St Mary's University
Twickenham
London

Doctor of Ministry

PROGRAMME HANDBOOK 2022-23

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1. Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to the Doctor of Ministry programme at St Mary's University!

We live in rapidly changing times. Accordingly the Institute of Theology and Liberal Arts at St Mary's has decided to initiate a new Doctorate in Ministry in order to help ministers to grow with the challenges of modern ministry whilst also contributing to the growing academic resources available for the Church. In this respect the course has two main elements: first, the opportunity for theological, philosophical and ethical reflection on the nature of Christian ministry and, secondly, the provision of a skill-set for practitioners to contribute to academic knowledge of ministry by developing their own original doctoral level research thesis.

The Doctor of Ministry (D Min) programme combines theory and pastoral practice, integrating theology and professional research practice to advance excellence in religious ministry and the general practice of ministry in its many forms. Following first year programmes in Pastoral Theology, Scripture, Ethics and Ministry students will be initiated into the research skills required to undertake a professional doctorate programme. In keeping with St Mary's mission and ethos, the programme gives special, though not exclusive, attention to the Christian and Catholic religious tradition. A major concern of the programme, in keeping with this mission, is to explore the social role that religious ministry can play in dealing with cultural and theological issues. Whilst remaining in their existing ministry base during studies, students engage in critical reflection on their practice of ministry in a collaborative way with other students in the program.

The DMin program is designed to prepare reflective and competent professionals for positions of leadership in religious ministry. The programme strives to discover and nurture sound scholarship, meaningful research and the interdependence of theory and practice. The DMin is conferred on the basis of scholarship, research skills and practical application demonstrated by the student's coursework and doctoral project.

Thus the programme may appeal to a range of ministerial needs as:

- A refresher-course, sabbatical or part of continuing ministerial development
- An opportunity to engage with the latest theological perspectives on ministry
- Personal growth and development

- An opportunity to take stock of current ministry
- An ability to acquire deeper ministerial skills
- A chance to meet other ministers facing similar challenges
- An opportunity to make a significant contribution to academic reflection on ministry

2. The Programme

2.1 Programme aims

The aims of the DMin programme are to:

- attract students of a variety of ages and academic backgrounds to develop and expand their range of theological skills and knowledge.

- provide students with a range of learning experiences that are supported by a variety of teaching approaches and delivered in a supportive learning environment.

- offer to students the opportunity to explore and reflect critically upon theological studies with a particular regard to the richness of Christian ministry.

- develop an informed awareness of the dynamic nature of the Christian ministerial tradition and a developed facility in the theological task of subjecting this tradition to a process of testing and renewal.

- draw on a variety of academic disciplines and discourses to enable students to reflect critically on Christian ministry.

- foster in students an ability to relate areas of ministry to broader areas of human understanding and life.

- use the research interests of staff to inform and enhance the students' learning experience.

- promote the development of key transferable skills that will assist students in their career options.

- equip students to undertake original research at doctoral level

2.2 Programme Learning Outcomes

By the end of Phase 1 of their studies students should be able to:

1. Analyse and critically evaluate demanding texts and ideas in the field of ministry, both orally and in writing, and relate this to specific ministerial contexts;

2. Evaluate, from an informed knowledge base, practitioner approaches to theological research;

3. Construct and communicate effectively sophisticated arguments relating to ministerial research and practice, with appropriate theoretical and evidential underpinning drawn as necessary from the areas of theology, educational theory and practice, sociology and psychology;

4. Demonstrate the ability to conduct research which connects knowledge, ideas and concerns arising in academic and ministerial domains;

5. Critically assess and apply a variety of philosophical and theological methodologies; and,

6. Conceptualise and design a significant and original programme of research in an area related to the student's ministerial practice.

By the end of Phase 2 students should be able to:

1. Successfully complete a piece of rigorous and original research in an area related to their ministerial practice and which demonstrates transformation of their practice;

2. Appropriately analyse and discuss their research, demonstrating originality and creativity in its interpretation;

3. Reach appropriate conclusions and findings, demonstrating a detailed knowledge and systematic understanding of the research process and any limitations of their own research project; and,

4. Effectively communicate the ethical considerations within their own research.
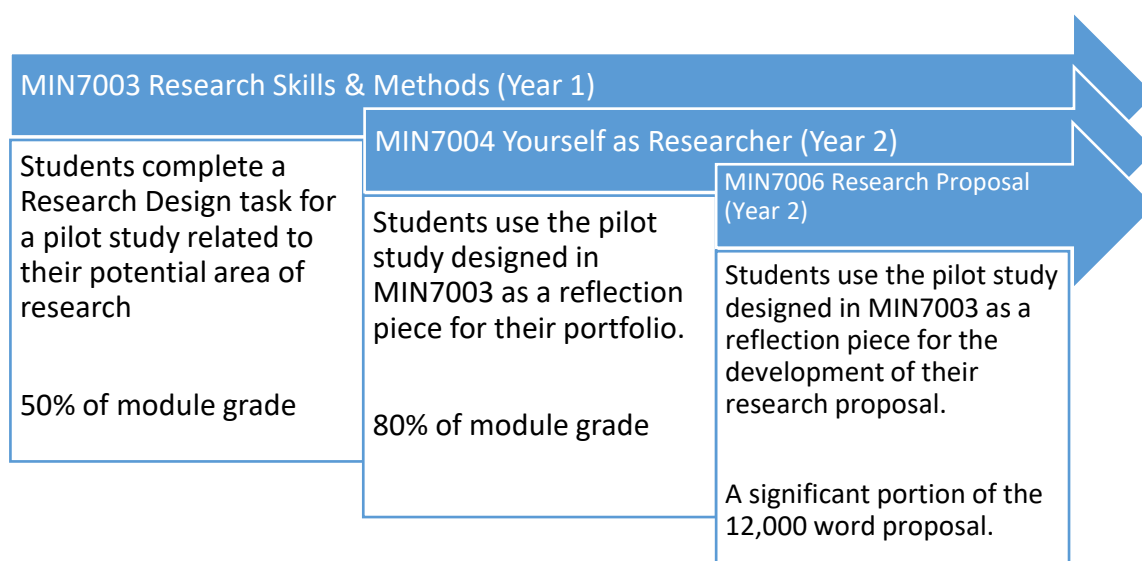
2.3 Programme Details

The DMin programme comprises 540 credits in two distinct parts. In the first part of the programme students study 7 modules totalling 180 credits. These modules are taught and assessed at level 7 and are normally undertaken over a period of two years. This is designed to enable students to develop their skills in research, writing and academic scholarship at Masters Level/Level 7 progressing to the Part 2 Level 8 Thesis. The Higher Education Credit Framework (2008) notes that learning at Level 8 will reflect the ability to: "make a significant and original contribution to a specialised field of inquiry, demonstrating a command of methodological issues and engaging in critical dialogue with peers and accepting full accountability for outcomes."

Progression to the Part Two Level 8 programme is contingent upon satisfactory completion of Part One. A key bridging component between these two parts is the Research Proposal. Emerging significantly in the second year of taught study, it culminates in a substantial proposal which will identify the significant and original contribution it is proposed to make and delineate methodologically how this will be achieved.

Part One: FHEQ Level 7 Modules

Code	Title	No. of credits	Year of delivery	Module status (core, option)
MIN7001	Pastoral Theology and Scripture in Ministry	20	Year 1	Core
MIN7002	Ethical and Social Issues of Ministry	20	Year 1	Optional
MIN7003	Research Skills and Methods	20	Year 1	Core
MIN7004	Yourself as Researcher: Practitioner Research in Context	20	Year 2	Core
MIN7005	Engaging with Research: Research, practice and the political	20	Year 2	Optional
MIN7007	Engaging in Theological Reflection	20	Year 2	Optional
MIN7006	Research Proposal	60	Year 2	Core

The Research proposal MIN7006 is undertaken in Semester 2 of Year 2 of study and is taken concurrently with the other Year 2 modules.

MIN7003 Research Skills & Methods (Year 1)		
Students complete a Research Design task for a pilot study related to their potential area of research 50% of module grade	**MIN7004 Yourself as Researcher (Year 2)** Students use the pilot study designed in MIN7003 as a reflection piece for their portfolio. 80% of module grade	**MIN7006 Research Proposal (Year 2)** Students use the pilot study designed in MIN7003 as a reflection piece for the development of their research proposal. A significant portion of the 12,000 word proposal.

Part Two: The Dissertation (Level 8)

In Part Two of the course, based on the Research Proposal completed in Part One, students will undertake a rigorous, original and significant piece of doctoral level research of 50-60,000 words which is related to their ministerial field. This will be awarded 360 credits on successful completion. The scope and aims of this will be developed in collaboration with the Programme Team. The Dissertation stage lasts a minimum of twenty-four months. The thesis will demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge on the subject of ministry utilising theological and philosophical insights as appropriate. In congruence with the rest of the course this may incorporate qualitative or quantitative field research as agreed with the research supervisors and Programme Director. Individual students will be matched with a personal and academic mentor in year 1 based on their preliminary indication of research interest, who will normally supervise the Research Proposal and form part of the supervisory team at Dissertation stage.

3. Personal Tutors

Personal Tutoring has an important role in enabling students to fully engage with their University experience and realise their full potential, both educationally and personally throughout their time at

the University. Having a Personal Tutor will provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their learning and academic progress whilst also developing a pastoral, mentor-like relationship with a key member of academic staff. Personal Tutors will be able to advise students on a variety of services and issues; including academia, student services, extracurricular activity and professional development.

Full details on the Personal Tutoring process at St Mary's University is documented in the Personal Tutoring policy document. The Policy is built on the concept of partnership between staff and students and the various roles that are necessary in ensuring that this is the case. In terms of the responsibility of personal tutors and students, they are as follows:

Personal Tutors:

- Organise the compulsory tutorials outlined in the Policy
- Manage the contact points prescribed in the Policy, in collaboration with the Programme Team to ensure consistency of student experience across the entire programme
- Monitor their Tutees' academic progression, pastoral care and professional development in partnership with each Tutee, utilising technology systems as they are developed and introduced to support and enhance the Personal Tutoring system
- Where requested, support the Tutees' knowledge and understanding of both formative assessment and summative feedback, or refer the Tutee in a timely fashion to a member of staff best placed to do so
- Signpost Tutees to relevant support and advisory services
- Attend training and professional development sessions for Personal Tutors including Personal Tutor Forums
- If a student does not respond to more than two contact points, notify the Programme Director so that the referral process can begin

Students:

- Attend the compulsory tutorials at the beginning of Semester 1 and Semester 2
- Provide a response to Personal Tutor emails and other interactions inviting them to tutorials even if the student does not require or want a tutorial, and maintain regular dialogue with the Personal Tutor
- Fully utilise the opportunity to discuss their progress with, and seek advice and guidance from their Personal Tutor to enhance their student experience

- Engage with opportunities for further development arranged or recommended by the Personal Tutor
- Understand the referral process for both staff and students

Once dissertation topics have been decided, you will also be allocated a supervisor who may or may not be the same as your personal tutor.

If you have any questions or concerns at any point in the programme relating to the programme as a whole, then please contact the Programme Director and make an appointment. If you have a question relating to a specific module, then either ask the module convenor before or after classes, or arrange a time to meet or make contact by email.

