

## **PROCEDURE FOR THE ISSUE OF CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY TO A MINISTER OF ANOTHER CHURCH AND ENTRY OF THAT MINISTER ONTO THE ROLL OF MINISTERS OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

The General Assembly in 1991 agreed to the issue of Certificates of Eligibility to ministers of other Churches so that they might be introduced to a pastorate in the URC and if called enter the list of Ministers of the URC. The issue of such certificates is the responsibility of the Accreditations Committee of the Ministries Committee.

The procedure for such a course of action shall be:

From time to time the Ministries Committee will decide on the number of certificates to be issued in any given year or period, as part of the responsibility to monitor minister numbers.

1. Initial enquiries from ministers of other churches shall be directed to the Secretary for Ministries who will send the Minister an application form.
2. On receipt of the completed form the Secretary for Ministries will;
  - a) ascertain the applicant is a minister in good standing with their own Church;
  - b) obtain other references;
  - c) confirm that the applicant's own Church is a member of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, the Council for World Mission or the World Communion of Reformed Churches;
  - d) confirm that previous training was equivalent to that required of Ministers of Word and Sacraments in the United Reformed Church;
  - e) confirm that the applicant understands the financial provision given by the URC.
  - f) ensure that non-European Economic Area applicants understand that they would need to qualify for a visa under the points based system, and that a specific level of English language skills would be required. [Currently equivalent to the Council of Europe level B2.]

*In the case of d and e above any concerns will not necessarily preclude the application being considered however the shortlisting group will need to be aware of any complicating factors in assessing the application.*

3. In considering applications the following criteria will be considered:
  - Experience in local pastorate ministry (minimum 5 years) in a leadership role
  - Under the age of 57 (the granting of a certificate is intentionally long-term – 10 years)
  - Intercultural competence
  - Understanding/experience of working in multi-church pastorates
  - Readiness and willingness to serve in any part of the UK

4. If, by the deadline, the number of applicants meeting the above criteria exceeds the number of certificates available by more than twice the quota, a Certificates of Eligibility short-listing group will meet to short-list up to quota x2. The short-listing group consists of the three members of the Accreditations Committee, and the Secretary for Ministries.
5. The short-listed applicants will be interviewed in person for those based in the UK and by Lifesize or Zoom or similar for those based overseas.
6. The Accreditation Sub-Committee may then issue a Certificate of Eligibility.
7. Certificates of Eligibility are valid for three years. During that time, the Synod Moderators are able to introduce the name of the holder of the certificate to vacant pastorates;  
N. B. the normal procedure for filling a vacancy and issuing a call applies. Further paperwork will need to be completed at this point.
8. Ministers who are issued with a Certificate of Eligibility and receive and accept a call to a pastorate or post, will serve a probationary period of one year from induction. During this probationary period, s/he will be remunerated under the provisions of the Plan for Partnership. On successful completion of this probationary period the minister's name will be added to the roll of ministers of the United Reformed Church. In other words, he or she becomes one of our ministers by transfer.
9. If an applicant does not have the right of abode and employment within the United Kingdom and is called to a church please note that it will be **the applicant's responsibility** to ensure that permission to live and work in the United Kingdom is obtained from the Home Office, through a United Kingdom Consulate, although support with your application will be given to you.
10. If after three years no call has been issued the certificate will lapse.

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