



ASCEND

by unbound



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Unbound is a project-based education company that provides coaching, hands-on experience, life skill development, and relevant resources for high school and post-high school students.

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What is Ascend & How Does it Work?



Ascend is Unbound's 3-year leadership and professional development program that gives students a network and community for life, relevant, resume-worthy skills that will put them ahead in the job market, and the opportunity to earn high-level certificates. Ascend does all of this while providing the freedom and flexibility for students to remain local, invest in their family and friends, and pursue jobs and other opportunities along the way.

As a project-based education program, Ascend equips you with the practical life skills, decision-making ability, and hands-on experience you need to be successful in life.

As a leadership and professional development program, Ascend provides students the opportunity to develop relevant skills and gain hands-on experience in the work-force so that they are equipped to earn back their investment in the Ascend program within 6-12 months of completion, if not before.

More than anything else, Ascend is a thriving community and an active training ground — a place to meet exceptional people, build relationships that will last a lifetime (and beyond), and ultimately know that regardless of where you live or what life brings, you have people around you who will pray for you, support you, and be there for you no matter what.

Here's how it works.

When you enroll in Ascend, you will be assigned to an Ascend Team, a group comprised of 7-10 other Ascend students and led by a dedicated Ascend Team Leader (ATL). Your ATL is another student or alumni who has successfully completed all of the elements of the first year of Ascend and has been intensively trained in coaching, mentorship, and leadership. His or her job will be to help you and your other team members set and achieve your educational, personal, and professional goals for the year. You will meet with your team once a month via Zoom for coaching and support and also have daily access to your fellow team members, ATL, and greater Ascend class through our private chat platform, Slack.

In August, your Ascend experience will kick off with the first live event of the year, APEX. Remember: Ascend is not a fully online program. There are three live events throughout the year that bring students together for in-person training, networking, and community building. Registration for all three events is included in your Ascend tuition and travel costs for the first event, APEX, are also covered.

APEX is our national conference, held in Lake City, Michigan during the second or third week of August. For year one students, APEX is an orientation not just to Ascend but also to the student community and Unbound as a whole. APEX is where you are first introduced to the key principles and relational culture behind Ascend. Here, the bar for the year is intentionally set high — too high for you to reach it on your own. But through the connections you make with over a hundred other students and alumni, you have the opportunity to reach it together.

Each month in Ascend you will attend an Expert-Led Webinar and your Ascend Team meeting. The first meeting every month will be the Expert-Led Webinar. Attended by all

Attended by all Ascend students, these webinars provide opportunities for field experts to share their experiences and the lessons they have learned. You'll hear from intentionally selected speakers and have a chance to ask questions. These webinars give you the opportunity to see how what you are learning is successfully applied in the real world.

Your second meeting of the month will be with your own Ascend Team. In this meeting, you will discuss and apply the webinar content to your own life in practical ways and work with your ATL to set and achieve your educational, personal, and professional goals for the year. Your ATL will also be your first line of contact for questions and support over the next 10 months.

Following the APEX event, the first course you and your team will take in the Ascend program is Navigate. Navigate is a 16-week, non-accredited life course that runs from late August through early December. This course is designed to help young adults discover their life purpose and make wise decisions by asking the right questions, exploring their interests, and moving forward with confidence in their next steps. You will also begin meeting regularly with your Ascend Team and start brainstorming your Ascend Project.

What's the Ascend Project? This is your "capstone" for each year you complete in Ascend and teaches you how to make an idea a reality. These projects are as varied as they come, but there are a few common threads: students choose their own projects, which a) must be challenging and b) must incorporate lessons learned throughout the year. Past student projects have included illustrating a children's book, achieving business sales goals, starting a business, running a marathon to raise money for a charity, and building a canoe and taking a five-day river trip. Your project should be as unique as you are and challenging enough to meet your ambition and personal goals.

