

Ministries of Word and Sacraments/church related community work

Education for **Ministry** **Phase One**




Resource Centres for Learning




United Reformed Church

December 2016

Throughout this document the word 'minister' is used to identify those in the Ministry of Word and Sacraments (MWS) and church related community work ministry (CRCW)

	Introduction	2
1)	The choice of a Resource Centre for Learning for Education for Ministry Phase 1 (EM1)	
2)	Preparing for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments or church related community work	4

Resource Centres for Learning

	Northern College, Manchester	7
	Scottish United Reformed and Congregational College, Glasgow	22
	Westminster College, Cambridge	34



1) **The choice of a Resource Centre for Learning for Education for Ministry Phase 1 (EM1)**

- 1.1 The United Reformed Church uses three Resource Centres for Learning (RCLs) for the education and training of student ministers before ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacraments or commissioning as a church related community worker.

These are Northern College based in Manchester, the Scottish College in Glasgow and Westminster College in Cambridge. Northern College has responsibility for the initial training of all church related community workers.

Becoming a minister is a process of testing God's call, which is continued throughout the process of education for ministry. Preparing to inhabit the role of a minister is a careful combination of gaining practical experience, pursuing academic qualifications and being open to spiritual growth. It does not end with the completion of EM1.

For Ministers of Word and Sacraments the choice of which centre is right for which student remains critical. Consideration of the candidate's vocational needs and circumstances is very important.

- 1.2 In addition to being available on the URC website, this booklet is sent to all candidates just before attending the Assembly assessment conference. A candidate may contact or visit any of the three colleges before or after the assessment conference.
- 1.3 The United Reformed Church will only finance the training of candidates who have been accepted for training for ministry by the Assembly Assessment Board. A separate booklet is available which explains the financial support available during EM1.

- 1.4 An adviser is offered through the Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries for any candidate or EM1 student who would like to discuss the processes they are undergoing with particular reference to black and minority ethnic concerns. The current advisers (December 2016) are the Revd Dr Malachie Munyaneza and the Revd Zaidie Orr.
- 1.5 At the assessment conference, an Education and Learning Board meets each candidate to discuss potential training routes, and to make the final decision on that training. The minimum requirements to complete training are set out below (see section 2).
- 1.6 The Board will reflect on each candidate and decide what training for them will best contribute towards providing a well-equipped ministry for the Church whilst also taking the needs of the student into account. To those ends the Board will have in mind the vocational needs and the circumstances of candidates as well as the distinctive elements offered by each of the Resource Centres for Learning (RCL).
- 1.7 Factors to be taken into account would include:
 - a) The RCL milieu which will best enable the student to develop personally and spiritually.
 - b) Any family or financial restrictions for the type or location of residence during training.
 - c) The programme of study most suitable.
 - d) The size and balance of the student body at any particular time.
- 1.8 The final decision is without prejudice to the admission procedures of the Resource Centre. A subsequent change of RCL at the request of the candidate will only be recommended if good reasons can be clearly stated to all concerned. The Education and Learning Board will consult with the Assessment Board, the student's Synod, and the RCL concerned.

- 1.9 In the event of the Assessment Board accepting a candidate for training the candidate will be invited to a meeting with the recommended Resource Centre to decide on the detailed programme of study to be undertaken, to complete admission procedures, and to discuss financial and housing matters.



2) **Training for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments or church related community work**

- 2.1 In order to meet the minimum requirement for ordination or commissioning, accepted candidates commit to undertaking:
- a) The satisfactory completion of the *Introduction to the United Reformed Church* course which consists of 5-7 sessions with a synod tutor, attendance at the 'Our Church, United Reformed Church Ethos and History' weekend, and completion of assignments.
 - b) A programme of study through one of the RCLs which could be in full- or part-time mode but which ensures that students have reached a minimum of a Diploma of Higher Education or a Foundation Degree in Theology.
 - c) A minimum of 800 hours in supervised and assessed placement(s).
 - d) Participation in at least one Summer School organised by the Education & Learning Committee during their period of EM1.
- 2.2 Every student is encouraged by their Resource Centre for Learning to take advantage of opportunities to experience the world church at first hand.
- 2.3 The normal period of study is 4 years, either part-time or full-time. This may be varied depending on the previous theological education of individuals, or their potential to benefit from further studies.

- 2.4 The decision about whether someone trains full-time or part-time is shaped by the principle that the pattern of EM1 reflects the pattern of eventual ministry. Normally people accepted for stipendiary service train full-time and people accepted for non-stipendiary service train part-time.
- 2.5 Personal circumstances sometimes mean that someone preparing for stipendiary service is recommended to start EM1 part-time and then move into full-time training subsequently. There are also instances where someone preparing for non-stipendiary service undertakes full-time training on an expenses-only basis. These are decisions taken by the Education & Learning Board during the assessment conference.
- 2.6 For many of those available to study full-time, their EM1 programme will include theological degree at bachelor level. For those over 30 with the necessary academic background and Christian experience a full-time course might be taken in three years. Work towards a Master's degree might be possible for those with a first degree in theology.
- 2.7 Sometimes it is possible for a student to carry work forward from the initial training period and complete it after starting ministry, for example topping up diploma – level study to achieve a bachelor's degree, or finishing off a dissertation. However this is not always a good idea. The early years of ministry can be fiercely busy, and the United Reformed Church has its own learning programmes (EM2 – see below) for supporting new ministers. Any work that runs on from initial training would need to be discussed carefully with the Education and Learning Committee's Education & Learning Programme Officer and the Training Officer of the receiving synod, for the synod is responsible for the new minister's programme of learning.



