



SCHOOL OF
SPIRITUAL
DIRECTION

DIVINE MERCY UNIVERSITY

The School of Spiritual Direction Handbook

Effective March 25, 2026

All Students

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PART I: ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Introduction and Welcome to the School of Spiritual Direction

Welcome to the School of Spiritual Direction of Divine Mercy University. The School of Spiritual Direction is designed to provide the foundations for preparing our hearts for a deeper relationship with the Lord, certificates for skill training, and continued education and support for those serving in this ministry. It seeks to respond to the ongoing need for the followers of Jesus Christ to assist one another on their path of becoming more faithful disciples of the Lord every day.

As she has always done, today the Church continues to recommend the practice of spiritual direction not only to those who desire to follow the Lord closely but to every Christian who wishes to live responsibly his or her Baptism, that is, new life in Christ. Everyone, in fact, especially those who have heeded the divine call to follow Christ closely, needs to be accompanied personally by a guide reliable in doctrine and expert in the things of God, this guide can help people to watch out for facile forms of subjectivism, making available their own knowledge and experience lived in the following of Jesus.

Address of Pope Benedict XVI to the Pontifical Theological Faculty
“Teresianum”, Rome, 19 May 2011

Theological and Philosophical Underpinnings

Every program of studies, especially those which focus on the human experience, have a theological \ philosophical framework in which they operate, either explicitly or implicitly. That framework involves a conception:

- theologically, of: God; his self-revelation; and his call to each of us to know and love Him; and
- philosophically, of: human nature; what constitutes well-being, health, and human flourishing; of the development process toward (spiritual) flourishing.

The theological \ philosophical underpinnings of the School of Spiritual Direction are those that have arisen as a result of the reflection of the Catholic Christian intellectual and spiritual tradition, and as articulated in the premises of Divine Mercy University.

Constitutive Elements of Spiritual Direction

Spiritual Direction as Accompaniment

Assisting people on their path to the Lord requires being there for them, in service both to them and to the Lord. Pope Francis articulates the role of accompaniment in *Evangelii Gaudium*, 169.

169. In a culture paradoxically suffering from anonymity and at the same time obsessed with the details of other people's lives, shamelessly given over to morbid curiosity, the Church must look more closely and sympathetically at others whenever necessary. In our world, ordained ministers and other pastoral workers can make present the fragrance of Christ's closeness and his personal gaze. The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this "art of accompaniment" which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Ex 3:5). The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life.

In a certain sense, we can describe the whole of Christian life as *accompanying*. When we reflect upon what has been called the *Principle and Foundation* of Christian life, or the *eternal truths*, we encounter the reality that the Lord God made the human person for no other reason than to enter into a loving relationship with the Creator and other men and women. This relationship, whose essence is *being there for the other* is in a sense *accompaniment*. Here we are not so much speaking about a sociological reality, but a deeply theological reality, and in this way, spiritual direction can rightly be called *accompaniment*. This *being there for the other* is based upon Christ-like charity. My existence is for others, and I am willing to go to the Cross for their well-being.

True Christ-like accompaniment implies respecting the other's silence and solitude. Understood in too human a fashion, accompaniment can degenerate into the extremes of intrusion or cold-hearted aloofness. In the former case, the director thinks too highly of his presence and being there, to such a point that he or she inserts the self without the permission of the other. In the latter case, spiritual direction takes on the air of an esoteric process of consulting a medium or aloof guru.

Spiritual Direction as Pilgrimage toward God

As the name implies, spiritual direction is not accompanying for accompanying sake, but in order to make Christ present, and facilitate and catalyze the walk toward God, with Christ. Again Pope Francis summarizes this important element in *Evangelii Gaudium*, 170.

170. Although it sounds obvious, spiritual accompaniment must lead others ever closer to God, in whom we attain true freedom. Some people think they are free if they can avoid God; they fail to see that they remain existentially orphaned, helpless, homeless. They cease being pilgrims and become drifters, flitting around themselves and never getting anywhere. To accompany them would be counterproductive if it became a sort of therapy supporting their self-absorption and ceased to be a pilgrimage with Christ to the Father.

Spiritual Direction as Formation in Mission

The Presence of Jesus Christ at once summons (“Come Follow Me”), forms (“He taught them”) and sends forth (“Go out”). Spiritual Direction, accompanying others in this process, also involves these dynamics of summoning, formation, and mission, dynamics inherent in following Jesus Christ. If in the strict sense of the term, there is reason not to consider the spiritual director as a formator, even so, if spiritual direction does not initiate and sustain a process of Christ-like transformation for the directee, something is amiss with that spiritual direction. Pope Francis notes in *Evangelii Gaudium*, 173,

173. Genuine spiritual accompaniment always begins and flourishes in the context of service to the mission of evangelization. Paul’s relationship with Timothy and Titus provides an example of this accompaniment and formation which takes place in the midst of apostolic activity. Entrusting them with the mission of remaining in each city to “put in order what remains to be done” (Tit 1:5; cf. 1 Tim 1:3-5), Paul also gives them rules for their personal lives and their pastoral activity. This is clearly distinct from every kind of intrusive accompaniment or isolated self-realization. Missionary disciples accompany missionary disciples.

Two Knowledge Bases for Spiritual Direction

Spiritual (theological) knowledge: Spiritual Theology

Pope Benedict XVI (Address to the Pontifical Theological Faculty “Teresianum”, Rome, 19 May 2011) notes the importance of spiritual theology, the know-how of

the spiritual life, without which one cannot responsibly undertake the role of spiritual direction.

A thorough in-depth study of Christian spirituality, starting with its anthropological presuppositions, is of great importance in the contemporary context. The specific formation it provides is certainly significant, for it equips and trains the student to teach this discipline and constitutes an even greater grace because of the know-how it brings concerning the sensitive task of spiritual direction.

