

CALLED TO BE A NATIONALLY RECOGNISED PASTOR

What is a Nationally Recognised Pastor?

Baptists have a tradition in which pastoral ministry has been exercised not only by those whose primary calling in life is pastoral ministry, but also by those who live out their Christian vocation in a secular context and exercise pastoral leadership in a part-time capacity. These have often been designated as 'Lay Pastors'.

This document aims to introduce you to pastoral ministry; how you prepare for that ministry and how you may receive recognition of your call and gifting from other Baptist Christians. In the church meeting, members recognise and affirm each other's gifts. It is within the local church that your gift for pastoral ministry is first discerned.

Denominational Recognition

Your Association has been asked to share in the national recognition of Pastors and it is to the Association that your church will commend you. You will find it helpful to ask your Regional Minister for details of the national recognition process and training for Pastors.

The Baptist Union currently maintains a list, published each year in the Baptist Union Directory, of those who are nationally recognised as called and gifted by God for pastoral ministry among the churches of the Union.

Applicants for national denominational recognition will have been baptised as believers and will need to be in membership of a Baptist Church for two years.

Steps towards denominational recognition

- An inner, personal openness to God's calling for this ministry.
- The testing and confirmation of your call and gift by the local Baptist church of which you are a member.
- An initial testing of your call and potential for pastoral ministry by the Association Ministerial Recognition Committee. This first interview, early on in the process, is important. It may prevent years of misdirected time and energy in study, as well as disappointment at the end of the process. It is at this point that a candidate will be directed to a Baptist College to fulfil the study required by the National Ministerial Recognition Committee, which includes the study of Baptist History and Principles.
- At the end of the College course and after two years of pastoral ministry experience, the final testing of skills and character will be arranged with the local Ministerial Recognition Committee by your Regional Minister. This second interview will be arranged to test skills, calling and character.

Approaches to the following colleges are recommended:

Bristol Baptist College
Regent's Park College
Northern Baptist Learning Community
South Wales Baptist College
Spurgeon's College

(Turn to the final page for contact details)

Training

Responsibility rests on those who serve as nationally recognised Pastors among God's people to be as well equipped as possible for their ministry. You may be impatient to get on with the work, but taking time now to lay a good foundation will repay you later when busyness tends to squeeze out space for study and when good habits of reading, reflection and devotion are harder to establish. Keep reading to find out more information about the Baptist Training Partnership.

Personal Growth

It is vital that you develop and nourish your relationship with God. This involves disciplines which enable you to grow and mature as a Christian. These disciplines will include a sustained commitment to the study of the Scriptures and a life of prayer.

In Service Development

There is need for ongoing study, for continuing reflection both upon the word of God and the world. Your Association will be able to advise you of helpful courses and conferences to assist in your development as a Pastor.

In summary

The testing and confirmation of your call and gifts will follow the following stages:

- A recognition of your call by your local Baptist Church where you have been in membership for two years. You will have been involved in pastoral ministry for a two year period before the church can commend you to the Association Ministerial Recognition Committee.
- This first interview will help discern your sense of a call to pastoral ministry and will recommend a course at one of our Baptist Colleges. The Committee will inform the College that you are in the process of recognition. If you are already enrolled on a course, then the Committee will need to ensure that the College understands that you are applying for national recognition and therefore will ensure that you undertake the necessary assignments. The Association are looking at potential at this point.
- After two years of pastoral ministry and training in which to gain experience, you will once again meet with the Association Ministerial Recognition Committee for a second interview. The Committee will use references to help them test the candidate's pastoral ability and will look also at calling, character and spiritual and intellectual development.
- Once commended by the Association, your paperwork will then be sent on to the Baptist Union of Great Britain Ministries Team for your name to be taken to the National Ministerial Recognition Committee.

Further help

Further help and advice will be available from your minister, your Regional Minister or from the Ministries Team, contactable at Baptist House by e-mail or letter. The website will give you the telephone numbers as well as more detail about the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

BAPTIST TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

TRAINING FOR NATIONALLY RECOGNISED PASTORS AND PREACHERS

Over the years, Baptist churches around our country have depended upon the faithful ministry and service of nationally recognised Pastors and Preachers. Whether it has been through an itinerant ministry Sunday by Sunday, or through the regular oversight of a congregation, these women and men have been an integral part of the ongoing life and witness of Baptists, and we owe a debt of gratitude for the work that they have done and continue to do week by week.

It is therefore important that we seek ways of supporting the vital ministry of nationally recognised Pastors and Preachers, and of nurturing those who will fulfil this calling in the future, and this is the aim behind the training course that is delivered by our Baptist Colleges, in cooperation with our Associations and the Ministries Team. It is a course that we hope will be of assistance to many in our churches who serve in a variety of ways or who simply want to find out more about their faith. But it is especially designed to equip those called to serve as nationally recognised Pastors and Preachers.

What is special about this training course?

This is training designed by Baptists for Baptists! It is designed, firstly, to be ***manageable***. Those who serve as Pastors and Preachers often do so alongside many other commitments, and so it is important that training expectations are realistic as well as providing the help and guidance needed. Secondly, it is designed to be ***flexible***. Our Pastors and Preachers often bring with them a broad range of skills and experience and have very varying needs, so the aim is to deliver training that as far as possible reflects individual circumstances and requirements. Thirdly, it is designed to be ***practical***. The purpose of this training course is to equip women and men for the urgent task of ministry and mission in today's society, and so the content of the various modules is rooted in practice.

What will I study?

