

**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 [balAlexander@usml.edu](mailto:balAlexander@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