In January, the spring semester will kick off with Basecamp. Basecamp is typically held in Florida or Alabama towards the end of January. This event is a life skills intensive that focuses on key personal and professional skills that most people are aware of, but few make the most of. At Basecamp, you will learn to strategically manage your time and tasks, form exceptional relationship skills, and challenge your existing idea of resiliency. Basecamp is also an orientation to the execution phase of your Ascend Project.

As we said before, Ascend is a project-based education program, which means that it is all about helping you translate what you are learning into practical, actionable steps that equip you for life. Your Ascend Project is one of the most powerful ways you will do that. In the spring semester you will bring your Ascend Project to life and put your plan into action through four steps:

- 01** Attend Basecamp for your project orientation
- 02** Submit your project proposal to your ATL
- 03** Receive final approval for your project and begin executing
- 04** Submit three project status updates to your ATL in February, March, and April

As the spring semester begins to wrap up and you come to the midway point of your final leadership class for the year, you will attend the third and final event of the Ascend year: Capstone. Capstone is the culmination of the Signature Leadership Courses that all first year students complete and is held in the Colorado mountains. Your Signature Leadership Course instructor, Dr. Jeff Myers, will attend live, present several lectures, run a live coaching and mentorship practicum, and engage with students over meals.

Capstone is all about engaging with the leadership principles and practices taught in the Signature Leadership Courses at a whole new level. As you dialogue, wrestle with, and apply the concepts you've learned through the course series, you become better equipped to take these ideas home and do something new with them.

At Capstone, you're reminded of the lesson that no leader ever "arrives," and you'll create a plan that allows you to apply the "asking questions" framework you'll learn in Navigate to your life and influence as a leader. Capstone is the most academically challenging event in the Ascend year – but it's also an event that students consistently remember as life-changing.

In May, you will complete your Ascend Project with three final steps:

- 01** Complete a peer review and make all final edits
- 02** Submit your final project report to your ATL
- 03** Receive a final review and notes from your ATL

At the end of May or beginning of June you will close out your Ascend year by completing any final assignments for your leadership courses and attending the final Ascend Webinar. For all students who successfully complete each aspect of the program, they will earn two high-level certificates in leadership and professional development. These certificates will set you apart from your traditionally educated peers and ahead in the job market. And if you continue on in Ascend? You will have the opportunity to earn an additional three certificates to highlight all the experience, training, skills, and education you have received through the Ascend program.

Each of the three years in Ascend builds on the previous in unique ways. Year One, Ascend Foundations, is described in this e-book. Year Two, Ascend Challenge, takes everything to the next level with three powerful life courses focused on cultural engagement, communications, and finances, leadership and internship opportunities, and additional event tracks. And Year Three, Ascend Launch, does just that - bringing your Ascend experience to a powerful launching point as you step into the workforce with three years of relevant experience under your belt, a powerful community at your back, and high level certificates to validate all that you have accomplished in Ascend.

In summary, the entire Ascend Program is designed to teach you what you need to know about life and leadership through our Signature courses and Navigate. The Expert Webinars help you see how successful leaders have applied what they have learned in their own lives. Your Ascend Team will give you a community of people who will hold you responsible for maximizing your time in Ascend. The live events will teach you how to use what you have learned and apply it in a community setting. And your Ascend Project is where you bring it all together and demonstrate your skill in the real world.

When you finish your first year of Ascend, here's what will have happened:

- You will have made lifelong friends that you have traveled with, worked beside, and experienced some intense and deep times with.
- You will have completed your Ascend Project and achieved a significant personal goal.
- You will be equipped and trained to be exceptionally good at the basics of life: relationships, work, learning, and Biblical rest.
- You will have earned the Signature Leadership Certificate. This is a credential that you can put on your resume and your LinkedIn profile. Employers who learn about this credential will receive solid information about your leadership skills and experience.
- You will have earned the Ascend Certificate. This credential will show potential employers and/or graduate programs your experiences and accomplishments in the Ascend program.
- You will have options for your life. You can choose to:
 - Stay in Ascend through Year Two and Year Three and continue building skills and experiences that will set you apart in the workforce.
 - Take your newly learned skills and experience and go straight to work, either for an employer or by starting your own business.

