**MA in Digital Theology**
*Validated by Liverpool Hope University*


**Programme Handbook and Specification**


**September 2020**

# 1. PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION for *MADT*
## for entry during academic year 2020-21

## A. Brief Description

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| 1. | Study mode(s) and period of registration | Full time or part-time (maximum 4 years) |
| 2. | Frequency of Intake | Twice annually: September and January |
| 3. | Awarding body | Liverpool Hope University |
| 4 | Teaching location(s) | Spurgeon's College, London and online |
| 5 | Framework for Higher Education Qualifications | Level 7 – 180 credits |
| 6 | Final award(s), including any interim awards | Master of Arts in Digital Theology (MADT). A Postgraduate Certificate in Digital Theology will be available as an exit award on successful completion of 60 credits consisting of the Digital Theology and Digitally Mediated Christianity units and a Postgraduate Diploma in Digital Theology will be available as an exit award on successful completion of 120 credits of which 60 will be made up of the above units. Students who complete 60 or 120 credits which do not include both the above units may be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma in Theology. |
| 7 | Role of the programme specification | This document explains the aims and structure of the programme and how the units contribute to the programme's overall aims and Intended Learning Outcomes. It also sets out what knowledge, understanding and skills students can expect to have acquired when they graduate. |
| 8 | Regulation | The provision is subject to Spurgeon's College Taught Postgraduate Degree Regulations. |
| 8 | Date written | September 2020 |
| 9 | Further links | College website: www.spurgeons.ac.uk Spurgeon's College Moodle: http://spurgeons.moodle.webanywhere.co.uk |

The maximum period of registration for the MADT is 4 years. The distribution of work for full and part-time students will **normally** be as follows.

| | | YEAR 1 | YEAR 2 | YEAR 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Two Years FT** | | Core Units<br>Optional Unit<br>Methodology Units<br>Dissertation (= 180 credits) | (Dissertation may be completed in Year 2.) | |

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| **PT Pattern a** | Core Units<br>1 Methodology Unit<br>(= 75 credits) | Optional Unit<br>1 Methodology Unit<br>Dissertation (= 105 credits) | (Dissertation may be completed in Year 3, and year 4 if required) |
| **PT Pattern b** | Core Units<br>1 Methodology Unit<br>(= 75 credits) | Optional Unit<br>1 Methodology Unit<br>(= 45 credits) | Dissertation (60 credits); may be completed in year 4. |

**B. Details**

**1.1 Aims**

The programme aims to provide:

1. an environment fostering the integration of academic and professional knowledge and values, through the sharing of lived research and professional practice;

2. an advanced level of critical engagement with literature in the field of digital theology and related disciplines;

3. opportunities for students to communicate their ideas effectively to academic peers;

4. the opportunity for students to draw on a variety of theological and other academic disciplines and discourses in order to reflect critically and constructively Christian faith and practice in a digital age;

5. the opportunity to explore topics from an ethnically and culturally diverse range of international voices and perspectives;

6. the opportunity for students to learn from the research interests of staff;

7. the opportunity to join and participate in a wider postgraduate community of students and scholars for mutual support and formation;

**1.2. Learning outcomes**

By the end of their studies students should be able to:

Subject Specific Skills (Level 7)

1. reflect in a critical, imaginative and theologically sophisticated way on the implications of digitally mediated practices in mission and ministry;

2. analyse and critically evaluate demanding texts and ideas in the field of digital theology, both orally and in writing;

3. critically evaluate current research in aspects of digital theology such as contextual theology, digital culture, digitally mediated Christian practices and ethical issues in contemporary society;

4. demonstrate a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of key issues within the field of theology and technology.

Key Generic (transferable) skills (Level 7)

1. apply, summarise and analyse key complex trends relevant to her/his profession;

2. communicate reasoned ideas effectively within a variety of contexts;

3. identify, engage with and respond appropriately to ethical issues in his/her professional and ministerial contexts;

4. understand and critically evaluate positions taken by others in similar and different ecclesial and cultural contexts to her/his own;

5. build personal confidence in analysing and leading appropriate professional practice;

6. integrate academic and professional knowledge to develop the self;

7. articulate with confidence his/her own ministerial perspectives and praxis.

Academic Skills (Level 7)

1. undertake independent learning, independent research, and sustained critical and self-reflexive analysis;

2. critically assess arguments and positions taken by others, both in discussion and in writing, including the ability to evaluate the quality of methods employed to produce any underpinning data or evidence;

3. present information effectively in a variety of different media, including digital, with the ability to summarise and create articulate syntheses of complex positions, and to justify conclusions and positions put forward;

4. apply their critical and imaginative faculties towards the creative transformation and enhancement of missional and ministerial practice;

5. ask informed questions, and identify problems and issues, on a given topic.

**1.3 Teaching/Learning and Assessment Methods**

The MA in Digital Theology degree provides an opportunity to engage in sustained reflection and research upon theological and philosophical approaches to digital culture and technology as well as the implications of digitally mediated Christian practices. In order to complete all of the elements of this course, students need to be able to engage in independent research and reflection. At each stage in this process students are required both to engage in critical theological reflection upon their own professional practice, and to enter into dialogue with a variety of theological traditions and with insights from other disciplines including digital humanities, digital religion and computer sciences. This process of reflection and dialogue contributes to students' personal and professional development as reflective practitioners, helping them to construct fresh perspectives on the tasks and opportunities facing those involved in the practice of ministry and mission in a digital age.

