RTC CHURCH BASED TRAINING

1. THE STRUCTURE OF RTC CBT
RTC Church Based Training is a recognised pathway to ordination within the Christian Reformed Church of Australia. It replaces the Task3 program the RTC has previously offered.

RTC CBT has three key components:

0.1. MINISTRY APPRENTICESHIP
RTC CBT students will be required to complete a ministry apprenticeship in their local church. The nature and makeup of this apprenticeship will have to be approved by both the RTC Faculty and the CRCA Candidacy Committee.

Students will be required to complete the equivalent of 180 days of apprenticeship work. Since circumstances of individual students will differ, a wide latitude will be allowed in terms of how the 180 days goal is reached (as long as all parties - the RTC, the CRCA Candidacy Committee and the local Session agree). Some possible scenarios may include:

• Two days per week for two years
• One day per week over four years
• Four days per week in a year

A set of ministry competencies will guide churches in the kind of ministry experience to which apprentices should be exposed. The focus will be on testing gifts, developing character for ministry and cultivating leadership, mission and teaching/preaching skills. Churches will be asked to report on progress in these areas as part of the general RTC CBT reporting procedures (see below).

Since RTC CBT is a pathway towards ordained ministry preaching should form an important part of the apprenticeship and it is recommended that students will gradually be given more opportunities to preach as the internship progresses. All sermons delivered by RTC CBT students should be followed by opportunities for feedback, processing and debriefing.

While an apprenticeship will be of great benefit to students, it will also, of course, be a benefit to churches. An apprentice will be able to help with many facets of ministry and establish a team ministry dynamic in the local church.

1.2 ACADEMIC STUDY
Students will work towards earning an ACT B.Th. or MDiv through the RTC as part of the RTC CBT program. Please see the attached study plan for an indication of the likely makeup of a degree program. Students may opt to complete their academic study in a variety of ways. The maximum time for the full RTC CBT program is eight years, and the minimum is four years.

Some possible pathways towards completing the academic component of RTC CBT include the following:

• Spending two years at a local church, focussing on the apprenticeship and mentoring program while engaging in some part time study. Then moving to Geelong or Melbourne for two years of full time study.

• Completing the entire degree (or as much as is possible) through the RTC without moving to Geelong or Melbourne by making use of intensives, distance study, ‘attending’ synchronous distance classes and doing units through a local ACT College if necessary. In such cases the apprenticeship could possibly be stretched out over a longer period.

• Opting to do only the ‘Reformed Distinctives’ units required for CRCA ordination (students will be able to complete all of these without relocating) through the RTC while doing all other units through a local ACT College.

All possible pathways will have to be discussed with, and approved by the RTC and the CRCA Candidacy Committee prior to commencing the program.
1.3. SPIRITUAL AND MINISTRY FORMATION

Spiritual and ministry formation are integral parts of the RTC CBT program. To achieve the aims of spiritual and ministry competency growth we will make use of two main tools namely BILD courses and a mentoring program.

**BILD Courses**

RTC CBT students will be required to complete two BILD (Biblical Institute of Leadership Development) units. They are: Acts and The Pauline Epistles. Each course will require Bible study, set readings, group discussions and projects. The group discussions will need to be led by a pastor trained by the RTC (see details below). Preparing for and leading the weekly group discussion will take 5 or 6 hours a week over a 15 week period for a pastor (each BILD course is 15 weeks). The pace at which units are completed will largely depend on local factors (including the availability of a local pastor to take responsibility for running the units).

**Mentoring Program**

All participants in the RTC CBT program must be actively mentored by an ordained pastor in their local church. This should ideally take the form of both group and individual mentoring sessions. The shape of these mentoring sessions will largely be left to the local pastor but should be informed by the desired RTC CBT Ministry Competencies (attached). Some ideas for the design of a mentoring program include:

- Regular individual sessions during which personal, spiritual and ministry issues can be discussed.
- Guided reading (either in group or individual settings) followed by opportunities for processing and discussion.
- Exposure to different types of ministry
- It is highly recommended that a mentoring group be established of which the student can be a member. This will provide an opportunity for group discussions and will also spread the impact of the local pastor’s mentoring ministry wider than the RTC CBT student.

2. REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS

Students who wish to participate in RTC CBT should have access to an apprenticeship in the local church and to the required BILD courses (either presented by the pastor of the congregation where the apprenticeship is done or by another local pastor). It is not the responsibility of the RTC to set up the apprenticeship that the student will participate in. This will be a matter for negotiation between the student and the local church.

Students must formally apply to the RTC if they intend to participate in the program. It is especially important that they liaise with the RTC Registrar.
in order to map out a suitable pathway towards completing all requirements. The RTC will only approve a student to proceed with RTC CBT once it is clear that there is a workable plan for meeting all requirements.

It should be remembered that the primary purpose of RTC CBT is to provide a pathway into ordained ministry within the CRCA. This means that students must notify the CRCA Candidacy Committee of their intention to participate in the programme and seek their approval.

Time commitments will vary widely according to the pace at which the program is completed. Students should in all cases make sure that they form a realistic picture of the time that will be required and then commit themselves to set aside enough time for study, ministry work and mentoring activities.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR PASTORS AND CHURCHES

Local Sessions must formally approve and nominate students to take part in RTC CBT. This includes a commitment to provide a suitable setting for the required RTC CBT apprenticeship and also may include financial support of the apprentice (see below).

Pastors wishing to lead a BILD course will need to be trained by the RTC to do so. This will be valuable in-service training for pastors. Where numbers warrant this, the College will host training intensives in order to train pastors to lead BILD units in their own contexts. The training will expose pastors to the philosophy of church-based training and also introduce them to the specific material of the BILD courses.

Training seminars will usually be conducted on the RTC campus and will take three days to complete.

Where only a single pastor requires training one-on-one training may be negotiated with the RTC. Local ministers will be asked to regularly report on the progress of the RTC CBT students under their care. A written report based on the attached ministry competencies must be submitted to the RTC CBT coordinator on a bi-annual basis. This will be followed up with a phone interview during which the written report will be discussed.

Since the local pastor will take primary responsibility for mentoring the RTC CBT student and for teaching the BILD units he should have sufficient time available to undertake these tasks. Time commitments will vary depending on the timeframe for completion that is decided on. It is, therefore, highly recommended that a realistic appraisal is made (and that the local Session agrees to this) before a minister commits to taking on an RTC CBT student.
4. COSTS

4.1. FOR STUDENTS

• RTC CBT students will pay the prescribed RTC fees for ACT units and will be eligible for the RTC’s e-campus scholarships. Students may be able to make use of Fee-Help (an Australian government loan scheme) to help fund their studies.

• The costs for the two BILD units will be around $80 per unit. This covers the study material associated with these units.

• Students will need to attend approximately six intensives, with associated food, travel and accommodation costs.

• Students may be able to claim Austudy for part of the period that they are involved with RTC CBT. Ordinarily, they will be eligible for this whenever three units are taken during a single semester (the definition of ‘full time study’ for Austudy purposes), for a total of seven semesters.

4.2. FOR CHURCHES AND PASTORS

Seminars for the training of pastors to present the BILD units will cost $250. This will include all study material. In cases where a one-on-one training session is required the cost will be $250 plus the travel costs of the RTC CBT coordinator.

The RTC does not mandate any particular amount a church ought to pay a RTC CBT apprentice. This will vary from church to church depending on resources and the needs of individual students. The stipend of a CRCA Vicar may be used as a rough guideline (this would equate to roughly $25,000 for a 0.4 position).

5. SOME POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

It has been repeatedly emphasised that there is no one-size-fits-all shape to RTC CBT but that the actual program design will have to be determined in each individual case. What follows should, therefore, not be seen as the only possible scenarios. They are, instead, offered as illustrations of how individual students could possibly proceed towards ordained ministry using this pathway:

• **Matthew**, who currently works as a tradesman, is deeply committed to ministry in his local church. He would like to continue with this in the short term but also feels that he would benefit from full-time residential theological study. In consultation with his local Session he decides to begin working for the church (thus fulfilling apprenticeship requirements) while at the same time reducing his hours at his current employer. He will continue with this for two years while also beginning to take some units through the RTC (through distance study and by attending intensives). After the initial two years he intends to move to Geelong or Melbourne to complete his degree. During the initial two year period Matthew will be remunerated by the church as he will not be able to claim Austudy (since he will not be a full time student). During his time at College he will be able to claim Austudy as he will have a full-time study load.

