



Distance Learning Course

The Work of a Church Administrator Course Handbook



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Introducing UCAN

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churchadministrators.net

“ We believe the local church is the hope of the world and that effective administration is crucial to maximising its impact. The Work of a Church Administrator is a spiritual calling which honours God and helps people. ”

Introducing the Author



John Truscott

John Truscott describes himself as a champion of creative organisation in churches.

He is now retired from client work but continues to write for his extensive website and lead the Tutor team for this course.

He set up UCAN in 2009, basing it on a similar network he had been involved with in the 1980s and 1990s. After eight years of steady growth he handed it over to a team of Directors in 2017 so that he could concentrate on his broader work of promoting God's gifts of administration for the Church. John remains a trusted advisor, trainer and associate consultant of UCAN.

Published by the UK Church Administrators Network (UCAN) in partnership with the Cliff College Short Course Programme.

27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3AX

Original version: February 2014
This update: August 2025
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Introducing Cliff College



Cliff College was founded over 115 years ago by The Methodist Church as a mission training centre. In the 21st century it continues its work resourcing the wider Church with a focus on the training and practice of Christian ministry, mission and evangelism.

Cliff College is pleased to be partnered with UCAN in the delivery of the distance learning course: The Work of a Church Administrator

General information about the college can be found on the college's website: cliffcollege.ac.uk.

The short course programme, of which The Work of a Church Administrator is a part, is fully described at cliffcollege.ac.uk/study/courses/cliff-college-short-courses

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1. The ten units



Unit 1: Different roles

- S1 Defining a church administrator post
- S2 Nine possible purposes
- S3 Job descriptions
- S4 One year aims
- A1 Your role
- A2 Your job description
- A3 Your aims for this year

Business & Administration
textbook:

N/A



Unit 2: Character and people-skills

- S1 The person profile
- S2 Witness through reception
- S3 How you come across
- S4 Customer care
- A1 Meditation
- A2 Your person profile
- A3 Customer expectations
- A4 Dealing with difficult people

Business & Administration
textbook:

Q328, Q329



Unit 3: Biblical viewpoint

- S1 The place of administration
- S2 The purpose of a church
- S3 Biblical texts to study
- A1 Your church's health
- A2 Your application
- A3 Someone to help you

Business & Administration
textbook:

N/A



Unit 4: The office base

- S1 Purpose
- S2 Location and layout
- S3 Security
- S4 Education
- A1 The purpose of your office
- A2 Be a consultant
- A3 Risk analysis
- A4 Environmental concerns

Business & Administration
textbook:

Q303



Unit 5: Being well organised

- S1 Accuracy, reliability and memory
- S2 Setting standards
- S3 Diary and work planning
- S4 Tools to use
- A1 A time of reflection and prayer
- A2 Work with a mentor
- A3 A learning log

Business & Administration
textbook:

Q301



Unit 6: Working with colleagues

- S1 Know yourself
- S2 Manage your team
- S3 Understand your line-manager
- A1 Understanding yourself
- A2 Managing others
- A3 Working with the staff team

Business & Administration
textbook:
Q305



Unit 7: Principles of communication

- S1 The communications hub
- S2 Choice of media
- S3 Structure, legibility and colour
- A1 Church etiquette
- A2 Your church website
- A3 Improving the notice-sheet

Business & Administration
textbook:
Q309, Q312



Unit 8: Systems and structures

- S1 Organising systems and events
- S2 Church meetings
- S3 Your own specialist topic
- A1 Project management
- A2 Minutes of meetings
- A3 Your own specialist topic

Business & Administration
textbook:
Q322



Unit 9: Handling files

- S1 A theological reflection
- S2 The concept of sorting
- S3 The concept of filing
- S4 Digital applications
- A1 Your sorting and filing principles
- A2 An office clear-out

Business & Administration
textbook:
N/A



Unit 10: Development

- S1 A creative approach
- S2 Personal development
- S3 Thinking future possibility
- A1 Your personal vision
- A2 Your self-evaluation
- A3 Review of the course

Business & Administration
textbook:
Q302

References on these pages refer to the textbook specified by the course.

It is not possible to include everything in one ten-unit course and for an equivalent level to NVQ Level 3. What has been omitted includes matters to do with Human Resources management, employment law, charity law and trusteeship, finance and giving. UCAN also operates an ILM accredited church management course. Please see churchadministrators.net/managingchurchwell

Church of England Administrators may be responsible for issues such as graveyards, wedding and funeral registers and other issues of ecclesiastical law, whereas other Administrators may not deal with any of these areas, so a section of Unit 8 allows such matters to be studied rather than including them in the main text.

This course is not the place to tackle pastoral issues within the Minister / Administrator relationship.

This course is entirely self-study based. Your Tutor is available throughout to support and guide you in whatever ways you may need, and that will likely involve 1:1 occasional phone or video calls. However there will be no group seminars or tutorials.

2. Intended students

This is a ten-unit course leading to a certificate from Cliff College.

This course is designed for Christians who are employed by a local church of any denomination or none to work as an Administrator in some form. The work base is assumed throughout to be a dedicated church office.

Many people in such posts will be in employment that is somewhere between half and full time and a majority will probably work on their own, perhaps with some part-time volunteer assistance. But some will be employed in larger churches and be part of an administrative staff team.

A few people may undertake this responsibility without remuneration, but the course is not designed for traditional office-holders such as a Church Secretary or a Church Warden (see note later in this introduction about denominational language).

