

Discipleship Training LLM(Reader) Course Handbook



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Introduction and Term Dates

Welcome to Discipleship Training in the Diocese of Derby and the start of your journey to growing your faith and exploring your sense of call to Licensed Lay (Reader) Ministry. The Central Readers' Council of the Church England believes that LLM(R) ministry has three basic strands: Teaching the Faith, Enabling Ministry in the Everyday and Leading in Church and Society. The training you are about to undertake has been designed to help you to develop all these three strands of ministry.

The term dates for the current year can be found on the website here:

<https://www.discipleship-training-llmr.org/term-dates>

Most Study Days will take place on Zoom and the links will be posted in the Session page on the website in the week before the study day – please look out for them! Occasionally there will be In Person Study Days at Danemoor, Chesterfield. If you can't make these days for logistical reasons they will be videoed so that you can catch up afterwards. The In Person day at the Multi-Faith Centre at Derby University in the final year cannot be videoed but there is an alternative of a book to read if you cannot make that day.

We advise you to put the dates of all the study days in your diary straight away and to make them a priority please. Very occasionally a study day date may have to be changed and if this happens we will let you know as soon as possible.

If you can't make a study day for any reason please do let us know by emailing the Course Director, dawn.glen@derby.anglican.org.



CENTRAL READERS' COUNCIL
Transforming
ministry



*Teaching the Faith.
Enabling Ministry in the Everyday.
Leading In Church & Society*

How Do the Modules Work?



All of our training is modular and most of it is delivered on-line on our exciting new website www.discipleship-training.org. Our training has been designed to include a variety of different content and we have tried to make it easy to access with video content wherever possible, but there will be some reading to do. You don't need any formal educational qualifications, just some thinking and reflecting skills and a desire to learn and grow in your faith.

Each module consists of 10 sessions, 7 of which you complete in your own time and 3 of which are completed on Zoom Study Days (apart from the Preaching module which will be taught entirely by Zoom Study Days and the Old Testament module which has 12 sessions, 3 of which are study days). **The average time commitment per session is 7-10 hours.**

Studying the Sessions

This programme has been designed to be flexible and to fit around your other commitments as easily as possible. A week or so prior to the start of each module you will be sent a password to access that module on the website as follows:

- Go to the website and look at the top right of the page.
- Select the "Enter Modules" button, this will take you to the Module Portal page.
- Once in the Module Portal page, select the module you have applied to study and click the 'Login' button.
- You will be asked for the password, enter the password that was sent to you by Fiona Bennett or Dawn Glen.
- This will take you to the module's Home Page where all the sessions are listed.
- Read (or listen to) the Welcome information. You can now begin your study at any time you wish by clicking on the picture next to each Session Number. Most of the content is by video or text or documents available on the website but for a couple of modules you may need to buy a single text book for some of the reading.

You can take each session at your own pace. Some people may decide to do a whole session at one sitting, others may prefer to break the sessions up into two or three sittings (if you do this we recommend you make a note somewhere of where you stopped!).

The module can be completed in your own time too. You may decide to do one session per week or several in a week if you have the time. You will however, need to complete all the sessions prior to a Study Day session unless some unforeseen circumstances prevent this (so Sessions 2-4 before the Study Day that is Session 5 and Sessions 6-9 before the Study Day that is Session 10). If you are not able to attend a Study Day please do let us know as soon as possible.

Tutor

You will also have a group tutor to help you with each module. The tutor will contact you after Session one and will arrange optional weekly tutorials with the group, usually on a weekday evening. If you feel you need extra support please let us know, help is available.

Study Days

The study days are part of the formational side of the course. They will give you some further input but they are also a chance for you to share with others the things you have learned so far on the module. In each session prior to Study Days you will be asked to write some things down in a learning journal (see note below about what this is) to bring with you to discuss with other students. These days are always very enjoyable and there is no substitute for being able to interact with others who are on the same journey. Study Days are mostly on Zoom though one or two are in person, either at Danesmoor, Chesterfield or Derby University and usually commence at 9.00am and finish at 1.00pm (slightly later for any in person days to allow for travel). **Attendance at study days is expected so please make these dates a priority in the same way you would a preaching or leading commitment in your church. They should take priority over church commitments so please let your incumbent/supervisor know of the dates.** If you can't make a study day for reasons of ill health or an emergency please let us know as soon as possible.

