

Admissions Policy for Ordination Candidates (Common Awards Programmes)

Introduction

St Stephen's House accepts applications for the following programmes within the Common Awards validated by the University of Durham:

- Foundation Award in Theology, Ministry and Mission;
- Certificate of Higher Education in Theology, Ministry and Mission (120);
- Diploma of Higher Education in Theology, Ministry and Mission;
- BA in Theology, Ministry and Mission;
- Graduate Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission;
- Postgraduate Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission
- MA in Theology, Ministry and Mission.

This policy is in accord with the norms for fairness and transparency set out by the University. Decisions on admissions are based solely on the individual merits of each candidate, their suitability for the course they have applied to study, and the selection criteria appropriate to the course of study. Admissions procedures are kept under regular review to ensure compliance with this policy. All selection for admission takes place within the parameters of our Equality Policy which is published at <https://www.ssho.ox.ac.uk/policies/>

Criteria

1. Candidates for the Common Awards must be sponsored by the Church of England for full-time training or otherwise eligible for the Common Awards programmes under the agreement between the Church of England and the University of Durham, and have an immigration status that allows them to study in the programme.
2. *Foundation Award* Entry to this programme is flexible, depending on the student's experience, employment and education. In general, applicants – especially those with little or no employment history – are likely to have at least one A-level (Grade E or above) or equivalent. However, if an applicant (especially a mature student) does not have this academic qualification, St Stephen's House will assess other evidence of the candidate's potential to benefit from study in Theology, Ministry and Mission at level 4, for example, samples of recent academic writing or relevant work experience.
3. *Certificate of Higher Education* Entry to this programme is flexible, depending on the student's experience, employment and education. In general, applicants – especially those with little or no employment history – would normally have at least one A-level (Grade E or above) or equivalent. However, if an applicant (especially a mature student) does not have this academic qualification, St Stephen's House will assess other evidence of the candidate's potential to benefit

- from study in Theology, Ministry and Mission at Certificate (HE) level, for example, samples of recent academic writing or relevant work experience. Students who have successfully completed the Foundation Award are eligible to apply to continue to the Certificate.
4. *Diploma of Higher Education* Entry to the Diploma is flexible, depending on the candidate's experience, employment and education. In general, applicants would normally have at least two A-levels (at Grade E or above) or equivalent qualifications. However, if an applicant (especially a mature student) does not have these academic qualifications, St Stephen's House will assess other evidence of the candidate's potential to benefit from the Diploma (HE), for example, samples of recent academic writing or relevant work experience. Students who have successfully completed the Foundation Award or Certificate HE (120) are eligible to apply to continue to the Diploma (HE).
 5. *BA in TMM*. Normally entry to the BA requires at least three A-levels (Grade E or above) or equivalent. Graduates in other subjects may enter the BA programme, and students who have completed the Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission successfully may be admitted to the final year of the BA programme.
 6. *Graduate Diploma* Normally entry to the Graduate Diploma requires an upper second class Honours degree or equivalent. Graduates in other subjects and students who have completed a Diploma (HE) in theology successfully may enter the Graduate Diploma programme. For non-theology graduates, normally students should have an upper second class honours degree. However, especially for mature students, prior professional experience will be taken into account as well as educational qualifications and other evidence of ability to benefit from the programme such as samples of recent academic writing .
 7. *Postgraduate Diploma and MA in TMM* Normally an upper second class Honours degree or equivalent in a subject relevant to the proposed course of study. Normally students will need a good degree (or other level 6 qualification, such as a Graduate Diploma) in theology, although graduates (classed as first-class or 2:1 honours) in other disciplines with experience of Theology or Religious Studies to at least undergraduate Certificate level (awarded with credit or distinction, or with an overall mark of at least 60%) may also be admitted to the programme.
 8. Candidates for the Foundation Award, Certificate HE, Diploma HE or BA in TMM for whom English is their second language should have achieved a score of 6.5 in an IELTS examination (with no component under 6.0), or equivalent, if they do not have qualifications at A-level or above where the primary language of instruction was English.
 9. Candidates for the Graduate Diploma, Postgraduate Diploma or the MA in TMM for whom English is their second language should have achieved a score of 7.0 in an IELTS examination (with no component under 6.5), or equivalent, if they do not have qualifications at A-level or above where the primary language of instruction was English.
 10. Our policy on Accredited Prior Learning is set out in a separate document.

11. Where candidates do not meet these entry requirements, their application will be referred to the Common Awards Team at the University of Durham for decision by the Common Awards Management Board (normally by Chair's Action).

Process

12. The Admissions Process is managed by the Admissions Secretary under the direction of the Tutor for Admissions for Ordinands.
13. Candidates are invited to interview on receipt of their application form.
14. Interviews for admission normally take place twice a term (a maximum of four candidates attend at each interview round), but if circumstances require late entrants and special cases are sometimes interviewed outside the usual interview rounds.
15. Before the interview the college requests three references - normally from the candidate's parish priest, another ordained minister and an occupational or academic referee. These are then available to interviewing staff.
16. Candidates arrive at lunchtime on Thursday and leave after lunchtime on Friday, and during their stay candidates normally:
 - a. Attend college worship
 - b. Attend a guest night dinner
 - c. View college accommodation
 - d. Have an interview with the Principal
 - e. Have an interview with the Course Director
17. Interviewers record in writing their assessment of the candidate's suitability to study here for the relevant qualification along with a recommendation of acceptance or refusal.
18. The Principal is responsible for Admissions decisions under this policy.
19. Decision letters are sent to candidates as soon as possible after their interviews.
20. Offers to candidates seeking the sponsorship of a bishop are conditional if the candidate has not yet received notification of the bishop's decision on the recommendation of the Bishops' Advisory Panel.
21. Decisions are reported to the next formal Staff Meeting.

Feedback

22. Feedback will only be given on written request to the Admissions Secretary, when it will be provided generally either by email or in writing in as timely a fashion as possible.

Staff Training

23. Normally St Stephen's staff involved in interviewing will have training provided by the Oxford Learning Institute and/or have been mentored by the Senior Tutor.

Review

24. The operation of this policy will be kept under review in the first instance through reporting of its operation to regular Staff Meetings, and the termly Common Awards Management Committee. The results of such discussions will be included in the Annual Self Evaluation Process.

Complaints

25. Following the University of Durham, this policy defines a complaint as ‘specific concern regarding a procedural error, irregularity or mal-administration in admissions policies or procedures.’ An appeal is defined as a request by an unsuccessful applicant for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision. Appeals will not normally be considered.
26. Candidates who have an admissions complaint should raise it as soon as possible and normally within 28 days after the event in the first instance to the Course Director for the Common Awards. If the complaint is made in writing, the Course Director will acknowledge it within five working days, and attempt an informal resolution.
27. If informal mechanisms do not produce a resolution, the complaint should be made in writing to the Vice-Principal (or Senior Tutor) who will acknowledge it in writing within 5 working days, institute a formal investigation, and report the decision within 28 working days after the acknowledgement.
28. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, he or she has a right to request a review by the University by contacting the Common Awards Team common.awards@durham.ac.uk The Office of the Independent Adjudicator does not consider complaints about admissions.

Contact Details

Contact Details for members of St Stephen’s House Staff are available on this website via <https://www.ssho.ox.ac.uk/about/people/>

Revised March 2021