

Queen's College Faculty of Theology



Discipleship and Ministry Program Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf Handbook 2021 - 2022

The contents of this handbook set forth the intentions of Queen's College at the time of publication, with respect to the matters contained therein. The handbook reflects the arrangement agreed upon in the Memorandum of Understanding between Queen's College and the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf (September 14, 2017). More detailed information is available on our website www.queenscollegenl.ca.

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Welcome to Queen's College

Dear Students in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf:

I welcome you on behalf of the Queen's College Community. While your engagement with us will be quite different than students on campus and living across our province, Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada, we are nonetheless committed to providing you with a good educational experience.

Our programs and services at Queen's College have changed immensely since it was founded in 1841. Changes have been and will be necessary to ensure we are relevant and current in a changing world. Yet, the goal and purpose to provide theological education, pastoral skills and spiritual formation for those discerning their vocations and preparing for ministry remains as genuine as ever.

As you become more familiar with Queen's College you will discover we have a strong community and we offer a wide array of degree, diploma, and certificate programs for people at the various stages of their discernment and preparation for ordained and lay ministries. We also have regular continuing education sessions for clergy and pastoral workers. We have full-time and part-time students, we offer courses on campus and by distance. We are proud of our initiative and collaboration to make the Bachelor of Theology for Discipleship and Ministry program available in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf by availing of the Exploring Faith Program developed and supported by St. Mary's Centre in Wales, UK.

At Queen's College, we describe ourselves as a Christ-centered, Spirit-filled theological college. We are rooted in the Anglican tradition, we have strong partnerships with other denominations, and we welcome people of all faiths who wish to join our community in common pursuit of theological insight, pastoral skills and spiritual growth. We build our programs on four pillars: good theological education, pastoral training and practice, spiritual development, and a faith-based learning community.

Blessings and best regards,

The Rev Dr Joanne Mercer
Provost and Vice Chancellor

Greeting from the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf

Dear Fellow Theologians:

Welcome to this edition of the Queen's Handbook, focused on the BTh course of which you are a part. In this booklet you will find an overview of the course, with descriptions of each module and the order in which they should be attempted. You will find a rationale for the way the course is delivered and details of the resources that are open to you as a member of the Queen's Community. You will see how modules are assessed and credits awarded and how, in due course, awards are claimed. Whether you are embarking on the course in a spirit of discernment or whether as a selected person for ministerial training of some kind, I hope you will find it a challenging but rewarding, exciting and liberating experience to be part of a local group using this course.

The course itself is innovative rather than traditional, and our partnership with Queen's is also innovative within the Anglican Communion at this point. So welcome as pioneers. May your journey into theology be a fulfilling one.

John Holdsworth

Director of Ministry, Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf

Fast Facts about Queen's College

Queen's College was established in 1841 as the Theological Institute by the Right Reverend Aubrey George Spencer, the first Church of England Bishop of the Diocese of Newfoundland, to offer training leading to ordination of men in the Church of England.

Queen's College now has women and men in full-time and part-time programs, from all the major denominations in Newfoundland and Labrador – some pursuing ordination and lay ministries, and some studying theology out of personal and academic interest. The College is sponsored and supported by the three Anglican Dioceses of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The College is incorporated under an Act of the Provincial Legislature, which grants it the authority to confer appropriate degrees in theology, and is an Associate Member of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the United States and Canada.

Queen's is affiliated with Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) and is situated on the MUN campus.

The College has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf regarding delivery of a Bachelor of Theology in Discipleship and Ministry. The Faculty consists of full-time and part-time members. A network of trained supervisors and facilitators form an integral part of the College's programming.

Queen's College celebrates its past with thanksgiving and anticipates its future with hope.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The **academic year** runs from September to August and comprises three semesters (terms) of approximately fourteen weeks (see Calendar for exact dates). Please note that Queen's College operates according to a system of three semesters per academic year, roughly as follows:

- Fall Semester (September-December)
- Winter Semester (January-April)
- Spring Semester (May-August)

A **course (or module)** is a unit of study, usually of one semester in length, the completion of which normally carries credit towards the fulfillment of the requirements of certain **degrees, diplomas** or **certificates**.

A **credit hour** is the measure used to reflect the relative weight of a given course towards the fulfillment of an appropriate degree, diploma, certificate, major, minor or other program requirements. Degree courses normally have a value of three credit hours (M. Div., M.T.S., M. Th., B. Th.). The B. Th. Discipleship and Ministry program uses the UK system to award credit for prior learning; a module is typically worth 20 credits.

Queen's College courses are designated 'Q', preceded by a four-digit number (3000-3999 for three-credit-hour courses; 2000-2999 for two-credit-hour courses). B. Th. Discipleship and Ministry program courses are referred to as modules.

A **program** is a series of courses, the completion of which, if other requirements are met, qualifies the candidate for a degree, diploma or certificate.

B. Th. for Discipleship and Ministry is the nomenclature for the Bachelor of Theology for Discipleship and Ministry degree. This program is offered on a part-time basis over six years, with one course/module completed per semester/term.

CALENDAR DATES

The Queen's College Calendar (available at www.queenscollegenl.ca) provides a detailed guide to College administrative deadlines and events. Key dates for students in the Discipleship and Ministry Program in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf are semester start dates and deadlines for the submission of assignments.

2021 - 22

Fall Semester

Start of Semester	September 6, 2021
Deadline for Assignments	November 29, 2021

Winter Semester

Start of Semester	January 2, 2022
Deadline for Assignments	March 21, 2022

Spring Semester

Start of Semester	April 25, 2022
Deadline for Assignments	June 27, 2022

LIBRARY ACCESS

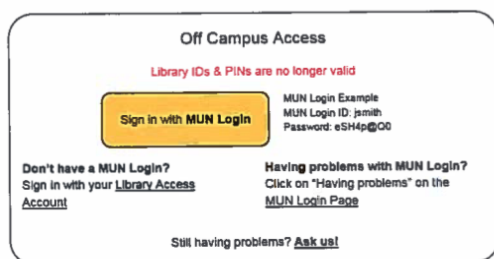
Queen's College students are provided with online access to the Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) Library.

How to Access MUN Library E-resources

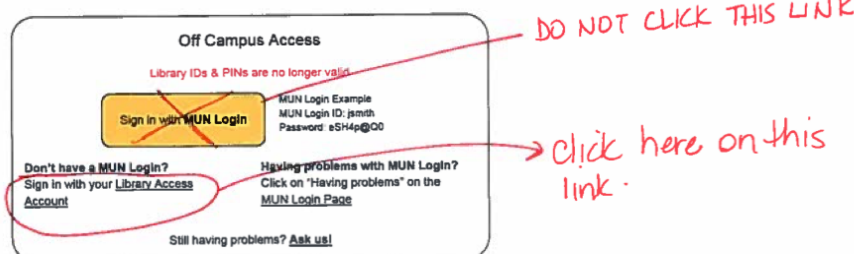
Once you are registered at Queen's, you will receive an e-mail from MUN Library containing your online Library access username and password. (You will also be advised that your MUN Library card is ready to pick up at the QEII Library. Off-campus students can ignore the card pick-up message.)

