RD 704 EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION: MASTER OF DIVINITY

Program Coordinator/Faculty Supervisor: Jason Mills, PhD | jmills@briercrest.ca

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION

MDiv students are required to complete a mentored Experiential Integration (EI) and should carefully plan for their Experiential Integration requirements with the Faculty Supervisor. EI is generally three to twelve months in duration, depending upon the number of hours per week students can devote to the ministry. The minimum requirement is three months (12 weeks or 480 hours). Some students choose to complete EI over a longer period while working or studying part-time. Though EI is non-credit, there is a one-time fee of $150 for processing, registration and supervision.

Prerequisites: Completion of a minimum of 48 credit hours of the program, including CM 600 and permission of the Program Coordinator.

EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION OBJECTIVES

- To integrate graduate education with a ministry context
- To test and/or reaffirm vocational directions
- To bring together the activities of thinking and serving theologically
- To enable students to gain personal confidence as reflective leaders
- To experience and understand diverse forms of ministry
- To develop and/or refine skills required for ministry
- To relate to a mature mentor who will support personal, spiritual, and ministry formation
- To develop an ongoing self-assessment process, utilizing self-perception and feedback from others, to stimulate further learning and growth

STEPS TO BEGINNING THE EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION

A. Step One

Meet with the Faculty Supervisor for Experiential Integration to discuss the process. Included will be discussion around:

- Registration process
- Length and structure of the Experiential Integration
- Selecting an EI Supervisor
- Selecting a secondary EI Supervisor, if necessary
- Selecting an Experiential Integration location

B. Step Two
   - Select a potential ministry site and a potential EI Supervisor
   - Ask your potential EI supervisor to carefully read the *Guidelines for EI Supervisors* (below) and submit the attached *Request for EI Supervisor Approval* form (below) unless he or she has already received approval.
   - Select a potential secondary EI Supervisor, if necessary
   - Receive approval for your EI Supervisor (and secondary EI Supervisor, if necessary).

C. Step Three (after the EI Supervisor has been approved)
   - Complete the application form (below) and begin the process of enrolment in RD 704 Experiential Integration – this is done through the Program Coordinator.
   - Confirm the potential dates of the Experiential Integration.
   - Compose a *Learning Covenant* (below) in collaboration with your EI Supervisor. The *Learning Covenant* will serve as a guide and schedule to the experiences you will receive during the Experiential Integration and must be submitted to the Program Coordinator by the end of the first week of the experiential integration. Students and EI supervisors are strongly advised to compose the *Learning Covenant* before the experiential integration begins. There will be no extensions for this assignment.
     - Make sure to include all information in the *Learning Covenant* – all church information, all addresses and email addresses, primary supervisor information (and secondary if applicable), etc.
     - The *Learning Covenant* must include a job description for the Experiential Integration (see job description worksheet later in this syllabus). Normally, after review, job descriptions require some revision prior to approval.

SELECTING A MINISTRY SITE

The congregation, church plant, mission, hospital or parachurch organization provides a setting for hands-on involvement under the guidance of an experienced EI Supervisor. Students should prayerfully select a ministry situation:

- That is a healthy ministry context
- Where the EI Supervisor meets the educational and experiential qualifications
- Where the EI Supervisor is capable and available as a positive mentor
- That provides opportunity for a variety of ministry experiences

GRADING

The Experiential Integration will be graded as pass/fail. Students must complete all components as indicated in the *Learning Covenant,* submit all evaluation forms, the *Experiential Integration Journal* and the *Summative Reflection Paper* before a grade of pass is assigned. Details on how to keep the *EI Journal* are found later in this syllabus.

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EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION APPLICATION FORM

This form must be submitted to the Program Coordinator to enroll in RD 704. Please complete all information.

Student Name: _____

Student Email: _____

Place of Ministry for Experiential Integration: _____

Name of approved EI Supervisor: _____

Name of secondary EI Supervisor (if applicable): _____

Check List: make sure all these things are completed before submitting this application:

- Meet with Faculty Supervisor
- EI Supervisor is approved
- Ministry context is confirmed

Reminder: the *Learning Covenant* must be completed and sent to the Program Coordinator by the end of the first week of the Experiential Integration at the latest. This is required for registration.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please submit this form to:

Briercrest Seminary Experiential Integration
Attn: Dr. Jason Mills
510 College Drive
Caronport, SK
S0H 0S0

Email: jmills@briercrest.ca

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GUIDELINES FOR EI SUPERVISORS

EI supervision is an essential element in ministry experiential integration at Briercrest Seminary. EI Supervisors participate with students in preparing and affirming them as leaders of the church. This reflects the biblical pattern of 2 Timothy 2:2, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." For this reason, we describe the partnership formed with the student as a *mentoring* relationship. The mentor's task is to come alongside the student and participate in forming, shaping and training them for ministry. This happens through oversight, instruction, collaboration and encouragement. Mentors also provide essential insight regarding the integration of graduate education into ministry.

