

## 'Discover'— Frequently asked questions

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### What is Discover?

**Discover** is a program designed to assist individuals to discern what their future ministry, vocation or service in the church might look like through a personal journey of action and reflection.

Participants will enrol in formal academic study online at ALC while also engaging in a formational experience within their local context.

### Why do Discover?

Discover combines a higher education qualification with formational experiences which are grounded in deep vocational reflection that relate to a participant's area of current or intended service.

Discover is designed to help people who are curious and wish to explore and identify their vocational direction, and answer questions like:

- What has God got in mind for my life?
- Where is God sending me to serve?
- How will I find out?
- How will I prepare?

Discover can also be undertaken by people who want to be enriched and grow in their current paid or volunteer service in the Church.

Discover is one example of ALC's commitment to support people throughout the whole of their service in and through the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ).

Upon successfully completing Discover, a participant is likely to have a stronger sense of where she or he might serve in the Church. In some situations, their initial thinking may change. Discover will therefore also provide a useful off-ramp for the participants while also providing that person with a recognised tertiary qualification. Through Discover, participants will also have the opportunity to 'try out' at least one area of vocational focus, giving them the opportunity to 'get to know' the Church. While a participant might have some certainty about his or her vocational direction, contexts can vary greatly. Discover allows a participant to consider his or her vocational focus from many points of view.

## How is Discover structured?

Discover has two concurrent components.

### 1. Study component

Participants will work with the ALC Course Advisor to select the best qualification for their intended outcomes and context.

### 2. Vocational discernment component

While completing a formal qualification, participants will be encouraged to reflect deeply upon that learning within the context of their local Christian service. This service could be in a local congregation, school, aged or community care facility or some other specialised area.

This part of Discover will be supported by ministry placement supervisors and local mentors, with the aim of encouraging participants to grow through deep vocational reflection upon the interaction between theology and their areas of vocational enquiry.

Where participants are unsure of their vocational direction, Discover can be organised to engage with a variety of vocational experiences. A participant who has experienced one or more ministries already may also be challenged to engage with a broader range of ministry experiences.

At the conclusion of the whole Discover experience, it is anticipated that participants will have completed a portfolio of evidence which may be used to support their admission to the Church's further vocational programs.

## What qualifications are on offer in Discover?

The qualifications available within the Discover program are either a [Diploma in Theology](#) or a [Diploma in Ministry](#) delivered by ALC and accredited by the [University of Divinity](#). These qualifications can be completed in one year (full-time study), or up to four years part-time study. An ALC Course Advisor will assist participants to select the most appropriate qualification and study plan.

Participants who have already completed an undergraduate degree may discuss with the ALC Course Advisor about completing the Discover program with a [Graduate Diploma](#).

For participants who are discerning a call to the ordained ministry, a set program of study is in place.

## How much will Discover cost?

A schedule of fees for qualifications is available at:  
<https://divinity.edu.au/study/fees/tuition-fees/>

It is important to note that qualifications undertaken as part of Discover qualify for Australian Federal Government assistance through [FEE-HELP](#).

The formational (experiential) elements of Discover are offered at no cost to the participant.

## Who can enrol in Discover?

Anyone who has successfully completed Year 12 can apply to enrol in Discover. Mature age entry without Year 12 is also possible in some circumstances. Before ALC admits applicants to the program it will seek to ensure they have every prospect of successfully completing the full program. ALC may, from time to time, recommend additional preparation prior to admission to this program, to ensure the participant's success.

## How is Discover delivered?

Discover utilises the well-attested educational values and practices of Distributed Learning.

Distributed Learning is not online-only learning, and it is not distance education in new clothing. It is something different again. It envisions a college without walls: locally based, nationally coordinated, and globally connected. Distributed Learning accommodates a separation of geographical locations for part of the program, and it focusses on student-to-student as well as teacher-to-student interactions.



Participants follow an approved course of study within a dynamic model of intersecting learning communities: *congregation, college, and context*. Distributed Learning describes a model of learning that includes a mix of online learning, streaming video conferencing, and experiential learning.

Concurrent with their theological study, participants are engaged in a guided process of relational, reflective, and contextual learning, including the use of mentors and supervisors. The ALC Discover Coordinator will also help to create an online community which provides peer and college support.