To log in:

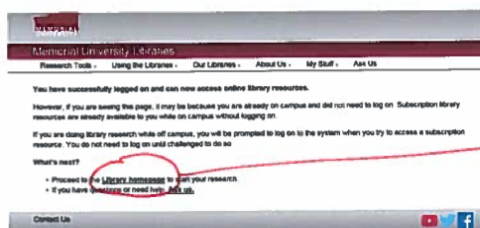
Go to <http://qe2a-proxy.mun.ca/login> then follow the instructions below.



- In order to log into QEII resources please choose the **Library Access Account** option as circled below:
- NOTE: do not copy and paste your user name and password, they must be typed in the appropriate fields.



- Once you have signed in, the following page will open



this link will bring you to the Library.

- Click on the Library homepage. This will bring you into the library site where you then can begin searching for your required readings or materials.

For help with Library access, go to <https://www.library.mun.ca/askus/>

COMPUTER LITERACY

Students enrolled at Queen's College are expected to be sufficiently familiar with basic hardware, software, and the Internet to use personal computers for research, word processing, and electronic communications.

COMMUNICATIONS

Most official communications between Queen's College and students are by e-mail. All students are expected to have a secure e-mail account and access to a computer, and to use good etiquette in correspondence with and on behalf of Queen's College. We expect students to:

- check their e-mail regularly
- acknowledge receipt of important correspondence
- ensure **Subject** identifies the content of the e-mail
- use discretion in the use of **Reply** and **Reply All**

Students from the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf should communicate with the Diocesan Director of Discipleship and Ministry (or designate) regarding matters pertaining to their program of study.

APPLICATION AND REGISTRATION

The Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf facilitates all application, registration, and graduation processes for students of the Diocese. Information and documents regarding application, registration, and graduation should be directed to the designate of the Diocese.

The College's admission policy is designed with the intention of ensuring all students an optimal experience of theological education and compliance with the standards established by the Association of Theological Schools. As such, applicants are required to:

- be competent in English, spoken and written
- provide satisfactory evidence of academic readiness for the program for which registration is sought

ACADEMIC AND RELATED POLICIES

MARKING CRITERIA AND CLASSIFICATION OF DEGREES

The Discipleship and Ministry Program marking scheme is based on that used in the United Kingdom (UK), where the program was developed, and differs from that used on other Queen's courses.

DEGREE CLASS MARKING SCHEME

BA (HONS) IN THEOLOGY FOR DISCIPLESHIP AND MINISTRY

Honors Classification	%	Assessment criteria %	
I	70-100	86-100	The work examined is exemplary and clear evidence of a complete grasp of the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to the Level of the qualification is provided. There is also considerable evidence of an excellent standard showing that all the learning outcomes and responsibilities appropriate to that Level are fully satisfied.
		76-85	The work examined is outstanding and demonstrates comprehensive knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to the Level of the qualification. There is also evidence of an excellent standard showing that all the learning outcomes and responsibilities appropriate to that Level are fully satisfied.
		70-75	The work examined is excellent with evidence of comprehensive knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to the Level of the qualification. There is also evidence of an excellent standard showing that all the learning outcomes and responsibilities appropriate to that Level are satisfied.
II(i)	60-69	65-69	The work examined is very good with evidence of the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to the Level of the qualification. There is also evidence of a very good standard showing that all the learning outcomes and responsibilities appropriate to the Level are satisfied.

		60-64	The work examined is good with evidence of the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to the Level of the qualification. There is also evidence of a good standard showing that all the learning outcomes and responsibilities appropriate to that Level are satisfied.
II(ii)	50-59	55-59	The work examined is sound with evidence of the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to the Level of the qualification. There is also evidence of a sound standard showing that all the learning outcomes and responsibilities appropriate to that Level are satisfied.
		50-54	The work examined is sound but provides limited evidence of the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to the Level of the qualification. There is also sound but limited evidence showing that all the learning outcomes and responsibilities to that Level are satisfied.
III	40-49	45-49	The work examined is acceptable but provides significantly restricted evidence of the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to the Level of the qualification. There is also acceptable but significantly restricted evidence showing that all the learning outcomes and responsibilities appropriate to that Level are satisfied.
		40-44	The work examined is acceptable but provides barely sufficient evidence of the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to the Level of the qualification. There is also acceptable but barely sufficient evidence showing that all the learning outcomes and responsibilities appropriate to that Level are satisfied.
Fail	0-39	35-39	The work examined narrowly fails to provide sufficient evidence of the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to the Level of the qualification. There is acceptable evidence showing that the great majority of the learning outcomes and responsibilities appropriate to that Level are satisfied.
		30-34	The work examined provides insufficient evidence of the knowledge, understanding and

			skills appropriate to the Level of the qualification. The evidence provided shows that the majority of the learning outcomes and responsibilities appropriate to that Level are satisfied.
		20-29	The work examined is unacceptable and provides little evidence of the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to the Level of the qualification. The evidence shows that only some of the learning outcomes and responsibilities appropriate to that Level are satisfied.
		10-19	The work examined is unacceptable and provides negligible evidence of the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to the Level of the qualification. The evidence shows that few of the learning outcomes and responsibilities appropriate to that Level are satisfied.
		0–9	The work examined is unacceptable and provides no evidence of the knowledge, understanding and skills appropriate to the Level of the qualification. The evidence fails to show that any of the learning outcomes and responsibilities appropriate to that Level are satisfied.
Other	Aegrotat standing	Credit is granted for a course in which either the required final examination was not taken, or the required final paper was not submitted. The grade is therefore based on an evaluation of work completed during the semester. Aegrotat standing may be granted by the exam board where, for documented medical or compassionate reasons, a student has been unable to fulfil course requirements. This standing may be denied by the exam board where there are insufficient criteria on which to base a grade.	
	Incomplete (Inc)	The work assigned for the course has been completed as scheduled, but the exam board accepts the reasons provide and is confident that the work can be completed and graded within a reasonable time, usually prior to the start of the next term.	
	Audit (aud)	The grade given to students who register for a course but are not part of the program and do not complete the assigned written work.	
	Dropped (DR)	The grade give a student who registers for a course and formally drops the course after the start of classes.	

	Dropped Fail (DRF)	The grade given a student who registers for a course and withdraws without formally dropping the course.
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In order to obtain an honors degree, candidates must have successfully completed modules totaling 360 credits. (The UK system is used to assess and award credit for prior learning.) A pass degree may be awarded to candidates who have successfully completed modules totaling 320 credits. The exam board may, at their discretion, award a pass degree to a candidate who has narrowly failed to complete the requisite modules as a result of illness or for other pastoral reasons. A candidate who has completed 360 credits with an average mark of below 40% but who has attained marks of above 40% in a sufficient number of modules may, at the discretion of the exam board, be awarded a pass degree.