ESTABLISHING AN EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION

If you are interested in establishing an Experiential Integration in your ministry context, the first step is to submit the *Request for EI Supervisor Approval* form below.

EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION OBJECTIVES

The experiential integration is designed to accomplish two sets of objectives – those that are of primary benefit to the student and those that benefit the ministry. This should be a mutually beneficial arrangement. The student will be required to satisfy the following objectives:

1. To intentionally integrate graduate education into a ministry context
2. To test and/or reaffirm vocational direction
3. To bring together the activities of thinking and serving theologically
4. To enable students to gain and/or affirm personal confidence as reflective leaders
5. To experience and understand diverse forms of ministry
6. To develop and/or refine skills required for ministry
7. To relate to a competent mentor who will support personal, spiritual, and ministry formation
8. To develop an ongoing self-assessment process, utilizing self-perception and feedback from others, to stimulate further learning and growth

It is expected that supervisors, as ministry leaders, will also have goals that relate to the ministry setting. These will vary according to the needs and opportunities provided by that setting. It will be essential that these goals are discussed with the student to ensure they are understood and agreed upon as the *Learning Covenant* is written. It is also crucial to keep central the priority of integrating graduate education into ministry. This will require that supervisors spend some time recalling their

own graduate education and integration into ministry. For the student, this will require affirmation, encouragement, assistance and patience.

QUALIFICATIONS OF AN EFFECTIVE EI SUPERVISOR

The EI supervisor is a mature Christian leader who has commitment to graduate theological education. *Ideally, this person will have an MDiv degree*. He or she will also be experienced and knowledgeable in ministry, able to provide insightful and sensitive guidance to the student and be comfortable working with human limitations. The EI supervisor will contribute to the ministry formation of the student by giving oversight in the ministry setting, encouraging study and reflection on the practice of ministry, modelling spiritual disciplines, healthy attitudes and ministry skills, and providing evaluation and feedback. Establishing a good fit between EI supervisor and student is important.

EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION REQUIREMENTS

Experiential Integration is generally a minimum of three to a maximum of twelve months in duration, depending upon the number of hours per week the student can devote to the ministry. The minimum requirement for the student is three months (12 weeks or 480 hours). Some students choose to complete the experiential integration over a longer period while working or studying part time elsewhere.

The EI Supervisor's role will include the following:

1. Supervision: EI Supervisors will assign ministry responsibilities and provide oversight as the student engages in ministry. This begins with writing a *Learning Covenant* in collaboration with the student. The *Learning Covenant* will serve as a guide and schedule to the experiences the student will participate in during the experiential integration and must be submitted to the Program Coordinator at the beginning of the Experiential Integration.
2. Mentoring: It is expected that there will be a minimum of 12 meetings between supervisor and student over the time of the Experiential Integration. These mentoring sessions provide an opportunity for:
    a. Discussion regarding the process of integrating graduate education into ministry;
    b. Planning, problem-solving, feedback and evaluation relevant to the ministry setting;
    c. Debriefing of incidents encountered in the ministry;
    d. Affirmation of ministry direction and calling;
    e. Prayer and mutual encouragement;

f. Discussion of ministry related topics (a list of suggested topics is found later in this syllabus).

EI Supervisors should be gentle but honest. The ability to affirm strengths sets a context for discussion of weaknesses. Mistakes are to be expected, tolerated and learned from. One purpose of supervising is to assist the student to ask the right kind of questions, those seeking the theological dimensions in the field experience, those exploring what really happened in a situation, those inquiring about the student's feelings during those encounters. The concern is growth, ministry formation and affirmation of the student.

