

AGM 2024



Agenda Item 8: To consider the following resolution: This Society would welcome the introduction of a postgraduate qualification in canon law as part of the Common Awards partnership between the Church of England, Theological Education Institutions, and Durham University.

Background Information

In 1991, Professor Norman Doe set up the LLM in Canon Law at Cardiff University Law School. He had approached the Ecclesiastical Law Society prior to the beginning of this programme, seeking its welcome and support for the revival of the teaching of Anglican canon law at postgraduate level. The Society duly gave the endeavour its full support at its Annual General Meeting.

For over thirty years, the LLM in Canon Law has seen students from all over the world come to Cardiff to study canon law—mainly with from an Anglican context, but in many cases bringing a comparative or ecumenical focus. Graduates have gone onto work in the field of ecclesiastical law as chancellors, registrars, and church administrators; some have pursued doctoral study in canon law; and some of the essays and dissertations from the course have been published in the Ecclesiastical Law Journal. In short, the Cardiff LLM has been an engine room that has helped power the revival of the study of Anglican canon law over the past three decades.

The Cardiff LLM has now come to an end, with the last weekend residential taking place in March this year. There is great reason to be thankful for all that the degree has brought to our field over this time.

The end of the Cardiff LLM leaves a gap. There is no equivalent postgraduate course with an Anglican focus. It is therefore hoped that the teaching of Canon Law at postgraduate level will continue through Common Awards. This is a partnership between the Church of England (and the Church in Wales and other churches), theological education institutions (TEIs), and Durham University. New canon law modules are already in the process of being put designed. The next step will be seeking approval for a full master's degree programme in canon law.

The ELS's welcome and support for the proposed LLM thirty years ago was instrumental in gaining approval for that degree. A strong show of support from the ELS, acknowledging the continued need for a postgraduate canon law degree programme today, would be of considerable help in demonstrating the viability of a new degree now. For this reason a motion to this effect will be proposed at the AGM.