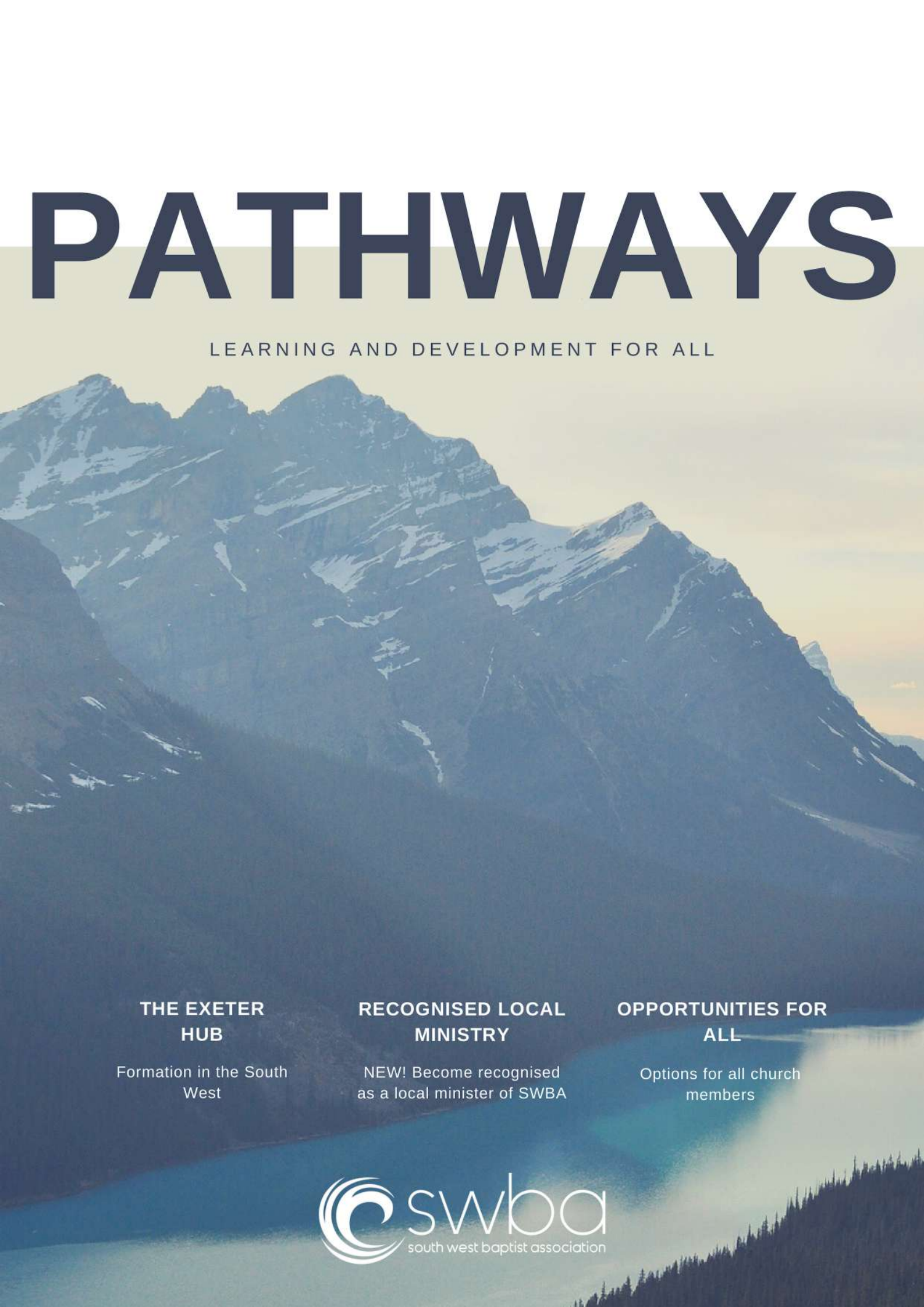
PATHWAYS

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL



THE EXETER HUB

Formation in the South West

RECOGNISED LOCAL MINISTRY

NEW! Become recognised as a local minister of SWBA

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Options for all church members

