

## Appendix #13 – Information about Clinical Pastoral Education

### Frequently Asked Questions About ACPE Clinical Pastoral Education

The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc.

<http://www.acpe.edu/faq.htm>

#### INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

1. [What is Clinical Pastoral Education?](#)
2. [What do the essential elements of CPE include?](#)
3. [What kind of things might be included in the Individual Learning Contract?](#)
4. [What are the different types of CPE?](#)
5. [What does CPE prepare a person to do?](#)
6. [I want to be a chaplain or a pastoral counselor. Do I need CPE?](#)
7. [What are some Vocations in Pastoral Care?](#)
8. [Who is eligible to enroll in CPE?](#)
9. [Do I have to be ordained to do CPE?](#)
10. [Where can one enroll in CPE?](#)
11. [How may I enroll in CPE?](#)
12. [Can I apply to more than one ACPE center?](#)
13. [What are the dates for CPE and deadlines for application?](#)
14. [What does CPE cost and are scholarships available?](#)
15. [I am an international student. How do I enroll in CPE?](#)
16. [Can I get academic credit for CPE?](#)
17. [Can I do CPE on-line or through some other distance learning process?](#)
18. [Can I get CPE credit for previous work/ministry experience?](#)
19. [A complaint about an ACPE center or an ACPE supervisor. What to do?](#)
20. [How do I become a member of ACPE?](#)
21. [Additional Information for Prospective Students](#)
22. [Where will you be ministering?](#)
23. [A Typical Day in CPE](#)
24. [The CPE Learning Environment](#)

### 1. *What is Clinical Pastoral Education?*

Clinical Pastoral Education is interfaith professional education for ministry. It brings theological students and ministers of all faiths (pastors, priests, rabbis, imams and others) into supervised encounter with persons in crisis. Out of an intense involvement with persons in need, and the feedback from peers and teachers, students develop new awareness of themselves as persons and of the needs of those to whom they minister. From theological reflection on specific human situations, they gain a new understanding of ministry. Within the interdisciplinary team process of helping persons, they develop skills in interpersonal and inter-professional relationships.

### 2. *What do the essential elements of CPE include?*

- The actual practice of ministry to persons
- Detailed reporting and evaluation of that practice
- Pastoral Supervision
- A process conception of learning
- A theoretical perspective on all elements of the program
- A small group of peers in a common learning experience
- A specific time period
- An individual contract for learning consistent with the objectives of CPE
- The CPE program must be conducted under the auspices of an ACPE certified supervisor (faculty) attached to an ACPE accredited CPE center.

### 3. *What kind of things might be included in the Individual Learning Contract?*

The CPE participant's contract is developed around the learning goals of:

- Pastoral Reflection - reflection on one's self as person and pastor in relationship to persons in crisis, the supervisor, and peer group members, as well as the curriculum and institutional setting.
- Pastoral Formation - focus on personal and pastoral identity issues in learning and ministry.
- Pastoral Competence -deepening and unfolding of competence in pastoral function, pastoral skills and knowledge of theology and the behavioral sciences.

Some centers also offer Pastoral Specialization, focusing on the student's desire to become competent and knowledgeable in a particular area of ministry, e.g. oncology, urban ministry, parish ministry, hospice ministry, etc.

**4. *What are the different types of CPE?***

ACPE offers Level I and Level II CPE, as well as Supervisory CPE, in sequence. The outcomes for each level must be completed before moving to the next level. CPE is usually offered in single units (10-12 weeks) or in a year-long program (3-4 consecutive units). Some centers have other part-time options. The center of your choice can explain the options available at their location.

**5. *What does CPE prepare a person to do?***

- CPE serves as a part of one's preparation for parish ministry, chaplaincy, lay ministry, teaching, and counseling. A student's learning contract may be focused toward integration of theological, psychological, and pastoral insights into pastoral functioning for parish work. Or the contract may be designed with a career goal of chaplaincy or pastoral counseling.
- Some students, after completing several units of CPE, choose to enroll in Supervisory CPE working toward certification as a CPE supervisor. In Supervisory CPE the student learns the theory and practice of supervision and has an experience of supervising CPE students under the guidance and with the consultation of a CPE supervisor.
- CPE develops the capacity for the pastoral and spiritual care of individuals, families, and systems.
- Many theological schools require one unit of CPE as a part of a theological degree program.
- Other schools accept a year of CPE as the required intern year of ministry for a theological degree program.
- A number of theological schools which are members of the ACPE have graduate degree programs which combine academic study and CPE Supervisory CPE.