Honors degree classification is decided by the exam board based on: a candidate's average mark for modules completed; number of modules passed at a particular classification (I, II or III); and evidence of progression.

EVALUATION OF PAPERS

A well-written paper is a combination of an accurate, succinct exposition of the hypothesis formed on the basis of relevant data, and balanced and plausible arguments supporting the hypothesis. What is essential is evidence of:

1. care in reading and analyzing the issues and data
2. a critical assessment of the data and any hypotheses that have been advanced on that data
3. a creative and thoughtful interaction between the issues and the student

Assignments vary, as do instructors and courses. It is imperative that students understand what is permitted and required of them for any given assignment (i.e., primary sources, secondary sources, commentaries, personal reflection) and adhere strictly to specific instructions. It is the student's responsibility to clarify the task with their instructor *beforehand*, if they are at all unclear. A portion of any grade (10-15%) will be awarded for proper presentation (i.e., style, referencing, spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.).

LANGUAGE

In all academic papers and classroom conversations, Queen's College is committed to the use of language that respects the equal dignity and worth of all human beings.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is *"the act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts or passages of his/her writing, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the product of his/her own mind"* (H. C. Black, *Black's Law Dictionary*, 5th ed., West Publishing Co., 1979).

Plagiarism is a form of cheating and a serious academic offence, as well as a moral offence. Any "catchphrase", idea or thesis unique to a particular author, along with anything more than 3-5 consecutive words, must be cited.

Guidance on academic integrity and research methods is provided in Appendix A.

POLICY RELATING TO PLAGIARISM

1. For most first offences, depending on the severity or degree, students will be required to rewrite the paper, with late penalties assessed at the discretion of the instructor.
2. For a subsequent offence, depending on its severity, the student will receive a failing grade for the course and may be required to withdraw from the program.

PROCEDURES RELATING TO PLAGIARISM

1. Minor offences will be handled between the instructor and the student.
2. Serious (or repeated) offences in a given course will be reported to the Provost, who may consult with Faculty regarding circumstances and proposed penalty. A decision with respect to the penalty will be communicated to the student within five working days of the Provost receiving the report.
3. Normal appeal procedures apply.
4. Students may be required to seek academic assistance. The student may also request other appropriate support services.
5. All serious offences will also be addressed in the normal evaluation process for those students sponsored for ordination or other forms of ministerial training.

Queen's College Policy on Academic Integrity and matters pertaining to research methods are explained in the narrated slideshow at the following links

Research Methods Session 1. <https://youtu.be/CI-zvYZSSKU>

Research Methods Session 2. <https://youtu.be/K3LI2gNpkMU>

Other policies regarding academic matters are available at www.queenscollegenl.ca

APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION

In order to be considered for graduation at the annual spring convocation, students eligible for a degree, associate or diploma are required to notify the Director of Ministry or designate in writing (letter or email) **by December 1st** of the year before they intend to graduate. Students' applications and transcript are reviewed by the designated representatives of the Diocesan Director of Ministry and Coordinator and the Provost.

TRANSFER OF CREDITS

Credit will be transferred from an accredited institution if it can appropriately be applied to the Discipleship and Ministry degree program and has not been credited toward a degree at another institution. The student must provide an official transcript with marks and a link to the official website of the institution at which the course was completed. No transfer credit will be granted for any course for which the final mark was less than 50% or equivalent. Credit may be transferred for not more than five Level Four courses. Students wishing to transfer credits for more than five courses must apply to the Director of Ministry and the Provost.

ADVANCE STANDING

Students who have completed a Bachelor of Theology may apply for advance standing in a Master's degree programme. For further details, consult regulations for respective Master's degrees at www.queenscollegenl.ca.

BACHELOR of THEOLOGY in DISCIPLESHIP and MINISTRY

Program Description

Progression through the Bachelor of Theology in Discipleship and Ministry program is based on completion of three phases of studies. Successful completion of Phase One requirements will result in the award of the Diploma (Discipleship and Ministry). Successful completion of Phase Two requirements will result in the award of the Associate (Discipleship and Ministry). Successful completion of Phase Three requirements will result in the award of Bachelor of Theology (B. Th.). This program is intended to be cohort-based and is offered through seminars conducted in the evening in offsite locales. It is intended that students can complete the requirements for the B. Th. over six years on a part-time basis, taking three modules each year.

The program has the following general aims

1. To provide opportunities for the critical study and extended knowledge of Christianity and Christian theology, accessed through the Holy Scriptures, the traditions of the Church, and the experience of the people of God.
2. To explore Christian faith and spirituality as an exciting and dynamic process, drawing on existing critical approaches and perspectives within theology.
3. To develop an understanding of the contribution of faith to contemporary life.
4. To provide opportunities to extend, reflect upon and apply theological principles, and to explore issues based on practical experience of engagement with local churches.
5. To extend and develop ways of exploring, examining, critiquing or deepening personal faith, in keeping with students' engagement with a program concerned with Education for Discipleship.
6. To provide opportunities for preparing students to undertake specific or a broader range of ministries within the Church, and to take up particular tasks and services through Church, community or occupation. This might include work as Licensed Lay Readers, Eucharistic Assistants, Youth Leaders, Pastoral Workers, ministers for work among children, or as clergy.

The program is distinctive in the following ways

1. *Theological principles.* The program is grounded in the individual's Christian experience of God and offers the tools of theology to promote reflection and interpretation of such experience. In this context, theological learning connects intellectual understanding with personal transformation. Theology changes lives.

2. *Pedagogical principles.* The program requires attendance at a series of meetings of a Local Education Group for each module. Participants are invited to read material and to prepare short written responses before each meeting. Discussions at these meetings are facilitated by a Local Education Group Facilitator or convenor. Theology is explored in community.
3. *Discipleship and ministry.* The program recognizes Jesus' central call into discipleship as the platform from which calls into ministry emerge. Those engaged in education and formation for authorized ministries (lay and ordained) undertake this program alongside those engaged in discipleship learning. Theology is for all God's people.

The program has the following structure

1. *Course curriculum.* The two-year, part-time programs at the Diploma level and the Associate level follow the same curriculum structure. Each year covers three modules, one focusing on the Bible, one focusing primarily on Church, and one looking to the World. For the final two years, there is greater emphasis on independent study and the option to undertake a dissertation.
2. *Mode of assessment.* The mode of assessment recognizes the distinctive learning objectives of the program. At the Diploma level and the Associate level, each module is assessed by four submissions:
 - two reflections of 750 words each, based on questions discussed during Local Education Group meetings (20% of final grade for module)
 - an essay of 1,500 words testing the main learning outcomes of the module (40% of final grade for module)
 - a reflection of 1,500 words applying the learning outcomes of the module to personal experience of discipleship or ministry (40% of final grade for module)

At the B. Th. level, there is greater emphasis on independent study and wider variety in the mode of assessment.