The course will provide a structured environment in which students can engage at an advanced level with a range of academic and professional issues relevant to their own practice. The learning and teaching strategy seeks to develop the three key skills of independent learning, independent research, and sustained critical and self-reflexive analysis integrating academic and professional considerations. Therefore, the major emphasis is on encouraging independent, self-reflexive and active learning with tutors providing appropriate support.

Student engagement between intensive teaching blocks will be facilitated by online forums. Students will have set tasks to undertake as preparation for such online sessions and for the next block. The VLE will serve a number of purposes, including providing a repository for information and resources, and also as a means to extend the academic debates and activities established during the face to face delivery. The engagement is intended to be both formal and structured (such as specifically scheduled online seminars), and spontaneous and occasional (such as contributing to ongoing 'threads', responding to material posted by tutors and other students). Alert and news functions will be used by unit leaders and other tutors to keep in regular contact.

### 1.4 Structure of the Provision
Within the MADT there are four components:
- Two core units
    - Digital Theology (30 credits)
    - Digitally Mediated Christianity (30 credits)

- Two short methodology units:
    - Theological Enquiry and Interpretation (15 credits)
    - Theological Research (15 credits)
- A choice of one unit selected from those offered on Spurgeon's College level 7 provision for the year (30 credits)
- Dissertation (60 credits)

### 1.5 Narrative description of the programme

Students engage in curriculum-based study worth 180 credits at Level 7, consisting of 3 x 30 credit taught units, 2 x 15 credit methodology units and a 60-credit dissertation in which they engage in a guided investigation of a topic of choice broadly within the area of digital theology. The two core units, Digital Theology and Digitally Mediated Christianity, as well as the two research units Theological Enquiry and Interpretation and Theological Research are compulsory for all students. The remaining 30 credits can be chosen from the range of options available during the relevant years of study.

### 1.6 Delivery mode

We believe the timetable offers both access and choice for full and part-time students and for local and distance students. Our normal rhythm is:

1. The students will commence with two days of induction to the programme and postgraduate study skills, followed by two days of block teachings on Digital Theology/Digitally Meditated Christianity units. These will normally be held on-site at Spurgeon's College.

2. The core units will be delivered through teaching blocks, and through online seminars throughout the semesters. Other units may be delivered either in this way or by weekly classes through a semester. The students will be required to engage in online forums and occasional one-to-one supervision with a tutor, either remotely or face-to-face.

3. Students will have access to a MADT-specific social media platform for conversation, chat and sharing of information and research.

4.  Each year the Centre for Digital Theology will run a Digital Symposium exploring key issues related to Digital Theology. The symposium provides the students the opportunity to engage with leading scholars in the field and the possibility of presenting papers in an academic environment.

5.  Notice of timetable changes will be given well in advance of the start of the programmes, although some flexibility will be retained in order to avoid clashes.

6.  The Theological Research unit provides training in the process of researching and writing a Master's dissertation. It is assessed by a dissertation proposal which must be of an adequate standard before a student is allowed to embark on the dissertation.

7.  Students will be encouraged to engage with the College's research culture, which includes a rich programme of weekly postgraduate research seminars on a range of topics, recorded to enable remote access, and regular research colloquia.

**1.7 Taught Units**

**Compulsory Units:**
Core Units:
*Digital Theology*
*Digitally Mediated Christianity*

Methodology Units:
*Theological Enquiry and Interpretation*
*Theological Research*

 **Optional Units (indicative list of those regularly offered in a year):**
*Delivered through weekly teaching:*
**Studying Christian Theology**
**Reading and Using the Bible**
**Contemporary Issues in Theology**
**New Testament Theology – Romans**
**Christian Spirituality**
**Preaching, Worship and Pastoral Care**

*Delivered through intensive block teaching and online study:*
**Preaching – Theology and Practice**
**Biblical Literacy in a Media Culture**

**1.8 Assessment Strategy and Criteria**

*Assessment Strategy*

The assessment strategy is intended to build student skills in rigorous reflection on the implications of digital technology and culture on Christian faith and practice, and strengthen their capacity to theological engage with digitality; it is also designed to foster a critical integration of academic and professional knowledge and values. Thus, critical reflection on the student's own ministerial and missional practices is a sustained element of the assessment strategy, alongside assignments designed to enhance skills and knowledge in selected fields of study. Taught unit assessments will include an appropriate mixture of essays, reflections, textual analyses, oral presentations, and contributions to digital media such as wikis or blogs. Timely, formative and transparently managed feedback will form an important part of the assessment strategy. Due attention will be given to the

selection of assessment questions and tasks so that students are able to engage with issues relevant to their cultural and professional context.

The Assessment Strategy enables students to demonstrate the acquisition, understanding, application, synthesis and evaluation of knowledge at the appropriate level, while also demonstrating subject-specific and transferable competencies and skills.

Assessment is viewed holistically as an integral part of the Learning and Teaching strategy, intended to enhance learning as well as providing the means for verification of student achievement. A clear communication of expectations (chiefly through the unit descriptors), and feedback to students on completed assessment, are pillars of the strategy.

The following practices will be adopted to ensure that assessment is rigorous, transparent, equitable and valid:

1. As part of the students' induction process, the following will be discussed:
   a. The role and purpose of assessment within the programme
   b. The grading system
   c. Marking criteria
   d. The practicalities of submission
   e. Opportunities for resubmission

2. Assessment details will be published to and discussed with students at the start of each unit, as will marking criteria.