2.8 After ordination/commissioning ministers will:

- i) proceed into Education for Ministry Phase 2 (EM2) for an intentional programme of learning in the context of their first (normally) three years of service; and
- ii) undertake appropriate subsequent development as Education for Ministry phase 3 (EM3) throughout the ministries entrusted to them.

For further information about training for ministry in the United Reformed Church, please contact the Secretary for Education and Learning, The United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9RT.

phone: 020 7916 8635

email: fiona.thomas@urc.org.uk

(United Reformed and Congregational), Manchester

If you are preparing for Ministry of Word and Sacraments (MWS, either stipendiary or non-stipendiary) or for ministry of church related community work (CRCW) within the United Reformed Church, Northern College would be delighted to welcome you to this learning community. We offer a range of full-time and part-time study options and we would seek to tailor your course to suit your learning needs. We take into account your prior learning and experience, whilst meeting the requirements of the United Reformed Church and of the academic programme you are following.

Our courses – working towards a diploma or degree in Contextual Theology – are taught alongside a formational programme, which covers denominational-specific and practical skills for your future ministry. You would also engage in a pattern of church and community placements, developed in consultation with you and your synod, in settings close to your home. The placements form the basis for context-based reflection and assignments, allowing a creative interaction between the theoretical and practical aspects of preparation for ministry throughout your course.

Course assessment is entirely by written assignments (and, just occasionally, class presentations). Wherever possible, course assessment tasks are designed to explore how your developing theological understanding relates to your practical experiences on placement and in life as a whole. Inter-disciplinary work and creativity (such as art and poetry) is encouraged where appropriate.

In addition, all courses have a strong international dimension, with learning from the world church and other world faiths having a place in the curriculum. Many of our students spend some time (usually four to

six weeks) experiencing church life in a setting outside the UK as part of their programme. You would find your classes, and our corporate worship, in Luther King House include many students from a rich variety of cultural and theological backgrounds from across the world church.



Tell me about Northern College

Northern College was formed by the union of a number of historic, independent Congregational colleges. Today, we continue to serve the learning needs of the United Reformed Church and the Congregational Federation and also welcome students from the Moravian Church. We are based at Luther King House in the leafy southern suburbs of Manchester yet only a short walk from the fabled 'curry mile' restaurant district in Rusholme. Public transport links are excellent. In Luther King House we live and work in close co-operation with Northern Baptist College, Unitarian College Manchester, Luther King House Open College and the Urban Theology Unit. Between us, we share an excellent theological library and registry; and the atmosphere of friendship and collegiality is a wonderful 'plus'.



What courses might I take?

Diploma in Contextual Theology

For church ministry students without previous university-level qualifications in theology, we offer a University of Manchester Diploma in Contextual Theology. This is taught by the in-house partners in Luther King House in a midweek format and also in a part-time weekend format. It would normally take a part-time student four years of study to reach the diploma level, and mid-week, full-time, a student would take two to three years to reach the Diploma (the period of study being completed

with courses that do not form part of your external award). The award is made at Higher Education level five and meets the requirements of the United Reformed Church for candidates for ordination.

The Manchester Diploma course includes modules in these areas:

- Learning Theologically Together
- Spirituality
- Biblical studies
- Worship, Preaching and Pastoral Care
- Mission
- Theological Themes
- Radical Church Traditions
- Ethical Thinking in Context
- Service and Leadership
- Public Theology
- Community work practice and development.

There is also an option within the full-time programme to do an introductory study of Biblical Languages.

Full-time students may wish to continue beyond Diploma level to honours degree level and complete a University of Manchester BA in Contextual Theology. This can easily be accommodated within a four year full-time programme. Students undertake the same modules as Diploma candidates, and then choose from options that include:

- Christian Homiletics
- Old Testament Texts
- New Testament Texts
- Conflict Transformation for Churches
- World-Shaking Mission

- Encountering Islam
- Ecumenism
- Personal study module (equivalent to one module)
- A personal dissertation on a relevant topic (equivalent to two modules).

MA in Contextual Theology

For full-time or part-time church ministry students who already have a degree in Theology, or achieve good results in their first two years of full-time study, it may be possible to progress to study for a University of Manchester MA in Contextual Theology, also taught by the staff team here at Luther King House.

The Manchester MA course includes the following possible study areas:

- Methods/resources in contextual theology
- Worship, hymns and liturgy
- The Bible in a post-modern context
- Encountering Other Faiths
- Theologies of Mission
- Jesus and Empire
- Embodied theology
- Paul's Gospel in Rome
- Reading the Bible Ecologically
- A Dissertation (is a requirement to complete the MA).

Ministry of CRCW course

Ministry of CRCW students normally follow a specially-devised four year full-time pathway with both

community work modules and modules shared from the wider 'palette' at Luther King House. It is possible to qualify with a Diploma or BA in Contextual Theology from the University of Manchester. The community work pathway through these programmes is recognised as a professional qualification in Community Development Work by the English Standards Board for Community Development Education, as well as being the required qualification for URC's ministry of church related community work. Our course has been revalidated and described as innovative, creative and a benchmark for other providers.

The CRCW course is timetabled to produce more integration between the ministry of CRCW and MWS students; a number of MWS students now choose to take CRCW courses too. These courses include:

- Introducing Reflective Practice
- Enabling Inclusion
- Communication in Text and Community
- The Value and Values of Community Work
- Theologies of the City
- Facilitating Participation
- Public Theology and Cultural Engagement
- "Toolbox" – practical skills for CRCW ministry.

