Petition for Prior Learning Assessment
for Acceptance into the Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies Program
at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake

An applicant seeking admission to USML who does not have a bachelor's degree, or its equivalent from formal post-secondary coursework, may petition to have a prior learning assessment of formal vocational or non-credit coursework. Examples of such prior learning might include training programs, courses taken at a 2-year community college, military training, community organizing training, ministry formation programs, continuing education courses and/or courses taken at the college level without completing a degree. Upon review of the requested items listed in sections I-V, an in-person interview will be set up through the Administrative Assistant of the Institute for Pastoral Leadership.

To petition for PLA, please complete the following and submit it to Bob Alexander via email to balexander@usml.edu or by post to Bob Alexander, Institute for Pastoral Leadership, 1000 E. Maple, Mundelein IL 60060.

I. An Introduction
   A. Introduces the applicant to the reviewer(s)
   B. Expresses the applicant’s goal for applying for a graduate degree in ministry

II. Two Letters of Recommendation
   A. Pastor or professional supervisor with whom the applicant has worked which describe the various competencies which the applicant has mastered through work/ministerial experience
   B. Educator, a teacher or facilitator from a prior formal educational experience who can assess the applicant’s capacity to engage in graduate level study

III. Transcripts and/or Certificates
   A. Official transcripts from a community college, 4-year college or university
   B. For non-credit programs, copies of certificates from educational courses, programs, or continuing education units earned in formal learning settings

IV. Work/Ministerial Experience
   A. Job description with verification of employment
   B. Role descriptions from ministerial roles involving leadership with verification from the pastor

V. Written Articulation
   A. Submit a previous academic paper of at least ten pages
   B. In the absence of the above paper, submit a five-page typed essay on one of the following topics:
      1. A book report on an academic or spiritual book
      2. An essay on the role of the laity in the life of the Catholic Church
      3. A topic of study of interest to the applicant

VI. Verbal Articulation
   A. Demonstrated by an in-person interview with the Associate Director of the program
   B. Demonstrates the ability to express oneself in a clear, logical and organized manner

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