

COMPARISON OF KINGSTON DOCTRINAL FORMATION PROGRAM WITH VATICAN “BASIC NORMS FOR THE FORMATION OF PERMANENT DEACONS

TOPIC AREA (1 course = 40 hours)	NORMS	KINGSTON
PREVIOUS BASIC FORMATION REQD.	Y	Y
1 SCRIPTURE- Introduction to Sacred Scripture and right interpretation, theology of Old and New Testaments, relation Scripture/Tradition, use of Scripture in preaching, catechesis and pastoral ministry	6	1,1,1,1,1**,1** = 6
2 FATHERS/HISTORY- introductory level	2	1,1,1* =3
3 FUND THEOLOGY- sources, topics, methods of theology – Revelation and relation between faith and reason – as an aid to the explanation of reasonableness of the faith	2	1**,1** =2
4 DOGMA – Trinity, creation, Christology, ecclesiology & ecumenism, Mariology, Christian anthropology, sacraments (especially Holy Orders), eschatology	7	1,1,1,1,1,1,1* =7
5 MORALITY in its personal and social dimensions & Catholic Social Doctrine	2	1,1* =2
6 SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY	1	1**
7 LITURGY	1	1**
8 CANON LAW	1	1**
9 OTHER – may include study of other religions, philosophical questions, economic and political issues	1	0
EXAM- CORE COURSE	Y	N
FINAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAM	Y	N
TOTAL COURSES	23	23

LINE NOTES:

1. KINGSTON offers 9 weekend (Saturday to Sunday) study sessions per year (once a month). These sessions focus on training for a ministry of service and likely contain some aspects of pastoral and sacramental theology, including fundamentals of theology, as well as spiritual life, liturgy, and canon law. This is indicated as **.
2. both NORMS & KINGSTON require an Inquiry period and a propaedeutic period of study and discernment before a public commitment by candidates to the program. In Kingston, this involves three 4-month terms over 2 years of study, prayers, discernment and sharing. Topics covered are history of the Diaconate, ministry and life of a deacon, Church documents on the diaconate, etc. The Norms also require some introductory coverage of Scripture and theology. Some introduction to Scripture is present in the Kingston program in the propaedeutic year.

3. Coverage is given in terms of courses; on-line courses in Kingston involve between 5 and 10 contact hours per week and run for approximately 7 weeks. Contact hours are assessed at 40 hours per course.
4. Coverage listed with a * indicates the course is given post-ordination. Coverage listed with a ** indicates material is presented in a weekend study session.
5. Breakdown of coverage over 4 years:
 1. faith, OT scripture (Torah, prophets, wisdom), spiritual and pastoral items. (emphasis on God the Father)
 2. Continued as 1., plus anthropology, NT (Gospels, Pauline letters), sacraments (emphasis on Jesus, God the Son)
 3. Church history, ecclesiology, Catholic social teaching, canon law, homiletics, more NT (emphasis on God the Holy Spirit)
 4. (post- ordination) Various pastoral and ethical issues.

Analysis

The Archdiocese of Kingston has covered all essential aspects of the Norms in their Doctrinal Formation program. This is accomplished through a combination of on-line courses from the Institute of Church Life, University of Notre Dame, offered through the Satellite Theological Education Program (S.T.E.P.), plus the compulsory monthly weekend study days offered locally. In addition, some of this material at an introductory level is given during the enquiry and propaedeutic (pre-candidacy) stages.

As a result, the doctrinal formation program adheres well to the Norms. There is no examination, even in core courses, but the Archdiocese has entered into an essay-based assessment program, wherein comprehension of materials is assessed by the Program Coordinator on the basis of synthesis of course content and understanding of material. A summary of their intellectual, pastoral and spiritual development is provided at the end of each year, and whether the candidate exhibits diaconal gifts. The cost for this assessment service was an annual fee per student. In addition, the Archdiocese paid an annual affiliation fee. This was decided since their assessment process meets the guidelines set down by Rome for an assessment of each candidate. Notre Dame developed this to satisfy a request by the US Bishops for a means of meeting the guidelines from Rome (Norms). [at present, there are approximately 10 candidates in the Kingston formation program]