Research Degrees

Members of the ecumenical staff team at Luther King House are also able to supervise students undertaking research for University of Manchester higher degree, should that provide you with a helpful and appropriate component of either initial or continuing ministerial education.



What will my time in college look like?

If you are studying full-time

A typical week for a full-time MWS student would involve working for somewhere between 8 and 12 hours a week (the time increases as you progress through your course) on church and community placements, normally near your home, with two days' attendance at college during teaching terms for classes, college time, tutorials, and shared worship. The MA and level 6 classes are taught on Mondays (with some modules available as block-taught), and the level 4 and 5 (midweek) programme is taught on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Some modules involve block teaching when classes are held over three or four consecutive days. You would attend on Tuesdays for college time and tutorials whenever your academic sessions were taught.

Students who live more than 25 miles from the college are able to book overnight accommodation in Luther King House in single rooms with en suite facilities. This may be for one night a week, or possibly two depending on class times and the distance from home to college.

Typically, most of your private study will be done in your own home, though there are good facilities in the library at Luther King House for those who prefer to work there. You will need to take some time to gather resources for study from the library when you are present in Manchester (although many key resources will be available on-line and books can be forwarded to you by post – the library catalogue is also available on line).

For ministry of CRCW students, your first two years at Northern College will be based around extended weekends and block-taught days. The timetable will vary slightly each year, and you are encouraged to contact the college during your candidating process (see contact details below) to talk through what your time commitments might be. For example, for the year 2015-16 CRCW students attended college for six extended weekends, and two sets of four one-day sessions.

For the third and fourth years of the CRCW course, you would attend as a mid-week student in the same pattern as full-time MWS students (please see above). During this time it is possible to complete a Manchester BA in Contextual Theology; occasionally, students are able to undertake a Manchester MA in Contextual Theology. You will be guided by the CRCW tutor in respect of module choices to ensure the best possible preparation for your particular ministry.

If you are studying part-time

Students on the part-time Diploma programme attend Luther King House for six weekends of academic teaching in each of their four years. Students will be required to attend college for a number of short courses in addition to these weekends.

You will do much of your work at home, and your course, like that for full-time students, is centred around placements that will be arranged near your home.

You will need to be available to come to Luther King House in Manchester for the six designated weekends a year. Those travelling from a distance can arrive on Friday evening; weekend teaching begins at 9.00am on Saturday and ends at 3.15pm on Sunday (with one exception that goes on to 5.15pm).

It is also possible to undertake the MA as a part-time student. If you believe this might be the course for you, you are invited to contact the college (see details below) and enquire what the pattern of your attendance might be. The timetable for MA modules involves some Monday teaching, and some block teaching.

Additional courses

All students are required to undertake formational courses that are not part of their academic qualification. What we call “college time” on Tuesday afternoons, or Saturday evenings depending upon the course you are following, is the heart of this programme. However, there are several additional and required courses which

need to be taken during your period of study; some of these take place at weekends, and some occur mid week. The courses are:

- Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection (undertaken before you begin at NoCo)
- Diversity Awareness
- Safe Boundaries in Pastoral Practice
- Voice Training.

We also offer a short “worship basics” course for students who have not undertaken prior courses such as Training for Learning and Serving (TLS), or who do not feel confident in leading worship (or in leading worship in the URC tradition). Although they do not always preach or lead services, CRCW students are welcome to participate.

What will my time on placement look like?

MWS students (both full-time and part-time) normally have three placements:

- first year – a placement in a church of another denomination
- second year – a ‘secular’ placement such as a chaplaincy
- over years three and four a ‘major’ placement in a URC pastorate.

The activities and responsibilities experienced during these church placements are individually negotiated between student, placement supervisor and college tutor, to best fit the student’s learning needs and prior experience, and the opportunities offered by the placement setting. These church placements are expected to be for a minimum of 8 hours per week for full-time students in their first two years and a minimum of 12 hours per week during their major placement. Part time students are expected to accumulate a minimum of 800 hours on placement during their four

years of preparation for ministry. Alongside these church placements, full-time students are asked to develop a related community placement (perhaps in a school, or with a community group or chaplaincy), usually somewhere close to their church placement. The hours for these placements are included in the hours set out above.

Full-time MWS students are encouraged to include an overseas placement of a few weeks duration. Students also spend at least six weeks offering ministry in a vacant URC pastorate in the UK; this usually takes place during the summer at the end of their first or second year of preparation for ministry.

If you are preparing for ministry of CRCW, you will normally study full-time for four years, but your course will be organised differently from that for MWS students. You will be based in substantial community work

placements near your home. During your four-year course you will normally have two such placements, each lasting for two years. At least one of these will normally be in a church-related context.



Where will I live?

The pattern of attendance at Northern College for both full- and part-time students means that they can continue to live where they were living before they started their course. In recent years Northern College students have travelled to Manchester from: Plymouth, Portsmouth, Cardiff, Coventry, Birmingham/ Wolverhampton, the Lake District, Leeds and Sheffield as well as from closer areas: Liverpool, Blackburn and the Greater Manchester area. Students who wish to move to, or nearer, Manchester would discuss this with the education & learning Panel during the Assembly assessment conference.

Anyone who lives more than 25 miles from Manchester qualifies for overnight accommodation in Luther King House (single rooms with en suite facilities) for either one or two nights each study week (or weekend).

In ALL cases we arrange your church and community placements as near as possible to your home.



