

MID-COURSE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Basic Information

Definition: The Mid-Course Assessment, ordinarily done in the “Middler” year (normally the second year for full-time students), is a major review of the student’s preparation and potential for his/her vocational objectives and occurs after the student has completed 39 credit hours toward the Master of Divinity degree requirements.

The content of the Mid-Course Assessment is confidential. Some matters may need to be shared with faculty to facilitate its decisions in response to the recommendations of the student’s Mid-Course Assessment Committee. A statement of the issues discussed is contained in the minutes of the Mid-Course Assessment, a copy of which is shared as appropriate with the ecclesiastical body responsible for the supervision of the student.

Copies of the faculty’s actions (in response to the Mid-Course Assessment) are placed in the student’s personal file and shared with the appropriate ecclesiastical body. The report of the faculty’s action may include an indication of the major issues considered.

If a student’s Mid-Course Assessment has not been completed before March 1 of the student’s final semester, graduation will be postponed beyond that semester’s graduation date.

Prerequisites

The Mid-Course Assessment is ordinarily scheduled during a student’s “Middler” (normally the second) year at the Seminary. To be scheduled for a Mid-Course Assessment, a student must have completed 39 credit hours toward the M.Div. degree. At least 12 of these credit hours must have been completed while a student at Columbia Theological Seminary. A Mid-Course Assessment may also be scheduled at the discretion of the Dean of the faculty.

By the time of the Mid-Course Assessment, a student seeking ordination shall have established a working relationship with the appropriate ecclesiastical body in order to qualify for ordination on schedule and in sequence. For instance:

- a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) shall be under the care and supervision of the Commission on Ministry;
- a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shall be registered as a candidate for the ordained ministry with the Professional Preparation Committee of the Synod;
- a member of the Presbyterian Church (USA) shall be enrolled as either an inquirer or a candidate with their home presbytery;
- a member of the United Church of Christ shall be a Student in Care with the Church and Ministry Committee of the Association;
- a member of the United Methodist Church shall be a candidate for ministry with the Board of Ordained Ministry of the Annual Conference.

Formation of the Mid-Course Assessment Committee

The Dean of Students is the Mid-Course Assessment coordinator. The coordinator is responsible for explaining the Mid-Course Assessment process to students and for overseeing the compiling of each student's Mid-Course Assessment file. The coordinator will designate the membership of each committee, appoint the chairperson, and ascertain that the assessment is completed as required. (When the chairperson is the advisor of the student, the chairperson shall ask another professor on the committee to preside.)

A Mid-Course Assessment Committee is composed of:

1. A team of three professors, one of whom is the student's advisor.
2. Two students specifically chosen to participate in the assessment of the student, one of whom is a peer chosen by the Mid-Course Assessment candidate with the student's permission. This peer must be a student who has not yet had a Mid-Course Assessment and is a member of the candidate's class.

The second student is selected by the Mid-Course Assessment coordinator from a list of three seniors submitted by the candidate with their permission. These students must have already completed the Mid-Course Assessment process themselves.

A student may serve as a student peer for no more than one Mid-Course Assessment during a semester.

Students may not serve as peers on each other's Mid-Course Assessments.

Schedule of Assessments

Mid-Course Assessments are held during Mondays and Tuesdays of the mid-term reading/exam week. An assessment may be held at some other time during the semester if necessary.

The chairperson of a Mid-Course assessment Committee is responsible for determining when and where an assessment will be held. This information is to be communicated to the members of the assessment team and the Mid-Course Assessment coordinator as soon as it has been determined.

Data to be considered in the Mid-Course Assessment

1. A document written by the student following the "Guidelines for Student's Self-Profile".
2. A transcript of the student's seminary academic record.
3. If completed, a summary report of SM210 and other Supervised Ministry courses as submitted by the Office of Supervised Ministry.
4. If completed, an evaluation of the student's work in P232, Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and other clinical settings, prepared by the supervisors and submitted by the Office of Supervised Ministry.

5. When appropriate, reports of annual consultations from the student's supervisory ecclesiastical body and other correspondence from that body which relates to the concerns of the Mid-Course Assessment.
6. When appropriate, certification of ecclesiastical status from the student's supervisory ecclesiastical body.
7. When appropriate, the student's work-study and employment evaluation(s) submitted by the Financial Aid Office.
8. A summary response to the above reports compiled by the student's advisor.

The Mid-Course Assessment file will be destroyed within one year of the termination of the student's relationship within the seminary. The minutes and the report of the action of the faculty in response to Mid-Course Assessment are placed in the student's permanent file.