Learning Journals and Discussion Forums

Although it is not compulsory, we recommend that all students keep a journal (or notebook) in which you write down the things that strike you or that you have been thinking about in each session. This will help with questions or comments for the Study Days as well as for posting on the Discussion Forum (see below for what this is). It also helps to keep all this together in one place so that you can easily find it later and you can also see your journey and growth at a glance.

For every module there will be a Discussion Forum on the website and in each session you will be asked to post something on it. There is always a link to the forum whenever you are asked to post something. We also require you to post a comment on at least one other post by a fellow student. **These are not an optional tasks, they MUST be completed for every session as they form part of the final assessment for the module and you won't be able to pass without doing this (see below for more information).**

To Access the Forum

Go into Session 2 of the first module you take, go to the bottom of the page and in the section headed 'To Do In Church This Week' click on the word Forum. This will take you into a screen where you will be asked to join the Forum. You will need to set up a username and password. A message will then be sent to the Course Director to approve your membership. You will receive another message telling you that your request to join has been approved and you will then be able to login to the Forum. You will need to change how your name appears on the Forum, to do this please watch the short video [here](#).

Something Practical To Do

In every session of every module there is a practical exercise to do. It will be a simple exercise that you can carry out on your own and you will be asked to post some of what you have discovered on the Discussion Forum. It is important that you carry out these exercises as they will help you with growth in faith and ministry development. You will need a Bible throughout your time on the Course and we recommend the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) for study purposes which is the version recommended by the CofE.

How Will My Course Work Be Assessed?

You will be assessed by several means during the course:

- Your participation on study days and tutor groups as well as your parish placement activities and the way you conduct yourself in all forms of communication (including emails) forms one set of assessments which are known as formative or formational assessments. Feedback on these elements of assessment will be given in the form of Annual Reports, one from your Incumbent/Supervisor and one from the Director of Studies.
- Assignments: there are two assignments for each module and these make up 100% of the final module mark. The questions (or tasks) can be found by clicking on the picture next to 'Assignments' at the very end of the module Home Page.
- One assignment is always practical and you will need to video record it (a mobile phone will be perfect for this). There is usually a commentary/rationale of some kind to go with this which can be written or recorded. You will then need to submit these to the module leader via a personal Google Drive folder which will be set up for you at the outset of the course and only shared with the module leaders, your supervisor, and the external examiner. You will need to email dawn.glen@derby.anglican.org when you're ready to submit your first assignment in order to receive the link (we've tried sending the links at the outset but students tend to lose them and ask for them again when trying to submit the assignment so we felt it best to wait until you were ready to submit). Feedback on these assessments will be given in the form of a Feedback Sheet for each assignment you submit which will tell you whether you have satisfied the learning outcomes for the module or need to do more work with some suggestions for further development.
- The second assignment is usually your Forum activity: **As this is a formational course rather than an academic course, you will also be assessed on your engagement with other students on the Forum. This means you must post for each session as you complete it and also you must comment on other students' posts. You can't just put all your posts and comments in at the end because that is not a discussion which is what the Forum is all about. Please do remember this and start posting straight away. You can't pass the modules without doing this.**

Assignment Deadlines

The other thing about deadlines is they are part of the formational criteria for LLM(R)s. They are like being put on a rota in church to lead or preach or take a confirmation class session, or anything else you might be asked to do. If you aren't able to make the commitment you would be expected to let someone know as soon as possible rather than simply not turning up. The same is true of assignments - there are other people involved who need to know if you can't make the deadline. For this reason, Ministry Division of the Church of England has put in place the following procedures for assignment deadlines.

- a missed deadline without an agreed extension results in marks being deducted for every 24 hours or part thereof
- anything more than a week late without an agreed extension has to be considered a default and given a mark of 0. Opportunity is given to effectively re-submit the assignment at a later date. If that date is missed, then the whole module needs to be repeated.
- the same applies to extended deadlines, marks are deducted for every 24 hours or part thereof after the extended deadline and a mark of 0 if it's more than a week late with the opportunity to re-submit. If that date is missed without an agreed extension the whole module needs to be repeated.

We don't want anyone to be in the position of having to re-sit a module they've completed it so do let us know if you need an extension. We try to be as flexible as possible but many of our markers and moderators do this on top of other jobs and they have to fit the marking (which is a time-consuming task) into their diaries.