Three current Northern College students talk about studying at Northern College

John Grundy is training for stipendiary Ministry of Word and Sacraments, on the full-time midweek programme

Before I started my training at Northern College, the idea of returning to education seemed like a huge step to take. Starting here, I very quickly realised that I had become a part of an incredibly supportive college which is not as daunting as I had feared. As Northern College is part of the Luther King House family of colleges, we study alongside a whole range of other reformed-traditions, cultures and understandings. All of which makes studying fascinating and our weekly worship varied.

The Northern College model of studying alongside placement work has been an exciting part of being here. I have enjoyed placements learning from Anglo-Catholic and Lutheran traditions as well as our own. While on placement at a Food Bank and then with the Chaplain of Liverpool Airport, I also gained valuable understanding of real current issues such as immigration, poverty, human-trafficking, and loneliness. All of these learning experiences have helped to influence and change how I approach what I do, often in really creative ways. Doing placements alongside studying also allows me to reflect back what I have learned in college and placement.

In studying for a Diploma, I feel that I have been given a real God-given gift of time to embrace what this whole journey of faith-exploration means. All of the staff and



my fellow students, have supported and encouraged me through my training and in how that has impacted the rest of my life.

The most important thing I wish I'd known while I was candidating though is that Northern College is an open, highly supportive non-judgemental place where my own learning needs are supported, my exploration of my own faith is positively encouraged and where I am open to develop what my future ministry might look like. I feel blessed to be part of the Northern College Community.

Chris Watson is training for non-stipendiary Ministry of Word and Sacraments on the part-time, weekend pattern

Just a few years ago I was working for the Civil Service and every day I sat at my desk I would pray that God would find me a way out, I would say 'surely there was a job I could do for the church, something useful, something that would make a difference'. I was not thinking of Ministry but God was.

After an interesting journey through pastoral work in the Methodist Church I find myself starting year three of the four year part-time course for Ministers of Word and Sacrament. I have come to the college as a mature student with family responsibilities and with a part-time job. Initially I was concerned that the time span between my last foray into academic life and this course would prove too great to span but so far I have found the challenge exciting and fulfilling.

The course is about putting what we learn into practice and so each year has a placement setting to enable us to do that. In the first year my placement was in an Anglican church where I immersed myself in the wonders of set liturgies and seasons of the church year. One of the modules enabled me to lead a group within the church

to look at how ecumenical relationships locally could be improved. This work was used as a basis for that church to move forwards - how exciting! In the second year I spent time as a retail chaplain within a local supermarket: a whole new experience of church on the edge, of church in the community. I learnt lessons about talking to people about the church and about my faith. My last placement will be for two years, this time in a local ecumenical partnership between the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church.

Luther King House is a great place to study. The modules are challenging and not just academically, they give an opportunity to explore and strengthen faith, to explore why we hold the beliefs we hold. The tutors are both academics and fellow-believers which I find very refreshing, along with the ecumenical setting, it all leads to interesting class discussions. My course being on a part-time basis means that I and my fellow students meet for six teaching weekends per academic year. Each time we meet we catch up on news about our lives and placements and support each other as much as possible. The weekends are intense but never dull.

I am thoroughly enjoying the experience of being a part of the learning community at Luther King House and would certainly recommend it.

Lisa Wigfield is training for the Ministry of Church-Related Community Work – full time:

My experience in community work prior to studying spanned across 16 years. Previously working with a church based community project I have always been drawn to creating and developing opportunities for the growth of local people and their families. Feeling a call to formalise this area of work I began to explore what God was saying and where he was leading me.

At assessment conference I remember saying to one of the interview panel, 'the scary bit will be if it's a yes!' It was yes. I was successful and accepted for training. My study would take place at Northern College, Luther King House,



Manchester and this is where the real journey began. I was excited about this new journey but, not an academic, I was worried about how I would cope with assignments, studying and keeping up with the reading material. I looked forward to the time spent at college, the lectures were interesting and I enjoyed looking at the Bible in a new way, making connections with community work and looking at how, why, where the church was in this. I slowly began to realise I could do this!

Now in my final year of training I reflect on those early days, on how much I have learned, not only in contextual theology but also about myself. Due to personal circumstances my journey has had its ups and downs, but with the support and guidance of all the college staff I have managed these times and difficulties. The student body have also played a huge part in my ministerial development. We are an extended family who share in the good and not so good times. Collegueship, friendship and fellowship are fostered here at Luther King House. Growing and developing relationships which will last a lifetime, as each of us move to the next stage in our personal journeys with God, our churches and communities.



I will be sad to leave the security of Luther King House, however, I know my experience, my developed, and still growing, theology and the knowledge that God is guiding me to create opportunities for everyone to experience his love in our everyday life has grown out of my time at Luther King House.



I'd love to take a course but ...

If there is any aspect of our standard programmes that might make it difficult for you to study with us (e.g. distance / cost of giving up work to study full-time / family commitments) we would be happy to consider with you, your synod and the Education and Learning Board at your assessment conference, whether there are ways in which we could adapt the training to your personal circumstances. You may already be having conversations with your Synod Candidating Officer, but you are welcome to contact the college (see contact details below) and, if it would be helpful, to come and visit us to talk over any anxieties or questions you may have.

The final decision about your training (place and programme) remains the responsibility of the Education and Learning Board that would meet with you at your assessment conference and would be taken in the light of the most appropriate learning possibilities on offer from all three URC Resource Centres for Learning that offer programmes for Education for Ministry Phase One (EM1) as well as other factors, as indicated elsewhere in this booklet.