3. The use of both internal and external moderation processes. All summative work is internally second-marked. A representative sample of assessments is sent to the external examiner for moderation, the sample size being agreed with the external examiner.

4. Academic standards are maintained by a combination of the following:
   a. The external examiner facilitates understanding of comparability with other institutions.
   b. Members of the team, acting as external examiners at both Masters and Doctoral levels in other institutions, foster discussions about comparability.
   c. New members of staff with recent experience of teaching elsewhere also bring enhanced understanding of comparability.

5. Feedback Strategy: the provision of timely, effective and consistent feedback to students is an important element of the Assessment Strategy. It will be achieved by the following:
   a. Notification to students of assignment due dates will also include notification of the expected return date and method.
   b. First and second marking will be completed within four term-time weeks.
   c. Internal markers will provide detailed feedback, reflecting the assessment criteria used (which will have been made known to the student in preparation for the assignment). This, together with the appropriately annotated assignment, will be returned to the student with a reminder that until the external moderation process has been completed, the mark/grade is provisional only.

*Assessment Criteria*

Assessment criteria will reflect the College's generic assessment descriptors for Level 7 provision, which are published in the Student Handbook.

There will also be purpose-designed criteria where applicable, which will be established in relation to learning outcomes and as appropriate to assessment mode.

## 1.9 Transition Points

Student progress is reviewed at the June and September meetings of the Progression and Awards Board. Students who have failed any units will be granted compensation or opportunity for reassessment in accordance with Spurgeon's College Taught Postgraduate Degree Regulations. Students are required to gain their 120 Part 1 credits before the Board will permit them to proceed to Part 2 (the dissertation).

## 1.10 Entrance Requirements

### MA in Digital Theology (MADT)
The normal entrance requirement is a degree in Theology or Religious Studies or a related subject classed as a first or a good second class honours degree (55% or above). Graduates in other disciplines and with experience of Theology or Religious Studies to at least Certificate level (with marks at merit or higher) may also be admitted to the programme.

### Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma in Digital Theology
The normal entrance requirement is a degree in Theology or Religious Studies or a related subject. Graduates in other disciplines with experience of Theology or Religious Studies to at least Certificate level may be admitted to the programme with the agreement of the Admissions Committee.

Suitably qualified mature students who have undertaken formal academic study to a similar level in non-accredited courses may also be admitted to the programme with the agreement of the Admissions Committee.

Students who successfully complete the Postgraduate Certificate will be permitted by the Progression and Awards Board to proceed to the Postgraduate Diploma. Students who successfully complete the Postgraduate Diploma will be permitted to proceed to the MA in Digital Theology.

### APEL
Advanced Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) may be considered as equivalent, or partly equivalent (up to 90 credits), to these entry requirements for candidates who do not meet the normal threshold but have relevant experience.

### Standard of English
Applicants from outside the UK may be required to meet specific English language requirements normally an IELTS at level 7 where the reading and writing specific components should be at least 7. The College will comply with the relevant and current Home Office legislation.

### Selection Procedures
All candidates will need to demonstrate to the panel that they have sufficient experience and aptitude for the course they are applying for. They may be invited to an interview (normally virtually) if this is not sufficiently clear from their application papers.

Applicants who are citizens of countries other than the UK will only be admitted subject to careful verification that they fulfil the criteria laid down by the UK Government for the admission of non-UK nationals as published on the UK Home Office website at the time of application.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to disclose any disabilities, health issues whether physical or mental, or learning difficulties which might impact their studies. The College will make all reasonable adjustments for such students, but where there are concerns about a student's ability to undertake their desired course, the procedures in the College's Fitness to Study policy are followed. Where appropriate, it is advisable that accepted students apply for a Disability Student Allowance as early as possible to enable support to be in place before they begin their studies.

There is an appeals procedure when applications are unsuccessful. Please see the College's Admissions Protocols.

### 1.11 Special Features

The programme has a number of special features. Elements of note include:
- Access to the College's excellent library and electronic resources.
- The opportunity to join and participate in a wider postgraduate community of students and scholars for mutual support and formation.
- The programme offers a cohesive and coherent study experience as part of a community of student peers and of research practitioners.
- The assessment is varied and innovative, developing a broad, critical and self-reflexive skills base.
- A choice of an optional unit in addition to core requirements.
- The curriculum and learning and teaching methods foster reflection on personal, professional and academic values and on the links between them. This is then related to evolving professional identities.
- The College offers a vibrant research culture, with opportunities for engagement with 'live' research embedded into the programme structure.
- Opportunities for students to be engaged in the activities and work of Centre for Digital Theology (CfDT) including an annual digital theology symposium.
- The programme benefits from the wide academic network of the CfDT and its engagement with leading scholars in field through the Global Network of Digital Theology.
- The programme is also strengthened through the CfDT and the College's active partnerships with churches and para-church organisations such as Premier Christian Media.
- Modes of learning and teaching will forge meaningful links to policy, political and practitioner contexts.
- Accommodation can be arranged for any periods of residential study at a competitive rate.
- An ecumenical staff base of experienced academics and practitioners.

### 1.12 Programme evaluation, monitoring and revision

*Evaluation and Monitoring*

(i) Unit evaluation: Students are asked to evaluate each unit which they study. The completed evaluation forms are sent to the unit tutors who present the outcomes to the Postgraduate Programmes Committee and complete their own evaluation in the light of the students' comments. Student and tutor evaluations are monitored by the Academic Quality Assurance Committee, which in turn reports to the Academic Board. The students are represented on both the committee and the Board and significant outcomes are shared with students through the Student-Staff Liaison Committee.

