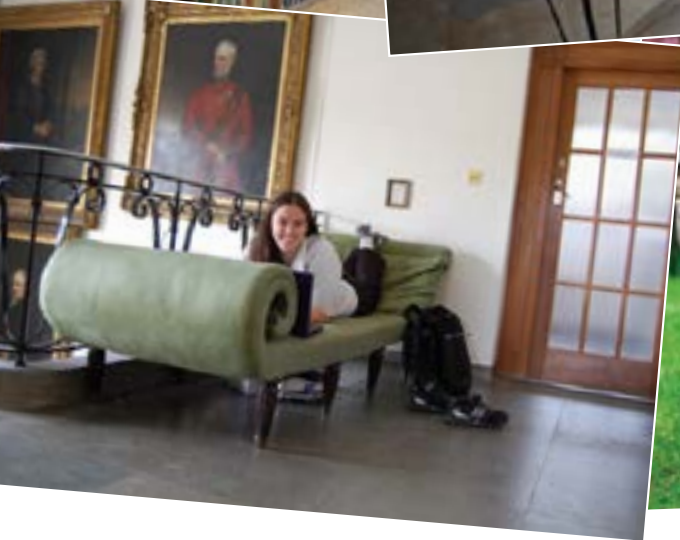
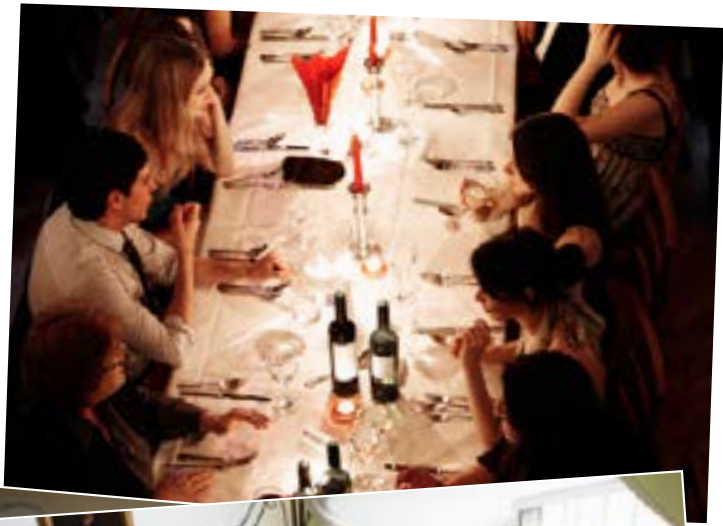


MINISTERIAL FORMATION





Regent's
Park College
OXFORD



Regent's and Oxford

Regent's is a unique place! No two colleges are alike as are no two Baptist Colleges, and Regent's is shaped by its history, location, and make-up. Regent's Park College is part of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and also part of the University of Oxford.



The College began life in Stepney in London, before moving to Regent's Park, hence the name, and then to Oxford in 1927. From its origins it was always concerned with both the education of young people, at that time denied entrance to Oxford and Cambridge for not being members of the Church of England, and the training of those who sensed a call to Baptist ministry.

The College continues to be a diverse community with around 200 students. As well as students preparing for ministry, around 25 to 30 at any one time, there are a large number of undergraduates reading for university degrees in a range of arts subjects, and a significant number of post-graduates, mainly in theology – many of whom are already engaged in ministry among Baptist churches and those of other denominations. There is a regular flow of visitors from churches and academic institutions around the world – especially Eastern Europe and North America – which adds to the richness of community life.

BUGB ministerial students mostly share with other Baptists in their formation, but some of the training experience has an ecumenical dimension. There are various occasions when Regent's students work and worship with those preparing for Anglican ministry within the university. Regent's students are not expected to tow any 'party line' but encouraged to think through for themselves issues relating to faith, ministry and mission.



Oxford University gives the opportunity for students to study theology in a stimulating environment, at a centre of international excellence, and with unmatched resources (those libraries!) Class sizes are generally small even where lectures are used as a key component in course delivery and these are supported by tutorials, the traditional Oxford method of tutorial).

Despite its deserved reputation as a centre of excellence, it would be quite wrong to think that only some sort of academic elite may be suitably qualified for preparing for ministry at Oxford. Access is widening all the time, and some students entering college to prepare for ministry have few formal qualifications, or none. The relatively small scale of the college and the small teaching groups, allow good support of all students, including those coming to study for the first time or returning to it after a break.

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Ministerial Formation

Learning and formation in ministry is a lifetime's work, and the Baptist Union speaks of six years of initial ministerial formation. The College course, normally for three years, is the beginning this process, which then continues as a Newly Accredited Minister, setting patterns for continuing personal and professional development throughout ministry.

Formation speaks of the inner work of God in all of us, which has a particular focus during these years of preparation. It concerns spirituality and character, which need to be nurtured and honed. So we look to develop awareness of the virtues, values and habits of a Godly life, drawing on the streams of spirituality (worship and prayer life) that have nourished the church through the ages and facilitating a climate and context in which students can journey and grow in their own spiritual life. Training relates more to the skills that are taught and developed during the course in diverse areas such as taking funerals, voice production and chairing meetings.

The whole experience at Regent's seeks to integrate these, and other aspects together into one whole course.

There will be elements which will have a more academic feel, such as those which contribute to the different formal University courses; there will be other elements which will be more practically orientated, and still others that will develop spirituality. But it is their combination together which form the process of preparation for ministry. Tutors see themselves as fellow learners rather than imparters of information and so it is as we work and relax alongside others that the process of formation occurs.

“In response to the call of God, the course aims to contribute to the forming of persons to be competent ministers and reflective practitioners. This involves the integration of appropriate knowledge, skills and personal growth. The course is ecumenical in nature, and we seek to affirm our unity in Christ and value the different theological perspectives of all students and staff.”

Two Patterns: College-based or Congregation-based

We offer two distinct patterns for training for ministry, which have much overlap, but each has its own distinct benefits. Some are Congregation-based, others are on a more 'traditional' College-based pattern of course (though not necessarily living in Oxford).

Our College based pattern, enables individuals to spend more time learning in College, and they will study for either a first degree in theology or a Masters level course. A series of placements in local churches and in a hospital, alongside experienced ministers, enables them to ground what they are learning in practice, and for their experience of church to shape their study.

Our Congregation-based pattern is designed to enable men and women of greater maturity and experience to prepare for Christian ministry. As an integral part of the training process, these 'Ministers-in-Training' either serve churches which might otherwise lack pastoral oversight or serve as assistant ministers. Students are placed with a church within reach of Oxford, normally a maximum of about

two hours commuting distance, and visit College weekly during term-time to pursue their academic and pastoral studies. The extended opportunity to integrate such studies and pastoral experience, so that students are enabled to evaluate and reflect on what is learned in the pastorate, is a central feature of this pathway. Hence the time the student spends working with the local congregation is vital, and we understand this as a covenanting together of College, Church and student in the task of training for the Christian ministry.

A variety of factors need to be considered before deciding whether a student trains on one pattern or the other. As well as personal circumstances, the way in which an individual learns most effectively is also important. The great majority of students on both patterns study full-time, but part-time and bi-vocational variations on these patterns are also available. These two patterns, together with the great variety of individual students on the course, complement one another to enhance the whole experience.

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Two Emphases: Pastor or Evangelist



Within the Baptist Union it is possible to be ordained as a pastoral minister or as an evangelist – a more pioneering role. And it is possible to prepare for both of these at Regent's. They are not two distinct courses, but rather different emphases within one whole process of formation and training.

It is vital that all those being formed for ministry are able to engage with contemporary culture in creative missional ways, and so this thread runs throughout the course. Those called to be Pastors need to develop skills in pioneering mission and those who are responding to a call to be Evangelists will need to develop their pastoral understanding and skills. The heart of both emphases will be the integration of character, skills and understanding, together with developing the habit of theological reflection.

But we are also able to shape the overall formation for those called to be Evangelists in particular ways. We have, for example, a partnership with the Pioneer Mission Leadership Training run by CMS (Church Mission Society) in Oxford and overseen by Jonny Baker as well as regular visits from those involved in pioneering work in Baptist churches. In addition, appropriate placements will be carefully planned to enable students to develop the skills they need as Evangelists.

It is possible to follow a calling to be a Pastor or an Evangelist on both College-based and Congregation-based patterns, and also on either a full time or part-time basis.

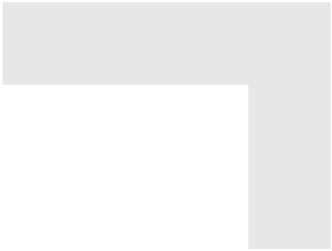


'Academic' Tracks

For those without a degree in Theology

Students who come without any formal theological education will follow an undergraduate track. This will build solid foundations in biblical studies and Christian doctrine, and allow students to reflect on contemporary society and the mission and ministry of the church, combining the best of traditional courses with a concern for application and practice. Most of these options come from the BTh suite of courses.

- Within the BTh suite all students begin with the Certificate in Theological Studies (CTS). This is a one year full-time or two year part-time course and students write on six papers (or modules) and includes introductions to Old and New Testaments, to Church History and Christian Doctrine as well as Mission and Contemporary Culture, and Introductions to Ministry, Worship and Spirituality. All the papers are assessed by a mixture of essays, projects and portfolios, although there is also the option to choose exams for the Biblical papers.
- Following on from the CTS students can opt to transfer to the Diploma in Theological Studies (DTS) or the Bachelor of Theology degree (BTh) depending on their mark in the CTS.
- The DTS is a further one year full-time or two years part-time and students take a further six papers (modules) which explore further issues around Biblical Studies, Theology, Mission and Ministry. All the papers are assessed by a mixture of essays, projects and portfolios, although there is also the option to choose exams for some papers.
- Those students who finish the CTS with a final mark of 60 or over can opt to take the BTh, which is a further 2 years full-time or up to four years part-time. Students take a further 12 papers (modules) which explore in greater depth issues around Biblical Studies, Theology, Mission and Ministry, including a dissertation or extended project. Students taking the BTh must take at least 2 papers by exams – the rest can be assessed by essays, projects and portfolios.
- Alternatively, the Post-Graduate Diploma in Theology is a one year full-time or two year part-time course designed for those with a degree in another subject other than Theology, and can act as the necessary qualification for studying the MTh. The course focusses on Old Testament, New Testament and Doctrine, which are assessed mainly by examinations sat at the end of the course.



For those with a degree in Theology

Those who already have a degree in theology pursue one of our postgraduate options, which allow for various kinds of specialisation.

- Suitably qualified students may apply for the MTh in Applied Theology, a very useful course in preparation for ministry, or for a postgraduate research degree. This degree allows a high degree of flexibility and choice in subjects and is assessed by four long essays in the Part 1 and then a 15,000 to 20,000 word dissertation in Part 2. The MTh syllabus offers a number of broad areas of study, within which essay titles are chosen in conjunction with a tutor. For the first two terms of the first year, there are classes on a

Friday morning, which means that congregation-based students will need to make two trips a week to Oxford for that period of time.

- It is also possible to study an MSt (one year course) or MPhil (two year course) in a number of theological disciplines. These, together with the MTh, can lead to doctoral study within the University.

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People

One of the key resources at Regent's is the wide range of expertise and gifts among the permanent staff and the variety of visiting tutors.

At the heart of ministerial formation and training are the Pastoral Studies Team:



Revd Dr Rob Ellis is Principal of the College. After pastorates in Milton Keynes and Bristol, Rob first came to College as Tutor in Pastoral Studies. Rob teaches in areas such as preaching, pastoral care and doctrine.

Revd Myra Blyth, one of the Tutors in Pastoral Studies and the College Chaplain, brings experience of working in significant posts for both the Baptist Union and World Council of Churches. Myra specialises in teaching on worship and ecumenical issues.



Our three Pastoral Placement tutors are:

Revd Dane Baker

Revd Ruth Bottoms

Revd Paul Campion



Revd Dr Nick Wood teaches in the area of Mission and Religion. As one of the Presidents of the Christian-Muslim Forum he brings significant insight into multi-cultural mission. Nick specialises in mission, religion and culture.

Revd Anthony Clarke is also a Tutor in Pastoral Studies as well as overseeing the College's Community Learning. Previously he had pastorates in Oxford and London. Anthony teaches leadership, pastoral care and doctrine.



Other College Tutors who are involved in ministerial formation and training include:

Revd Dr Tim Bradshaw - Tutor in Doctrine

Revd Dr Larry Kreitzer - Tutor in New Testament

Revd Professor Paul Fiddes - Director of Research

Dr Pamela Sue Anderson - Tutor in Philosophy and Ethics

Dr John Jarick - Tutor in Old Testament

Dr Cathy Ross - Tutor in Contemporary Mission

Dr Krish Kandiah - Tutor in Evangelism

The Content of Ministerial Formation

Many of the academic tracks already begin to integrate more academic theology with pastoral practice, for example tackling issues of culture, mission and ministry.

But alongside these, other elements in pastoral and mission studies are added. The course aims to be 'progressive' in nature, each year building on the previous one. You can expect, therefore, that each year will return to similar issues, but in a deeper way. Those looking to be pastoral Ministers or Pioneer evangelists will have different emphases.

The core aspects of each year are shown in the tables below:

Those pursuing undergraduate courses can expect to cover all these areas at that level. Those coming with degrees in theology will already have covered some areas of doctrine and biblical studies and will pursue other areas to a higher level.

Year 1
Introduction to the Bible: As appropriate for the different academic tracks
Introduction to Worship and Preaching: Including the practicalities of leading worship, preaching and communication and voice production
Foundations in History and Theology: As appropriate for the different academic tracks together with an introduction to Baptist History and Heritage
Introduction to Mission and Contemporary Culture Including pioneer missio, cross-cultural mission and other religions
Introduction to Ministry: Including the occasional offices, pastoral psychology, listening skills and safeguarding issues

Year 2

Further Biblical Studies:

As appropriate for different academic tracks

Issues in Christian Doctrine:

As appropriate for the different academic tracks

Issues in Mission:

Including evangelism and church planting, working with children and cross-cultural mission

Understanding the Church:

Including aspects of Baptists distinctives

Developing Spirituality

Christian Ethics

Deveoping worship and preaching

Year 3

Further Biblical Studies:

As appropriate for different academic tracks

Further Developments in Mission

Including mission in context and mission beyond the local church

Further Developments in Ministry:

Including establishing a pastoral ministry, developing pastoral care, and exercising leadership

Understanding Salvation

Developing Spirituality

Further Developments in Worship

A Year in College

The Oxford academic year is divided into three terms, and we teach for nine weeks each term. Students come to College on one day a week, a Tuesday, during the nine weeks of term (see opposite for more details) and will connect from home with a tutor and their year group for a webinar one other afternoon a week.

Each of the three terms is preceded by a four day block week when we are able to look more intensively at a particular subject. Students stay in College for these weeks giving lots of opportunity for building community and learning together.

1st and 2nd year students then have a further two days in College after the end of the summer term which will prepare for the summer placements.



Pattern of the Week

A typical Tuesday would be:

10:00am	Coffee
10:15am	Session 1
11:45am	Session 2
1:00pm	Lunch
1:45am	Prayer Groups
2:30pm	Session 3
4:00pm	Session 4
5:00pm	Tutorials
5:45pm	Worship and Assessed Services
7:00pm	Dinner

College-based students will also have further lectures and tutorials at other times and MTh students will have classes on Friday mornings in their first year.



Placements

Congregation-based Students

The term time placement is in a local Baptist Church where the student is 'Minister-in-training' whether as the sole or as an associate Minister. The location of the placement is decided in consultation between the student and tutors and potential churches. This may be in a more traditional or pioneering setting. There would normally be a process in which a student would meet with the leadership of the church and take a service and preach before the church meeting made a decision to go forward with the placement. Where the student is seeking a placement in their sending church, there should still be a clear process and formal decision by the Church. The placement is for the length of the College course (normally three years) and there is no expectation that the student will continue at the church after the end of the College course, although this may sometimes be appropriate.

The Church will provide a setting in which the Minister-in-Training can be formed and prepared for ordained ministry by being able to experience, within the constraints of time, the full range of ministerial life.

They will offer advice, support and encouragement to the student and provide feedback to the College. The Church would normally provide a half BUGB stipend, plus accommodation or a housing allowance and cover ministerial expenses. They may also be able to contribute to fees.

The expectations are that the student will transfer, with their family, membership to the placement church and become fully involved. This will mean carrying out the full-range of ministerial duties - preaching, leading worship, pastoral care, engaging in mission, chairing meetings, administration - but to work at half the rate of a full-time Minister. The student may also focus on one or two specific main areas for the development of the Church's activities, as agreed with the Church.

The College employs three Baptist Ministers who act as part-time placement tutors. One of these, together with College tutors, will visit the student and the Church and supervise the placement.

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College-based Students

The term time placement for the first two years is in a local Baptist church reasonably close to College or to the student's home, where there is already an accredited Baptist Minister. Again, this may be a more traditional or pioneering setting. This gives the student the opportunity to observe and increasingly to work alongside an experienced Minister, gaining insights about the nature of the church and a particular approach to ministry. Over time the student can expect to have some involvement in the whole range of church activities, including leading worship and preaching, pastoral care, midweek activities and charring meetings.

The normal time expectation is for a morning, afternoon or evening a week together with Sundays, during term-time. In some situations it may be possible for this to be extended into the vacations. Normally the placement will be in the same Church for the two years.

The third year placement may be based in a Hospital setting – normally in Oxford, where students are involved in teaching sessions with hospital chaplains and engage in pastoral care with patients. For pioneering evangelists the placement may be a different mission context.

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Summer Placements

One summer placement is two weeks based in another Baptist church, which is significantly different to their current experience of church life.

In the other summer vacation we organise a placement abroad in partnership with BMS World Mission or another partner. The students go as a team, together with a tutor and are able to explore mission in a different culture and context.

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Life in College

Worship

College chapel, an important focus for ministerial students, whether College or Congregation-based, is also a place where all members of this wider community are encouraged to come together to pray for the life of the College, and its present and former students; everyday in term time former students are remembered by name in prayer. The wider College community, including undergraduates, is an ecumenical one, and College worship tends to reflect this diversity while retaining its Baptist roots very firmly.

Eating, Sleeping, Relaxing

Food is important for many people and eating together in College is an important way in which we build community. This provides opportunities not only to carry on the discussion of a class, but to mix with the whole variety of other students and staff within the College. At lunch the Hall is full and abuzz with conversation. Ministerial students are encouraged, so far as time and personal circumstance allow, to be as fully part of this wider community as possible – in the sports and social life of the College, for instance.

While Congregation-based students often live in the 'manse' at their placement or make other arrangements in consultation with their church, College-based students can usually be accommodated in the College's own accommodation – either on site or nearby.

Congregation-based students are also accommodated in College rooms for block weeks.





Reading

Oxford’s libraries are world-class. The college has its own well-stocked library, and students may also use the libraries of the University Theology Faculty (just around the corner from Regent’s), and the main University library – the Bodleian. With extensive on-line resources and search facilities, libraries are part of the world class resources that are available at Oxford.

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Other Study

Lunch and dinner can always provide interesting conversations about many subjects, but two focussed areas of study are the two Centres which are run from the College. The “Centre for Christianity & Culture” seeks to make connections between faith and a wide range of other activities and interests, and lays on a public lecture series each term. The “Centre for Baptist History & Heritage” builds on the presence of the Angus Library (a major Baptist world archive) in developing research into our Baptist past, present and future!

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Life Beyond College

Regent’s is formally a member of the Southern Counties Baptist Association and BUGB, and has excellent relationships with other Associations. One way this is expressed is in the programme of Community Learning. The College is committed to serving the churches and sharing in the mission of God in every aspect of its life. To help achieve this we go out of College to churches, running short course in a whole variety of subjects, working with the local Associations on ‘Footsteps’ – a training course for church members, and overseeing the formation and training of “Lay Pastors” or Lay Preachers”. One of the options for those seeking to be Lay Pastors is to study with us through the Certificate in Theology and Pastoral Studies alongside those preparing for ordained ministry.

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find out more

It is not our custom to hold 'open days', but rather we invite people to make a personal visit to the college and discuss the questions which are of interest and concern to them, on a date convenient to their own schedule. We hope in this very personal way to help those seeking to discern God's call on their lives and what their next steps may be in that discovery. Please do get in touch!

If you would like to know more about ministerial training and formation at Regent's Park College, please contact the Principal:

Revd Dr Robert Ellis
robert.ellis@regents.ox.ac.uk
or 01865 288120

MINISTERIAL FORMATION