



The Stevenson
School *for* Ministry

Competency Based Scope and Sequence

For the Training of Vocational Deacons from the Offerings of the
Bishop Dean T. Stevenson School for Ministry



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General Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for those tasked with planning curriculum and course offerings for the formation program for *vocational deacons* in the Stevenson School for Ministry.

At the heart of this document is an understanding that *competency* differs from academic performance in that its goal is to provide the participant with the tools necessary to perform adequately the tasks of ministry upon ordination. Moreover, this guidance does not presume that a deacon's formation is complete with certification in SSFM. Rather, the responsibility of SSFM is to provide *learning opportunities* for participants to *attain a foundation* for future growth and development in ministry.

Ultimately, it is *not* the proper role of SSFM to adjudicate competency for individual candidates. Rather, this important judgment is made by diocesan authorities (e.g., Commission on Ministry, Board of Examining Chaplains) as determined by the canons and by the policy of respective bishops. However, SSFM does have the responsibility to provide an integrated, timely curriculum that will enable individuals to move through the offerings at an appropriate pace so as to appropriate the knowledge and experience necessary to be so evaluated.

The present document remains a work-in-progress as needs and curriculum responses continue to develop. Its fundamental outlines will provide a basic structure to assess current offerings and recommend future developments. It is founded upon insights gleaned from the *Iona Report: The Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada and Competencies for Deacons 2017* by the Association of Episcopal Deacons.

This model should better assist SSFM to develop its offerings in a way that will allow for wide application across different cultural, ecclesial, and social contexts. Traditional academic measures can be employed in the educational process (since this is what most people find most familiar and comfortable). Competency based modeling allows for a broader view of how, for example, a participant engages a particular subject by integrating them into other course work, preaching, or spiritual growth and development.

Competency areas are included here:

- DIAKONIA and the DIACONATE
- HUMAN AWARENESS and UNDERSTANDING
- SPIRITUALITY and SPIRITUAL PRACTICE
- PRACTICAL TRAINING and EXPERIENCE
- CHURCH POLITY and DIACONAL MINISTRY IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE
- SACRED SCRIPTURE
- CHRISTIAN HISTORY and TRADITION

It is hoped that this scope and sequence, will assist instructors and leaders alike in formulating the offerings of SSFM.

Area A: DIAKONIA and the DIACONATE

The gospel call to the diaconate is expressed in the “Ordination of a Deacon” in the *Book of Common Prayer* [BCP]:

. . . every Christian is called to follow Jesus Christ, serving God the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit. God now calls you to a special ministry of servanthood directly under your bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.

It is rooted primarily in the baptismal vocation to live the life of Christ in the world. A deacon needs to be able to articulate the meaning of this baptismal identity, have a clear understanding of the notion of *diakonia* within baptismal mission and exhibit a compelling identity with ministry of a deacon. This means being thoroughly familiar with and clear about the unique ministry of a deacon in this context and those elements which create a particular role within that ministry.

COMPETENCY The deacon must:	OBJECTIVE The candidate should be able to:	RELATED COURSE(S)
1. Show understanding of the biblical concept of <i>diakonia</i> and its relationship to the diaconate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trace the origin of the diaconate from biblical and early church roots and its development in the Middle Ages, Reformation and modern period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Deacon’s Path • The Message of Mission • Church History I • Church History II
2. Identify and articulate a personal role and identity in diaconal ministry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how a personal sense of call and practice of ministry relates to the office of deacon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Deacon’s Path • Deacons in Action

Area B: HUMAN AWARENESS and UNDERSTANDING

The collect used in the “Ordination of a Deacon” [BCP 540] seeks God help to:

. . . let the whole world see and know that things which were being cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord . . .

Christian anthropology teaches that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, in a specific time and space, in community to live and grow in love, reason, memory and skill. Christians are drawn into the fullness of humanity by the call to follow Christ, to the glory of God. This maturity is attained through a journey toward a mutually dependent understanding of ourselves and of others. Deacons find a unique place for ministry where these relationships are fractured. Moreover, understanding that all ministry is deeply relational, there is a strong need for deacons to commit themselves to a continuing development of their awareness and understanding of self and of others, especially in light of human need and suffering. Deacons must understand how they are called to help shape communities of justice and care. Because this journey is an intentional undertaking in grace, it requires the intimate cooperation of the created person and the creative Holy Spirit.

<p align="center">COMPETENCY The deacon must:</p>	<p align="center">OBJECTIVE The candidate should be able to:</p>	<p align="center">RELATED COURSE(S)</p>
<p>1. Demonstrate growth in self-awareness with a view to becoming fully present to others in one's ministry, relationships, and interactions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe the impact that one's personal values, biases, and assumptions have on relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) • Intro to Theology & Theological Reflection • Field Education
<p>2. Build and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ listening skills appropriately in a variety of economic, cultural, and interfaith contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPE • Anglican Approaches to Ministry • <i>Becoming the Beloved Community</i>
<p>3. Build and foster healthy community life in a variety of contexts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model care and concern for those in need • Affirm and encourage the gifts and talents of others • Show an awareness of causal factors that threaten healthy communities, and of relationships between communities (e.g. use and abuse of power in church and society) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discernment: Who is God, Spiritual Gifts, Baptism, Eucharist, Mission • Missiology in Acts • Paul and Leadership • Ethics I • Anglican Approaches to Ministry • Deacons in Action • CPE
<p>4. Accept people from a wide variety of backgrounds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model behavior that promotes inclusion • Give evidence of learning from and about those who differ from oneself (e.g., culture, economic and social condition) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anglican Approaches to Ministry • Multi-cultural Awareness
<p>5. Respond appropriately to conflict.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe ways of responding to conflict, including their preferred approach • Engage oneself and others appropriately in conflict situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues in Pastoral Care
<p>6. Collaboration with others in exercising ministry and leadership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Function in groups in a way that encourages the participation, contribution, and initiative of others • Accept supervision and authority from others and exercise it oneself as appropriate to one's capacity and role • Reflect with insight on the use and abuse of power in a communal setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Issues in Pastoral Care</i> • Prayer Book Studies

Area C: SPIRITUALITY and SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Bishop: Will you be faithful in prayer and in the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures?

Answer: I will.

With this dialogue “The Ordination of a Deacon” makes explicit the central role that the Holy Scriptures play in the life and ministry of deacons. And later,

Bishop: Will you in all things seek not your glory but the glory of the Lord Christ?

Answer: I will.

places the ministry of deacons within the context of an ongoing and growing relationship of love for God. Deacons build an awareness that all people are the children of God regardless of social or economic status. The Holy Spirit shapes the ministry of deacons as one way of sharing the ministry of Jesus Christ and in so doing makes clearer the purposes of God in the world. The spiritual life of deacons (as any disciple) requires discipline and an open heart. It is an incarnational spirituality that holds up people and situations to God. For this spirituality adequately to reflect the life of God, the deacon must grow in an intimate knowledge and appreciation of the Word of God.

COMPETENCY The deacon must:	OBJECTIVE The candidate should be able to:	RELATED COURSE(S)
1. Give evidence of practicing a life of prayer both alone and in community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe different practices of Christian prayer • Create a <i>rule of life</i> that is rooted in and supportive of diaconal ministry • Show confidence in speaking to others of one’s prayer life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Anglican Spirituality (module)</i> • <i>Spiritual Practices for Today</i> • <i>Spiritual Direction (module)</i>
2. Know that the spiritual life is in continual development, and that healthy development requires continual attention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate and reflect on the experience of working regularly with a spiritual director • Describe some of the many understandings of God in the wider community • Begin to discern and participate in God’s activity in concrete situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to Old Testament • Intro to New Testament • Liturgical Theology • Prayer Book Studies • <i>Spiritual Practices for Today</i> • <i>Spiritual Direction (module)</i>
3. Show a vocational tendency toward the spirituality of a deacon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify signs of the Spirit observed in situations of disaster, conflict, and poverty • Show a grounding in prayer and in spiritual practice • Enrich the spiritual journeys of others • Proclaim <i>good news</i> with confidence of voice and presence • Demonstrate proficiency in crafting public prayer (especially intercessions) using the perspective of justice and mercy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discernment: Who is God, Spiritual Gifts, Baptism, Eucharist, Mission</i> • <i>The Deacon’s Path</i> • Intro to New Testament • <i>The Message of Mission</i>