The course can also be taken by someone who aspires to be a Church Administrator but may not be in such employment at this moment. In this case it will be necessary to have familiarity with the workings of at least one church office, preferably at their own church, so that they can apply the material to that specific operation.

The material is pitched at an equivalent level to NVQ Level 3 and so assumes a post with a level of responsibility that you might expect from post titles such as Parish Secretary, Church Office Administrator, Office Manager, PA to the Minister, etc. rather than titles such as, on the one hand, Administrative Assistant or Receptionist or, at a different level, Director of Operations or Business Manager.

3. The support of your church

We hope that your church will support you in taking this course. You should speak to your Minister at an early stage and show this introduction to him or her.

We hope that your church will:

- cover all or part of the cost of the course (£450), your UCAN Administrator or Manager level membership (£35 or £75) and your expenses (course book to buy, travel to other churches for assignments, other materials to purchase);
- allow you some time off your work as Administrator to at least help you cope with the study and assignments required (most students find it hard to make the necessary time for study without this);
- offer advice and information (eg. about commentaries to study for Bible passages, churches to consider visiting for relevant practical assignments, and possible mentors when suggested);
- encourage you in your studies in word and deed.

It is important that you have your Minister's backing for taking this course, if at all possible. It is our hope that you will be a more effective Church Administrator for having studied this material. You will also have a Cliff College certificate that should be recognised by other churches in the future.

4. Help from others

Some of the exercises depend on finding other people to work with you in some way. It would therefore be wise to seek advice from your Minister or others as to who might be happy to support you in this way, seeing the value that they could bring to what you are doing.

You might like to plan the following in advance so that you are not delayed on a practical exercise while you try to find someone to help you.

- Unit 1 Exercises A2, A3 – your line manager
- Unit 2 Exercise A2 – two people to help with person profile
- Unit 3 Exercise A3 – someone to talk through your answers to A2 on biblical material
- Unit 4 Exercise A2 – visiting another church office*
- Unit 5 Exercise A2 – working with a mentor*
- Unit 6 Exercise A1, A3 – three people to help you understand yourself, your staff team
- Unit 10 Exercise A1, A2 – vision and assessment with a mentor*
- Written assignments – Assignment 3 requires the investigation of two other church offices to extend Unit 4 Exercise A2 above.*

Items marked * will need the most planning and thought.

Several of the other exercises may require you to seek advice from others, but these are the main ones where you need to find people to give you time and their experience to help you.

5. Aims for the course

1. To enable those employed by local churches as Administrators and others to come to a clear understanding of the role of and opportunities for local church administration together with its challenges, set within a biblical framework.
2. To help such people to improve their business capability and performance in a number of skills required for such work including self-organisation, working collaboratively, desk management and communication.
3. Within all the above to encourage participants to develop a creative mind in devising appropriate systems and solving problems within any required denominational structures, rather than simply following traditional office methodology for its own sake.

and as a result:

1. To set a standard of achievement for Church Administrators in the UK that will be recognised by a wide range of churches.
2. To see the work of church administration become recognised as a discipline worthy of analysis and study.

6. Key outcomes

Those who successfully complete the ten units of this course can expect to:

1. Be energised and encouraged in their work with a renewed understanding of the subject of church administration as a valid, strategic and spiritual ministry.
2. Be better equipped to act in this role with a professional understanding of issues and ways of tackling the kind of difficulties regularly faced in such work.
3. Understand the need for Christian character to play a foundational role in their work so that they see their ministry as Christian service as well as daily employment.
4. Be enabled to work collaboratively with church leaders to free them for their priority ministries while handling the church's daily administrative requirements in a professional and effective way.

7. Practical exercises

The **Study** section in each unit includes a number of exercises. These should never be overlooked or treated lightly as they are designed to earth the study material.

The same is true for the **Personal application** section in each unit. Students will be expected to complete each of these. Approximate timings are provided to give some indication of how much should be done within each. But we would expect you to go into greater detail or to allow more time for the work in any which particularly interest you.

It is vital that in each you complete the whole exercise. So, if you are asked to consider something and then write a short report, it is the report that matters (and which ensures you have done the considering!). Never think you can leave out the last instruction – that is usually the one that will earth and enable you to take in the research that has preceded it.

If you are struggling with anything, consult your Tutor who will offer help.

8. Order of units and written assignments

There are three written assignments to be submitted to your Tutor for marking at various points throughout the course. So that these make sense for the material you have covered, we recommend you follow the ten units through in the order given. But if you get stuck on one unit it is quite permissible to go on to the next one and return to the previous one later, provided you complete all of Units 1-3 before attempting Assignment 1, all of Units 1-8 before attempting Assignment 2, and the whole course before submitting Assignment 3.

If you prefer to start with the biblical material in Unit 3 rather than the purpose of the post in Unit 1 (skim read both to get a feel of the content), a suggested order would be: Unit 3, Unit 1, Unit 2, Assignment 1, etc.

The three assignments to be submitted are described in detail from page 24 onwards, as well as in separate pdfs which can be downloaded from the course portal.

9. Course portal

UCAN operates a suite of private web pages on its own website which function as a portal for this course. You can access the portal at www.churchadministrators.net/dlcwocaportal. Your course Tutor will provide you with a password to access the portal.

The portal contains a separate section for each unit, and as well as including the unit material and further reading links, contains some of the extra material posted by the Tutors to help with the completion of the three written assignments. You can find this extra material under the title 'Tips for completing assignments', listed individually for each assignment. We strongly recommend that you read these extra notes and talk to your Tutor before starting work on each of the three assignments for this course.