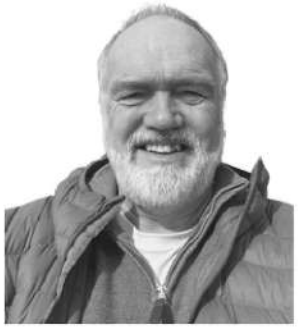
swba
south west baptist association

PATHWAYS

LEARNING AND
DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL

WWW.SWBAPTISTS.ORG.UK

FOR ENQUIRIES ABOUT FULLY ACCREDITED MINISTRY OR RECOGNISED LOCAL MINISTRY CONTACT:



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FOR OCCASIONAL LEARNING OR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONTACT:

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BAPTISTS TOGETHER

BRISTOL BAPTIST COLLEGE

swba south west baptist association

WELCOME TO PATHWAYS

Christians believe that God invites his Church to be involved in his mission in the world.

We are all called to use the gifts and skills he has given us to serve him, each other and our local communities. Through the various stages in our lives, he calls us to explore different pathways of calling – to be willing to step out in faith and obedience and follow wherever he leads.

For some this calling will be to continue to serve by playing our part in the ministry and mission of our local churches. Around the south west we are blessed by so many people doing just that – volunteering their time, resources and gifts alongside their normal jobs and daily lives.

Others are called to be ‘set aside’ to take on positions of special responsibility in our churches and communities. This could be as a volunteer or in a paid position, a full time role or just a few hours a week. It includes a range of positions and roles – from youth workers to chaplains to pastoral carers to church leaders. The process usually includes a time of discernment and recognition of that calling, either at a local or national level, as well as training and formation for the role.

The SWBA Pathways programme is designed to help you explore how God might be calling you, as well as equip and support you in that calling. Whether you’re just looking for a short training course to help you in your volunteer role, or feel like God might be calling you to something new, we’d love to help you and walk with you every step of the way.

Please keep reading for more details about the programme, the different resources we can currently offer, and some of the processes involved in discerning and recognising calling. Once you’re ready to take the next steps, or if you have any questions along the way, please don’t hesitate to get in touch using the contact details on the opposite.

Rev James Henley
Learning Co-ordinator

PATHWAYS

LEARNING AND
DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL

Occasional Learning

Anyone is welcome to sign up to any of the individual modules which make up the ‘Learning Element’ of the programme. This option is ideal if you want to dip in and out, are looking for some basic training in a particular area of ministry or just want to dig a bit deeper into a subject to help with your own walk with God.

Leadership Development

Those wanting to engage more fully in being formed in discipleship and ministry can complete the full programme. This involves attending the teaching days for all the core modules and some optional modules, as well as completing assignments for each module. In addition, you’ll be part of a ‘Spiritual Formation Group,’ which is a space to reflect, share and pray with others. You can read more about both these elements below.

The course starts each September and takes two years. By the end you’ll have received an overview of a number of different subjects which will provide an excellent foundation for ministry and mission in your local setting. For those who feel God is calling them on to accredited ministry, the course also offers a great introduction and gateway to further study.

Recognised Local Ministry

Those wanting to be recognised and affirmed in their calling to particular ministry positions should think about becoming a Recognised Local Minister. This is a new initiative, implemented by Baptists Together in 2023, and is ideal for those who are called to ministry of some kind, but who feel that fully accredited Baptist ministry is either not for them or too difficult in their current circumstances. Recognised roles might include local church leaders, children & youth workers, pastoral carers, pioneers, chaplains and a number of others.

Recognised Local Ministers are expected to have their calling recognised by both their local church and a regional committee, before completing the two year learning and formation programme detailed below. In addition to the support offered through that programme, we also organise local mentors to journey with each student and offer advice and care. At the end of the programme, candidates return to the regional committee for a final interview to have their calling affirmed.

For more information from Baptist Together about Recognised Local Ministry, visit www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/402182/Recognised_Local_Ministers.aspx.

Fully Accredited Ministry

Some are called to have their ministry recognised and accredited at a national level, which opens up all sorts of possibilities for serving God across the country. This includes local church ministry, but also youth and children's work, church planting and pioneering, chaplaincy and other more specialised ministries.

For more information about accredited ministry, visit www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/347473/Accreditation_as_a.aspx.

Candidates for national accreditation are expected to have their calling tested and recognised by their local church and a ministerial recognition committee, before undergoing a more rigorous formation process through one of the Baptist colleges. This is usually completed alongside ministry in a local church or mission setting. As an Association we are delighted to work closely with Bristol Baptist College by hosting the Exeter Hub, which allows students to complete the ministerial formation part of that process with others right here in the south west.

If you think God might be calling you to fully accredited ministry, or would just like to know more, the next thing to do is to have a chat with one of our regional ministers. They will be able to explain the process, pray with you and walk you through everything that needs to happen.

BRISTOL BAPTIST COLLEGE

Durham University

Ministerial Formation at The Exeter Hub

One of the reasons we might dismiss a call to Fully Accredited Ministry is geography. Living in the South West is a blessing in so many ways, but it can also present seemingly insurmountable obstacles when it comes to accessing facilities and training to pursue the calling to ministry that we (and others) recognise in our life. Bristol Baptist College is our regional training institution, but may not feel particularly “local” to many of us in the South West.

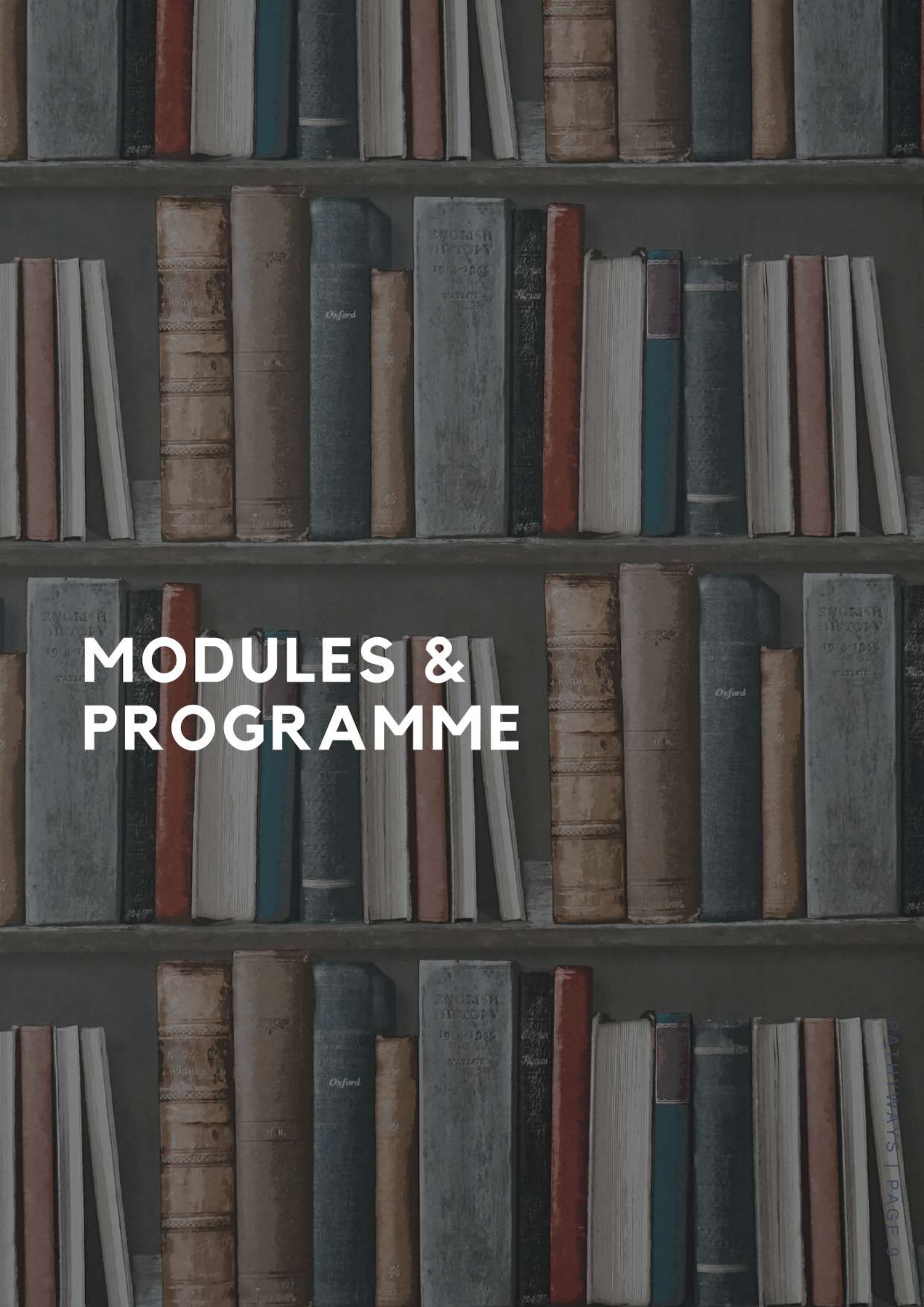
In September 2021 the College launched its first regional hub in Exeter to deliver the 3-year ministerial formation programme, preparing women and men for Christian ministry, be that pastoral ministry, chaplaincy or pioneering work. This programme runs one day a week throughout term time and is based at the SWBA offices in Exeter.