Knowledge of the Human Person, Learning and Developing the Requisite Skills

Pope Francis articulates it well in *Evangelii Gaudium* 171-172:

*171. Today more than ever we need men and women who, on the basis of their experience of accompanying others, are familiar with processes which call for prudence, understanding, patience and docility to the Spirit, so that they can protect the sheep from wolves who would scatter the flock. We need to practice the art of listening, which is more than simply hearing. Listening, in communication, is an openness of heart which makes possible that closeness without which genuine spiritual encounter cannot occur. Listening helps us to find the right gesture and word which shows that we are more than simply bystanders. Only through such respectful and compassionate listening can we enter on the paths of true growth and awaken a yearning for the Christian ideal: the desire to respond fully to God's love and to bring to fruition what he has sown in our lives. But this always demands the patience of one who knows full well what Saint Thomas Aquinas tells us: that anyone can have grace and charity, and yet falter in the exercise of the virtues because of persistent "contrary inclinations".[S. Th., I-II, q. 65, a. 3, ad 2: "propter aliquas dispositiones contrarias".] In other words, the organic unity of the virtues always and necessarily exists in habitu, even though forms of conditioning can hinder the operations of those virtuous habits. Hence the need for "a pedagogy which will introduce people step by step to the full appropriation of the mystery".[John Paul II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Asia* (6 November 1999), 20: AAS 92 (2000), 481.] Reaching a level of maturity where individuals can make truly free and responsible decisions calls for much time and patience. As Blessed Peter Faber used to say: "Time is God's messenger".*

172. One who accompanies others has to realize that each person's situation before God and their life in grace are mysteries which no one can fully know

from without. The Gospel tells us to correct others and to help them to grow on the basis of a recognition of the objective evil of their actions (cf. Mt 18:15), but without making judgments about their responsibility and culpability (cf. Mt 7:1; Lk 6:37). Someone good at such accompaniment does not give in to frustrations or fears. He or she invites others to let themselves be healed, to take up their mat, embrace the cross, leave all behind and go forth ever anew to proclaim the Gospel. Our personal experience of being accompanied and assisted, and of openness to those who accompany us, will teach us to be patient and compassionate with others, and to find the right way to gain their trust, their openness and their readiness to grow.

The School of Spiritual Direction

Overview

The increase in those seeking spiritual direction and those discerning a call to be spiritual directors has given Divine Mercy University the desire to respond with a school dedicated to this mission. Originally only a certificate program, the School of Spiritual Direction has been created to serve more needs of those in this ministry, educating and training them within the framework of the Catholic Christian understanding of the person.

To that end the School of Spiritual Direction will promote and support spiritual direction activities, direction relationships, and ministry certificates, and is devoted to the spiritual direction ministry in the following ways:

- We offer foundational courses, for preparing people to deepen their relationship with the triune God - ***“Preparing our Hearts - Foundational Courses”***
- We offer certificates for developing those who are called to the ministry as directors and/or as supervisors: ***“Certificates”***
- We offer on-going support for spiritual direction supervision and related activities: ***“Ministry Support”***

Preparing our Hearts - Foundational Courses

Overview

Our foundational courses will be open to anyone who is earnestly seeking to cultivate a relationship with God and deepen their interior life to know him. There are no prerequisites beyond the understanding that these are graduate-level courses in their expectations for

reading, writing, and group assignments, and serve as pre-requisites for acceptance to the Spiritual Direction Certificate. These 8-week courses are intended to be taken in sequential order. The following are the foundational courses:

- SOSD101: A Catholic Vision of Spiritual Maturity
- SDC100: Life in Christ and Spiritual Direction (Spiritual Direction Certificate prerequisite)
- SDC200: Human Development for Spiritual Growth (Spiritual Direction Certificate prerequisite)

Student Learning Outcomes

Successful completion of the foundational courses will prepare one to engage in a deeper spiritual life and will offer opportunities for the student to more fully and purposefully enter into a spiritual direction relationship. Students who complete the foundational courses will be exposed to the following:

- The fundamentals of what spiritual direction is and its origins,
- The stages of spiritual growth and freedom,
- Tools for understanding oneself in relationship with God,
- Human development and human relationships
- How to apply our spiritual and human development to our relationships with God and others,
- Foundational education for application to the Spiritual Direction Certificate

Certificates

The Spiritual Direction Certificate

Overview

The Spiritual Direction Certificate (SDC) prepares candidates with the requisite knowledge, human interaction skills, and supervision tools that will enable them to be spiritual directors with the heart and mind of Jesus Christ and in the tradition of the Church's tried and tested experience. These are the three pillars of the program: theological content; human formation (interaction skills) and accountability (through supervision).

Student Learning Outcomes

Graduates of the SDC will be able to:

- exhibit a vibrant spiritual director identity with the requisite foundational knowledge and skills.
- enter the directee's life with compassion and respect.
- develop Christ-centered and person-centered approach to spiritual direction.
- employ basic social and behavioral skills and a habit of solid theological reasoning to promote deep spiritual flourishing.
- embody a vision of the flourishing person that inspires them, as spiritual directors, and their directees to have courage to trust, hope and love.

Ongoing Formation and Local Engagement

Upon completion of the SDC, students will have acquired the requisite knowledge, learned the key skills, and will be in a supervision relationship that will enable them to continue as a spiritual director. Their work as a spiritual director however, will depend upon their fruitful engagement in their local faith community (parish or church, diocese, religious community, ecclesial movement, and so forth).

As part of the ongoing development as a spiritual director, students are required to continue cultivating a deep spiritual life, receiving spiritual direction themselves, have a supervisor, or take part in a peer-supervision group. These key elements to the program are also essential for the ongoing development and formation of the spiritual director upon completion of the program.

The Spiritual Director Supervision Certificate

Overview

Supervision has now become standard in most spiritual director formation programs. Supervision at once respects the particular style, formation, and experience of the individual spiritual director while providing an important venue for self-reflection and examination, feedback and input, growth and development of the spiritual director. Supervision in its various formats - individual or group - presents an invaluable aid for the spiritual director, not only during training in practicum, but also in a well-established ministry.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete the certificate for Spiritual Direction Supervision will be able to: **COMING SOON.**

General Information

Contact Information for the School of Spiritual Direction

By Phone or Voice Mail Message

Main DMU Number: (703) 416-1441

By Mail

Divine Mercy University
School of Spiritual Direction
45154 Underwood Lane
Sterling, VA 20166

By Email

sdc@divinemercury.edu

Website

<https://divinemercury.edu/academics/spiritual-direction-certificate/>

Tech Support

Please reach out to support@divinemercury.edu for assistance with Canvas, or other technology needs. This is the support desk run by Divine Mercy University.

Canvas our Learning Management System (LMS) also provides support to students 7 days a week to ensure access to learning, teaching and research. *This is Canvas specific help.* Students and faculty may contact tech support via live chat or by phone:

- Canvas Tech Support phone: 1-855-976-9659
- Live Chat: Click on the Help link (question mark in circle) in the lower left-hand corner of the Canvas classroom to access a variety of help options, including a live chat function with Canvas support personnel.

Procedures for Disseminating Information

In addition to the [DMU Policy for Distribution of Materials](#), students in the SDC must be aligned with the dynamic nature of the spiritual direction field. To ensure that students are aware of current events, learning, and research opportunities, and/or programmatic adjustments or changes, students may receive information through mass emails, faculty announcements in class, and in the electronic discussion forums within the online learning system. In addition, SDC administration, and/or faculty advisors may visit the online classroom and the residency activities to deliver information or to keep students abreast of DMU activities.