Bachelor of Theology in Discipleship and Ministry

Module Sequence and Course Descriptions

Diploma Level

Year 1

3341 Q Beginning the New Testament: (Credit value – 20) This unit provides an introduction to the study of the New Testament and explores issues raised by scholarly study of New Testament texts. It examines the Gospels and Pauline Epistles from a variety of critical perspectives. It investigates the theology of the New Testament including: the person and work of Christ; Kingdom and eschatology; the Holy Spirit; and the nature of the church in the New Testament. It examines how the New Testament can be used as a resource for exploring issues facing Christians today and promotes critical reflection on the use of the New Testament as a spiritual resource for Christian life and witness.

3347 Q Doing Theology: (Credit value – 20) This unit provides students with a general introduction to theological study. It investigates ways in which theological study has been modelled in the past and investigates the issues facing theology at the present time. It examines various methods of theological reflection and explores ways in which the sacred texts, doctrines and liturgical traditions of the church can interact with the student's faith story and life experience, and be interpreted and used to support Christian discipleship and ministerial practice.

3349 Q Global Anglicanism: (Credit value – 20) This module relates some traditional understandings of Anglican identity and polity to contemporary global practice, through the prism of responses to the five marks of mission. It works from the experience of those participants who live and worship in situations of great cultural diversity. It describes traditional western understandings in their contemporary form, and invites reflection on mission in the twenty-first century as set out in contemporary essays and other resources that originate in those parts of the world in which the majority of Anglicans now live. It will help students to locate what Anglicanism means in their setting, and what its mission imperatives are, and so make a contribution to thoughtful contextual discipleship.

Year 2

3342 Q Beginning the Old Testament: (Credit value – 20) This module provides an introduction to the study of the Old Testament: its literature, theology and history, and explores issues raised by scholarly study of Old Testament texts. It utilizes a critical examination of the Old Testament writings to investigate a number of theological themes within the Old Testament, including: creation, journey, land, election and promise. It examines how the Old Testament can be used as a resource for exploring

issues facing Christians today and promotes critical reflection on the use of the Old Testament as a spiritual resource for the student's Christian life and witness.

3345 Q Mission and Service: (Credit value – 20) This unit investigates ways in which Christian mission is understood today. It examines how God's mission is revealed in the Old Testament, examines the contexts from which the ministry of the early church developed, investigates how Paul developed the church's mission to the gentiles and examines ways in which the mission of the church is expressed through the Gospel narratives. It examines the values and practices that might underpin the church's mission today and promotes critical reflection on ways in which God's mission, and the mission of the church, might impact on the student's Christian life and witness.

3348 Q Exploring the Bible: (Credit value – 20) This module investigates the different ways in which the Bible is communicated within the life of the church. It includes the communication of the Bible through preaching, music, art, and meditation, and hermeneutics. It explores how the Bible is used in the life of the church, and how communicating the Bible is relevant for personal discipleship, for ministry, and for mission. The unit looks to different contexts of communication, including school assemblies, services commemorating special events, and the use of radio and television. The implications of communicating the Bible for the student's Christian life and witness are also considered.

Optional

3391 Q Locally Designed Module: (Credit value – 20) This module allows opportunity for the coordinator and students to develop a module that focuses on an issue of local importance to their education and training for ministry.

Associate Level

Year 3

3354 Q Exploring Paul: (Credit value – 20) This unit critically examines the text of one of Paul's epistles. It investigates the structure, context and intention of the letter, examines the contexts in which the text was created, explores the story that the texts tell, investigates how Paul's history and his understanding of his mission contribute to the letter's thinking, and examines the theology that Paul constructs in response to the events in the recipient church. It further examines the issues that surround the interpretation of the letter and explores how its theology can challenge the Church's understanding of its life and mission today. It will enable students to reflect critically on Paul's Letter as a resource for their Christian life and witness today.

3352 Q God as Trinity: (Credit value – 20) This unit examines ways in which the Christian scriptures and creedal statements reveal the nature and purposes of God. It examines key statements about the nature of God in the Old Testament and examines

the ways in which understandings of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are presented in both narrative and creedal forms in the Gospels and the Epistles. It further examines the formal creedal statements agreed at Nicaea and Chalcedon and explore how understandings about the nature and purposes of God are encountered today in worship, prayer and hymnody. This unit will help students to reflect critically on their own understanding of the nature and purposes of God as Trinity.

3353 Q Pastoral Practice: (Credit value – 20) This unit explores the Church's pastoral practice. It examines the theological and scriptural basis of pastoral practice and explores the various biblical models that inform it. It utilizes social science perspectives to explore the human condition and engages with personality and lifespan issues. This unit further engages with the student's practical experience of pastoral care and the broader experience of the Christian Church in order to promote the development of appropriate aims and objectives in pastoral practice and support critical reflection on practical personal experience.

Year 4

3351 Q Exploring the Gospels: (Credit value – 20) This unit critically examines the text of the chosen Gospel and investigates its context, purpose and key themes. It explores the chosen Gospel as story and investigates characters, plot and setting. It examines the chosen Gospel's narrative Christology and explores how this may contribute to our understanding of the person and work of Jesus. It investigates the theology of the chosen Gospel and explores the Evangelist's understanding of Christian discipleship and of the new community of Jesus. It will enable students to critically reflect on the chosen Gospel as a resource for Christian life and witness today.

3355 Q Worship: (Credit value – 20) This unit examines the practice of Christian worship within a theological and biblical framework. This involves the examination of the biblical foundations of Christian worship and the ways in which worship developed in the early centuries of the Christian era. The unit also investigates ways in which worship developed within Western Christianity in broadly different theological traditions and ways in which it is practiced today. Students are required to examine the principles that inform the structure of worship and explore ways in which the physical, social and spiritual contexts affect its practice. They are required to reflect critically on their personal experience of being a member of a worshipping community and/or a worship leader. The unit provides opportunity to examine one's own denominational and faith tradition.

3356 Q Christian Ethics: (Credit value – 20) This unit investigates the biblical and theological foundations of Christian ethics and examines the ethical imperatives associated with 'the Kingdom of God'. It examines the nature of ethical thinking in post-modern society. It explores the church as an ethical community and examines how a distinctively Christian ethical perspective can be developed in a number of areas (e.g.

economics, justice, work and money, sexuality, medical ethics, warfare and environmental issues). This unit will help students to reflect critically on their own understanding of the nature and practice of Christian ethics and the way that that impacts on their practice of discipleship and ministry.

3392 Q Locally Designed Module: (Credit value – 20) This module allows opportunity for the coordinator and students to develop a module focused on an issue of local importance to their education and training for ministry.