In addition to your course work you will also be assessed on the practical outcomes of the programme which we will now address in the next section.

Formation

You will be expected to be able to articulate how you feel you are moving from the role of private person in the pew to a public person who represents the church in the community. This is called 'formation', it's about gradually inhabiting the role to which God has called you, and, much like grit forming a pearl, it should necessarily include challenges. It will help you if you discuss this regularly with your supervisor and, when reflecting at the end of sessions, ask yourself 'how has this learning changed me? How am I allowing it to transform me and my faith journey?'

Context-Based Learning



Your ministerial context is taken very seriously. Learning on the Course is work-based and work-related. In other words, engaging with and growing in practical ministry, is an essential part of the Course. This means that you will be 'on placement' (ie in a ministry context) either in your home-church or an alternative church for the whole of your time on the Course. It is here (more than in the classroom!) that you develop the practical skills required for the ministry for which you are being trained. Placements also provide the major way of tailoring the programme to the particular needs of each student.

Details of the expectations and requirements of placements, together with the form used for writing reports can be found on the website [here](#).

Elements of Context-Based Learning

Your experience of placement-based learning should match that of the ministry for which you are preparing, in order to help you establish patterns, routines and approaches that will sustain you when the programme is over. Put more simply, that means (for example) that if you are preparing for a ministry that involves preaching and teaching, you should expect to be involved in preaching and teaching on your placement, etc.

Context-based learning has six key elements.

- A working relationship alongside an experienced training minister or supervisor who can provide you with appropriate supervision.
- Personal development, designed to help you develop your self-awareness, maturity and confidence in the role.
- Spiritual formation, to enable you to develop and practice a spiritual life that will serve and sustain you and your community.
- Skills development, providing the opportunity for you to practice and refine appropriate skills (such as leading worship and preaching).
- Reflective practice, helping you develop the ability to reflect on your experience of ministry in ways that will help you grow and identify new possibilities now and in the future.
- Activities specifically related to modules, which provide opportunities for research and preparation, building up of practical skills, and for assessment. Some assignments are based on your placement. You should check all your modules for such assignments and with the help of your supervisor plan dates accordingly. These activities should be included in your **Parish Outcomes/Working Agreement Document** (see p14 for more details).

As a typical or average figure you should expect to be actively 'on placement' for 40 weeks of the year. This also means - and this is very important - that for 12 weeks each year you should **NOT** have placement duties so that you can have a break and time to reflect.

What Does 'Being on Placement' Include?

Context-based learning **includes** involvement in Sunday worship. It should also include (where appropriate) activities such as attending or leading a bible study group, attending church or community project meetings, etc. In essence, everything you will be doing as a licensed Reader.

What is does not include

On the other hand, placement hours do **not include** private study time, nor time spent on formal assignments. When an assignment involves a particular activity in the workplace, time for the activity itself is included - it is part of your placement - but not time for any reflection required nor the writing up/recording. In other words, your reading, reflecting and writing/recording (the three 'R's!!!) should not reduce the amount of practical placement activity. The actual amount of time allocated in any one week can fluctuate, but should average 3.75 hours per week for Reader Candidates over the year.

Avoid Doing Too Much

It is also important that you do not do excessively more than this. To do so will squeeze something else: your study time, your personal and family time, your rest. This means being realistic and pragmatic. For some, if not most, people it will mean cutting down on some church activities to make room for these new ones. If you have any problems with this (e.g. deciding what to cut down, or being under pressure not do so) you should talk to your Director of Studies (who will probably ask you about it anyway).

Regular Preaching and Leading of Worship

Preaching is central to LLM(R) ministry and, with help and guidance, you will prepare sermons and/or talks, and deliver them, on a regular basis throughout the training period (starting in year 2 for those on the 3 year pathway). You will be given some early guidance on preaching to help you with this early on as the first Study Day of the Preaching module is in early January of the first or second year depending on the length of your pathway. **You will need to complete the first Preaching module Study Day before preaching as part of the course.**

Leading Worship will be covered in the second module of the second year of the course however, it is anticipated that you will start leading worship in your home church from the outset, however during the first discernment year, it must be with the guidance and under the direction and supervision of a minister with the Bishop's license to officiate.