You will need to have a [UCAN Administrator or Manager level membership](#) to undertake this course. This will give you both access to a wide range of printed resources and training, but also the chance to link up with other administrators through a local group and via the online members' forum.

10. Background reading

There are very few books available from a UK perspective that deal specifically with the subject of local church administration as a whole, and yet a confusingly large number of (secular) books that deal with some of the specific skills covered in the course (such as communication). Books that deal with church legal and structural issues tend to be written for the Church of England and issues here differ markedly between denominations.

Having said that, the recommendation is that candidates study from the following five broad categories:

1. The standard textbook and website for this course

Students will be expected to purchase and study the standard book for this course:

Parton, Nigel & Watkins, Bernadette. 2011. **Business & administration. NVQ/SVQ Level 3** (Heinemann). ISBN 978 0 435 04688 0.

This is a standard textbook from the business world which provides a helpful background to the more specific issues of managing a church office. Seven of the ten units in this course include one or more units to study from this book. It is available from any good bookshop or from Amazon. Note that some weblinks in the textbook no longer work. Just ignore if so. And there is no need to undertake the exercises in the textbook. It is designed to be read for a wider view of its topics

Students will also be expected to read a range of Articles and sets of Training Notes from the author's website at www.john-truscott.co.uk/resources which give a specifically church-based perspective on the issues being studied. All of these are available for downloading and/or printing out without charge.

UCAN is also delighted to recommend Sharon J. Clark's book on church administration, '[Spreadsheets & Prophecy](#)', available for purchase from the [UCAN online shop](#).

2. Church and charity structures and management

Students will also be expected to access books that deal with the specific details of working in a church and charity environment.

Those who work in a Church of England church should consider the following:

Behrens, James. (latest edition) 2020. **Practical church management: a guide for every parish** (Gracewing). This gives a wide overview as seen by a lawyer. It covers church people, church life, church property and church finance.

There are also a range of shorter books that can be studied with profit. Examples include:

MacMorran, Kenneth and Briden, Timothy. (latest edition) 2024. **Handbook for Church Wardens and Parochial Church Councillors** (Continuum). A standard textbook on how a Church of England parish church is run.

Pitchford, John. (latest edition) 2019. **An ABC for the PCC: a handbook for Church Council members** (Continuum). A more popular book covering a range of issues on an alphabetical basis.

Dudley, Martin and Rounding, Virginia. 2004. **The parish survival guide** (SPCK)

Dudley, Martin. (latest edition) 2009. **Churchwardens – a survival guide** (SPCK).

Those working in Baptist and independent churches should study:

Tole, Rachel. 2006. **Nothing spiritual about chaos** (Baptist Union). A short book outlining some of the administrative issues faced by a Baptist Church Secretary

There is a range of books for the (secular) charity market that will be relevant too. For example see the resources available from the Directory of Social Change at www.dsc.org.uk/Publications. These are quality textbooks covering issues that churches are dealing with as voluntary organisations themselves. Look in particular at the sections on 'Information and communication' and 'Management and governance'.

Then there will be a range of materials from your own denomination or stream, or resources from denominational websites. For example, the Baptist Union site at www.baptist.org.uk/resources/bugb-online-store.html has links to materials on 'Leadership' and on 'Admin' that will be relevant. Also the section of the website for Church Secretaries at https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/317183/For_secretaries_treasurers.aspx has a range of articles and downloads, several of which you will need if working in a church office.

3. Bible commentaries

In Unit 3 in particular you will be expected to do some serious Bible study, but this course assumes an open Bible on your desk for several of the units. To help you, you should expect to make use of commentaries. If you do not own a range of these, you might like to take advice from your Minister and then, possibly, to borrow from him or her or to use any specialist library in your area. But to help you, we give here three series of Bible commentaries that we recommend at different levels.

Serious but accessible academic commentary series

The New International Commentary on the Old Testament / New Testament currently edited by Robert L Hubbard Jr (OT) and Gordon D Fee (NT) published by Eerdmans for those who would like to make a serious investigation of the passages that are recommended.

Mid-range academic commentary series

The Sacra Pagina series edited by Daniel J Harrington published by the Liturgical Press provide helpful interpretations of passages.

Entry-level commentary series

Many students will be familiar with The Bible Speaks Today series edited by Alec Motyer (OT) and John Stott (NT).

For this course a one volume commentary will not give enough detail, and devotional or daily use commentaries such as the 'Everyone' series by Tom Wright are not really suitable.

You might also like to study passages in more than one Bible translation, so NIV, NRSV and others may be helpful.

Another tool you may need is a Bible concordance, whether in print or online. A concordance gives you every Bible reference for any given word. This would be helpful in Unit 3. Your Minister will be able to advise you if you do not already possess one.

4. Particular organisational skills

Students who wish to focus on one or two specific applications from the module would find it more helpful to study texts on these specific units. As examples:

Buildings: Durran, Maggie. 2004. Making church buildings work (Canterbury Press).

Self-organisation: Allen, David. 2015. Getting things done (Piatkus), which many church leaders have found helpful though not written for a Christian context.

Communication: Crosby, Mark. 2019. So Everyone Can Hear: Communicating Church In A Digital Culture (SPCK).