Semester Model and Course Length

The School of Spiritual Direction offers exceptional content courses plus opportunities to engage in supervision sessions. DMU operates using a fall, spring, and summer semester model, with two 8-week terms in the fall and spring semesters, and one 8-week term during the summer. The School of Spiritual Direction offers SOSD101 and SDC100-800 in fall term 1, spring term 1, and in the summer term. Supervision sessions (700 series) are available additionally, during term 2 of the Spring and Fall semesters.

- SOSD101: A Catholic Vision of Spiritual Maturity
- SDC100: Life in Christ and Spiritual Direction
- SDC200: Human Development for Spiritual Growth
- SDC300: Human Relating Skills for Spiritual Direction (with Week 7 Residency)
- SDC400: Discernment and Spiritual Growth: Theory and Practice
- SDC500: Advanced Spiritual Direction Skills and Practicum: Putting Out into the Deep (with Week 2 Residency)
- SDC600: Advanced Prayer and Situations
- SDC700: Practicum with Individual Supervision
- SDC701: Practicum with Group Supervision
- SOSD800: Spiritual Direction Supervision Certificate

Financial Information

Tuition and Fees

Students will register for courses on the Canvas platform. Students have one week to complete registration before a late fee is automatically applied. Students who require financial assistance should speak with the program director for details about potential financial support. The School of Spiritual Direction is not currently eligible for Federal Financial Aid.

Expenses

All expenses are payable in U.S. currency. The University reserves the right to change rates and policies when necessary.

Withdrawal Refund

SOSD101, SDC100, SDC200, SDC700, and SDC701 are non-refundable and are offered at a discounted rate.

Certificate courses (SDC300-600) are refundable within 5 business days, counting the first day of the course. No refunds after 5 business days.

Other certificate courses are non-refundable.

Other financial information is available at:

<https://divinemercury.edu/academics/spiritual-direction-certificate/tuition-and-costs/>

Matriculation/Admission to the School of Spiritual Direction

Admission Requirements and Process

There is no admission requirement for registering for any of the foundational courses. Students who complete these courses successfully may discern the spiritual direction certificate and apply accordingly.

In order to be considered for admission into the **Spiritual Direction Certificate (SDC)** at Divine Mercy University, you must fulfill the following admissions requirements:

1. Complete and pass SDC100 and SDC200.
2. Complete application form submitted online and payment of application fee (\$50.00)
3. Letter of recommendation [from the applicant's pastor or minister](#).
4. Letter from one's own [spiritual director using the form provided](#). A history of receiving regular spiritual direction is required to continue in the program
5. A letter of recommendation [from a person](#) (peer, friend, colleague) who has known the applicant for at least 3 of the last 5 years.
6. After the review of these requirements, you will be contacted to schedule a virtual interview. Interviews generally take place during the term prior to the course start.

Transfer Policies

Given the integral nature of the courses, residencies, and practicum of the SDC and content and skills scaffolding that occurs across the courses, transfers into the program are generally not accepted. They will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

New Student Orientation and Preparation for the Program

A virtual meet and greet is held two weeks before the start of term, for all registered students. Course materials and assignments will be available one week prior to the start of the term.

The course instructor will reach out to students assigned to their virtual class within one week prior to the course start date.

Time Interval from Acceptance to Matriculation

Students must take SDC100 and 200 in consecutive semesters in order to apply for the Spiritual Direction Certificate.

They must apply for the SDC within a year of completing SDC 200.

Certificate Completion Policies

Program Completion Requirements

In order to qualify for Spiritual Direction Certificate of completion, students must

- successfully complete and pass all their courses, residencies included
- attend an Ignatian Spiritual Exercise retreat experience of at least 5 full days
- complete the practicum requirement of 48 hours with directees and a *minimum* of 12 hours of supervision.
- submit proof of holding the necessary professional liability insurance in order to register for SDC500, and must hold this insurance until the completion of their hours.

Please read Part II in this handbook for information about the practicum candidacy and completion.

All financial accounts must also be satisfied.

Program Sequence

The normal sequence of the program is to take courses in sequence. Successful completion of prior courses is a prerequisite for subsequent courses.

After SDC300, students may elect to interrupt their course of studies and take a *leave of absence* for a legitimate reason, upon prior consultation with the program administration.

Taking Time Off

Students who anticipate earning the spiritual direction certificate should take SDC100 and 200 in consecutive semesters.

Students may take up to two terms off (in total) after completing SDC300.

Should students find it necessary to interrupt active pursuit of their certificate, they simply do not register that term.

Students may cancel their registration by emailing sdcd@divinemeracy.edu or contacting by phone the SDC Program Assistant at (571) 616-0190.

A student (in SDC300 or after) who does not return to active enrollment in courses after two terms will be considered withdrawn from the SDC and must apply for readmission to the program, subject to the regulations and requirements then in force. In such cases, acceptance into the program is not guaranteed, and any courses taken prior to the interruption of enrollment may not count toward graduation if they were not completed within the time allowed for program completion.

Time Limitation

After acceptance to SDC300, students need to begin that course in the consecutive term. They have up to 2 years to complete the program from their time of enrollment in SDC300, including their practicum hours. If an extension is needed for practicum hours, that can be discussed with the director.

If a student has taken two terms off or failed two or more courses, then they will need to discuss an extension of their practicum hours with the program director.

Auditing

The program does not allow students to audit.

Certificate of Completion

Students who fulfill all program completion requirements receive a Certificate of Completion. This Certificate is a declaration that the student has successfully completed the course of training, which includes content, skills mastery, and supervised practicum. Spiritual direction, unlike clinical professions such as psychology, counseling, or social work, does not have an officially recognized licensing board that acts as a legal and ethical gateway to the spiritual direction “profession”. It is a Christian ministry and a professionally unregulated field. Consequently, obtaining the Certificate of Completion does not mean that students automatically become an officially recognized Catholic or Christian Spiritual Director. It does mean that the student who has successfully concluded the program has

attained the sufficient mastery of content, interpersonal skills, and initial spiritual direction practice that could be reasonably expected for someone beginning ministry as a spiritual director.

Each Church, diocese, parish, religious order, congregation, or other Church entity might have specific oversight and requirements for spiritual directors who wish to exercise within their ecclesiastical boundaries or jurisdiction. Students are encouraged to be in touch with their local pastors or faith community leaders regarding their participation in the program and inform themselves about any local church requirements. The SDC faculty and staff are available to assist, but it is incumbent upon the student to personally take responsibility for their future exercise of the ministry or apostolate of spiritual direction.

