

CPE Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)?

CPE is experience-based theological education and pastoral formation for seminarians, clergy, and lay persons of diverse cultures, ethnic groups and faith traditions. In CPE you join other women and men who are currently in ministry or are preparing for it. Some may be healthcare professionals who come to CPE to enhance their work pastorally. Most are Christian, but CPE welcomes qualified persons across faith traditions.

2. What does *clinical* mean in CPE?

First of all, *clinical* describes the basic methodology of CPE: reflecting on experience. You may call it *process* education; you begin with experience, reflect on it, and act. “What did you learn?” is a common question in CPE. Secondly, *clinical* refers to your ministry site, which is usually St. John’s Hospital Springfield with some possibly at your own place of ministry. At your clinical site you provide pastoral care which is a key component of your learning.

3. Is the CPE program accredited?

CPE at St. John’s has been accredited since 1974. The program is accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), making it one of some 350 ACPE-accredited CPE centers in the United States. The USCCB-CCA (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops—Commission on Certification and Accreditation) renewed St. John’s accreditation through 2018. St. John’s CPE program is accredited to offer Level I and Level II CPE as well as Supervisory CPE.

4. What is a unit of CPE?

According to ACPE Standards, a unit of CPE is at least 100 hours of structured group and individual education. Each unit shall be accompanied by the supervised, clinical practice in ministry. The combined time shall be no less than 400 hours.

5. What is meant by *structured group and individual education*?

Within any unit of Level I/Level II CPE you will be part of a peer group (minimum of three but usually more) who learn from case studies, critique and feedback on your practice of ministry. Peer groups also critique each other’s verbatims, which are word-by-word reviews of a pastoral visit. You work with a qualified supervisor who is first and foremost a pastoral educator, a companion in your own pastoral formation process. This supervisor has pastoral experience and a Masters of Divinity or the equivalent. By certifying as a CPE supervisor, he/she has pursued approximately four-five years of post-graduate work.

6. What is *individual supervision*?

Students meet with their CPE Supervisor for about an hour during which they discuss ministry events, personal issues, theological questions, peer relationships, or any other experiences that might have an impact on their ministry and/or their pastoral identity.

7. What kinds of CPE programs does St. John’s offer?

St. John’s is accredited to offer Level I - II and Supervisory CPE:

- Level I CPE – addresses the fundamentals of pastoral formation, pastoral competence, and pastoral formation through one or more CPE units. Satisfactory achievement of Level I outcomes is a prerequisite for doing Level II CPE.
- Level II CPE – addresses the development and integration of pastoral formation, pastoral competence and pastoral reflection to a level of competence that permits participants to pursue professional certification as a chaplain and/or admission to Supervisory CPE.

- Supervisory CPE – is designed to see the participant through to Associate CPE Supervisor status. The program accepts persons who have demonstrated pastoral, professional, and clinical competence and develops in them competence in the art, theory and practice of supervision of clinical pastoral education.

8. In what formats does St. John's offer CPE?

St. John's offers CPE in four formats:

- Extended unit, part-time over nine months, designed primarily for persons exploring CPE as a possibility, seeking ordination in their denomination, desiring to hone their pastoral skills. One unit CPE.
- Summer unit, fulltime over 10 weeks, designed primarily for persons seeking ordination in their denomination, but not limited to seminarians. One unit CPE.
- Residency, 12-month, fulltime program, designed for persons preparing to become professional certified chaplains or planning to pursue supervisory education. Four units of CPE.
- Supervisory Education, a two-to-three-year fulltime program through certification as Associate Supervisor.

Occasionally, St. John's offers an off-site program in places where an interest in CPE and a related need exist. In these cases, the calendar is tailored to the situation while honoring professional standards.

9. What is the Extended Unit CPE program?

You can continue to work a job. Your CPE group work is on Tuesday evenings, 6:00-10:00 p.m. Your clinical hours can usually be scheduled to accommodate your other responsibilities. For this nine-month program plan on seven hours weekly of clinical work, usually sometime Monday through Friday 8:00-4:30 when staff chaplains are available for mentoring. Every other week you will have individual supervision with your CPE Supervisor.

10. What is the Summer CPE program?

This is a fulltime 10-week program. Group and clinical work and individual supervision will be Mondays through Fridays, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Twice during the summer you will be working with a staff chaplain on a weekend day or evening to provide pastoral care throughout the hospital.

11. What is the Residency CPE program?

The Residency is a 12-month, fulltime program. Group and clinical work and individual supervision will be Mondays through Fridays, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. One weekend monthly you will be the day chaplain (8:00-4:30) for the entire hospital. **Pre-requisite** for entering the residency is a graduate theological degree or sufficient progress toward it that could be certified as a chaplain within 24 months of completing the residency. **Strongly preferred** is one previous unit of CPE.

12. How many positions are in the CPE Residency program?

Three.

13. Is an on-site interview required for a CPE Residency?

Yes. Our experience is that it serves the applicant and the center best, when an on-site interview is conducted. The applicant will have an opportunity to talk with current Residents and have a tour of St. John's so that they can make an informed decision.

