

STETS Programme Regulations

The Southern Theological Education and Training Scheme

Programme Regulations for the Modular Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and the Degree of MA in Theology for Christian Ministry and Mission

1. General

- 1.1. These regulations relate to the programme offered by the Southern Theological Education and Training Scheme leading to the award of the Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and the Degree of MA in Theology for Christian Ministry and Mission of the University of Surrey.
- 1.2. The Southern Theological Education and Training Scheme reserves the right to amend or revise these Regulations from time to time subject to the approval of the University of Surrey.
- 1.3. These Programme Regulations should be read in conjunction with the General Regulations for Higher Awards of the University for Students Pursuing Programmes on a Modular Basis, and the current *STETS BA and MA Course Handbook*, including the Programme Specification for the MA.

2. Aims and learning outcomes for the programme

2.1. The programme has three primary and interrelated aims:

- 2.1.1. To *educate* students to engage critically, creatively and autonomously with:
 - the resources of the Christian tradition and its relationship with other systems of belief;
 - the norms of Christian belief and practice;
 - and their own place in the worship, life and mission of the Church.
- 2.1.2. To *train* students to exercise a skilful, reflective and innovative ministry marked by wisdom, empathy and initiative and exemplified in a capacity for collaborative leadership, co-responsibility and commitment to the growth, well-being and empowerment of others;
- 2.1.3. To *form* students to participate responsibly in the mission of the Church by integrating their learning and ministry within the particularities, complexities and adversities of their own lives and the lives of their communities, and by offering strategic leadership.

2.2. The primary learning outcomes are expressed in terms of these three central aims as follows:

- 2.2.1. After completing each phase of the programme, students will be better educated to:
 - discern God's ways in the world;
 - understand the dynamics of Christian faith (expressed in texts and interpretative practices, norms of thought and practice, ecclesial worship and polity) in the

worship, teaching, life and mission of the Church both in local situations and in global mission;

- understand their own denomination in its breadth and diversity;
- determine the place of Christian ministry in relation to particular contexts;
- analyse the personal, social, cultural and institutional practices by which people are formed in ordinary life.

2.2.2. After completing each phase of the programme, students will be better trained to:

- serve God's purposes in the world;
- think of, experience and form church life and ministry in theological, missiological and ecumenical terms;
- discern the form of ministry which is theirs (with an understanding of its appropriate roles and boundaries), consider its responsibilities, prepare to practise it and to reflect upon its performance;
- discover possibilities for Christian formation in and through the practices of ordinary life.

2.2.3. After completing each phase of the programme, students will be better formed to:

- embody and express the ways of God in the life of the Church in the world;
- draw on the resources of Church life, thought and worship for ministry and mission;
- exemplify trust in God and expectancy for the kingdom of God through prayerfulness and Christian service;
- order their lives, working co-operatively for the fuller realisation of God's mission in the world
- develop sound habits of reflective practice, contributing to growth in wisdom in Christian ministry and mission.

As indicated in the attached Programme Specification, these global aims and learning outcomes apply to all the awards of the programme: Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Degree. The annex to the Programme Specification indicates that the only exception to this is that students registered for the awards of PG Certificate and PG Diploma are not required to be able to meet the learning outcomes which are associated with the successful completion of an extended Research Project and Dissertation.

3. Admission and registration

3.1. To qualify for admission to the programme, all applicants must satisfy the General Entrance Regulations for higher awards of the university pursued in the associated institutions of the University of Surrey (General Regulations F/34-36; paragraphs 2.1-2.16).

3.2. Students following this programme as part of their initial ministerial education this will normally register for the award corresponding to the time for which the church authorities have sent them to STETS, after account has been taken of any AP(E)L claims which have been allowed by STETS.

3.3. No student may gain more than one award from any programme of study. The University shall rescind the subsidiary award upon completion of the higher-level award. (General Regulations f/ 35, paragraph 2.8)

4. Programme structure and study requirements by level

4.1. Students will normally register for *one* of the following awards:

4.1.1. Postgraduate Certificate in Theology for Christian Ministry and Mission;

4.1.2. Postgraduate Diploma in Theology for Christian Ministry and Mission;

4.1.3. Master of Arts in Theology for Christian Ministry and Mission.

4.2. Specialist formational training pathways

Students undertaking one of these awards as part of their initial ministerial education for ordained or accredited lay ministry in the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, ministry in the permanent diaconate of the Church of England and the Methodist Diaconal Order, and vocational exploration candidates for the Methodist Church will be required to undertake additional specialist formational training for candidates for these such ministries. However, these are not part of this programme.

