

### Information for registered students

## Theology

Programme handbook

2017-18

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Note: the telephone and fax numbers given in this handbook for addresses outside the United Kingdom are those to be used if you are in that country. If you are telephoning or faxing from another country, we suggest you contact your local telecommunications provider for details of the country code and area code that you should use.

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# Welcome to your 2017–18 study year as an International Programmes student



This **Programme handbook** has been put together to help you navigate your way through the various Theology programmes. It aims to give you academic quidance, practical information and advice that is specific to your studies as a Theology student. At the time of writing, about 200 students worldwide are studying one of the Theology programmes offered by the University of London International Programmes. Some attend classes at a local institution, or work with a tutor or institution that offers distance learning tuition; others study on their own, with the help of the University's subject guides, or with other students they have contacted through the Theology virtual learning environment (VLE). Some are members of a Christian denomination: others are finding out about the beliefs of Christians and, perhaps, other religious traditions, without themselves being committed to any particular faith. Whatever your circumstances, we hope that we have covered everything that you need to know about during your studies, but if you require any additional information or support, please contact us (see page 2).

Alongside this handbook, you should also read the **Student guide to the International Programmes**, which will guide you through the practical aspects of studying as an International Programmes student. The Student guide is available on the website:

www.londoninternational. ac.uk/guide-handbooks

#### The Programme Regulations and Programme Specification

These documents contain all the rules which apply to every aspect of your programme, as well as detailed information about what modules you can study and what you will achieve by the end of your programme. You should make sure that you read them and refer to them regularly throughout your registration with us:

www.londoninternational. ac.uk/regs

You will be notified directly of any changes likely to affect your study programme, but you may also find it helpful to check our website:

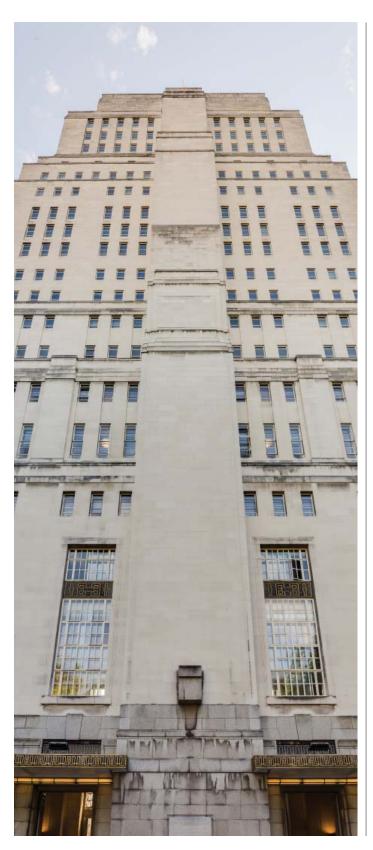
www.londoninternational.ac.uk

or the Student Portal:

http://my.londoninternational.ac.uk

which are regularly updated with the latest news.

## The University and the International Programmes



The University of London is a federal University which is made up of 18 self-governing member institutions and nine other smaller specialist research institutes, based in and around London. The International Programmes are the suite of programmes that the University offers in partnership with its member institutions. The University of London handles all aspects of the Theology programme, such as helping you to register and pay your fees, organising examinations, despatching your study materials, determining what you will study and providing academic guidance and support.

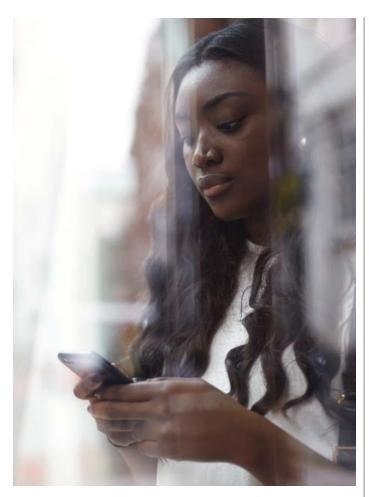
#### Contact information

It is important to us that we respond quickly to any queries you may have that are related to any part of your studies.