Area D: PRACTICAL TRAINING and EXPERIENCE

Almighty Father, give to this your servant grace and power to fulfill his/her ministry. Make him/her faithful to serve, ready to teach, and constant to advance your gospel; and grant that always having the assurance of faith, abounding in hope, and being rooted and grounded in love, he/she may continue strong and steadfast in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord ...

Ordination of a Deacon (BCP)

Jesus had a vision of the “Kingdom of God” in which justice and mercy prevail and all God’s people have enough – food, housing, security, dignity, and peace – and compassion guides and shapes human interaction. He gave his life to this vision, in spite of the opposition from the political and social powers of the day. From its very beginning, the Christian church has always called dedicated people to work for peace and justice and to serve God’s people, from the first seven deacons, to communities of brothers and sisters providing health care, shelter, meals, orphanages and other ministries of service. Deacons model for all the baptized in a given setting what it means to be partners with God in bringing about the Kingdom of God. This calls for a delicate balance in posture between the humility of service – on our knees, helping the broken – and the power of advocacy – standing up straight, fists in the air, confronting systemic injustice.

COMPETENCY The deacon must:	OBJECTIVE The candidate should be able to:	RELATED COURSE(S)
1. Demonstrate a diaconal “servant” heart, and gifts for ministry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflect on experiences personally, emotionally, spiritually and theologically, and articulate the fruits of this reflection with an experienced deacon mentor • use core ministry abilities effectively; e.g., basic pastoral care, effective communication • practice and model for others noticeable flexibility and patience working in community • express a sense of divine diaconal call 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discernment: Who is God, Spiritual Gifts, Baptism, Eucharist, Mission</i> • The Deacon’s Path • Deacons in Action (Field Placement) • Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) • <i>Issues in Pastoral Care (module)</i>
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage in social analysis of power relationships • build relationships with local community leaders • build relationships with people in the community from other cultures, and more broadly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deacons in Action (Field Placement) • The Message of Mission

<p>3. Interpret the “needs, concerns, and hopes of the world” to the gathered church.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify correctly the sources of human suffering, causes of injustice, and resources for healing • use current media creatively (news and learning websites, social media, etc.) to learn, engage, teach, and inform • speak and preach prophetically about the needs, hopes, and concerns of the local and global community • compose prayers of the people that reflect the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Testament Survey • Ethics • Homiletics • Prayer Book Studies
<p>4. Demonstrate a knowledge of, and eagerness to learn more about, contemporary issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly identify the positions and thought of the Episcopal Church major social, ethical, and environmental issues • show familiarity with the positions and thought of significant ecumenical, full communion, and Anglican Communion partners on major social, ethical, and environmental issues • demonstrate skill and passion for research and the presentation of accurate information on ethical social justice topics • ask the hard questions and engage others in critical thinking in order to call the church to account in its baptismal and diaconal mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics I • Deacons in Action (Field Placement) • Theology I • The Message of Mission
<p>5. Capably performs all diaconal liturgical functions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate a basic knowledge of and appreciation for key developments in the history and tradition of Christian worship • show a working knowledge of other worship resources; e.g., The Book of Occasional Services, Holy Men and Women, Enriching Our Worship • demonstrate increasing proficiency with forms of liturgy that differ from one’s own Sunday experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer Book Studies • Deacons in Action (Field Placement)

Area E: CHURCH POLITY and DIACONAL MINISTRY IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world ... At all times, your life and teaching are to show to Christ's people that in serving the helpless, they are serving Christ himself.

