

St Augustine's College of Theology / Common Awards

Admissions Policy 2026-27

Key contacts:

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1. Admissions decisions will be made by the Director of Studies in consultation with the Principal (or their acting substitutes). Where applicable, St Augustine's College of Theology may consult staff from diocesan teams responsible for the delivery of the relevant programme, in line with the Service Level Agreement in place.
2.
 - a) for postgraduate awards, one of the following:
 - a 2:1 degree (or other equivalent level 6 qualification, e.g., a Graduate Diploma) including a substantial element of theology and/or ministry, or
 - a 2:2 degree in any subject and an additional qualification at level 5 or above in theology and/or ministry at 2:1 standard or equivalent, or
 - a 2:1 degree in any subject and an additional qualification at level 4 or above in theology and/or ministry;
 - b) for graduate awards (Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma):
 - a Diploma of Higher Education or equivalent in theology and/or ministry, or
 - a 2:1 degree in any subject;
 - c) for the BA:
 - three A levels at grade E or above, or equivalent or higher qualifications;
 - d) for the Diploma of Higher Education or Certificate of Higher Education (180 credits):
 - two A levels at grade E or above, or
 - equivalent or higher qualifications.
 - e) for the Certificate of Higher Education (120 credits):
 - one A level at grade E or above, or
 - equivalent or higher qualifications.
3. Applicants for a postgraduate award who do not meet the standard entry qualifications (e.g., a 2:2 degree in theology and/or ministry and no other HE qualification) may be conditionally admitted based on their academic and/or ministerial potential (see paras 9 and 10). Such admission will be conditional upon satisfactory completion of the first module in the postgraduate programme (see para. 6) to a standard that demonstrates potential to complete a postgraduate qualification.

4. Applicants for an undergraduate award, especially mature applicants, who do not meet the standard entry qualifications may be admitted to the Certificate of Higher Education if St Augustine's College of Theology believes they are capable of undertaking these awards, and allowed to progress from these to higher awards if their performance in them is satisfactory. Likewise, other students admitted to lower awards may be permitted to progress to higher awards if their performance in the lower awards has been satisfactory.
5. Applicants may undertake one module (10 or 20 credits) as a 'Taster Module' without being registered on a Common Awards programme. Once they have successfully completed the module, and if they decide to register for a related Common Awards programme, they can take their result forward as credit towards that programme. (For further details, see the [Common Awards Taster Module policy](#).) This arrangement allows students to get a 'taster' of study before committing to a full programme of study. Furthermore, in cases when an applicant does not meet the standard entry qualifications (especially for postgraduate studies, see para. 4), the College may stipulate that admission to a programme is conditional upon successful completion of a Taster Module.
6. Applicants can apply for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), making a case for exemption from some of the modules of the programme/pathway for which they apply, based on previous learning – either University-accredited or non-accredited (or a mixture of these). St Augustine's College of Theology follows the [Common Awards APL policy](#) in considering and making decisions on all APL applications. In addition to the stipulations set out in that policy, the College has the following local policy on dealing with APL applications:
 - i. APL is available for all St Augustine's programmes (except the Foundation Award); at all levels of study (Levels 4–7); and up to the maximum amount of credits as set out for each programme by the Common Awards APL policy.
 - ii. Applications for APL are invited as part of the standard admissions process (without additional fees charged) and are normally considered during that process. The College, however, allows students to apply for APL at a later stage, after they have embarked on their programme of study.
 - iii. Decisions on APL applications are made by the Director of Studies, who is also the contact person for APL matters (see key contacts above). Decisions are made on the basis of the criteria set out in the Common Awards APL policy, and the APL process is normally completed within the timescale of the admissions process (period running up to the start of a new academic year).
 - iv. The process of submitting and considering APL applications usually requires a conversation between the applicant and the Director of Studies (or acting substitute) to clarify the Common Awards APL policy, establish whether accreditation of prior learning is feasible, and advise the applicant on completing their application. Applicants will receive such advice during the admissions process (or whenever they indicate an interest in applying for APL).

In all other aspects of the APL process, the College will follow the Common Awards APL policy.

7. Applicants whose first language is not English will be asked to provide evidence of English Language ability, as follows:
 - i. Successful completion of a comprehension and writing assessment, conducted by St Augustine's College of Theology; *and*
 - ii. successful completion of external language test, as required by Durham University, e.g., IELTS score of 6.5 (see [Common Awards programme specifications](#)).

External English language tests are undertaken at the potential applicant's own expense.

8. Admissions decisions are based as appropriate on previous qualifications, evidence from church selection processes, sample work, interview and references.
9. Admissions decisions are made on the basis of merit and potential. This may include not just merit and potential with regard to the academic award *per se*, but also with regard to the contribution that an applicant can make to and the benefit they may gain from the learning community at St Augustine's College of Theology.
10. In making admissions decisions, St Augustine's College of Theology staff shall take every care in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 to avoid unlawful or unjust discrimination.
11. Before an offer is finalised, at least one reference will be taken up, except in the case of those who have been recommended for training for ordained or licensed lay ministry who therefore come with the commendation of their diocese (or equivalent in other denominations).
12. The reasons for all admissions decisions, and supporting evidence as appropriate, shall be recorded and held by St Augustine's College of Theology, and made available to Durham University on request.
13. Admission to programmes of training for licensed church ministry (lay or ordained) may be made conditional on the candidate subsequently gaining the sponsorship of their diocese for ministerial training (or equivalent in other denominations).
14. If an applicant is found to have provided false or misleading information (whether in formal application processes or in other ways), this is sufficient grounds for refusing admission or withdrawing offers already made.
15. Feedback on admissions decisions is given on request only.
16. If an applicant has a complaint following the provision of feedback and is unable to resolve this informally, a formal complaint may be made. Formal complaints should be submitted in writing to the Principal. A complaint is defined as a specific concern related to a procedural error, irregularity or mal-administration in the admissions procedures or policies. A written response shall be given to the complaint within one month of its receipt.

17. If a complaint cannot be resolved internally, it will be referred it to Durham University. For more information, see the [Common Awards Complaints and Appeals policy](#).
18. Appeals, defined as a request by an unsuccessful applicant for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision, will not be considered.
19. Applicants will not be discriminated against in any further application should they request feedback or make a complaint under these policies and procedures.
20. St Augustine's College of Theology, in consultation with partner dioceses (where applicable), may close admissions to any programme when it believes it has recruited to its capacity. However, it must ensure that fair treatment is given to all who have applied prior to the closure of admissions. This may include taking into account (in addition to merit and potential, as in para. 10 above) factors such as when the application for admission was made, when the applicant made themselves available for interview, and when the applicant would be in a position to confirm acceptance of their place.
21. If further places become available following closure of admissions, St Augustine's College of Theology shall either offer those places to those who had previously applied (ensuring they are all treated fairly) or reopen a fair admissions process.

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