

Information about International Ecumenical Placements 2018-19

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I. Overview of placement opportunities

Institution	Semester / term placement?	University offering credit for semester / term study	Shorter placement options (1-2 months)?	Language skills needed	Other points to note
Dombes Theological Institute, near Lyon	Yes (term ends before Christmas break)	Université Catholique de Lyon	Yes	At least basic French (oral and written communication)	Living with the Chemin Neuf Community
Foyer Unitas, Rome	Yes (semester ends after Christmas break)	Angelicum	Yes	None – option to learn Italian for semester students	Open to individuals & couples in training
Graduate Ecumenical School, Bossey, near Geneva	Yes (semester ends after Christmas break)	University of Geneva	Yes	None – but ability to speak another language is an asset	International student body, from full range of churches
Pontifical Beda College, Rome	Yes (semester ends after Christmas break)	Angelicum	Yes	None required – some Italian helps	Only open to male Normally ordinands over 30
Venerable English College, Rome	Yes (semester ends after Christmas break)	Angelicum (English) or Gregorian (Italian)	No	None – option to learn Italian for semester students	Only open to male Normally ordinands under 30
Germany (via Meissen agreement) – no specific institution	Yes	To be worked out individually	Yes	Fluency in German	No standard programme – needs to be worked out individually.

All placements offer students:

- the chance to meet Christians of other traditions at first hand and to work through ecumenical issues in depth, both personally and theologically;
- being part of another, different community dedicated to ministerial formation;
- personal growth towards ministry through the opportunity to gain perspective from these ecumenical encounters;
- the chance to travel and to encounter the church in a wider European setting;
- becoming a resource in ecumenical relationships and ministry in the local and wider Church.

On their return, ordinands will be expected to write a report on their visit, partly for their own benefit and partly to help us keep developing and enhancing this provision.

2. Institutions

Dombes Institute of Theology (France)

<https://www.chemin-neuf.fr/fr/propositions/formation/institut-de-theologie-des-dombes>

The Notre Dame des Dombes Abbey, near Lyon, has a long-standing association with ecumenism. It is now the international centre for theological studies for the Chemin Neuf Community, a Roman Catholic Community with an ecumenical vocation that was started over forty years ago and now has around 2000 members in over 30 countries, including both married couple and people committed to celibacy. It has a number of centres in this country, including a community at Lambeth Palace supporting the work of the Archbishop of Canterbury. In terms of its spirituality, the Chemin Neuf draws in particular on the Ignatian tradition and on the experience of Charismatic Renewal.

A placement at the Dombes Institute will combine three elements. First and fundamentally, it will involve living in community with the members of the Chemin Neuf who are studying there, and sharing their patterns of daily life, including worship. Second, it will involve participating in the courses that are run at the Dombes Institute as an integral part of the formation for Chemin Neuf members. Third, it will involve the opportunity of joining other students there in attending courses taught in the theology department at the Catholic University in Lyon. All courses are taught in French and therefore a certain level of fluency in French will be needed to benefit from this placement. There is the possibility of support in more advanced language skills while there for those who can build on some basic knowledge. The Dombes Institute is happy to accommodate students for the whole of its first term (ending before Christmas), or for a shorter period within that.

Foyer Unitas

<http://www.laycentre.org>

Foyer Unitas, in the heart of Rome, is an intentional lay community centred on the four formational pillars (as with the Bede) identified by the Catholic Church, spiritual, intellectual, human, and pastoral. It is for lay people, primarily from the Roman Catholic Church, but including those from other faiths and denominations who wish to study for a year at a Roman Pontifical University, usually the Angelicum, while also participating in the community life, and spiritual and educational programme of the Centre. The focus is on discerning vocation 'in the communion and mission of the Church'

through fostering 'an attitude of active listening'. Anglican candidates based here will be able to interact with other Catholic seminarians and Anglican ordinands on placement through study at the Angelicum, as well as having the opportunity to visit the VEC and the Beda. Ideally candidates will attend for the semester placement, but it is also possible to negotiate the shorter placement subject to availability of accommodation. It would also be possible for a spouse to accompany a student (at their own expense) or we might be able to consider a couple in training.

