

Programme Specification

Award and title:

MA Applied Theology

MA Transformational Leadership

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| <i>School:</i> | Humanities |
| <i>Subject area:</i> | Theology and Religious Studies |
| <i>Entry from academic year:</i> | 2026-27 |
| <i>in the month(s) of:</i> | August |
| <i>Awarding institution:</i> | York St John University |
| <i>Teaching institution:</i> | Irish Bible Institute |
| <i>Delivery location:</i> | Irish Bible Institute, Dublin |
| <i>Programme/s accredited by:</i> | Not applicable |
| <i>Exit awards:</i> | Postgraduate Certificate Applied Theology Postgraduate Diploma Applied Theology Postgraduate Certificate Transformational Leadership ¹ Postgraduate Diploma Transformational Leadership ² |
| <i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i> | Not applicable |
| <i>Joint Honours combinations:</i> | Not applicable |
| <i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i> | TRS 2022 |
| <i>Mode/s of study:</i> | Non-standard period of study as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time for 2 years • Part-time for 4 years³ |
| <i>Language of study:</i> | English |
| <i>Paired with foundation year</i> | No |
| <i>Study abroad opportunities:</i> | No |
| <i>Placement year opportunity:</i> | No |

Introduction and special features

As a Christian college, we have a distinct understanding of the purpose of theological education. We are committed to delivering an educational programme that serves God's mission (*missio Dei*), namely one that helps you to live a life within God's vision for individuals, church and the world. This means that we do not see an academic qualification as an end in itself. Rather, we view it as helping you to interpret all of life theologically enabling you to serve effectively within your sphere of influence, wherever that may be. We believe the best form of learning is holistic, involving the whole person and goes beyond mere knowledge or information, and for that reason that we talk about learning that engages 'Head, Heart and Hands.'

This programme is designed to enable you to become a more biblically and theologically informed, practically competent, reflective practitioner who is able to engage with the interface between theory and practice. In

¹ Provided that module VIB7107M has been taken and passed

² Provided that module VIB7107M has been taken and passed

³ The MA programme is designed to be flexible, and students may well have other commitments outside of their studies. Therefore, it is possible to study for the part-time MA across a maximum of 4 years.

doing this you will be enabled to develop further the skill and attitudes you will need for whatever ministry or professional practice you are involved in.

As an applied theology award, the focus of the programme is to address issues posed within life, work, ministry and mission within the contemporary Irish context. Culture is fluid and ever-changing and so the programme will engage with new questions and challenges facing the church. In Ireland, as in much of Western Europe, these include issues such as a fast-evolving post-Christendom reality, an increasingly multi-cultural and multi-religious society, pluralisation in all areas of life, the powerful forces of capitalism and globalisation and their impact on the environment, and continuing revolutions in information technology, the internet and artificial intelligence.

This is delivered by the combination of high-quality teaching input on a specific range of topics and a deliberate policy of encouraging you to engage in a self-reflective critical analysis of your current practice. It is this combination that ensures the programme is related to life as you have experienced it and that creates the reflective framework within which it is delivered.

As part of the programme you will be required to examine and critically engage with a broad range of theological opinions, including those with which you disagree. This is an important discipline in learning and reflecting.

Applied theology requires a context. The primary focus for this programme is the Irish context (either the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland). However, if you are normally located outside Ireland (for example in Europe) you will be encouraged to develop your theological reflection within your own specific context.

There is a specialist named award within the MA which focuses on Transformational Leadership. There are two compulsory modules required in this named award (see later for details), each of which will enable you to reflect on different aspects of leadership in general and on your own leadership in particular.

Admissions criteria

This is a link to the university's general entry criteria for postgraduate study.

There are two entry routes into the MA programme:

1) Direct Entry

We welcome applicants with prior academic qualifications in theology but also applicants who have studied other humanities subjects at degree level.

For direct entry to the MA you need to have achieved one of the following qualifications:

- A 2:2 undergraduate honours degree (single or joint) in theology and/or Religious Studies or a closely related subject.
- A 2:1 honours degree in another humanities subject.
- A first degree, and at least the equivalent of a Certificate of Higher Education in Theology and/or Religious Studies.

2) Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

We also welcome applications from applicants who do not have traditional qualifications but who are able to provide evidence of professional experience in the subject as an alternative way of meeting the university entry requirements.

This route is open to applicants who can demonstrate through your curriculum vitae and references sufficient ministerial, professional or vocational experience to indicate that you have the ability to study at postgraduate level. You must have at least two years of significant and relevant professional/Christian

ministry* experience (evidenced by two referees). You may be required to complete a sample piece of work relevant to the subject area of applied theology.

*Relevant professional/Christian ministry means significant involvement over a period of at least two years in the broad area of Christian ministry (either paid or lay) or some specific professional practice that demands aspects of theological input/reflection.

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

Recognition of Accredited Prior Learning (RPL)

A candidate who has studied theology at another recognised institution may be able to transfer credits and enter a programme with advanced standing. Contact our Academic Administrator to discuss options.

The onus is on you to demonstrate that the studies you have completed have an equivalence to our programme.

The MA Programme Committee will examine each application on a case by case basis.

Programme aim(s)

This programme is delivered within the context of a learning community. In addition to the formal requirement of the programme, students will be enabled to engage and dialogue with people from diverse traditions and practices.

This programme aims to:

1. Enable you to engage critically (for example, using biblical, theological and/or other resources) with a selected range of applied theology issues
2. Facilitate advanced critical reflection on current ministry/leadership practice
3. Enable you to reflect self-critically (at an advanced level) on and develop the character, values and attitudes for authentic Christian living, mission, and ministry (leadership)

These have been developed in consultation with the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2014) and QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Theology and Religious Studies (2022).

Programme learning outcomes

All of this programme is at FHEQ Level 7.

At the end of this programme you will be able to:

1. Critically analyse and evaluate a range of contemporary expressions of Christian theology and/or practice using, for example, biblical, theological and/or other appropriate research-informed resources
2. Demonstrate the skills of an advanced critical researcher with the ability to relate aspects of relevant, recent research to the contemporary context
3. Engage in advanced critical, personal, and/or theological reflection on their attitudes and professional practices and develop strategies to enhance your ministry/professional practice

4. Engage in advanced, research-informed self-critical reflection to cultivate biblical and theological values and virtues essential for authentic Christian character and service

Programme structure

MA Applied Theology

| Code | Level | Title | Credits | Module status | |
|---|-------|---|---------|---|--|
| | | | | compulsory or optional to take C or O | non-compensable or compensable NC or X |
| VIB7011M | 7 | Dissertation/Research Project | 60 | C | NC |
| Choose FOUR option modules from the following modules: | | | | | |
| VIB7012M | 7 | Bible Interpretation | 30 | O | X |
| VIB7013M | 7 | Church and Mission | 30 | O | X |
| VIB7014M | 7 | Contemporary Theologies: Issues and Implications | 30 | O | X |
| VIB7015M | 7 | Biblical-Theological Frameworks for Life and Work | 30 | O | X |
| VIB7016M | 7 | Enabling Pastoral Care | 30 | O | X |
| VIB7017M | 7 | Teaching and Preaching the Bible in a Ministry Context | 30 | O | X |
| VIB7018M | 7 | Christian Leadership in Practice | 30 | O | X |
| VIB7019M | 7 | Christian Ethics in the Contemporary Irish Context: Action and Reflection | 30 | O | X |
| VIB7020M | 7 | Independent Study | 30 | O | X |

MA Transformational Leadership

| Code | Level | Title | Credits | Module status | |
|--|-------|---|---------|---|--|
| | | | | compulsory or optional to take C or O | non-compensable or compensable NC or X |
| VIB7021M | 7 | Dissertation/Research Project (Leadership) | 60 | C | NC |
| VIB7022M | 7 | Transformational Leadership in Practice | 30 | C | NC |
| Choose THREE option modules from the following modules: | | | | | |
| VIB7012M | 7 | Bible Interpretation | 30 | O | X |
| VIB7013M | 7 | Church and Mission | 30 | O | X |
| VIB7014M | 7 | Contemporary Theologies: Issues and Implications | 30 | O | X |
| VIB7015M | 7 | Biblical-Theological Frameworks for Life and Work | 30 | O | X |
| VIB7016M | 7 | Enabling Pastoral Care | 30 | O | X |
| VIB7017M | 7 | Teaching and Preaching the Bible in a Ministry Context | 30 | O | X |
| VIB7019M | 7 | Christian Ethics in the Contemporary Irish Context: Action and Reflection | 30 | O | X |
| VIB7020M | 7 | Independent Study | 30 | O | X |

Learning, teaching and assessment

As a postgraduate programme the majority of your learning will be self-learning. There is an emphasis throughout the programme on critical analysis, independent thinking, creative engagement, self-critical reflection and the development of research skills. The programme will encourage you to engage with the subjects you are studying in such a way as to enable transformation in either yourself or others.

The programme is committed to tutors and students being partners in the learning process. You will bring to the programme your prior learning and experience; the tutors bring expertise in specific areas. The synthesis of these in the modules produces a unique learning experience; this facilitates the interaction and debate which is necessary for learning at this level. Your experience is at the centre of the teaching and learning strategy.

The duration of modules is normally 20 weeks and includes 30 hours of contact time with tutors. This happens either during a single week or over a series of sessions (this depends on factors such as the module subject area and the module tutor). The teaching and learning strategy includes a range of activities: lectures, discussions, seminars, individual/group tutorials, video clips, and, occasionally, visiting speakers.

The contact time of VIB7022M Transformational Leadership in Practice and VIB7018M Christian Leadership in Practice is distributed over the entire length of the module (40 weeks). The duration of these modules have been extended to allow time for action research on a leadership project. The assignments are designed to allow you to reflect on and learn about your leadership in your own context over this period of time.

The contact time of VIB7017M Teaching and Preaching the Bible in a Ministry Context is also distributed over a longer length of time in order to allow time for the preaching/teaching project that forms part of the assignment.

Assignments are designed to engage you in the learning process. Where possible you will have a choice of assessment titles so that you will be able to choose areas where either you have an existing interest, or you want to do further research/study (or both).

Module assessment (except for VIB7022M, VIB7018M and VIB7017M) has a combination of a main essay (normally 4,500 words) and a parallel reflective assignment (normally 1,500 words). This is a deliberate policy to ensure that you engage with the holistic emphasis of the programme. You will not be able to simply engage with theoretical aspects of a subject; the critical reflection elements of every module ensure that you are working in each case towards an applied theology for your context, engaging “head, heart and hands”.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's general [regulations](#) (hyperlink) for postgraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University mission and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised: 22/12/23

Programme originally approved: 25/1/24