

## Centre for Christian Studies When a Student is Absent

*Approved by staff February 2003  
Reviewed by the Program Committee March 2003*

### **Learning Circle**

The Centre's educational methodology is contingent on the creation of a learning community in which students and staff participate as learners and as leaders. Learning in a community is both gift and challenge. The richness of this kind of learning environment enables individual and group growth, fosters authentic expressions of spirituality and creates a place of care and concern. This model requires a high commitment to presence and participation.

The design of the program with intensive gatherings of the learning community means that a lot is covered in each day of the learning circle, sometimes as much as the equivalent of 3 classes in a semester long course.

When a student is absent from a Learning Circle it affects their learning, but it also affects the learning of the others in the program, since all contribute as leaders and teachers for one another.

It is recognized that sometimes absence from a Learning Circle is required because of health, personal emergency or bereavement. As adult learners, the Centre expects students to be able to determine for themselves when they must be absent from a Learning Circle, weighing their own needs with the expectations of the program. The Centre also expects students to be responsible for meeting equivalency requirements for all work missed.

The process and method for this will be negotiated with staff and will be contextual. **Such decisions need to be made by more than one staff person.** Some of the contextual factors that will be considered are : learning goals of the student, student's academic history, readiness for ministry, possibilities for community learning, length of absence and content missed, effect on staff work load.

Make up processes could include, but are not limited to, additional assignments, a workshop in the student's home context, additional courses or extra leadership responsibility at a subsequent Learning Circle.

However, there is a limit to how much of the Learning Circle requirement can be fulfilled through an equivalency. In situations where a student has had to be absent for an extensive period of time, absent repeatedly, or where their absence demonstrates a lack of commitment to the requirements of the program, they may not be given credit for the year.

### **Field Placement**

In the Centre's praxis model the integration of experience and theory are valued. The simultaneous experiences of Learning Circles and Field Placement are designed to help meet this goal.

It is recognized that sometimes students are unable to fulfill their field placement requirements of 12 hours a week from September to April because of health, personal emergencies, bereavement or other extenuating circumstances. As adult learners, the Centre expects students to be able to determine for themselves when they must be absent from their field placement, weighing their own needs with the expectations of the program and the field placement site. Students are required to make up time missed. In many situations this can be accomplished by increasing hours at a later point in the field placement. This must be negotiated with the Learning Facilitator and others as appropriate. CCS staff should be informed of the arrangement if there is a significant change.

If it is not possible for the student to complete all of the field placement requirements before the spring Learning Circle then an arrangement for completing the requirements must be negotiated with staff and the field site. **Such decisions need to be made in consultation with more than one staff person.**

In situations where a student has had to be absent for an extensive period of time, absent repeatedly, or where their absence demonstrates a lack of commitment to the requirements of the program or the field placement, they may not be given credit for the field placement.

### **External Courses**

The nature of the Centre's program requires students to be away from their home community for several weeks at a time during the academic year and this can result in a student missing classes in External Courses that are offered on a weekly basis. When students are deciding on External Courses they are encouraged to consider the impact of their absence on their learning and on the others in the course. Students should consult with the school and professor in advance of registering in the course and refer to the policies and procedures set forth in the handbook or calendar of such institutions for the relevant policies guiding absence.