

DISCOVER

Discerning your vocational pathway



A|L|C

Program Information

for your personal journey of academic study and integrated action and reflection practices

Discover program

The Discover program is designed to integrate academic and formational experiences to create a holistic learning and vocational discernment process. The Discover program values participants as adult learners who are responsible for their own growth and learning.

The Discover program is locally based and nationally coordinated. Participants will complete their study and engage in their formational experiences within their local context. ALC will coordinate opportunities for community via an online platform which will include mutual support and churchwide ministry awareness.

Participants will enrol in an academic qualification, which will be delivered via a distributed learning model. This model includes a mix of synchronous and asynchronous online learning, streaming video conferencing, and experiential learning. There will be no expectation for a participant to be physically onsite at our Adelaide campus.

Concurrent with their theological study, participants are engaged in a guided process of relational, reflective, and contextual learning, which includes support from a ministry supervisor and mentor. The integration of these elements means the learning of Discover occurs within a dynamic model of intersecting learning communities: congregation, college, and context.

Purpose and goals of Discover

The Discover program has three interrelated components—core outcomes, ministry placements, and learning goals. The academic and formational elements of Discover will both contribute to these.

Core outcomes

The core outcomes for Discover are:

- *Be aware*
- *Think theologically*
- *Serve faithfully*

In order to fulfil the requirements of this program, participants are asked to demonstrate how well they have addressed each outcome through the completion of a reflection portfolio. The ALC Discover coordinator will provide guidance to participants on how to complete their portfolio, and in contextualising these core outcomes.

Ministry placements

Discover participants will participate in two ministry placements. One placement will be within a local context (e.g. normally your home congregation). The second placement is within an LCA NZ ministry¹

¹ LCA NZ ministries include: Schools, Early Childhood Centres, Indigenous Ministry; Urban Ministry; Rural Ministry; Church Planting; Cross-Cultural; Aged/Community Care; International (e.g. Malaysia, Cambodia).

of choice. This could be local or within the wider church. Participants are also expected to participate regularly in the worship life of the church throughout their involvement in Discover.

Learning goals

To help meet the core outcomes for Discover, the participant will establish a number of personal learning goals that are associated with their ministry placements. These goals will be identified in consultation with the Discover coordinator, ministry supervisor and mentor.

Discover requirements

Participation in the Discover program requires participants to:

1. study an approved academic course (e.g. Diploma in Theology or Diploma in Ministry or graduate award)
2. complete the Discover portfolio, which includes personal reflections, learning goals and evaluations
3. participate regularly in the worship life of the church
4. engage in a local context ministry placement (typically 60 hours during the year)
5. engage in a LCA NZ ministry placement (typically 2 weeks)
6. develop ministry learning goals to help them achieve the Discover program core outcomes
7. complete state-specific Police or Working with Children Checks and complete the Level 1 LCA NZ Safe Church Training. (Note: Some placements may require additional training or requirements before commencing)
8. engage in the Discover online community (through a regular Zoom meeting)
9. meet regularly with their ministry supervisor and local mentor
10. participate in mid-point and end of program evaluation meetings with supervisor and mentor

The Discover program team

The Discover participant will be supported throughout the program by the following people:

- ALC Discover coordinator
- ALC course advisor
- Local ministry supervisor
- Local mentor
- Fellow Discover participants

ALC Discover coordinator

The ALC Discover coordinator oversees the Discover program. The coordinator will support participants with guidance on ministry placements, ministry learning goals, portfolio assistance and online community engagement.

The ALC Discover coordinator will also provide orientation and support for a participant's nominated ministry supervisor and mentor. This will also include the debriefing and evaluation of the participant learning experiences through their ministry placements and involvement in local worship.

ALC course advisor

Every Discover participant will meet with the ALC Course advisor to have their course of study approved. There are a number of course options for Discover participants. The individual's desired ministry outcome will affect the qualification and subjects chosen.

Local ministry supervisor

The participant will nominate a ministry supervisor who will be able to supervise them in their local ministry placement. The ministry supervisor will meet with the participant regularly (recommended monthly) to discuss their involvement in the placement, ensure that ministry goals are being achieved, and to pray for them.