14. Do I need to be ordained to be considered for a CPE Residency?

Ordination is not required. Since Clinical Pastoral Education is post-graduate education, successful applicants will have completed a Bachelor's degree, and preferably a Master's degree (Theology, Pastoral Ministry, Divinity) or some program which will allow the person to become board-certified as a Chaplain within at least 24 months of completing the Residency and/or will allow the person to

enter supervisory education. For all CPE programs, the Center looks for applicants who are active and rooted in their faith tradition and who have been in service in some way in their local faith community.

15. Do you accept international applicants in the residency program?

We will accept international applications from persons who have resided in the U.S. for at least one year prior to the application and who have completed at least a single unit of ACPE CPE.

16. Do you offer a 2nd year Residency?

We do not currently offer a 2nd year residency. You may be able to find an offering through the ACPE website, www.acpe.edu.

17. What is the Supervisory CPE program?

At St. John's persons in Supervisory CPE also have staff chaplain responsibilities. The curriculum is two years in length with a third year negotiable, designed to see participants through to Associate Supervisor status. Monthly, supervisory education students participate in a peer group with supervisory education students and CPE Supervisors from other CPE centers. Most of these meetings are by videoconference.

Pre-requisites for entering supervisory education are a post-graduate theological degree (usually a Master's of Divinity or the equivalent), successful completion of CPE Level II outcomes, and denominational endorsement. Within the first months of supervisory CPE, if not before, the applicant participates in an ACPE-sponsored consultation for readiness for Supervisory CPE.

18. Do you have any openings in your Supervisory Education Program (SES program)?

We do not currently have an opening for our SES program. You may be able to find an offering through the ACPE website, www.acpe.edu.

19. What kind of orientation do I receive if I do CPE at St. John's?

Allow four full days at the beginning of any of the programs. The first day you will join other new St. John's coworkers for General Orientation. The other days will orient you to CPE. At your clinical site you will have an on-site mentor, one of the staff chaplains.

20. What is the cost of doing CPE at St. John's?

There is a \$25.00 non-refundable application fee to be sent with the application. Tuition for each unit of CPE is \$400.

21. Is there a stipend for CPE at St. John's?

For the summer and the extended unit there is no stipend. The CPE Residency pays a stipend, computed at \$12.15/hr. subject to state and federal withholdings. CPE residents also receive benefits at the same rates as other St. John's coworkers. A person in Supervisory CPE receives St. John's coworker benefits and earns a salary in the range for chaplains at St. John's.

22. Do you have any scholarships available?

At the present time, we have none available. You may be able to find financial support through a seminary or church.

23. How can I learn more about chaplain certification?

The following websites provide information that can be downloaded:

- Association for Professional Chaplains (APC) www.professionalchaplains.org
- National Association for Catholic Chaplains (NACC) www.nacc.org
- National Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC) www.najc.org

24. How can I learn more about supervisory certification?

Information can be downloaded from the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) website at www.acpe.edu.

25. How do I apply for CPE at St. John's?

You can download an application and directions from this website or from www.acpe.edu, the website of Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE). Mail your completed form with attachments to:

St. John's CPE Program
Attn: Nancy Beckenhauer, OSU, Pastoral Services
1235 East Cherokee
Springfield MO 65807
Phone: 417-820-7440
Fax: 417-820-2504
email: Nancy.Beckenhauer@mercy.net

When your application has been received and reviewed, you will be contacted for an interview to

- explore further what you have written in your application materials
- answer your questions about CPE and specifically about the program at St. John's
- discern whether this program is a good fit for your learning interests.

26. Will you accept my application electronically?

Yes, we will. Please address the application to nancy.beckenhauer@mercy.net. Send your application fee by mail or deliver it in person.

27. Where do CPE participants at St. John's do their clinical work?

Usually participants in the extended or summer unit and the residency do their clinical work at St. John's Hospital, which is a Trauma I facility and a rich environment for learning.

28. Can I do some of my clinical work at a place other than St. John's?

At times it is possible to do some of the clinical hours at a place other than St. John's, provided certain conditions are met. These conditions include a site agreement, on-site mentoring by a qualified individual(s), visits of the CPE supervisor to the site. The details of such an arrangement are individualized to the situation.

29. Do you provide housing for CPE participants?

St. John's CPE program itself does not have housing, but we will work with a person to identify area possibilities.

30. I am interested in chaplaincy certification but want to do it through NACC. Would your program help me?

The CPE curriculum at St. John's is designed with both APC and NACC Standards in mind, as well as those of the accrediting body, ACPE. When you successfully complete a residency at St. John's, you have at least four units of CPE, which are required for certification. Alumni of St. John's program have successfully achieved both NACC and APC chaplain certification.

31. Are there chaplain jobs?

As in most fields, the answer is mixed. If you are willing to relocate, you will have more possibilities. People who complete St. John's residency program have a good track record on employment.

32. Are there supervisory positions?

Very definitely, but you may have to relocate. Currently there are more supervisory openings than there are available supervisors. In addition, according to an ACPE 2006 survey, about 50% of the CPE supervisors in the United States are over 55.

33. How is St. John's CPE program accredited?

St. John's CPE program is accredited through the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc, 1549 Clairmont Road, Ste 103, Decatur GA 30033-4635. Telephone: 404-320-1472. Fax: 404-320-0849. Email: acpe@acpe.edu. Web: www.acpe.edu