Graduate Ecumenical School, Bossey

<http://institute.oikoumene.org/en/study-at-bossey>

At Bossey, the Church of England candidates have come to play a very important part in the life of the course. As English Anglicans they can often provide an important bridge between members of Northern European and North American Protestant churches and members of Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches and Christians from developing countries. This role is particularly enhanced if they can speak French and/or Spanish. We need people who will not only learn from the course but who can contribute both to learning and to the communal life. It may very well be that friendships begun on the Bossey course could be an important contribution to future ecumenical development. Semester placements run from the beginning of the academic year until late January/early February. **It is necessary to be a graduate to apply for this opportunity, and the selection panel will look for a sound basis in ministerial theology.** The shorter placement will be from the beginning of the academic year until the half-term point, depending on dates for that year.

Pontifical Beda College, Rome

<http://www.bedacollege.com/>

The College was founded in 1852 to form older men (i.e. over 30) for Catholic priesthood, including converts from other denominations. They come for only four years as they are considered to bring with them significant knowledge and experience. They now take men from English-speaking countries world-wide, giving the college a much more diverse ethos. Their mission is to 'help older men harness and develop their experience and knowledge in the service of the Gospel as Catholic priests'. Their emphasis is on formational and relational aspects of learning, with lectures mostly taught 'in-house', although students can access courses taught in one or other of the Roman Universities. As with the VEC, candidates whom we send need to be theologically alert and competent but are also able adequately to justify their position as members of the Church of England. The opportunity for the semester placement is from the beginning of the academic year until the end of the first semester, the exact date depending on whether students stay for the examination period. The shorter placement will be from the beginning of the induction fortnight in September until the half-term point in October/November depending on term dates.

Venerable English College, Rome

<http://www.vecrome.org/>

The English College is the College to which the most academically able Roman Catholic seminarians are sent. The majority of the English Catholic Bishops were trained there. One of the reasons for maintaining this close link is that over the years we hope to build up a network of Church of England and Roman Catholic clergy who know and trust each other and understand how both churches work and think. A proportion of the seminarians are converts from Anglicanism. It is vital that the people whom we send are not merely theologically alert and competent but are also able to articulate their reasons for being Anglican in a coherent and robust manner. Reformation issues, both historical and theological, are still very much alive at the English College. It was from there that the great majority of those who were martyred in the Roman Catholic cause in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries went out, and their relics are proudly

displayed in the Chapel there. We need people who can be strong and sensitive in such a situation. This opportunity is from the beginning of the academic year until the end of the first semester, the exact date depending on whether students stay for the examination period.

Study in Germany (Meissen Agreement)

In addition to the usual invitation to offer ordinands the opportunity to study in Bossey and Rome, the Ministry Division offers a scholarship scheme to study in a theological faculty or ordination institution in Germany. This is with a view to further the cooperation between our churches, the EKD (the major German Protestant Church) and the Church of England, under the terms of the Meissen agreement.

Unlike our schemes in Bossey and Rome, the opportunity in Germany will need to be tailored for each candidate on an individual basis, and usually requires that the candidate is fluent in academic German. These scholarships are for up to one semester in length, and will include plans for substantial theological study and immersion in the church life of the EKD.

3. Semester / term placements and university study

Ordinands on semester / term placements are expected to register for courses at the relevant university. The selection of these modules will need careful discussion with relevant staff from the sending TEI (most obviously the Director of Studies or equivalent) and with the staff of the placement institution, to ensure the best fit with the student's needs for theological education within their overall programme of formation for ministry. The relevant university in this country (Durham for most ordinands) will also need to be consulted about precise arrangements for granting credit for study abroad. While there is unlikely to be a simple match with what the student would otherwise be studying at the sending TEI, it is reasonable to expect a substantial overlap to be possible and also for there to be opportunities to study areas and approaches that would not otherwise receive coverage.