Removal from School Resources

Once a student completes their certificate, withdraws from the program or is administratively withdrawn, they will be removed from the learning management system within 30 days.

If a student withdraws from or is withdrawn from a course in progress, they will be removed from the course effective immediately.

Academic Guidelines

Grading Policy

Courses are graded on a pass/fail basis. Course assignments must be done by the deadline stated in the course. Assignments past the due date are not accepted. If a student misses or fails more than two (2) assignments of any type (essay, discussion, etc.) the student will fail the course and need to retake the course, unless there is an extenuating circumstance and notification is given to the instructor as soon as possible.

Course Completion Requirement

Students must pass all the courses and residencies to receive the Certificate of Completion, as well as fulfill the other requirements.

When a course has been paid for and the student is unable to complete the course or misses or fails more than two (2) assignments of any type (essay, discussion, etc.), a student may re-enroll. A student may only re-enroll in a course one time. A student may not move on to subsequent courses until they have successfully completed a previous course.

It is not permitted to retake a residency if a student has failed it.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity entails a respect and reverence for knowledge as a human good and for the whole academic process, by which that knowledge is pursued and transmitted.

Specifically, it entails honesty in all one's academic dealings. Students therefore are not to engage in or tolerate acts of academic dishonesty. These acts include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act or attempt to commit an act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment).

Students shall acknowledge in appropriate fashion the contributions of others to their work where such acknowledgment is due. In cases where a violation of academic integrity has been verified, the faculty member has the responsibility for determining the consequences. Consequences can include probation from the program for a designated period of time, and in extreme cases, permanent dismissal.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is unethical and is considered academic dishonesty. According to the American Psychological Association (2016) plagiarism is described as follows: Plagiarism is the act of presenting the words, ideas, or images of another as the student's own. It violates ethical standards of accuracy, honesty, and truthfulness in scholarship.

Self-plagiarism

Self-plagiarism is the act of presenting the student's own previously published work as original. This also includes turning in a paper from another class without prior permission from the current instructor. It misleads readers and falsely inflates the number of publications on a topic. Plagiarism occurs when writers fail to give proper credit to their sources. Some kinds of plagiarism are deliberate—for example, copying an entry—or a substantial part of one— from Wikipedia and submitting it as the student's own work.

American Psychological Association. (2016). How to Avoid Plagiarism and Self-Plagiarism [Video file]. Retrieved from

<https://apastylecentral.apa.org/learn/browse/TUT-14>

Use of Artificial Intelligence in Writing

The AI landscape is evolving rapidly. DMU does not consider the use of AI (e.g., ChatGPT) as a primary or secondary source (unless the topic under study is AI text output). At this time, it is unclear

- where an AI bot is drawing its information from,

- if the AI provides citations, whether the information is accurate, and
- whether any given content generated is plagiarized.

Students are permitted to utilize AI in their written work under the following conditions:

- Students may use AI for brainstorming purposes or to explore topics, but any text created from AI is not considered to be scholarship. Students are responsible for finding the primary sources where the information was derived. They must locate and read the original source of the AI output and must paraphrase and appropriately cite the original source content.

- Students are not permitted to turn in work for essays and assignments created by AI even if they paraphrase the AI generated content and cite the AI software as the source. An exception would be if AI generated content was being used as an example of AI text generation. In such a case, the AI would be cited as the source of the material. In cases where a violation of plagiarism has been verified, the faculty member and the program director have the responsibility for determining the academic consequences which are determined by the degree of plagiarism and the frequency. (Source: California Lutheran University)

Late Assignment Policy

Unless otherwise noted, all online assigned work is due at 11:59 pm Eastern USA Time or at the beginning of the session of a residency on the date due.

Technological issues are not considered valid grounds for late assignment submission. In the event of a DMU or personal server outage, students should submit assignments to the instructor via email, and when systems are restored, submit those assignments in the Canvas platform.

Exceptions and Special Circumstances

An expectation for students to submit assignments by posted due dates is aligned professionally with this ministry. There are exceptions and special circumstances that warrant consideration. In these instances, contact the instructor immediately or as soon as reasonably possible. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Death of an immediate or close family member requiring the student's full attention
- Serious illness (i.e., illness that would impede the student's ability to complete an assignment on time)
- Unexpected natural events (i.e., natural disaster, weather phenomenon, etc.)
- Accidental injury to the student or a close family member that constrains the student's ability to complete assignments on time

- Military duty that impedes the student's ability to complete assignments on time

Retreats, Conferences, and Vacations

Students should notify faculty at the beginning of a course if there is a planned retreat, conference, or vacation occurring during the term, and request approval to post assignments in advance. Students are obligated to complete assignments, including initial discussion posts, prior to leaving. Students should anticipate the coursework required and prepare without expectation of special consideration. Posting to the cohort for discussions can still occur during most absences. Students should consider obligations and responsibilities within the course as they would in a professional setting. Vacation time should be planned per the course schedules. If students will be traveling during a term, they should plan ahead and connect to the internet to complete assignments during their trip.

NOTE: *Missing ANY residency session may result in a failing grade.*

Time Management

Courses in the School of Spiritual Direction generally require 6-9 hours of the student's time, per course each week. All faculty were once students too, and fully understand the demands of this program. Please plan accordingly. Success is a function of planning and time management. *Think* ahead and work to *stay* ahead of the large amount of reading that is required.

Most of each course involves asynchronous learning wherein students read course texts and materials, prepare written assignments, and respond to discussions on their own time. In short, much of the time students are learning on their own with a mix of instruction styles that includes segments with live video conferencing, peer-to-peer group work, and working solo. While SDC provides ample and facilitative support systems, studying course texts and other technological resources are necessary for student success.

Academic Appeal

The School of Spiritual Direction has a responsibility to protect the rights of students and to ensure compliance with its nondiscrimination policy by providing an appeal process for those who desire to file a grievance against the University, including any claim of discrimination.

Student Evaluation of Courses

As a process for continual and consistent improvement, students may be asked to complete evaluation surveys during a course or upon its completion. This process provides students, instructors, and curriculum managers an opportunity to make effective adjustments along the way that will enhance the student learning experience.

Near the end of each semester, students are expected to complete an evaluation of each course. All evaluations are confidential and privacy is maintained. The school takes course evaluations seriously as an important means of gathering information for the enhancement of learning opportunities for its students. It is an important responsibility of students as participants of our programs to participate in the instructor and course evaluation process. Prior to the end of each course, the student will be asked to reflect upon what they have learned in this course, the extent to which the student has invested the necessary effort to maximize their learning, and the role their instructor has played in the learning process. It is very important that the student complete the online evaluations with thoughtful comments.

