

Theological Study Requirements for National Ordained Ministry (NOM) Candidates

Exploring My Options

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa NZ (PCANZ) determines the policies, procedures, profiles of ministry, training needs and standards which govern the training programmes for ordained ministry.¹

I sense a call to be a Presbyterian minister. What do I need to do?

National Ordained Ministry is one of four strands of ordained ministry in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

As you test your sense of call from God to serve as a National Ordained Minister (NOM), the PCANZ has a number of ways to discern, with you, what God is saying to you and the church.² There is an [extended discernment and formational process](#) that you need to be aware of.

What formal study will I need to complete?

Usually, the PCANZ requires those preparing for ministry training to have completed part or all of another tertiary or vocation award *before* commencing theological study. This requirement is fairly general and may be modified having regard to your life-experience and background in church leadership.

The major requirement is to complete a recognised theological qualification; You will need to study for a bachelor's degree (360 credits/points). This will usually be a minimum of three years full-time study (level 5-7 NZQA).

The PCANZ refers to this phase of your preparation for NOM as your “Foundation Studies.”

Your Foundation Studies are a crucial time to prepare you for the 22-month NOM internship programme at the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership (KCML).

Getting the Right Guidance

Who do I need to be talking with?

This is important:

You need to be talking with key people as soon as you can and to remain in close contact with them. They will help guide you through the process and ensure you are making wise choices with your study programme.

¹ PCANZ Book of Order – section 9.5, page 62.

² The two main assessments for those applying for national ordained ministry take place firstly at presbytery level and then, if your sense of call is affirmed there, at national assessment. You can only proceed towards the internship programme if your sense of call has been affirmed at both presbytery and national level.

Those people are:

1. **Your [Presbytery Candidate Convener](#).** They will advise and guide you through the comprehensive application process.
2. **Dean of Studies at the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership.** The [Dean of Studies](#) at KCML will confirm for you the theological studies you will need to complete. In deciding that, we need to respect the training provider may have subjects they require to be included in the qualification.
3. **A training provider recognised by the PCANZ.** You have a choice of four theological institutions which the PCANZ has recognised as training providers:

Please note: All training providers provide distance options for study

- ◆ [Carey Baptist College](#) (Auckland)
- ◆ [Laidlaw College](#) (Henderson, Manukau, Christchurch)
- ◆ [Otago University](#) (Dunedin)
- ◆ [Pacific Theological College](#) (Suva)

The Character and Competence of a PCANZ Minister

Your training and formation (including time spent in the 22-month NOM internship programme) is intended to develop you in areas which are essential for any minister of the PCANZ. The areas in focus are:

- ◆ *Personal Maturity*
Demonstrates robust and rounded sense of Christian presence marked by Christ-centred spirituality and character, emotional maturity, well-being, attentiveness and ability to apply themselves to diverse contexts. Attentive to self-care and self-management. Commitment to ethically responsible ministry highlighting interpersonal and professional competence and safety.
- ◆ *Leading Worship and Theological Attentiveness*
Practices key ministry competencies with skill, sensitivity to context, authenticity and shaped by attentiveness to God and the best of the Reformed tradition. Demonstrates biblical/theological aptitude in ministry settings. Agile leader with capacity to improvise. Ethically responsible ministry ensuring all people are served without discrimination, manipulation or exploitation.
- ◆ *Cultivating Communal and Pastoral Formation*
Listens well. Takes initiative and implements key processes of communal and pastoral formation. Instils confidence and trust when leading in public forums and personal settings. Reads the big picture and shows skills of interpreting the social situation. Operates within a Presbyterian ecclesial identity. Respects and works constructively with difference. Ethically responsible ministry with particular reference to truthfulness and confidentiality.

◆ *Enabling Mission Practice*

Practices leadership which draws the faith community and individuals to discern and engage in God's mission in multiple and diverse contexts, grow in gospel practice, innovation, cross cultural intelligence and faithful witness to Christ. Ethically responsible ministry ensuring all people the church interacts with are treated with compassion, natural justice, dignity and safety.