**6. *I want to be a chaplain or a pastoral counselor. Do I need CPE?***

The Association of Professional Chaplains ([www.professionalchaplains.org](http://www.professionalchaplains.org)), the National Association of Catholic Chaplains ([www.nacc.org](http://www.nacc.org)) and the National Association of Jewish Chaplains ([www.najc.org](http://www.najc.org)) and/ other organizations certify chaplains. The American Association of Pastoral Counselors ([www.aapc.org](http://www.aapc.org)) trains and certifies pastoral counselors. Some CPE is required as a pre-requisite. You should contact these organizations directly about their requirements.

7. What are some Vocations in Pastoral Care?

	<b>Areas of Service</b>	<b>Training Recommended or Required</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Pastoral Care	Pastor, Church Staff, Social Services	Clinical Pastoral Education (minimum 1 unit)	Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. (ACPE)
Professional Chaplaincy	Hospital, hospice, military, or other institutional chaplaincy	Clinical Pastoral Education (4 units required for Board certification)	ACPE for training and Association of Professional Chaplains (APC or NACC or NAJC for certification)
Pastoral Education (CPE Supervisor)	Supervisor of CPE programs in a variety of settings	CPE (Level I, Level II and Supervisory) Successful completion of certification process	Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. (ACPE)
Pastoral Counselor	Counselor on church staff, counseling center or agency	CPE (at least 1 unit) Plus Pastoral counseling training program	ACPE for introductory unit <i>and</i> American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC)
Licensed Professional Counselor		varies from state to state Can often be done in conjunction with pastoral counseling training	AAPC or state credentialing agency

## **8. Who is eligible to enroll in CPE?**

For Units of CPE:

- An individual who, through a written application and an admissions interview, has demonstrated the ability to participate in CPE, usually one who has successfully completed at least one year of theological school.
- Such other requirements or education and experience as a specific CPE center may require.

For Supervisory CPE programs:

An individual who has successfully completed several units of CPE and has demonstrated a readiness to utilize Supervisory CPE, usually one who has a theological degree and several years of pastoral experience.

## **9. *Do I have to be ordained to do CPE?***

Specific requirements regarding ordination as a prerequisite are determined by each CPE center.

## **10. *Where can one enroll in CPE?***

The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education has accredited over three hundred and fifty clinical pastoral education centers and clusters throughout the United States. These CPE centers are located in health care institutions, hospitals of all kinds (e.g. general, university, children's, psychiatric, military, VA), geriatric centers, hospices, parishes, mental health facilities, correctional institutions, and a variety of other settings. Click here: <https://acpe.edu/programs/accreditation/accredited-program-directory> for our online directory.

## **11. *How may I enroll in CPE?***

Click here: <https://acpe.edu/education/cpe-students/cpe-application> to access the CPE Application form as a Microsoft Word document: CPE Application Form or in a PDF format.

- Complete the application and send it directly to the center where you wish to enroll.
- The center will then contact you for an interview.

## **12. *Can I apply to more than one ACPE center?***

Yes, you may apply to as many centers as you chose. Many centers have an application fee. The ACPE online Directory will provide this information.

**13. *What are the dates for CPE and deadlines for application?***

Each individual center establishes its own dates for their programs and application deadlines. Contact the center for this information.

**14. *What does CPE cost and are scholarships available?***

Tuition is determined by each CPE center. Some centers have scholarship programs. There is not a scholarship program at the national level. Questions should be directed to the specific ACPE center.

**15. *I am an international student. How do I enroll in CPE?***

International students should make application at the center of their choice. Once accepted, the student should contact the ACPE national office (email: [tobey@acpe.edu](mailto:tobey@acpe.edu)) to apply for a visa. The visa process can take from six to nine months to complete. The visa must be obtained before you can begin CPE. Additional considerations are discussed on the International Student Information page.