4. Academic Work – Presenting and Submitting Work

4.1 Submitting coursework

Upon completion, E-copies of essays and papers should be uploaded directly to the Moodle virtual learning environment (VLE) through the TurnItIn portal on or before the deadline. Only if the system fails, should copies be sent directly to the Programme Director or to the relevant module convenor.

All work should be *anonymous*, with the *student registration number* (printed on your student card) and the module code clearly identified. It should contain a bibliography and should be properly referenced. It is strongly recommended that students use the version of the Harvard system outlined later in this booklet.

4.2 Deadlines and Extensions

Any student having difficulty submitting by the due date should inform the module convenor and discuss the problem. The perennial difficulties of balancing work, home life and study may make it attractive to delay submission in a variety of circumstances, but this should not be used as part of the ordinary pattern of submission or students will fall behind and will seriously harm the chances of completing the course, especially for full time students. There will also be less chance of timely feedback. Failing to work to time will generally lead to poorer marks. Dates given in module handbooks then should be treated as working deadlines and are given to help you succeed.

4.3 Criteria for assessment

Different modules have different modes of assessment. For example: The first module involves writing an essay of 5,000 words plus a short paper of 1,000 words. These comprise 80% and 20% of the marks for that module. The short paper will be handed in half way through the module so that you will obtain feedback before you submit the full essay after the module teaching is complete. Different forms of formative assessment are also used across the modules to support and develop student learning.

The dissertation is assessed on the basis of the dissertation alone. Students should pay close attention to the mode and date of the assessment for each module as listed in the module handbook.

The University has agreed criteria for assessment for coursework and dissertations at Masters/Doctoral level; these are given below.

Preliminary Marking: Provisional feedback for a module should be given to students not later than one month after the submission deadline.

Final Marking: It is important to recognize that formal final marks are issued only when a whole group has been marked, a sample second marked and an examination board (usually held in November) has in turn confirmed the allocated gradings. That board will not change marks individually (i.e. will not change one persons' mark while leaving the rest of the group unchanged) but can adjust the marks of a whole group up or down. Students should be aware that, while this is not common, it can and does sometimes happen. ***Any marks they receive before this point should therefore be understood as <u>provisional</u>.***

Summative and formative feedback: After marking of the essays, the module convenor will return a marked copy with tutor's remarks to the student – usually directly on the learning platform. Students will also be a sent an individual mark sheet with further general comments from each marker. Students may request a meeting with their module convenor to discuss their work if necessary. The Programme Director is available to see students who have extra concerns over and above those dealt with by the module convenors. After the exam board, students will be informed of their confirmed marks as soon as possible.

4.4 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the theft of someone else's ideas or the use of someone's work, either in quotation or in paraphrase, without acknowledgement. Advice on plagiarism and how to avoid it is given in the section of this booklet on postgraduate study skills. If a marker suspects that a piece of work is plagiarised, the student will be contacted by the convenor of the plagiarism board and given an opportunity to defending him or herself. These procedures are University wide and not only programme based. There are a range of penalties that a board can impose and these will depend on the character and circumstances of the misconduct. You should be particularly careful when using electronic resources that you avoid any suspicion of plagiarism. To do this you should always acknowledge the source of material and use other people's work critically and in relation to your own arguments and ideas. Section 9 of this handbook gives more details on this important topic to bear in mind in all your work.

5. Getting the Most Out Of Lectures and Seminars

Some postgraduate students come straight from an undergraduate course, while others are returning after a long time away from higher educational study. Some may be accepted to a postgraduate level course in recognition of their prior learning or experience though they do not hold a first degree. The nature of the help that students need will thus vary appreciably. This and the following handbook sections have been drawn up to help students develop or sharpen up the skills needed for successful study at a postgraduate level. We have sometimes stated the obvious but better this than risk neglecting the basics which are sometimes forgotten, especially in referencing your work.

5.1 Studying at Postgraduate level

Higher Education can be fun, challenging, sometimes uplifting and rewarding, and other times depressing. There are opportunities to learn a huge amount and to develop ideas which will change the way you think about the world and your place in it. Postgraduate study requires more independence of thought and more initiative than undergraduate study. For this reason, it can be extremely stimulating or frustrating. In order to make the transition from undergraduate to postgraduate, you must be prepared to question and to think critically. The claims of others (even lecturers!) should not be accepted without first seeking evidence or good reasons. The aim is not simply to ingest information but to develop skills for approaching novel problems, for weighing evidence and for testing ideas.

The first session is important for each new module. It reveals the scope and focus of the course. In this session it should become apparent what the lecturer is trying to achieve in the classes. What is the nature of the journey on which the group is being asked to embark? Who are the main thinkers that will be encountered on the way? Which are the key concepts which form the foundations to the module? There will be a great deal of detail, much of which will have to be engaged with for the assessment. However, underlying each detailed class will be a vision and direction inspiring the module overall. Try to grasp the whole picture: link the chief ideas into a meaningful whole. Keep asking questions such as:

- What are the main aims of the module?
- What does the lecturer highlight as key concepts?
- What are the main areas of focus in the module?
- What basic knowledge should I absorb?
- What are the chief questions which keep recurring and require analysis?

If a student is unsure as to the answer to any of these questions, he or she should ask the tutor.

Students who get the most from the course are self-motivated, make some effort not to miss lectures or seminars, read around the subject and hand in work on time. When a text is allocated, make sure you read it! Failure to read material in advance will mean that you get much less from a seminar. It is the **student's personal study which will comprise the main element of each module**. This is the aspect which will take up most time and will probably be the most valuable activity. This is what will enable the student to understand the direction the lecturer is trying to take the class. It is not expected that a student will know everything about the module content. It is necessary to be selective to some extent, whilst ensuring that you do not neglect the basics. It will take time to learn all the key concepts. Indeed, it may only be during revision at the end that things fall into place properly. Do not be surprised if a lot of the key texts require re-reading in order to grasp their content. Be prepared for some of the reading material to be difficult at first. Start thinking about and reading for the assessments well in advance, while the classes are still going on. This will give time for your thought to mature and give more opportunity to talk about it with the tutor in class or online

You may find it useful to monitor and record the time put into each module, including personal research, reading, note-making, discussions with others, quiet reflections, writing up of essays, etc. This can help you focus on time management, on prioritising work, on checking whether you are spending a disproportionate amount of time on any one module.

Absences may result in you falling behind with work. It is essential that you inform your tutor of any foreseen absence and that you **report if you are getting behind with work.** The tutor will advise

you. If the module is seven weeks long, then even one or two absences will be significant and work will be needed to fill in the gaps. To be absent for more than a quarter of the sessions cannot be considered sufficient attendance to fulfil the learning objectives of the module and the student will be advised to repeat the module at a later occasion.

Do not try to cope with an impossible workload. Tutors are there to help. They want you to pass your assessments. They do not want to fail anyone. Use the safety nets provided by the University including help with basic essay writing if required. It can be a difficult life as a mature student, especially juggling part time study with other commitments. Staff can only help if they know there is a problem.

5.2 Developing study skills

There is more to undertaking a module than simply the acquisition of information. A variety of skills is required to consistently produce high quality work in postgraduate study (for example, do you work only to deadlines, or do you work to a set timetable of, say, 4 hours per week?) Many of these (transferable) skills have application well beyond the context of the course or the subject matter being studied. Your proficiency at the following should be improved:

- **Communication skills**: writing essays, short responses or commentaries; delivering presentations; responding to questions in class; contributing to group discussions.

- **Information skills**: using libraries; using encyclopaedias and dictionaries; searching the internet; handling information and its presentation; checking references.

- **Life skills**: Organisation of time and resources; attendance; punctuality; co-operation in groups; leadership; management of tasks and projects.

- **Independence**: Autonomy; self-motivation; self-reliance; interest in topics; initiative; confidence; judgement.

- **Basic skills**: literacy; numeracy; computer literacy; typing skills; proof-reading skills.

- **Study skills**: note-taking; reading; research; prioritising material and knowledge; revision techniques; exam technique.

5.3 Lectures

This is normally a formal session, though lecturing styles do differ widely. The function of the lecture is to provide a personal commentary on a particular theme and to provide direction for the student's own reading. Remember that during the hour or so that lectures last, only a relatively patchy coverage of any subject is possible. Lecture notes must be supplemented with independent reading. **Do not rely solely on the lecture notes to write essays.**

Some lecturers use handouts and some PowerPoint and some use both. Similarly, students develop an individual style of note-taking. Some make very thorough notes, others brief bullet points. Some lectures will require no notes at all. What follows is some general advice about note-taking.

1. There is no point in making notes *unless they are going to be used* in your studies.
2. There are few people who remember the content of lectures! Most need to remind themselves of what went on by jotting down the main features or a skeleton of the lecture's structure.
3. Do not expect to be able to record everything the lecturer says. If you are frightened of missing something essential - because you cannot write fast enough, for example - then use a hand-held tape recorder but ask the lecturer's permission first.
4. When taking notes leave lots of space between remarks. This makes the notes easier to read and also allows you to add secondary comments later. Some people allow a wide margin next to their notes in order to insert comments later.
5. Be disciplined and prepared to spend time after class revising and completing lecture notes. The best note-takers are those who look at their notes as soon as possible after the lecture is over. By doing this they can fill in the sections they failed to record while the content is still fresh in their mind. The next step would then be to incorporate ideas from personal reading into the notes to help flesh out the material.
6. Personal reading either before and/or after lectures helps to make sense of lectures and allows the student to focus on the important sections of his or her notes.

5.4 Text Seminars

These are group sessions with all the students who, with a tutor, discuss particular texts linked with the lectures. The format is more informal than the lecture. They are not so didactic. The idea is to allow students to interact with material in a way that cannot be done so effectively in lectures. It allows the student to express views, engage with others with different views, test out arguments, try out new ideas, and ask for clarification of issues raised in lectures and so on. Discussions allow the tutor to focus more deeply on a topic of interest and to explore questions of relevance.

If you lack confidence or feel embarrassed, you are not on your own. Most students will have some level of anxiety about expressing ideas in a group. Furthermore, spirituality is a subject that touches on many disciplines: theology, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, history and aesthetics. Someone who comes to the class with a background in theology might feel very aware of his or her lack of knowledge of other issues and vice versa. So do not feel you are uniquely ignorant, as nearly all students will feel ignorant of one or other parts of the subject. Everyone has some contribution to make and the range of perspectives in the group adds to the depth of the discussion. Do not be afraid to express half-formed ideas. It may help to get discussion going and do not be intimidated by those who speak out. It is not the quantity but the quality of participation that counts. The seminar is a learning opportunity for the whole group and it is the task of the tutor to help lead the discussion so that everyone has the opportunity to participate and so that the discussion remains focused and useful for all. In general, the more a student invests in a series of seminars, the more he or she will benefit. Don't aim to be a passenger travelling for free, as it were. A student will only achieve a significant depth of understanding when he or she moves from passive reception to active engagement with the ideas. Classes provide an excellent occasion for active learning.

5.5 Independent Study

The dissertation module adopts this as the primary mode of teaching/learning though every module requires an element of independent study to underpin other modes of learning (see comments above). The student is expected to take responsibility for his or her own learning which will necessitate good time management.