Preachers will need to complete eight modules and pastors twelve modules. Some of these will be fixed, while for others there will be options, which may vary from college to college. All the modules put an emphasis on biblical study and seek to ground that study in the practice of ministry and mission.

Preachers must complete:

- o Two Bible modules
- o Leading Worship
- o Preaching
- o Baptist Belief and Practice

The other three modules must be one from each of the following categories:

- o Theology and History
- o Mission and Culture
- o Personal Development and Formation

Pastors must complete:

- o Two Bible modules
- o Leading Worship
- o Preaching

- o Baptist Belief and Practice
- o Pastoral Care
- o Leadership Skills
- o Doing Theology

The other four modules must include at least one from each of the following categories:

- o Theology and History
- o Mission and Culture
- o Personal Development and Formation

The colleges will provide details of what modules they can offer together with further details of the content of each module and the expected outcomes. Nationally recognised Preachers and Pastors will also have to undergo child protection training and this will be provided by the colleges or associations.

How will I study?

Each of our Colleges is delivering training in the way that best suits both the College and the participants. So it may take place on Saturdays, for example, or on weekday evenings, and some Colleges also offer distance learning. Whichever College you approach, you can expect twelve hours of teaching for each module.

It will be possible to begin study at any time, taking advantage of whatever module is currently being taught by the College. Participants can then proceed to study further modules as and when they are offered, at a time and pace to suit their particular needs, until the course has been completed.

Where will I study?

Participants will often attend the College to study, though in some places modules are delivered more locally.

All our Colleges are following a generally agreed curriculum and working to similar standards, so if participants find a module is not being delivered by their College in the immediate future, the first step will be to see if another of our Colleges can offer the teaching required. If this is not practical, then the College will look for another deliverer.

The advantage of this kind of portfolio system is that participants can slowly build up their training, taking whatever time they need and using different deliverers as necessary, with a College to guide them through this process.

How much work will I have to do?

Each module will be assessed and participants will normally be asked to complete two assignments. One of these will be a straightforward piece of written work, while the other may be more creative, such as a journal. Modules taught by distance learning may be assessed in different ways. The training provided is expected to correspond to 'A' level standard and the assignments will be assessed accordingly.

What will I have achieved by the end of the course?

The aim is to provide training that meets the real needs of those who seek to serve our Baptist churches as Pastors and Preachers. Thus there is no intention to work towards any formal qualification with the limitations this would inevitably impose on both Colleges and participants (of course, all our Colleges offer this opportunity for those who wish it).

However, those who complete the course will be able to seek national recognition from BUGB as Pastors and Preachers, and this will enable them to serve as such in any of our churches. And most important of all, the training should equip all those who complete it with the necessary skills and understanding to fulfil their calling.

What will it cost?

All training involves cost. It requires a considerable investment of time and expertise from those who serve as trainers, and this needs to be recognised and acknowledged. Each College will be able to provide details of the fees charged for the training course, and every effort is made to ensure costs are reasonable.

It may be that the church or churches that benefit from the participant's training might be asked to contribute towards the fees.

What if I have already done some theological training?

This modular form of training means that recognition may be given to any training that has already been completed. A participant would give evidence to the College of recent work already completed satisfactorily, and together they would then identify any further work that needed doing in order to complete the training course and receive national recognition.

What happens if I do not live near a Baptist College?

As this training is designed for Baptists the places that can best deliver it are our Baptist Colleges, and all participants will be expected to register with one of the Colleges. It is clear, however, that parts of the country are some distance from the nearest Baptist College making it difficult for some to access training. In some circumstances, the registering College may be able to seek other more local ways in which training can be delivered (perhaps through a comparable course offered by another institution). The registering College will continue to have oversight, but the intention is to provide the training in a way that is as responsive as possible to the needs of the participant.

What happens if my circumstances change?

Again, the advantage of this training course is that participants can complete modules as and when they are able, and so build up a portfolio of completed work over time. If a participant completes one or more modules but then finds they need to take a break due to work or family commitments, then they can do so and resume training when they are next able to. If a participant moves from one part of the country to another, they can easily transfer to another of our Colleges to continue training as all are offering the same core curriculum. If a participant finds they have additional time and wish to complete the course as soon as possible, the College will look for ways of making this possible.

How do I begin?

Anyone wanting to access this training should begin by approaching the nearest College to find out details of the way they are presently delivering the course and how to register.

At the same time those who want to seek national recognition as Pastors and Preachers should have an early conversation with their local Baptist association. Those seeking such recognition will need the support and commendation of their local church as well as association, and a formal interview should take place at the beginning and the end of training.

Our colleges can be contacted as follows:

Course: Prepare for Service

Contact: The Revd Dr Helen Paynter, Bristol Baptist College, The Promenade, Clifton Down, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3NJ

Tel: 0117 946 9206

Email: paynterh@bristol-baptist.ac.uk

Course: Footsteps

Contact: The Revd Anthony Clarke, Regent's Park Baptist College, Pusey Street, Oxford OX1 2LB

Tel: 01865 288120

Email: anthony.clarke@regents.ox.ac.uk

Course: Listen, Learn and Serve

Contact: The Revd Dr Ed Kaneen, South Wales Baptist College, 54 Richmond Road, Cardiff, CF24 3UR

Tel: 029 2025 6066

Email: principal@swbc.org.uk

Course: Equipped to Minister

Contact: Linda Campbell, Spurgeon's College, 189 South Norwood Hill, London SE25 6DJ

Tel: 020 8653 0850

Email: enquiries@spurgeons.ac.uk

Our Colleges and Associations will be glad to answer any further questions you may have about this training course.

January 2020