• **Mark** has significant family commitments that would make an interstate move very difficult. He views RTC CBT as an ideal opportunity to complete CRCA ordination requirements without relocation. He intends to complete the academic component of the program through a combination of RTC distance units, RTC distance units (both synchronous and asynchronous) and study through a local ACT College. During certain phases of his involvement with RTC CBT he will be carrying a full-time load for Austudy purposes (3 units) while not being eligible at other times. His local church agrees that his apprenticeship duties and hours will be increased during such times (thus leading to increased compensation).

• **Luke** is currently a teacher but is convinced that he should enter ordained ministry. He does not feel quite ready to take up full time study or an apprenticeship at the moment. He nevertheless informs his local church and the RTC of his intentions and is advised to begin ‘chipping away’ at the academic component. He commits to doing this and begins to take a unit or two every semester (which he charges to Fee-Help) while continuing in his current employment. He understands that he has eight years to complete the program and will negotiate the exact shape of the apprenticeship and completing outstanding academic requirements when the time comes for him to commit to an increased time commitment.

• **John** is working full time for his local church as their new youth pastor. He would like to complete the RTC CBT program but is not quite ready to begin his studies as he is still settling into his role. His local Session and pastor agrees that his work for the church can be used to fulfil the apprenticeship requirements. He is therefore able to complete this part of RTC CBT in a year (by working 180 eligible days in church ministry). Over subsequent years he will gradually increase his academic commitments, with a corresponding reduction in his ministry hours at this church. Eventually this will reach a point where he will be able to claim Austudy, at which point the church will reduce his remuneration accordingly.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like further information on RTC CBT please:

- Consult the RTC Website for general information
- Phone Phillip Scheepers at the RTC (03) 5244 2955 or email him at pscheepers@rtc.edu.au
## APPENDIX - MINISTRY COMPETENCIES
For RTC CBT apprenticeship and internships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA OF FOCUS</th>
<th>COMPETENCY</th>
<th>SPECIFIC ACTIONS</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT** | **SELF-ASSESSMENT AND GOAL SETTING FOR PERSONAL GROWTH** | • Sets and works toward realistic goals for personal spiritual growth and ministry development  
• Makes realistic self-assessments in key areas of personal spirituality and ministry and responds constructively to the assessment and mentoring of others  
• Understands himself and what drives and motivates him, and shapes ministry appropriately according to his strengths and weaknesses | • Develop initial plan for personal growth  
• Make annual revisions  
• Undertakes the BILD Assessments in:  
  • Life and Ministry  
  • Becoming established  
  • Giftedness  
  • Current ministry fruitfulness  
  • Ministry team profile and relationships  
  • Journal of mentors  
  • Annual revisions |
| **MINISTRY PRACTICE** | **TEACHING AND PREACHING** | • Exegetes the Scriptures accurately  
• Explains the Bible clearly in a variety of contexts  
• Applies the Bible with spiritual insight and sensitivity to people  
• Communicates well in public  
• Leads in public settings in an edifying way | • Leads a Bible study group  
• Reads the Bible in one-to-one discipleship and pastoral contexts helping individuals make progress in the Christian life by applying the Bible to their lives  
• Gives Bible talks and devotions in various settings  
• Begins to preach with oversight and feedback  
• Begins to lead in church and other gatherings, with feedback |
| **PASTORAL SKILL** | **Pastoral Visitations** | • Clear understanding and confidence in the gospel and the work of the Spirit for addressing the foundational needs and problems of new and unestablished believers.  
• Relates well to people in a range of pastoral situations  
• Ministers the Word and leads in prayer in appropriate ways in pastoral settings | • Engaged in some pastoral visitation  
• Exposed to some regular pastoral matters in church life (weddings, funerals, crisis situations etc) |
| **EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS** | **EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS** | • Builds friendships with non-Christians and establishes rapport with people in evangelistic situations  
• Explains the gospel clearly and boldly urges people to respond to Christ  
• Offers appropriate steps for individuals; answers questions and objections; follows up new Christians  
• Fosters a commitment to evangelism in others  
• Cultivates a world-view for evangelism (not just a local view)  
• Understands and develops a church planting ethos | • Runs some kind of basic Christianity course  
• Engages in a variety of evangelistic contexts  
• Helps in the planning, development and training aspects of local church evangelism/church planting |
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<th>AREA OF FOCUS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training Others in</td>
<td>Identifies people’s gifts and therefore in what ministries they should</td>
<td>Engages in one-to-one and small group ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry</td>
<td>serve</td>
<td>Trains someone else in one-to-one mentoring</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Trains others in the ministries in which he is involved</td>
<td>Trains an assistant in how to lead a small group</td>
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<td>Actively identifies and coaches those who should consider vocational ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Evidences a servant heart</td>
<td>Serves others at church (ministry of pew)</td>
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<td>Manages own time effectively</td>
<td>Makes plans for personal time management and implements them</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identifies own leadership style, gifts and flaws, and adapts it to</td>
<td>Engaged in the leadership team of at least two existing ministries</td>
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<td></td>
<td>enhance relationships</td>
<td>Starts a new ministry and oversees its development, resourcing etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evidence of leadership ability</td>
<td>Provides vision and direction for ministry &amp; communicates that effectively</td>
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<td>Actively recruits others to ministry</td>
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<td>Develops and implements ministry plans</td>
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<td>Delegates responsibility and follow-up</td>
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<td>Resolves conflict positively</td>
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**Award:** Master of Divinity  **Delivery:** Distance and Intensive  
**CBTE Program Sample** Beginning 2017 or odd-numbered year  
Degree Requirements Revised 02/2016