6. Making Full Use of the Library

The Library offers students and staff information services and systems that include book, journal and electronic information services, computer services and reprographic services. You will have access to

around 115,000 print volumes and over 120,000 e-books. Approximately 50,000 journals are available full-text online, with a small number of print subscriptions. We now have the ATLA database of Religion and Theology journals, adding 300 titles to the existing provision in this area. We also have the world-renowned Franciscan Study Collection with an extensive coverage of medieval, mendicant and Holy Land material. As well as academic journals in the areas of philosophy, theology and religious studies, there are many others in related areas such as history, sociology and psychology. Access to the library is 7 days per week 8.15am-9pm weekdays in semester, plus Saturday and Sunday opening. The fact that the library is open in the evenings and at weekends facilitates its use by part-time and evening MA students. Changes to opening hours will also be communicated through the Twitter account - @LibraryStMarys.

Each student has access to e-mail and Internet facilities. In the main library, the library IT rooms provide 160 PCs, plus 24 loanable laptops for use on campus. Almost all of the machines are connected to the campus network and have access to web-based including electronic journals, Lexis Library, the Internet and other external sources of information. Electronic resources can also be accessed anywhere you have an internet connection. Use the St Mary's resource discovery tool 'Summon', available through the library pages as your starting point for any information search. The same username and password gives you access to almost all resources available through St Mary's. For computer-related queries, please come to the main information desk in the library.

Effective use of the library comes with practice and there will be opportunity during the course to develop these skills. Make use of the on-line catalogue, 'Summon', but once you have found a book, look the surrounding books which should be on the same or a related topic. Note that books on similar topics might also be place in different parts of the library, for example some books on pastoral ethics will be with philosophy others with theology. For this reason you should often go back to the catalogue and not simply browse in the areas of the library that you are familiar with. There may be a whole collection of other books on the topic somewhere else that you have not discovered yet. To access Summon go to St Mary's homepage.

Books that are recommended for particular modules are available in the library, often on restricted access, but it is difficult to stock enough copies to fully satisfy student demand. It is in the student's interest therefore to buy a certain number of key texts which are not available as e-books. Ordering books by inter-library loan is also a good way to find books which are rare, difficult to find, expensive or out of print. As postgraduate students, you are able to use almost any university library in the country, and have borrowing rights at many, via the SCONUL Access scheme – see the library pages on Simmspace. You are also able to use free Wi-Fi services at most UK universities using the Eduroam scheme. Again, please see Simmspace for details or just ask.

7. Critical Use of Sources

There are things we know because we see them for ourselves, and things that we know because we have worked them out for ourselves, but most of what we know we learn from others. This is true even of scientists who conduct carefully framed experiments to find out how things are. There are so many scientists and so many different sorts of science, that no one can have overseen all the experiments or looked through all the data themselves. We rely, then on the trustworthiness of what people tell us about what they have discovered, about the way things are.

For this reason arguments from authority are no less important now than they were in the Middle Ages, or than they always have been. We cannot check everything, most information we must take on trust. For example when reading a bioethics text book, I might wonder what the evidence is for something it claims. I might make the effort to find some scientific papers written in review journals which provide this evidence. I might also check that there are no other scientific papers of similar weight which suggest the opposite conclusion. If there seems to be a consensus on the matter I might leave it at that, but, in principle, I could try to repeat the experiment for myself, to see if I obtained the same result and to see if I could spot any weaknesses in the method that were not obvious from just reading the work. Unless I was a professional scientist, it is highly unlikely that I could check things for myself in this way. But even if I could check one thing thoroughly, I could not check everything at the same time, and in science, as in other areas of knowledge, what makes a conclusion plausible is not just one experiment or theory, but the convergence of many theories and many experiments.

7.1 The written word

It is, then, extremely important to be able to distinguish between information that is likely to be reliable, and that which is much less likely to be reliable. The *ad hominem* fallacy consists of dismissing an argument because of who said it. This is always lazy and usually unwarranted. An argument should stand or fall on its own grounds no matter who puts it forward. However, when it comes to believing truth claims (rather than arguments) it is important to assess the reliability of the person making the claim. What is written down is often given more weight than what is spoken. This is partly psychological, the authority of the written word, but it has some reason behind it, for what is written can be checked and people can be criticised for what they have written. In general (though not always!) people take more care over what they write than they do over what they say. Yet clearly, not everything that is written down has the same level of reliability.

7.2 Peer Review Journals

The *Sun* is generally less reliable than *The Times*, and *The Times* is less reliable than the journal *Nature*. This is partly because of who the publication is written for, and partly because of how it is written. In order for an article to appear in a journal such as *Nature*, it has to be accepted by a board of editors who usually ask advice from one or more academics who are expert in the area covered by the article. Such publications are called 'peer review journals' (PRJs). There are peer review journals in all academic disciplines (philosophy, law, theology) including some highly specialised journals. These publications tend to be very conservative ('way out' theories not accepted by most people in the field, don't get in). Also, much that is printed in journals will be disputed by someone else or will later be disproved. Peer review journals are no guarantee of truth. Nevertheless, because they are so cautious about what they print, they represent what is at least credible or reasonable to believe, and when they make empirical claims they will generally check their facts first. Mostly arguments will be at the level of interpretation not fact (though the simple dichotomy of fact and interpretation can be misleading – it is more of a continuum from direct evidence to theory than an either/or).

So, in short, PRJ articles are academically credible in a way that the *Daily Star* or even *The Times*, is not. Though they all have their own agenda, broadsheet newspapers (*The Times, The Telegraph, The Independent, The Guardian* and their international equivalents(*The New York Times, Le Monde* etc.) make some effort to be accurate in what they report. However, if you become knowledgeable about a specialist subject you will often find small mistakes and occasionally huge mistakes even in these newspapers, especially in bioethical issues. This should not be a surprise because they are produced to a tight deadline to be out every day, and their journalists cannot be experts on all subjects. They are useful sources themselves, for what people say and how people think and they often report findings which are reliable and which you can find elsewhere, but they are not a secure guide to academic subjects.

7.3 Academic and other publishers

With books, again we need to look at who published the book and who is the target audience. A book intended for the popular market may not be as substantial as a book written for students or for academics. In general a University Press (like Cambridge University Press or Harvard University Press) will be more cautious about what it publishes because the University does not want to damage its reputation. University Press books, and those of other academic publishers, are peer reviewed, like peer review journals. So they will be more worth engaging with. If a press has a very strong religious

or political agenda then the works it publishes will be more one sided, but they may still be worth reading.

Encyclopaedia articles are often a useful source of background or general information and may also contain useful references to significant books or articles on a particular topic. However, encyclopaedias vary in reliability and balance. Here again it is useful to know something about the publisher, editor or organisation behind the encyclopaedia. The most important limitation on encyclopaedia articles is that they are written to be brief summaries and do not have space to go into depth about issues. Essays that rely on one or a few encyclopaedia articles are thus almost inevitably superficial. To get a proper view of a subject it is important to read a number of different works including recent books and PRJ articles.

7.4 One sidedness

Nearly all books and articles will take a particular stance on the debated questions of the field, and may not fairly represent the opposite side of the question. Sometimes the view may be controversial or disputed and the author may not say so! For this reason it is important to read several recent publications on a topic to see the terms of the present debate. Never assume that a book is impartial, accepted wisdom, or something that every scholar agrees on. Even a collection of essays may be taken primarily from one side of a question (for example a selection of essays giving the 'pro-choice' side of the abortion debate, but none giving the 'pro-life' side and *vice versa*).

The less reliable the source of the information the more we have to be wary of that there may be basic mistakes. Thus is advisable to check a less reliable source against a more reliable source (such as an article in a well respected encyclopaedia). But even articles in encyclopaedias, or from PRJs are not guaranteed to be free from all error or bias. They should not be thought of as purely neutral presentations of facts without interpretation. Every description will contain some level of interpretation and this interpretation may well be open to criticism. For this reason the process of academic reading should be active and critical not taking claims for granted but asking if they are true and how the author knows.

7.5 The purpose of reading

Reading is not just about obtaining new information, it is about expanding your own thinking. Key questions to ask yourself include:

- What point is the author trying to make?

- Can I explain this argument to someone else in my own words to?

- What is the author's aim? Does he or she have an axe to grind?

- How does the particular point relate to the argument as a whole?

- Who or what is this author fighting against or afraid of?

- Do I agree with the author's view or argument? Do different views exist?

"The underlying purpose of reading is to develop your thoughts; to weave new ideas and information into the understanding you already have and to give new angles to your thinking. If you try to bypass this thinking process, you are not really learning as you read. Learning is to do with changing your ideas, combining them together in new ways and extending them to cover new ground. Reading a text is one way in which you trigger off these changes." [Andrew Northedge, *The Good Study Guide*, p34]

"Anyone who has not entered into dialogue with a text, who has not asked it questions and listened to its answers, not attempted to find within it even better answers, not selected some part for special emphasis while omitting consideration of others, anyone who has not done this has not read the text." [Stuart Schneiderman, *Jacques Lacan*, pp31-2]

7.6 Primary texts and secondary literature

In some subjects, including theology and spirituality, the subject matter of a discussion will sometimes be a particular written 'text', for example *The Cloud of Unknowing*. In this case the scholarly argument will depend on a careful reading of the text itself. It may be important to verify that this is what the original document said (whether the printed book accurately represents what the author himself or herself wrote). If the text is in a language other than English then it will be necessary to ask whether the translation accurately reflects the original.

In addition to the original text there will generally be many works by later writers, including contemporary writers, which use or interpret or engage with the text in some way. For example, there are many books and articles about medieval English spirituality in general and the *Cloud* in particular. There are also discussions, for example, of the medieval worldview that lies behind many of *Cloud*'s ideas or about the meaning and uses of texts in general, that may be relevant to the understanding of this particular text. This wider collection of writings concerning the text or relevant to the text is called secondary literature ('secondary' in comparison with the 'primary' text).

When writing an essay which relates in some way to one or more primary texts it is important to give pride of place to the original text, use it, quote it, interpret it, show that you have read it. It is also important to show awareness of secondary literature. The primary text must be read carefully and separately from secondary material (to give you a chance to engage with it in a way that is fresh and, in a sense, unprejudiced), and then afterwards read again in parallel with the secondary material. This second reading should illuminate aspects you have not thought of and also guide you in the terms of current debates about the text. It is generally obvious when someone has approached an original text only through the arguments of the secondary literature and has not engaged directly with the text itself. This is not adequate at a higher level of study.

The primary text in humanities subject is like the experimental data in science. All interpretations should pay close attention to what the data actually says. The distinction between primary text and secondary literature is not relevant to every subject, but it is an important distinction in some and certainly worth being aware of.

7.7 Finding resources

The module handbook will include a reading list on the subject and the place to start researching an essay is in the library with this list. This may seem very obvious but it is worth stating the obvious. The first thing to do is seeing if all the books are in the library (using Summon. Some modules will also have online reading lists available through MyModules), make a note of the shelf number (where it is on open shelf) and go and find it. There may be competition for the books on a reading list in which case you may need to co-operate with others to get a look at the more important books.

Having looked at the books and articles listed, *follow the reference trail*. Notice the books or articles that are referred to in the book you are reading (if these are relevant to the topic of your essay), and see if this is in the library, then see which books/articles this refers to. In this way it should soon be possible to build up a collection of relevant material.