The Examination, Ordination of a Deacon

Processes of vocational discernment focus on spiritual and personal gifts: *Charism, Call, and Character* have been the watchwords for local discernment teams and diocesan Commissions on Ministry. Sometimes it happens that the attention to practical training, experience, and skills development is seen as of lower importance and value. However, among the *charisms* (gifts of the Spirit) necessary for any form of ministry, is the gift of openness to bring experience into reflection, to have a desire for continued learning, formation, and skills development necessary to the exercise of public ministry. Deacons need to be adept at moving between the contexts of church and street, of vestry and arena of justice, of liturgy and service. That means that there is much specialized knowledge they require, both of church polity and of civil society and the societal sectors in which they work.

COMPETENCY The deacon must:	OBJECTIVE The candidate should be able to:	RELATED COURSE(S)
1. Demonstrate knowledge of the scope and structures of the church.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • name the main advisory and governance positions at the church-wide, diocesan, and local level, in which fellow parishioners can serve • identify key ecumenical, full communion, and Anglican Communion partners • explain clearly to the worshipping community what kinds of political action, advocacy, and speech are appropriate in a church at the local, diocesan, and national levels in the deacon's context, and what is not 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church History II • Canon Law (module) • Prayer Book Studies
2. Demonstrate ability to work within the structures of the church.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give evidence of preparation to take up appropriate roles as a baptized person and as a deacon • assist others in taking up their roles as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discernment Modules: Who is God, Spiritual Gifts, Baptism, Eucharist, Mission</i> • Anglican Approaches to Ministry • The Deacon's Path • Field Placement

<p>3. Work within agreed procedures, vision, and priorities of the church.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use a knowledge of church history and of scripture to assess personal visions and priorities as compared to wider church visions and priorities (for example: personal appropriation of the meaning of the Marks of Mission) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church History • Old Testament Survey • New Testament Survey • The Message of Mission • Anglican Approaches to Ministry
<p>4. Demonstrate interpretive skills relating to “church world” interactions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • articulate the importance of interpreting the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world to the church in one’s current ministry • name and demonstrate the ability to interact in constructive and co-operative ways with leaders in society whose policies and practices affect the impact of ministry • take a leadership role in supporting parishioners to develop ministries; this involves being able to articulate theological and scriptural bases for such ministries • identify what they will need to know to exercise ministry • respond constructively and collaboratively to parishioners who raise objections to ministry initiatives perceived to be “political” and therefore inappropriate in discussions, preaching or church-related projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Deacon’s Path • Field Placement • <i>Introduction to Theology and Theological Reflection (module)</i> • <i>Human Awareness and Understanding (module)</i> • <i>Issues in Pastoral Care (module)</i>

Area F: SCRIPTURE

As a deacon in the Church, you are to study the holy scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model your life upon them. You are to make Christ and his redemptive love known by your word and example, to those among whom you live and work and worship.

. . . and I do solemnly declare that I do believe the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation.

The Examination and the Presentation, Ordination of a Deacon (BCP)

We affirm the holiness of the Old and New Testaments. They are the word of God and contain all things necessary to salvation. We affirm them in this way because they witness in a normative way to God’s activity, in creation, incarnation, and redemption, and in the work of the Holy Spirit. They call us to worship God the Holy Trinity, and to follow Jesus the Christ, empowered by and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We do not worship the Holy Scriptures, and yet we bow to their holiness and are guided by them. The Christian relationship with the Bible is complex. Deacons are given the authority to proclaim God’s word. This ministry carries with it the responsibility to tend to that relationship with reason, prayer, and skill. We need to know the origins and contexts of these words of holy witness, and to engage in holy conversation with them in ways that respect the integrity of these origins and their diverse contextual voices.