Contact details

For more information, or to arrange an exploratory visit with us in Manchester, please contact:

The Revd Dr Rosalind Selby, Northern College,
Luther King House, Brighton Grove, Rusholme,
Manchester M14 5JP

phone: 0161 249 2506 (college) 0161 249 2530 (Principal)

email: rosalind.selby@lkh.co.uk ;

or the college administrator, c.thornborough@lkh.co.uk



Scottish College,
Glasgow

Scottish United Reformed and Congregational College

Our way of developing theological education has distinctiveness in the close connection between the college and the church at various levels. Studying with us is to become part of a learning community that is much wider than an ordinand community. Our educational philosophy and practice reflects the best in contemporary education practice with specialist adult education and community work input. We are dedicated to integrating the learning of ordinands with that of the whole people of God – learning together with and from one another. Our commitment to scholarship in theology and biblical studies is matched by a strong interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning – courses draw on history, literature, social sciences and a range of other perspectives and experiences. We combine traditional approaches to scholarship with more radical perspectives on learning.

The main elements of Education for Ministry 1 ‘Scotland-style’

Studying at university

As we don’t have to teach for the qualifications of a particular educational partner, there is a high degree of flexibility in choice in institution and programme– or indeed the possibility of preparing for ministry without taking an additional academic award.

Where an ordinand is required to obtain a theological qualification as part of their initial ministerial education, we have two main options. We can support them in pursuing studies, undergraduate or postgraduate, at a



UNIVERSITY
of
GLASGOW



suitable local university, close to their home. This can have the advantage of not requiring the ordinand to re-locate or travel constantly. Students based in Scotland can be enrolled at one of our Scottish universities. For part-time students resident in Scotland, there is also an option through the Scottish Episcopal Institute of studying for a Common Awards qualification. The principal routes then are:

- Those who come to us without a prior degree generally study for a BD at university or may take an ecumenical course for a diploma in theology for ministry with our Episcopal partners
- If you've a first degree other than in theology, then it may be for a graduate diploma – a fast-track qualification for graduates taking them to honours degree level in 2 years part-time.
- Theology graduates often follow a taught MTh or MA in ministry which is designed for people in or preparing for ministry. In other cases, it may be appropriate for the ordinand to pursue a non-university programme which is more focused on placement and reflective learning
- There are also postgraduate research options in some of the most distinguished universities in the UK.



In the college community

The college is at the heart of the formational experience for ordinands. In studying and talking together, in shared regular worship and through bringing placement and other experience back into the college community, we nurture knowledge and understanding, prayer and reflection, skills and imagination – intended not only to prepare you for ministry but to grow personally and spiritually, discovering more and more of that abundant life to which you are called.

Our modules are currently followed on three consecutive days each month. Each year, the dates are settled in consultation with the student community to endeavour to ensure that these are responsive to students' other commitments and needs. Non-local students stay in nearby hotel accommodation for usually a couple of nights and have their expenses met by the Church.

Most modules are open courses, when we welcome elders and members of churches, ministers undertaking continuing education and others. The college is a diverse group, enabling a rich mutual learning experience. Our integrated approach is intended both to capitalise on that range of experiences and perspectives and to prepare ordinands for being collaborative ministers in the widest sense. We seek to help in the breaking down of barriers between different roles and responsibilities in the life of the church. As we don't teach a set pre-determined curriculum but, as a small community, can be responsive to folk's interests and needs, we are able to shape the curriculum very flexibly.

In seeking to help future ministers and others nurture their creativity, we draw on many different disciplines, a wide range of experiences, and learning that is rooted in conversation, we hope, as Edicio de la Torre says, to help "birds learn to swim and fish to fly!"



What's it like at Scottish College?

- A creative, energising and committed community, exploring our faith in innovative ways
- People who know that fun is part of the joy of the Gospel
- Learning that draws on a wide range of disciplines and integrates different ways of thinking about big questions
- Fostering the growth of the individual and the community for ministry and for life
- A holistic space in which the whole of ministry and our lives are brought together
- Learning alongside elders, members, other ministers
- A safe space where deep trust is built to house significant conversations
- A flexible and spontaneous learning community in which we are not tied to pre-determined outcomes but can explore where the Spirit takes us

- A community in which all are learners and all are teachers
- Lots of eating together, of sharing conversation and of being open to epiphanies, large and small
- A framework that allows us to use a suitable university or learning partner near the student for the more 'formal' part of ministerial formation
- Going to a variety of settings - wherever we find there is an opportunity to experience and learn something new together
- Sharing in the life of the national synod of Scotland and beyond.



Here's an example of some recent programme elements

Creation

- Eco-theology
- Creative congregations
- Myths of creation
- Dinosaur Sunday –science with congregations
- Crafts and composition.

Café style

- Conversational cafes
- Cafes as outreach and service
- Café style worship
- Death cafes .

A novel approach to faith

Discussing faith issues through some contemporary novels

- The anchoress by Robyn Cadwallader

- Behind God's back by Harri Nykäänen
- The God of Chance by Kirsten Thorup.

Communion

- Multi—faceted celebration
- The Liturgical framework
- Creative Communion.

Fairy tales

- Fairy tales in learning
- Fairy tales as life story
- Fairy tale and organisational development
- Scottish Ballet Cinderella.

Desire

- The radicality of love
- Lust— a deadly sin?
- Desire in the spiritual life.

The public square

- Space for faith celebration?
- Dialogue in the public square
- Pluralism— isolation or interaction?

Yarns

- Weaving—integrating congregational life
- Tapestries of life and longing
- The Great Tapestry of Scotland.

Time for shared reflection

Bringing together learning on placements, in university, with ecumenical partners or through life generally.