Another thing to do is look on the shelf at the surrounding books, as books on the same topic will generally be close together. Sometimes a catalogue will have a "subject" index which will identify similar books. Often books could be catalogued under more than one section (for example 'human dignity' might be under medicine, under philosophy, or under theology). If the books on the module bibliography are from more than one section, look at each of them to see if there are other books

that might be useful. Remember, if there is a primary text then it is most important to read this text. Commentaries or discussion should be read after having looked at the work for yourself.

Finally, make use of Summon to search for journal articles, and the electronic resources given in the Module Guide. Look at these to see if there are recent articles on the topic you have chosen for your essay.

8. Making Critical Use of the Internet

As a resource the internet (or World Wide Web) is enormous. It is bigger than the biggest physical library collections in the world and is a great tool for gaining access to information. It also has much to offer scholars and academics. There are millions of books and articles on the Internet on every imaginable topic and many of the works of great philosophers and writers (such as Plato, Aristotle, Shakespeare and Milton) have been placed on the Internet.

8.1 No quality control

While the Internet offers great possibilities it needs to be treated with great caution for its main strength is also (as so often) its great weakness. There is very little control of any kind as to what is on the Internet, therefore there is no quality control about what is on the Internet. The Internet is therefore as far as you could get from a peer review journal. Whereas it is very difficult to get an article published in *Nature*, virtually anyone can write something and put it on the Internet. As such, the Internet has less control than the *Daily Star*! There are sites promoting racism, promoting terrorism and how to avoid "alien abduction", the Loch Ness monster and the yeti each have several sites dedicated to them. It is full of assertions without arguments and claims without evidence. The Internet is a marketplace of ideas in which most people are not discussing but shouting and not listening.

8.2 Domain names

Not only is the Internet a market place of ideas it is also a literal market place where people advertise, subscribe, buy, sell and con people. There are legal businesses and illegal businesses, fund raisers and money launderers. When looking at an Internet site, notice the domain name. If it is <u>something.com</u> or <u>something.co.uk</u> then the site belongs to a company who will be trying to sell you something. If the address is <u>something.org</u> or <u>something.org.uk</u> then it is a non-profit making organisation. In this case the site will not have a commercial interest but it may still have a strong political, religious or other agenda. If the address ends <u>something.gov</u> or <u>something.gov.uk</u> then it is a government website. This should be a reliable source of official statistics and public records but, of course, government has its own agenda. The addresses <u>something.edu</u> and <u>something.ac.uk</u>are used for educational institutions – schools and universities. University websites tend to be well controlled and give access to many good quality books and articles. Generally, the domain name will also tell you in which country the site is based (for example <u>something.uk</u> for the UK, <u>something.it</u> for Italy and <u>something.au</u> for Australia)

though this tends not to be the case for the United States. In addition to these domain names there are also other such as something.net for those that do not fit into the above categories.

For the most part, Internet sites will be pursuing a particular agenda and trying to get you to do something or to believe something: one site wants your money, one wants your vote, another wants your soul, a forth wants your liver ("downloadable facsimile organ donor card"). In every case the reader must be critical and when it becomes clear what the person is selling or pushing then it is easier to decide whether to use the material or not.

8.3 The best is often not on the Internet

Because the Internet is modern and electronic you might think that it would contain the most up-to-date information. After all, this is the electronic age. However this tends not to be so for the following simple reason: copyright. If an author and a publisher want to make money then they want to sell books. Thus they are unlikely to agree that the book should be provided free on the Internet. If the book is free on the Internet the person who reads it does not have to pay and so the publisher gets no sale and the author no royalties. For a similar reason journals are reluctant to put all their articles, including their most recent volume, on to the Internet. If people could wait a couple of months and then read the articles free on the Internet, why would they pay the subscription fee to buy the journal?

Thus very many books on the Internet are not new books but books that are so old that the author dead, indeed long dead, 70 years dead. For this reason the classics that you find on the Internet (the translations of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine or Aquinas) tend to be from nineteenth or early twentieth century translations. There are some recent books on the internet which have either been written for the internet or which you have to subscribe to use, but many books are freely available on the internet precisely because they are out of copyright. It is, or course, a prejudice to think that old is useless, but it is helpful to be reminded that not only is much information on the Internet biased, much of it is also dated.

In addition to what is generally and openly available on the Internet, most universities also have additional electronic resources with more reliable and more up-to-date information. The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy is, for example, an excellent resource and all articles have a citation reference printed on them.

8.4 How to find material on the Internet

When people start to use the Internet they often use an Internet browser or search engine such as Google, Yahoo or Opera. This will identify hundreds, thousands or even millions of relevant pages, ordered in terms of relevance and popularity. However, this way of searching the Internet is relatively indiscriminate. It may be useful to put in a long search string when you are looking for something in particular, or if you are looking for general public discussion, but it will not help identify academic resources. Most of what is found by a search engine will be weak in academic terms: inadequately supported by evidence or argument. If you do use such browsers you need to be highly critical and know how to pick out the occasional useful and valuable material from the rest.

A much better way to search the internet is to use portals which have already identified useful material that is reliable in terms of academic quality: governmental, scientific or scholarly material which has already been subject to a high level of criticism. Useful sites include:

British Academy http://www.britac.ac.uk

British Library http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/catblhold/all/allcat.html

8.5 How to use the Internet critically

There are a number of questions that should be asked about any material found on the Internet (whether via a search engine or via a portal):

- What is the Internet address?
- Is the website commercial (.co.uk/.com), organisational (.org), governmental (.gov) academic (.ac.uk/.edu) or something else?
- Which organisation hosts the website?
- What are the aims or purposes of the organisation, the website and the article?
- In what way or on what issues might this article therefore show bias?
- Has the author given his or her name?
- Can he or she be contacted?
- Is the author someone holding a full time academic post?
- Is the author qualified to write about the topic?
- Has the article been published elsewhere before being the Internet?
- Is there a full reference?
- Was it in a peer review journal or through an academic publisher?
- When was it written?
- If it was written many years ago is it a classic (or primary text) or might it be dated?
- When was it placed on the Internet?
- When was the site last updated?

You may not be able to answer all of these questions for everything you find, but it should help you to place the material in terms of general reliability and to identify possible bias.

9. Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

A piece of written work, an essay or an assignment is presented as your own work. It is important that it is what it appears to be, your own work and not the presentation of someone else's words or ideas as though they were your own. Plagiarism can be defined as "the wrongful appropriation or purloining, and publication as one's own, of the ideas, or the expression of the ideas (literary, artistic, musical, mechanical, etc.) of another" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Plagiarism is a form of cheating and is generally punished severely by the automatic failure for that piece of work and sometimes of the module or of the entire course. Plagiarism is worse when it is deliberate and involves a clear intent to deceive. This tends to attract the worst penalties.

9.1 Examples of plagiarism

9.1.1 Using the words and ideas of an author without proper referencing

This is probably the most common form of plagiarism and can easily be avoided by the correct use of a proper referencing system in all essays and written work. The author's name and the date of publication should be noted in the text after the quoted words and these should be in inverted commas. A full bibliography listing all quoted works should be given at the end of the coursework.

9.1.2 Using the ideas and words of a fellow student

Often it is appropriate and good practice to work closely with a friend on a piece of work. Unless a single piece of work from several authors is allowed, the final essay or report must show independent thought. Thus two people working together on the same set of data or the same set of resources should, unless the rules specifically allow it, produce completely separate pieces of work.

9.2 How the University will respond to perceived instances of plagiarism

Plagiarism falls within what the University deems "academic misconduct". Should an instance of plagiarism of any kind be believed to have occurred in the work of a bioethics student, the following action will be taken:

- The alleged case of plagiarism will be referred to another marker for a second opinion.

- Where plagiarism is believed to exist, the Chair of theExamination Board will write to the candidate(s), setting out the grounds of the alleged misconduct. The candidate(s) will be given the opportunity to defend themselves against the allegation.

The case against the candidate(s) will be considered by the Board of Examiners who will decide what action, if any, to take. If the candidate(s) wish to defend themselves they will be given at least four days notice of the meeting. They can be accompanied at the meeting by a friend.

If there is no reference to the original work from which the essay was taken this is blatant plagiarism. However, putting in one or more references will not be enough to escape the charge of plagiarism if large sections of the essay are copied verbatim or very closely paraphrased.

If the exact words of another are used then they must occur in quotation marks with an appropriate reference. Taking whole sentences from the Internet or copied out of books without quotation marks is plagiarism. Nevertheless, even if the words have been slightly altered, if paragraphs have been paraphrased from a source without being referenced, especially if this occurs with a number of paragraphs sequentially, this is also plagiarism. It is worse if it is deliberate; ignorance is no excuse for copying ideas without acknowledging where they come from. Not only exact quotation but also paraphrase must be clearly referenced (i.e.: reference with name, date and page number where applicable) and an essay must consist of more than this else it is not your work.

Inaccurate and incomplete referencing, and even missing some references accidentally within an essay that uses a number of sources, is sloppy work but it is not necessarily plagiarism. Sloppy work is distinguished from plagiarism by: a lack of any intent to deceive; the use of several sources; an honest attempt to give references; the avoidance of paraphrase; and above all, a real engagement with the argument through the critical use of material.

9.3 Good referencing

The aim of essay writing should not be to produce sloppy work (that might verge on plagiarism), but to produce clear, well-presented and well-referenced work, which could not possibly be charged with

plagiarism. In giving references it is necessary to adopt a systematic approach. There is more than one system commonly used in academic writing but it is good discipline to learn and to practice using one, as this will help to make you aware of what information is required, even if you are subsequently encouraged to present references in a slightly different way.

The important thing is to acknowledge where you have used others scholars' words or ideas. It should be possible for the person marking your work to locate the exact page or paragraph that you have used, whether from book, journal article, periodical, encyclopaedia or internet website. Proper referencing involves giving the author, date, title, place and publisher of the source you are quoting, paraphrasing or referring to. The two most important things about referencing are clarity and consistency, and it is better if you do not use abbreviations such as 'ibid' as these can cause confusion.

The idea of referencing is to provide the reader with all the information necessary to locate the exact page or paragraph of the work to which you are referring.

9.4 Academic Conduct

Your learning during your time at St Mary's University is a journey of discovery as you progress through your programme. Whilst being supported and guided by the tutorial/supervisory team, you will also undertake your own research, preparation and planning as you construct your assessment tasks. This is a vital element of your learning, and it is important to remember that the assessments are an integral part of that learning – not simply a way of testing *what* you have learned.

That learning process only has meaning and value if you present your own thoughts, *your* analysis – *your* work.

That is the standard of academic conduct that we expect, and hope, our students attain – however, we do have procedures in place to address any apparent instances of academic *mis*conduct.

Academic Misconduct is taken very seriously by the University, and students should be aware that the consequences of such misconduct can be serious.

Examples of behaviours considered to constitute academic misconduct are as follows:

copying work from reference sources or other students (**plagiarism**);

using elements of your own work more than once and without referencing the original **(auto-plagiarism)**;

working too closely together with other students to produce very similar submissions (**collusion**);

allowing another student(s) to copy their work (**unfair advantage**)

fabricating results or other outcomes that form part of the work (**falsification of data**);

bringing unauthorised materials/electronic devices into an examination room, and/or behaving in other ways that could bring an unfair advantage (**examination cheating**).

9.5 Academic Misconduct – Guidelines for Students

The above represent the most common forms of academic misconduct, however, students should refer to the "Academic Misconduct – Guidelines for Students" on SIMMSpace in order to familiarise themselves with the more detailed information about the types of academic misconduct.

