Ministry Discernment and Formation Program

St Barnabas College has at its core business the preparation for people for ministry in the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Adelaide.

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Anglican Diocese of Adelaide

Ministry Discernment and Formation Program

This program outlines the processes involved for those who are responding to a call to serve God and are discerning if the call is to ordained ministry.

This program is led by the Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation in consultation with the Archbishop.

1. **Seeking and Discernment** – this stage incorporates two groups of people:

   - **Seekers Year:** Those who have made initial contact and who are **seeking** whether God is calling them to ordained ministry. This stage begins with a Seekers Day, and continues for a full year.

   - Those who have completed the Seekers Year may be invited to apply for a **Discernment Year**. This includes those who are **formally discerning** a call to ordination and who are actively engaged in the program and in theological education.

     If a person makes satisfactory progress and reports confirm a call to ordained ministry be tested, psychological and medical assessments are made, an invitation to attend the MDE is issued.

2. **Formation** – this has two stages which usually takes **two years**:

   - Stage 1: participants who have successfully transitioned through the MDE are recognised as **ordination candidates** and commence an intentional program of preparation for ordination. This includes movement from home parish into a training placement and continued engagement with theological education.

   - Stage 2: participants continue the intentional program of preparation for ordination and develop in parish placements. Theological education should be complete or near complete at end of the second stage. If all reporting is satisfactory a **recommendation may be made to the Archbishop for ordination.**[1]

3. **Ministry Praxis** – candidates who are deacons commence a **two-year** post-ordination program which both vocational and transitional deacons and first-year priests must complete.[2] Movement is made from the formation placement to a **curacy** placement.

   At the end of the second year, following full participation in the Ministry Praxis program and satisfactory reporting a recommendation may be made to the Archbishop for ordination to the priesthood.

[1] Ordination before the completion of two years Formation is an exception and will be made only at the Archbishop's discretion.
[2] Requirement of vocational deacons to complete a two-year program is intended to demonstrate the value of the diaconate.

Requirements for each Stage of the Program

1. Discernment

Stage 1: Seekers

Seekers are those who are in the early stages of exploring a call to ordained ministry. This stage usually lasts one year unless an exception is made based upon ministry experience and spiritual maturity. Exceptions are at the discretion of the Archbishop.

- **Attend Seekers Day**
- Be worshipping in an Anglican parish in the Diocese of Adelaide for at least one year. This parish is the home parish for both stages of Discernment.
- At time of initial contact with the Diocese have the written recommendation of the Parish Priest.
- Be involved in a clearly defined lay ministry – e.g. lay assistant, bible study leader, home communions.
- Hold a working with children check and be up to date with all safe ministry training.
- Be baptised in a mainstream Christian Church and be confirmed as an Anglican (or willing to do so) or received into the Anglican Communion.
- Commence theological education at St Barnabas College.
- Meet monthly with the wider group of seekers led by the Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation and four times a year on a Saturday with the Formation group. Attendance is compulsory.
- Commence reading *Truly Called,* by Bradly Billings.
- Write spiritual autobiography (see guidelines).
- Meet with Coordinator to determine recommendation to move to Stage 2 Formal Discernment.

Stage 2: Formal Discernment

If the Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation recommends a person advance into Stage 2 and approval by the Archbishop or Assistant Bishop is received, a more intentional period of discerning a call to ordained ministry begins. This stage will take at least one year.

- Students continue to be involved in lay ministry in their home parish.
- A Ministry Project is undertaken in consultation with the Parish Priest – e.g. trial a contemporary worship service, begin an outreach program, lead a study, start prayer group.
- Continue to participate in the monthly meetings led by the Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation and attend two quiet days. Attendance compulsory.
- Continue theological education at St Barnabas College – at least six subjects passed satisfactorily by the end of the year, noting that the student will need to complete degree in 3-4 years to complete by end of formation.
- Complete or update spiritual autobiography.
- Establish regular meetings with a Spiritual Director.
- Meet with an Examining Chaplain twice in the year.
- Receive satisfactory progress reports from Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation, Principal of SBC, Examining Chaplain, and Parish Priest.
- Meeting with Archbishop or Assistant Bishop before MDE.
- If there is appropriate progress an application to attend MDE may be made by the student.
- If recommended, undertake medical and psychological assessment.
- Invitation to MDE may be issued when all reports received and Archbishop confirms.
- MDE is undertaken by approved students.

2. Formation

If the MDE and Archbishop affirm a call to ordination a student is invited into a two-year Formation program. This is intentional ministry training to prepare students for the rigours of ordained ministry. A student is now an ***ordination candidate.***

Formation: Stage 1

- Ordination candidates are assigned a training placement in a parish which is not their home parish.[3]
- Theological education continues with a view to completion of award in two more years.
- Receive satisfactory progress reports from Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation, Principal of SBC, Examining Chaplain, and Parish Priest.
- Meeting with Examining Chaplains twice a year.
- Regular meetings with Spiritual Director.
- Learning Covenant designed in consultation with Parish Priest.
- Leadership ministry clearly established in parish.
- Full attendance at monthly formation meetings led by the Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation, including two quiet days.
- Attendance at annual Formation Retreat.
- Attendance at Synod meeting.
- Attendance at significant diocesan worship events, including ordinations, Chrism Eucharist and Synod Eucharist.
- Participation in St Barnabas College events, including opening worship and St Barnabas Day.

