

SWMTC: Foundations For Reflective Practice In Context (Short)
TMM1447

Protocol for the observation placement

Introduction

Work for this module is based on an observation placement, providing an opportunity for students to learn from a church context very different from their own. The placement seeks to build on the understanding of church being developed in SWMTC Year 1, by making comparisons with the home church as to overall character and self-understanding, and as to the way ministry is understood.

The core staff will invite suggestions from the student as to what placement might stretch his/her experience. The staff tutor will then propose an appropriate location, and the student will negotiate the precise timing and detail of the placement. The duration of the placement will be 20 hours, including two Sundays and a midweek meeting.

Primary Aim of the observation placement: to enable students in SWMTC Year 1 to compare an unfamiliar church context with that of the home church, reflecting theologically in terms of descriptions of church and understandings of ministry introduced on the course to date.

Objectives:

- to compare the placement church with the home church in terms of size, character and 'story'
- to reflect in particular on the role of the minister – again, by comparison with the home church.
- to reflect on how ministers co-operate with lay people – two interviews with lay people will be a standard element in the placement.

Learning Outcomes

See module document

Assignments

Formative work = A log of observations carried out

Summative work = A theological reflection of 2500 words.

It will be helpful to discuss elements of the report with your personal tutor before reaching the version that will be handed in to your staff tutor.

The deadline for handing this work in is **Residential Weekend 6**.

Staff Tutors require to see **a draft of this assignment at the latest by Easter School** – you may send this to your Staff Tutor as soon as you have completed it.

Given the potentially sensitive nature of this assignment, its contents must remain confidential to SWMTC and examiners. This means that it must not be shared with either of the churches you are comparing.

Students may wish to consider the following prompts:

What can you say theologically about:

how the placement church resembles and differs from your home church in terms of a) location b) size and character of local community c) denomination, size and age-range of congregation, and idiom of worship.

what particularly struck you, from comments made at services or meetings, or in the interviews, about the church's self-understanding (as to its identity and vision, and/or as to challenges it faces). Where this differs markedly from your home church, comment on this, and on whether you see lessons to be learned for one church community or the other.

how the placement minister understands ministry in that place, and whether the impressions of the laypeople interviewed were congruent with that understanding. Where possible, try and tie these views to scriptural or denominational understandings.

clergy/lay collaboration in a) planning b) performing ministerial tasks. Did this collaboration seem effective? Again, draw a comparison with your home church if you feel lessons could be learned on either side.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE STUDENT ON OBSERVATION PLACEMENT

1. To meet with the placement minister to set a schedule of activities. The total time given to the placement should not be less than 20 hours. The activities scheduled should include:-
 - Observing two main acts of Sunday worship and talking informally with members of the congregation
 - Observing one midweek meeting for study or devotion
 - Interviewing the placement minister for 90 minutes as to his/her understanding of ministry in that context
 - Interviewing two lay people from the church for 60 minutes each as their understanding of the church and how ministry is being carried out there.
2. To keep a log (not for assessment) of activities carried out, observations made, and initial connections made with prior learning, this to form the basis of the report discussed below.
3. To draft a 2500-word theological reflection.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE PLACEMENT MINISTER

1. To meet with the student to set a schedule of activities. The activities that are scheduled should include the student:-

- a) Observing two main acts of Sunday worship and talking informally with members of the congregation
- b) Observing one midweek meeting for study or devotion
- c) Interviewing the placement minister as to his/her understanding of ministry in that context
- d) Interviewing two lay people from the church as their understanding of the church and how ministry is being carried out there.

2. To undergo a 90-minute interview by the student as to the character and self-understanding of the church, and the minister's own understanding of how ministry is being carried out there.

3. To invite two laypeople from the congregation, likely to have different perspectives on the church and its ministry, to undergo 60-minute interviews by the student.