Degree Level

Year 5

3360 Q The Bible Today: (Credit value – 20) This module looks critically at the development of modern hermeneutics. It looks in particular at the contributions of sociological and psychological theory in shaping hermeneutical perspectives, including the place of feminist theology, liberation theology, narrative criticism, reader-response criticism and the SIFT approach. The impact of criticisms on the modern understanding of the Bible, and the implications of critical and hermeneutical questions for the place of the Bible as Christian scriptures, are investigated. The module looks at different aspects of the Bible and their relevance to the student's pastoral ministry.

3361 Q Practical Theology for Today: (Credit value – 20) This module offers an introduction to the applications of theology to everyday Christian living in ways developed by pastoral theology, practical theology, and empirical theology. It is here that theological insights gained from the Bible, Christian Doctrine, and Church History engage with the social sciences that are concerned with real people living in real situations. The module explores how psychology illuminates Christian formation, how sociology illuminates Christian engagement with the world, and how churchgoing impacts Christian ethics. Course participants are encouraged to employ the tools of the social sciences to explore aspects of their own lives, the communities in which they live or work, and the churches in which they worship.

3362 Q Ministry and the Church: (Credit value – 20) This unit makes connections between pastoral theology and ministry and: biblical studies; doctrine and church history; theology of ministry; spirituality; ethics; the practice of liturgy; apologetics; and education. It reflects on work undertaken in the local church and reflects on ministerial and formational issues with the local ordained supervisor, spiritual adviser, mentor etc. It encourages students to engage in theological reflection utilizing various forms of media, including a reflective journal.

Year 6

3364 Q Spirituality and Prayer: (Credit value – 20) This unit examines ways in which prayer is understood and practiced in the scriptures and explores elements of the Western spiritual tradition over two millennia, including the contribution made by monastic orders and mendicant friars. The unit also examines those expressions of prayer and spirituality that inform the life and worship of the church today. It explores ways in which prayer and spirituality relate to personality and cultural context and encourages students to reflect critically on ways in which their own spirituality and life of prayer impact on their Christian discipleship.

3375-Q and 3376-Q: (Credit value – 40) The **Capstone Project** is a two-module process in which students pursue independent research on a topic of their choice; engage with the scholarly debates of relevant disciplines; and - with the guidance of a faculty supervisor - produce a substantial project that reflects a deep understanding of the topic and a practical application of the matter that can be a resource in ministry.

3375-Q (Credit value – 20), the first module, includes the proposal, initial research and discussion phase. It begins with a consideration of areas of personal interest to the student and pastoral applicability. Then it moves on to discussion with the Director to bring focus to the topic and to identify a suitable faculty supervisor. The Director and the Provost will finalize the arrangement with the supervisor. The supervisor will work with the student to refine the topic and prepare an annotated bibliography and project outline. The project might focus on a topic from areas such as pastoral ministry and practice, mission, liturgy, applied theology, ethics, or faith development.

3376-Q (Credit value – 20), the second module, consists of the research and writing of the project. It can include development of materials to be used as a resource for the student and others. The product could include a paper, and resources such as facilitator manual, slideshow, or video on the subject matter.

Acknowledgement

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APPENDIX:
STUDY SKILLS
FOR DISTANCE LEARNERS



Practical Exercise in Reading Skills

EXTRACT From *Witness in a Gentile World: A Study of Luke's Gospel* by E. Johns and D. Major (Cambridge, Lutterworth Press 1991), p.66.

"The way in which Luke presents the baptism of Jesus suggests that he was either less certain of the event's significance than was his predecessor Mark, or he felt it needed more cautious treatment than Mark had given it. For the earlier writer (Mark), the baptism is the point at which the story of Jesus begins. Jesus simply arrives on the scene without further comment, is baptised by John and, as he emerges from the water, the heavens open and there is a voice from heaven which says, "Thou art my Son, my Beloved, on thee my favour rests" (Mark 1:11). These words are similar to those found in the Old Testament at Psalm 17. This Psalm is about the coronation of one of Israel's kings. When a person became king, he was thought to be adopted by God and from then on would be treated as if he were God's son. As such he was God's representative on earth. In using these words, Mark is telling his readers that Jesus is God's new representative on earth. He is the Messiah whom the Jews have so long awaited. Luke has already made this point quite dear to his readers through the story of Jesus' birth so, in that sense, the baptism is not as essential to his gospel as it is to Mark's. Yet there is a need to mark the commencement of Jesus' ministry in some way and the baptism is an ideal way of doing this.

Mark's account, as it stands, seems to present Luke with some problems, and he feels the need to modify it. Even during the early decades of Christianity's existence, ideas about Jesus were changing. Writing later than Mark, Luke is probably more consciously aware of the idea that Jesus in his earthly life had been sinless. So, Luke is faced with a problem which Mark seems to have overlooked, namely, why was it that the sinless Jesus needed to be baptised when the purpose of baptism was to deliver people from their wrong-doing and their old style of life and give them a fresh start? Matthew too seems to have recognised this problem, and he solves the matter by introducing a short dialogue between John and Jesus to give the reason for Jesus submitting to John's baptism. Luke does not do this. He chooses to play down the significance of the actual baptism by mentioning it almost in passing: "During a general baptism of the people, when Jesus too had been baptised and was praying..." (3:21). Note that John (the Baptist) is not mentioned as the one who is doing the baptising, and Luke immediately puts the baptism in the context of Jesus at prayer. Jesus at prayer is a favourite theme of Luke's which he uses to mark significant moments in Jesus' life, so that what follows - the heaven opening and the Holy Spirit descending on him 'in bodily form like a dove', and the voice from heaven - is more to do with prayer than baptism. Perhaps Luke is emphasising that it is through prayer that one is filled with the Holy Spirit. (A similar point is made when Jesus

is at prayer in Gethsemane, 22:39-46, and an angel brings him strength.) Placing the baptism of Jesus within the context of a general baptism also enables Luke to show how Jesus identified himself with the ordinary people.”

Learning Outcomes from this passage:

What is the central concern of the authors in this extract—i.e. what, overall, is the piece about?

What are the main issues the authors are addressing—i.e. what are the key areas and ideas discussed in this passage?

- a) the way Luke treats the incident of Jesus’ baptism differently from that of Mark and Matthew;
- b) possible reasons for this different treatment.

Knowledge, Understanding and Evaluation

Knowledge is necessary in order to become familiar with a range of content, even though we acknowledge that we can never really know everything there is to know about something.

Understanding then becomes important in the capacity to deploy knowledge carefully and sensibly and to give a perspectival depth to what we know.

Evaluation is then the further all-important capacity to weigh up different approaches to knowledge and understanding. We may want to agree with a weighty source that provides us with knowledge and understanding but we cannot wholly do so until we evaluate it for ourselves. Or we may want to disagree. Do not assume that just because something is in print it is necessarily to be accepted. But we have then to provide cogent arguments as to why we have a different opinion.