Together with a couple of ‘community’ weeks at other locations further afield, the programme focuses on developing godly character, training in deep theological reflection, and equipping competent and Spirit-filled ministers-in-training in practical aspects of ministry in all its varied forms.

No longer is travelling to Bristol a barrier for ministerial formation

For those looking to gain academic theological qualifications as part of their training, there are now two options - to take modules either on a day-a-week basis at Bristol or in block weeks at Bristol, which are offered at various points throughout the year. The combination of weekly sessions in Exeter and whole weeks occasionally at Bristol might mean that the obstacles of distance and availability might not be as high as they once were.

Students at the hub are usually based in a church or pioneer context which offers practical experience and a real-life situation to reflect on, experiment with and receive support and encouragement from. This hands-on context is vital in the training process and, together with academic studies and the formation programme, helps to prepare the individual in a rounded and grounded way.



MODULES & PROGRAMME

ELEMENT ONE

LEARNING

The learning element of the Pathways programme is designed to help you explore your faith more deeply in the company of others who love God, and to equip you to serve God in your church and community.

We do this by offering a programme of short modules covering a range of subjects - from basic theology and Bible study to practical skills such as leading worship and pastoral care. All the modules are taught by experienced pastors and theologians, and include a mixture of theory and practical reflection. Together, they provide a great foundation for thinking about ministry and mission.

Most of the modules are taught over two Saturdays, although some of the practical modules are just one day. For the best teaching experience we encourage students to join us onsite at the SWBA office in Exeter. However, you'll also be able to join most of the modules via Zoom. Those just looking for one-off modules are welcome to sign-up for any that take their interest.

Those looking to complete the full course or who are hoping to become a Recognised Local Minister will need to complete all nine of the core modules, plus two of the optional modules. You will also need to complete assignments for each module, which are designed to help you go further in your own thinking, reflection and practice.

ELEMENT TWO

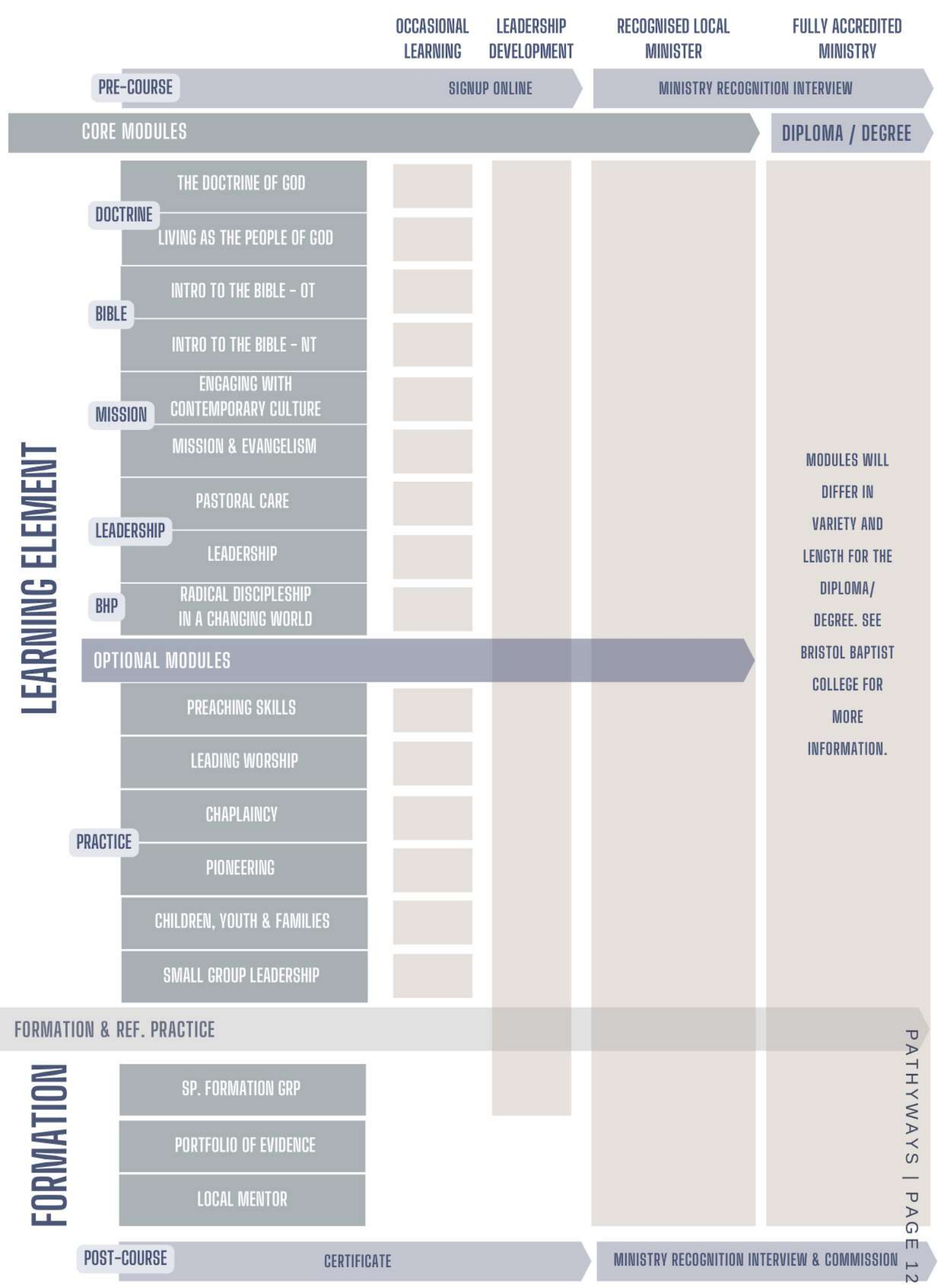
FORMATION

Being formed for ministry and mission is not just about knowledge or practical skills, but about our character, journey of discipleship and relationship with God.

For this reason, everyone looking to complete the full course or become a Recognised Local Minister is expected to also fulfil the formation element of the Pathways programme.

You will become part of a 'Spiritual Formation Group' with others from the course, led by an experienced minister. The group will meet 4-5 times a year, and will be an opportunity to share, reflect and pray together, as well as think about spirituality and our individual journeys with God. Most of the meetings will be online, but at least one of the meetings will be a full day retreat to give more space to reflect and listen to God together.

In addition, all students are expected to write a series of reflections on their own spirituality and different aspects of their ministry and calling.


OCCASIONAL LEARNING
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
RECOGNISED LOCAL MINISTER
FULLY ACCREDITED MINISTRY
PRE-COURSE
SIGNUP ONLINE
MINISTRY RECOGNITION INTERVIEW
CORE MODULES
DIPLOMA / DEGREE
LEARNING ELEMENT
DOCTRINE
THE DOCTRINE OF GOD
LIVING AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD
BIBLE
INTRO TO THE BIBLE - OT
INTRO TO THE BIBLE - NT
MISSION
ENGAGING WITH CONTEMPORARY CULTURE
MISSION & EVANGELISM
LEADERSHIP
PASTORAL CARE
LEADERSHIP
BHP
RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP IN A CHANGING WORLD
OPTIONAL MODULES
PREACHING SKILLS
LEADING WORSHIP
PRACTICE
CHAPLAINCY
PIONEERING
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES
SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP
MODULES WILL DIFFER IN VARIETY AND LENGTH FOR THE DIPLOMA/ DEGREE. SEE BRISTOL BAPTIST COLLEGE FOR MORE INFORMATION.
FORMATION & REF. PRACTICE
FORMATION
SP. FORMATION GRP
PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE
LOCAL MENTOR
POST-COURSE
CERTIFICATE
MINISTRY RECOGNITION INTERVIEW & COMMISSION