For all enquiries please visit:

www.londoninternational.ac.uk/contact-us

## Quality and standards



The quality and standard of our International Programmes are always at the top of our priorities, to ensure the value of the education you receive by studying with us. We work very closely with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), whose mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education. More details about how we safeguard our quality and standards can be found here:

#### www.qaa.ac.uk

#### Student feedback mechanisms

International Programmes students are valued members of the University and so we want to hear your feedback, ideas and suggestions. Every two years, you are invited to participate in a student survey. Your responses are heard at committee meetings and we value your opinions, which help us to make your student experience even better.

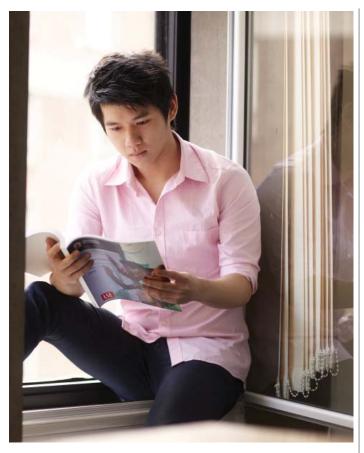
#### Student representation

There are two ways for you to get involved in representing your fellow students. We have a student representative position on the International Programmes Committee; you do not necessarily have to attend in person (so you do not have to even live in the UK), you can simply send your report to us and be heard. In addition you may take up a position on the student panel in one of our Periodic Programme Reviews, ensuring that student feedback plays a vital role in the review process.

## Dates to note

Dates to note	Things to do in the year ahead
At the time of initial or continuing registration	Start planning which examinations you intend to enter for. You will be able to download a personalised examination entry form from the Student Portal from mid-December.
<b>Examination Centre closing date</b>	Check with your Examination Centre for their closing date for making an examination entry.
1 February	All entries from Examination Centres must be received by the University no later than this date. Entries received after 1 February will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances.
Three to four weeks before examinations	You will receive your Admission Notice, which confirms the dates and times of your examinations and your candidate number.
10 days before the examinations start	If you have not received an Admission Notice by this time, please use the online enquiry system (see the Student guide) to contact the Student Assessment Office.
Early May	The first examinations normally start. Note that the University is unable to take religious and/or public holidays into account when setting the examination dates.
Three weeks after the last examination	Last date by which the University will accept information about any mitigating circumstance that may have affected your examination performance.
July	Your examination results will usually be released during this month and will be made available to you online.
September/October (depending on programme)	Continuing registration is now open for students
30 September (for the May/June examinations)	The deadline to request an administrative recheck of your examination mark.

## Learning options



There are several ways to study for our programmes: for example, enrolling with a distance-learning organisation or studying at a local institution.

#### Private study

You may decide to study on your own, with the help of the subject guides. This is certainly the most economical option and, if you are experienced in writing essays and taking examinations, you may be more than happy to study in this way.

#### Distance learning tuition

Some institutions are able to offer distance learning tuition. Such institutions may offer guidance in the writing of essays, both suggesting appropriate titles and marking and commenting upon the work submitted. Perhaps one of the most valuable services they can provide is a personal study programme, related to the demands of the degree but taking into account the student's own interests and background, and focusing on areas where there may be special needs. For some students the awareness of having to meet a deadline and to satisfy a tutor is a valuable spur to study, perhaps particularly in the more demanding parts of the programme. In any case, the development of a critical and independent approach to your study is a valuable asset for all students.

#### Study at a local teaching institution

Please read this information in conjunction with the information about institutions found in the Student guide.

Some of you may be enrolled at Bible colleges for programmes of ministerial or vocational training as well as studying for the University of London's Bachelor of Divinity (BD). Others may attend individual lecture courses or study days at a local institution; these may not be specifically intended for students of these programmes, but there may be sufficient overlap in the syllabuses for them to be helpful.

Below are the details of institutions that are actively teaching Theology for International Programmes students for the BD degree or Diploma or Certificate of Higher Education in Theology. You are invited to contact them for further information about services they offer.

