

The Local Ministry Pathway for ordinands



DIOCESE of OXFORD

A Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world

What is the Local Ministry Pathway (LMP)?

Oxford LMP is our diocesan ministerial training course. It is a part-time, context-based programme designed specifically to prepare you for ministry and leadership in a range of parish and other settings. For more than 25 years we have been training candidates for ordained ministry in the diocese.

As one of four centres in the region that form the South Central Theological Education Institute (SCTEI), we work closely with neighbouring dioceses to ensure the quality, breadth and contemporary relevance of your training. We aim to nurture and equip collaborative ministers of the gospel who are rooted and grounded in God and the contexts to which they are called, and passionate enablers of everyday faith in others. With Oxford LMP you can expect:

- ✓ an engaged and supportive ordinand learning community
- ✓ opportunity to learn alongside others training for a range of ministries
- ✓ bespoke learning programmes where needed
- ✓ smooth transition to Oxford's IME2 training programme (curate training)
- ✓ emphasis on experiential learning and reflective practice.



“Having served for more than ten years as a Licensed Lay Minister in congregational leadership, I found the LMP helped me significantly broaden and deepen my theological understanding, while maintaining a practical focus that complemented my context-based practice. The tutors pastored the ordinand community with wisdom and sensitivity as we travelled together through the challenges of the journey.”

Sam Mortimer, student rep 2020-21



“The Oxford LMP is what made it possible for me to respond to God’s calling and was a hugely rich and enjoyable learning experience.”

Wendy Middleton, former student

Is LMP for me?

LMP embodies the breadth of Anglican tradition and theology found in many colleges and courses, and across the diocese. We don't adopt a particular tradition or theological stance but, rather, foster a community where students and tutors from different traditions worship together and learn not only with but also from each other. This creates a stimulating and creative learning community which both reflects and prepares you for effective ministry in the Church of England.

What will I be taught and who will teach me?

You will engage with a spectrum of theological, ministerial and missional subjects – Bible, doctrine, mission, pastoral care and many more – with an emphasis on the integration of theory and practice. You will be led in your learning by subject specialists and experienced practitioners who have a passion for their subject, enjoy teaching and bring a wealth of experience from theological education, pastoral ministry and missional leadership.

How long is the course and when do I attend?

This is something that is worked out together with your DDO, but two or three years is the usual expectation, depending on prior learning and relevant experience (see page 6).

Modules are taught through a mixture of mid-week training (usually term-time evenings, with some afternoon options) and weekend training (three residential weekends and a further six Saturday study days each year). You will also enjoy a residential silent retreat weekend, usually in the spring term. Midweek courses are increasingly being delivered through our online Moodle VLE platform, sometimes in a hybrid pattern with 'in person' study days.

Ministerial formation and contextual training

Formation is not just about ministry – it is a word that tries to capture all that God grows in us as we journey on in our Christian lives. It is not just about what we do but about who we are: our character and our habits. Ministerial formation is about allowing God the space and time to shape us as we follow a particular call to ordained ministry. This involves studying, but it also means digging deep into what this call means for our lives. So, training with LMP

isn't just about writing assignments and learning new skills – it's about being in community, about time with personal tutors and each other exploring how the course is challenging and affirming you.

Contextual training includes the learning that takes place not only on the course, but also in your church and beyond. It is, for example, about making connections between what happens in church and what you learn in the classroom, so that your learning flows between the two and they enrich and shape each other. This is an important aspect of LMP, working with your home parish as a partner in your training.



“The best thing about training through the LMP is that you're sharing the experience with the people you live, work and worship with. There's a sense of wholeness that links the different areas of your life.”

Sally Prendergast, former student



“I was born in Sri Lanka, theologically trained on the LMP and now serving in Milton Keynes for the glory of God in the service of the Church and the NHS.”

Sam Muthuveloe, former student and GP

Will I be training only with ordinands on the LMP?

While some of your training will be with ordinands only, for much of the time you will be learning alongside candidates training for Licensed Lay Ministry (Readers) and those who have come simply because they want to grow in faith and understanding. This is an important dimension of LMP training and makes for a rich formational experience that encourages and enables us to work alongside, and learn from, those with other vocations.

What if I haven't studied for a long time?

Don't worry! Most LMP ordinands study towards a Durham University (Common Awards) Diploma or Certificate in Theology, Mission and Ministry. While this can be challenging at times – an inevitable part of formation and training – we are experienced in working with those who are returning to study and can support and encourage you as you engage in your learning. If you have particular needs, let us know.



“I thought I couldn't study at this level and that I couldn't be me. I couldn't have been more wrong!”

Polly Falconer, former student



What if I have relevant prior learning and experience?

Where an ordinand has significant prior learning and relevant experience we will work closely with your DDO to build a bespoke programme that addresses both national expectations and your own formational needs. Our concern is to shape programmes that make formational and vocational sense, allowing you to build on previous experience and push into new areas of learning, whatever your starting point.

What the experts say...

The Inspectors

“We commend Oxford LMP for developing the habit of theological reflection in all elements of the course; for the staff’s accessibility and responsiveness to incumbents, tutors and students; and their commitment, flexibility and care of students to ensure they follow the most appropriate pathway.”

Ministry Division Inspection Team

The External Examiner

“SCTEI offers its students a fine theological education, bringing together rigorous academic standards, the development of a capacity for honest self-reflection, encouraging faithful commitment to Christ and a developing sense of vocation.”

Revd Dr Jeremy Law, External Examiner

Core staff



Revd Canon Dr Phillip Tovey is Principal of the Oxford LMP. He had been an incumbent twice in the diocese and has 20 years' experience in theological education. He has written many books, mostly on liturgy, and is an international lecturer and speaker.



Revd Dr Phil Cooke is Vice-principal. After 20 years' ministry as a worship pastor in Taunton, London and then Reading, Phil was ordained in 2012 and joined LMP soon after this. Originally a human geographer, he later trained at London School of Theology and then the Oxford Ministry Course at Cuddesdon. He is an Associate Vicar at Christ Church, Abingdon.

What next?

Once you have talked this through with your DDO, do contact us to arrange an exploratory meeting to determine what your own learning programme might look like and discuss any prior learning. We are always happy to welcome visitors to evening teaching or study days by arrangement. Contact Phil Cooke: phil.cooke@oxford.anglican.org.



DIOCESE *of* OXFORD

A Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world

oxford.anglican.org