As noted, student evaluations of courses and instructors are regarded as strictly confidential. Extensive precautions are taken to prevent the student's comments from being identified as coming from them. Student honesty in evaluation of the courses is critical, since the results contribute to improving class design and presentation and are an integral component in the programmatic assessment process for our program.

General Policies

Non-Discrimination Policy

Statement of Non-Discrimination The University admits to its programs qualified students of any age, race, gender, color, nationality or ethnic origin. Applicants should understand that the central mission of Divine Mercy University is the development of a Christian approach to mental health science and practice. The University welcomes qualified students of any religious faith; nonetheless, all students who seek admission must sincerely desire to share the University's mission and objectives. Given its distinct and unique goal of integrating with the Catholic view of the person, the degree programs at the University differ from traditional programs in their approach, while maintaining the rigor in both the quantity and quality of training.

Anti-Harassment Policy

Harassment-Free Environment It is the policy of Divine Mercy University that no student, employee, or volunteer of DMU should be subject to unsolicited, unwelcome, abusive, or offensive conduct of either a verbal or physical nature. Harassment refers to behavior that is not welcome, is personally offensive, interferes with efficiency or creates uneasiness. Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to: repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances or propositions; continued or repeated verbal abuse of a racial nature; graphic, degrading, or demeaning ethnic comments about an individual or about his/her appearance; the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; or any other offensive or

abusive verbal comments or physical contact. Further, students and employees will not be subjected to third party harassment, which is defined as behavior that is personally offensive to an observing party. Students or University representatives engaging in any act that harasses or discriminates against another person because of age, race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, marital status, or the presence of a disability, will not be tolerated. Such conduct is specifically prohibited. Appropriate action will be taken by the University administration.

Program Delivery Platform

The School of Spiritual Direction courses are delivered to students primarily in an online, asynchronous mode. However, two in-person residencies are required for the Spiritual Direction Certificate.

Students and faculty will also interact in real time via video conferencing with synchronous components, but these also have an asynchronous alternative.

The online learning management system is Canvas, an electronic venue in which students can communicate with faculty and peers, gain access to online support, find links to assistance with educational tasks (such as writing, researching and subject tutoring), and links to all required reading.

Methods of Instruction

The following methods of instruction may be employed:

- **Synchronous Instruction:** students and faculty will engage in real-time using a variety of technology such as chat rooms, web-based conferencing, telephone and during *in-person residencies*. The synchronous work has an asynchronous alternative, **except for the residencies**.
- **Asynchronous Instruction:** student-centered, student-managed facilitation of exchanging information and instructional materials outside of the constraints of “real-time” meetings between students and faculty.
- **Reading assignments:** students are expected to complete assigned weekly readings from texts and journal entries.
- **Lecture:** prepared or live lectures may be included as a method of instruction. Students should read assigned material prior to class as lectures will be brief and class discussion will be devoted to applying assigned readings.

- **Academic Class Discussion:** courses will have mandatory academic discussions. Students are expected to prepare responses to academic discussions and participate in them whether online or at the residencies.
- **Video/Audio:** students are required to review video material as assigned. Additionally, students are required to video/audio tape role-plays that will be viewed as opportunities for faculty and classmates to review listening and direction skills.
- **Demonstration:** faculty and/or guest speakers may provide instructional demonstrations of spiritual direction skills.
- **Role Play:** students are required to conduct role play to practice spiritual direction skills as assigned. Instructors may require a triadic model with students assuming the roles of director, directee and/or observer.
- **Written Assignments/Papers:** students will be required to compose some papers and other written assignments, such as personal reflection papers, expository compositions, and reviews.
 - **Simplified APA Style:** students are required to submit written assignments consistent with the [Simplified APA guidelines](#) which DMU provides in the SDC Orientation.
 - **Rubrics:** rubrics, or grading guides, are provided for each assignment. Although weighting of the key elements of a written assignment will vary by instructor, there are 4 general categories:
 - 1) Key Concepts: the paper should address the objectives for the assignment
 - 2) Readability: flow of thought, sentence and paragraph constructions, critical thinking, and attention to key concept/key elements.
 - 3) Mechanics: Usage, grammar, spelling, and consistency with the simplified APA style and format guidelines provided above. Be sure to include in-text citations to give credit to the sources used. Include a title page and references. Use headings to organize the work.
 - 4) Personal Application: demonstration of introspection through articulation of personal synthesis of the key topics.
- **Quizzes, examinations, and assessment of student learning:** students will have quizzes and examinations administered in courses to measure the acquisition of knowledge.
- **Learning Activities:** students are required to engage in critical thinking activities.
- **Group Work:** differing categorizations of group work are required. For example, students are required to participate in clinical group exercises, demonstrations, facilitation and role-plays. Additionally, students may be assigned to work in groups on assignments, projects, presentations, and demonstrations.

- **Residencies:** *students are required to attend and participate in two (2) live, in-person residencies.* Residency requirements include traveling to a destination point, and actively engaging with peers and faculty. Residencies are embedded in SDC300 and SDC500.
- **Interactive Multimedia:** students are required to interact with their respective cohort and faculty in real time via online multimedia platforms.
- **Practicum:** students are required to complete their program requirements by working as supervised spiritual directors with real directees under the direct supervision of an experienced spiritual director.

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Student Resources

APA Writing Style Guidelines

In SDC, students will be required to write papers in a simplified APA style. The guidelines to follow can be found [here](#). The most important guideline is to be consistent and to make sure a reader can understand what works are being referenced.

Students with Special Needs

Students who have or think they may have special needs that impact their learning may contact the SDC program director to determine what accommodations are available.

Course Syllabi

Course syllabi are available through the course page in Canvas. They are intellectual property of the university, and cannot be shared with anyone without written permission from Divine Mercy University.

Student Personal Counseling Services*

Students who experience personal difficulties as a motive for seeking counseling should explore the availability of services within respective communities. As students and/or counseling professionals, students are required to be knowledgeable about their community mental health resources. Become informed, especially regarding Child Abuse,

Domestic Violence, and Vulnerable Adult Abuse. Find and make a written record of local phone numbers for their regional or state mental health authority (i.e. child and/or adult protective services).