(ii) End of year Programme evaluation: At the end of each year, students are asked to comment on their experiences on the programme as a whole and the support they have received. This feedback is examined by the Postgraduate Programmes Committee and forms part of a continual process of review by the teaching staff team, with a rolling action plan in response to data about the quality of teaching, learning and achievement and the student experience. The Programme Director provides an annual report to the Academic Board and the University.

(iii) Internal evaluation and monitoring reviews: The programme is part of the College's internal scheme of periodic reviews which ensures that each programme is reviewed on a 6 year cyclical basis.

(iv) In addition the validating partner, Liverpool Hope University, has its own systems in place to review its validation arrangements.

***Programme Revision and Development***
Programme revision can be initiated by the College's teaching staff or the Academic Board as well as by the University. Students participate in this process through their representatives on the Postgraduate Programmes Committee, Academic Board and through other consultations.

Programme development is the responsibility of the appointed Programme Development Working Group that reports to the Programme Design and Re-validation Review Committee that makes recommendations to the Academic Board.

## 2. CONTEXT, RATIONALE AND FURTHER DETAILS OF THE MADT PROGRAMME

### 2.1  Background to the Award and Rationale for the Development

Spurgeon's College is a nationally-recognised and respected centre of theological education with a reputation for academic excellence and high-quality ministerial formation. In maintaining its reputation, the College recognises the value of active participation with the wider university sector, while wishing to retain its distinctive evangelical ethos and identity. Part of the College's vision for the next ten years is to develop its position, in the global and diverse city of London, as a research-led, experience-based, centre of excellence delivering positive outcomes for students. The College's willingness to work collaboratively with established institutions, such as Liverpool Hope University, is one manifestation of this wider vision. Spurgeon's College's commitment to Christian mission is central to its Mission, Vision, Values, Aims and Objectives. The College seeks to form students who are equipped to identify strategic opportunities to participate actively and intelligently in the *missio Dei* and to play their part in enabling the Kingdom of God to come and the Church of Jesus to be built up and strengthened.

Spurgeon's College views the MADT programme as a means of contributing to the mission of Spurgeon's College "to train men and women for Christian mission, ministry and leadership in the contemporary world." The aim of the proposed programme is as such to equip graduates for mission, ministry and leadership in a contemporary world increasingly influenced and transformed by digital technology and digital culture.

It is intended that the MADT will build on and enhance academic cross-disciplinary collaboration across both Liverpool Hope University and Spurgeon's College, benefitting from the richness and diversity of their research expertise, as well as the wide, long-standing professional partnerships in which colleagues engage, particularly churches and partner institutions. In particular, the programme will benefit from the experiences, research and networks of the Centre for Digital Theology (formerly CODEC) as well as the partnership with Premier Christian Media.

Whether professionally orientated or otherwise, all the College's programmes align with its commitment to research-informed teaching at all levels; and it is also the case that several areas of provision not formally resulting in a vocational qualification nevertheless have explicit relevance to, and reference, professional contexts and applications. In this way, the work of the College as a whole reflects multiple and nuanced understandings of knowledge (both 'pure' and applied) and recognises 'professional knowledge' as an area that draws on various traditional and emerging traditions and modes of learning.

### 2.2  Overview of Spurgeon's College's Standing and Provision

Spurgeon's College is a Christ-centred, evangelical college in the Baptist tradition, engaged in biblical and theological education. Based in South London it offers, amongst other programmes, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in the field of Theology and Religious Studies. Spurgeon's College has a distinguished and ongoing history, having been training Baptist and non-Baptist ministers for over 163 years. The College's alumni are working across the world to support their communities.

In November 2019 the Office for Students (OfS), approved the College's registration. Recent QAA reviews have consistently identified Spurgeon's as meeting UK expectations in all areas of scrutiny. Spurgeon's College is committed to retaining its research degrees provision, and hopes to enter into a collaborative partnership for the awarding of research degrees with an institution that shares our values and our goal of forming students for mission and ministry in the contemporary world.

### 2.3  The MADT at Spurgeon's College, validated by Liverpool Hope University

Our societies are rapidly transformed by digital technology as it infringes on all spheres of human culture and society. The degree of MA in Digital Theology provides an opportunity to engage in sustained theological reflection and research upon the effects and consequences of digitality upon Christian faith and practice and more broadly society at large. Its design permits for fulltime or part time study. It is delivered in a mixed-mode of onsite block teaching and online seminars. It is integrated with postgraduate provisions that have been successfully offered at Spurgeon's College for 25 years. It is also designed to be a potential foundation for professional doctoral studies for those who wish to pursue them.

The Liverpool Hope-validated MADT programme can be seen in a number of ways:

- as in-service training or continuing ministerial education;
- as on-going personal and spiritual development;
- as an opportunity to develop new skills;
- as a focus for evaluating your current work;
- as a structure for developing expertise in a particular aspect of theology and ministry;
- as an opportunity to develop new approaches to mission and ministry;
- as an opportunity to consider the challenges facing church life and mission in the 21st
- century;
- as providing skills for research and consultancy
- as a preparation for making a significant contribution to the understanding and practice
  of mission and ministry, and/or theological thought through the completion of a major research project in a doctoral programme.

