

Title: Mission and Ministry Experience Credit

Functional Area: Academics

Last Reviewed: February 2018

Approved by: Curriculum Committee



Mission and Ministry Experience (MME) Credit may be granted for up to nine hours in a Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree. A maximum of six hours of credit may be granted toward the Master of Arts: Christian Formation (MACF) degree.

Eligibility

Students must meet the following criteria to be eligible for Mission and Ministry Experience credit:

1. are normally at least 30 years of age; petitions from students younger than 30 must be approved by the Curriculum Committee;
2. have had the mission or ministry experience within the five years prior to entering AMBS as a student;
3. have between 400–1200 hours of documented mission or ministry experience in a setting with a supervisory structure and regular evaluations by a supervisor or overseer (see portfolio requirements for range of supervisory relationships allowed);
4. have successfully completed 30 credit hours of work at AMBS with a cumulative grade point average of B (3.0) or higher;
5. have never received equivalent credit for ministry or mission experience in any other degree program.

Registering for MME

Students complete the MME petition and secure the approval of their advisors, the Contextual Education Director, and the Registrar. The Academic Dean is the final signatory. If the petition is approved, the Academic Dean will assign a faculty evaluator to work with the student. Students will register for MME credit the semester after approval is complete or before the close of registration in the semester in which the work will be completed. The Registrar's office records the MME approved proposal.

Assigning Hours of Credit

Hours of direct mission or ministry work under supervision	Credit hours assigned
400 hours	3
800 hours	6
1200 hours	9

Grading Mission and Ministry Experience

A Mission and Ministry Experience Portfolio is evaluated on a Credit/No Credit basis by a faculty evaluation. Students may request a letter grade through the standard procedure for changing grading patterns. The faculty evaluator's final evaluation is structured around the educational goals of the MDiv or the MACF degree program. The final report and the Academic Dean's recommendation for assigned credit hours are approved by the Curriculum Committee.

Record Keeping

The final evaluation and record of Curriculum Committee action remains in students' electronic records in the Registrar's office. An electronic copy of the report is uploaded into students' portfolios to use during the Capstone course (MDiv) and for program assessment purposes.

Petition for Mission and Ministry Experience Credit

Personal Information

Name: _____ Age: _____

Hours complete towards degree: _____ Current semester in program: _____

Educational Background

Degree	Institution	Date

Mission and Ministry Experience

Assignment	Location	Church/Agency	Dates

Summary and Rationale for Petition

1. A brief summary of the primary mission or ministry activities engaged
2. The structures for oversight or accountability attending the work
3. The names of three references who witnessed growth in your practice of this work

Name	Role	Email

4. A rationale for why credit should be given for this experience that makes clear how the experience informs and relates to the mission or ministry to which you sense an ongoing call and addresses the specific educational goals outlined by the degree program in which you are enrolled.

By my signature or electronic identification below, I signify that:

1. I have completed at least 30 credits at AMBS with a grade point average of “B” or higher.
2. I have not received equivalent credit for mission or ministry experience in another degree program.
3. I have consulted with my advisor about this petition.
4. I have consulted with the Missional Leadership Development Director about this petition.

Student’s signature: _____ Date: _____

To be completed by the student’s advisor

I have discussed the Ministry and Ministry Experience Credit with this student and recommend proceeding with the MME process.

Advisor’s signature: _____ Date: _____

To be completed by the Missional Leadership Development Director

I have discussed the Ministry and Ministry Experience Credit with this student and recommend proceeding with the MME process.

Director’s signature: _____ Date: _____

To be completed by the Academic Dean

Upon granting this student’s MME petition, I name the following faculty member to serve as MME evaluator for this credit:

Dean’s signature: _____ Date: _____

Submit form to Registrar’s Office with copies to MME Evaluator, Student Portfolio, and Registrar.

MME PROCEDURE

STAGE ONE: Preliminary Approval

1. Students who meet the above criteria and wish to apply for Mission and Ministry Experience (MME) credit will:
 - a. Discuss with their academic advisors the merits of using recent supervised experience for curricular credit within their degree program, the educational goals set for their chosen program of study, academic readiness to undertake the writing and reflection process, and their vocational interests.
 - b. Determine that they have time in their current course load to complete the MME portfolio successfully within the term in which they have registered.
 - c. Complete the application form for MME credit along with the petition addressing the points listed under the Summary and Rationale section of page 3.
 - d. Submit the application and petition with advisor's and Contextual Education Director's signatures to the Academic Dean for consideration before the close of registration in Semester One, Semester Two, or the Intensive term. (NOTE: Students will normally complete the application and petition process in the semester or term prior to starting their MME portfolio work.)
 - e. Register for MME credit, if petition is approved.
2. The Academic Dean will assess submitted petitions in light of students' degree programs and educational goals. If the Academic Dean deems the MME appropriate for students' educational programs, she or he will assign faculty evaluators to supervise the portfolio process. If the Academic Dean sees significant problems with the petition, it will be rejected with clear indication why it is not approved.
3. Students will complete the MME work within the semester in which they have registered for MME credit. They may apply for one extension in cases where references or other materials are difficult to secure.

