

## **Research Parameters for the LRDT scheme**

The LRDT is a distance learning scheme for MPhil and PhD students in theology broadly conceived. Face-to-face meetings between students and LRDT officers are limited, but meetings between students and their supervisor(s) are regular, and can be face-to-face, or online.

The LRDT operates with a very slim infrastructure, and academics give their time voluntarily to the governing bodies. All its Officers have full-time roles in addition to their work for LRDT.

LRDT's volunteer governing bodies contain distinguished and senior academics, and the scheme is well placed to call upon a wide range of academic resource. This is because its supervisors and examiners are drawn from multiple universities, whereas theology and religion departments must angle their specialisms to suit those of their in-house staff. Its breadth is therefore in its generous capacity for different areas of study and interdisciplinary inquiry, and indirectly in strengthening the place of academic theology within the life of ministry.

However, LRDT cannot easily support all forms of research. Research projects that require institutional support for intensive training from scratch in particular research methods (e.g. social science research methods within pastoral theology) might be better placed in an institution that has the infrastructure to offer that kind of training. The same is true for the kind of research question that might lead to a professional doctorate such as a D.Min. – questions that might arise, for example, out of the direct experience of ministry in a particular context. As many of LRDT's applicants and students are ordained ministers this is inevitably an area of interest for some of those who apply; and the scheme is in principle keen to support practical theology projects where possible. It is therefore important also to say that the LRDT actively welcomes and can support the supervision of this kind of research if, but only if, the applicant is already equipped with the necessary research skills.

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