The **aim** of the MADT programme is to develop reflective practitioners and thinkers, who will engage in critical, theological reflection upon the Christian faith and practice in a digital age. The programme encourages students to explore various theological traditions and disciplines, to further develop a range of practical skills and to develop habits of theological reflection which integrate theory with practice. This process of reflection and dialogue contributes to students' personal and professional development as reflective practitioners, helping them to construct fresh perspectives on the tasks and opportunities facing those involved in the practice of ministry and mission under the conditions of digitality.

In particular, the MADT programme aims to:

• assist students to develop and expand their range of theological knowledge, understanding and skills in ways that will inform their practice and thought;
• provide students with a range of learning experiences that are supported by a variety of teaching approaches and delivered in a supportive learning environment;
• offer to students the opportunity to explore and reflect critically upon theological studies with particular regard to the richness of Christian practice and expression;
• enable students to draw on a variety of theological and other academic disciplines and discourses in order to reflect critically and constructively on their practice, vocation and experience;
• use the research interests of staff to inform and enhance the students' learning experience;
• promote the development of key transferable skills that will assist students in their career options;
• enable students to become competent in research methodologies enabling further study and research in the subject field of digital theology.
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The MADT consists of 180 credits at Level 7.

The programme links to the wider corporate goal of Liverpool Hope University to be 'a generator of new knowledge and ideas in order to be a natural epicentre for research, knowledge transfer … and professional development'. The MADT encapsulates these elements, locating the learning of the student within the professional context, and assuming the potential for both professional transformation in the individual, as well as tangible impact in the professional setting. These inter-related spheres of influence are themselves aligned with broader philosophical perspectives that rooted in a commitment to truth, peace and social justice, key aspects of value-informed practice.

The proposed MADT is intended to attract applicants who have clearly demonstrated Level 6 competencies and the capacity for study at Level 7.


## 2.4 Evidence of Demand and Consultation Process

The MADT has been specifically designed to equip ordained and lay leaders to engage theologically in mission and ministry in the digital age. With increasing evidence of the wider societal impact of digital technology and the recent turn to digital platforms by churches there is arguably a greater demand for the sort of area of specific study the programme offers. It thereby furthers the mission of Spurgeon's College 'to train men and women for Christian mission, ministry and leadership in the contemporary world!'

The programme is designed to attracts students from a number of different interested groups including:
- Students with a particular interest in theological reflection on digital culture.
- Theological students in TEIs or in overseas seminaries who seek to progress to a PhD programme in cognate studies.
- Lay people or ordained ministers involved in Church communications, leadership, pioneer ministry, or discipleship training.
- Persons with a background in the IT-industry who wish to integrate their work experience with their faith.

The recruitment will further be strengthened by the strategic partnership with Premier Christian Media which promises avenues of promoting the MADT to a broad Christian audience.

The units to be offered will be a mixture of tried and tested units already offered under different postgraduate programmes at Spurgeon's College and the core units which have previously been delivered and developed at Cranmer Hall, Durham University. The MADT at Spurgeon's will as such build upon the valuable experiences gained from the programme's previous rendition in Durham.

Spurgeon's College has offered postgraduate degrees for continuing development in ministry since 1994. It established a Master's in Applied Theology and a Master's in Preaching in the 1990s, first validated by the University of Wales and since 2012 by the University of Manchester. Since the University of Manchester's decision in 2018 to bring the partnership gradually to an end, the College has been reassessing the full range of its courses. It wishes to refresh its postgraduate provision for professional development in response to changing needs.  It intends to seek its own Taught Degree-Awarding Powers, but also to establish a postgraduate route which could lead potentially to doctoral studies in mission and ministry, and for this purpose it has established a partnership with Liverpool Hope University.

In addition to the professional Master's degrees, Spurgeon's College has offered a successful Doctor of Ministry degree since 2004. This was validated by the University of Wales (Lampeter) and since 2010 by the University of Chester. Since the University of Chester ceased taking new applications for

the programme (and for the validated MPhil/PhD) in 2016, the College has continued to receive enquiries regarding postgraduate research. The College's hope is to restart a validated DMin programme in due course.

While developing these plans for its postgraduate provision, the College has also undertaken a major review of its BA degree and plans are in place for offering a completely refreshed curriculum from September 2021 or 2022. In addition to a generic ministerial pathway, we have agreed to offer specialist pathways in areas including pioneer ministry, chaplaincy and youth ministry. The simultaneous revision of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes allows for an alignment of routes, such that undergraduate pathways such as these would form a natural basis for transition into new Master's programmes.

Given that the MADT is thus conceptualised as part of a coherent suite of provision leading from undergraduate programmes through potentially to doctoral level, it is confidently anticipated that there will be increasing numbers of applications from these 'internal' routes.

In sum, the proposals for the MADT incorporate and build on the strengths and considerable experience of the College in offering postgraduate degrees for continuing professional development, with the aim of meeting the continuing demand for relevant and accessible advanced education as well as in-service training for those in a wide range of ministry settings.

## 2.5      Relationship to the Equality Scheme(s)/Inclusive Curriculum Design

Spurgeon's College is committed to the principles of equality and diversity as well as the elimination of discriminatory practices. Within this context the College seeks to ensure that all individuals are treated with respect and dignity; find it possible to participate fully in the life of the learning community; are recognised for the varied contributions that contribute to Spurgeon's Mission and have equal access to opportunities so as to maximise their personal, academic and professional development. Underpinning this approach is the principle that no individual will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, marital status, gender reassignment, racial group, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, socio-economic background, trade union membership, or any other irrelevant distinction.