Program Advisors, or other DMU administration, staff or faculty may NOT provide psychotherapy, professional counseling, or spiritual direction for students as part of their role at DMU. The counseling process and agreement with a student would constitute a dual role relationship (see below in 15.4). If you feel you are in danger, are a danger to yourself through self-harm, experiencing a mental health emergency, or are otherwise having a medical emergency, **DIAL 911 immediately.**

- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1 (800) 273-8255
- National Human Trafficking Resource Center: 1 (888) 373-7888
- Therapists Online Now: www.betterhelp.com

Expectations of Students: Technology, Participation, and Attendance

Technology

As an online program, students may live almost anywhere and attend class. The SDC curriculum, however, includes both asynchronous and synchronous components. For example, most weekly discussions and written assignments may be completed by posting in Canvas on or before scheduled due dates in the convenience of the student's home, office or wherever they have reliable Internet access. Synchronous assignments involve interaction in real time with students' cohort and faculty, guest speakers, and/or supervisors via the Internet via Zoom (or similar) video conferencing.

Because of the reliance on the Internet and technology to complete this program, students must have a reliable broadband connection, a computer capable of downloading and uploading larger files, headphones/earbuds and microphone, and compatible computer software for completion of assignments using Microsoft Office software such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Microsoft Excel.

Students are also required to accommodate scheduled live meetings by adjusting availability to align with US Eastern time (EST or EDT).

Mandatory Class Participation

Attendance in the online classroom is required. Students must post as directed in the online classroom weekly. Assignments must be posted on or before due dates. Student participation and response level will be monitored by instructors. Any student who lacks participation or is unresponsive to emails or within Canvas, will be subject to late penalties. Students are expected to communicate with their instructor in a timely manner if they need

to make up missing/late assignments. Failure to participate regularly or communicate in a timely manner with the instructor could result in a failing grade for the course or administrative withdrawal.

Residency Information and Attendance

There are two 4-day residencies embedded within two courses in the SDC. Online assignments precede the live workshop at the location provided in the associated course, and there will be homework assigned each day. Students may bring, but are not required to bring, their own laptop computer, compatible tablet or other electronic device capable of high speed Internet connectivity for uploading and downloading documents when required. However, a binder with the pertinent materials will be provided. The in-person workshops provide opportunities to interact with faculty and peers, to practice spiritual direction skills and professional presentations, to enhance aspects of professional development, and to network within the spiritual direction community.

Residencies are included in the following courses:

- SDC300: Human Relating Skills for Spiritual Direction
- SDC500: Advanced Spiritual Direction Skills and Practicum: Putting Out into the Deep

Residencies are an intensive 3½ days of activity, lecture, and working individually and in groups. Homework may be assigned on Thursday, Friday and Saturday to prepare for the following day's workshop. Students must pass each residency to move onto the next sequence of the program. Faculty, staff and program advisors will be working with them to prepare them with all the necessary information, timelines, and directions pertaining to the residency. Lunch and snacks will be provided to students during the in-person workshop portion of the residency.

Each residency is an important milestone in the development of spiritual direction skills. The residencies provide students with opportunities for personal growth and professional development, to demonstrate skills and apply learning through face-to-face spiritual direction situations. The residency workshops are a great benefit for students in this program. Not only do the workshops allow students to receive constructive feedback on skill development, they also ensure that students are progressing through their mastery of skill at the pace required for the program. The workshops allow students to demonstrate readiness for the next phases in their program and adequately prepare for the professional spiritual direction field.

Overview of Residency Workshops

Details of each residency location will be provided within the designated course, the Canvas Course Site, and by email. For any questions, please contact the SDC administrative assistant. Students are required to stay at the hotel chosen by DMU. The rooms will be booked by the SDC Administrative Assistant. Arriving late or leaving early for any day may result in failure of the course.

Residency Guidelines and Policy

- **Students must arrange flight schedules to arrive on Wednesday afternoon or evening.** Hotels may not allow check-in prior to 3 pm. Consult with the hosting hotel for check-in and check-out times. **The Meet and Greet event at 6:30 pm on Wednesday is not optional.** Students should contact the SDC program director if they have a serious reason to not attend the Meet and Greet event.
- The Residency workshop continues until about 1:00 pm on Sunday. Class will not be excused before then. Please allow time for hotel checkout, and travel to the airport. It is suggested that students ***do not book their departure flight earlier than 3 pm on Sunday. Leaving the Residency early due to flight schedule is not permitted and may result in a failed grade for the course.***
- Workshops start at 8:00 am sharp on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Please be prompt. Breaks are provided with a return to the workshop promptly as directed. Promptness sets the tone for students as professionals and for similar expectations that they would set for their directees.
- The atmosphere for learning spiritual direction skills is generally rigorous. Homework will be assigned for the evening. Although there is time in the evening to process and to visit with peers and colleagues, the Residency workshops are not conducive to a vacation or resort venue for families.
- Accommodations can be made for mothers of nursing infants or young children. Please contact the SDC Administrative Assistant for more information.
- Be respectful of each other's time and commitment to the program.
- Time and space for personal devotion is provided each afternoon following the day's activities, and on Sunday morning.
- The SDC program will provide lunch for Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The hotel has complimentary breakfast. Students are on their own for dinner meals with the exception of Wednesday's Meet & Greet where a light dinner is provided.
- Attire: business casual (dress as if to meet someone as a Spiritual Director). Please see points on this below.

- If students are required to complete a presentation, they should copy their Power Point onto a USB drive. Time is of the essence so be sure the presentation works!

General Agenda

Day	Time	Activity
Wednesday	6:00 pm - 6:30 pm 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm	Optional Mass Meet and Greet. Join with faculty and peers in a reception with a light dinner served
Thursday	8:00- 5:00	Full Day with lunch and Mass
Friday	8:00-5:00	Full Day with lunch and Mass
Saturday	8:00- 5:00	Full Day with lunch, Mass and Adoration
Sunday	8:00 am -1:00	Half Day with student evaluations, lunch, Mass and Adoration

Dress Code

This policy applies to students in professional settings such as practicums, seminars and workshops, presentations, and settings where students represent DMU and the SDC program.

Rationale

Students' presentation reflects the presence of Christ, and practically can influence the degree of respect and effectiveness with others, including their directees. If students are uncertain about what is appropriate, they can ask faculty, staff, and other students.

Guidelines

As a general rule, if one is uncertain if an article of clothing is appropriate, it is best to find something else to wear that day, and then to ask a faculty member for input. When dressing in a professional manner, students should be selecting articles of clothing that fit well, are in good condition, are well-structured, ironed (if needed), and, for the most part, more on the conservative side.

Expectations of Students in Certificate programs: Spiritual Direction Practicum and Supervision

Refer to Part II of the Program Handbook for details.

Overview

Spiritual direction practicum and supervision are important to ensure the students in certificates have not only acquired the requisite knowledge and skills in the classroom, but are applying them and gaining practical wisdom in their exercise.

Please thoroughly review Part II of the Handbook for information on Practicum.