Study tour

Each year, we organise a short residential time together around a theme. Overseas, we have had a particular connection with Scandinavia. At home, we have travelled north to Orkney and south to Wales.

Synod of Scotland ministers' conference

The ordinands meet with ministers in this annual three day residential conference.



Placements

Placements are undertaken throughout EM1 in a variety of settings – local church including ecumenical settings, hospitals and schools, prisons and workplaces.

These are organised in cooperation with the sending synod of the ordinand, generally close by to or easily accessible from the person's home.

As the United Reformed Church and its partners move to develop a shared online learning environment, we are working to take full advantage of a mixed economy learning environment. With the distance between the most northerly and the most southerly churches of the Synod of Scotland coming in at nearly 300 miles, and students now coming to us from outside Scotland, we recognise how we have to take seriously the needs of those who are not on our doorstep.



Who we are

Our college was formed through a concern of early Scottish Congregationalists for an educated ministry and the development of the whole people of God in

ministry and mission. Our roots like in radical movements in Scottish political, social and church life. We hope that we continue to exercise that radical ministry, following in and moving on in a tradition that.

We believe in education that is rooted in life and for life, that is participative and interactive, that draws on the experience and wisdom of the participants, that is radical in its thinking and in its action.

We stand in, affirm and seek to live out a tradition that:

- believes in developing an educated ministry but within a deepening discipleship of the whole people of God
- holds that faithful discipleship is rooted in a continual questioning
- draws on the wisdom in each person and community
- understands the calling of Christian people to be a calling to live and share the abundant life to which the Gospel testifies
- recognises the radical nature of the Gospel of Christ
- is deeply rooted in and related to the life of the Church but stands in critical interaction with the institutional life of the Church
- seeks to form and grow inclusive community is committed to ecumenical journeying together.



Our strengths

Academically and professionally, we have significant interest in such fields as:

- Fresh approaches to Biblical study
- Ministry with older people
- Community work and development and grassroots movements
- Story and narrative approaches in worship and education, pastoral care and organisational growth

- Interdisciplinary ways of doing theology
- Church development
- Adult learning
- Political and social theology
- Engagement with civil society in dialogue and in mission.

An important aspect of our college community life is the close connection between the work of the college and the life of the synod and its churches. The college acts effectively as 'training officer' for the synod and is the education arm of the synod.

As our students prepare for university qualifications in parallel with their college studies, we are able to have a freshness and flexibility that comes with the freedom of not teaching to the regulations and restrictions of a degree programme.

Here are some thoughts from existing students of the College.

David M Scott



I have been an Ordinand since January 2015, attended the Scottish College and am now in my final year of the BD course at the University of Glasgow. Exploring a call to ministry was something I had been putting off for some time but knew had to be done. Thinking about returning to university and study after many years as a chartered surveyor was daunting but it is never as bad as it seems from the outside. The modules and style of learning at the Scottish College together with my recent placement, complement my BD studies and subjects well.

I think that the United Reformed Church is very well placed to adapt and respond to local spiritual and practical needs at congregational level and look forward to this challenge in my future ministry.

Stewart Cutler



For the last 9 years I have been Children and Youth Development Officer for the URC's National Synod of Scotland having previously worked for the Church of Scotland in both youth work and adult education. When I candidated for ministry the Scottish College seemed the ideal fit.

The Scottish College is a real learning community where staff and students both lead and contribute, recognising the huge variety of experience and knowledge we all bring with us. Each student follows a course of academic study with an external provider. I'm working on a three-year part-time diploma with the Scottish Episcopal Institute. The monthly Scottish College sessions are primarily formational, using discussion, visits, creativity and the arts to explore issues of importance in ministry like crime and punishment, death and dying, faith in art, storytelling and worship. The chance to engage with other cultures in an overseas field trip adds hugely to the sense of belonging to a world church. The college sessions are open to others too so the conversation is always rich and firmly rooted in the reality of congregational experience. And there is food. Lots of food.

Andy Braunston



I am training for URC ministry after spending many years working for a different denomination; my journey into the URC has been gentle, inclusive and fun. I was impressed by how my prior education and pastoral experience has been affirmed and taken into account by the Assessment Board. My time at the Scottish College is working out well; I combine a placement nearer to home (I live in Manchester) with regular (monthly) blocks of time spent in Glasgow. The Scottish College is participative where students and tutors recognise that we have much to learn from each other with

humour, reflection and a mutual sharing of experiences which is grounded in our lived realities. I know my future ministry will be enriched by the time spent in EM1 and the collegial relationships which are being formed.



The college staff

The Revd Dr Jack Dyce has been in ministry for 40 years. His PhD is in adult education and he previously served as Regional adult education officer in Strathclyde region. His current principal research interest is Scandinavian studies in which he has an MLitt. As principal of the college, he is also training officer for the synod of Scotland.

The Revd Lindsey Sanderson has undergraduate degrees in philosophy and in theology, together with an MBA in voluntary sector management. She formerly served as Assistant General Secretary of Action of Churches Together in Scotland, giving her a wide perspective, ecumenically in Scotland and from the wider world church. She currently serves as a URC minister in three churches in Lanarkshire.

The Revd Trevor Jamison is chaplain to Eco-congregation Scotland. He previously served in a number of URC pastorates in England as a synod adult education officer. He is at present pursuing studies for a doctorate in practical theology.

The Revd Jan Adamson serves as field officer for local mission and development for the URC synod of Scotland, having trained for ministry after many years in management and is a Fresh Expressions trainer.