STAGE TWO: MME Portfolio and Final Approval

1. Students will meet with their assigned faculty evaluators for an orientation to the portfolio process, to set up a schedule of periodic meetings during the term, and to schedule a final interview.
2. All portfolios will meet the regular requirements of Turabian style and use standards for good writing for graduate credit.
3. When portfolios are completed, students will meet with their evaluators to discuss their contents using the educational goals of the students' chosen degree program and their vocational interests to frame their conversation. Evaluators may require additional work on the portfolio to deepen students' learning or to rework problematic issues. Where appropriate, evaluators may identify specific learning agenda for students to pursue

during the remainder of their studies at AMBS. Evaluators may also determine that the portfolio work does not meet graduate-level standards and set specific requirements for improvement.

4. When completed portfolios meet the approval of MME evaluators, they will write a report assessing students' portfolios and the final interview using the educational goals of students' chosen degree programs and their vocational goals. This evaluation is normally at least 1,000–1,500 words in length and will indicate the number of credit hours that may be assigned for MME credit.
5. The Academic Dean receives the evaluation report from the faculty evaluator. If the Academic Dean approves the report, she or he will take it to the Curriculum Committee with a recommendation for granting the student MME credit. In the event that evaluations are submitted at times when the Curriculum Committee does not have scheduled meetings, the Academic Dean may approve evaluations and later report such actions to the Committee. Credit will then be posted on students' transcripts and evaluation reports will be filed in MDiv students' portfolios or in MA students' advising files.
6. One ministry experience that received in-depth reflection in the MME portfolio will serve as a first draft of the Capstone case study for MDiv students.

PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS FOR MDiv and MACF STUDENTS

Mission or ministry experience that has not been examined for its potential for learning and growth does not warrant MME credit. MME credit is based on students' ability to analyze experiences, to reflect on them biblically and theologically, and to identify learning derived from them. Even experiences that are deemed to be unsuccessful may be useful for theological reflection and personal learning.

The MME Portfolio submitted by students to their MME evaluators will include the following items:

1. The completed MME application form with the petition
2. Documentation of evaluations carried out by site or field supervisors, conference or regional executives, peer reviewers, or personnel offices during the period of mission work or ministry
3. Three letters of reference that bear witness to students' growth in mission and ministry work including occasions of failure. Students will request these letters from people with whom they had supervisory or collegial relationships during the mission or ministry experience (e.g., conference or regional church ministers; judicatory overseers, congregational leaders; church councils; ministry peers; employers; etc.) These letters should identify:
 - a. Specific gifts for ministry that were developed and exercised in the mission or ministry context.
 - b. Specific areas of growth observed.
 - c. Evaluation of students' cross-cultural or intercultural communication skills, ministry skills, and abilities to reflect theologically.
 - d. Evaluation of students' capacities for self-awareness, healthy human relationships (including interpersonal, physical, sexual, and emotional boundaries); spiritual maturity, and continual learning.
 - e. Other comments the reference believes to be significant for this process.
4. Any artifacts of students' choice that demonstrate their capacity, develop, and competence in their mission or ministry work
5. A substantial paper (5,000 words for 3 credit hours; 7,500 words for 6 credit hours; 10,000 words for 9 credit hours) that:
 - a. **Describes** the mission or ministry setting and the work done in that setting (a job description should be attached if available) (normally 500–750 words).
 - b. **Summarizes and evaluates** the various testimonies to growth received from supervisors and/or colleagues including students' strengths, weaknesses, growing edges, areas of needed growth including in *theological reflection, spiritual growth, personal boundary maintenance, and intercultural communication* (normally 750–1,000 words).
 - c. **Describes** three to five significant mission or ministry experiences that have shaped the students' understanding of ministry and why these have become

formative for their practice of missional leadership (3 examples for 3 credit hours; 4 examples for 6 credit hours; 5 examples for 9 credit hours) (normally 1,000–2,000 words).

- d. **Reflects** critically on one to three of the experiences cited above following this rubric for each experience:
 - i. Describe what is at stake in the experience for students as practical theologians and missional leaders in their own spiritual growth (500–750 words).
 - ii. Analyze the biblical, theological, and ethical issues that this experience reveals and identify the relationship between the specific experience and the *missio Dei* (1,500–2,000 words).
 - iii. Describe and assess the strategies employed (or that might have been employed) from Scripture, theology, the community, or Christian tradition to address the questions or issues arising from this experience (1,500–2,000 words).
 - iv. Identify resources or learning needed to strengthen students' capacities to address similar situations in the future (350–500 words).
- e. **Identifies** specific plans for addressing the learning needs identified through the reflections in section d (350–500 words).
- f. **Summarizes** their learning from the MME process in light of their educational program goals (350–500 words).

Dean's Office 11/83

Revised 4/91; 8/95; 7/97; 8/98; 3/03; 11/03; 11/11; 2/18