Discussion topics may include:

- Call/reaffirmation of call to ministry
- Pastoral responsibilities such as preaching, teaching, leadership, counselling, visiting, weddings, funerals, leading worship, baptisms, communion
- Personal priorities and stress
- Time management
- Expectations of others
- Job descriptions
- Devotional practice (spiritual disciplines)
- How an MDiv can help make you a better pastor
- Leisure and renewal
- Understanding the community
- Evangelism and outreach
- Social action
- Discipleship
- Christian lifestyle
- Nurturing marriage and family relationships
- Ministry tensions such as worship style, inter-generational ministry, congregational decision making, conflict management
- Leadership and administration
- Mission and vision
- Budget and financial management (personal and organizational)
- Lay leadership development
- Denominational issues
- Professional ethics
- Exegetical and theological issues

3. Evaluation: There are several components involved in evaluation. EI Supervisors and the student will participate in *Mid-Point and Final Evaluations*. The Program Coordinator will assign the grade (PASS/FAIL) for the Experiential Integration.

FINANCIAL GUIDELINES

Financial remuneration is established directly with the student and is included as part of the forming of the *Learning Covenant*. The manual includes suggestions regarding how to approach this aspect of the Experiential Integration. Covering all ministry-related expenses, such as travel, is also strongly suggested.

THE LEARNING COVENANT

The *Learning Covenant* provides direction for the experiential integration by drafting agreed upon objectives, duties, schedules, time expectations, remuneration, and commitments. EI Supervisors and students are to work together to complete this form. ***The student must submit this to the Program Coordinator by the end of the first week of the Experiential Integration at the latest, and it is required for the registration of the Experiential Integration.***

EI SUPERVISOR TRAINING

EI supervisors are encouraged to address any questions to the MDiv Program Coordinator, Dr. Jason Mills (Phone: 306.801.4720 (office), Email: jmills@briercrest.ca).

REQUEST FOR EI SUPERVISOR APPROVAL FORM

Please fill out the form on the following pages. This is important for establishing consistency in the Experiential Integration component of the student's program. In some cases, it is appropriate to share the EI supervision responsibilities. Examples might include: the necessity of a team approach when a man is mentoring a woman student; where there is no one in the ministry context with a graduate ministry degree. In these cases, it is possible to have a primary and secondary EI Supervisor. It is the student's responsibility to discuss this with the Briercrest Seminary Program Coordinator, but both primary and secondary EI Supervisors must fill out the *Request for EI Supervisor Approval* form below. Please indicate whether this is for primary or secondary EI supervision in the space provided. Need for a secondary EI Supervisor will be assessed in consultation with the student. Please complete all the information on this form.

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REQUEST FOR EI SUPERVISOR APPROVAL

Please check one (secondary EI Supervisor by special arrangement only):

I intend to be: ☐ primary EI Supervisor ☐ secondary EI Supervisor

Name of EI Supervisor: _____

Email address: _____

Name of student you wish to Supervise: _____

Church/Ministry Name: _____

Church/Ministry Office Address:

Street/Box Number: _____

City: _____ State/Prov: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Office Phone:_____ Fax: _____

Denominational Association (if any): _____

Educational Background:

College	Major	Years	Degree
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Graduate Education	Major	Years	Degree
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Post-Graduate Education (if any)	Major	Years	Degree
_____	_____	_____	_____

Please briefly describe your previous Lay Ministry Experience:

Where	Role	Dates
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Please briefly describe your previous Vocational Ministry Experience:

Where	Role	Dates
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Please briefly describe your Non-Ministry Employment Experience:

Where	Position Title	Dates
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Total years in lay ministry: _____ Total years in vocational ministry: _____ Age: _____

Describe any other ministry experience you have that might be relevant to serving as an EI supervisor.

Describe any other formal or informal training you have received that might be relevant to serving as an EI supervisor.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

This request must be received and approved by the Program Coordinator before the student can enroll in the Experiential Integration.

Please submit form to:

Briercrest Seminary Experiential Integration
Attn: Dr. Jason Mills
510 College Drive
Caronport, SK
S0H 0S0

Email: jmills@briercrest.ca

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LEARNING COVENANT FORM

A. The Experiential Integration Location and Team

Name of Church/Ministry: _____

Complete mailing address:

Street/Box number: _____

City: _____ State/Prov: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Church phone number: _____

Church email address: _____

Student Name: _____

Student email address: _____

Position student will fill: _____

EI Supervisor's Name: _____

EI Supervisor's email address: _____

EI Supervisor's position: _____

Secondary EI Supervisor's position (if applicable): _____

Secondary EI Supervisor's email address: _____

Secondary EI Supervisor's position: _____

B. The Experiential Integration Details

Dates of the Experiential Integration:

Start Date: _____ End Date: _____

Identify the mid-point evaluation date: _____

Estimated number of hours per week: _____

Periods of Absence: _____

Reason for Absence (taking a course, vacation, etc.): _____

_____

C. Remuneration

Salary: _____

Travel Allowance: _____

Housing: _____

Food: _____

Other benefits: _____

Describe: _____

Total Remuneration: _____

D. Spousal Involvement (if married)

Describe the specific expectations for spousal involvement in the ministry context (this could include anything from virtually no official involvement to an expectation of "getting two for the price of one" that is common in some ministry contexts – please be as specific as possible).

E. Job Description
Please attach one printed version.

F. Other Details
Please identify any other details that are important to this covenant.

G. Commitments

- The EI Supervisor will meet with the student for weekly mentoring sessions (or a minimum of twelve meetings if the Experiential Integration is part time).
- The EI Supervisor will submit the *Evaluation by EI Supervisor* forms to the seminary office at the half-way point and conclusion of the Experiential Integration.
- The church/ministry will encourage and support the student, seeking to be sensitive to the student's ministry formation and needs. The student will honour the leadership of the church/ministry and will be fully supportive of its ministry.
- This Covenant will not be terminated by any signatory except by mutual agreement among all the parties involved.

Note: It is recommended that this Learning Covenant and Job Description be initially sent to the Program Coordinator as an email attachment. Usually some clarification and revision are requested. After the requested revisions have been made, the completed Learning Covenant, including Job Description, should be submitted to the Program Coordinator. Please send two hard copies, signed by the student and EI supervisor. One will be returned after it has been signed by the Program Coordinator and one will be filed at the seminary.

The arrangements as described here are accepted by:

EI Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Student: _____ Date: _____

Program Coordinator: _____ Date: _____

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THE EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION JOURNAL

Students are expected to document the Experiential Integration experience. One important way of documenting is to keep a journal throughout the ministry time. This journal is to be written weekly and then submitted monthly to the Program Coordinator. This journal serves a number of purposes:

1. Theological Reflection

   Out of the various experiences in a given week, choose one in particular and analyze it according the following four steps:

   a. The Experience (What happened?)

      To the best of your recollection, describe the direct experience — what was said, done and felt? Include background information, the setting, and other information important for understanding the experience. Relate what happened without including interpretation or conclusions, and describe your own feelings and, to whatever extent possible, those of others involved.

   b. Analysis (What was going on? How did it go?)

      It is in this section that your interpretation and assessment of the experience belongs. What are your perceptions about the experience, your reflection on it? From the raw data presented in the previous section lift out the main elements, the themes. Highlight the factors that gave the experience the flavour and shape it had for you.

   c. Theological Meaning (What religious significance did it have?)

      Questions to be asked of the experience include:

      - What theological issues are raised by this incident?
      - What scriptural passages speak to this incident?
      - How does the experience tell us something about how God relates to us?
      - What has this incident taught me about myself?
      - How has God revealed Himself in this experience?
      - How does this experience relate to the gospel?
      - How did this situation touch my spiritual development?

   d. Follow-up (What do you do next? How will you minister in the future?)
      - Discuss the implications of your analysis and synthesis for pastoral concern and responsible action.

- What does this experience contribute to your understanding of yourself as a spiritual leader?
- How might you minister more effectively in the future?
- What resources would you utilize in the future?

2. Self-evaluation
3. Recording of hours spent in EI

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MID-POINT EVALUATION OF EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION BY THE EI SUPERVISOR

Student: _____ Date: _____

EI Supervisor: _____

Experiential Integration Details:

1. Please review the *Learning Covenant*. Up to this point in the ministry experience, do you feel you are on track to complete the essential requirements of the *Learning Covenant*?

   ___Yes ___No If no, please explain.

Please respond to the following questions on a typewritten page and attach it to this form.

2. Comment on your approach to mentoring and on your satisfaction with the mentoring sessions. Are there things you intend to change or improve for the remainder of the Experiential Integration? Please explain.
3. Summarize the student's strengths and gifting in ministry. Do you feel that your mentoring sessions are empowering the student to maximize his or her potential for ministry?
4. In what ways are you finding opportunities to deliberately integrate graduate education into ministry for this student?
5. In what personal and ministry areas does the student need to work to improve? What specific plan do you have to help the student improve during the remainder of this Experiential Integration?
6. Do you have any suggestions for ways in which Briercrest Seminary could help you in your role in the Experiential Integration?