No matter what option you choose you will have access to the Unbound and Ascend network and community for life.

Ready to get started?



What is Project-Based Education?



Ascend is a project-based education program, which means that the core of what we do is focused on helping you to translate your academic and nonacademic studies into practical, actionable steps that equip you for life. We believe you're called to greater things than most people settle for, that there are often better ways to learn those things than merely sitting in a classroom, and that your education should functionally equip you for a life of impact.

Well, all that sounds great...but what does it actually mean? What is project-based education?

A significant (and increasing) number of career fields require less rigorous academic preparation and far more rigorous skills preparation. In fact, there are significant skills that most colleges or universities seldom touch - but that are inherently critical for success in today's professional world.

Project-based education avoids the theoretical as much as possible. It substitutes simulations with real-world experience and grounds academic knowledge in practical application. Throughout Ascend, you'll actively take the theories and ideas you're learning in your leadership classes and apply them in real life. You'll do real projects, learning to turn ideas into reality, connecting with real professionals, and working with teams of people on some seriously ambitious ideas. You'll work on real skills in the real world. And you'll learn the tools, principles, and skills necessary to be exceptional in your generation.

Ascend Foundations Project Requirements

Every student must complete a given project challenge during the course of their Ascend year. Here is an overview of the Foundations Project Requirements.

To earn your first Ascend certificate, you must complete a personal project in the spring semester. This project will allow you to a) turn an idea from concept into reality, b) practically apply what you are learning in Ascend, and c) complete something personal, relevant, and meaningful.

Your Ascend Foundations Project must meet the following requirements:

- Your personal project should be a project where you apply the skills and knowledge you are learning in your classes and from the SME webinars. The project should be both personally challenging and personally rewarding.
- Your project can be an individual project or a group project. Your group can be your teammates, other students in the Ascend program, or with others who are not involved with Unbound.

Your project should be:

- Big and ambitious enough to move you out of your comfort zone.
- Difficult enough to require 8+ weeks of effort/work/preparation. Use this as a rough scale to judge difficulty.

There are a wide variety of options for your project. For example, your project could be:

- A personal challenge or goal. A personal challenge could be creative, physical, mental, or something else. Example: Write a book, run a marathon, or build a boat.
- A service project. A service project could be anything from a fundraiser to disaster relief to meeting a need in your community/sphere of influence.
- A business or entrepreneurial project. A business project could be anything from tackling a big project where you work, to starting a small business, to making a big goal in a business you have already started.

There are three phases to your Ascend Project:

1. Ideation and Proposal
2. Execution and Updates
3. Review and Submission

Your proposal, updates, project completion, and evaluation will be submitted to your team leader by given deadlines during the semester. Ultimately your project will allow you to use what you are learning in the program, give you new experiences or skills, and be challenging, stretching, and personally rewarding.



The Signature Leadership Courses



Leadership is action, not position.

Donald H. McGannon

What is leadership?

For some, it evokes dusty board rooms where hours-long arguments take place, or bureaucratic ladders where one is pulled down so another can climb up. For others, it evokes a glimpse of ivory towers, far away and above the rest of us, where distant directives make our lives difficult without any understanding of real-world consequences.

But at the end of the day, this is not leadership that leaves a deep, positive impact on the world. True leadership, argues Dr. Jeff Myers of Summit Ministries, is influence - and if this is true, then every young adult is positioned to be a leader right where God has them.

Young men and women today are the same men and women who will lead our churches, governments, businesses, and families tomorrow. In recognition of this, Unbound and Dr. Jeff Myers have partnered together to offer three transformational courses to our students. Consistently rated by young adults as their most life-changing courses, the Signature Leadership Course series lays a strong foundation for discerning, Godly leadership in the life of a young adult. From building a deep personal leadership plan, to actively practicing and receiving mentorship and coaching, to engaging with powerful and timeless leadership principles at a new level, these leadership courses serve to support a new generation of Christian leaders — men and women who are prepared and equipped to lead in their spheres of influence.