**16. *Can I get academic credit for CPE?***

Many theological schools and seminaries grant academic credit for CPE. You should contact them directly for this information.

**17. *Can I get CPE credit for previous work/ministry experience?***

No, ACPE credit is not granted for previous work experience. However, your previous work/ministry experience will be considered during the interview/acceptance process.

**18. *Can I do CPE on-line or through some other distance learning process?***

ACPE currently does not have any distance learning programs.

**19. *I have a complaint about an ACPE center or an ACPE supervisor. What should I do?***

ACPE encourages complaints be resolved at the local center level. Mediation is often an option. If the complaint does not get resolved at this level, a formal complaint can then be filed with the ACPE Regional Director in which the center or supervisor resides. A list of Regional Directors and their contact information can be obtained here: <https://acpe.edu/detail-pages/resource/complaints>

**20. *How can I become a member of ACPE?***

There is a Student Affiliate level of membership with ACPE. Membership with ACPE allows you the opportunity to participate in the National and Regional conferences, a subscription to The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling, and the ACPE News, our bi-monthly newsletter. For an ACPE membership form, click here: <https://acpe.edu/membership/join-renew>

**21. *Additional Information for Prospective Students:***

CPE is an experience in process education which has been shaped by history and yet remains responsive to the present-day cultural developments which will affect your pastoral formation. The heart of CPE is your ministry with people and learning from that ministry through reflection, discussion, and evaluation with other students and your supervisor. In your CPE experience, you will utilize verbatim (in the form of Pastoral Care Reports), case studies, and other ministry descriptions to present your ministry to supervision. The focus in some seminars will be on what is happening to you, the care giver, as much as on what is happening to the people receiving your ministry. There will be discussions which assist you in understanding theological issues arising from experience. There will be opportunities to learn from behavioral sciences while also reflecting theologically, so you can draw from both in understanding the human condition. You will be challenged to think about groups and social structures as well as individuals in defining your ministry. You also will be part of a dynamic learning group with other students and your supervisor, which will provide opportunities for mutual supervision, care giving, challenge and appreciation.

**22. *Where will you be ministering?***

CPE is offered in a number of different kinds of settings. In many of the settings, such as general hospitals, mental health facilities, correctional institutions, children's hospitals, and nursing homes, you will minister to individuals, families, and small groups of people as a chaplain. CPE may, however, be done in any setting where ministry happens. There are a growing number of centers with innovative approaches to ministry. Many centers are being established as Congregational or Community based models in connection with a local church or churches. You may want to clarify with a center the types of ministries which occur there.

**23. *A Typical Day in CPE***

CPE units may be either full time or part time. Either schedule will include an equivalent number of ministry and education hours. Some extended CPE units meet one day per week for structured educational sessions, and ministry is performed at other times. A more common day, however, is one in which time is provided for ministry and for several education events. Since the heart of CPE is ministering and learning from the experience, a day's schedule frequently includes a clinical seminar in which a student presents a pastoral encounter to other students and the supervisor for discussion and feedback. Other typical sessions are: didactic seminars in which discussion follows a lecture; discussion of

a book or article; exploration of theological concerns; peer group meetings or interpersonal group sessions for mutual sharing, caring, support and relationship concerns are explored; and worship or sharing occasions which provide opportunity for spiritual nurture. Field trips, workshops, and clinical observations may be periodically included. Evaluation experiences with the other students and your supervisor are also part of a CPE program and may be scheduled at the end of a unit to sum up the experience, midway to assess your learning objectives, and, at other times, such as with the other care providers in your ministry area. You will discover that a CPE schedule asks for active investment but also provides time for sharing, reflection, preparation, and relaxation.

#### **24. *The CPE Learning Environment***

If you have never participated in a dynamic, interpersonal, process educational experience, you may be concerned about what it will be like. A foundational task will be for the other students, your supervisor and you to share with each other in such a way that all are cared for, supported, and challenged without being belittled. Furthermore, since an individual best knows his or her own limits, everyone will need to respect other's boundaries and work to negotiate appropriate learning relationships. Developing a learning environment that is supportive, stimulating, and safe will make the risks of interpersonal learning and growth work taking. Any CPE supervisor, regional director, or ACPE seminary liaison professor is available for consultation concerning opportunities for students in CPE.

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