

Graduate Certificate in Theology (Pastoral Leadership) (GradCertTh(PL))

Level 7, 60 credits



This programme is designed for experienced ministry leaders who may not hold prior academic degrees but have demonstrated significant leadership within a recognised ministry context.

Students in this programme will also engage in the Pastoral Leadership Pathway. Completion of the GradCertTh(PL) together with engagement in the Pastoral Leadership Pathway may provide special entry into the PGCertTh(PL), PGDipTh(PL), and MTh(PL).

Flexible Study Options

This programme also allows for a range of flexible learning options, including a combination of on campus and Distance Learning courses, as well as part-time study.

Students will study towards the GradCertTh(PL) in a hybrid model. All courses are available by Distance Learning, and some courses are also offered on campus in Henderson and Christchurch. GradCertTh(PL) students will attend interactive cohort learning sessions online to support them as they develop and contextualise their learning.

The GradCertTh(PL) caters for

- Those who have not completed a prior academic degree in any area, but who have demonstrated significant leadership within a recognised ministry context;
- Those who have completed a degree in a non-theological area but who wish to study towards a theological qualification with special emphasis on areas of pastoral leadership;
- Those who have completed a degree in a non-theological area but who wish to bridge into postgraduate programmes in Pastoral Leadership, such as the PGCertTh(PL), PGDipTh(PL), or MTh(PL).

In addition to the above:

- Admission in the programme requires evidence of a minimum of five years' recognised ministry leadership experience (or similar approved experience);
- Applicants must complete a police check;
- Applicants must complete a questionnaire and may be required to have an interview;
- Applicants must provide a written reference from a senior ministry leader.

Programme Requirements

The Graduate Certificate in Theology (Pastoral Leadership) is a part-time programme that can be completed in one or two years. It is made up of four prescribed courses of 15 credits each. Of these four courses, one can be taken at level 6 and the remaining three at level 7.

These may be taken in any order, though it is recommended that you discuss course selection with Laidlaw staff. For students in the GradCertTh(PL) programme, course pre-requisite and co-requisite regulations may be waived.

Courses

111.6/715 INTERPRETING THE BIBLE

Unlock the world of biblical interpretation in this dynamic course. Explore key exegetical methods including historical-critical and literary-critical approaches, gaining hands-on experience in analysing biblical texts. By the end, you'll be able to apply your insights to contemporary contexts.

205.6/715 CHURCH: THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE

Discover what it means to be the Church. In this course, you'll explore biblical and historical perspectives on ecclesiology, tracing how the Church has understood itself as the people of God through time. You'll engage with key biblical and traditional themes and affirmations about the church, as well as a range of approaches to ministry, leadership, and sacraments. Along the way, you'll learn to evaluate church practices, apply theological insights, and reflect on how these shape your own context and leadership today.

219.6/715 NGĀKAU MAIA: CHRISTIAN CONFIDENCE

Explore how to genuinely know and authentically live out the truth within the Biblical narrative. You'll discover how recognizing all truth as indwelled truth leads to a posture of "proper confidence" in the gospel. You'll examine how this contrasts with alternative worldviews and ideas in contemporary New Zealand society and beyond. You'll also be encouraged to develop new examples and practical applications of indwelled gospel truth that connect directly to your everyday experience.

480.6/715 FAITHFUL LIVING: INTRODUCTION TO REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Learn how to think theologically about your practice and cultivate resilient self- and other-awareness. You'll explore models of theological reflective practice, develop a personal code of conduct rooted in biblical ethics, and build practical skills for addressing ethical challenges. Gain the tools to thrive and grow in your ministry or vocational context with confidence.

2026 Fees

Domestic: \$944.25 per 15-credit course. **\$3,777** for programme (4 courses, 60 credits).

International: \$3,195 per 15-credit course. **\$12,780** for programme (4 courses, 60 credits).

Pastoral Leadership Pathway: \$800 per year. This includes a 3 day annual retreat, monthly two-hour interactive cohort learning sessions, access to international guest speakers/lecturers, and 4 coaching sessions with senior ministry coaches. This fee does not cover transport costs to or from gatherings, and would not be covered by a student loan.

NOTE: Annual fee may vary. A Student Services fee of \$4.20 per credit is charged for on-campus courses or \$63 per semester for distance learning. Please refer to Fee Schedule for more details (www.laidlaw.ac.nz/fees)

UPDATED 1 DECEMBER 2025

READY TO APPLY? ANY QUESTIONS?

0800 999 777

info@laidlaw.ac.nz | www.laidlaw.ac.nz



Pastoral Leadership (PL) Pathway

Engagement in the Pastoral Leadership Pathway may provide you with special entry into the PGCertTh(PL), PGDipTh(PL), and MTh(PL) and is considered an important aspect of the GradCertTh(PL). Participants with at least 80% attendance will receive a certificate of completion.

To apply for the PL Pathway please contact the Pastoral Leadership Coordinator Louise Wernich - Lwernich@laidlaw.ac.nz

ANNUAL RETREAT

The three-day retreat is a focused, immersive learning experience within the Pastoral Leadership Pathway, designed to integrate theological reflection with practical ministry formation. Across learning sessions, group discussion, and prayer, participants engage deeply with key themes such as the formation of healthy, disciple-making communities; the inner life of the leader; engagement with God's mission; communication and preaching; spiritual vitality; organisational leadership; ethics; pastoral care; and other contextual issues.

The intensive provides space to wrestle with real-world pastoral challenges, learn from experienced practitioners, and apply insights directly to ministry. Strengthened by the cohort learning environment, this gathering accelerates leadership growth.

MONTHLY ONLINE GATHERINGS

Each month, you join online sessions featuring expert input and training from a variety of experienced ministry practitioners. These gatherings combine input with interactive discussion, giving participants space to reflect, ask questions, and engage with peers. The sessions foster ongoing learning, community connection, and practical application.

COACHING SESSIONS

You receive personalised coaching that supports your growth in pastoral identity, skill, and formation. Through reflective conversation and practical guidance, the Senior Coach helps you integrate learning with real ministry, set meaningful goals, and navigate leadership challenges. These sessions provide a trusted space for encouragement, clarity, and next steps, ensuring you are accompanied and well-supported throughout the pathway.

ACCESS TO GUEST SPEAKERS/LECTURES

You benefit from input and proximity to international and local guests who bring fresh insight, diverse experience, and practical wisdom. These sessions broaden perspectives, deepen theological reflection, and expose you to a range of ministry contexts and leadership approaches - contributing to your overall formation journey.

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