Students who successfully complete all three courses earn the Signature Leadership Certification, a powerful certificate backed by Summit Ministries that they can feature on LinkedIn, their resume, or provide to potential employers.

Course Titles & Descriptions

Leadership Theory & Practice - This is the first of three leadership courses that prepare students for culture-shaping leadership. Leadership Theory and Practice seeks to:

- Give students a thorough understanding of the history of leadership
- Prepare students to analyze their own leadership gifts
- Move students from theory to practice in effective leadership with practical life-management skills

Leadership & Management Communication - This is the second of three leadership courses that prepare students for culture-changing leadership. Leadership and Management Communication seeks to:

- Sensitize students to the importance of effective communication in leadership
- Equip students with organizationally useful communication skills
- Acquaint students with best practices for communicating effectively in leadership situations

Leadership Learning & Execution - Leadership Learning and Execution explores wisdom literature from Scripture, academic literature on wisdom, best practices for effective mentoring and coaching, and how to skillfully execute strategic plans – all with the objective of preparing students to put their leadership training into practice. Leadership Learning and Execution seeks to:

- Train students in the skills of mentoring and coaching
- Clarify the relationships between individual learning, organizational learning, and skillful execution of strategic plans
- Practice effective mentoring and coaching – both working with a mentor and mentoring others

A young man in a light blue shirt and dark trousers is presenting a certificate to a young woman in a teal dress on a stage. The background is a red curtain. A large green graphic with the number '4' is overlaid on the image.

Ascend Certificates & Why They Matter



Why certificates?

With everything you're learning, studying, practicing, and doing in Ascend, you're also investing heavily in your personal and professional future. And we'd like you to get credit for that.

In fact, we'd love nothing more than for you to be able to share your accomplishments with your family, friends, future schools, or possible employers in a way that is straightforward and easy to understand.

With that in mind, we've built three years of Ascend Certificates - certificates that document and validate your unique accomplishments during your time in Ascend and present them in a powerful way. Students who successfully complete all three years of Ascend also receive the Unbound Certificate, the highest honor Unbound currently accords.

Ascend certificates are tied to a unique badging system with both online electronic and physical components. Want to add your certificate to LinkedIn or send it to a potential employer? Go right ahead. They'll be able to click on your badge and go straight to a site that verifies and describes all of your accomplishments during Ascend. Want to show off your physical certificate? You'll receive your certificates at the completion of each Ascend year.

What's even cooler is that these certificates stack. In other words, each year you're in Ascend is a year filled with new accomplishments, new projects, and new skills and experiences. Your certificates build on each other.

So keep learning, with the confidence that the experience you're gaining will make a difference in your life - and will be recognized.

Ascend Foundations Certificate Requirements

To earn the Ascend Foundations Certificate (Year One), the following requirements must be met:

- Successfully complete the Signature Leadership Course Certificate by achieving a passing grade in the following classes:
 - Leadership Theory and Practice
 - Leadership and Management Communication
 - Leadership Learning and Execution
- Attend the following events:
 - APEX
 - Basecamp
 - Capstone
- Attend at least 8 Expert Webinars
 - Live attendance is required, but you may listen to a recording for 2 of the 8 if necessary
- Attend all team meetings unless you have an excused absence from your team leader.
 - Consistent absences will result in loss of certificate
- Complete Ascend Foundations Project
 - Demonstrate integration of principles into life, and demonstrate proficiency in core skills, through application in a personal project.



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How to Enroll



So what does it look like to enroll in Ascend? In this comprehensive guide, you'll walk through the enrollment process and what happens afterwards as you approach your first semester.

Admissions

Ascend is a non-traditional education program and both the way we enroll students into the program and the way we run the program do not follow traditional practices. We do not require applications but we do require conversations to ensure that we understand the student's goals and that the student understands the program before they join. Typically we find that 1 in 10 students are looking for the kind of challenging, non-traditional environment of Ascend and the rest are not interested. So what is your first step? Book an admissions appointment with our team. The number one goal on this appointment is to determine whether the Ascend program is a good fit for you and you are a good fit for the Ascend program. You'll talk through any questions you might have about Ascend that weren't covered in this eBook and talk through your leadership and professional goals for the coming year. At the end of that call, your counselor will be able to tell you whether or not you would be a good fit for Ascend and determine what the best next steps are for you. If the next step is enrollment, our team will schedule an enrollment appointment for you to complete enrollment by submitting your deposit.