[3] Ordination candidates who work on weekdays in a ministry setting such as a school or agency are still expected to move from their home parish to experience the benefits and challenges of different ministry contexts.

- Two meetings a year between Parish Priest, Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation and ordination candidate.
- Candidate meeting towards the end of the year with the Archbishop or Assistant Bishop.
- If satisfactory progress is made in all areas, a recommendation may be made to the Archbishop that the ordination candidate proceed to Formation Stage 2.

Formation: Stage 2

- Ordination candidates continue in parish placement or may move to another placement depending on reports received during Stage 1 and recommendations by Parish Priest and/or Bishop.
- Theological education continues with a view to completion of award at the end of the year.
- Receive satisfactory progress reports from Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation, Principal of SBC, Examining Chaplain, and Parish Priest.
- Meeting with Examining Chaplains twice a year.
- Regular meetings with Spiritual Director.
- Learning Covenant updated in consultation with Parish Priest.
- Leadership ministry clearly established in parish.
- Full attendance at monthly formation meetings led by the Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation, including two quiet days.
- Attendance at annual Formation Retreat.
- If accepted as an ordinand at the end of the second year, attendance at an ordination retreat.
- Attendance at Synod meeting.

- Attendance at significant diocesan worship events, including ordinations, Chrism Eucharist and Synod Eucharist.
- Participation in St Barnabas College events, including opening worship and St Barnabas Day.
- Two meetings between the Coordinator for Ministry Discernment and Formation, the Parish Priest and ordination candidate.
- Meeting toward the end of the year with the Archbishop or Assistant Bishop.
- Recommendation is made to the Archbishop for readiness for **ordination as deacon.**
- If the Archbishop approves the recommendation for ordination on the basis of reports and subject to meeting canonical requirements, the student receives a letter notifying the provisional ordinand of the Archbishop's intention to ordain them as a deacon *God willing.*

3. Ministry Praxis

Ministry Praxis is a program of ongoing formation and training for clergy in their first two years of ordained ministry. These two years include deacon and priest training. The program is led by the Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation and may involve senior clergy who advise on specific ministry areas (such as weddings and funerals)

Ministry Praxis: Year 1

- First year deacons meet with the Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation six times a year for ongoing formation and training.
- Deacons are assigned a curacy placement by the Archbishop. The conditions of the curacy and the licence are provided by the Archbishop or delegate in consultation with the parish/ministry setting and Parish Priest.
- Commencement of professional supervision and other employment conditions including the Ministry Wellbeing Program.
- Attendance at annual Clergy Conference.
- Attendance at Synod meeting.
- Attendance at clergy retreat and if invited (for those who are transitioning to priesthood), ordination retreat.
- Regular spiritual direction meetings continue.
- Two meetings between the Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation, the Parish Priest, and the deacon.
- Receive satisfactory progress reports by Parish Priest and Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation.
- Meeting with the deacon towards the end of the year with the Archbishop or Assistant Bishop.
- Recommendation is made to the Archbishop for readiness for

ordination as priest.

- If the Archbishop approves the recommendation for ordination on the basis of reports and subject to meeting canonical requirements, the deacon receives a letter notifying them of the Archbishop's intention to ordain them as a priest *God willing.*

Ministry Praxis: Year 2

- First year priests and second year vocational deacons meet with the Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation six times a year for ongoing formation and training.
- The curacy placement continues for the second year in consultation with the parish/ministry setting and Parish Priest.
- Professional supervision and other employment conditions including the Ministry Wellbeing Program continue.
- Attendance at annual Clergy Conference.
- Attendance at Synod meeting.
- Attendance at clergy retreat.
- Regular spiritual direction meetings continue.
- Two meetings between the Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation, the Parish Priest, and the deacon/priest.
- Receive satisfactory progress reports by Parish Priest and Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation.
- Meeting with the priest/deacon towards the end of the year with the Archbishop or Assistant Bishop.
- At the end of the year, following satisfactory reports by Parish Priest and Coordinator of Ministry Discernment and Formation, recommendation is made to the Archbishop that the deacon/priest complete the curacy program and be eligible for licensing in an independent, team ministry, or other ministry placement.

Notes

The program presented here is intended to provide clarity for students and new clergy as well as those responsible for the testing and preparation for ministry.

- Full participation in the program and openness to God's calling may indicate lay ministry over ordained, or vocational diaconate over priesthood. Progression through the MDE to the Formation stages does not indicate 'success' over those for whom a calling to ordained ministry is not discerned. The point of the MDE is to discern God's calling for a person at that particular stage of life. A call to lay ministry is to be celebrated.
- Recognising that spiritual maturity and ministry experience will be different between people, and that some may present with already significant theological education, flexibility will be exercised in progression through the program at the Archbishop's discretion.
- There may be some people whom the Archbishop decides to ordain before the completion of their theological education. In these cases, reporting on progress of completion of the degree will continue into the Ministry Praxis stages. Again, the Archbishop reserves the right to ordain a person, *God willing.*