4. Shorter study placements

There is a degree of flexibility about these, because they are not necessarily tied to university terms and courses, although there are opportunities for some level of participation. It is perfectly possible to work towards modules from the sending TEI that focus on placement work, independent study or dissertation during such shorter study placements. There is a specific module within the national Common Awards provision designed to run alongside them, if that would be helpful. Preparation for and assessment of the module is done by the sending TEI in conjunction with reports from the placement supervisor.

Some more detailed notes on short placements at Bossey and at the Beda are given below.

The Ecumenical Institute, Bossey

A short placement of approximately 5/6 weeks, beginning in September with the new intake of students. Candidates audit one or two core modules and an elective module, as well as taking a full part in the community and worship life of the Institute.

The Beda, Rome

A placement of 5-7 weeks at the Beda, an English Roman Catholic Seminary which trains men for the priesthood. Whereas the VEC trains seminarians under 30 years of age, the Beda is mainly for those over 30 and is a more diverse community with seminarians coming from countries other than Britain. The teaching is in English and mostly 'in-house' which means that they are able to be more flexible and they have a strong relational approach to formation. Candidates join with the new intake of seminarians in early September for the two week induction programme (getting to know each other and Rome!), followed by approximately 5 weeks until the half-term point. Candidates audit one or two core modules and an elective module as appropriate as well as taking a full part in the life of the college.

5. Funding

All placements are fully funded by Ministry Division in terms of essential costs, i.e. a return flight, tuition and maintenance fees, plus a small personal allowance. This does not include visits from family members to the placement location. In some cases, but not all, the student's spouse may be able to be accommodated with them for some or all of the time, at their own expense. For fuller information about how spouses may be able to be involved, please contact Keith Beech-Gruneberg at the Ministry Division.

In the case of semester placements, the Ministry Division will also pay for candidates to return home at Christmas.

6. Application

We are concerned to send candidates of a high calibre. In particular we are looking for:

- the ability to represent the Church of England and to articulate its traditions;
- a firm grasp of issues in theology and ministry;
- at least an outline knowledge of contemporary ecumenical issues and publications.

Applications should contain:

- i) a statement of approximately 400 words by candidates on why they wish to be considered, explaining their aims, relevant experience and what the opportunity could contribute to their preparation for ministry.
- ii) a letter from the principal explaining why it is appropriate to consider the candidate, how this will affect their preparation for ordination (both in terms of formation and in terms of their programme of study) and comment on the knowledge and qualities which would enable them to be good ambassadors for the Church of England (or other sponsoring church).
- iii) confirmation that the candidate's diocese supports the application. This could simply be a statement to that effect in the principal's letter, but the bishop or DDO may wish to provide a more extensive endorsement. **Please note that this is a new requirement** – it has not been a stated expectation in previous years.

Applications for the semester placement at Bossey should be forwarded to the Revd Dr Keith Beech-Gruneberg, Ministry Division by **the end of October 2017**.

Applications for all other placements should be forwarded to the Revd Dr Keith Beech-Gruneberg, Ministry Division by **Monday 4th December 2017**.

Those who are short listed will be invited to an interview with a panel including the Revd Dr Keith Beech-Gruneberg on behalf of the Ministry Division, an experienced Bishops' Advisor and the Secretary of the Council for Christian Unity.

7. Philip Usher Memorial Fund

Ordinands should also be aware of the Philip Usher Memorial Fund, which is not part of the Ministry Division but an independent charity supporting Anglican engagement with the Orthodox churches. They have funding provision for placements in Orthodox contexts that parallels the opportunities set out above for study in Western Europe. Further details can be found on their website, <http://www.philipusherfund.org.uk/>.