Ascend Team Assignment

One to two weeks prior to the start of the semester, you will be assigned to your Ascend Team. Your team is a significant aspect of your Ascend Experience, and we can't wait for you to plug in with your fellow students!

Each team is comprised of seven to ten students and is led by a carefully selected ATL. Your ATL has already successfully completed at least one to two years of Ascend and has received significant deep training in mentoring and coaching. These teams meet on a monthly basis to discuss what they've learned from expert-led webinars, encourage each other, and stay accountable for their goals. In addition, teams participate in a series of fun challenges throughout the course of the year and have the chance to complete group projects as well.

Because we believe deeply in the power of community and mentoring, your team will include both year one and year two students as often as possible. Instead of being on a team solely with students who are also new to Ascend, you'll have the benefit of coming alongside students who have already completed two rigorous certificates and are uniquely positioned to encourage and motivate you as you jump in.

Community

Your team is a pivotal aspect of Ascend, but it's not the only way to get plugged in! In fact, you've joined a student body with over ten thousand graduates and an active student body of over a thousand young adults. As you launch into the semester, you'll have the chance

to join or follow our social media platforms - including Facebook and the Unbound Forums as well as Youtube, Instagram, and Unbound's blog - as well as attend live online Empower Calls with other students.

APEX

A keystone event of Unbound, APEX is something our students look forward to all year long - and is a fantastic opportunity for you to connect live with your fellow classmates and Ascend Team Leader as you attend your Ascend Orientation. Marked by incredible speakers, deep conversations, inspiring friendships, and a whole lot of fun to boot, APEX is something you won't forget.

Launch

At this point, you're ready to jump into the semester with both feet - and Ascend, here you come! You've already met your classmates at APEX, and you're ready to connect on a deeper level as you keep each other accountable and growing forward. You're starting your first Signature Leadership Course, looking ahead to your first Ascend Webinar, and exploring various project ideas that are personal and meaningful to you.

The best part? This is only the beginning.

And we can't wait to see where your road takes you.



FAQs & The Unbound Guarantee



Why choose Ascend instead of just going to a community or state college?

It all depends on what you want out of this season of life.

And what you want out of life itself.

Ascend isn't for everyone. If you want a cheap and/or fast college degree, we're not it. If you want a typical post-high school college experience, we're not it. If you want hours of classroom time with a professor, we're not it. If you want an education that prioritizes academics over everything else, we're not it.

And that's okay. But here's who Ascend is for.

If you want a peer community that consistently challenges you to raise the bar and leap for it - one that absolutely refuses to settle for average - Ascend is for you.

If you want a program that prioritizes real-life, project based learning, and not just academics, Ascend is for you.

If you want to deeply study (and practice) how to be a leader who impacts those around you for the kingdom of God, Ascend is for you.

If you want flexibility in where you study and where you live while doing so, Ascend is for you.

If you want something more - if you recognize that you are called to a life of meaning, service, and leadership and are willing to pursue that vision - if you're willing to commit time, effort, and energy to the process of growth, and if you see the value of skills and principles that will equip you for a life of impact - if you're willing to be part of a team, knowing that you and your fellow students can help each other to go further and do more than you could on your own, Ascend is for you.

If you know that an extraordinary life lies past the edge of your comfort zone, and you're willing to set sail for that horizon -

Then Ascend is for you

Are my courses from Christian perspective?

Yes, the Signature Leadership Courses are presented from a strong Biblical worldview perspective. Taught by Dr. Jeff Myers of Summit Ministries, these lay a deep foundation for what it truly means to be a leader of integrity.