COMPETENCY The deacon must:	OBJECTIVE The candidate should be able to:	RELATED COURSE(S)
1. Demonstrate an awareness of the sweep of the biblical narrative, its content, and themes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give evidence of having read the Bible • describe and contrast the various types of biblical literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Testament Survey • New Testament Survey
2. Be learning about the context in which scripture was written.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the cultural and historical backdrop to one or more teachings of Jesus, and one or more of the prophets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Testament Survey • New Testament Survey • Church History
3. Be growing in his or her ability to exegete and interpret scripture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access and use basic exegetical tools, in print or online, such as annotated Bibles, gospel parallels, simple commentaries, Bible dictionary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Testament Survey • New Testament Survey • Homiletics I
4. Demonstrate an awareness of the authority of scripture as understood in the Anglican tradition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • articulate an understanding of the role and authority of scripture in The Episcopal Church, and how this differs from other traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anglican Approaches to Ministry • Church History
5. Identify major biblical themes, especially those foundational to diaconal ministry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and give examples of such themes as prophecy and prophetic ministry, exile, wilderness, law and grace, covenant, justice and mercy, poverty and wealth, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Testament Survey • New Testament Survey

Area G: CHRISTIAN HISTORY and TRADITION

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light, look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery. By the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation.

From Prayer used at Ordinations and other occasions (BCP)

Anglican Christians use the word “communion” often, and in many ways. It refers to the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, and it also describes and guides our relationships with each other within the church, and our call to the fulfillment of the whole Body of Christ in the world. “Communion” is a translation of the Greek word *koinonia*, often used by Paul in his letters to the new Christian communities. It means fellowship, community, deep relationship, relational responsibility, and, as a spiritual theological term, a whole lot more. We who are incorporated into the Body of Christ through baptism are in reconciled communion with God, part of the communion of saints, those who have been, those who are to come, those present with us across the globe and unknown to us. *Koinonia*, theologically speaking, is across both space (geography) and time (past, present, and future). It speaks to our being invited into, and caught up in, God’s Holy Story for all creation. We are entrusted with the God-story of faith, to hear it deeply – the voices from the past – in order to deepen our partnership with God in the continuation of God’s story. When the church ordains you, people expect you to know the God-story, as received, lived, and retold by a cloud of witnesses.

COMPETENCY The deacon must:	OBJECTIVE The candidate should be able to:	RELATED COURSE(S)
1. Demonstrates an awareness of the sweep of the Christian movement from its inception to the present.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and describe two or more eras in Christian history; e.g., pre-Constantine, medieval, reformation, etc. • explain why Episcopalians (especially Americans) need to pay particular attention to the legacies of slavery, racism, sexism, homophobia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics I • (Church History I) • Church History II • <i>Becoming the Beloved Community</i>
2. Be learning about and drawing upon the Jewish antecedents of Christianity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • name key historical events in Jewish self-understanding (e.g., Passover/Exodus, Exile, and Shoah) and how they inform the Christian narrative and theology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Testament Survey
3. Understands the origins and distinctiveness of Anglicanism within Reformation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain, briefly, to an inquirer, the origins of the Episcopal Church within the overarching Anglican movement, including the role of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I • describe two or more points of similarity and difference between the Episcopal Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and churches of the Reformation • outline key contributions of at least two non-English cultural groups to The Episcopal Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church History II • Anglican Approaches to Ministry
4. Be familiar with the institutional structure and development of The Episcopal Church.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain to an inquirer key aspects of the distinctive nature and history of The Episcopal Church and its place in the Anglican Communion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church History II • Anglican Approaches to Ministry
5. Demonstrate a growing awareness of the history of the diaconate in the Christian Church, and in The Episcopal Church.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • point to New Testament evidence for diaconal ministry • show familiarity with the concept of “waves” of the diaconate (for example, as described in the work of Plater or Epting), and apply this concept to the experiences of the diaconate in the local diocese • articulate distinctive features of diaconal ministry in Episcopalian practice, and demonstrate appreciation of points of convergence with other Christian traditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Deacon’s Path • New Testament Survey • Church History II