures that discussion is rich and that each student is appropriately challenged and informed by the community experience.

Attendance is expected and required for all students at all HDSM weekends. If there is an emergency or an unforeseen weather event, please contact the Dean immediately about your absence.

Two absences, or incomplete weekends may result in removal from HDSM for that year, with a report to the Diocesan Commission on Ministry. The COM would engage the participant for further discussion.

Assignments

Students will be assigned Videos and Power Point presentations to view in preparation for the next HDSM weekend. These virtual lectures are presented by professors from the Seminary of the Southwest. Additionally, students will be assigned readings, papers and/or projects as part of their class preparation.



Students can expect to attend 4-6 virtual lectures, 30-40 minutes each, in preparation for the weekend. Students will need to devote concentrated time to adequately focus and reflect on the material presented.

Videos and powerpoints will usually not be repeated during the weekend gathering, unless there is a point that needs emphasis.

Preaching is an important component of the worship experience; a student can expect to preach 2-3 times per year, with the appropriate attention given to the sermon preparation.

Students can expect some reflective work based on topics related to practical experiences in parishes, local agencies, hospitals or jails.

Evaluation and Feedback

The focus of evaluation and feedback is to note and foster growth in the student. There will be two types of grading used for the HDSM experience: traditional grading, or pass/fail.

In some situations, the traditional point or A,B,C,D system will be appropriate: factual tests, quizzes, multiple choice, research papers, certain projects, etc.

Pass/Fail will be commonly used to evaluate homilies, reflective essays, summaries and the like.

Should a student receive an unsatisfactory grade, they will be offered the opportunity to re-do the assignment.

In addition to continuous feedback from the Dean/Mentor, the Diocesan Commission on Ministry will receive annual reporting, or reporting as needed for Candidacy or Ordination.

Field Experience

For on-going formation, reflection and practical experience, students are expected to seek experiential opportunities relevant to their calling, context, and development as deacons or priests. These opportunities provide students with reflection and feedback outside of the academic environment, and enrich their formational experience at HDSM.

All first year students, on diaconal or priestly track, are expected to visit another congregation or agency, Episcopal or other, once per month, as observers and participants in the community experience.



Year Two:

Deacon track: At least twice per month, students should serve in a particular ministry situation (congregation or local agency) dedicated to serving those on the margins. Some examples of this may be: feeding program, health ministry, community meal, prison ministry, literacy ministry, ministry among the homeless.

Priest track: At least twice per month, students should serve in a specific congregation other than their home congregation, participating in the areas of leading worship, preaching, teaching and pastoral care.

Year Three:

Deacon track: In addition to bi-monthly service at a ministry to those on the margins, diaconal students should serve one Sunday per month in a congregational worship setting.

Priest track: Third year students are expected to serve in a specific congregation other than their home congregation, twice times per month, with attention given to worship, pastoral care, preaching, teaching, and administration. These experiences may be on weekends and/or weekdays, as best suited to the geographical distances and opportunities.

Financial arrangements

An aim of our partnership is to keep HDSM affordable for its students. The annual fee for tuition, room and board is \$3,200 per student. Full payment or monthly payments may be made to Ascension Camp and Conference Center. For details about how to handle your payment, contact Lisa Boquist, Diocesan Administrator and Executive Assistant to the Bishop, Diocese of Eastern Oregon: lboquist@episdioeo.org

Students are expected to pay their fee by soliciting funding from their sponsoring congregation, personal and familial resources, and diocesan educational funds. Students experiencing a hardship in pay their tuition need to speak with their respective diocese.

The Dioceses of Eastern Oregon and Idaho, together pay a yearly membership fee for the rights to use the curriculum and materials developed by the Iona Collaborative. This fee is absorbed by the dioceses and is not passed on to the students.



Preaching

Homiletics is introduced promptly in the Year One curriculum. Students can expect to preach 2 - 3 times per year at Morning or Evening Prayer during their first two years. During Year Three, students will also be expected to preach at least once during the Sunday Eucharist.

Students will learn to give and receive feedback on preaching, and will be encouraged in finding their preaching voice and experimenting with different preaching styles.

Additionally, students are expected to preach in their field congregation and home parish at least twice per year during their field experience.

Worship

The HDSM experience is enveloped in prayerful reflection and opportunity to worship as a community. Students, mentors and at times other staff may gather for Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Compline and Eucharist in either Kimsey Commons or in the Ascension Chapel. It is expected that students will attend all services of worship and plan to lend liturgical support by serving as Altar Guild, Lectors, Acolytes, and Musicians. Additionally, students will be scheduled to serve as Officiant for Daily Office, and as Preacher or Homilist for Evening Prayer or Eucharist.

Worship will provide a way to increase knowledge of rubrics and use of the Book of Common Prayer, as well as other supplemental liturgical resources. It is also a place to learn about aspects of movement, presence, and the “art” of liturgy in order to provide a meaningful, reverent worship experience.

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