Procedure for the Student's Assessment

1. The assessment review will be initiated by the Mid-Course Assessment coordinator.
2. The coordinator will provide the student with the appropriate guidelines and secure from the student the name of a student peer from the Middler class and a list of nominees from the senior class.
3. The coordinator, with the assistance of the Dean of Student's Administrative Assistant, will establish deadline dates for the required written materials from all persons involved in the assessment process. The chairperson of the assessment committee will set the time and place for the assessment interview. The Mid-Course Assessment coordinator will ascertain that the interviews are scheduled, appropriate persons are attending, the required documents are in the file and have been reviewed prior to the assessment, and that the committee action is reported to the faculty.
4. The transcript of the student's seminary academic record, the student's self-profile, and, if available, the supervised ministry report, the clinical evaluation(s), and the work-study and employment evaluations will be filed with the Office of Student Services at least twenty-eight (28) days prior to the MCA interview.
5. The advisor's report will be filed with the office of Student Services twenty-one (21) days prior to the MCA interview.
6. Each person (including the student) scheduled to participate in the interview process will review the student's Mid-Course Assessment file in the Office of Student Services prior to the interview.
7. All persons will participate in the interview process according to the "Interview Procedure". The three faculty members of the team will meet for the interview; however, if for good and sufficient reasons only two faculty members are able to be present, the interview can be held. In every instance, the student's advisor must participate in the Mid-Course Assessment.

8. Following the interview, the advisor will compose the minutes of the meeting. The minutes must include the recommendations being made to the faculty concerning the student's request for degree candidacy. Copies of the minutes are to be sent to the student and the Office of Student Services within seven (7) days of the Mid-Course Assessment.
9. The chairperson of the Mid-Course Assessment committee will present the report and recommendation to the faculty for approval at its next meeting.
10. The Dean of the Faculty will inform the student of the faculty's action by letter, copies of which will be filed with the Office of Student Services and the student's supervisory ecclesiastical body.
11. The Dean and the Associate Dean of Students will be available to meet with the student in order to discuss the Mid-Course assessment and its outcome as it relates to the student's program and future course of work.

Student's Self Profile

The student shall write a paper containing the following elements:

1. A brief autobiographical statement of how you have come to the point in your personal, religious and professional pilgrimage. (1-2 pages)
2. An assessment of how you have shared in the social and spiritual life of the Columbia community, how you have participated in the courses of study, and how you have changed and grown in your theological understanding and spiritual life during the past two years. (1-2 pages)
3. A statement outlining the nature of your relationship with your supervisory ecclesiastical body.
4. A statement of your understanding of the Christian ministry to which you have been called (whether ordained or lay) and where in the process of responding to that call. How do you see your natural talents, general fitness, specific gifts, lifestyle, character traits, etc. contributing to your ministry? (1-2 pages)
5. A statement of your projected goal(s) for the next five years and a projected plan for attaining those goals.
6. A statement of the ways your family status influences your future plans.
7. A request for admission to degree candidacy.
8. If you intend to apply for an internship, please give your plans and reasons.

This paper is to be filed with the Offices of Student Services 28 days prior to the interview.

Summary of the Educational Record

The Dean of Faculty will prepare a summary of the student's educational record and place it and a copy of the transcript in the Mid-Course Assessment file twenty-eight (28) days prior to the interview. The summary should include items 1,2 and 3 below and may include 4.

1. Grade point average.
2. Completion of required credit hours.
3. Listing of courses in which student is presently enrolled.
4. Proposals for the student's future course of study.

This proposal is to be filed with the Office of Student Services twenty-eight (28) days prior to the interview.

Supervised Ministry Report

1. If SM210 has been completed or is in process, a copy of the supervisor's report must be submitted as well as reports from other SM electives.
2. If SM210 has been completed or is in process, a copy of the student's self assessment (details of this self-assessment are available in Contextual Education Office).
3. If completed, supervisor's reports from other courses such as SM610 (Basic CPE Unit) or other units of CPE.

This report is to be filed with the Office of Student Services twenty-eight (28) days prior to the interview.

Work-Study Report

When appropriate, the student's work-study and employment evaluation(s) shall be submitted by the Financial Aid Office.

This report is to be filed with the Offices of Student Services twenty-eight (28) days prior to the interview.

Role of the Advisor

A. The advisor will submit a report twenty-one (21) days prior to interview which contains the following:

1. A statement about the nature of the advisor-student relationship.
2. A response to the student's academic record.
3. A response to the report and final evaluation from the supervisor of the student's Supervised Ministry, if completed, as well as a response to other clinical evaluations, if completed.