This list is offered as a service to you; however, it is not intended to be a recommendation by the University of London. The University maintains a policy framework covering relationships with institutions. Please refer to the International Programmes website for more information:

## www.londoninternational.ac.uk/teachinginstitutions

You should not assume that references to the University in institutions' advertisements, 'advertising features' or brochures have received the University's approval.

Please remember that enrolment with an institution is not the same as registration as an International Programmes student with the University of London. In particular, we advise you to wait for confirmation from the University that you are eligible for your chosen programme before enrolling at an institution and paying tuition fees.

To avoid disputes and misunderstandings about financial matters, you should make sure before you enrol that you understand the full extent of your commitment to the institution, especially if you have to withdraw during your studies.

If you have a concern or complaints about an institution you are attending, you should discuss these matters in the first instance with the staff of the institution. In many cases it will be possible for problems to be resolved quickly and effectively. Although the University is always pleased to receive comments on any aspect of the International Programmes, it is only able to consider complaints about, or criticism of, an institution if you are able to show that the issues have been brought to the attention of that institution.

In addition to the institutions listed here, you may wish to contact extramural or continuing education departments

at universities local to you. They may offer courses with a similar content to that of the modules offered on your degree or diploma programme.

We have an online directory of institutions which provides you with easily searchable and up-to-date contact details of any new institutions which approach us about providing tuition support to students of humanities programmes. Please check regularly for updates:

### www.londoninternational.ac.uk/onlinesearch/institutions

The following institution is a recognised centre and provides support for this programme.

#### **Westfield House**

30 Huntingdon Road Cambridge CB3 0HH

Tel: +44 (0)1223 354331 Fax: +44 (0)1223 355265 www.westfieldhouse.org.uk

#### Period of study

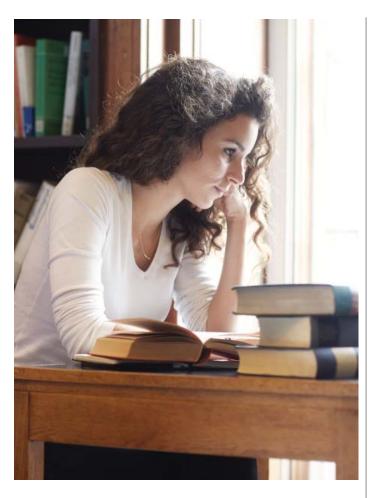
The Bachelor of Divinity (BD) is structured on a modular basis to allow you to study and enter for examinations at a pace which suits your individual circumstances. Some students may be able to take four examinations each year and complete the degree in the minimum registration period of three years. However, for most students, especially those studying part-time, results may be poorer than would otherwise be the case if you take on too many modules too soon. Others will choose to enter just one or two examinations at a time and perhaps take several years to build up the number of passes required to complete the degree. The maximum period of registration for the BD is eight years.

The maximum period of registration for undergraduate Diplomas and Certificates is five years, although students can complete in one to two years.

The standard of the examinations for International Programmes students is the same as that for undergraduates studying at member institutions and working throughout the year at their studies. There are no concessions for International Programmes students. Frequently, greater maturity of mind, work experience or other similar factors may make up for lack of time to study, but since a university degree is a hallmark of intellectual development, short cuts by 'cramming' are likely to be counter-productive. You should dedicate sufficient time, both to read and to think about your work. As a very rough guide, you might expect to spend about 300 hours on each 30-credit module – about six hours per week over 50 weeks, or seven-and-a-half hours per week over 40 weeks. However, this does depend on how fast you learn, and the depth to which you intend to study each module. If you have not studied for a long time, you may find that you can accomplish an increasing amount per hour as you progress through the modules and become more proficient at reading, understanding and note-taking.



