

## **NSM Model 4: Discerning a call and equipping for service**

### **1. Introduction**

Meeting in November 2018, Mission Council passed the following resolutions:

1. Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, authorises a model 4 non-stipendiary ministry which will provide for locally ordained ministers, as outlined in paper H2, November 2018.
2. Mission Council directs the ministries committee to ensure that plans for this model of ministry are appropriately complementary to other ministries of the church – including stipendiary ministry, current models of non-stipendiary ministry, local leadership (recognising that this is currently directed by synods) and the eldership, including the specific role of authorised elders.
3. Mission Council rules that the training for this model of ministry need not be bound by the standard set out in resolution 37 of General Assembly 1997 and that further training might be required before an NSM model 4 could transfer to other models of non-stipendiary or to stipendiary ministry.
4. Mission Council instructs the ministries and education and learning committees to implement model four non-stipendiary ministry in consultation with the assessment board and the resource centres for learning.

### **2. Candidating and Assessment**

2.1 The supporting text for the November 2018 Mission Council resolutions specified that the call to ministry for model 4 NSM should be determined in the same way as other calls to ministry of word and sacraments through both the synod candidating process and the Assembly's assessment conference. Subsequent discussion involving representatives of the ministries committee, education and learning committee and synod moderators identified one additional piece of paperwork. This is a role description and person specification for the intended NSM model 4 role and the candidate's reflection on these.

2.2 Fitting this into the established candidating process, as agreed at General Assembly 2016, would produce the following steps:

- a. The candidate meets with the synod moderator to discern a sense of call. This meeting shall also explore whether the candidate might serve in their own church or is open to serve in a church other than their own.
- b. If all pre-assessment criteria are met the synod candidating secretary is informed and an application form is supplied to the candidate.
- c. Synod candidating secretary receives the application and personal references and provisionally books a space for the candidate at an assessment conference.

- d. Arrangements made for the candidate to conduct an assessed service and the candidate supplies reflective accounts on a Church Meeting and a synod meeting. (Note that some synods also require a candidate to shadow a minister or undertake a short placement.)
- e. Church Meeting interview and decision. If there is a decision to recommend the Church Secretary sends a report to the candidating secretary.
- f. Local interview on behalf of the synod (where held).
- g. Synod interview and decisions. If there is a decision to recommend the synod candidating secretary notifies the ministries office and forwards the candidate's papers, including a synod report.
- h. A role description and person specification will be finalized by the relevant synod committee in agreement with the synod moderator (see below at 2.4 and 2.5). This, along with the candidate's reflection on how they meet the description and specification is included in the papers sent to the ministries office.
- i. Assessment conference which includes interviews with assessors and a panel representing the education and learning board. Prior to the conference the candidate will be required to complete an online assessment, the outcome of which is discussed with a personal development officer.
- j. After the conference members of the assessment board will meet the candidate in the relevant synod on a previously agreed date.
- k. If the decision is yes, the candidate is offered a training place subject to completion of the required medical and psychological screenings and a satisfactory criminal record check. The outline pattern for training will have been determined by the education and learning panel at the assessment conference and will take note that preparation for this model of ministry is not bound by resolution 37 of the 1997 General Assembly. See section 3 below for further information on Education for Ministry Phase 1 for NSM Model 4.

2.3 It is noted that synods may vary slightly in the detail of how certain stages are undertaken (e.g. who checks that the preassessment criteria are met, at what point reflective accounts are obtained) but the process should include the steps given above.

2.4 The production of a job description and person specification may begin earlier in the process and may grow out of discussions that take place quite early on. However, it becomes a formal tool in the discernment process at the assessment conference stage. It is important that the identifying of the leadership role needed in the local church is addressed robustly by the appropriate synod body and not confused with the testing of a call to that identified ministry.

2.5 If the candidate is successful and it is agreed they should go to Assessment Conference a role description and person specification should be drawn up by the Synod Pastoral

Committee (or equivalent) in agreement with the moderator and the local church which may include some or all of the following:

#### Role Description

- To provide visible leadership in the church by worshipping at the church regularly.
- To lead worship on a regular basis (*specify the intended frequency, e.g. the number of services per month*)
- To give leadership to the church community in seeking to plan and develop the mission strategy of the church.
- To assist the Elders in planning for the nurture of church members.
- To teach, or to help provide teaching for, those seeking baptism, confirmation or membership.
- In association with the Elders, to be responsible for pastoral care of members, and to be prepared to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice.
- To chair Elders' and Church Meetings
- To give guidance to the Elders and Church Meetings on denominational matters.
- To represent the church at meetings of Synod Together and the Synod Area.
- To give leadership to the church in ecumenical matters, including representing the church on the local Churches Together.