Please review this evaluation with the student and then return it to the Program Coordinator.

Briercrest Seminary Experiential Integration
Attn: Dr. Jason Mills
510 College Drive
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FINAL EVALUATION OF EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION BY THE EI SUPERVISOR

Student: _____ Date: _____

EI Supervisor: _____

Experiential Integration Details:

1. Please review the *Learning Covenant*. Do you feel you have completed the essential requirements of the *Learning Covenant*?

   ___Yes ___No If no, please explain.

Please respond to the following questions on a typewritten page and attach it to this form.

2. Review the job description found in the *Learning Covenant* and describe the student's fulfillment of duties.
3. Comment on your approach to mentoring and on your satisfaction with the mentoring sessions.
4. In what personal and ministry areas does the student need to work to improve? Have these hindered the student's ministry? How?
5. What plan of action beyond the experiential integration would you recommend for the student to improve in those areas?
6. State your overall evaluation of the student's readiness for ministry in a chosen area.
7. Do you have any suggestions for ways in which Briercrest Seminary can improve the Experiential Integration? What should we be sure to maintain?

Please review this evaluation with the student at the conclusion of the Experiential Integration and then return it to the Program Coordinator.

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MID-POINT EVALUATION OF EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION BY THE STUDENT

Student: _____ Date: _____

EI Supervisor: _____

Experiential Integration Details:

1. Up to this point, my time spent in this Experiential Integration has been:

   ___ close to what the *Learning Covenant* stated

   ___ quite different from what the *Learning Covenant* stated

   Please explain:

2. At this point, does it appear that I am on track to complete the essential requirements of the *Learning Covenant*?
   ___Yes ___No If no, please explain.

Responses to the following questions are to be typewritten and attached to this form.

3. Describe your overall satisfaction in your relationship to your EI Supervisor.
4. Evaluate the helpfulness of the mentoring sessions.
5. Carefully review the learning objectives (ministry knowledge, ministry skills and ministry character) defined in the *Learning Covenant* and comment on your progress in meeting these objectives. What have you learned from this to help you in the future? What things emerge as areas to work on for the remainder of the Experiential Integration?
6. How has your involvement in this ministry to date affected your sense of calling?
7. Is there any way Briercrest Seminary could help you with the remainder of your Experiential Integration?

Please review this evaluation with your EI Supervisor and return it to the Program Coordinator.

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SUMMATIVE REFLECTION ON THE EXPERIENTIAL INTEGRATION BY THE STUDENT

Student: _____ Date: _____

EI Supervisor: _____

Experiential Integration Details:

1. During my Experiential Integration, I worked for _____ weeks, for a total of _____ hours.
2. Did you complete the essential requirements of the *Learning Covenant*?
   ___Yes ___No If no, please explain.

The Summative Reflection will be 1800 -2000 words and will address the following areas:

1. An analysis of your personal strengths and weaknesses, as discovered and developed during the entire EI process.
2. Areas of growth and development experienced during the EI (in light of your *Learning Covenant*).
3. An evaluation of the correlation between your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and your effectiveness in ministry.
4. A strategy for further development in the area of reflective thinking and personal development in the areas of ministry skills in which you participated.
5. An anticipation of the kind of ministry directions you will take in the future, including a statement on areas where it has been made clear that you are *not* likely to proceed.
6. Do you have any suggestions for ways in which Briercrest Seminary can improve the Experiential Integration? What should we be sure to maintain?

Please review this evaluation with your EI Supervisor and then return it to the Program Coordinator.
Note: *this assignment is required in the graduation portfolio.*

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EVALUATION OF THE EI SUPERVISOR BY THE STUDENT

Student: _____ Date: _____

EI Supervisor: _____

Please briefly answer the following questions.

1. Describe what kind of mentor your EI Supervisor has been to you. What are his/her strengths and weaknesses?

2. What has been the most satisfying element of your relationship?

3. In what way(s) could your EI Supervisor improve as a mentor?

4. How has your growth been enhanced as a result of your relationship with your supervisor?

5. Would you recommend your supervisor to another student? Why or why not?

6. Additional Comments:

Please return this completed evaluation to the Program Coordinator.

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