4. A response to the work-study evaluation(s), when appropriate.
5. A response to the student's self profile.
6. A statement about the student's ability to meet deadlines, particularly in light of the number of course extensions requested and Incompletes received during prior academic work.
7. A brief list of possible issues to be considered.
8. Proposals for future directions of study, skill development, or experience in ministry while in seminary.
9. This report must be on file 14 days prior to the interview.

B. The advisor will serve as secretary for the Mid-Course Assessment.

C. The advisor will make the motion regarding admission to degree candidacy.

D. The advisor will submit a copy of the minutes to the student and the Office of Student Services within seven (7) days of the Mid-Course Assessment.

Role of the Faculty

Any faculty member with concerns about a particular student is encouraged to report this to the advisor.

Guidelines for Participation

1. Prior to the interview, all are to study the student's self-profile, the clinical evaluation(s), the work-study evaluation(s) and the supervisor's report from supervised ministry. In addition to the above, faculty members of the committee are to study the transcript and the advisor's report. These items will be in the student's Mid-Course Assessment file in the Office of Student Services. Student members of the Assessment Committee will not have access to the transcript and the advisor's report in order protect this confidential data of the student being assessed.
2. Having read the file, committee members should be prepared to assess the students strengths and weaknesses, raise issues to be considered by the committee, and make recommendations concerning the student's further course of study.
3. All participants are expected to honor the confidential nature of the proceedings.

Intent of the Interview

The interview will focus on the following:

1. Intellectual and relational skills and development.

2. A developing theological capacity.
3. Personal growth in faith and character.
4. Understanding of Christian vocation and the student's personal response to it.
5. Future vocational plans.
6. Plans for completion of the degree.

The assessment may include recommendations to the faculty for enhancing the student's academic strengths, remedying weaknesses prior to completion of the M.Div. degree.

The assessment of a student seeking ordination may also include recommendations for personal and professional growth, some of which may be required and must be fulfilled before the student is admitted to degree candidacy and/or completes the M.Div. degree.

The recommendations arising from the Mid-Course Assessment interview will be reported to the faculty for approval or amendment.

Interview Procedure

1. Opening prayer.
2. Statement by student about reports placed in the Mid-Course Assessment file.
3. Expressions of issues, concerns, questions from the student and committee members.
4. Exploration and consultation with the student about issues, concerns, goals of future study in light of preparation for ministry.
5. Review and assessment of the student's request for admittance to degree candidacy in light of the data in the assessment file and elicited during the interview.
6. The student is excused from the meeting.
7. The student's advisor moves a possible recommendation to the faculty or moves that the assessment not be sustained. (If the evaluation is not sustained, the committee shall make a report to the faculty on the assessment, and the faculty will then determine the next appropriate action to be taken.)
8. The committee discusses the motion. A secret vote on the motion is held. Each member then claims his/her vote, and the committee attempts to reach a consensus. The student rejoins the committee and the vote is reported and discussed. A report to the faculty is formulated.
9. Closing prayer.
10. The advisor acts as secretary and records the minutes of the meeting.

11. The committee chairperson reports the committee's recommendation to the faculty regarding the student's request for admission to degree candidacy.

Criteria of evaluation

1. Academic ability and record as evidenced in course work.
2. Ability to function in ministry as evidenced in Supervised Ministry and other applied courses, if appropriate.
3. Personal maturity and professional readiness for ministry (lay or ordained) in accordance with the vocational gifts of the student.

Possible Recommendations to the Faculty from Mid-Course Assessment

A. For Degree Candidacy:

That the student

- a. be admitted to degree candidacy (with the following notations..., as appropriate)
- b. be admitted to degree candidacy and, during the senior year,
 - (1) take the following designated course(s): and/or
 - (2) focus on the following designated skill or function: and/or
 - (3) engage in the following experience of ministry:
- c. take SM210 (if not previously completed), SM610, SM615 or SM620 in the summer and then be admitted to degree candidacy. (This action assumes that the student's Mid-Course Assessment Committee will not reconvene.)
- d. satisfactorily complete a Supervised Ministry intern year and thereafter be admitted to degree candidacy. (This action assumes that the student's Mid-Course Assessment Committee will not reconvene.)

B. For Postponement:

That the student's Mid-Course Assessment be adjourned and the decision regarding the student's admittance to degree candidacy be deferred until after the satisfactory completion of a Supervised Ministry intern year or another program devised by the faculty.

C. For Withdrawal:

That the student withdraw from seminary for a period of time set by the faculty with the opportunity to reapply at the end of that period. If readmitted, the student shall be the subject of another Mid-Course Assessment.

Right of Appeal

A student may appeal the faculty's decision in response to the Mid-Course Assessment recommendations. Appeals are handled through the Academic and Judicial Commission of the Faculty.

(updated October 2010)