Communication: Pugmire, Neil. 2024. 100 ways to get your church noticed. (Kingsway)

5. Sets of papers on a creative approach to organisation

There are a number of booklets in the Grove Series that cover specific issues: **How to worship with data projection** (W192), **An introduction to managing yourself** (Y20), **Loving volunteers** (L3), **Decluttering** (S97). Most of the various series are aimed at clergy but titles such as these are well worth obtaining and are not expensive. Browse at <https://grovebooks.co.uk>.

If in your church's archive you can find sets of materials published by Administtry in the 1980s and 1990s many are still well worth studying as practical guides to a wide range of church life.

11. Your course folder

We ask you to create a 'course folder'. You may prefer this to be a hard-back notebook which you write in, but it is probably better for this to be a set of sheets punched and held in a ring- or other binder. By using section dividers you can then keep material in order for each of the ten units and add to it whenever you wish. Alternatively, you may create a digital folder, provided a listing of its contents can be copied to your Tutor after Units 5 & 10.

The idea is to create this as you progress through the units, using it for the following content:

1. Notes you make yourself; highlights or summaries from the material presented in each unit.
2. Your output from the exercises included in the study section of each unit.
3. Notes on the books you read related to each unit. In particular you should keep reasonably detailed notes on your reading of the standard course textbook (see page 10) as this will provide a different perspective on each topic from the material presented here.
4. All the output you prepare for the personal applications in each unit.
5. Your three main written assignments (which need to be submitted in electronic form for marking and so not in a fixed book).
6. Materials you have downloaded and printed out from websites.

You will gain far more from this course by taking the trouble to prepare such a folder in a format that you can then keep and refer back to. We recommend you set this up with any necessary purchases before you start on the material.

You are asked to submit a list of contents of your folder to your Tutor after both Unit 5 and Unit 10 so we can check you have filled it with at least the items listed in the units and discuss with you your progress on reading and practical exercises in each unit. When you have completed the course your Tutor may, in exceptional circumstances, recommend to the Course Director that the student be awarded up to 5 extra overall marks for what we assess to be an outstanding folder, or have up to 5 marks deducted for what appears to be a poor folder or where there has been no submission.

12. Course Timings

The course has three termly intakes per year with start points marked by a welcome online call in January, April and September respectively. (For specific upcoming dates please refer to the UCAN website at <https://www.churchadministrators.net/course>) The course is designed to be completed within a little over 12 months from any of those three start points and has a 15 month overall time limit.

We assume you have a busy life as a Church Administrator and you may have to combine this with family responsibilities. It would be ideal if your church invested in your training by not only covering the cost of undertaking this study but by allowing you some paid time each week in which to work at it, even if this is only a part of the total time you need. But there will probably be some, sadly, whose churches will not take this view.

Each unit is shown with a timescale of 12 hours which would mean five hours per week would cover the whole course in a year, allowing breaks at Christmas, Easter and the summer but also time to complete the three written assignments and extend some of the units if you need to do so or if you find specific issues you wish to research further.

Depending on your start point for the course (January, April or September) your three assignment and course folder inspection submission deadlines are as follows:

Initial Zoom	Assignment 1 after Unit 3	Folder Inspection after Unit 5	Assignment 2 after Unit 8	Assignment 3 / Folder Inspection after Unit 10
By 31st January	31st May	31st July	31st January	30th April
By 30th April	30th September	30th November	30th April	31st July
By 30th September	28th February	30th April	30th September	31st December

At the start of each unit you are given a rough idea of how to divide 12 hours between the study section, background reading and the personal application section. In the application section each exercise is given a target time, but these are only broad indications. Different people work at very different speeds.

In all this the point is not just to read the material and tick the box, as it were, but to give yourself time to ponder all that is said, to reflect on how it impacts your own ministry, to take your own notes and to talk it through with others.

We want to support and encourage you, especially those unused for many years to courses of study. We hope this course will prove to be a delight, not a burden nor something that gives you feelings of guilt if you slip behind your deadlines. Your Tutor will advise you on action to take should this happen.

13. Terminology and capitalisation

The subject of church administration involves studying structures and using a language, both of which differ between Christian denominations. This course will, for the most part, either seek to use general terms that each denomination can apply to their structures and usage or give varying examples from different denominations.

For example, the main governance body for a church is usually referred to as the Church Council. Students should then consider this to refer to, depending on their tradition, the Parochial Church Council (PCC), the Elders or Deacons, the Trustees, the Kirk Session or Committee, or whatever.

At other times examples might refer to office-holders such as Church Secretary (a term used by Baptist and other churches) or Church Warden (a Church of England office). Examples from more than one denomination will be used in any such lists.

Note also that 'church' will be given a capital C when the word relates to the Church of Christ at large (or the name of a specific church) and a small c when it refers to a local church in general.

So: *At St John's Church we believe that all churches should have a similar purpose based on the Church's role as set out in the New Testament.*

Similarly the word 'unit' will be capitalised when relating to a specific unit in this course but not when used in general. *Look back to Unit 5 and then check out the two units that follow.*

'Church Administrator' has a capital C and A for a post of this title. 'Administrator' has a small 'a' when used as a general term referring to any kind of administrator but will have a capital A if it relates to any kind of official Church Administrator. *The Church Administrator has a team of volunteer administrators. The same principle is extended to other offices too. The Treasurer paid the bills on time like any financial officer should.*

14. The author and course team

John Truscott has spent over 45 years in church administration. He was the first executive Administrator at a large London church and then, in 1981, set up Administry, an organisation that sought to promote the use of God's gifts of administration within UK churches. As part of this he developed a network of employed Church Administrators in the 1980s but Administry was better known for its innovative publishing programme, and for a developing training and then consultancy ministry.