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<tr>
<th>FIRST YEAR</th>
<th>SECOND YEAR</th>
<th>THIRD YEAR</th>
<th>FOURTH YEAR</th>
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<td>Semester 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>LA004A New Testament Greek A (SD)</td>
<td>EM505 Theology of Mission*</td>
<td>PC515 Christian Worship*</td>
<td>CH502D The Church from 1550 to Modern Times</td>
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<tr>
<td>OT501D Old Testament Foundations</td>
<td>LA003A Biblical Hebrew A (SD)</td>
<td>TH601D The Knowledge of God</td>
<td>PC602 Foundations of Pastoral Care (SD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NT501D Jesus and the Gospels</td>
<td>NT543 Introduction to Greek Testament Exegesis (SD)</td>
<td>OT543 Foundations for Hebrew Exegesis (SD)</td>
<td>TH603D The Doctrines of Grace &amp; Eschatology</td>
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<tr>
<td>RDP62A The Practice of Preaching (0.25) (SD)</td>
<td>RDP62C The Practice of Preaching (0.25) (SD)</td>
<td>RDPXX Pastoral Ministry in Reformed Churches*</td>
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Semester 2  
LA004B New Testament Greek B (SD)  
NT502D The Early New Testament Church  
RDP51 Principles of Preaching*  
LA003B Biblical Hebrew B  
OT502D Old Testament Prophets and Writings  
RDP62B The Practice of Preaching (0.25) (SD)  
RDPXX Pastoral Ministry in Reformed Churches*  
NT635 Pauline Theology & Romans (Gk)*(SD)  
OT636 The Psalter (Hebrew) (SD)  
TH604D Church, Sacraments & Ministry  
RDP62C The Practice of Preaching (0.25) (SD)  
RDP62D The Practice of Preaching (0.25)(SD)  
CH501D The Church to 1550  
TH602 The Doctrine of God & The Work of Christ (SD)  
—690 Project (2 units)  

* Delivered by intensive format  
(SD) Available by distance via live online video link

**Award:** Master of Divinity  **Delivery:** Distance and Intensive  
**CBTE Program Sample** Beginning 2018 or even-numbered year

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OT502D Old Testament Prophets and Writings  
LA004B New Testament Greek B (SD)  
CH501D The Church to 1550  
OT636 The Psalter (Hebrew) (SD)  
RDP62B The Practice of Preaching (0.25) (SD)  
RDP62C The Practice of Preaching (0.25) (SD)  
CH604D Church, Sacraments & Ministry  
—690 Project (2 units)  
RDP62D The Practice of Preaching (0.25)(SD)  

* Delivered by intensive format  
(SD) Available online via live video link

**Important note.** This program sample represents just one possible pathway and it is not necessarily the case that all students will progress through RTC CBTE in exactly this way. Significant variations may occur due to student circumstances or unit availability. It is, in light of this, very important that students seek the assistance of the RTC Registrar to help them map out an individual study pathway.