ALC's Distributed Learning model aims to offer a rich, multi-dimensional learning experience that informs, shapes and prepares people for ministry. The Distributed Learning model represents a clear example of ALC responding to the challenge of providing theological education and training for a changing context.

## What if a potential participant already has a strong sense of her or his vocation or a participant already has significant church worker experience?

Discover is designed to challenge individual assumptions and extend the participant's exposure to the Church's breadth and depth. It creates an opportunity for a number of interested parties to be involved in the participant's journey of vocational discernment. They include the participant, the participant's local community and congregation, and the wider church. Discover allows each of these parties to fully participate in and contribute to the participant's vocational discernment, leading to the creation of a portfolio of evidence to support a vocational direction. The wider church encompasses a range of ministry opportunities beyond that of the parish or congregation, including church-planting and cross-cultural ministry, chaplaincy in hospitals, schools and aged care, and work in welfare, disability and social justice settings.

## What pathways are available to me after Discover?

For participants seeking entry to become an ordained pastor of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand, the *Discover portfolio* is used as part of the process of being admitted to the [pastoral training program](#). The completion of the Diploma in Theology counts as the first year of training.

If a participant is interested in teaching in a Lutheran school, the electives that are selected through their qualification can count towards the completion of ALC's [Lutheran Strand](#) program.

For participants exploring other ministry avenues, the completion of their qualification may be the first year of an ongoing undergraduate or postgraduate academic journey. The *Discover portfolio* may provide additional evidence to support future employment opportunities with the LCA NZ.

## After Discover, can I complete the remainder of the pastoral program part-time?

While this is currently not an option for on-campus participants in this program, it may well be something that ALC considers as part of its ongoing review of courses.

## What does Discover mean for the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand?

Just as a participant has the opportunity to 'get to know' the Church through Discover, the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand also has a similar opportunity in respect of the participant. Christian service is not only a form of personal expression, it is also an expression of our life together under Christ Jesus. A big part of that means being sent. Discover supports that. As the Church also engages in deep reflection with the participant—through local leaders, mentors and ALC—the Church can more confidently become a sending community for that participant.

Discover is an opportunity for Lutheran congregations, schools, and aged and community care facilities to become sending and supporting communities, thereby preparing people for future service in the Church.

## How do you describe ALC?

ALC—Australian Lutheran College—is a diverse and welcoming learning community, committed to delivering quality theological education and training that prepares tomorrow's leaders—pastors, teachers, church workers and volunteers of all kinds—to serve and lead with confident Christian faith, integrity, competence and compassion in a changing world.

While ALC is located in Adelaide, South Australia, it is a national provider and the majority of our participants are based outside Adelaide. All participants benefit from our innovative and distributed approaches to learning that utilise online learning, intensives located throughout Australia and New Zealand and practices that support deep reflection in each of our participant's local contexts. Read more about us on our college website: <https://alc.edu.au/about/>.

## What is ALC's educational vision?

ALC's vision, as the theological education and research institution of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand (LCANZ), is to see God's love in Christ coming to life through preparing God's servants—pastors, teachers, church workers, and volunteers of all kinds—to serve and lead with confident Christian faith, integrity, competence and compassion in a diverse and changing denomination and world.

## How is ALC putting its educational vision into action?

To meet that vision ALC's **mission** is to provide:

- theological education and research for vocation and life, with an emphasis on **vocational formation** of people **to meet the needs of church** and world in a post-modern society no longer literate in the Christian faith;
- opportunities for growth, education and training for pre-vocational, vocational and post-vocational needs, that include Certificate IV, Diploma, Bachelor, Masters, and Doctoral studies;
- church life research to inform the LCA and the broader community

To learn more about ALC innovation in delivering high quality theological education in Australia's contemporary context, read our [Strategic Direction](#) found on our website.:

To implement its Strategic Direction, ALC has developed a guiding rubric. This rubric focusses on connecting with and companioning to support the Church's students *sooner, deeply* and for *longer*. This will be done in ways that address both the student's formal and formational learning needs and be delivered through a variety of learning modalities that are informed by pedagogical practices that express the values identified in Distributed Learning.

## How do I contact ALC?

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