These Guidelines also explain the process that will be followed when a student is suspected of academic misconduct; and the types and levels of sanctions that will be applied when cases are proven.

9.6 Non-Academic Misconduct

Students should please note that Academic Misconduct and other forms of Student Misconduct are addressed via different processes.

Allegations of misconduct which are not categorised as academic will be investigated and progressed by the Head of School or Service (or nominee) according to Section 4 of the Student Disciplinary Procedures.

9.7 Student Disciplinary Procedures

The University expects its students to act in a responsible manner to the mutual benefit of the University, its neighbours, and the wider community.

The Student Disciplinary procedures can be found on simmspace under 'My Degree Programme', then going to 'Registry':

http://simmspace.stmarys.ac.uk/prog-admin/registry-policies/policies-complaints-disciplinary/Pages/default.aspx

9.8 Student Complaints procedures

There may be times, when the quality and standard of the educational experience or wider experience at the University does not meet reasonable expectations. Students are entitled to complain and to make known their concerns.

The Student Complaints Procedures can be found on simmspace under 'My Degree Programme', then going to 'Registry':

http://simmspace.stmarys.ac.uk/prog-admin/registry-policies/policies-complaints-disciplinary/Pages/default.aspx

9.9 Studying without Harassment

The University accepts that all students have a statutory right to be treated with dignity and respect at work in an environment free from bullying and harassment. This policy can be found on simmspace under 'My Degree Programme, then going to 'Registry', then 'St Mary's Policies and Regulations':

http://simmspace.stmarys.ac.uk/prog-admin/registry-policies/policies-complaints-disciplinary/Pages/Policies-Regulations.aspx

10. Accurate Referencing

10.1 Academic practice of giving references

One noticeable difference between academic publications and PRJs on the one hand and popular books and most Internet sites on the other, is that the authors of academic works generally give lots of references. Even a short article could contain anything from twenty to a hundred references to other books or articles. In each case the book or articled referred to will be cited in such a way that it is clear who wrote it, what it was called, and when and where and by whom it was published. As noted above, the information about who published something is not only useful for finding it, but also tells us something about the character of the publication.

10.2 Why so many references?

References to the work of other people serve a number of functions.

Firstly they acknowledge the sources of ideas that are used in the article. This is very important as it helps the author distinguish between what material he or she is using and what is original in this paper (which may only be the way the ideas of others are discussed and brought together, or may by more radical: a new idea or theory).

Secondly the giving of references helps to support the argument. The references provide evidence in the form of appeal to authority. The greater the number, authority and spread of references the more credible is the basis of the argument. This helps supports the premises, though not necessarily the argument itself (i.e. its structure or validity).

Thirdly giving references relates what the author is doing to debates and discussions within the wider academic community. It shows that the person who is writing the article is not an isolated thinker but a member of a large academic community.

An impressive piece of coursework often contains a great many references to such sources and it is important to learn this skill, using the recommended system. When referring to or quoting others

work it is important that you do not just string together fine-sounding phrases, but you will want to use relevant quotations, paraphrases and ideas from others to support the argument you are building in your essay. Where a good undergraduate essay would generally be expected to have somewhere between six and twelve references, a good postgraduate essay would be expected to have somewhere between ten and twenty-five references.

10.3 Bibliographic Referencing Policy

All St Mary's University programmes will adopt the standardised version of their nominated referencing style as set out in 'Cite them Right' online. Centralised support for standardised styles is provided by the Library through webpages, online tutorials, workshops, etc. To avoid confusion, inconsistency and duplication of effort, Schools and Programmes will not use variants of the standardised styles, nor produce bespoke guidance.

The adoption of the standardised styles as set out in 'Cite them Right' is intended to offer a better, more consistent learning experience for students, where the focus is on understanding the principles of referencing, rather than on having to tackle competing preferences.

Variants of standardised styles will not be used as this leads to confusion for students and uncertainty about where help can be provided. Students should always be directed to "Cite them Right". The Library's referencing webpages shall provide links to 'Cite them Right' online and other official guidance for all general and subject-specific styles. These webpages can be found here:
https://simmspace.stmarys.ac.uk/services-students/library-it-services/finding-using-information/Pages/Research-and-Referencing-Tools.aspx

10.3.1 The Harvard system

The recommended reference system for this programme is a version of the Harvard System (otherwise known as the Social Scientific Style or Author-Date system). This should be used both for citing sources within your essay and for your bibliography. You should consult "Cite them Right" for guidance on the Harvard system.

The Harvard system does not require footnotes or endnotes, though footnotes can still be used to expand on some point, which is tangential to the main argument in the body of the essay.

11. The Essay as a Coherent Argument

11.1 What is an argument?

If someone says they have had an argument with someone, we usually think of a row or an angry disagreement. For the sake of peace many people try to avoid arguments of this sort. People who like arguments are either bad tempered or they are bullies. An argument is a battle with words that you win if you get your own way, or lose if you surrender to the other person.

There is, however, another meaning of argument of argument. People who are engaged in higher level study should be concerned about arguments, not in the sense of angry exchanges, but in the sense of providing rational support for a conclusion. Some truths are self-evident or can be discovered easily - it is not difficult to find out whether or not it is raining outside. Other truths are much more difficult to establish. We need to build up a case to find the truth. An argument, in this sense is a **reasonable case in favour of a particular conclusion**.

Sometimes someone will make a statement without giving any supporting evidence or argument. This is an **assertion**, e.g. Nuclear power stations are better for the environment than coal powered stations. This assertion may be true or false, but no reasons are given to help us decide whether it is true or false. If we are to believe it, we need some reasons, e.g. Nuclear power stations do not produce greenhouse gases, therefore they are better for the environment than coal powered stations.

The statement is now supported by an argument. The argument has two parts a **conclusion** and a supporting **reason**. For any argument we can ask: Is the reason given itself true? (in this case: is it true that power stations do not produce greenhouse gases) How do we know that it is true? (is it obvious? How can we find out?) Does the reason support the conclusion? (in this case: is there a connection between producing greenhouses gases and being bad for the environment) Is it relevant? Finally, are there other relevant considerations that would support the opposite conclusion?

In our example, the argument *does* tend to support the conclusion and it *is* based on something that is true. To this extent, it is a good reason to believe the statement. However, what also needs to be asked is whether there are other arguments to consider which might support the opposite view. Can you think or any?

The aim of argument should not be simply to persuade someone else – to "win" the argument - but should be to find the truth by finding which arguments are really the strongest. A valid argument is

one where the conclusion does follow from the starting point (the **premise**). However a good argument will not always give a true conclusion unless the starting point is also true.

e.g. If the moon was made of cheese, then astronauts would not need to bring there own food with them.

The conclusion follows from the premise. It is a good argument. However the premise is not true and the conclusion is not true. Astronauts who go to the moon do need to bring food with them.

On the other hand, it is also worth noting that an *invalid* argument may still have a true conclusion. The conclusion is not supported by the reasons which are given, but it might be true for other reasons.

e.g. All heads of state are kings or queens therefore the head of state of the United Kingdom is either a king or a queen.

The conclusion is true – the United Kingdom does have a queen, but the reason given for this is false: many countries have presidents instead of kings or queens.

Higher level study will require assessing the strength of other people's arguments and the ability to build arguments of one's own. These abilities will be developed through many different parts of the course for example through seminar discussion and in the writing of essays.

11.2 The essay as an argument

We should see an essay as an extended argument in favour of a conclusion. This could be an obvious question e.g. "Evaluate the claim that the English Reformation was imposed from above". In this example you must consider arguments in favour of the claim and consider arguments against the claim and then come to a conclusion.

The conclusion of an essay should flow from the considerations presented in the essay as a natural outcome. One common flaw in academic essays is to list various opinions for or against a view but then fail to come to any conclusion. A says this but B says that and C says this third thing, full stop (no conclusion). It is not much better to write A says this but B says that and C says this third thing, "…so there are different opinions on this question", or, "…but everyone has the right to his own opinion which should be respected". Such statements frequently represent a cop-out: a failure to engage with the question directly. Essays of this sort describe other people's opinions but they do not critically engage with those opinions or come to a conclusion.

Having encouraged students to engage with the subject matter themselves and come to a conclusion, the result sometimes goes something like this: A says this but B says that and C says this third thing, "…but I think this", or, "…I agree with B". Worst of all is an unconfident student who will seek to come to a conclusion and then pull back: A says this but B says that and C says this third thing, "and I feel that B is right, but everyone has different views on this and none can be held to be absolute truth". The fundamental flaw of these essays is that the conclusion does not flow from the arguments of the essay but just appears at the end. Using the first person can be valid, but the danger is that the conclusion appears to be about the author "this is what I feel" not about the topic,"these are the reasons to believe this or that".

11.3 Concluding

A good essay should come to a conclusion. It should not be left without a conclusion (like a headless corpse) nor should the 'conclusion' just appear out of the air unconnected from the essay as a whole (like a head floating above a body). The considerations contained within the essay should constitute an argument in favour of the conclusion. They should point to the conclusion. Some of the considerations in the essay will point in the opposite direction; they will be objections or criticisms of the eventual conclusion. A good essay, like a good argument will not simply be one sided but will have examined and overcome various possible objections.

11.4 Well balanced argument

A good example of balanced argument is provided by Thomas Aquinas. Whenever he considered some questions he would first look at objections to the answer he favoured. In choosing objections he would search for the best and strongest objection. It is easy to knock down a straw man, but this does not help understand why people hold different opinions, and it does not help to test or to clarify one's own position.

In answering objections to his position, Thomas Aquinas would not try to discredit the opponent, or to attack every one of his beliefs, but would seek some middle ground upon which they could both agree, and then identify the points that still divided them. This habit of seeking agreement and making distinctions remains important in well balanced argument.

When writing essays in the humanities, it is not just possible but important to criticise authors. Many students are reluctant to do this, for these writers are professors or lecturers who have studied the subject for many years? How can you know more than they? Criticism is not a matter of knowing more than someone else but is a matter of asking questions: How do they know? What is the evidence?

Are they being one sided? What are they not saying? If their arguments relate to an original text read the text yourself first, then read them and ask yourself if you agree, go back and look at it again. Is this reading demanded? If a question is controversial then writers will argument for different conclusions and so it will be possible to use one to criticise another. This is explored further in the next section.

11.5 Structuring an essay

The structure of an essay should reflect the structure of the argument. It should not be haphazard, repetitive or meandering. Someone reading the essay should have a sense of where they are in the essay, of what has gone before and what might follow.

Very often an essay will consider a number of views given by a number of different writers, say writer A, writer B and writer C. In structuring the essay the student should not simply follow the outline of the work of A then B then C. Rather the student should consider how these views fit together, what are the strengths and weaknesses of these views, which are better or more persuasive. In the light of what he or she has read, the student should come to some conclusion, however tentative.

The essay should be structured so that it moves towards this conclusion. The arguments of A, B and C should be looked at in the order that best suits the essay, not necessarily in the order A, B and C.

11.6 Researching and timing

If you think about the question as you are looking for material and choosing what to read, then it is much more likely the material will be useful and relevant. Make notes as you are reading and think about how the different readings relate to one another and about how they relate to the question.

Theological encyclopaedia and dictionary entries will be of great use to you since they aim to give information as objectively and as fully as possible. However, check the year of publication to ensure that the material is not outdated and remember that the writing tends to be dense and concise and therefore harder to read.

