

Ministry personnel accreditation Information and frequently asked questions from recent Zoom conversations.

Context

The number and diversity of ministry personnel serving in Lutheran schools and early childhood services has changed significantly in the last 20 years. Historically, a school pastor was called in our larger schools and in the smaller school context, a local congregational pastor would provide some support. In recent years we have seen growth in the different roles and responsibilities of ministry personnel as schools and ECS have continued to attend to their mission and ministry. The list of ministry personnel now includes youth interns, youth workers, ordained and not ordained chaplains and well-being and pastoral care workers. The knowledge and experience they bring to our school communities is rich and varied. The work completed by the Formation Working party and the consultation process suggested that ministry personnel would appreciate an orientation to ministry in the Lutheran education context. The discussions last year identified the following process.

- Participation in, and completion of Connect which is designed to develop an understanding of Lutheran education and the theology that underpins it as well as their role and contribution. Connect: three-days and delivered over five sessions (Induction, Sessions 1-4) as well as the completion of an ePortfolio, and,
- Participation in, and completion of *Introduction to ministry in Lutheran education* (chaplaincy/pastoral care/youth work), and
- Commencement of an agreed theological qualification from Australian Lutheran College (ALC) or equivalent that supports their role and responsibilities if required.

This process has been further elaborated in the attached PPT where you will find information about what this might look like in practice for different roles and responsibilities.

Frequently asked questions from the recent Zoom discussions.

1. What is the definition of Ministry Personnel (i.e. who needs to do this?)

Ministry personnel includes youth workers, chaplains, school pastors and may involve well-being and pastoral care staff. Well-being staff have expressed the need to know more about well-being and related theological concepts. Discussions will be conducted with each school or ECS to determine who and what will best support each person serving in a ministry role.

2. What is the course Introduction to ministry in Lutheran education?

Introduction to ministry in Lutheran education will operate in similar ways to Equip where staff will be released to attend a workshop conducted over some days that will be delivered by regional staff and experienced school-based ministry personnel. There will be core content and electives to attend to the different responsibilities that the varied roles may require. The course will be micro credentialed and provide credit into courses at ALC and other colleges of University of Divinity.

3. Has the course *Introduction to Ministry in Lutheran education* been written yet?

No

4. What is the timeframe?

In Term 4 2022, Ministry personnel can contribute to Zoom workshops to identify key outcomes and learning opportunities for the course. It will be developed in Term 1 2023 and trialed in Term 2 and 3 in 2023.

5. Who is writing *Introduction to Ministry in Lutheran education*?

How do we ensure that the content is relevant and covers ground that is applicable to the role?

The *Introduction to Ministry in Lutheran education* will be co-constructed with Ministry personnel in each region next term and we have had a range of great ideas shared already in these sessions. Such as the diverse nature of worship in Lutheran schools and ECSs.

This course will be facilitated by regional staff and ministry personnel from that region. It will be practical and involve ministry personnel in the kind of learning we would hope occurs in Lutheran schools and early childhood services (ECSs).

6. How can *Introduction to ministry in Lutheran education* meet the needs of such a diverse group of school pastors, youth workers, well-being staff?

Introduction to Ministry in Lutheran education will have some core content for all ministry personnel and then electives offering learning in specific areas of responsibility such as worship, pastoral care etc. Ministry personnel will be able to complete the core and then choose those areas of greatest need.

7. Would a Certificate IV in School Ministry be a better course to develop, rather than a generic theology course?

If people want to complete a Cert IV that is also a possibility but the intention of *The Introduction to Ministry in Lutheran education* is that it is practical and similar in nature to *Equip* where Ministry personnel are released to come to meet with other ministry personnel and learn and share together.

8. What kind of qualification will be provided through the course *Introduction to ministry in Lutheran education*?

Connect and *Introduction to ministry in Lutheran education* can be micro-credentialed into ALC courses.

9. Could *Introduction to ministry in Lutheran education* be conducted earlier than Year 2?

Yes, *Connect* and *Introduction to ministry in Lutheran education* could be completed in the 1st year.

10. Could *Introduction to ministry in Lutheran education* replace *Connect*? (Is there a crossover of content?)

No as *Connect* and *Introduction to ministry in Lutheran education* courses have different purposes and content.

11. Will all ministry personnel have to complete units at ALC?

The accreditation for ministry personnel involves consideration of prior learning and experience and discussions around their role and possible career pathways. Further study forms a part of career progression and needs based professional learning discussions. ALC is able to provide access to the range of offerings through the College of Divinity, eg Ministry personnel wanting to study counselling could access this through Stirling College in Melbourne and have it cross credited to a degree at ALC.

12. Are Chaplains expected to have qualifications?

Chaplains are supported through individualised professional learning plans that attend to their prior learning and role responsibilities. The second page of the Accreditation of Ministry personnel information has some suggested classifications that provide a starting point for discussions.

13. What ongoing learning could be provided for ministry personnel beyond *Connect* and *Introduction to ministry in Lutheran education*?