4.3. Modules

Details of modules together with their credit value are given in the attached Programme Specification.

4.4. Modules per year of part time study: (total hours: 600)

Year 1: four 15-credit modules (600 hours), with the PG Certificate as an optional exit point.

Year 2: four 15-credit modules (600 hours), with the PG Diploma as an optional exit point.

Year 3: one 10-credit module on research methods and one 50-credit dissertation module (600 hours).

4.5. Core/compulsory modules

4.5.1. Modules M1-M10 are all core modules.

4.6. Pre-requisite, or co-requisite for further/higher level modules

4.6.1. M9 is a pre-requisite for M10

4.7. Accredited Prior Learning and Experiential Learning

4.7.1. *Terminology:* Unless otherwise indicated, the generic term AP(E)L here refers to prior formal academic learning and prior experiential learning. All provision for AP(E)L by STETS is intended to be fully consistent with the policies being developed by the University of Surrey. It is also intended to ensure that all the educational, training or formational requirements of the participating churches are met for students undergoing initial or continuing ministerial education.

4.7.2. *Provision for AP(E)L:* AP(E)L may be granted for any of the modules in the programme, after due consideration of:

- the limits of AP(E)L provision (regulation 4.8.7. below).;
 - the pre-requisite status of modules M1, M3 and M9 (regulation 4.6 above);
 - and whether the credit granted for individual modules still permits students to study the remaining modules in a way which respects the integrated nature of the programme as a whole.
- 4.7.3. *Procedures for claiming AP(E)L:* If a candidate for this programme wishes to be considered for AP(E)L, he or she will inform the STETS Director of Studies and complete a STETS AP(E)L Assessment Form by a specified date which allows sufficient time for the proper assessment of the claim. This statement of APL will need to be supported by full syllabi for the work described and a transcript for any completed parts of a degree programme, together with names of academic referees from the institution(s) concerned. Where a supplementary claim for APEL is also necessary, the Director of Studies will specify additional means of assessment appropriate to the candidate in question, such as submission of a portfolio, submission of special assignments, or an interview with a member of the STETS core academic staff in accordance with guidelines agreed by the STETS Board of Studies. If necessary, the Director of Studies will request the candidate to provide additional evidence. This evidence is then assessed by the AP(E)L Subcommittee of the STETS Board of Studies.
- 4.7.4. *Criteria for awarding AP(E)L:* In order to be awarded exemption on the basis of AP(E)L candidates will have to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Board of Studies that they can substantially satisfy the specific learning outcomes of the modules or level of study for which they are claiming exemption. In the case of APL, exemption would not normally be given for study completed more than five years ago.
- 4.7.5. *Evaluation of claims:* AP(E)L evidence will be verified and reviewed by the AP(E)L subcommittee of the STETS Board of Studies, taking the following factors into account:
- Are the claims independently verified?
 - Is the AP(E)L current?
 - Is it of sufficient quality?
 - Is there a sufficiently close fit between the specific content of AP(E)L and the work for which the candidate is seeking credit exemption?
 - Will the AP(E)L offer a proper basis for study of the remainder of the programme?
- 4.7.6. *Recommendation and ratification:* On the basis of its review, the subcommittee will recommend to the Board of Studies a specific award of credit or advise that credit should not be granted in this instance. When necessary, this committee may seek the advice of the Chair of the STETS Board of Studies.
- 4.8.7 *Extent of AP(E)L award:* Candidates may submit evidence of AP(E)L which amounts to more than 30 credits for the Postgraduate Certificate, 60 credits for the Postgraduate Diploma and 90 credits for the Master's Degree.
- 4.8.8 *Right of appeal:* The candidate has the right of appeal to the Board of Studies on grounds of procedural irregularity. The candidate also has the right to resubmit

their AP(E)L evidence, providing that additional relevant evidence is adduced and that it is made available in time for consideration by the STETS AP(E)L Sub-Committee before the December meeting of the STETS Board of Studies.

4.8.9 Final adjudication lies with the STETS Board of Studies.

5. Expectations relating to attendance

Attendance at all centre-based seminars is compulsory unless students have prior permission to be absent.

6. Rationale and aims for each module

Shortened module descriptions based on the rationale and aims are given in the *STETS BA and MA Course Handbook*.

7. Assessment requirements for each module

7.1. The programme employs a process of continuous assessment. Academic modules M1-M10 are summatively assessed by means of written assignments. Assignments may consist of more than one component (e.g. seminar paper and essay) and may be required to be presented in a range of genres (e.g. research proposal or briefing paper).

7.2. The deadlines for all assignments are published in advance and are normally at the end of each module.

7.3. Each summatively-assessed assignment course work is graded according to the following system

Percentage	Class Mark	Level of Achievement
100-70	Distinction	Excellent
69-60	Merit	Very Good
59-50	Pass	Good
49-25	Fail	Reassessment normally permitted. Penalised resubmission mark.
24-0	Fail	Reassessment not normally permitted

7.4. Assessment criteria for all assignments are given in the *STETS BA and MA Course Handbook*.

7.5. Where there are a number of parts in assessment requirements, the grade awarded is the aggregate pass-mark, calculated according to the relative weighting of the components.

7.6. The derivation of marks from methods of assessment: The forms of assessment used in the course are designed to test the specific learning outcomes of each module. Work will be graded according to the degree to which these learning outcomes have been demonstrated.

7.7. The assessment criteria for particular learning outcomes are indicated in the Programme Specification.

7.8. *Viva voce assessment*: The Board of Examiners may require any student to be examined *viva voce* in addition to taking the assessments prescribed for each module. (University General Regulation F/42, paragraph 4.18).

In addition, where illness or incapacity (such as a broken arm) prevents a student from submitting a written assignment a student may be examined *viva voce*, after prior approval from the External Examiner. In such cases this will be conducted either by the STETS staff member responsible for marking the written assignments or the one who has convened or written the module. For grading purposes, the same assessment criteria will be used as for written assignments.

7.9. *Pass Marks*: In order to obtain credits for a module students need to achieve a mark of at least 50%. Students following this programme as part of their initial ministerial training must attain the pass mark for *each standard module*.

Work below this standard may normally be resubmitted.

7.10. *Submission regulations*: Students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines for submitting written work for marking by Core Staff. All written work submitted for marking by core staff should be:

- typed or word-processed;
- submitted on white A4 paper
- double-spaced; printed on one side of the paper only
- unbound;
- laid out with a minimum left hand margin of 3 cm
- accompanied by a completed *Assignment Learning Review & Assessment Form* (attached to the front).
- Bibliographic referencing should follow the Harvard referencing system, as exemplified in the current edition of the *STETS Course Handbook*.

7.11. *Word-limits*: These should be strictly observed. Assignments longer than 10% above the word-limit will be penalised by up to 20%. This will take the form of a sliding scale – 11-14% over the limit will be penalised by 10%, 15-19% by 15% and 20% and over by 20%. Where unusual circumstances make it necessary to submit an assignment of greater length, permission must be obtained in advance from the Director of Studies.

7.12. *Reference to Sources and Plagiarism*:

7.12.1. Students are expected to acknowledge their use of all ideas or quotations adopted from another person, whether from a book, article, internet site, lecture or any other source. All assignments should therefore contain full and accurate references to sources and a bibliography. Referencing should follow the Harvard system, as exemplified in the current edition of the *STETS BA and MA Course Handbook*.

7.12.2. The inclusion of the words or ideas of another author in an assignment without proper attribution so as to lead the examiners to believe that they are the writer's own is plagiarism. Cases of alleged plagiarism will be dealt with by the Board of Examiners or a panel acting on behalf of the Board. Candidates facing such allegations shall be given a written statement setting out the grounds of the allegation and shall be permitted to submit evidence to the Board on their own behalf. Candidates found guilty of plagiarism shall forfeit the whole or part of the marks for the assignment in question as determined by the Board.

7.13. *Compensation*

In view of the integrated nature of the programme and also the requirement of the churches that candidates for ordination should pass all modules, no compensation will be allowed.

7.14. *Late or non-submission of assignments*

7.14.1. STETS recognises that from time to time students studying part-time may need to be granted extensions to the submission deadlines for the submission of assignments. All such requests for extensions should be directed to the Director of Studies in writing, giving sound reasons for the request and a clear indication of when the assignment will be ready. The new deadline agreed with the Director of Studies must be observed. No more than three such extensions of assignment deadlines will normally be given for modules in any single level.

7.14.2. Assignments submitted after the deadline without permission will be marked on a pass/fail basis only. Assignments which pass under these circumstances receive a grade of 50%. Work failing to attain this standard will be required to be resubmitted.

7.15. *The Assessment Process:*

7.15.1. *Assignment Writing:* Assignment titles and deadlines for each module are detailed within the distance-learning documentation for each module. In addition students are given a list of assignment deadlines at the start of each academic year. The student writes the assignment and submits it to STETS by the deadline specified, or requests an extension from the Director of Studies, where special circumstances make this necessary. The Academic Secretary monitors the arrival of assignments and notifies the Director of Studies of any which remain outstanding after the deadline. Letters of reminder are sent to students who have not requested an extension.

7.15.2. *Internal Marking:* The internal first marker (usually STETS staff member or module convenor) starts marking after the deadline (or when at least 75% of the scripts have been received). In any event this should not be more than a week after the deadline. Because of the need for some flexibility with distance learners, internal markers are given four working weeks to complete the marking. The Academic Secretary collects late submissions and passes them on the first marker. To avoid delaying the moderation process, these are to be marked as soon as conveniently possible.

7.15.3. Internal Second-Marking by STETS Staff:

This is done to a deadline, normally two working weeks after first marker's deadline. All assignments are second-marked, and an agreed mark is awarded.

As soon as the internally-awarded marks have been released to the students, they are encouraged to note feedback from the markers by studying the marked copies of their assignments which are held in the STETS general office. These remain on file until the conclusion of the examination process and the completion of the course. Internally-awarded marks remain provisional until the conclusion of the examination process.

In all these cases, the Director of Studies will consult with the Module convenors and other staff, as appropriate.

8. Rules for progression

8.1. Students may only proceed to the Research Project and Dissertation once they have obtained an average mark of at least 50% in at least four taught modules (M1 – M8).

9. Arrangements for reassessment

9.1. Students who fail a module (with a mark below 50%) may repeat the assessment (after revision or rewriting) on one subsequent occasion within one year of the first attempt (University General Regulation F/39, regulation 4.4). Because of the nature of the STETS course, students are normally expected to present their work for reassessment within six months.

9.2. At the discretion of the Board of Examiners, a student who shows strength in other modules may be permitted one further attempt at the assessment of not more than one component of assessment beyond that provided by regulation 9.1. Such provision may be permitted, provided the student has:

either:

- (i) achieved an overall mark of 50% for the other modules so far completed
- (ii) been awarded credit for all other components of assessment for other modules so far completed
- (iii) achieved a mark of not less than 30% for the component of assessment for which a further attempt is being considered

or:

- (i) achieved an overall average mark of 50% for modules completed thus far
- (ii) been awarded credit for all other components of assessment for other modules so far completed
- (iii) achieved a mark of not less than 25% for the component of assessment for which a further attempt is being considered.

9.3. Students who successfully resubmit such assignments shall be awarded a mark which is the actual mark or the arithmetic mean of the actual mark attained and the pass

mark for the award for which the student is registered, whichever is the lower. (University General Regulations F/40, regulation 4.8).

9.4. Appeals against the joint decision of the internal examiner(s) and the external examiner relating to marks awarded for individual modules will be dealt with by the STETS Board of Examiners. All appeals relating to final awards are governed by the appeals process of the University.

10. Mechanism for the determination of degree and other award classifications

10.1. The award of the Postgraduate Certificate is made on the basis of achieving an average pass mark of at least 50% for four 15-credit modules.

10.2. The award of the Postgraduate Diploma is made on the basis of achieving an average pass mark of at least 50% for eight 15-credit modules. It will be awarded with Merit for students achieving an overall aggregate mark of 60-69%, and with Distinction for students achieving an overall aggregate mark of 70% or above.

10.3. The Degree is awarded on the basis of successful completion of 180 credits, including the Research Project and Dissertation. The final mark, which determines classification, is the overall aggregate of the marks for all assessed modules. The Board of Examiners may adjust the final mark (but only upward) to reflect the excellence of a student's performance. The Degree will be awarded with Merit for students achieving an overall aggregate mark of 60-69%, and with Distinction for students achieving an overall aggregate mark of 70% or above.

10.4. *Final grade for students awarded AP(E)L:*

The marks used to calculate the classification or division of the award shall be those derived from modules undertaken within the University of Surrey or from programmes offered by this or another Associated Institution, unless an arrangement to recognise marks derived from another institution is explicitly stated in a Memorandum of Agreement between the University and that institution.

11. Revision of programme regulations

11.1. Every effort has been made to ensure that the accuracy of the information concerning the programme of study contained in these Programme Regulations is accurate. The University reserves the right to introduce changes to the information given, including the addition, withdrawal or restructuring of programmes of study.