You will need to consult several sources in order to write your essay, but you will not necessarily need to read a whole book in its entirety. Learn how to 'gut' a book. Use the table of contents or index at the back to decide which pages are of most relevance. The preface, foreword or back page often gives a short statement of the author's viewpoint and the content of each chapter. The first or

last paragraph of each chapter usually summarises the chapter's content. Academic texts are not like detective stories - you are allowed to read the ending first to see if the beginning is worth reading.

Many students spend much more time researching and reading than they do planning an essay. Some students start writing without having planned it at all: without any idea of how they will conclude or what they are trying to say in their essay as a whole. This can work if there is lots of time to edit and rework the essay, but I general it is a mistake to move straight from reading to writing without spending time planning.

There is always more reading that could be done, but if all the time was spent on reading there would be no essay at all and all the reading would be wasted (at least in terms of the assessment). Thus, when allocating time to a piece of work it is a good idea to spend no more than half the available time on researching and reading. With the remaining time, it is good to spend at least as much on planning as on writing. A well-written essay will have a clearly-defined structure embodying a single coherent argument and this a cannot be done without planning

11.7 Planning the essay

A very common mistake in essay writing, both in coursework and in exams, is to misunderstand what is being asked and so to answer the wrong question. Sometimes students just put down everything they know about an issue but fail to notice precisely what the question is asking. At every stage of the process come back to the question and ask if the essay effectively answers it.

Spend time 'brainstorming' by jotting down everything that comes into your mind of relevance to the topic; either in a list or spread out on a piece of paper. Make connections between these thoughts. Later develop and refine your reflections into a list or 'flow chart'. There is no need to try to be organized or logical at this stage. Do not try to criticize what comes to mind. When you run out of ideas you may need to do some research.

The next stage is to begin to order your thoughts into a structure. Ask yourself, what are you trying to say? What is your conclusion? How do you get there? Use your previous notes and ideas to develop an organized plan. The plan should constitute one long argument, including within itself

arguments for and against. It should come to a conclusion. Having planned the structure of the essay as a whole, in outline, be clear what each paragraph is intended to communicate.

The introduction should be short. It should set the scene, by outlining the context of the discussion and preparing the ground for the material you are going to present. It should also include an analysis of the essay question sating what is required and defining or explaining any key terms. It should set out the scope of your essay (what it will do, what it will not do) and point towards the general shape of the answer, but not anticipate the answer to fully. Save your best until last!

The main body of the essay contains around 80% of your word count. According to the type of question set, it should contain description and analysis of the views of others and your assessment of all of these. The structure should be clear so that it moves from considering one area to considering the next in an orderly fashion. The structure of the main body of the essay should help to make clear the basic structure of the argument as a whole.

The conclusion (no more than 15%) of the essay should sum up the argument and present a final assessment of the situation. It may return to the original question and/or the first paragraph to show how the essay has answered the question asked. The conclusion may remind the reader of the limited scope of the essay and point towards wider implications or future prospects etc.

A good essay will often contain some extra unexpected element towards the end of the essay or in the conclusion, an element of irony or sideways reflection. It may include a criticism of the assumptions behind the question itself or a surprising return to a position criticised earlier in the essay. For example, an essay on the morality of law might conclude that the best approach to war is the traditional just war approach (rejecting pacifism) but then ask whether, in practice, in the conditions of modern society the distinctions of just war are applicable, and hence conclude that, in the modern age, just war theory might be no different from pacifism. An essay does not always have to end with a final 'twist' (this would be artificial) but this is one way that an essay can show a further level of sophistication.

11.8 Reviewing the essay

If you have time it is a very good idea to leave your essay for a few days and return to it with fresh eyes, or to ask someone else to read it for you. Ask yourself: Does it make sense? Have you answered the question set? Have you covered all the main aspects? Have you gone into enough depth or is the work shallow and superficial? Is all the content of relevance? Is all of the material accurate? Have you distinguished clearly between your ideas and those of others? Is there a logical order? Does it constitute a single sustained argument? Is the essay the correct length? Have you proof-read thoroughly?

In many institutions, students are encouraged to talk to tutors about their work or even to show drafts of their work to tutors and ask for comments or suggestions. Even at a late stage there may be much that can be done to improve it. If this is opportunity is offered then it is worth making use of. It may seem like an ordeal but it will lead to improved work and should build your confidence. All students who go to see their tutor, obtain higher marks as a result. Remember, if you submit work to a tutor always retain a copy for yourself.

11.9 Common problems and how to crack them

"I always find it hard to start off my essay"

If you develop a block in planning do not fear. Try attacking the question without a plan to see if that kick-starts you into action. You can look at the structure or re-order material or develop a plan at a later stage. If you are still stuck it may be because of information overload. Try talking to another person about your reading and your ideas. Speaking out loud often helps you to articulate your ideas in simple language. It sometimes helps to imagine having to give a class to sixth formers on the essay topic. How would you choose to get the main message across? What strategy would you choose? How would you grab their interest? If you cannot answer the question out loud, you will not succeed when writing an answer. Keep the sentences short and simple. Do not try to achieve too much. When you put pen to paper ask yourself:

- What am I trying to say?

- Can I express myself more clearly?

- What basic points do I need to include?

- Am I communicating to the reader?

"I find it hard to write enough"

Try making more detailed notes. Check to see you are not omitting important points or assuming material that needs to be spelt out. Remember you have to explain fully the points you are trying to get across. Illustrate your argument through the use of more examples. Do not be vague. Give more attention to how your points link up with one another.

"I find I have too much material; it always goes over the word count"

If you do not know what to leave out you need to be more brutal at the organizing stage. Are you including waffle or too much preamble in the introduction? Have you included an aside that can be omitted? Are you being unnecessarily ponderous in your writing style and labouring points too much?

12.Presentation of Written Work

12.1 General Presentation

The quality of essay presentation is important. While you may get different guidelines from other subjects, the policy of the Institute of Theology is as follows.

Students are encouraged to type their work and keep a copy of returned work. Naturally, it takes time for essays to be typed so make allowances in order to meet essay deadlines.

12.2 Style and grammar

Although the essay should reflect the student's own critical opinion, it is best generally to avoid the use the first person (I, we, you). Try to keep to phrases such as "The evidence suggests that...", "It appears that..." or "...logic dictates that...", rather than "I think that..." However remember there may be instances, when engaged in critical self-reflection when the first person pronoun is appropriate. If in doubt ask your tutor.

Be aware that in an establishment where the purpose is to develop scholarly excellence, lecturers are duty bound to preserve the English language by demanding high standards of spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. It is impossible to divorce the substance of your arguments entirely from the manner in which they are presented, so naturally a proficient writing style will win you higher grades. Remember that, as students, words are the tools of your trade. Always strive to use words in a clear, concise and varied manner. Think before you commit pen to paper.

12.3 Title and Content

In many of the modules on the course you will be set an assignment or given freedom which allows you to choose your own title within certain boundaries. This will generally be done in consultation with the module convenor. *Please do not choose a title without consulting the tutor first.*

Often the most difficult dilemma when essay writing is deciding what information to leave out. Select only the most relevant material and make sure you relate it clearly to the essay title. Make sure you are familiar with the "questioning" words used in examinations and essay titles.

12.4 Word limits

All coursework will have a word limit associated with it. You are expected to keep within ± 10% of this word limit, by being selective in the information you include and writing concisely. Students are encouraged to provide a word count at the end of the work. You may be penalised if your work is too long or too short. An overlong essay is usually for a reason, normally lack of good editing or woolly thinking.

12.5 Submission of coursework

Coursework should be handed in online with 'Turnitin' on the designated day. Your name should not appear on any piece of work. Only your Student registration number (regnum) number entered on the assessment form should identify your work. If there are problems with submitting work please discuss with your module tutor in good time.

All coursework submitted must meet the following requirements:

- **Essay title** at the top of the first page (you should put your student number here too).

- **Wide** margins (left and right, top and bottom) to allow for the marker's comments

- **Double-spacing** except for bibliographies and footnotes, which should be single-spaced

- Standard and simple **font** (e.g., Times Roman or Arial) using **12 points** for the main body of the essay and 10 points for footnotes, with non-English words in *italics***or**underlined (e.g. *berit, diatheke*)

- **Page numbers**

- **Word count** at the end of the essay (this should not include any footnotes or bibliography) - make sure you are within 10% of the recommended number of words required for the particular piece of coursework.

- **Correct referencing**using Harvard style as advised by Cite Them Right.

- **Bibliography** including all sources used in your essay, not only those explicitly quoted or otherwise referred to.

In addition to the structure of the essay as a whole, ensure the reader can follow the sequence of thought from one sentence to the next. Each paragraph should have an internal structure to it too and should only deal with one idea or issue. The first sentence of each should indicate the content of the paragraph. In order to make the ideas flow within paragraphs you will need to use a variety of **transitional words** that indicate how the sentences link together. Assist the reader in following your argument by clearly highlighting your intentions through the use of "**signposts**". This helps the reader to recognize your aims.

To introduce a contrast:

but   however   on the other hand   yet   by contrast

To indicate a move to an opposing point of view:

nevertheless   on the other hand   at the same time

To indicate you are offering an illustration:

for example: that is,   for instance:

To extend or expand an idea:

similarly,   moreover,   furthermore   in addition   not only

To indicate a conclusion or result of something:

in conclusion   therefore   consequently   thus   whence

To indicate the next step:

then   after that   ultimately

To indicate how one point follows on from another:

"Having looked at the strengths of this, one must now consider the weaknesses."

"While this point of view has its advantages, Moltmann's view is also worth considering."

To indicate what function the paragraph serves in the overall essay:

"Having dealt with Plato, we must now consider Aristotle's understanding of human nature."

"As we have seen in the previous section..."

"To summarize..."

"In short..."

13. Assessment

13.1 Assessment strategy

The programme aims to use assessment as part of the learning process for students, rather than simply a means of assessing learning. This means that assessment tasks are designed to help students *achieve* the desired learning outcomes, rather than only *measuring* their achievements (although that will, necessarily, take place too). Forms of formative and summative assessment will vary, and include:

- *Shorter and longer essays, case studies and written reports* which enable students to develop skills in research and reflection, and (for longer pieces of writing) the sustained application of methods, approaches and texts which they are studying. As appropriate, some will include making connections between Christian spirituality and today's world and today's believing communities, in a variety of formats (e.g. a case study). As well as a list of topics for summative assessment provided by the module coordinator, students will have the opportunity to negotiate a specific (and appropriate) assessment topic with the module coordinator;

- *Article and book reviews*, where students give an evaluative account of designated material to demonstrate the depth of their reading and the level of their understanding.

- *The dissertation*, which is an enhanced form of essay for which students will receive individual supervision, normally 15,000 words. Students will prepare for the dissertation by presenting a draft proposal, in collaboration with tutors, which will receive formative assessment.

- *Issue reports*, where students focus on a defined question and give a critical evaluation of it.

- *Class oral presentations* by groups or individuals in a variety of formats (e.g. talk, debate, introducing a seminar discussion, question and answer) which enable students to research and communicate their learning in particular areas and (for group presentations) their collaborative skills. For these purposes, projectors and computer facilities are available for student use. Students receive oral feedback on all presentations; presentations which are summatively assessed receive formal written feedback too;

The programme affirms the University's stated aim that feedback be available to students within three weeks of submission/presentation.