Spiritual Director Identity and Behavior Standards

Spiritual Director Education and Personal Engagement

While care has been taken to establish all students' emotional readiness for personal engagement, it is understood that there may be times when such self-exploration is not constructive for students. In these times, students should understand that they are under no penalty if they choose to step back from such activities that may prove overwhelming or unproductive, and that the staff and faculty are available to advise and refer students to resources as may be appropriate to their need. Staff and faculty will respect students' rights to set their own boundaries for what and how they share material of a personal nature. In short, students are empowered to say "yes," "no," or "not now."

Furthermore, students should understand that they will not be graded upon the progress, depth, or nature of their level of self-disclosure, but rather upon their level of engagement and completion of the academic requirements. Program staff and faculty are committed to meet all students where they are in their personal journey and to encourage movement in an atmosphere of respect, humility, and care for the unique needs of all students. In addition, educators may respectfully and confidentially ask students to seek professional help to address any personal concerns that may be affecting their competency.

While the form of activities that involve a level of personal engagement will differ from course to course, the central principle detailed above is intended to be a component of all program classes. The following paragraphs offer some specific applications for the students' consideration. The faculty teaching paradigm has a solid foundation in modeling spiritual directors' behavior, while sometimes stretching students just outside their comfort zones as a strategy for facilitating personal growth in all domains.

Real Issues or Roleplay

When asked to participate in a roleplay exercise, generally, students may talk about issues of real concern to them, or they may prefer to roleplay a problem that is quite distinct from their own experience. They will be informed of the specific processes, questions, and procedures they will go through in advance of the training activity. Students should understand that even in cases when a student is role-playing a mock scenario, often very real issues and/or emotions will be engaged. In a similar manner, students who witness either live or video role-plays may have their unresolved emotions pulled as a result. In

either case, students are strongly encouraged to take appropriate steps for their self-care, and to seek assistance from the professor or staff as desired. It is customary that if a student leaves the room during an exercise that someone will follow them out within a few minutes to offer support as needed. Students are encouraged to seek out their professor, program advisor or program staff for assistance.

Self-Care Responsibility

Adult education can be a life-changing journey with certain demands on students. Successful completion of the certificate requires time management, advance financial planning for residencies, time away from family, work, and friends for study, residency and practicum, and a unique pressure to perform that can create a higher level of stress for almost everyone. As a strategy for staying mentally, emotionally, psycho-socially, physically and spiritually healthy, it is recommended that students develop a personal self-care plan during their first course.

Dual Relationships

The relationships students form with staff and faculty will have different sides to them, as they evaluate students' work, advise students in their professional development, and support students in their growth.

The line between the different roles and relationships as a spiritual director educator and student versus real spiritual director and directee must be maintained. Faculty and staff cannot serve as spiritual directors to current students, though they can provide some valuable spiritual guidance when associated with a training experience.

Over the course of the program, students will share many projects and experiences together to include peer interviews and spiritual direction practice sessions. Many close friendships are apt to form. In time students will learn a lot about one another, and principles of trust, respect, and humility will need to be closely maintained to avoid relational difficulties. In all activities, students should disclose only what they wish, and the staff and their peers are to respect the boundaries they establish.

Confidentiality

Students do not have full confidentiality with their spiritual direction course work with fellow students or with the DMU faculty and staff. However, gossip or thoughtless disclosure of one another's personal information is prohibited, and infractions will be addressed.

Confidentiality: Institutional Supervision

Once students begin their practicum, they will be sharing their verbatims or similar tools with the course instructor, supervisor, and/or other students enrolled in this class for observations, comments and suggestions. As noted elsewhere, verbatims should not include any information that might specifically identify an individual. It is understood, though, that students will be sharing, for learning purposes, what is appropriate about their own experience during spiritual direction.

Audio/Videotaping

Audio or videotaping of actual spiritual direction sessions is not permitted in the School of Spiritual Direction and is not a mode used for supervision. (Some helping professionals, such as psychologists, counselors, and social workers may make use of audio or video taping with client consent for purposes of their training or supervision; however, it is not a viable mode for the Spiritual Direction Certificate). The pertinent contents of a spiritual direction session are conveyed to supervisors and peers through verbatims to aid in self-reflection, self-assessment, and supervision. Students are taught what verbatims are and how to develop them.

Boundaries of Competence

Students are providing a Christ-inspired service, and fellow students who participate in role plays and other activities are pre-professionals. It is understood that every student's skills are under development, and that an atmosphere that encourages one to fail safely is critical to taking the risks necessary to grow. Students' willingness to work with their fellow students is appreciated, and they are encouraged to ask for feedback on their work and to offer constructive feedback to their peers. The goal is not perfection, but growth. Within each class students are working under the direction of a faculty member, and he/she will be happy to meet with students should they have any questions or concerns about their program in the course.

Program Values

The School of Spiritual Direction adheres to the same values of the Catholic Church and her mission to evangelize, teach all nations, and serve all of humanity. The program is committed to the teaching of Vatican Council II that every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent (*Gaudium et Spes*, 29).

Code of Conduct and Ethics

CONDUCT: Student behaviors online should reflect the dignity and respect of other students and the instructor at all times. Inappropriate behaviors will be addressed by the

instructor and can result in dismissal from the course and/or program. Students agree that any class assignments will be completed on their own, without assistance from any outside source. Students agree to respect all copyright course materials and to not share any such materials without proper permissions. Any student found to have violated these terms may be dismissed from the course and/or program.

CRIMINAL HISTORY: Students have the right to request a criminal history evaluation through a state or private agency on their own. Before registering for a certification program, please note that a criminal history may make a student ineligible for a position with a religious or other institution or agency to work as a Spiritual Director.

Spiritual Director Identity

The School of Spiritual Direction promotes and facilitates the development of a solid identity as a spiritual director with the heart and mind of Jesus Christ. As part of their own ongoing development as spiritual directors, students are required to continue a regular practice of their own spiritual direction throughout the course of their studies.

Professional Affiliations

Professional affiliations can provide valuable ongoing training, education, and references for spiritual directors. Students are encouraged to avail themselves of such resources. Examples would include: local supervision groups; ongoing formation and education; spiritual director organizations.

Implied Consent

It is understood that the decision to enroll in the School of Spiritual Direction implies permission to engage in the activities that may impact personal and professional development as a future spiritual director as described above.

Student Freedom of Expression

The free expression of student opinion is an important part of education in a democratic society. Student's verbal and written expression of opinion at the University is to be encouraged so long as it does not substantially disrupt the operation of the school. Students are, however, expressly prohibited from the use of vulgar and/or offensive terms, images, or behaviors.

