A Quick Guide to the Ministerial Study Program

What is it?

The Ministerial Study Program (MSP) is district ministry training and Coaching program that is administered nationally and which meets the uniform requirements for academic study of Bible and Theology for licensing and ordination or consecration. The MSP is designed to develop character and competency in skills for ministry, and though the student will gain knowledge, the emphasis is on growing in Christ-like character and developing practical ministry skills.

Who is it for?

The MSP has been developed primarily for people who are aware of the call of God to full-time ministry, but who are unable to obtain their training through traditional educational institutions. It is also used by many others who, through the guidance and approval of their District, desire a self-study and Coaching approach to their ministry preparation.

The typical candidate for the Ministerial Study Program has the following profile:

•   Has experienced a call to full-time ministry and is able to articulate that call.

•   Is willing to make a career change to follow God's leading.

•   Is an experienced leader in a local Alliance church.

•   Gives evidence of having godly character and potential for the vocational ministry.

•   Is an active member of an Alliance church.

How is the District involved?

Candidates for the program must be approved by the local congregation and recommended by their district superintendent. The student studies under the supervision of a Coach appointed by the district. The district Coach is enrolled in the course along with the student, and discusses projects, answers questions, and provides additional insight in the practical and theological aspects of the course. In some online courses, the Coach reviews the major assignments before a student submits them to the evaluator, and evaluated projects are returned to the student through the Coach.

How much does it cost?

The cost to participate in the Ministerial Study Program is approximately $2,000. This includes a $100 student registration fee, $85/$95 tuition (per course, depending on course format), plus books and materials.

How does a candidate enroll in the program?

A candidate contacts the office of the district in which he or she resides and requests the MSP enrollment packet, or downloads it from the Church Ministries Online Learning site (www.disciplesandleaders.com). The packet contains:

•   Student application form
•   Congregational approval form
•   Schedule of course completion
•   Instructions

When the candidate has filled out the application form and has received approval from his congregation, the candidate sends these forms with the student registration fee to the District office. The District Superintendent must sign the application form to give his approval, and name a coach to oversee the student's progress. The district office then sends these completed forms to the Church Leadership Academy for processing.

What happens next?

The Church Leadership Academy sends a Student Handbook to both the student and their Coach with information and links to the online resources. The student and Coach also receive a username and password to access the online resources and courses.

How does a student register for courses?

Students register and pay for courses online using the National Office Event Registration System (they can also enroll by mail and pay by check or money order). Information on registration is found on the Church Ministries learning site, www.disciplesandleaders.com.

How does a student get textbooks?

A link to the CLA's *Textbook Selector* is located on the Church Ministries learning site, www.disciplesandleaders.com. Students can choose to purchase from our online bookstore, or obtain their textbooks elsewhere.

What kind of courses are in the program?

There are two independent-study course formats: paper-based, and online. Most of the courses are available in both formats. A few required courses are external courses, where a student registers and completes the course with another organization (*Peacemakers, Sonlife, Perspectives*, etc.). In both the online and paper-based courses, the student's assessment is based primarily on projects they submit, which are evaluated by a CLA-trained and -certified Evaluator.

What help is available to the Coach in their role?

When a student enrolls in a course, the Coach gains full access to all of the resources, assignments, and discussion forums that the student uses, as well as the ability to review the student's progress in the grade-book. Specific guidelines, project explanations, and resources for each course are in development.

What do students need to take a course?

The CLA provides the syllabus and assignments, and the student just needs to purchase the assigned textbook(s) for each course. For online courses, a student will need also access to a computer or mobile computing device with internet access. The entire online portion of the course can be completed using any standard Windows or Mac-based browser with *QuickTime* plug-in, including on an iPhone or iPad. A printer is helpful for some sections, but not required.

How can I see the MSP curriculum?

Visit the Church Ministries learning site, www.disciplesandleaders.com.

When does a student graduate?

Students are required to complete all the courses in the Ministerial Study Program. Those who have received theological training at an accredited institution may receive credit for some MSP courses upon submission of an official transcript of credits. When a student successfully completes their final course, a *Certificate of Graduation* is sent to the district office. The district superintendent arranges an appropriate occasion to award the certificate.