Prior to summative assessments and during the course of the modules, students are given opportunities to develop and expand their skills in engaging in critically-informed understanding and

interpretation of primary and secondary sources through class presentations (individually or in small groups), and through contributing to and leading discussion and debate.

Module outlines generally include 3 hours of individual tutorials which will facilitate feedback to students and give opportunities for students to discuss their learning and their approach to assessment tasks, both formative and summative. The dissertation includes 3 hours of corporate 'research induction' to the project, and up to 7 hours of individual supervision to enable students to gain the maximum appropriate advice and help in developing and completing their projects.

Appropriate adjustments will be made to assessment tasks for students with particular needs, in consultation with appropriate professional assessment and advice.

13.2 Assessment Profile of Tasks

Assessment Schedule Year 1

Module	Assessment mode	Module Leaders
MIN7001 (20 credits) **Pastoral Theology and Scripture in Ministry**	**(20%)** <u>Short Paper – 1,000 words</u> Reflection on the interpretation of scripture in a ministerial context. **(80%)** <u>Reflective essay, 5000 words</u> Draw on theological and scriptural models and literature to reflect on own ministry and values.	Peter Tyler/Francisco-Javier Ruiz-Ortiz
MIN7002 Ethical and Social Issues of Ministry (20 credits)	**(20%)** <u>Presentation (hard copy, notes): 15 mins</u> On ministerial context: personal location within it and identification of key ethical and social issues **(80%)** <u>Reflective essay, 4 - 5,000 words:</u> Critically consider the significance of ethical and social perspectives to research in your ministerial domain.	Ashley Beck/Susan Longhurst
MIN7003 Research Skills and Methods (20 credits)	**(50%)** <u>Research Design 2500-3000 words</u> Design a small-scale research project based on an element of the envisaged methodological approach/es potentially to be used in the main study, including rationale and justification for its selection.	Peter Tyler/David Fincham

| | **(50%)**
Research Exercise Portfolio and Skills Record <u>2,500 -3,000 words</u>
Research Methods exercises are undertaken throughout the course both in class and via Moodle. Students present evidence of their engagement with these and maintain a skills development record in Mahara. A passing grade is obtained by presenting a portfolio demonstrating sustained and reflexive engagement | |

Assessment Schedule Year 2

Module	Assessment mode	Module Leader
MIN7004 Yourself as Researcher: Practitioner Research in Context (20 credits)	**(20%)** <u>Presentation, 15 mins</u> Critically reflect on the social and theological context for practitioner research in your ministerial field. **(80%)** <u>Research Inquiry and reflective commentary, 3,500 words</u> Undertake a small-scale research inquiry into your own ministry. Write a reflective commentary relating your experience to the nature and value of practitioner research in your own professional context and one or more issues that may arise in relation to the use of research findings.	Caroline Healy
MIN7005 Engaging with Research: Research, Policy and the Political (20 credits)	**(100%)** <u>Reflective essay, 4,000 words</u> 1. Identify an issue, critical incident or policy question arising in your ministry. 2. Analyse it with reference to one or more socio-political/theological paradigms of knowledge and value, making recommendations for appropriate pastoral response	David Fincham
MIN7007 Engaging in Theological Reflection	**(20%)** <u>Presentation (hard copy, notes): 15 mins</u> The advantages and disadvantages of various models of theological reflection relevant to your research. **(80%)** <u>Reflective essay, 4 - 5,000 words</u> 1. Identify an issue, critical incident or theological question arising in your ministry. 2. Use the tools of theological reflection to relate it to the theological/scriptural/pastoral sources	Peter Tyler
MIN7006 Research Proposal (60 Credits)	<u>Research Proposal, 10-12000 words plus oral examination of up to an hour</u>	Peter Tyler/David Fincham

	Design a Research Proposal for a project suitable to be researched as a doctoral Dissertation, including ethics clearances and a pilot study. Oral examination of up to an hour (pass/fail only)				

13.3 Assessment Grade-Related Criteria

The University's policy is that internally-moderated marks and feedback on assessment tasks should be available to students within three working weeks of submission, and this is the expectation of this programme. Final marks will be confirmed at the examination board after scrutiny by the external examiner.

The University has agreed criteria for assessment at Master's level, and these are reproduced below.

Grading criteria	Knowledge and Understanding	Intellectual skills	Scholarly practices	Enquiry and research skills	Professional and life skills
0-39 Fail	Demonstrates little knowledge or understanding of the field Demonstrates significant weaknesses in the knowledge base, and/or simply reproduces knowledge	Very little or no critical ability Poor, inconsistent analysis	Failure to evidence or discuss/apply appropriate examples of literature relating to current research and advanced scholarship in the field References to literature/evidence	Demonstrates little or no skill in selected techniques applicable to own research or advanced scholarship Lacks any understanding of how established techniques of	Significant weaknesses evident in key areas such as communication, problem-solving and project management Inability to adapt Inability to work flexibly, independently as

Grading criteria	Knowledge and Understanding	Intellectual skills	Scholarly practices	Enquiry and research skills	Professional and life skills
	without evidence of understanding		and use of academic conventions are flawed, and/or inconsistent

Argument absent, or lacking any clarity and/or logic | research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge | part of the student cohort |
| 40-49 Fail | Demonstrates knowledge of the field and awareness of current evidence and issues, but with some notable weaknesses

Lacks knowledge and understanding of some key areas | Some appropriate analysis, but some significant inconsistencies which affect the soundness of argument and/or conclusions

Demonstrates very limited critical ability | Can evidence and discuss/apply examples of literature relating to current research but lacks critical engagement

References to appropriate literature/evidence and use of academic conventions are insufficient and/or inconsistent

Argument is attempted, but lacks in clarity and/or logic | Demonstrates some skill in selected techniques applicable to own research or advanced scholarship, but with significant areas of weakness

Lacks sufficient understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge | Demonstrates generally effective employability skills, including communication and problem-solving, but with some problematic areas of weakness

Limited ability to adapt

Ability to work flexibly, independently or as part of the student cohort, but with areas of weakness |

Grading criteria	Knowledge and Understanding	Intellectual skills	Scholarly practices	Enquiry and research skills	Professional and life skills
50-59 Pass	Demonstrates a sound knowledge and understanding of material within a specialised field of study Demonstrates an understanding of current theoretical and methodological approaches and how these affect the way the knowledge base is interpreted	Provides evidence of relevant and sound analysis within the specialised area, with some ability to evaluate critically Is able to analyse complex issues and make appropriate judgements	Can evaluate critically examples of literature relating to current research and advanced scholarship in the field Makes consistently sound use of appropriate academic conventions and academic honesty Able to communicate argument, evidence and conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences	Demonstrates understanding of and skills in selected techniques applicable to own research or advanced scholarship Shows some originality in the application of knowledge, and some understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline	Shows a consistently good level of employability skills, including team working, project management, IT/computer literacy, creativity and flexibility Demonstrates capabilities to support effective communication in a range of complex and specialised contexts Shows consistent ability in tackling and solving demanding problems Can plan and direct own learning Demonstrates ability to advance own knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills Demonstrates the independent

Grading criteria	Knowledge and Understanding	Intellectual skills	Scholarly practices	Enquiry and research skills	Professional and life skills
					learning ability required for continuing professional development
60-69 Merit	Produces work with a well-defined focus

Demonstrates a systematic knowledge, understanding and critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice | Is able to evaluate methodologies critically and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses

Is able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, making sound judgements in the absence of complete data | Is able to evaluate critically a range of literature relating to current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline

Makes consistently good use of appropriate academic conventions and academic honesty

Able to communicate very effectively arguments, evidence and conclusions to specialist and non-specialist audiences | Displays a comprehensive understanding of and skills in techniques applicable to own research or advanced scholarship

Shows originality in the application of knowledge, together with a good understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline | Shows a high level of employability skills, including team working, project management, IT/computer literacy, creativity and flexibility

Demonstrates very effective communication in a range of complex and specialised contexts

Demonstrates self-direction and some originality in tackling and solving demanding problems

Can act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level |

Grading criteria	Knowledge and Understanding	Intellectual skills	Scholarly practices	Enquiry and research skills	Professional and life skills
					Demonstrates the skills and attitudes needed to advance own knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills Demonstrates the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development
70-79 Distinction	Produces work of exceptional standard, reflecting outstanding knowledge and understanding of material Displays exceptional mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills, with an exceptional critical awareness of current	Shows outstanding ability to evaluate methodologies critically and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses Is able to deal with a range of complex issues both systematically and creatively, making excellent judgements in	Is able to evaluate critically, with exceptional insight, a range of literature relating to current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline Makes consistently excellent use of appropriate academic conventions and academic honesty Able to communicate at a very high level	Employs advanced skills to conduct research and, where appropriate, advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for related decision making Displays an exceptional grasp of techniques applicable to	Shows a very high level of employability skills, including team working/leadership, project management, IT/computer literacy, creativity and flexibility Demonstrates very high level communication skills in a range of complex contexts, and ability to write at publishable standard

Grading criteria	Knowledge and Understanding	Intellectual skills	Scholarly practices	Enquiry and research skills	Professional and life skills
	problems and/or new insights at the forefront of the field	the absence of complete data	arguments, evidence and conclusions to specialist and non-specialist audiences	own research or advanced scholarship Shows originality in application of knowledge, and excellent understanding of how established techniques of enquiry create and interpret knowledge in the discipline	Demonstrates autonomy and notable originality in tackling and solving demanding problems Shows a high level of consistency and autonomy in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level Demonstrates the skills and attitudes needed to advance own knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level Demonstrates the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development
80-100 Distinction	This work meets and often exceeds the standard for distinction, as described in the 70-79 band, across *all* sub-categories of criteria: knowledge and understanding of subject; cognitive skills; research skills; use of research-informed literature; and skills for life and professional employment.				

Grading criteria	Knowledge and Understanding	Intellectual skills	Scholarly practices	Enquiry and research skills	Professional and life skills
	This work is of publishable quality, with only very minor amendments, and would be likely to receive that judgement if submitted to a peer-reviewed journal.				

14. Quality Assurance and Student Experience

14.1 Timetable and Tutorial Support

A timetable for the current academic year is given as an insert to this booklet (Appendix 1).

The Programme Director, Peter Tyler, has direct responsibility for this programme and his office may be found on the 1st floor of the Old House (E Corridor) in E103. If you have any questions or concerns at any point relating to the programme as a whole, then please contact Peter on 020 8240 4082 or peter.tyler@stmarys.ac.uk to make an appointment. If you have a question relating to a specific module then either ask your module convenor before or after the seminar, or arrange a time to meet or make contact with them by telephone or email.

14.2 Module evaluation and Staff-Student Boards

Towards the end of each module, students will be invited to complete a module evaluation form online by which they can give an assessment of the module from the students' point of view. These can be signed or left anonymous as the student wishes. These forms are very valuable in getting an impression of how the module is experienced by the group as a whole, and where there are issues that need to be addressed or areas that need to be developed.

Towards the end of each semester (i.e. twice a year) there will be a Staff Student Programme Board at which the running of the programme will be discussed. All students are welcome to attend this meeting at which at least two students will be present. The Forum will review the module evaluation forms for all the modules and also discuss other issues that are raised by the students' representatives, the module convenors, the programme director or the subject librarian. If you have issues related to the programme that you would like raised at the Forum, but you cannot be there in person, then you

can ask your student representative or any of the module convenors to present it to the meeting. Minutes from the Forum will be distributed to all students by email.