The MADT curriculum is fully compliant with the Equal Opportunities Policy of Spurgeon's College. This is threaded through the programme since such issues emerge in self-reflexive professional practice and in reflection on professional values; they are also addressed explicitly in critical engagement with epistemological paradigms attentive to positionality and standpoint (such as liberation theologies).

Teaching staff recognise that 'an inclusive curriculum is one where all students' entitlement to access and participate in a course is anticipated, acknowledged and taken into account' (Higher Education Academy, Inclusive curriculum design in higher education, 2011, p. 7). It seeks to reflect the following principles, as enunciated by the HEA:

- Anticipatory: Adopting an anticipatory approach reduces the need for reactive and individualised responses that can arise when inclusive issues have not been considered at the design phase;
- Flexible: it is open, versatile and responsive to an evolving student population, and to changes in circumstances that may require adaptations to accommodate student availability;
- Accountable: it encourages staff and students to be responsible for the progress they have made against equality objectives and actions agreed;

- Collaborative: it builds on partnership between students, colleagues and other stakeholders including professional bodies, sector bodies, international partners and employers to enrich the curriculum content and relevance;

In addition the teaching team seeks to promote equity and to challenge prejudice and discrimination.

This translates into this provision as follows:

- Anticipatory: students are encouraged to think about maintaining a quality experience in the classroom as a way of widening the interests and aspirations of all students. In this regard the student voice is heard and acted upon through a number of mechanisms. These include:
  - Student feedback on units, leading to robust evaluation processes via the Postgraduate Programmes Committee and Academic Quality Assurance Committee
  - Student representation in the wider framework of College Boards and Committees
- Flexibility: Members of the team – where appropriate with the support of colleagues responsible for administration and pastoral care – make every effort, within the framework of College regulations and processes, to meet with individual student needs responsively, creatively and fairly. This approach includes meeting with students in difficulty outside of office hours or, subject to due process, setting alternative assessment tasks;
- Accountability: The teaching team and students share a responsibility to uphold inclusivity and fairness for everyone. Through the structure of small teaching groups, in particular, potentially harmful or hurtful behaviour is intercepted and positive relations fostered;
- Collaborative: To ensure enhanced opportunities for students, the teaching team fosters collaborative relations with a range of professional bodies and stakeholders, notably through its partnership networks.

## 2.6 Principles of Curriculum Design

The curriculum is designed on the following principles:
- The professional and personal experiences of candidates admitted to the programme are central to the learning experience providing opportunities both for self-reflective learning;
- The curriculum will be relevant to a diverse range of personal-professional needs and interests;
- Fostering integration of academic and professional knowledge and values is at the heart of the programme;
- Students should be enabled to relate their academic and professional interests and concern to broader issues of policy and practice;
- Core to the student experience is the formation of cohort communities, through which students will engage with their peers in a variety of activities/settings, both face to face and virtual; thus, the curriculum should offer a cohesive and coherent study experience as part of a community of student peers;
- The curriculum should reflect faculty expertise and integrate closely with faculty research specialisms;
- In all, the curriculum should promote student development as highly competent and self-reflective practitioners.

## 2.7 Credit Structure

The programme consists of 180 credits of study consisting of 4 units of 30 credits each, 2 research units of 15 credits each, and a dissertation of 60 credits. These can be taken either fulltime over a maximum of 2 years, or part-time over a maximum of 4 years.

## 2.8 External Involvement in the Curriculum Design

The core units of the MADT have been offered at Cranmer Hall and validated by Durham University since 2017. Aspects of the Spurgeon's College MA and MTh courses, which have been validated and scrutinized by external bodies over 25 years, as well as its new MMin course scrutinised by a validation panel including three external members in July 2020, have been integrated into the curriculum design and programme specification of this new Liverpool Hope-validated MADT programme.

## 2.9 Relationship to Subject Benchmark Statement(s)

The programme conforms to the Level 7 descriptor of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and the Level 7 Subject Benchmark statement for Theology and Religious Studies

## 2.10 Learning and Teaching

Key features of the Learning and Teaching Strategy include:

*1. Learning in small groups which allows the development of academic potential and fosters relationships with members of staff*
It is envisaged that the size of the student group would be small. This will enable close working with the tutor and between students. One-to-one support is also built into the course.

*2. A coherent curriculum supported by well-designed assessments and appropriate feedback*
The curriculum has a clear rationale and distinctiveness and is planned in an integrated fashion. Assessments are varied in support of the specific requirements of particular unit learning outcomes. They will be accompanied by feed-forward about assessment criteria and guidance for planning work at this level, and by constructive and detailed feedback.

*3. Signposting of a clear route for personal development and employability*
Personal and professional development is integral to the programme. Clear signposting of this will be offered in marketing materials, admissions interviews, in handbooks and orally, and it will be built into the student experience throughout.

*4. A curriculum informed and influenced by current research*
The curriculum is underpinned by extensive staff research.

*5. Well organised learning opportunities underpinned by a network of pastoral and academic support*
Class sessions will have clear foci and structure, within the bounds of which the aim is to enable student engagement, and allow for peer exchange as well as tutor support and feedback. Tutors will seek to foster an environment in which contentious and difficult questions can be treated in a principled manner. These principles will derive, at least in part from philosophical understanding and debate. The learning and teaching strategy outlined above is designed to provide a flexible and responsive network of pastoral and academic support.

*6. Developments and changes to Learning and Teaching made after listening to the student body*

The election of student representation and discussion of points raised at staff-student liaison meetings will be given a high priority. Evaluations will be carried out at the end of each unit, and responses shared with students.

