

Information for United Reformed Church ministerial candidates.

RCL Booklet Update for Spring 2019 – Westminster suggested Frequently Asked Questions as a starter for inclusion in EM1 booklet...

Some Frequently Asked Questions About Westminster College:

1. What if I wonder if I'm clever enough to go to Westminster?

Don't be fooled by our location. Yes, we are firmly in the heart of one of the world's great university communities. Certainly, if you have academic experience and aptitude, we have programmes that will challenge, stretch and enhance your learning. However, learning in the Cambridge Theological Federation accommodates a host of learning styles and Westminster students are able to access programmes through the usual University channels for widening access to those from non-traditional educational backgrounds. We have a teaching team of 5 full-time staff dedicated to these programmes so one-to-one and small group tutorial support for your learning is both high priority and lived experience. We have a proven track record of enabling people who left education years ago, often with few or no qualifications, to gain what they need by way of formal and experiential learning in readiness for ordination (the URC's minimum requirement is an undergraduate diploma). We also have helped countless candidates with specific learning differences (dyslexia or dyspraxia, for example) to succeed.

2. Is Westminster's programme all classroom and library and nothing in the real world?

While it is the case that our major placement, the 9 months full or part time in a pastorate of the Living Ministry Programme, normally comes in your final year, other placements are fundamental to our courses. It's entirely untrue to think that our placement learning only comes in the final year for our students, with all other years restricted to "academic study". No matter which university your course comes under you'll be expected to do a range of placements in local churches and social contexts such as hospitals and prisons. These are built in to your programme of study, you'll be assessed in them and they will count towards your award. In addition, we'll ensure you have opportunity for a Belonging to the World Church overseas placement, and the programmes validated by Durham University specifically includes modules which incorporate such overseas experience and placement. None of our students find it difficult to complete the minimum of 800 placement hours the URC requires. Most will do many more.

3. Will I be able to afford to go to Westminster...

The total cost of training for ministry at Westminster depends on the course you do and the living arrangements created for you. All URC ministerial candidates undergo a financial assessment, and provision made by the URC to fund your training includes assessment of your household income. The crucial thing to know, if you come to us to train for stipendiary service, is that the costs of both the academic programme, travel, subsistence and your accommodation are met by the URC. If you come to train for non-stipendiary service your course fees and travel expenses are covered along with accommodation at Westminster when necessary. If there ever are financial concerns during training Westminster works with staff at Church House to resolve them so that your formation for ministry is not hampered.