Knowledge would be things like: “Is this a football pitch or a cricket pitch? Do I know enough about the rules of the game to know what is going on?” Or “What sort of recipe is this? Is a tomato a fruit or a vegetable? What do I need to know to turn a recipe into a successful eating experience?” Or “What is the doctrine of Providence? Do I know enough about where it comes from and how it fits into a framework of belief?”

Understanding would be things like: “Do I understand why the referee halted the game for this or that infringement?” Or “Do I understand why I need to mix ingredients in a given order, or why my cake did not rise/rose too much?” Or “Do I understand why a doctrine of Providence was formulated in the first place? What is such a doctrine trying to say in order to give meaning and shape to belief?”

Evaluation would be things like: “I think this was a good/poor/boring game because...” Or “I think this meal I prepared was enjoyable/tasteless because...” Or “I appreciate the doctrine of Providence because... but I can also see some of the problems it raises because of the capacity we have as humans for free will.”

Going back to the previous excerpt on *Witness in a Gentile World*:

By **knowledge** we might note that:

1. there is a relationship between Luke, Mark and Matthew;
2. it is very likely Luke had Mark’s gospel in front of him; and
3. Luke mentions the baptism of Jesus almost in passing.

By **understanding** we might note that:

1. Luke has certain interests and concerns that shape his presentation of the story (e.g. prayer), and an awareness (shared with Matthew) that Jesus was sinless and yet accepted a baptism for the forgiveness of sins;
2. Luke shaped the story to address these interests and concerns; and
3. Luke presents evidence according to influences and interests, as indeed we would—i.e. we each see things through the lens of our own experience.

By **evaluating** we might note that:

1. what we call “history” involves not just the listing of facts but sifting interpretations of how evidence is presented to us in order to appreciate it;
2. we can only understand a gospel by bearing in mind the interests of the writer in comparison with the other gospels;
3. the Gospel writers were each writing for living faith communities who believed in God’s work in Jesus not only as about the past but as present in their midst.

5. Note Taking

Whilst a book is a tool it is best not to mark in a book - a) it may not be one’s own; b) even if it is one’s own you may refer to it again in a fresh way without wanting to be taken back to something you no longer regard as important. It is best to make notes from a book.

On the other hand, if you have a photocopy or a set of notes then using a highlighter can be very useful. But be careful not to overdo it or that undermines the purpose if everything

gets highlighted. So it is best to keep in mind the overall key ideas and what strikes you as of key importance for highlighting something. And/or it is also helpful to make notes in the margin that may summarise a point or help you to identify key points.

If you are going to use a book or an article as a resource for an essay then it is a good idea to make notes. In making notes, address three things: i) summarise the argument; ii) sketch the evidence that supports it; iii) formulate a critical response/evaluation.

Going back to the first extract in the previous section we might produce notes as follow:

Theme: the appropriateness of Bible stories for children.

Key Point: many Bible stories are inappropriate for children because:

1. the stories are written for adults rather than children;
2. the stories of some Biblical characters may be inappropriate e.g. they contain violence or sex;
3. children (at different stages) have a limited capacity to understand different kinds of truth (literal and metaphorical) and to distinguish between different kinds of writing (so do adults at times too!).

Key point: care must be taken when choosing a Bible story. Care needs to be taken:

1. to explain the context appropriately for children appropriate to their development);
2. to balance the number of stories about men and women;
3. to handle racial perspectives carefully;
4. to identify the appropriate message of the story for children.

An Evaluation. Notwithstanding the argument, there are stories from Scripture that are appropriate and accessible for children e.g. Jesus' parables such as the Good Samaritan, the Friend at Midnight, and the story itself of the life of Jesus. And it is also acceptable, surely, to give edited highlights appropriate to the subject matter and for ease of understanding.

So the outcome here is both to summarise but also to evaluate an argument.

Note-Taking

How to process information

Note taking is an invaluable process because it requires us to process information in at least 5 different ways - all of which help to retain it:

1. We **read** the material to get the gist of it.
2. We **select or pick out** the key points – highlighting.
3. We work to understand the information by **rephrasing it in our own words** - this is really the key to processing because it ensures that the information is fixed into our long-term memory bank.
4. We **write** it down.
5. We **check the text summaries** to ensure we have covered all the key points. (With academic literature, you will find summaries contained within conclusions and also introductions. If you have followed, where appropriate, the technique of highlighting key words (discourse markers) and topic sentences, these will also help to give you a summary.)

Why make notes?

- To have a personal record of your reading, or (if a lecture) your hearing.
- To select key points towards an essay plan.
- To make the learning process an active one: you may want to put ideas into your own words - or to challenge them.
- To help you to concentrate.
- To help you to identify everything that you already know about a topic so that you can then use your study time effectively to fill any gaps.
- To help you understand something, or check out whether you have actually understood something.

Facts about our memories

Our memory is organised in different levels of processing - like layers in a cake:

- Incoming sensory information (e.g. what you read) is held on the very first level in a working memory bank.
- This working memory can hold between 5 and 7 'units' of information for 6 to 12 seconds. We can, for instance, retain a 5 or 7 digit telephone number for a few seconds after being told it. We can extend this memory by 'rehearsing' the information, e.g. by repeating a telephone number to ourselves whilst we search for a pen.
- However the working memory information store is only temporary. As soon as the working memory experiences interference, the information is lost.

So, how do we remember anything?

- Information needs to be transferred into another level of memory that has a longer term and deeper storage capacity.
- We are lucky to have a long-term memory store. Research has not been able to find a maximum capacity for it. So we can assume that it (our memory) has (in theory) an open-ended capacity!¹
- Transfer from the temporary store in working memory into our memory where long-term storage takes place through note taking.

Note Taking

The best method or style of note-taking will depend, in part, on the reason why we need to make notes in the first place. For example, if you look at the points above under “Why make notes?”

- The first point involves a conscious decision to look out for or listen out for the key ideas, in terms of what comes along, what strikes you as important at the time.
- Making notes for an essay is a slightly different activity, related to having an idea of what you are looking for. You may have to be discriminating, discarding points that aren't strictly relevant. This resonates with the skimming and scanning techniques we looked at earlier in the Reading Skills Workshop.
- Taking notes from a book or an article is a different activity from taking notes at a lecture. With a book you can re-read something you don't understand. Also you can make use of page references, and you can mark the text (if an article).
- Notes made for later revision need to be clearly organised. Putting in some headings and sub headings will be useful when you return to the notes after a gap of time.
- With regard to the third reason given in the above list “Why Make Notes?” (i.e. “to make the learning process an active one: you may want to put ideas into your own words - or to challenge them.”), it is essential to find some mechanism of making it clear which ideas are yours and which ideas are the author's or lecturer's.

Different note taking styles

- * A list of main points - linear style
- * A précis
- * Spray or patterned notes
- * Flow charts or nuclear notes
- * Index cards

¹ However, you will also know the adage: the more I study the more I know, the more I know the more I forget, the more I forget the less I know, so why study?!