Lutheran education believes in the importance in ongoing learning and not a once off model. Ministry personnel will have similar Accreditation currency expectations to classroom and school leaders. Regions currently offer chaplain days and spiritual retreats that would contribute to Accreditation currency. This can be an area for further exploration and discussion.

14. How will the school manage Accreditation for ministry personnel to ensure staff are provided with the time and opportunity to do this?

Introduction to ministry in Lutheran education will be offered in similar ways to *Equip* where ministry personnel would be released for in-service days to complete the course. Part time staff could negotiate with their school around their attendance. It is expected that this would form a part of the professional learning plan and budget for Ministry personnel in their first years at a school or ECS. In the early childhood context where volunteers from the local congregation including the pastor can provide ministry support, we will explore ways of providing opportunities for volunteers to learn about the particular needs and approaches in the education context.

15. Has LCA been part of these conversations?

The LEA Executive director has shared the documents with GCB and it has been approved. The LEA Executive director and Director of formation have shared the documents with College of bishops and received their approval. The pastor shortage that is facing the LCA has also been a consideration as we have planned for the support and specialisation of ministry in the Lutheran education context.

16. Who would be required to complete new Accreditation process?

The Accreditation for ministry personnel will take effect for new staff from 2023. There will be transition processes for existing staff and discussions with each school in relation to existing staff and their prior learning and experience to determine what will best meet their needs. Existing staff can choose to complete *Introduction to ministry in Lutheran education* even if it is determined that they will not need to complete the course.

17. Has this been discussed to ensure that school-specific material is addressed (e.g. looking at school's well-being frameworks, Pastoral Care programs, LEA policies, LEA and church networks, service learning programs and care providers)

Yes, the content of the course will engage ministry personnel in reflecting on Lutheran education and school-based documentation. Ministry personnel will co-construct the course with regional and national formation leaders.

18. What would it look like in practical terms – hours, costs, is this paid for by the school or the individual, is it done within work hours? How would this look for part time workers?

It will be done in work hours and if people are part time it would be negotiated with the person and school. Ministry personnel have a professional learning budget, and this would form part of this in first couple of years. For the school this is a great investment in the success of their ministry personnel.

19. Is this about equipping staff appropriately for their role, or about providing them with a pathway to more senior positions?

It is hoped to do both. We hope to equip people for their role but also provide real pathways for staff including teachers who seek a role in the ministry and formation area. Please see the table on page 2 of the Ministry personnel accreditation documentation for career progression through the descriptions of the different roles and possible responsibilities. The Lutheran church has significant issues with pastor supply and this will work to attend to ministry personnel supply and also supports gender equity in the ministry personnel area.

Ideas raised as possible content for the *Introduction to ministry in Lutheran education* by attendees of the zoom discussions

- Consider some different content for Chaplains in various situations, eg secondary, primary, P-12.
- Ministry Personnel will need to be aware of LCA, LEA and district and regional policies and practices
- The importance of adapting ministry to school and ECS settings (with both students and families having different/no faith etc)
- It can be likened to cross cultural ministry
- Involve visual learning, behavioural models, conflict management etc
- Learning opportunities could include mentoring and shadowing
- Help chaplains understand Lutheran education approach to Christian Studies, purpose and pedagogy.
- Help Chaplains to understand worship:
 - What does it look like
 - Equip them to support staff
 - Advise on devotional life in schools an
 - An FAQ for Chaplains

Additional ideas that arose in discussion:

- A need for tools for schools and ECSs to reflect on their Ministry
- Role description for Youth Workers
- Chaplaincy as a career pathway for teachers requires discussion and consideration. Issues such as how does chaplaincy support career pathways to leadership, how can we support teachers with salary parity, etc)
- How to maintain momentum once the initial *Connect* training is completed with staff. What opportunities are schools and ECSs providing after *Connect*?
- Who is responsible for overseeing Accreditation and ongoing opportunities for growing staff in these areas? Can we consider a role in the leadership team, eg an assistant principal with responsibility for formation of staff?
- Curriculum for senior High School students to consider Ministry as a career pathway (including more support for students to show their Faith outside of school)
- Big emphasis on needing to organise clear and defined pathways (to promote progression and support) for Ministry Personnel (including salary and conditions) to create these opportunities and also to encourage young people to work in Ministry in schools and wider church. Needs to start already in High School and provide the options to them.
- Some of the LDP content, Education and theology in Dialogue (ALC unit) would be helpful for Chaplains. It would also support consistency between Principals/teachers/Chaplains etc

Attendees:

Ben Klingberg, Dale Gosden, Mark Rathjen, James Winderlich, Peter Weier, Kate Polack, David Field, Graeme Schache, Adam Yeager, Eloise Beveridge, Stuart Traeger, Will Wallace, Fiona/Eugene, Andy Traeger, Jonathan Kotzur, Fiona McAuliffe, Kris Forman, David Radke, Jon Goessling, Noel Mifsud, Sarah Lush, Grant Wildman, Helen Dorling, Matthias Reid, Tala Aufai, Jeremy Lie, Dan Weller.