The internship is a time when we draw on your foundation studies and submit to the good work Christ has begun in you (Philippians 1:6). KCML will explore, develop and extend your studies for ministry formation. The term the PCANZ uses to describe this is: readiness for ministry.

Essential Subjects to Study

There are a range of biblical and theological subject areas that the PCANZ consider important for their ministers to study. The approved theological training providers teach those subjects as part of their regular programme of studies.

Biblical Studies

You will need to learn how to read the Bible so that you can speak into and engage with the life of the world.

Your degree will show evidence of:

- Deep and focused engagement with the Scriptures as ancient texts
- Interpretation of the Scriptures as a contemporary voice
- Working knowledge of the diversity and unity of the Old and New Testaments
- Appreciation of the place of the Gospels

Christian Thought and Church History

You will need to have a working and active knowledge of how the Christian Church has formed her identity, thinking and action through the ages.

Your degree will show evidence of:

- Exposure to and practice of introductory theological methods
- Study of the historical story of the church; including as it pertains to New Zealand
- Engagement with the person and work of Christ (Christology)
- Engagement with the nature and mission of the church (Ecclesiology)
- Engagement with theological ethics

Ministry in Church and Society

You will be studying in response to the call of God on your life; which means you are studying for the benefit of others that you will minister to. A crucial element of that is the practice of being able to study, reflect and practice what you are learning. There are a range of subjects that will develop your skills and gifts in this way.

Your degree will show evidence of:

- Study and engagement in ministry subjects

Each training provider offer a suite of subjects whose range includes Mission, Pastoral and Contextual Studies, Spiritual Formation, Christian Education, Leadership and Youth Ministry.

Te Ao Māori

The PCANZ takes seriously her commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and our ministry partner, Te Aka Puaho, and seeks to deepen our responsibility to living and ministering accordingly.

Your degree will ideally include

- One course on Māori language and/or culture at the beginning of your formal study

Additional Subjects

Sometimes KCML will require you to engage in study in a subject area which is light in your qualification. KCML will work with you in finding the best way to complete any requirements before commencing the internship programme.

Graduates with Tertiary Qualifications in Non-Theological Disciplines

If you have a tertiary qualification (e.g. bachelor or masters) in another discipline, the training provider you are studying with, may cross-credit subjects to your theological degree.

Alternatively, you might choose to study towards a Graduate Diploma in Theology³. A Graduate Diploma is open to anyone who has an undergraduate degree. The subjects studied for a Graduate Diploma in Theology are at undergraduate level.

A Post-Graduate Diploma is only available to someone who has an undergraduate qualification in theology. As the study requirements for a Post-Graduate Diploma are more rigorous and advanced you will need to attain a grade average of a B or B+ depending on the training provider you are with. Also, the number and range of subjects available for a Post-Graduate Diploma do not always match the subjects the PCANZ require for a Foundation Studies qualification.

As the Graduate Diploma option translates to less than three years full-time theological study; KCML will need to decide whether your qualification satisfies the principles of Foundation Study requirements. This is because the PCANZ needs to be assured their ministers have spent the necessary time and depth in theological study so they can lead safely, confidently and competently. In making the decision, KCML will:

- Consider the subjects you studied across the disciplines of Biblical Studies, Christian Thought and Church History, Ministry in Church and Society, and Te Ao Māori.
- Talk with you about supplementing the Graduate Diploma with an appropriate certificate qualification, such as a Certificate of Proficiency, to bolster the range of undergraduate subjects you have studied in a Graduate Diploma.⁴

³ Depending on the training provider, the title of the diploma can be termed differently. It could be “Graduate Diploma” or “Diploma for Graduates”; either way it is the same qualification.

⁴ Some training providers offer certificate studies which will add to the subjects studied in a Graduate Diploma. However, usually only four subjects make up a standard certificate qualification. This still may not be enough to fulfil all foundation study

- Consider what, if any, supplementary courses of study (under the tutelage of KCML) are required

Regardless of which study option you explore, remember to stay in close contact with the Dean of Studies (KCML) as you and your training provider discuss your study programme.

requirements. KCML may direct you to finish your foundation studies with a training provider who can award a “Certificate of Proficiency” which has the scope to include whatever subjects are required.