He moved on in 1999 to become an independent church consultant and trainer working with churches throughout the UK as he sought to champion the ministry of creative organisation. In 2009 he established the UK Church Administrator Network (UCAN) as part of his work to replace the earlier Administry network which had closed down a few years earlier. Membership grew steadily to over 1,350 in autumn 2017. See section 15 below for further details.

Running UCAN was starting to take too much of his time so, after several years of careful planning, UCAN was taken over by a team of six directors and an employed Administrator in October 2017.

John has also written the Good Book College's distance learning course on Administration which is designed for anyone involved in or interested in church organisation in any way. This UCAN distance learning course is much more clearly aimed at those employed by a local church and working out of a church office.



John Truscott
john@john-truscott.co.uk

John works with a highly gifted and experienced Tutor team for this course consisting of:



Simon Jones, formerly Church Manager of St Andrew's Church, Chorleywood.



John Williams, formerly Admin Team Leader of Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church.

All students are assigned one of these three as their Tutor for the course. Your Tutor marks the three assignments you send in but keeps in touch with you throughout the course to encourage and advise.

The course is accredited by Cliff College as part of their short course programme. Ian White, formerly Senior Tutor and Short Course Programme Leader at Cliff College, is Our Course Director and will be your main point of contact, besides your allocated Tutor. Please do not hesitate to contact Ian with any queries relating to assignment submission, marking or academic logistics.

Ian was on the faculty team of Cliff College from 2001 to 2022 and now works for them as a consultant. He is a Methodist local preacher, a director of a charity working in the Middle East and holds a MA in Evangelism Studies.



Ian White
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Behind the scenes, you will be supported by the team at UCAN, who will be your main point of contact when registering for the course. If you have any queries about billing, course registration or the wider UCAN services and membership, please do not hesitate to be in touch with Verity or Maria on 0300 302 1887 or via info@churchadministrators.net.

15. Joining the UK Church Administrators Network (UCAN)

About UCAN

The UK Church Administrators Network (UCAN) exists to support, equip and connect those working in church administration across the UK. Whether you are employed or volunteering, full-time or part-time, UCAN is here for you. Our members include everyone from Operations Directors and Church Business Managers to Parish Secretaries, Office Administrators and PAs. Some work in large, multi-staffed churches, others are the only administrator in a small church office. What unites them is their shared commitment to serving the church through excellent administration.

UCAN membership spans a wide range of Christian traditions and church sizes. From Anglican and Baptist churches to independents and newer networks, UCAN reflects the diversity of the UK church. If your role involves managing, supporting or facilitating the work of a local church through administration, UCAN is for you.

What drives us

UCAN exists to affirm and strengthen church administrators in their vital ministry. We believe administrative roles are not just operational, they are deeply spiritual and strategic. Good administration frees up others to flourish and helps churches function effectively and with integrity. We want administrators to feel equipped, connected and encouraged in their work - and to know they are not alone.

Our vision is not just to support individuals, but to raise the profile of church administration within the wider Church. We want to see churches of all sizes valuing and investing in their administrative staff, recognising the difference this makes to kingdom work.

What UCAN offers

As a UCAN Administrator or Manager member, you will have access to a growing range of support and resources, including:

- Online discussion forum where you can ask questions, share experiences and access peer-to-peer support
- Local groups across the UK for networking and encouragement with others nearby
- National conferences tailored for administrators and church managers alike
- Webinars and training days covering relevant topics, tools and best practice
- Practical resources available online, including templates, policies, and how-to guides
- Monthly email updates with the latest news, resources and training opportunities
- Advice and support from UCAN and the wider network when you need it

To join this course, you will need to be a [UCAN Administrator or Manager member](#) - which means these benefits will be available to you throughout your training and beyond.

16. College logistics & requirements

Student guidance and oversight

The Course Director is there to provide guidance on matters to do with the academic course and will normally be the point of first contact for any concerns. The Course Director works closely with the Tutors to support students.

Withdrawals

If at any time the student wishes to consider withdrawing from the course, they are required to inform the Course Director, who, together with our partners UCAN, will be able to offer advice on how to proceed.

Writing assignments

Guidance on writing assignments will be given during the course by the course leadership.

Do feel free to speak to the Course Director or Tutor if you have any concerns about your writing, as they are around to offer support. Students should remember to refer to the guidance materials that are part of the course and made available on acceptance on the course.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the theft or use of someone else's work by presenting the material without proper acknowledgement, as if it were one's own. Assignments submitted for assessment must be the student's own work. Plagiarism is a serious matter, and could mean a piece of work failing, leading to a student not receiving their certificate.

Assignment deadlines

The assignment submission deadlines mentioned in section 12 are aimed at helping students pace themselves through the course, as well as aiding administration of marking and moderation by the college. Deadline extensions may be requested of your Tutor. They will judge whether the Course Director needs to decide on action in the light of any significant changes in personal circumstances.

The Course Director is the only person who can issue an extension and all applications should be directed to him. The Course Director will also consult with the student's Tutor to establish course progress, and see whether further support is needed.

The college aims to return work to students within four weeks of submission.

Academic referencing and word counts

All assessed work should be properly referenced. You can use whatever referencing style you like as long as you are consistent in your use of it.

Students can submit work that is 10%+ or 10%- of the assignment word count excluding reference notes and bibliography listing.