Every context is different, so it is only possible to give guidelines. However, there is an expectation that during the course you are engaged in leading worship and preaching on a regular basis. We recommend that:

- You have some engagement with planning and leading worship. This may be reading a lesson, preparing prayers, leading a part of the service, helping in a Communion service, etc. It does not mean leading the whole service every time! It is good to get experience of different services, including different times and venues, where possible. This will be outlined in the Parish Outcomes Document and worked out each year with your supervisor.

- You are expected to have at least one Sunday per month when you are not leading in any way – i.e. a day off! And holidays, of course.
- You will be expected to preach as you go through the course (though not in the first year for 3 year pathway students). As you will see from the assessment guidelines, where a sermon is the assignment, it must be videoed*. You may already have experience of preaching and be willing and able to do more than this; these guidelines are not intended to restrict you. However, as the work for this course will also take time, you must not take on too much either. "I have to preach/lead worship on Sunday" is not an acceptable reason or excuse not to do your course work or to be absent from sessions.

*Only basic camera recording equipment is needed, Zoom for some things and a mobile phone for others will suffice. If you don't have this available already, it may be worth enquiring of friends and family now in preparation. The Course also has a limited number of basic video cameras that can be booked and borrowed. Detailed guidance on recording and submitting sermons and/or talks is given in the modules that require them.

If you are not able to meet these recommendations, you must talk this through with the Director of Studies as soon as possible.

Expenses: Please note that any expenses incurred on the course (there should not be many) need to be met by students. Often PCCs are willing to support students with some financial help in the form of an annual small grant to cover costs of textbooks (there are not many of these now) and/or travel to the 6 weeks external placement in the final year of the course, so it's worth asking them about this. Unfortunately, the Training Department in the Diocese cannot give any financial support to students.

Vocational Discernment

The whole of this course is classed as a time of discernment and it is therefore essential that you see a Vocations Adviser regularly throughout. If you don't already have a Vocations Adviser Julie Fowler (julie.fowler@derby.anglican.org) will be in touch with you allocate a VA to work with you. A report from your Vocations Adviser will be required as part of the paperwork that will need to be submitted to the interview panel towards the end of the first year (or second year for 3 year pathway students) of the course. At that point you will also require a formal resolution from your PCC and an annual report from your supervisor/incumbent.

Spiritual Accompaniment

It is strongly recommended that you also have the support of a Spiritual Director or Soul Friend (this should be someone who has a recognised ministry in this area and doesn't know you at the start of the relationship). If you don't already have one we can help to find someone. You can find out more about Spiritual Direction at <https://derby.anglican.org/en/faith-and-life/spirituality-1/spiritual-companions-accompaniers-directors.html>.

Contacts



If you have a problem with any of the module content the first thing to do is post your question on the discussion forum where the module leader and your fellow students can post answers. You can also always contact the Module Leader by email (see details below).

If you have a problem with the website or any questions about the logistics of the course please contact the Course Director, Rev'd Dawn Glen.

If you are unable to attend a Study Day please contact the Module Leader as soon as possible to let them know.

Course Director / Director of Studies: Rev'd Dawn Glen,

dawn.glen@derby.anglican.org

Tel: 01332 388674

Deputy Director of Studies: Rev'd Susie Curtis

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Appendix

The Role of the Training Minister/Supervisor

By Training Minister we mean the incumbent of the student's home church, or sometimes another minister within that context appointed to the role.

For the purposes of the course the Training Minister/Supervisor is also be the 'Placement Supervisor' whilst students are working in their home church. *For clarity, in what follows the term 'Training Minister' is used for home-church based activities.*

The relationship between Training Minister and Student may be complex. He or she is in most cases the incumbent and s/he will have been an important part of the student's journey to this point in a variety of ways. It is not a given that there is a close personal friendship, but sometimes that is the case.

As a student begins training for ministry a new element enters that relationship. The Course takes as its starting point the understanding that the relationship between training minister/supervisor and student is a professional one with all that implies of responsibility and accountability on both sides.

If a student's home church is in a vacancy or goes into a vacancy, then an interim training minister/supervisor will need to be appointed to ensure that context based learning is properly supervised. In such a case a conversation with the Director of Studies and Warden of Readers needs to take place as soon as possible.

Each module involves tasks which have to be carried out in a 'ministerial context'. Some assignments are based on these activities. Students should check all modules for such tasks and activities and plan dates accordingly with their supervisor. Training ministers/supervisors are asked to be as accommodating as possible with this as it has an impact on the student. It is helpful if the student takes the lead in letting the minister/supervisor know what they are being asked to do.