15. Careers Advice

15.1 Careers and Employability

It is anticipated that many students will study part-time as continuing professional development, alongside various forms of Christian ministry and leadership, or for personal interest; for such people, the programme will enhance their future employability, including in more senior roles. Some will acquire an enhanced education in ministry which would open specific opportunities in teaching and HE lecturing and work with Christian or other charities and agencies. The programme will also provide an education which sensitises students to engaging with religious and ethical ideas from other times, cultures and places, and thus will equip them for work engaging with cross-cultural situations, such as non-governmental organisations in the UK and overseas, international relations, the media and the Civil Service.

The course is primarily, though not exclusively, intended for Christians of any tradition. The study of ministry at the University will take place within the context of a believing Christian community. Christian ministers taking the DMin part-time are likely to be engaged already in service in particular contexts, and will be encouraged and supported to make explicit connections between their studies and their ministries — the programme team do not anticipate that a specific 'placement' would be helpful or desirable (or, for that matter, practical) for such students. Since it is anticipated that the majority of students taking the course will be more mature and already be engaged in ministry, they will have the necessary experience of life and the world to draw upon in making these connections.

To engage in reflection on ministry in relation to today's world will necessarily involve students being critically self-reflective about their world-view, mind-set, and approach to life and society, and features of modules, both core and optional, will encourage such critical self-reflection. The increasing occurrence of reflection on ministry in areas such as healthcare, psychology and education will help students to find a means to employment in these other diverse work-places. Some of the teaching will take place with students engaging in other St Mary's professional doctorates and postgraduate courses, which will again encourage exchange of ideas and viewpoints.

15.2 Careers Resources

The careers information room at the Careers Service contains electronic and paper-based resources, prospectuses for further study and funding information, occupational information and gap year information. They also have brochures, booklets and leaflets to take away, including 'How to write a

CV', 'How to analyse and promote your skills for work', 'How to succeed at Interviews', 'Recruitment consultancies for graduates in the London area'.

In addition the Careers Service offers a range of services including individual guidance appointments with a CareersConsultant, workshops on subjects such as preparing CV's, interview skills, psychometric tests, employer presentations and fairs.

Keeping in touch with the Careers Service

The Careers Service is in **Room J3** (next to the DolcHe Vita Café)

Open throughout the year, Monday – Friday 09.30 – 17.00

Have a chat with a Careers Consultant – Monday to Thursday, 10.30-12.30 and 2.30-4.30 Tel 020 8240 4055

www.facebook.com/stmarys.careers

careers@stmarys.ac.uk

Simmspace / Careers Service @StMarys_Careers

Doctor of Ministry (DMin)

Dates and Modules 2022/23

All sessions are 9.30/9.45am – 4.30pm unless stated

2022

Induction: 17th September, 10 – 2pm

MIN 7001Pastoral Theology and Scripture in Ministry

Saturdays: 1st October (Francisco-Javier Ruiz-Ortiz), 26th November (Peter Tyler), starts 9.45am

MIN7003 Research Skills and Methods

Saturdays: 5th November (Peter Tyler and David Fincham), 4th March (2023)(Peter Tyler and David Fincham), starts 9.45 am

2023

MIN7002 Ethical and Social Issues of Ministry

Saturdays: 11th February (Susan Longhurst), 20th May (Ashley Beck), starts 9.45am

Appendix 2: Marking and Moderation Process (Appendix H from Assessment Policy)

How is my work marked?

After you submit your assignment, it is marked by at least one tutor. If your assignment is a written exam or written piece of coursework, you can expect this to be marked anonymously, i.e. your identity will not be known to your tutor as he or she marks the assignment. Your tutor should only be able to identify you by your regnum. Anonymous marking helps the University to ensure that the marking process is objective and avoids bias.

Not all assessment can be marked anonymously due to the nature of the tasks. Examples of this include oral exams, productions and individual and group presentations.

Your work may then be subject to a process known as moderation. Moderation will generally involve a second marker checking a sample of work, along with the first marker's marks and comments, to verify the overall standard of marking and the use of the marking criteria.

For Level 7, a sample of at least 10% will be moderated and this will include a range of marks from the top, middle and bottom of the marking scale. All borderline fails, including those at Level 4, will be moderated.

There are exceptions to this. All dissertations and research projects will normally be blind second marked, which means that they will be marked by two tutors independently who have no access to each other's mark/grade and comments.

The purpose of moderation is to provide an internal check on the marking to ensure that the marking criteria are applied in a fair and consistent manner and that marking within and between modules is consistent.

The marks of the first marker generally will stand unless the moderation highlights significant differences between the two markers. If there are significant differences, further action will be then be taken with the approval of the Programme Director.

Methods that can be used to resolve disagreements include the first marker reviewing the marks following feedback from the second marker, all assignments being second marked by the second marker or third marking of the sample by another tutor.

Where there is significant disagreement in terms of the general consistency of marking, for instance if the first marker has marked too harshly or too generously, the two markers can negotiate to adjust the marks accordingly for all students and not just those in the sample.

Marks for individual students will not be changed after moderation, except in cases of mathematical errors, when marking criteria have not been correctly applied or when all assignments have been second marked. This ensures that all students are treated fairly and equitably. If marks for individual students in the sample are changed, those students could benefit or be disadvantaged by being included in the sample of work that was moderated or second marked.

You will always receive one final agreed mark. However, your tutor will keep a record of any mark differences, how these were resolved and the final outcome. Please note that you cannot appeal against the marks awarded by your tutors as these are deemed to be academic judgements. You can appeal if you believe the marking procedures have not been applied correctly.

What happens next?

After your assignment is marked by your tutors, it is then subject to external moderation by an external examiner. The use of external examiners is standard practice across the university sector in the UK. Each programme at the University has at least one external examiner, who is often a tutor in the same subject area from another university. Depending on the subject area, some programmes will also have external examiners from the workplace.

Why is this important to you? External examiners provide an additional check on the marking carried out by your tutors. External examiners help to ensure that marking within modules and across the entire programme is consistent and that our regulations and procedures have been applied appropriately. External examiners are also responsible for ensuring that the standards of this programme are comparable with equivalent programmes at their university and other universities that they have worked or examined at.

External examiners will not see all assignments. They will agree a sample with your tutors in advance. However, external examiners do have the right to see all assignments if they wish. The agreed sample should contain those assignments that have been moderated or second marked by your tutors and a range from the top, middle and bottom of the marking scale and first class or distinction marks, fail marks and borderline pass/fail marks.

External examiners do not act as another marker. They check the sample to see whether the marking is appropriate and consistent. If the external examiner suggests changes to the marks, as with internal moderation and second marking, the marks for all students on the module (not just those sampled) will be changed accordingly.

Appendix 3: Examination Board Process (Appendix J from Assessment Policy)

Programme Examination Board

Once your assignments have been marked and checked internally and by the external examiner(s), the marks are then approved by the Programme Examination Board, which meets at the end of each assessment period. For undergraduate programmes, this will typically be at the end of semesters one and two and the resit period. For postgraduate and PGCE programmes, the timings of meetings will vary from programme to programme.

The Programme Examination Board's membership consists of the Programme Director, the External Examiner(s) and all tutors who contribute to the teaching of the programme. The meetings are chaired by another tutor (normally a Programme Director) from another School in the University. Attendance of at least 50% of the members is required for the meetings to proceed. At least one External Examiner

must be present at the main meeting of the academic year where the majority of the marks are approved.

The Programme Examination Board is specifically tasked with approving:

1) The mark for each individual assessment you have taken;

2) The overall module mark (percentage and grade) for each of your modules;

3) Internal module compensation (see below) for students who are eligible.

The Programme Examination Board also makes recommendations to the relevant University Examination Board in relation to:

1) Recommendations for programme termination for students who have no right of resit or retake in core modules;

2) Recommendations regarding students who have been disadvantaged as a group as a result of errors in the assessment process or other circumstances beyond their control.

Internal Module Compensation

Internal module compensation can be applied if you achieve the pass mark for a module but have not passed each individual assessment. This would mean that you would not be required to resubmit the failed assessment. However, some programmes, such as those which lead to professional accreditation, do not allow internal module compensation.

The Academic Regulations allow internal module compensation in the following situations:

1) For substantive assessments (those which contribute 35% or more to the overall module mark), you must achieve a mark of at least 30% at undergraduate level or at least 40% at postgraduate level, and a pass mark for the module overall;

2) For non-substantive assessments (those which contribute less than 35% to the overall module mark), internal compensation is allowed regardless of the mark achieved provided that you achieve a pass mark for the module overall.

University Examination Board

The decisions and recommendations of the Programme Examination Board then go to the relevant University Examination Board for noting or approval. The University has a separate Examination Board for foundation, undergraduate, postgraduate and PGCE programmes. These Boards are responsible for approving awards, deciding on student progression and programme termination and ratifying decisions made by the Academic Misconduct Panel and the Extenuating Circumstances Board.

The University Examination Board has a similar structure to the Programme Examination Board. The Board's membership consists of the External Examiner and the Programme Directors for programmes which report to that Board. The meetings are chaired by a senior member of staff (normally a Vice-Principal). Attendance of at least 50% of the members is required for the meetings to proceed. The External Examiner must be present at the main meeting of the academic year where the majority of the awards are approved.

Appendix 4: A Guide to Academic Conduct (Appendix L from Assessment Regulations)

Your learning during your time at St Mary's University is a journey of discovery as you progress through your programme. Whilst being supported and guided by the tutorial/supervisory team, you will also undertake your own research, preparation and planning as you construct your assessment tasks. This is a vital element of your learning, and it is important to remember that the assessments are an integral part of that learning – not simply a way of testing *what* you have learned.

That learning process only has meaning and value if you present your own thoughts, *your* analysis – *your* work.

That is the standard of academic conduct that we expect, and hope, our students attain – however, we do have procedures in place to address any apparent instances of academic *mis*conduct.

Academic Misconduct is taken very seriously by the University, and students should be aware that the consequences of such misconduct can be serious.

Examples of behaviours considered to constitute academic misconduct are as follows:

- copying work from reference sources or other students (**plagiarism**);
- using elements of your own work more than once and without referencing the original **(auto-plagiarism)**;
- working too closely together with other students to produce very similar submissions (**collusion**);
- allowing another student(s) to copy their work (**unfair advantage**)
- fabricating results or other outcomes that form part of the work (**falsification of data**);
- bringing unauthorised materials/electronic devices into an examination room, and/or behaving in other ways that could bring an unfair advantage (**examination cheating**).

Academic Misconduct – Guidelines for Students

The above represent the most common forms of academic misconduct, however, students should refer to the "Academic Misconduct – Guidelines for Students" on SIMMSpace in order to familiarise themselves with the more detailed information about the types of academic misconduct.

These Guidelines also explain the process that will be followed when a student is suspected of academic misconduct; and the types and levels of sanctions that will be applied when cases are proven.

Non-Academic Misconduct

Students should please note that Academic Misconduct and other forms of Student Misconduct are addressed via different processes.

Allegations of Misconduct which are not categorised as academic will be investigated and progressed by the Head of School or Service (or nominee) according to Section 4 of the Student Disciplinary Procedures.