*7. Teaching delivered by staff using good and innovative practice informed by a range of development opportunities*
The teaching team is committed to interactive learning, using a range of mechanisms including textual analysis, seminar discussion, group work, workshop-style explorations of problems, multimedia input and debates. Staff engage with development opportunities provided both internally and externally.

*8. Learning opportunities developed through regular reflection by subject and support teams*
Unit evaluations and external examiner reports will enable the team to reflect on how best to provide enhanced learning opportunities.

*9. Learning opportunities developed with recognition of diversity within the student body*
The teaching staff will promote learning through diverse strategies, using a variety of oral and written communication, discussion strategies, abstract reasoning and more concrete professionally oriented case studies. They will be careful to note and respond to any specific student requirements as detailed in Learning Support Plans. Reading lists will be regularly updated to ensure a diversity of perspectives in gender, ethnicity, culture, etc.

*10. Learning opportunities delivered in a high quality physical, virtual and social learning environment*
Moodle will be used to provide resources and enable further virtual learning exchanges. Where residential events are possible, social gatherings will help cement relationships and respect. Students will also be encouraged to get involved as they are able in the academic oversight structures of the College.

**2.11 Visiting Academics**

In order to broaden and enhance the learning of students it may be appropriate to employ visiting academics as subject specialists to share in the teaching of the programme. Due care will be taken in the selection of visiting academics to ensure that they are appropriately qualified to lead and teach the distinctive and integrated content of this programme. Those who have not taught at Spurgeon's College before will be inducted, by the provision of all appropriate documentary information, and consultation with other members of the team as appropriate, into Spurgeon's procedures and expectations.

**2.12 External Examiners**
Spurgeon's College will follow its approved policies and procedures relating to the appointment, training, mentoring and management of External Examiners.

The College Registry will provide External Examiners with all appropriate documentary information, and will be inducted into College's procedures and expectations regarding (*inter alia*):

- registering attendance
- appropriate use of the Moodle VLE
- policies regarding extensions
- marking standards
- marking timescales
- feedback norms and timescales

- resubmission policies and practices

## 2.13 Management and Co-ordination

### 2.13.1 Senior Management
The Academic Director, Dr Stephen Wright, will have responsibility in consultation with the Senior Management Team for the overall strategic management of the MADT programme. This includes staffing of the provision and overview of how it relates to other areas of provision.

### 2.13.2 Award Co-ordinator

Dr Joshua T. Searle, Director of Postgraduate Studies, Spurgeon's College
The Award Co-Ordinator as Chair of the Postgraduate Programmes Committee will have responsibility in consultation with the Academic Director and Programme Director for the academic management of the MADT programme. This includes elements such as curriculum design, content, delivery and assessment, ensuring an appropriate level of integration and parity with other Level 7 programmes.

2.13.2 Programme Director

### Dr Jonas Kurlberg
The Programme Director will have responsibility for day-to-day operational management of the programme, liaising as appropriate with the Academic Director and Award Co-ordinator. This includes consideration of applications to the programme, planning of intensive block teaching periods, and liaising with students about their options. The Programme Director will work with key professional staff including the Senior Registrar and Director of Admissions

### 2.13.3  Programme Team
The core units of the MADT will be delivered by the staff of the Centre for Digital Theology at Spurgeon's College, Dr Pete Phillips and Dr Jonas Kurlberg.

The methodology units will be co-ordinated by the Director of Postgraduate Studies and delivered by members of the Theology Faculty at Spurgeon's College, including the staff of the Centre for Digital Theology.

The optional units will be delivered by members of the Theology Faculty as appropriate, including:

Rev Prof Philip McCormack MBE (Principal; Christian Doctrine and Ethics)
Rev Dr Stephen Wright (Vice Principal and Academic Director; Biblical Studies and Practical Theology)
Rev Simon Jones (Vice Principal and Director of Ministerial Formation and Training; New Testament and Practical Theology)
Dr Joshua T. Searle (Director of Postgraduate Studies; Theology and Public Thought)
Dr Zoltan S. Schwab (Assistant Director of Postgraduate Studies; Old Testament)
Dr Thomas A. Breimaier (Tutor in Christian Doctrine and Church History)
Rev Seidel Abel Boanerges (Tutor in Theology and Mission)
Rev Dotha Blackwood (Tutor in Practical Theology)

They will be supported by specialist associate staff as required.

### 2.13.4 Programme Management
The programme will be managed by the Postgraduate Programmes Committee. This will oversee the operational development and management of the MADT programme; review and monitor the

quality of provision via the full range of available mechanisms, such as evaluations and data outcomes; consider the resourcing needs and implications of any developments, as judged necessary for the highest quality delivery of the provision; liaise with the College's publicity and marketing and admissions departments over marketing and recruitment; and report via the normal monitoring processes on the above.

### 2.14    Staff-Student Liaison

This is in accordance with the College's standard policies and procedures. Students are represented on the Postgraduate Programmes Committee and the Academic Quality Assurance Committee. Student representatives also meet regularly with the Programme Director. Their feedback will be fed through to the appropriate channels in College. Any actions taken by the College as a result will be publicised on Moodle so all students are aware that their voice has been heard.