The ALC Discover coordinator will provide the ministry supervisor with information on how to support the Discover participant in their ministry placement. The ministry supervisor will also be supplied with documentation on how to report back to ALC on meetings, placement observations and evaluation processes.

The ALC Discover coordinator will arrange for mid-way and end of placement meetings with both the ministry supervisor and the Discover participant.

Local mentor

The local mentor is a guide, listener, encourager, and model for the participant. The role of the mentor is crucial for participants. They guide the participant through setting spiritual formation goals. They should be great listeners, letting the participant develop through talking and reflecting. Ministry is often hard, and the Discover mentor will sometimes need to be one of the participant's major encouragers. Mentors need to be a positive model of lifelong spiritual formation and growth for the participant to emulate.

The Discover mentor will meet with the participant regularly (recommended monthly). These sessions are to focus upon the participant's individual spiritual growth and development as they journey through the Discover program.

The ALC Discover coordinator will provide the mentor with information on how to support the Discover participant throughout the program. The mentor will also be supplied with documentation on how to report back to ALC on meetings and evaluation processes.

Fellow Discover participants

Throughout each semester, there will be a weekly online community gathering of Discover participants. This gathering will serve as a care group for those doing the Discover program, as well as an opportunity for different LCA NZ departments and groups to share more about ministry opportunities.

Discover program personal and sensitive information

The purpose of all conversations within the Discover program is to foster the growth and learning of the Discover participant in her/his vocational identity. By their nature, such conversations are very personal and most helpful when they take place in a setting in which all the persons involved trust each other.

Therefore, the content of these conversations should not be shared with anyone who is not part of the Discover program without permission. The Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand encourages strict standards of privacy and takes all reasonable measures that ensure that personal and sensitive information is used and cared for in an appropriate, respectful manner. The Church is also committed to its Standards of Ethical Behaviour, and related procedures: ensuring compliance with all church and legislative requirements for the health, safety and wellbeing for all people who engage with the church—especially ensuring the prevention of harm to children.

Discover reflection portfolio

The purpose of the Discover reflection portfolio is to guide the Discover participant in developing a lifelong discipline of reflecting theologically on the practice of ministry. The portfolio will allow the Discover participants to record reflections on their ministry placements, and conversations with ministry supervisors and Discover mentor. This portfolio will assist the Discover participant to grow in their awareness of self and the dynamics of ministry contexts, to integrate formal learning and life experiences, and to discern their vocational direction.

This will be achieved through the Discover core outcomes and the individual's learning goals. In more depth, the Discover core outcomes and how they are achieved are:

Be aware

Discover participants

1. will develop and practise spiritual disciplines throughout the Discover program to prepare them for life and potential vocation in the ministry of the Church
2. will develop and practise listening skills in their ministry context
3. will embrace and practise standards of ethical behaviour as they engage in interpersonal relationships
4. will develop an awareness of how their words and actions impact others, how they communicate with those with whom they differ, and how they reflect on their beliefs, values, and life experiences

Think theologically

Discover participants

1. will develop the capacity to have theological conversations in the context of daily ministry and to write reflection papers
2. will develop the capacity to articulate and appreciate diverse theological opinions and experiences and to reflect on these
3. will be able to articulate a theology of Christian vocation that arises out of their Discover ministry placement experiences

Serve faithfully

Discover participants

1. will be reliable and committed in contributing positively and effectively in their placement
2. will demonstrate their capacity to work in a team engaged in local ministry
3. will demonstrate an awareness of self and the dynamics of ministry contexts
4. will be able to integrate formal learning and reflected life experience, to discern vocational direction.

Discover completion

At the end of Discover, participants are encouraged to submit their reflection portfolio. This portfolio will assist ALC and the LCA NZ in conversation for further involvement in the life of the church (e.g. pastor, teacher and lay worker).

A satisfactory portfolio is one where the participant has addressed each of the core outcomes of the program based on their own learning goals.

The Discover Coordinator will assist the participant to submit their portfolio and provide feedback on their documentation.