The Unbound Guarantee

Ascend Foundations Students

This guarantee is entered into by and between the student receiving it and the Unbound team. Before we go any further, here's a disclaimer: this document is not intended to be a complicated agreement full of confusing legalese that sneaks in additional terms and agreements between the lines. This is a clean, straightforward guarantee that if you, the student, fully participate in the Ascend program to the absolute best of your ability, Unbound will partner with you to provide the necessary resources, support, and leadership needed for you to successfully complete the program requirements towards the Ascend and Signature Leadership Certificates. This document is intended to outline how that will happen through the actions of the student and Unbound.

Ascend Foundations is the first year of Ascend. In year one, students receive an introduction in several key areas of practical, hands-on education through webinars, student challenges, non-accredited course content, and live events.

The Student

As a company and a staff team, Unbound is fully committed to the student's success in the Ascend program and views each Ascend student as a partner with Unbound for that success. For their part in that partnership, the student guarantees:

They will be on a team of 7-10 other students led by an Ascend team leader. They will meet with their team on a video call once a month and engage online via the Slack chat platform throughout the rest of the month.

They will attend monthly expert-led webinars where they will learn from and ask questions of a variety of people based on the paths they've chosen for their education, profession, and ministry. These webinars are designed to expose students to a wide variety of fields, ideas, and principles.

They will attend three live student events where they will learn about the key concepts, principles, and tools needed for successful leadership, professional, academic, and personal development. They will put knowledge into practice through challenges and tasks designed to give them real-world experience through hands-on application.

They will conceive, plan, and execute a student project based on their individual interests and passions. This project can be completed solo, in partnership with other team members, or in partnership with others outside of Unbound. This project can be as simple or as ambitious as the student desires, but it must demonstrate the student's ability to take an idea and turn it into reality.

They will work through course materials and assignments to successfully complete the three course Signature Leadership Course series.

Unbound

As a company and a staff team, Unbound is fully committed to the student's success in the Ascend program and views each Ascend student as a partner with Unbound towards that success. For their part in that partnership, Unbound guarantees:

They will provide hand-selected and highly trained team leaders who are equipped to coach and support students through their Ascend program experience through scheduled team meetings, as needed one-on-one conversations, and the provision of resources and connections where applicable.

They will host a varied list of field-experts on monthly webinars designed and intended to expose students to a wide variety of fields, ideas, and principles.

They will plan and host three live student events, provide all-inclusive registration and travel arrangements based on the student's individual situation (if you are flying, Unbound will book your tickets. If you are driving, Unbound will provide a travel voucher).

They will provide support, applicable resources, feedback, and any needed guidance for all student projects.

They will provide access to three online, non-accredited Christian leadership courses through the Signature Leadership Courses Series.

They will provide full access to the Unbound student community through the Unbound student Facebook group, online forums, video hangouts, live events, and opportunities for international missions. This access will remain open to the student during and after their enrollment in the Ascend program.

And finally, upon the successful completion of everything listed above for both the student and Unbound, Unbound will award the student with the Ascend certificate outlining the academic, professional, and individual accomplishments the student achieved as an Ascend student. Unbound will also award the student with the Signature Leadership certificate outlining the leadership practice, development, and experience the student gained as an Ascend student.

Unbound believes their students are called to greater things than most people settle for, that there are often better ways to learn those things than merely sitting in a classroom, and that education should equip you for a life of impact. Unbound's highest educational goal is to teach students how to effectively learn so that they can quickly and effectively master the complicated information they will need in life. The Ascend program is intended to carry out that goal through the actions of the student and Unbound outlined in this guarantee. If both parties successfully complete their part in this guarantee, the student will graduate their first year with Ascend — Ascend Foundations — with 9 completed real-world project unique to their interests and passions, the ability to ask the

right questions in the face of decisions, a solid foundation in spiritual and religious education taught from an unapologetically Christian worldview, and an increased ability to manage their time, tasks, and relationships with excellence, endurance, and resiliency.

Ready to get started?

Visit beunbound.us/ascend-experience-schedule to book your admissions appointment!