#### Person Specification

- Education/Qualifications/Training
- Skills and abilities
- Knowledge
- Other requirements

2.6 The above process is particularly intended for candidates for Model 4 non-stipendiary Ministry of Word and Sacraments, hence there is no reference to the variations in the process that apply to candidates for Church Related Community Work.

### **3. Principles for equipping people for Model 4 NSM**

3.1 Mission Council resolved that the training for this model of ministry need not be bound by the standard set out in resolution 37 of General Assembly 1997. Therefore a Diploma of Higher Education in Theology is not required before an individual can be ordained and inducted to non-stipendiary service in Model 4. The Education for Ministry Phase 1 (EM1) programme for someone accepted for NSM Model 4 will be tailored by and to local circumstances.

3.2 The Education and Learning Board at the Assembly Assessment Conference will stipulate which Resource Centre for Learning (RCL) will be responsible for the individual's EM1 programme, if they are accepted for training by the Assessment Board. The designated

RCL will work with the student and their synod to outline a programme in the weeks after the Assessment Conference, and will seek agreement from the Education and Learning Board before EM1 commences.

3.3 EM1 for NSM model 4 may commence once the necessary post-assessment processes have been completed (see 2.2k above). EM1 for NSM model 4 does not have to start and end in line with the academic year. Start dates will be determined by the RCL, in consultation with the Education & Learning Board.

3.4 Ministerial formation for NSM model 4 is locally embedded, and a student will not normally need to stand down from all their existing responsibilities in their sending church, although (depending upon their experience) the RCL and synod may ask that the student vary their responsibilities and/or gain some wider experience locally.

3.5 A student pursuing EM1 for NSM model 4 would take at least one-year full time or two years part time to undertake the agreed programme for their learning and experience.

3.6 The RCL will 'sign off' the student when they have completed their EM1 programme satisfactorily by issuing a Leaving Certificate in the normal way and having kept the Assembly Assessment Board informed of the student's progress. This will be sufficient for General Assembly and Synod purposes. The subsequent ordination certificate will specify that induction is to NSM model 4.

#### **4. Requirements within EM1 for NSM model 4**

4.1 There are several important facets of ministerial development that are listed as particular subjects below (see section 6). It should *always* be the case that the evidence of attainment of standards in these subjects includes sufficient attention to certain essential aspects that are interwoven in all that is asked of ministerial students. These essential aspects are:

- Children, youth and intergenerational work
- Ministering contextually
- Intercultural awareness
- Understanding of discipleship in the contemporary world
- Inclusivity

4.2 Individuals accepted by the Assessment Board to train for NSM model 4 are subject to some of the same requirements of other EM1 students, given that they are anticipating being ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacraments in the United Reformed Church, albeit in a specified local setting. These requirements are:

- a. Completion of the "Introduction to the United Reformed Church" course, tutored by synods, and including attendance at the "Ethos and History" weekend held annually for new EM1 students at Westminster College in Cambridge. Some candidates for NSM4 may have completed all or part of this course previously. They will need to

show that they have fulfilled all the assignments, and will attend the next available Ethos & History weekend.

- b. Safeguarding awareness:
  - i. Training in safeguarding vulnerable adults and children at levels specified by their Synod and RCL;
  - ii. Evidence of participation in a course on Safe Boundaries in Pastoral Practice course which meets the standards of the URC;
  - iii. A formal conversation with their synod safeguarding officer to confirm their understanding of URC expectations on safeguarding and boundaries.

4.3 Given the nature of NSM model 4, the following requirements will also be included in their EM1:

- a. Attendance at synod or RCL-led courses on pastoral support of the dying and grieving unless substantial experience already gained in these areas.
- c. Completion of one year (full-time) or two years (part-time) 'placement', at least five hours per week, which may be in their sending church and/or other context agreed by the RCL and synod.
- d. Work with an assigned RCL Tutor to complete portfolio of all evidence and to reflect upon their practice in at least one one-hour tutorial each half term during the period of EM1.

4.4 The reporting requirements for students pursuing EM1 for NSM model 4 will be similar to those of other EM1 students, using a standard reporting format based on the marks of Ministry of Word and Sacraments accepted by Mission Council in May 2019 and taking into account the role description and person specification agreed during the candidating process.