Linear style:

This is the conventional style: headings, subheadings and numbered points. The above list of different note taking styles is an example of a very simple linear or sequential note form.

Précis:

This is more of a report which puts things in one's own words. A good example (from the media) would be the many occasions where a news reporter gives an overview of something that has been said, or has occurred – it aims to get the content across, but in a way that does not include (for whatever reason) *verbatim* reporting. Thus instead e.g. of the Prime Minister being recorded directly, a reporter would give an account of what (s)he said on x topic. This would be a report – a summary with (acceptably) an evaluative dimension accompanying or overlaying it. For our purposes it might be intriguing to reflect on the ways in which précis forms a core part of the Gospel narratives, or the recorded speeches in Acts.

Mind mapping techniques: spray diagrams/spider diagrams/pattern notes/ flow charts. (See Appendix 5.)

Mind mapping involves starting in the middle of the page and working outwards. Write down the topic or main idea in a bubble and then draw lines radiating from it for each main point. Lines can then spray out from each main point into a series of sub points. Mind mapping reflects the way our minds work, interlinking key concepts in a free ranging way rather than restricting us to an unnatural linear, logical pattern.

Common situations where mind mapping and other diagrammatic approaches are appropriate

- Initial stages of essay planning
- Quick revision notes
- Organising a lot of varied information

Index cards

Depending upon the size of the card they are useful for brief notes. Their limited space forces you to be succinct. The creation of these cards is an invaluable learning exercise and by using colour coding or an appropriate card index filing system, you can begin to sort out different key themes and change them around or add to them quite easily.

Common situations where doing index cards are appropriate

- For key concepts/themes/summarising a block.
- Summarizing key points from a particular source.
- Recall and revision.
- A quick portable source of reference.
- They help you condense your knowledge into shorthand so that a word will remind you of a whole argument.

Some Practicalities

- Importance of maintaining an efficient system that notes source details when making notes from your reading - see under "Organizing your notes" below.
- Use of your own abbreviations.
- Use of note form rather than proper prose – a sort of code that works for you (e.g. I write "Xty" for "Christianity" or "Xt" for "Christ" or "LTT" for "Living Theology Today"!).
- Ensuring that one's notes are user friendly and that one can go back to them and be able to read them.
- Accurate transcription of quotations and clear distinction made between quotations and the ideas of the author, and any comments/asides/questions etc. that you might have. (This to avoid unintentional plagiarism.)

Further help with making note from written material

- Skim read text to get the "feel" of it.
- Identify topic sentences and discourse markers.
- Read text in detail looking for crucial points.
- Make margin notes to reinforce key phrases particularly about significant concepts.
- Close the book or article and write short summary in your own words.
- Check back to the text to include any quotations and other key points that you have missed.

Further help with making notes from tutorials/lectures

- Don't write everything down.
- Annotate handouts.
- Use your own abbreviations.
- Listen carefully to the thread of argument.
- Listen to key phrases.
- Note down points from OHP/board.
- Copy any diagrams with annotations.
- Mentally sum up the relevance of information before you make notes.
- Seek clarification.
- Read through notes and write brief summary as soon as possible after the session.

Organise your notes

- Use a separate file for each subject area.
- Use file dividers to separate major topics.
- Use a separate page for each minor topic or source.
- Arrange ideas under headings or questions.
- Label files and dividers clearly.
- Number and label pages so that you can find and re-file them easily.
- Always put author, title and page numbers from any texts in your notes as you go along so that you will be able to cite page references in an essay, or go back to an original source easily. Being meticulous with this reference keeping at this stage will save hours of work later.
- Keep an updated contents page at the front of each file.
- If you are using a PC, make sure that you set up a well organized filing system with folders and sub-folders to reflect the different subject areas that you are studying. Remember to give sufficient information when you are naming a document so that it is easy to find again.

Shortcuts in note-making

- Leave space in your notes and a wide margin so that you can add new information and ideas later.
- Carry post-it labels with you. When you have an idea, write it on a label and stick this on a blank sheet in a plastic folder. You can move the labels around as you plan assignments.
- Post-it labels are also useful for sticking into a book, which should not be annotated. You can write margin comments on the label instead.
- Develop and use a system of abbreviations - see appendix.

And finally

There is no one perfect system. You need to find what suits you best.

Experiment with the different styles suggested here but also get hold of books on Study Skills and talk to fellow students to pick up further ideas.

6. Effective Writing: Essay Writing

i. Obeying instructions

- Word length
- Layout/presentation
- Avoiding Plagiarism (the intentional (or unintentional) passing off of others' work as one's own)
- Referencing/bibliography

ii. How to look at an essay question/title

- Underline the most important words(s).
- Identify process and content words.
- Read the whole question critically, identifying any hidden assumptions that lie behind the question.
- Discern exactly what is being asked of you.
- Think about the relative weight to be given to each part of the question/title (if relevant).

iii. Critical analysis

- Analysis means breaking something down into its component parts and describing or defining them and then showing how they relate to one another.
- Criticism means commenting upon an argument, a conclusion or whatever. It does not mean that you must violently object to the argument being put forward. Rather you need to be assessing the validity of that argument or statement and ideally you should be examining all points of view in order to reach a balanced conclusion of your own.

Critical analysis therefore involves a very detailed study of a particular theme or text in which you break it down into its component parts and assess the validity of any arguments or conclusions.

Associated with critical analysis is a requirement to present your own ideas in such a way that you back them up with evidence or examples. It is not sufficient to make an unsubstantiated assertion.

iv. Planning

Use mind maps and essay plans (refer back to Note taking) to help you collect your thought and put them into some sort of order so that you present your ideas clearly.

v. Layout and Mechanics of Essay Writing

- Introduction, main body and conclusion.
- Paragraph structure - each paragraph should contain one key point or topic sentence and the rest of the paragraph should substantiate, illustrate or discuss that point.
- Clarity of meaning - it is important that your reader can follow your arguments. Clear sentence structure with appropriate punctuation will help.
- Bibliography - all the sources you have used for a particular essay.
- Word allowance.
- Referencing - it is important to be consistent.
- Drafting and redrafting - don't expect your essay to be perfect on the first draft.

vi. The Characteristics of a Good Essay.

A good essay:

- Addresses the title throughout.
- Has an introduction, development and conclusion.
- Is held together by a clear argument.
- Is structured in paragraphs that develop the argument and provide supporting evidence.
- Is well written i.e. grammatically correct, with proper sentences and spelling, and in a clear style.

vii. Hints and Tips for Essay Writing:

Title: Choose one that as far as possible interests you - motivation is everything! And make sure that you fully understand the question. And a good essay is one that will make reference to the title at various points throughout explicitly, using a variety of vocabulary.

Planning: Make an essay plan by sorting out what you want to say according to what you think may be involved in the title. This could be a list or perhaps a picture sketch of ideas across a page with lines going from one point to another as you see connections emerging or that you want to make. But before beginning the essay proper make sure you have a clear idea of how the parts will most likely fit together. By spending a little time doing this you will realise that you are almost doing the essay before you begin, and it will stave off the panic that can be created by being confronted by a blank sheet of paper!

