



DISCOVER

Program Information

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

Discover program

Statement of purpose and goals

The Discover program values participants as adult learners who are responsible for their own growth and learning. The program is designed to integrate academic and formation activities to create a holistic learning and vocational discernment experience within a local and church wide context.

The Discover program is locally based and nationally coordinated. Students follow approved programs of academic study which include a mix of online learning, streaming video conferencing, face-to-face and experiential learning. Concurrent with their theological study, students are engaged in a guided process of relational, reflective, and contextual learning, including the use of local mentors and supervisors. The integration of these elements means the learning of Discover occurs within a dynamic model of intersecting learning communities: congregation, college, and context.

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

Core outcomes: The core outcomes are: *Be aware; Think theologically; and Serve faithfully*. In order to fulfil the requirements of this program, students are asked to demonstrate how well they have addressed each outcome. The ALC advisor will provide guidance to students in contextualising these core outcomes.

Ministry tasks: Discover students will participate in local ministry and wider church placements. Ministry tasks are the work and responsibilities relating to each core outcome that will be completed in these placements. These are identified in consultation with the local ministry context/congregation.

Specific learning goals: While the academic units have specific predetermined learning outcomes, the student's vocational and/or self-development goals will be integrated when considering the opportunities possible within the local ministry placement.

Minimum requirements

Discover students will:

1. complete academic requirements
2. participate regularly in the worship life of the church
3. participate regularly in at least one of the ministry groups of the placement site (minimum 60 hours during the year)
4. complete an LCA context placement (minimum 2 weeks) other than their home congregation¹
5. develop specific learning goals to help them achieve the Discover program core outcomes
6. complete state specific Police or Working with Children Checks and Level One LCA Professional Standards training; and, any further SafePlace requirements for their ministry placement
7. meet regularly with their pastor, Discover mentor and local ministry reference group
8. meet submission requirements for reflection reports
9. meet program requirement of developing a Discover portfolio (reflections, reports, local reference group recommendations)
10. participate in mid-point and end of program evaluation meetings

¹ Potential sites include: Indigenous Ministry; Urban Ministry; Rural Ministry; Church Planting; Cross-Cultural; Aged/Community Care; International (Malaysia, Cambodia, New Zealand).

The Discover program team

While Discover students are responsible for driving their own learning, a team of people will assist them to achieve their goals. These are:

- The ALC advisor
- The supervisor
- The mentor
- The reflection group

Discover team roles

ALC advisor

The ALC advisor is the overseer of the Discover program. The advisor counsels and guides Discover students in how to achieve the program outcomes by assisting in the development of learning goals that connect the ministry opportunities of local contexts with the three core outcomes of the program: *Be aware; Think theologically; Serve faithfully.*

The ALC advisor provides orientation and support for local supervisors, receives Discover team reports, and participates in the debriefing and evaluation of student learning experiences.

Discover supervisor

The Discover supervisor, normally the local pastor, is a guide and a model for the Discover student. Supervisors oversee the various aspects of integrated learning experiences in local ministry settings.

The Discover supervisor will meet with the student at least monthly.

- This meeting is to focus upon the student's individual growth and learning.

The supervisory meeting should include:

- assisting and holding the student accountable for working on his/her learning goals
- reflection on personal growth (head, heart, hand)

The supervisor will facilitate the mid-term assessment meeting.

Discover supervisors are required to document supervisory meetings with the student and submit semester evaluation reports.

Discover mentor

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

- The Discover mentor will meet with the student monthly for a one-hour (max) meeting. These sessions are to focus upon the student's individual spiritual growth and development. The mentor will need to take the time to adequately prepare for these meetings and see them as an investment into the life of a student.
- Submit student evaluation forms. These evaluations provide the mentor's perspective on the student's growth and development in the area of spiritual formation. The Discover mentor will join the Discover supervisor and a member of the Discover reflection group during the semester break for a mid-term assessment of the student. The Supervisor will facilitate the meeting.

Discover reflection group

The Discover reflection group is a group of four to five persons who provide feedback and reflection—not direction. The reflection group will symbolically hold up mirrors that will allow the students to see themselves in ministry.

Discover program supervision and trust

The purpose of all conversations among the student, mentor, reflection group, supervisor and ALC advisor—that is, the Discover program team—is to foster the growth and learning of the Discover ministry student 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 a member of the Discover program team without permission. The Lutheran Church of Australia 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 program core learning goals

The Discover academic program has pre-determined learning outcomes associated with each unit of study. The formation program integrates the student's own learning goals in the light of the three Discover core outcomes.

The ALC advisor will provide guidance to students in contextualising the required learning goals.

Be aware

Discover students

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 and intrapersonal 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 students

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

Serve faithfully

Discover students

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

Reflection reports

Purpose

The purpose of these reports is to guide the Discover student to develop a lifelong discipline of reflecting theologically on the practice of ministry. The Discover student participates in a ministry activity, pauses to reflect upon that activity with the aid of a mentor, and then continues to participate in ministry from a place of increased depth and clarity. Through disciplined reflection, the Discover student can grow to be aware of self and the dynamics of ministry contexts, to integrate formal learning and life experiences, to discern vocational direction.

Discover ministry placement evaluation

The word 'evaluation' is used in this program in a very specific sense. It does not imply a judgment about the 'value' or 'worth' of any person. It is separate from any decisions regarding vocational readiness/suitability in the church. A successful Discover program is measured by how well Discover students have addressed each of the core outcomes of the program based on their own learning goals.

The designations used in evaluation are:

- **Complete:** It is determined that the student has satisfactorily met the requirements of the program.
- **Ongoing:** The Discover student has not completed the requirements of the program. Unfinished work may be completed and/or reservations resolved as the student completes or repeats some aspect of the program in a satisfactory manner.
- **Redirected:** The Discover student has demonstrated a lack of aptitude, interest, or willingness to fulfil the stated requirements of the program.