Students should remember to retain an electronic copy of their work on file, as the student is finally responsible for storage of work.

Submission of the three assignments

Each one should be submitted to your Tutor who will mark it and then send it on to the Course Director who checks the mark given. The Course Director will then return the assignment, with all the Tutor's comments, assessment and overview, direct to the student, with a copy to the Tutor.

You should ensure that the assignment:

1. Is in pdf format
2. Includes your surname in the title.

All assignments should be accompanied by a header sheet providing the following information:

- Course name: The Work of a Church Administrator
- Your name: (First name and Surname)
- Title of the piece of work
- Word count submitted

Students assessed as having dyslexia should indicate this as an additional note on the header sheet. Please note that this information helps the marker in better supporting your assignment(s) and carries no academic prejudice.

Assignment resubmission

Where a student receives a failing grade on an assignment (less than 40%) they will be made aware via the Course Director of their need and opportunity to resubmit. This will be clearly stated in writing, and additional support will be given by the student's own Tutor.

Student evaluation

Both Cliff College and UCAN are committed to maintaining and enhancing their reputations for good teaching practice. Students are welcome to submit evaluations of the material, marking and/or Tutor support on completion of the course. These should be sent to the Course Director who will share them with UCAN and the Tutors as he feels appropriate.

Grievance procedure for students on short courses

1. If a student is dissatisfied with the administration of their course, teaching or other arrangements, they should in the first instance endeavour to resolve the matter informally with the appropriate staff member, i.e. their Tutor, Course Director (Cliff College), or the Academic Director (Cliff College).
2. If the matter is not resolved informally with the staff member concerned, the student may make a formal complaint in writing to the Academic Director. The Academic Director will then appoint a member of staff who is not directly involved in the matter, who will consult with the student and the other staff involved with a view to finding a resolution.
3. The Academic Director will approve any actions to be taken in response to the grievance and notify all parties involved of the outcomes.

Data Protection

The College's Privacy Policy is available on the College website at:

www.cliffcollege.ac.uk/legal/privacy-policy

17. Assessment schema for marking

The following chart provides a summary of the assessment criteria used for assessment:

	Structure/ Argument	Analysis/ Critical Awareness	Accuracy of Understanding	Use of Sources/ Basis of awareness	Presentation/ Style	Application to context
70+ or A	Outstandingly well-structured and/or well-argued	Convincingly presented independent view (showing critical awareness and assessment of alternative views)	High level of critical understanding; clear, thorough, and well- expressed	Wide and independent reading; critical engagement with lecture material	Clear and correct presentation	Clearly relates theory to own context and practice. Application of taught and resourced material is excellently expressed.
60-69 or B	Well-structured and/or well- argued	Presents and assesses alternative views, shows critical awareness and some independence of judgement	Accurate understanding	Wide reading; critical engagement with lecture material	Clear and correct presentation	Relates theory to own context and practice. Application of taught and resourced material is well expressed.
50-59 or C	Orderly	Shows little or no consideration of alternative views, but some critical awareness of issues covered in course unit	General understanding	Familiarity with lecture material, set texts and basic recommended reading	Largely correct presentation	Some attempt at relating theory to own context and practice. Application of taught and resourced material is moderately expressed.
40-49 or D	Unstructured	Presentation of issues covered in course unit, but without critical awareness	Limited understanding	Awareness of course unit lectures; little evidence of reading or awareness of views represented in secondary literature	Partially correct presentation	Little attempt to relate theory to own context and practice. Application of taught and resourced material is hardly expressed.
30-39 or E	Unstructured and incomplete	Partial awareness of issues covered in course unit	Partial familiarity	Limited awareness of course unit lectures; little or no evidence of reading	Partially correct presentation	No attempt to relate theory to own context and practice. Application of taught and resourced material is poorly expressed.
0-29 or F	Inadequate in all respects					

18. The written assignments

Students are required to submit three written assignments for marking by their Tutor. These are in addition to the practical exercises included in each of the units within the course. These three are as follows.

Assignment 1

A self-reflection exercise of about 1,500 words

To be submitted once Units 1-3 have been completed, with a submission deadline of 31st May (for a January course start date), 30th September (for an April start date) or 28th February (for a September start date).

Assignment 2

The main essay for the course of about 2,500 words

To be submitted once Units 1-8 have been completed, with a submission deadline in the following year of 31st January (for a January course start date), 30th April (for an April start date) or 30th September (for a September start date).

Assignment 3

A report on visits to two other church offices with recommendations for changes to your own church, of about 2,000 words.

To be submitted once all units have been completed, with a submission deadline in the following year of 30th April (for a January course start date), 31st July (for an April start date) or 31st December (for a September start date).

Your Tutor will give you a grade on each of these in accordance with the Cliff College Assessment Schema for Marking (see page 21) and will add some comments on your submission.

All the Tutors for this course keep in close touch with each other on their marking so that grades are given consistently. Over the next few pages (24-33), we explain the three assignments in more detail.

A summary of the assignments for the course including the timing of their completion is given in the table opposite. Keep all this in mind as you tackle each of the course's units. For example, in Assignment 2 there is a hint to all students to be preparing for this as you study each of Units 1 to 8.

IMPORTANT: You will lose marks if you fail to address issues specified in the assignments or if you go significantly over the word-count. There is further advice on how to undertake this work on the UCAN courses and John Truscott's distance learning webpages and students are strongly advised to study this before beginning work on each assignment.