## The programme structure



#### The study of Theology

Some degrees are vocational; that is, they are mainly concerned with providing the expertise necessary to follow specific professions. Other degrees are not directly linked with a particular career, but offer the opportunity to stretch one's mind, while exploring a subject which is intrinsically interesting and could lead to a wide range of careers. A degree in Law would be an example of the first type; Philosophy would be an example of the second. Students of Theology come into both categories. Some students will want to work in the service of one of the Christian churches or as teachers of Theology or Religious Studies. The University of London's Bachelor of Divinity (BD) has for a very long time been recognised as providing an admirable intellectual grounding for such vocations, though in the case of training for ministry, most churches will require additional training. Others will find in the closer study of the Christian tradition a way of enriching their own perception of the world in which they live, and a way of gaining the skills in critical thought and writing which, as with any other degree in the humanities, are of use in a wide range of professions.

#### The Bachelor of Divinity

For many people, a special attraction of the BD is the range of skills which it requires. These include:

- textual and linguistic skills (if Hebrew or New Testament Greek are chosen)
- ▶ theological skills for an understanding of the development of Christian doctrine over 2,000 years
- analytical and rational skills for the more philosophical modules, such as Philosophy of religion or Christian ethics
- comparative skills (if modules dealing with other world religions are chosen).

Some modules are compulsory, but the choice of options makes it possible to shape the overall degree to your particular skills and interests. Such a wide range makes the BD a fascinating programme of study; it also makes it

a very demanding one, which should not be undertaken without recognition of the major commitment involved.

#### The structure of the Regulations

The BD is made up of 12 modules and students must complete a number of modules at Level 4 before progressing to modules from Levels 5/6. This ensures that learning is progressive and consolidated.

For further information on the structure of the BD, please refer to the Programme Regulations.

## The Diploma of Higher Education in Theology

The Diploma is made up of 8 modules and students take the four modules from Level 4, then the compulsory module **Reformation and society** and three optional modules from Levels 5 and 6.

Passing the Diploma gives students the option of entry to the BD, and modules passed for the Diploma will count towards the BD if you decide to continue your studies.

## The Certificate of Higher Education in Theology and the Certificate of Higher Education in Philosophy, Religion and Ethics

Each Certificate consists of four modules. Students who complete the Certificate of Higher Education in Theology may apply to progress to the Diploma of Higher Education in Theology or the BD degree.

#### **Exit Awards**

The Diploma of Higher Education in Theology and the Certificate of Higher Education in Theology are offered as Exit Awards, available to you if you leave a programme before finishing. This means that if you successfully complete the necessary modules, you may be offered a qualification for the work you have done. These awards are made at the discretion of the Board of Examiners.

## Obtaining reading materials



For many modules you will find a selection of readings provided on the VLE, but there will be cases where you will have to source the recommended texts yourself, either by buying or borrowing books and articles.

#### Libraries

#### The Online Library

The first place to go to access library resources remotely is the University of London's Online Library, which has a homepage dedicated to Theology students to enable you to access the most relevant resources quickly:

http://onlinelibrary.london.ac.uk/programme/divinity-ba-and-theology-dip

Read the Student guide to find out more about the kinds of resources it can offer.

#### Local library access

It may be possible to borrow books for further reading from a library. If you live near a university with a Theology department, it may be worth enquiring about the possibility of using its resources. If you are a member of a church, there may be a diocesan theological library which you could join, or a local minister may be willing to lend you their books. Students living in or near London have access to the University Library at Senate House (for a small fee).

#### **Buying books**

All BD, Diploma and Certificate students taking biblical modules will need a copy of the Bible. In the examinations, set passages in English are taken from the Revised Standard Version, and this is probably the most suitable for student use. However, other translations, such as the Jerusalem Bible or the New English Bible, often provide valuable alternative understandings which can be looked at with profit. It is also worth noting that all three of these versions have been updated as the New Revised Standard Version, the New Jerusalem Bible and the Revised English Bible respectively. It remains to be seen how far these further revisions will supplant the older forms in practice.

Two other comments on the use of Bible versions may be useful. First, some recent versions are deliberately very free in their rendering, being aimed at a broader public and not at Theology students. These are not really suitable for academic study. Secondly, the Revised Version, though now more than a century old, has never been surpassed in its detailed concern for literality and, wherever possible, for rendering the same Hebrew and Greek words and phrases with the same English. In addition, it offers fuller cross-references in the margin than do nearly all modern versions. If it is readily available, therefore, a Revised Version with full marginal references can be a useful adjunct to study. (Note that the Revised Version is different from the Revised Standard Version.)

In addition to the Bible, you are advised to buy, or borrow on a long-term basis, the two or three most important books for each modules you are taking. The University's subject guides, hosted on the VLE, contain lists of suggested reading.

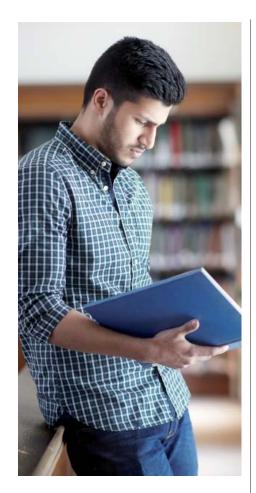
If you live near London, Oxford, Cambridge or a cathedral city, you may be able to find a bookshop with a good stock of theological books. If not, your local bookseller may be able to order them for you. Alternatively, there are lots of online companies from whom you may be able to order your books from. These include:

#### www.earthprint.com/universityoflondon www.amazon.com www.bookshop.blackwell.co.uk

Unfortunately some books go out of print very quickly. In order to address this problem, from now on, subject guides being revised will include alternative 'Essential reading'. In the meantime, you may be able to obtain out-of-print books from:

www.abebooks.com www.alibris.com www.bibliofind.com www.books.co.uk

## Studying for your Theology qualification



#### Support provided

We want to see you succeed so the University will support you in your studies in various ways, including:

## Virtual learning environment (VLE)

The Theology VLE is designed to provide you with round the clock access to important online resources and activities, to assist you in successfully completing your studies. Through the VLE you can access subject guides, a selection of reading for most modules, examination papers, examination guidelines, the Student guide, Programme handbook, Programme Regulations and Programme Specification and other important resources. It also provides a platform where students can interact with each other using discussion forums, and receive up-todate news and announcements. The VLE is accessed through the University of London's Student Portal, at:

## http://my.londoninternational.ac.uk

Students are sent a username and password for the Portal when they first register with the International Programmes. If you are unsure about how to log in to the Portal, please refer to the information in the Student guide, or for further help visit

www.londoninternational. ac.uk/contact-us

#### Preparing for study

Make sure that you have a suitable place for study. You will need adequate light, freedom from noise and interruptions, a good working surface, easy access to books and files, and, ideally, the facility to leave them in place overnight. Find the place where you feel most comfortable and alert and make a habit of working there.

In undertaking any kind of academic study, you are more likely to achieve your goal if you have worked out an effective strategy. To do this you need three kinds of self-knowledge:

- 1. You must have a clear idea of your goal. For example, if your main objective is to increase your knowledge and understanding of the subject, you might decide to divide your time equally between all of the topics in the syllabus. But, if you also need to achieve the best degree of which you are capable, this may not be an appropriate strategy.
- 2. You must be aware of your own limitations and of any limitations imposed upon you by your personal circumstances. For example, if your aptitude for a subject is limited, or you have relatively little time available to devote to it, you might decide to concentrate on a fairly small number of topics or, if appropriate, areas within topics.

3. You must know the most effective way for you, personally, to work – either by thinking about your past experiences of studying, or by experimenting with different methods. By all means read books on how to study, and listen to others' advice, but if their ideas do not work for you then ignore them.

#### Assessment

All Theology students are assessed by a written examination, so you will not have to submit any coursework. BD students, however, are the exception as they will submit a dissertation as part of their programme.

#### Dissertation

In the final year of study BD students will write a dissertation on a topic to be negotiated with your Programme Director. You will receive feedback on a one-page outline (consisting of a working title, a summary of the main sections of the dissertation, and a short bibliography), and comments on two complete drafts if required.

Your dissertation is an important piece of academic work and so we have put together a specific Dissertation guide to help you prepare. You can find this on the subject guide page on the VLE by logging in to the Portal:

http://my.londoninternational.ac.uk

#### **Examinations**

#### Preparing for examinations

Whatever your main motivation for studying the subject, you will have to take examinations. Here are some suggestions which may help you with your preparation:

- 1. Decide whether or not you are going to cover the whole syllabus. The choice of questions is generally sufficiently wide to allow you to study only some topics, if you wish. However, it may be better to work quickly through all the topics, and then to study in depth those which you find either the most interesting or the easiest to understand. Not only will this give you a better understanding of the subject as a whole and the way in which some topics interact with others, it will also enable you to make a more informed choice of the topics which you will revise for the examination.
- 2. For each topic you intend to study, read the relevant chapter in the subject guide, along with the sections from the Essential reading to which it will direct you. In order to do well in the examination you will need to increase your understanding by selecting additional material from the lists of Further reading.
- 3. Don't worry if you do not, at first, understand what you read. You may need to read some things several times before they become clear.

- 4. For each topic, look at the kinds of questions you may have to answer and make sure that you compile a set of notes that contains enough information for you to answer every possible question. Aim to have slightly more information for each question than you will actually need for the examination as you are unlikely to remember everything you have prepared. Thus, assuming that you will write about 1.000 words for a 45-minute essay question in the examination, you will need to have about 1,200 relevant words for every possible question. If, in the examination, you are likely to have difficulty working out which sections of the material you have prepared are needed for a particular question, you may find it useful to write a separate set of notes for every possible question on each topic. This is, of course, more time-consuming, but since failure to address the question is a common mistake, it may be worthwhile.
- 5. You may initially find it helpful to prepare separate sets of notes on individual books or articles, but make sure that you then incorporate them into a single set of notes for each topic or possible question. Otherwise you may find it difficult to organise the information when answering an examination question.
- 6. Make sure that you understand everything you have written in your notes. If there is an aspect of a topic which you really do

- not understand, either leave out that topic altogether or, if appropriate, leave out that part of it. You will gain much more credit for answering a straightforward question well than you will for answering a difficult question badly.
- 7. Practise writing essays. This is especially important if English is not your first language, or if you have not had recent experience of writing essays. As the examination approaches, practise writing timed essays under examination conditions.
- 8. If possible, work on the topics and tasks you find the most difficult at the time of day you find it easiest to concentrate. A topic that you cannot understand at 22.00 may seem much easier at 07.00, for example.
- 9. Take as many breaks as you need in order to work efficiently. You may need more frequent breaks if you are tired, or if you are working on a particularly difficult task.
- 10. Try to work at regular intervals; even if you are only able to study for half an hour at a time, this may be enough to 'programme your brain' with the next part of the topic you are working on, or with a particular problem which you need to solve. Research also suggests that our brains work on problems subconsciously, so the next time you sit down to study you may find that your understanding has improved, or that you have solved a problem,

- even if you did not consciously think about your studies.
- 11. It is not a good idea to 'work to the clock'; it is better to concentrate on covering topics effectively. There is no point in sitting at your desk for another half an hour just so that you can tell yourself that you have done x number of hours on topic y today. If you are not actually learning anything, take a break, or do something different.

#### Revision

- Once you have covered the module, construct a revision plan. Use this as a general guide; do not be afraid to modify it if you find you need more time on a particular topic, or if your circumstances change. It is better to know a smaller number of topics well than a larger number of topics only in outline. If you are taking more than one paper, you will need to decide whether to revise all the topics for one paper and then all the topics for the other paper. It might be best to alternate revision for both papers, especially if one of them involves a language – but, ultimately, only you can decide how you work (and remember) best.
- 2. By all means summarise your notes before the examination if you find this helpful, but do not stop revising from the more detailed notes that lie behind your summary too soon; otherwise you may find that you can recall only the summary and not the more detailed notes behind them.

- 3. You may find it helpful to work with other students, if you are able to contact them. You can discuss issues and problems, and make the revision process more enjoyable.
- 4. Relaxation is important. When you are not working, do things which take your mind off study so that you return to your books genuinely refreshed. Remember that you need adequate sleep. Treat your body kindly. Do not work unnatural hours, but judge how best to unwind and get as much rest as you need.

#### The examination

- 1. Read the paper (including the second page, if there is one) and decide which questions you will answer. Begin with the question you feel most confident about.
- 2. Do not waste time writing out the question the number is sufficient for the Examiners to know which question you are answering. Write a brief plan and cross this through when you have completed your answer. Write legibly. The Examiners will be unable to give you credit for good work if they cannot read what you have written.
- 3. Answer the question set. Do not simply write down everything you know about the topic. Use your knowledge to answer the question you have been asked, and make sure that this is clear to the Examiners, particularly (for essay questions) in the conclusion.

- 4. Do not write a 'sermon'. The Examiners are looking for logical arguments, not an appeal to their better feelings.
- 5. Make sure that you acknowledge the sources of your ideas by giving scholars' names and the titles of their books or articles.
- 6. Allow approximately equal time for all the questions. If you spend more time on some of the questions than on others, it is unlikely that the extra marks you will gain on these questions will outweigh the marks lost on others. However, should you find that you have only a few minutes left for the last question, it is better to put down the main points of your answer in note form, rather than write only a few lines of an introduction.
- 7. Should you have any time left over at the end, read through your answers again. You will not be able to make major changes, but you may be able to improve its legibility or correct minor mistakes.



## After graduation



#### Planning for a career

If you are hoping to enter full-time or lay ministry, you should keep in touch with your church authorities. On completion of the BD, you will probably be required to take additional courses in practical ministry. If you are seeking a career in another area you may consider consulting the University Careers Service:

www.thecareersgroup.co.uk

#### A postgraduate degree

Should you wish to study for a postgraduate degree, you will normally need to have achieved at least an upper second class BD. The International Programmes does not offer Masters programmes in Theology, so anyone contemplating such a programme should make enquiries at King's College, or any other university which is accessible to them. This should be done at least a year before graduation.

### **Questions and answers**

Here are answers to questions we are sometimes asked. If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

#### I am finding it difficult to keep going

This type of study is not easy – but it is very flexible. Should you find, for whatever reason, that you have fallen behind with your studies, you can always postpone an examination (subject to the Programme Regulations and Programme Specification) to the following year. If you are working alone, you may find it helpful to seek tuition, and/or to contact other students through the module discussion area on the VLE. If you are considering dropping out altogether, it might be a good idea to talk this through with someone first – perhaps a member of your family, a tutor, local minister, careers adviser or alternatively, use the online enquiry management system to contact the International Programmes. If, having done this, you still feel that you should discontinue your studies, the decision will be a considered and mature response to your circumstances and one which you can regard in a totally positive light.

#### I have failed

No doubt you feel disappointed. But it is important to consider carefully the reasons why you did not pass, and the options which are now available to you. Perhaps you were unable to devote sufficient time to your studies and, with further work, you could retake the necessary papers and do better. Perhaps you were working alone and would benefit from attending a course, or feedback on some practice essays from a distance learning tutor. Or perhaps, in the case of an optional module, you found the subject particularly difficult and would prefer to try a different module (provided that this is permitted by the Programme Regulations and Programme Specification). If you would like confirmation of what you are permitted to do, you should contact the International Programmes at:

#### www.londoninternational.ac.uk/contact-us

If you have been attending a course or receiving tuition, it would also be a good idea to ask your tutor's advice.

#### I cannot pay

We try to lighten your financial load by spreading the payment of fees to the University across your whole period of study. Instead of paying the full amount 'up front', you pay an initial registration fee, then further fees in each year that you continue with your studies and take examinations. Nevertheless, we realise that this is still a significant call on the resources of many of our students and that some struggle to maintain their registration.

We regret that it is neither possible for us to consider appeals from students for fees to be waived, nor to allow students to pay in instalments. You may want to consider making an application to your bank for a loan; many banks have special 'study loan' schemes. (See also, 'Fees, refunds and financial assistance' in the Student guide.)

For further information on the range of programmes we offer, please visit our website or contact us at:

The Student Advice Centre University of London Senate House Malet Street London WC1E 7HU United Kingdom

Telephone +44 (0)20 7862 8360 enquiries.londoninternational.ac.uk

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