## **5 Core Subjects in EM1 for NSM model 4**

5.4 Broad recommendations on EM1 for NSM4 will be made by the Education and Learning Board at the Assembly Assessment Conference. The details will be worked out by the designated RCL in consultation with the synod, taking into account the appropriate prior learning and experience of the student such as completion of TLS courses, Assembly-Accreditation as a Lay Preacher, service as a Synod-recognised local church leader, previous and current employment or voluntary work, etc.

5.5 Alongside any formal assessment which may be attached to a particular course, the student will be expected to maintain a Learning Journal to show evidence of their understanding and abilities in each subject, including in relation to the essential aspects listed above in section 4.1.

5.6 The RCL may ask for any work that doesn't reach an appropriate standard to be repeated. This also applies to practical tasks such as chairing meetings.

5.7 Any person undertaking a supervisory or reflector role with the student must be agreed by the RCL and the synod.

5.8 Any fees associated with courses which are agreed to be necessary by the RCL and synod will be re-imbursed by the normal Education & Learning committee systems for EM1. NSM model 4 students will also be reimbursed for eligible expenses.

5.9 What follows is a 'menu' from which an agreed programme will be developed, depending on the prior experience, strengths, aptitude and needs of the individual student and the role which the synod has identified for them to fulfil.

<b>Subject competence</b>	<b>Attainment evidenced by completion of one or more of these examples or their equivalents</b>
<b>Biblical studies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant Stepwise stream(s)</li> <li>• Level 4<sup>1</sup> Biblical Studies + piece RCL-marked work</li> <li>• Level 5 Biblical module + piece RCL-marked work</li> <li>• Portfolio of written work on required subjects (could include studies led)</li> <li>• Observed leading of two bible studies</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Growing Leaders</i> course or Stepwise <i>Faith-Fuelled Leadership</i> stream</li> <li>• Portfolio of evidence (from church, volunteering or workplace)</li> <li>• Participation in course on Conflict Transformation</li> <li>• Participation in course on Change Management</li> <li>• Observe/reflect upon at least two church meetings and two elders' meeting chaired by different experienced ministers/elders.</li> <li>• Chair an 'observed' church meeting and an 'observed' elders' meeting with an appropriately-experienced person present who reflects back</li> </ul>
<b>Mission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant Stepwise stream(s)</li> <li>• Level 4 introduction to Mission + piece of RCL-marked work</li> <li>• Level 4 or 5, mission in a multi-faith context + piece of RCL-marked work</li> <li>• Portfolio of experiences/work already undertaken in churches/community with sufficient evidence of reflection upon these</li> <li>• Completion of <i>Mission-Shaped Ministry</i></li> </ul>
<b>Pastoral Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant Stepwise stream(s)</li> <li>• Portfolio of reflections upon role(s) already undertaken in the church</li> <li>• Portfolio based on an agreed-length placement in a local church</li> <li>• Level 4 introduction to pastoral care + piece RCL-marked work</li> <li>• Read an agreed text on Christian ethics and reflect upon it with RCL tutor and in Learning Journal</li> </ul>

<b>Preaching and worship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant Stepwise stream(s)</li> <li>• Level 4 course on liturgy and worship + piece RCL-marked work</li> <li>• Level 5 course on preaching + piece of work for RCL marking</li> <li>• Portfolio of evidence (TLS/other denomination/‘informal’ experience)</li> <li>• ‘Worship Basics’ Course</li> <li>• Understanding/presiding at Sacraments – Synod/RCL courses</li> </ul>
<b>Rites of passage</b>  <b>Note requirement D3 above</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RCL-led or synod-led courses on funerals, weddings</li> <li>• Shadowing experienced minister/other ‘president’ (not necessarily the same person for each) for the whole of (a) crem only funeral, (b) church + crem funeral, (c) church wedding. Written reflection on each experience</li> <li>• Visit to a crematorium and a funeral director</li> </ul>
<b>Theological themes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portfolio of reflections on <i>The Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church</i></li> <li>• Reflections on the above with an RCL tutor and in Learning Journal</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> These levels are the England and Wales system. Level 4 indicates year one of a degree programme, level 5 year 2. In Scotland there is a different set of numbering and Level 4 in this document = SQA 7 and Level 5 = SQA 8.

Ministries Committee  
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