As well as these written assignments you need to send your Tutor, after both Unit 5 and Unit 10, a one-page listing of what you have put so far in your course folder.

	Assignment 1	Assignment 2	Assignment 3
Outline of the assignment	Self-reflection on 'the principle of release'	Main essay: compare and contrast office management in commercial and church settings	Report for your church: report of visits to two other church offices
When best written	After unit 3	After unit 8	At any point after Unit 4 but only to be completed and submitted after Unit 10
Number of words	1,500	2,500	2,000
When to start preparations	Have this assignment in mind as you study both Units 1 and 3	This essay is based on the whole course to date; have it in mind as you read each section in the main textbook	Application A2 in Unit 4 can form part of this assignment so be aware at that point

Note 1: See the paper, 'How to write an assignment' to help you. You can download this from the course portal.

Note 2: You may submit up to 10% above or below a word count excluding reference notes and bibliography listing but no more than this – see page 18.

Continue overleaf to explore the assignments in more detail...

01

Assignment 1: Self Reflection

To follow Unit 3.
Allow 5 hours or so split between
reflection, research and writing up.

Do not hurry this assignment.

The appointment of gifted administrators to official posts in churches has a fundamental aim to release Ministers and other spiritual leaders for the work for which they were ordained/commissioned/appointed and, as a result, churches can be true to their purpose and grow.

The statement above might be termed 'the principle of release'.



Hint to all students:
You will do well if you read the instructions on page 25 carefully and then follow them! See also the extra tips on the UCAN course portal.

1. Reflect carefully on the statement opposite, **‘the principle of release’**, by identifying and listing specific instances in your own work (or aspects of your post) where you have been conscious of this principle in operation.
2. Consider what might have been done to help it to work even better in the cases you have identified, both through your own actions and through what your Minister and other leaders did or did not do.
3. Reflect too on times (or aspects of your appointment) when the principle was not achieved and list what went wrong or failed to match up to what might have been possible.
4. Consider both the presenting reasons and the underlying causes why the result in 3 fell short of what might have been achieved. What practical actions might be put in hand to improve matters in future?
5. Write up your reflections as a list of numbered points under headings appropriate to the four areas numbered above, with a comment on each one. The whole should be about 1,500 words. Submit this to your Tutor for assessment (see page 19).

Your Tutor will be looking to see what you have learnt from this self-reflection for your future ministry, whether you have the ability to improve matters yourself or whether you feel it is out of your hands.

Your Tutor will be looking for evidence that you have taken the following points into account.

- How the idea of ‘purpose’ (S2.3 in Unit 1) works out in your own case.
- Acts 6.1-7 covered in S3 in Unit 3 (study this passage carefully in different translations and with commentaries) related to your own appointment.
- Other biblical passages mentioned in this course or chosen by you that have had an impact on you in your present responsibilities.
- Any books or articles that you have read that bear on this theme (cite sources if you quote these). For Anglicans: The Ordinal* (see www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/texts/ordinal/priests.aspx and the wording that follows the heading ‘The liturgy of ordination’ as spoken by the bishop) and the gifting and role of your own Minister (whatever his or her denomination).

*This is a Church of England term for the wording used at the ordination of Deacons and Priests and, in this instance, could still form the basis for this point by those from other denominations. Do not worry about Anglican terminology if this is strange to you - ordinands are those to be ordained, for Priests take Ministers or Pastors – instead focus on what their role is to be. But, if you come from a different denomination, you may prefer to find the equivalent wording for those ordained or appointed as congregational leaders and work from that instead. Hence the next bullet.

- For non-Anglicans: if you decide not to follow the idea in the previous bullet point, take instead the ministerial job description of your church’s Minister and consider that instead. Or any other literature from your denomination or stream that defines the purpose of a church leader.
- In any case, you might like to talk to your Minister about their role definition or job description and where they feel they need to be freed from inappropriate tasks to focus on their priorities.

02

Assignment 2: Main Essay

To follow Unit 8.

Allow at least 10 hours perhaps
spread over some days.



By now you have studied the majority of a standard textbook on commercial office management alongside material on issues that affect the work of running a church's office. Compare and contrast these two disciplines under a number of headings and discuss in each case what each discipline can learn from the other. Your essay should be about 2,500 words in length. If you add references, these do not need to be included in the word count.

Notes 1 and 2 below suggest some possible headings that you might want to select, but do not necessarily restrict yourself to these. A quick scan through the NVQ textbook may well suggest others from the topics that are covered there.

In this case your Tutor will be seeking to discover how much you have understood of the main textbook when that is placed alongside material that is church-specific. You will do well if you demonstrate evidence that you have studied a range of material within the text-book and a variety of church-specific writing.

Notes to help you research and write your 'compare and contrast' essay

Here is our suggested structure for your essay:

1. Identify areas where there are similarities between these two sets of material. You should be able to demonstrate that:
 - you are able to choose a few key headings which show that you understand where the two disciplines follow similar lines;
 - you can illustrate your choice and the points you then make with reference to specifics in what you have been reading (citing page references, etc.);
 - you can do the same from your own experience in your role as a Church Administrator.

For example, there are bound to be similarities in the daily detail of how you

- run an office;
- handle IT;
- maintain equipment;
- manage a team of people;
- apply customer care ideas;
- communicate with other staff;
- design documents;
- use the internet;
- devise systems, and so on.

How might you group such things into a few key headings?