The Training Minister/Placement Supervisor is asked to:

- provide students with an experience of learning and development appropriate to their personal and ministerial capabilities (students are not just 'an extra pair of hands')
- help students identify, plan and reflect on the tasks required by each of the modules
- give written feedback on practical assignments using the feedback sheet (attached)
- give students experience in professional practice appropriate to their ministry and experience and to provide appropriate feedback
- introduce students to areas of good practice in your context
- meet regularly with students specifically to provide professional supervision and – through this and other means – help students to reflect on their sense of calling and on the ministry and mission of their church

- keep in mind student's preparation for ministry not only in that placement but also in the wider church and community
- liaise closely with the Director of Studies and prepare a Parish Outcomes Document (see below) and end-of-year and end-of-course report.

Parish Outcomes Document(this document can be found on the website [here](#))

The Training Minister / Supervisor is required to develop a Parish Outcomes Document / with the student. This is based on the National Outcomes for Reader Training and under each outcome should outline a way that the student will be able to practice and fulfil the criteria in the parish. You should also discuss the following:

1. Praying together: The church is sustained through prayer and you need to share in corporate prayer with both the congregation and with your Supervisor (and any other ministerial colleagues, as appropriate). There needs to be agreement about the times and occasions for this prayer time together.

2. Public Worship, Ministry and Evangelism: You should have regular opportunities to share in the design and the leading of worship and in preaching. Agreement should be reached about how often it is expected the student will be present, robed, in a leadership role, preaching – and how feedback from congregation, colleagues and Supervisor will be managed. Also to be included are opportunities for other types of ministry and outreach which Reader are expected to engage with including baptism/confirmation preparation, study groups/other teaching opportunities, pastoral care, observation of PCC meetings and any outreach activities that take place during the two years of the course.

3. Meetings: It is good when Christian ministers, working together, can be friends as well as working colleagues but it is important to maintain clarity of purpose and task between staff, supervision and social meetings. It is important to distinguish between: staff meetings which are for information sharing, planning and review; supervision sessions where the specific task is to enable the student to reflect. Students are expected to have regular supervision meetings with their Training Minister (and when on placement their Supervisor) in addition to 'ordinary' (business, planning, or staff) meetings. Supervision meetings should be held at least once a month (eight or nine times a year, allowing for a break at Christmas, Easter and one or two in the Summer.) It is the student's responsibility to arrange the meetings with their Training Minister/Placement Supervisor. If supervision meetings do not take place, students should speak to the Director of Studies.

4. Communication: It is important that both student and supervising minister are clear about how information is shared in both written and spoken form. There will need to be a negotiation so that communication between the two of you, and with the church as a whole, is effective and does not lead to misunderstandings or communication breakdown.

5. Life Balance: There is always a tension between living out a vocation which is life-long and creating a balance between study, work time, ministry time, family time and time off. This can be a complex juggling act for those who may have to balance a full-time paid job, family and leisure time as well as ministry time in the church context. Remember that time spent in Sunday worship and in ministry-related work during the week (normally at least an evening a week) is included in the 3.75 hours per week average.

6. Spiritual Development: In addition to participating in the corporate life and worship of the parish, it is expected that you will wish to develop your own personal prayer life. It is also expected you student will have regular access to a spiritual director/soul friend. If you are not sure about what this means, talk to your Director of Studies.

7. Annual / End of Course Report: There must be an annual or end-of-course review between you and your Supervisor. Placement Report Forms are provided to assist this process, but an important purpose of this review is for you to reflect on the previous year and identify specific tasks and learning needs for the year ahead.

8. Confidentiality: There should be a specific statement and agreement about confidentiality and about you being publicly supportive and loyal to the leadership of the supervising minister and the leadership team within the church. It will be useful to agree a process for reviewing this if at any time there seems to be pressure on the agreement reached.

Once agreed and signed, the online form should be submitted to the Director of Studies.

The Recommendation of the Incumbent / Priest in Charge

This course is largely apprenticeship based and requires students to complete all the outcomes necessary prior to licensing. As many of those outcomes are learned and completed in the placement area, at the end of the course the incumbent (or equivalent in a Vacancy) will be required to sign a statement of completion and recommendation to the Bishop for the student to be licensed to them in their parish/benefice. Without this recommendation students will not be able to progress to the office of LLM(Reader).