One might think of it as a corridor with rooms off on either side. In proceeding along the corridor it is necessary to look into the rooms on either side but also to come out into the corridor before moving on. There are no connecting doors between the rooms that you can wander about at will! Try as far as possible to complete the explanation of a point before moving on to the next one. Or to put it another way, keep in mind the thread of an argument - develop each point before moving on, and going back if relevant to a previous point that supports an argument as you are developing it. Use helpful “trigger” words such as “however” or “nevertheless” or “another” or “additionally”, in order to draw in and work with different points of view or contrasts or opposing arguments.

And make sure that observing the word limit will allow you to provide for a conclusion that will summarise the argument that you have provided without rushing or cramming it in almost as an after-thought.

Paragraphs.

A good essay should have paragraphs that explore a main point or section. This may be helpfully expressed in an opening sentence and the paragraph then goes on to develop the point. Not all paragraphs have to be the same length. It will all depend on what you want to say and how you want to say it. A short one carrying a fundamental argument can be very effective. Often it is better to aim for short paragraphs so that an argument is structured with clarity.

Inclusive Language and God language.

These days we have to be careful about inclusive language. This is not just a fad but is a reflection of how language is influenced by changing culture. Compare for example the Revised Standard Version (RSV) with the New RSV (NRSV) to see how Bible translation has developed inclusive language. The word “man” can be both a generic term “mankind/human kind” but also a gendered term. Generally it is better to avoid the generic man and say instead “human kind” or “people” or “persons”. One might write (s)he or s/he if using singular pronouns. Or “we/they” as plural.

Reference to God is even more sensitive. God as Father is assured and is not to be changed. This is a different issue from inclusive language. God as “He” is acceptable although some, since God is not gendered, will write “She” or others “God/Godself” or instead of “His” one might write “God's”.

viii) Essay Writing: A Worked Example

The stages include:

- addressing the title
- finding resources and making notes
- planning the essay
- checking references and adding bibliography.

Essay Title: “What are the significant characteristics of your own denomination and what are its strengths and weaknesses?”

(Note: as a process, put “strengths and weaknesses” within each characteristic even though the title asks for these in relation to the denomination as a whole. This way one can build up a good detailed assessment of what the strengths and weaknesses are.)

Addressing the Title:

The subject, clearly, is “your own denomination” and so in this case we will explore Anglicanism (with a particular awareness of the Church of England). And the two aspects are

i) “the significant characteristics” - this means the typical qualities or traits, with it being left open as to what you think the significant ones are; but beware seeing this simply as personal preference since there will be central things inherent in Anglicanism that the tutor will be looking for. Nevertheless it does give scope for some personal appreciation here and that should find a place in your evaluation. And as to “significant” one should look for characteristics that are the most important, valuable and distinctive. I would suggest:

ii) “strengths and weaknesses” - this is self-explanatory but their identification is going to involve critical evaluation. Simply to write under weaknesses “boring sermons” may be part of your experience but it is too personal to form a judgement!

An assignment title will usually include a “trigger” word that asks for evaluation e.g. “discuss/evaluate/assess/explain/identify/comment on”. The trigger word here is “what” used twice. As above, I have suggested tying in the strengths and weaknesses to each characteristic as a way of seeing what their application is to the denomination as a whole.

Finding Resources:

The resources here would be:

knowledge and understanding you already possess from faith, worship and practice informed by your local church.

notes from any relevant teaching sessions.

relevant books and articles, especially (in the first instance) some dictionaries that will give a succinct outline of key points.

Building the Essay:

List the significant characteristics: These would be -

i) a broad church containing Catholic and Reformed traditions i.e. high church and low church;

ii) outlooks that contain evangelical, traditional, liberal and radical perspectives (with a need to clarify these);

iii) organisation that consists of the three-fold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, with parishes, deaneries, dioceses, provincial and synodical government;

established church (at least in the Church of England) involving monarchy, House of Lords; education at church schools and colleges, the parish church; the role and influence of the Mothers Union.

iv) liturgy that embraces the word and sacraments (two principal ones of baptism and Eucharist – with being open to whether others are dominical sacraments or pastoral actions with sacramental meaning);

v) foundations that draw upon scripture, reason and tradition. Note the order here with a "hinge" place for reason.

We might suggest that the first three contain both strengths and weaknesses (including the issue of establishment/disestablishment as this relates to the Church of England compared e.g. with the Scottish Episcopal Church as a near neighbour), the fourth is a strength and the fifth is a strength that requires some elaboration.

One would then consider resources drawing together any teaching notes and identifying a suitable reading list. Amongst these should be books or material about the church in general, dictionary articles on Anglicanism, specific resources that give an overview of the Church of England (including its historical context emerging out of Elizabethan England, and through the mid 19th and early 20th centuries, and identifying some significant figures e.g. Cranmer, Hooker, and the Oxford Movement of Newman, Keble and Pusey); and more recent movements down to the present e.g. the Parish Communion Movement begun in the late 1950's, Industrial Mission, Shared Ministry and the revival of the role of the laity in mission and ministry).

An Essay Plan:

Following exploration and reading perhaps one might revise the list above and draw up an essay plan like this:

An introduction that briefly sets the Church of England/Anglicanism in its historical and ecumenical context.

A broad church containing Catholic and Reformed (e.g. the liturgy includes the word and the sacrament); high church and low church; evangelical, traditional, liberal and radical (e.g. resources used are scripture, reason and tradition); strengths and weaknesses-

Organisation consists of three fold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons; parishes, deanery, dioceses, provincial and synodical government; strengths and weaknesses.

The Anglican church today in its variety and diversity and the question of authority in a decentralized group of churches in communion. Brief exploration of some examples of how the mind of the church can accommodate diversity e.g. alternative Episcopal oversight; strengths and weaknesses.

A conclusion that summarises the argument with the general observation that a characteristic can be both a strength and a weakness at the same time.

Writing and Editing:

Write the essay in draft and leave it for an interval and then read it through again. Read it through **a)** for proof reading and correcting any mistakes, and **b)** read it again for meaning asking oneself if the argument is clear and convincing.

Referencing and Bibliography:

You must provide a reference for any quotation or idea taken from one of your sources. And you must also provide a bibliography of books and other resources used. Only include in your bibliography the items you have actually used - it should not be a general list of items. Citing sources has a number of different conventions and styles that we need not explore here. As long as you cite the author, the title, publisher, date and page numbers that will do.

Bible referencing is thus: Gen.1:24, or Gen.1.24.

If there are some related verses within a chapter, then e.g. one might say: 1 Cor.5.1, 6.

If there are some references within a book, then one might say: Ephes.2.6; 4.3.

If referring to a text and a few follow-on verses then one might say: Mark 10.1ff.