

The Work of a Church Administrator

A ten-unit distance learning module leading to an award from St John's School of Mission and counting as one full module towards their Certificate in Christian Studies.

A nationally recognised course of study prepared for Christians employed by a local church as a Church Administrator in some form.

This module has been prepared by UCAN and St John's to offer a rigorous but highly practical foundation in the subject of office-based local church administration in the UK.

Students who complete the module will have a qualification that shows their church, and any future churches they move to, that they understand and can apply principles of organisational management within a theological understanding of a local church context.

This module may be taken on its own or as part of the Certificate in Christian Studies. For full details contact admissions@stjohns-nottm.ac.uk

Who should undertake this module?

It has been prepared for local church Administrators, most of whom will work in a church office, or those who wish to take up a post of this kind. Many will be employed by their church part-time though some will be in full time employment. It assumes a reasonable level of organisational skill and Bible knowledge. It has not been designed for posts at a more senior level such as Operations Managers although all the material would still be relevant for them.

Do I need to be a member of UCAN?

You do not need to be a member of the UK Church Administrator Network to undertake this module but if you are employed as a local church Administrator it will be to your advantage to join if you are not already in membership.

What does the module involve?

This is a ten unit module which can be taken in your own time at your own pace. Each unit takes one topic of relevance to working for a church as an Administrator and provides

- 1 a study section with vital input relating to your work or the church office plus some exercises to complete;
- 2 recommendations for background reading in both secular and church-based spheres – in particular you will be expected to follow one standard NVQ textbook;
- 3 a range of personal applications: Bible study, meditations, practical exercises, visits, working with a mentor.

Do I have to submit essays for marking?

There are, in addition to the ten units, three written assignments to be submitted to demonstrate that you are understanding the study material and able to apply it to your work. One consists of a self-reflection on your role as an enabler of others in their ministry, there is a main essay to compare and contrast commercial office management with church administrative practices, and the third consists of a write-up of a practical assignment based on visits to two churches other than your own.

What sort of topics are covered?

The ten units cover the possible roles of a Church Administrator, building people-skills, running a church office, being well organised, working with others, communicating well, designing systems, handling files and personal development. One unit focuses on relevant biblical material.

How much time do I need to set aside?

Each unit is expected to take you at least 12 hours in study, background reading and personal application, but it is up to you how much more you give to particular topics. So think in terms, perhaps, of completing the module plus written assignments in one year giving 5 hours a week to it with holiday breaks. St John's expect you to complete within 18 months or pay a continuation fee. For those employed by their church, we hope that you will be allowed to undertake some of the material within work time (though not in the church office with all its interruptions!).

What time of year do I need to start work?

You can start at any time to suit you.

What level is it pitched at?

You will need to purchase a copy of OCR Business & Administration NVQ Level 3 by John Sutherland & Diane Sutherland at a cost of around £26 depending on which retailer is used. This basic textbook is at NVQ Level 3 and the study material has been pitched at about this same level.

Is it just for Anglicans?

Not at all – the material does not assume a single denominational base and so does not go into detail on issues that might affect one denomination rather than others, such as graveyard administration, faculty applications, etc. One of the units gives scope for exploration within areas of special relevance to your own church or denomination.

Will I be able to cope?

The material does not assume any tertiary education qualifications but to complete the module you will need determination and discipline to set aside the time for study, reading and note-taking. But if you already work as a Church Administrator you should find real excitement in learning more about the kind of issues that you deal with day to day.

Will I be on my own?

Your tutor will be available throughout the module. You might also decide to take the module at the same time as another local Administrator so you can share your experiences.

Why have St John's and UCAN prepared this material?

We have three clear aims.

1. To enable you come to a clear understanding of the role, opportunities and challenges of this understated subject.
2. To help you improve your business capability and performance in a number of skill areas relevant to your work.
3. To encourage you to develop a creative mind in devising systems and solving problems within your work.

But we also have a wider vision of setting a standard of achievement for UK Church Administrators that will be widely recognised, and seeing such work become accepted as a discipline worthy of analysis and study.

Why should I bother?

Because as a result of completing these ten units you can expect to

- 1 Be energised and encouraged in your work.
- 2 Be better equipped to fulfil your responsibilities in a professional way.
- 3 Understand your work as Christian service not just daily employment.
- 4 Be enabled to work collaboratively with church leaders to free them for their ministry.

What's the cost?

The module costs £295. This includes registration with St John's, course materials, the marking of the three projects you submit and the involvement of a tutor throughout. We very much hope that your church will pay for you to take the module as they will receive the benefit of all that it gives.

Can I talk it over with you and ask questions?

Of course. If you want to discuss the content before coming to a decision, contact the author of the material, John Truscott, on john@john-truscott.co.uk. If you have questions about how the module works or about the Certificate in Christian Studies, contact admissions@stjohns-nottm.ac.uk.

So how do I apply?

Visit the St John's website at www.stjohns-nottm.ac.uk and then choose 'Distance Learning'. Choose 'The Work of a Church Administrator' from the left side. Download and complete the application form and return with a fee of £295. If you intend studying this module as part of the full Certificate in Christian Studies programme you will be able to do so at a later date.

What do people who have seen the material say?

I think it's great and I am glad that this subject is being taken seriously – you are treating the participants as adults and giving them the core skills to be really good administrators – rather than somebody just doing a job.

The Revd Jennifer Cole MBA School of Formation - Diocese of Bath & Wells

The course is clearly based on learning what the Bible says to us as servants, leaders and administrators as well as focusing on proven administrative tools and good practice. Scope to reflect on one's own situation is embedded throughout the materials, enabling participants to compare their situation with other business and churches, supported in this by the extensive materials in the resource bank. We all have a responsibility to develop our God given skills and serve him with them. I'm excited by the potential of this course to support Church Administrators in developing their professional skills and providing even better service within their church's team.

John Williams, Team Leader- Administration at Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church

As a Methodist Circuit Administrator I had some concerns that the course might not quite fit my needs but to my delight I discovered that it was adaptable to my denomination and a slightly different office environment and therefore entirely relevant to my role.

The coursework was challenging and practical. Everything I studied proved a helpful reflection on how I manage things both in the office and theologically. The three marked assignments in particular required a good deal of personal reflection and I found that I spent at least twice as long as the recommended amount of time on each of them.

The course has encouraged further learning, improved my work environment and communication channels, helped me make some valuable ecumenical contacts and completing it has given me a great sense of accomplishment.

Leisa Young, Circuit Administrator, Preston Ribble Methodist Circuit

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UK CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR NETWORK



It was difficult to fit the extra course work into my everyday life - but it was well worth it! I would highly recommend this course to any church administrator. It will transform your life as well as the church you work for!

GINNY NICHOLLS

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