Online and General Classroom Etiquette

Class courtesy and respect is important, especially when material is likely to elicit strong personal opinions. Please remember that other students may not share your opinion. Each student's point of view is to be respected. Disrespect of others will not be tolerated. There

is a document about online etiquette and expectations in the Orientation section on Canvas. Please refer to that for more information.

Cell Phone Policy

Cell phone usage is prohibited during class. Cell phones must be silenced upon logging into all synchronous class times, arrival at residency workshops, and during advising; Bluetooth devices must be turned off and placed out of sight. Any exceptions to this regulation must be cleared with the instructor prior to the beginning of class.

Behavior Expectations and Requirements

Candidates in the SDC are subject to a high level of scrutiny because of their anticipated interactions with directees and others in the community, expectations for personal growth and transformation, and the clinical nature of program standards. Students participate in practicums as part of their program and are expected to represent the program and adhere to the ethics and standards of their profession as well as the Spiritual Director's Code of Conduct.

Professional Behavior Policy

In addition to meeting the academic standards of the SDC, students are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical, responsible, moral and professional manner consistent with traditional Catholic Christian values. Students must be knowledgeable of and at all times adhere to the general standards of professional ethics and practice.

Professional Performance and Behavior Standards

Students' fulfillment of the program standards and requirements is reviewed by individual faculty during each class and at the conclusion of each semester by the combined faculty. The standards include:

- Openness to new ideas
- Flexibility
- Cooperation with others
- Willingness to accept and use feedback
- Awareness of one's impact on others
- Ability to deal with conflict
- Ability to accept personal responsibility
- Ability to express feelings effectively, appropriately
- Attention to ethical, legal, moral and theological considerations
- Initiative, motivation and contribution to a positive climate in classroom and practicum
- Spiritual development and sensitivity

PART II: PRACTICUM

Overview and Details of Practicum

Introduction to Practicum

Students are required to complete the spiritual direction practicum as specified in this handbook. This section of the program handbook provides students with information related to practicum. It is important for all students to become familiar with the practicum requirements prior to enrollment in the program, and to remain abreast of their standing in the program.

Introduction to Supervision

Spiritual direction supervision is the relationship by which spiritual directors allow more experienced spiritual directors to oversee their own work as spiritual directors. The many benefits of supervision are discussed in SDC100 and students begin group supervision in SDC500.

Please note that each student of the SDC program who is seeing anyone in spiritual direction should also have a supervision relationship. This is in part to ensure that the student is correctly incorporating the knowledge and skills that are a part of the program.

Overview

Spiritual Direction practicum provides practical opportunities for students to apply theory and develop skills under supervision. It provides for real-world experience.

Both the skills courses and practicum focus on the experiential learning characteristic of spiritual direction experience in which students practice skills and attitudes reflective of basic or advanced training and education in spiritual direction.

Spiritual direction practicum and supervision are important to ensure the students have not only acquired the requisite knowledge and skills in the classroom, but are applying them and gaining practical wisdom in their exercise.

Spiritual Direction Practicum and Supervision are on a gradual and developmental plan that initiates during the program and increases as time goes on. The sequence is as follows:

SDC300: After residency, students initiate spiritual friendship relationships

SDC400: Students continue spiritual companion relationships and prepare to take on first directee(s).

SDC500: Students start spiritual direction practicum with several directees.

SDC600: Students continue meeting with directees to fulfill their practicum.

Practicum: Students must complete 60 hours of supervised spiritual direction starting in SDC500 (48 hours of direction and a *minimum* of 12 hours of supervision)

It is hoped that students will complete their hours within SDC500 and SDC600. If not, students will enroll in SDC700: Practicum, or SDC701: Practicum with Supervision, in order to finish their practicum hours under supervision and remain enrolled in the University.

Goals of Practicum

The goals of practicum are:

- growth in the experiential practice of spiritual direction
- growth in reflective self-awareness
- development of one's own particular identity and style as a spiritual director
- application of knowledge and skills learned in the program
- learning the practice of supervision and experiencing the benefit of it
- initial establishment within one's own local ecclesial communities, becoming a part of a network of spiritual directors and "helping professionals" locally, regionally and/or nationally.

General Liability Insurance

Each student must obtain professional liability insurance. The proof of professional liability insurance must be submitted in order to register for SDC500. This professional liability insurance must continue throughout the rest of the time the student is in the SDC (from SDC500 until completion of the certificate). More information about procuring this insurance is given at the end of SDC400.

Candidacy for Spiritual Direction Practicum

To qualify for practicum, students must successfully complete all courses prior to the phase of practicum. Students must have professional liability insurance in order to register for SDC500, and they must maintain the insurance until the end of their practicum. Successful completion of the SDC500 residency will allow students to begin seeing spiritual directees under program supervision.

Successful completion of SDC600 is also a part of the practicum.

Spiritual Direction Practicum Courses

SDC students are required to fulfill 60 hours of practicum (48 hours of direction and a *minimum* of 12 hours of supervision) in order to complete the program. These hours begin after the SDC500 residency and are to be completed within 6 months from completing SDC600.

During the practicum phase, students are required to participate in supervision. For approximately every 5-7 hours of spiritual direction, students should participate in a supervision session.

Students enrolled in SDC500 and SDC600 receive group supervision within these courses.

Students working on their practicum hours between SDC500 and 600, or after SDC600, must enroll in either SDC701, where they will receive group supervision through the program (spots subject to availability), or they can enroll in SDC700, in which they find their own supervisor, who will need to meet with the program director for approval.

Student Spiritual Direction Practicum Behavior

Each student will maintain behavior in accordance with the highest ethical and spiritual standards.

PART III: PROGRAM FACULTY AND STAFF

Faculty

[Click here](#) for a list of School of Spiritual Direction faculty.

Staff

[Click here](#) for staff contacts for the School of Spiritual Direction.

PART IV: APPENDIX

Spiritual Direction Verbatim

Verbatims can be an important piece for the learning and supervision process of students in the Spiritual Direction Certificate. They can also be a very useful means of ongoing formation and peer supervision for experienced spiritual directors. For an explanation and sample, [click here](#).

Spiritual Direction Mock Session / Skills Assessment

Human formation can greatly aid the spiritual director in becoming a docile instrument of the Holy Spirit. The SDC seeks to help students develop specific skills of human interaction that can become important stepping stones to acquiring the human virtues of

a good spiritual director. It helps students interiorize the needed dispositions and habits of mind and heart.

To aid in the process of learning, practicing and assessing these skills, the SDC program has developed assessment rubrics and guides for use throughout the program. For a copy of the Sample Assessment Rubrics, [click here](#).