2. Now, in the second part of the essay, contrast the two sets of material, identifying a number of key differences. Here you should be able to demonstrate that:

- you are able to select headings which show you have noted where the two disciplines follow different paths;
- in these cases you can distinguish between what 'is' and what 'might be' – in other words you may feel that many church offices do not achieve what they might because they are under-staffed or have insufficient budgets;
- you can illustrate these points with logical arguments, again illustrated from selected sources in the material you have been studying;
- you can do the same from your own experience in your role as a Church Administrator.

For example, you might consider:

- how Christian witness might differ between what is possible in a secular and a church office;
- the place of motivation in the two environments;
- the definition of success for a church compared with a commercial operation;
- working in an organisation staffed mostly by volunteers;
- working solo for those who do rather than in an office team;
- how line-management works, or should work, in the two environments;
- operating out of buildings that were never designed as offices;
- working in an environment where finance is provided by gifts not sales, and so on.

3. In the final section of your essay, draw some clear conclusions that follow from the two earlier sections. Is there any fundamental difference between the work of an office in a doctor's practice (say) and an office in a church? Or between an office in a bank and an office in a church? Are they just serving different institutions with skills easily transferable from one to the other? If not, in what ways are they different and to what degree? End with some definite findings from your research and thinking.

Your Tutor will also be looking to see what you believe each discipline can learn from the other, and how this might be put into practice in some way both in your own ministry and elsewhere.

Hints to all students: If you carry out a mini 'compare and contrast' for each unit you study, you will have material to help you construct your essay by the time you come to this point. And don't forget the idea of Christian discipleship (eg Unit 3) in all this.

Remember: there are further hints for completing this assignment on the UCAN course portal. Ensure you read these before you write.

Submit this to your Tutor for assessment (see page 19).

03

Assignment 3: Report for your church

To be undertaken at any point throughout the course but submitted once all ten units have been completed. Note that the Personal application A2 in Unit 4 can form part of this assignment.

Timing will depend on travel times, but you need 6 hours for the visits, time to plan these first, and at least the same time again for thinking, analysis and writing up your report.



1. You are to visit two church offices other than your own of which at least one should be of a 'large' church (weekly congregations totalling over 350 including children) and at least one should be of a Christian denomination or stream other than your own. If you work in a large church, try to find one larger church to visit.
2. These visits should only be undertaken with the express permission of the Ministers and (senior) Administrators concerned. Explain why you are asking to do this and citing these instructions. Do not force yourself on any church that seems uneasy about allowing you to investigate them in this way.
3. Visits might last about 2-3 hours and include
 - a tour of the plant;
 - an interview with the Administrator;
 - a check of the office position;
 - an inspection of the office layout;
 - a listing of the equipment there;
 - an analysis of the church's website;
 - an analysis of the literature produced by the office;
 - an inspection of how the office handles visitors;
 - a check of whether other staff share the space.

You should ask to see any office documentation such as purpose, standards, etc. that the church concerned is prepared to show you. You should only see the Administrator's job description if they are happy for this. Be sensitive at all times: they are after all serving your needs.

4. Keep in mind the scope of this course throughout your visits. So be ready to learn something new about any of the ten units covered here.
5. Take careful notes during your visit and write/type them up soon afterwards while everything is fresh in your mind. List in particular what was a new idea for you, or areas where you feel you could suggest improvements.
6. Your task is to reflect carefully on what you have observed and, in particular, what has surprised you or come across as different from what you are used to in your own church office. To do this, analyse your notes under headings such as the following.
 - Ideas that impressed me;
 - Aspects I would criticise;
 - Ways of working which I need to ponder on;
 - What I might do there if I had the financial resources;
 - Changes I would now like to consider for my office.

7. Consider how these points might be affected by issues of

- church size;
- denomination;
- staffing levels;
- volunteers available;
- standards of output required;
- financial resources.

8. Now write a **business report**, ready for your church's leadership to vote on, clearly referencing your two church visits, giving **specific recommendations** for improvements that could be made to your **own church's** administration in the light of what you have seen elsewhere, with some ideas of costings and other implications such as staffing, plant, etc. Your report should be laid out in a clear way so that its recommendations and the reasons for them are clear to someone reading it quite quickly and the whole should be about 2,000 words.

The reasons you give for each recommendation should clearly relate to at least a couple of key principles covered by the course including biblical as well as practical perspectives.

Here are some possible headings you might use (you would only choose the relevant ones) for issues to raise and improvements to suggest. Have a look through the contents list for this course as this might give you other headings.

- office location and accessibility;
- priority purposes;
- use by other church staff;
- suitability of the office spaces for purpose;
- administrative paid staffing;
- use of volunteers and teamwork;
- customer care;
- staff handbook and HR issues;
- quality and type of furniture;
- quality and type of equipment;
- filing and storage areas;
- use of IT, social media, other tools;
- printing and stationery;
- communication channels;

- safety and security;
- development of staff and output.

Your Tutor will be wanting to understand what you have learned from seeing other Administrators and offices in operation and how you might apply these points to your own post whether as examples to follow or adapt, or methods to avoid.

Hints to all students: Your Tutor will be looking for evidence that you can think and write across the whole breadth of this course and see significant issues rather than just small matters of detail. He or she will also want to see evidence that you have had both practical and theological issues in mind throughout this exercise.

Remember: there are further hints for completing this assignment on the UCAN course portal.

Submit this to your Tutor for assessment (see page 19).

Distance Learning Course

The Work of a Church Administrator

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