

The Intellectual Formation of Jesuit Brothers and Scholastics: Initial Formation (Version 2, June 2014)

1. The Goal of Studies:

- 1.1. “The purpose of studies in the Society is apostolic” (NC 81). Studies are aimed at helping Jesuits grow in their capacity to fulfill the mission of the Society of Jesus today: the service of faith, the promotion of justice, dialogue with cultures and religions.
- 1.2. Thus, the intellectual formation of Jesuits should provide them with the ability to
 - 1.2.1. Analyze profoundly the complex and changing CONTEXTS of our mission;
 - 1.2.2. Understand deeply the CONTENT of Catholic faith;
 - 1.2.3. Acquire the ministerial COMPETENCIES needed to communicate the Gospel and to help make real the Kingdom of God in our world;
 - 1.2.4. Appropriate the meaning and implications of the Jesuit CHARISM for life and mission.

2. Fundamental Elements of Jesuit Studies:

- 2.1. The study of the **CONTEXT of mission** involves all that allows Jesuits:
 - 2.1.1. To understand and appreciate the complexities of the human condition (arts and humanities)
 - 2.1.2. To analyze structures and developments in society and culture, especially those that are relevant to faith, justice, religious pluralism, and ecological issues (social and natural sciences)
 - 2.1.3. To understand, through an encounter with important texts, how thinkers and cultures have sought to respond to fundamental questions and dimensions of human and social existence (philosophical studies)
 - 2.1.4. To acquire a methodology for continually reflecting on changing contexts of mission
- 2.2. The study of the **CONTENT of faith** involves:
 - 2.2.1. The study of the inspired Word of God and the rich and living tradition of teaching and theological reflection of the Church
 - 2.2.2. Initiating a systematic understanding of how the mysteries of faith relate to one another and to human existence and history.
 - 2.2.3. Dialogue with other ecclesial communities and religious traditions, and with the secular world and mindset.
- 2.3. **Ministerial COMPETENCIES** for *kerygma-martyria*, *leitourgia*, and *diakonia* (cf. CG35 D3, n19) include, among others, those for
 - 2.3.1. ministries of the Word: preaching, social communications
 - 2.3.2. sacramental ministry: presiding, liturgy
 - 2.3.3. ministries of interiority: spiritual direction, pastoral counseling
 - 2.3.4. educational ministries: education, pedagogy
 - 2.3.5. leadership and management
 - 2.3.6. skills for adapting to technological and social change
 - 2.3.7. collaboration
 - 2.3.8. language skills
- 2.4. Appropriation of the **Jesuit CHARISM** includes
 - 2.4.1. The study of Jesuit history

2.4.2. A historico-critical and sapiential reading of: a) foundational Jesuit documents concerning our Institute, including *the Constitutions*, the *Spiritual Exercises*, recent General Congregations of the Society; and b) key thinkers who have written on Ignatian Spirituality

2.4.3. Theological reflection on fundamental elements of the Society's identity and way of proceeding.

3. **Dynamic tensions involved in Jesuit intellectual formation:** Aspects of pedagogy

- 3.1. Jesuit studies should be marked by both an appreciative and critical *appropriation of one's own cultural, intellectual and religious tradition* and a *respectful openness and humble attentiveness to the Other* (different cultural, religious, intellectual traditions).
- 3.2. Jesuit studies should be *interdisciplinary*, seeking to understand reality from the vantage points of different disciplines, frameworks, and schools of thought. Yet there should be a constant concern for *integration*, a way of correlating the diversity of what one studies towards a vision of the whole.
- 3.3. Jesuit intellectual formation should involve an ongoing inter-action and dialogue between *experience* (including apostolic and pastoral experience, and especially insertion with the poor) and *reflection*, between *theory and praxis*.
- 3.4. The intellectual formation of Jesuits seeks to develop conceptual *rigor and clarity* of thought and expression, on the one hand, and *imagination and creativity*, on the other.
- 3.5. The process of learning calls for the *personal responsibility* of the Jesuit: his personal interest, engagement, research, self-evaluation. At the same time, the Jesuit learns through the process of dialogue and *collaboration with a community of learners*.
- 3.6. While there should be a *common program* of studies for Jesuits in formation, a discerning *flexibility* should also be exercised to allow for adaptations and adjustments of this common program in response to special needs, interests, and talents of individual formands.
- 3.7. While Jesuit intellectual formation aims at the appropriation of *content*, the manner of learning should inculcate *habits of life-long searching*, inquiry, reflection, study, and critical thinking.

4. **Promoting an Ignatian spirituality of studies:**

- 4.1. Professors should help formands develop an *Ignatian spirituality of studies*, which allows the Jesuit to live the joys and the challenges of studies, *not as an external imposition or requirement*, or as a matter of personal development, but rather as focused on better serving the mission to which God calls the Society and the individual Jesuit.
- 4.2. *Excellence* should be sought, diligently avoiding mediocrity or minimalism. However, this pursuit of excellence is undertaken so that Jesuits might be able to give the People of God the best possible service we can offer, rather than in a spirit of *competitive rivalry*.
- 4.3. While studies in the Society involve *the development of gifts and talents and the cultivation of interests* of the individual Jesuit, at the same time, Jesuit intellectual formation calls for constant *abnegation and discipline*, a willingness to die to self, to forego what might seem more immediately gratifying, even in apostolic work.
- 4.4. *Spiritual and apostolic fruit* should be sought and prayed for during the course of Jesuit studies: such as,
 - 4.4.1. a more profound sense of the search of humanity for salvation and liberation;
 - 4.4.2. great desires and apostolic zeal;
 - 4.4.3. deeper awareness of and surrender to the beauty and the mystery of God.
- 4.5. Formands should be helped to *integrate the fruit of their studies to personal and apostolic discernment*.

5. Stages of intellectual Formation:

- 5.1. Each stage of formation will have a *primary focus*:
 - 5.1.1. Novitiate will focus on the element of Jesuit CHARISM;
 - 5.1.2. First studies (including philosophical studies, and other relevant courses) will focus on the CONTEXT of mission;
 - 5.1.3. Regency is primarily aimed at the development of ministerial COMPETENCIES;
 - 5.1.4. Theology will focus on CONTENT of faith.
- 5.2. Although the formative emphases may vary in different stages, *all four elements of intellectual formation should be present during each stage*, progressively building on what has been learned before.
- 5.3. Different ministerial COMPETENCIES should be acquired at every stage so as to equip the Jesuit for ministry. As a rule, the competencies needed during Regency should be acquired during First Studies (Philosophy), and the competencies required for priestly ministry should be given special attention during Theology.
- 5.4. While the study of the Jesuit CHARISM is more intensely focused during the Novitiate, this element of Jesuit formation should be systematically present in all stages of Jesuit formation.

6. Special Concerns

- 6.1. *Philosophical studies in universities today*: Our formands studying philosophy, particularly in a university setting, are often exposed to a very wide diversity of schools of thought. Those responsible for formation should help our men better integrate this diversity, and provide greater continuity between philosophy and theology.
- 6.2. *Diversity of educational background and experience of Jesuit formands*: Today, some men in formation enter the Society with advanced degrees and professional training. They should be helped to integrate and build on their former experience. It may also be necessary to help some re-orient attitudes and mindsets that may have been acquired in previous studies or work experiences.
- 6.3. *Professors who are also formators*: Major Superiors and those who share responsibility for the formation of Jesuits should ensure the identification and training of a team of professors, both Jesuit and lay, who are not only professionally competent, but are also committed to the vision, goals, pedagogy, and ideals of Jesuit intellectual formation.