Mr Stewart Cutler is the Children and Youth development officer for the synod in Scotland and is a trained adult educator and youth worker. He has strong interests in fresh expressions in church life and worship.



But Scotland is so far away...

(unless of course you live in Scotland already)

Yes, Scotland is different. It has its own theological traditions, its particular church and ecumenical life, its culture and history, its distinct institutions, greater political devolution and a renaissance in much of its life. We face many of the same challenges as other nations, but we have our own slants on how to address them. It's an exciting and ever-changing place to be.

Some things change less quickly. We enjoy a good quality of life – even our cities are wee! Very close to our urban areas are picturesque and culturally distinctive places and communities.

Our pattern allows students both to have a taste of the Scottish and explore further their home environment.

Contact details

Jack Dyce can be contacted on 0141 248 5382

or at Scottishcollege@urcscotland.org.uk



Westminster College, Cambridge

Westminster college, Cambridge fulfils its role as a Resource Centre for Learning in part through sharing very fully in the Cambridge Theological Federation, an ecumenical community of theological education of nine institutions. The Federation teaches academic awards through three universities: the University of Cambridge; Anglia Ruskin University; and the University of Durham.

In recent years there have been about 50 people pursuing academic courses with Westminster – mostly from the United Reformed Church, with a few from other churches and parts of the world, and many, but not all, preparing for ordained ministry. For some years now Westminster has worked with part-time and full-time, distant and resident students, working flexibly according to students' needs.

Many members of the United Reformed Church also come to Westminster to attend conferences, meetings and events as they deepen faith, learn together and develop their skills for a variety of ministries. Every term we welcome a number of ministers from around the world who enrich our community whilst staying at Westminster on sabbatical through funding provided by the Cheshunt Foundation, itself part of Westminster's life. We continue to develop our life and expand the range and scope of our wider work for the URC. The teaching staff share with others in teaching and learning around the churches and in the Synods, and the college welcomes an increasing number of groups, conferences and committees. At the lunch table each day you might find people here on sabbatical, fellow students, a group which has come for a time of reflection, or some lay preachers' learning together. We delight in the diversity of the community we gather daily at Westminster: lay and ordained; training

for ministry and being refreshed in ministry; ecumenical; inter-faith; inter-cultural; international.

Westminster's building completed its major refurbishment, after our successful URC-wide financial appeal, in the summer of 2014. All of our facilities have been dramatically upgraded with all our bedrooms now en suite. Improved access and technology mean our library and teaching rooms are available as never before for diverse styles of teaching and learning.

A developing aspect of our vision is for the Westminster site to be a campus of theological education, spirituality and encounter. The Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide is based in our main building. We have welcomed the central offices of the Cambridge Theological Federation onto our site and are excited to watch the Woolf Institute for Abrahamic Faiths, another Federation partner specialising in dialogue between Jews, Christians and Muslims, rising from the ground. It will open in summer 2017. Alongside this we are developing space and scope for retreats and the creative arts. A purpose-built art studio is emerging alongside our open air prayer labyrinth. We want Westminster to enable and encourage a host of encounters that feed body, mind and soul.



Aims and hopes

The United Reformed Church is a diverse community, and Westminster is glad to serve all of its members. We believe that any kind of Christian service means being prepared for a future as yet unknown and in a church changing fast, so we seek to equip and prepare people to be resilient and faithful, strongly rooted while confident enough to face the challenge of the new.

Westminster provides a strong Christian community of shared prayer and hospitality as a context in which to prepare for Christian service. It is the depth and scope

of this sharing that is one of the unique gifts we believe we can offer.

Education for ministry has a strong focus on personal development – connecting the experience and insight students have and will gain, with the deepened understanding of the ways of God that reflection and learning can offer.

Through a variety of placements the college works to integrate practical experience and theological study. We aim to hold together the insights that come from working with people in church and community with the wisdom gained from reading and from teachers, from seminars and classes, discussions and writing. Most students on full time courses at Westminster can expect to undertake major blocks of placement in the summer vacations every year, leading up to a year of placement in a congregation through our Living Ministry Programme.

We take seriously the Church's calling to mission, to serve God and make Christ known among our neighbours. Theology involves an understanding of human community, and an imaginative vision of God's varied ways of working in the world.



Christian partnership

The college is committed to Christian partnership and to deep engagement and dialogue with those of other faiths. Along with Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic and Orthodox colleagues, and with those involved in the study of world Christianity and of inter-faith relations, Westminster belongs to the Cambridge Theological Federation, which links nine institutions, in the city and across the Eastern region. So Westminster is one part of a large, close and strong community. Students can borrow books from the libraries of other institutions and, when in Cambridge, worship in their chapels,

and eat in their dining rooms. Most of the teaching is planned and delivered jointly, drawing altogether on the expertise of some 40 theological teachers and serving more than 300 students from over 25 countries; many classes are attended by students from around the Federation. Cambridge based members of the Federation meet regularly for worship and to share community life. The ecumenical experience at Westminster, of learning, prayer and hospitality, is a daily reality and is both richly exciting and deeply challenging.

We enjoy having the Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide, which specialises in researching World Christianity and mission, in purpose-built accommodation within our main building. Most of the other Cambridge Theological Federation members are also with easy walking (or cycling) distance.



Centred in worship

Every working day in Westminster includes, for those in Cambridge, two short times of worship, led by a student or staff member. Prayer is at the heart of each day and meeting with God together is the heart of our life as a Christian community. We also enjoy worship within the Federation regularly during term, so that we discover the breadth of the ecumenical church at prayer. The week in term time also usually begins with Bible study.