### 2.15    Resourcing

#### 2.15.1  Marketing
The programme will be marketed according to the College's communications and marketing strategy. This will include recruitment at events such as the Christian Resources Exhibition and advertising through the Christian networks with which the College is linked, such as the Baptist Union, regional associations, and Baptist Missionary Society. It will be widely advertised through the partnership with Premier Radio and through the networks of the Centre for Digital Theology.

#### 2.15.2  Staffing
The MADT will be staffed primarily by the staff of the Centre for Digital Theology and the Theology Faculty of Spurgeon's College but utilising suitably qualified staff from elsewhere, including the College's existing associate tutors, where necessary. This strategy makes the most of the richness and diversity of expertise across research and specialist areas, and also enables a flexible approach that can be adapted to different student interests or changes to staffing within the College.

#### 2.15.3  Library, ICT and other Resources

| RESOURCES ALREADY IN PLACE | | |
|---|---|---|
| Library | ICT | Other      (Please Define) |
| See below | See below | See below |
| **RESOURCES YET TO BE PROVIDED** | | |
| Library | ICT | Other (Please Define) |
| N/A | N/A | N/A |

#### 2.15.4 Support and Training
Spurgeon's College will offer support for students in the use of the library, electronic resources and the College's VLE. This will include an induction during the first intensive study period. The services of the Learning Support Department are also available for those students with identified learning needs.

#### 2.15.5 Print and physical resources

Students will have access, including generous borrowing rights, to Spurgeon's College's excellent library with its extensive collections. From 2021, in addition to the library on its main campus in London, the College will open a branch of this library at BMS Birmingham which will be a second centre for course delivery. Students will also be able to access the wide range of electronic resources available through the College including a range of ebooks, full-text articles and handbooks. It is hoped that arrangements for reciprocal library access may also be available with Liverpool Hope University. In addition, the College will facilitate access to local libraries for students at a distance from either London or Birmingham.

### 2.15.6  IT Resources

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – Moodle

An online Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) - Moodle - will be employed to support MADT students. The use of Moodle will allow students to access learning materials and engage in online activities such as discussions, assessments, questionnaires and collaborative tasks.

Other IT Resources

MADT students will be provided with a free MS Office 365 account including 1TB of cloud storage and a Spurgeon's College email address. This email address is expected to be used for communication between students and the College. Students will also have access to a password protected student information portal, which allows students to register for the course online and access assessment grades amongst other facilities.

### 2.15.7  Student Support and Well-being

At Spurgeon's College, the following services will be available to all students on the MADT:
- academic writing support
- pastoral support
- support for students with disabilities
- academic advice on regulations
- financial advice

Elements of the above support services can be provided at a distance. Students do not necessarily need to be on campus to access them.

The student has accesses to the Learning Support Department which aims to support students across our programmes throughout their studies.  The department offers drop in sessions and one-to-one pre-booked appointments (in person/ by phone/ via Zoom). It also serves as a source of information and help to students with specific learning needs.  A number of staff have undertaken training in Mental Health Awareness and the College is actively pursuing the implementation of the University Mental Health Student Charter developed by Student Minds in 2019 (https://www.studentminds.org.uk/charter.html).

# Programme Intended Learning Outcomes mapped to Unit Intended Learning Outcomes

The chart on this and the following page demonstrates how the intended learning outcomes of the programme can be fulfilled through the core units of the programme.

Subject Specific Skills (Level 7) **[S]**

1. reflect in a critical, imaginative and theologically sophisticated way on the implications of digitally mediated practices in mission and ministry;
2. analyse and critically evaluate demanding texts and ideas in the field of digital theology, both orally and in writing;
3. critically evaluate current research in aspects of digital theology such as contextual theology, digital culture, digitally mediated Christian practices and ethical issues in contemporary society;
4. demonstrate a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of key issues within the field of theology and technology.

|  | Theol Enquiry and Interpretation | Digital Theology | Digitally-Mediated Christianity | Theol Research | Dissertation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **S1** |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **S2** |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **S3** |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **S4** |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Key Generic (transferable) Skills (Level 7) **[G]**

1. apply, summarise and analyse key complex trends relevant to her/his profession;
2. communicate reasoned ideas effectively within a variety of contexts;
3. identify, engage with and respond appropriately to ethical issues in his/her professional and ministerial contexts;
4. understand and critically evaluate positions taken by others in similar and different ecclesial and cultural contexts to her/his own;
5. build personal confidence in analysing and leading appropriate professional practice;
6. integrate academic and professional knowledge to develop the self;
7. articulate with confidence his/her own ministerial perspectives and praxis.

|  | Theol Enquiry and Interpretation | Digital Theology | Digitally-Mediated Christianity | Theol Research | Dissertation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **G1** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **G2** |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **G3** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |
| **G4** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **G5** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |
| **G6** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |  | ✓ |
| **G7** |  | ✓ | ✓ |  |  |

Academic Skills (Level 7) **[A]**

1. undertake independent learning, independent research, and sustained critical and self-reflexive analysis;
2. critically assess arguments and positions taken by others, both in discussion and in writing, including the ability to evaluate the quality of methods employed to produce any underpinning data or evidence;
3. present information effectively in a variety of different media, including digital, with the ability to summarise and create articulate syntheses of complex positions, and to justify conclusions and positions put forward;
4. apply their critical and imaginative faculties towards the creative transformation and enhancement of missional and ministerial practice;
5. ask informed questions, and identify problems and issues, on a given topic.

|  | Theol Enquiry and Interpretation | Digital Theology | Digitally-Mediated Christianity | Theol Research | Dissertation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A1** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **A2** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **A3** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **A4** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **A5** | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |