

LICENSED LAY MINISTRY

What is an LLM?

The ministry of LLMs (formerly called Readers) is essentially one of preaching, teaching and leading worship within a pastoral context.

The training which is offered sets out to give each LLM both practical skills for this ministry and also an appropriate theological education as a foundation for their thinking, preaching and teaching. (see below)

Someone who offers themselves for this ministry will feel called by God to use their gifts in a lay ministry. Their local church will recognise that they have, in general terms, the gifts and the calling to undertake this work. Their incumbent may well be crucial in helping someone to see that this ministry is suitable for them.

In the diocese of Winchester LLMs exercise their ministry in many different ways according to their particular gifts, their availability and their experience. Most work in parishes alongside clergy and others to serve the church in that community and to build up the ministry, worship and witness of the whole people of God. Some LLMs work in particular sectors such as hospital or prison chaplaincy. Others find that their ministry is primarily focussed in their place of work.

What can a Licensed Lay Minister do?

A LLM can do many things but the most common are those associated with their calling to be preachers, teachers and leaders of worship.

- Preach at church service
- Lead worship
- Assist at Holy Communion
- Conduct funerals
- Teach in groups, Sunday school, Bible study and confirmation classes
- Undertake Baptism preparation
- Visit people at home and in hospital – and administer communion to them
- Use gifts of organisation and administration in the church and community
- Explore the meaning of the Gospel for everyday life, at home, at work and in the community
- Work collaboratively and imaginatively with clergy and other colleagues in ministry to build the church
- Identify and encourage the ministry of others

The Selection process

Candidates for LLM ministry are identified initially by the clergy and people of their parish and are invited to contact Revd Julia Mourant, Diocesan Vocations Adviser. Julia runs a series of Vocation Exploration days throughout the year which provide a space for people to explore their vocation and calling, in whichever role they feel God is calling them to. Each LLM candidate completes an application form giving their personal details, an outline of their spiritual journey and an indication of why they feel called to this ministry. Each candidate then comes to a diocesan selection panel for interview. The interviewers are drawn from clergy and LLMs. The Vocations Adviser chairs the panel. She writes to each candidate and their incumbent telling them of the panel's conclusions and whether the candidate has been accepted for training. Most LLMs minister in the parish which has put them forward, but potential LLMs should also be willing, once licensed, to contribute on occasion to the wider ministry of the deanery.

Training

The training programme usually lasts three years. Candidates who have previously done comparable study may be exempted from some parts of the 'academic' work. The training cannot be completed in less than two years.

The diocesan programme provides modular training materials and tutors to lead the sessions. However a very important element of the training is what the students learn from each other. Students come from a variety of churches and with a variety of experience in the world and in the church. Learning and sharing with each other is an important foundation for a ministry which requires pastoral sensitivity and a care in responding to the ideas and insights of others.

Much of the practical training takes place in the student's home parish. This requires a commitment of time and energy from the student, their incumbent and the wider congregation whose encouragement and feedback is vital.

There are agreed national criteria about the aims of initial LLM training. Initial LLM training should enable candidates to:

- Grow in their Christian life and faith
- Develop their understanding of the Bible and Christian tradition
- Develop their understanding of contemporary issues in society and of current religious experience
- Develop skills to exercise a preaching, teaching, liturgical and pastoral ministry in Church and society
- Develop skills of team building and of working in collaboration with other ministers, both lay and ordained
- Take responsibility for setting their own learning goals and for their own continuing learning
- Facilitate the learning and growth in faith of those to whom and with whom they minister as part of a shared collaborative ministry.

Licensing and beyond

Towards the end of training candidates receive a further nomination from their local church and their incumbent. With this endorsement and having successfully completed the training programme, candidates are admitted and licensed by the Bishop. Admission is to a world-wide ministry. Licensing is specific with regard to the parish and deanery, though by invitation any LLM may undertake work in other places on an occasional basis.

Initials
Date