Personal support

Westminster has five full time teaching staff – all specialist teachers and committed to the church’s ministry, and all involved in the wider life of the United Reformed Church as well as in Cambridge. So the college offers not only teaching, but also the kind of personal

support and care that can help students develop their strengths and confidence for ministry. Many student spouses, partners, families and friends play an active part in the life of college. We try to ensure that the social life of the college adapts itself to the changing makeup of the student community each year.



Learning choices



Westminster offers the benefits of a small and intimate community, where individual needs matter, along with a diverse range of academic programmes that can respond to those needs. The Federation is linked to two very different local universities – Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin, and is also linked (for purposes of validation) with the University of Durham). There are several main Federation tracks – all designed and taught with ministry in mind – and various other possibilities in the universities. The most up to date details of all of our academic awards can be accessed via the Westminster or CTF websites.

All URC candidates preparing for ordination, and often students at Westminster from other traditions, complete the Living Ministry Programme (LMP) in addition to any academic awards. The LMP involves nine months spent in a pastorate local to where a student lives, under the supervision of the minister, with weekly class time in college during the term. The LMP is an on-going exploration of the practice and context of ministry and mission.

Bachelor of Theology for Ministry (BTh)

This is a basic programme of ministerial education, leading to a Cambridge University degree through the Faculty of Divinity. To gain access to this programme students need either to have a good previous degree or excellent A levels, OR, to do a year of study here first to demonstrate that this degree would suit them well. The two years of the BTh course (which would often follow

an initial year of study here) are based in Cambridge, and include both classroom and practical work.

The Common Awards in Theology, Ministry and Mission (CA)

These are a suite of undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes provided by the Cambridge Theological Federation in partnership with Durham University and the Church of England. The Federation is one of the largest providers of these awards. While the awards have been designed to provide training and formation for ordination candidates and accredited ministers, they are also suitable for lay people from all denominations who wish to deepen their learning and understanding of Christian discipleship. The Common Awards follow a series of programmes:

- Certificate - typically one year's study full-time, or two to three years part-time
- Diploma - typically two years' study full-time, or three to four years part-time
- BA (Honours) - typically three years' study full-time, or four to six years part-time
- Graduate Diploma - typically one year's study full-time, or two to three years part-time
- MA – typically two years' study full-time with various options for part-time study.

BA in Theology and Religious Studies (Tripos)

Where a student has a strong academic record, and seeks an intensive taught course in the more traditional disciplines of theology, Westminster can use the BA programme at Cambridge University. This programme is always supplemented by pastoral studies, organised by the college.

MPhil and PhD degrees

These are also available at both Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin universities, so that a theological graduate can pursue a specialist subject of interest to a high level, and add to the total

wisdom of the church. At this level too, there are part-time and distance-learning possibilities.



Where will you live?

Where you live may depend upon your family circumstances and the course that is best for you. There are many and varied patterns among our students.

Some students come to Westminster from Monday to Friday during term time periods and occupy one of our single residential rooms (all en suites), but return to home and family at the weekends and in 'vacation' periods. In such cases church placements can be arranged near home. This pattern gives an opportunity to participate in the community life of Westminster, Federation and Cambridge while also keeping home life going.

Some students, on part-time programmes, commute as they need to from home, staying overnight in Cambridge as necessary.

Some students move to Cambridge for the whole period of their education for ministry. Westminster works with students and the URC to offer appropriate accommodation in flats or rented houses locally. Some flats are available on the college site.



What our students say

Julie Kirby

This is what two of our present students for ministry have to say about the experience of being part of the increasingly diverse Westminster learning community.

“Throughout my life I have always had a sense of God being with me as I lived as faithfully as I believed I could. I had never really considered however that I was being called to serve as a minister of Word and Sacraments. I don’t think that I am alone in the fact that God communicates with me through others, it was through this communication that I finally tested my calling and found myself at Westminster.

I’m now into my second year of ministerial formation and can honestly say that every day brings new surprises. Westminster is an incredibly special place made up of dedicated people, both staff and fellow students prepared to travel alongside each other as we continue to seek God’s will for our individual lives, the United Reformed Church and the world, in formal and informal ways. The learning process is beyond anything I could have imagined, with me being enabled to learn much about who I am in God and God’s image, alongside the more traditional learning of the Bible and its message, and other module subjects offered. The learning really is tailored to each individual’s needs and I am extremely grateful to everyone who has supported me in being able to follow my calling, with my particular learning style.

I value my time here, as well as those who are prepared to share their time and wisdom with me in order that I may continue to be authentic to God’s calling as I continue to journey into ministry and beyond.”

Jacob Bali

“The call to study the Bible and theology is a great blessing, but it is also a call to service. Remaining mindful of this, Westminster College places an emphasis on communal prayer and devotion, which has truly been a blessing as it has strengthened my faith and nurtured a heightened love for God. Westminster College has far reaching historical roots; however it is not stuck in the past, but is equipped for today and the future. As part of the Cambridge Theological Federation, the program of study is both robust and engaging”



Finding out

Westminster is always ready to respond to people who ask about its work, and about how they might fit in. As the college's remit expands to include more distance learning we look forward to hearing from enquirers and ministerial candidates around the country, to talk about how our programmes could connect with your particular needs. College staff will gladly arrange to meet people who want to discuss these questions and concerns.

Contact details

Write to: The Principal, Westminster College,
Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0AA

phone: 01223 330 633 (for the main college office)

email: admin@westminster.cam.ac.uk

Produced by the communications department on behalf of the education and learning committee.
Published by the United Reformed Church,
86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT