

THE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE FOR MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENTS AND CHURCH RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS



THE ENQUIRY STAGE

Meeting with Minister or Interim Moderator

Informal and exploratory

Meeting with Moderator/or Moderator's deputy

Informal and informative. However the Moderator has a responsibility to check that the potential candidate fulfils the basic age, membership and educational criteria agreed by General Assembly. If a candidate does not meet any or all of the criteria the Moderator should discuss what steps could be taken in order for the candidate to satisfy the criteria or what other forms of service the candidate might be encouraged to offer to the Church.

Enquirers Conferences/Vocations Fair

At any point during this stage of the process the potential candidate should be encouraged to attend an Enquirers Conference/Vocations Fair.

THE FORMAL ASSESSMENT STAGE

The formal assessment process will proceed as follows: Church Meeting decision, Synod decision, the Assessment Board which makes the final decisions about forwarding a candidate for training and the method of training taken after Assessment Conference interviews.

Church Meeting Interview

Produces a decision of a Council of the Church. ***If the decision is not to recommend the candidate will not proceed to the next stage.***

Synod Interviews

Produce a decision of a Council of the Church. ***If the decision is not to recommend the candidate will not proceed to the next stage.***

Therefore any candidate who goes on to the Assessment Conference goes sponsored by the Synod.

The new structures of each Synod will doubtless determine how the Synod interviews are to be conducted. However the Synods will now need to take over the responsibilities which once lay with District Councils even though these may be devolved to a more local area grouping of churches.

This means that the Synods will need to oversee arrangements for an assessed service and any appropriate placement work or 'shadowing' for candidates for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments. Visits to established CRCW posts and workers will need to be arranged for candidates for Church Related Community Work.

The Synod also will need to collect local knowledge and opinion of the candidate, which is set in a wider context than that of the local church alone, to help in reaching an informed decision. This may be done by arranging for an interview in a local grouping of churches which will then send a recommendation to the Synod prior to the Synod interview itself.

The Synod interview should also identify whether there are determining factors in each candidate's situation, personal or otherwise, which the interviewers would want the Education and Learning Board to take into account in selecting the resource centre and training programme. This information should be sent to the Education and Learning Board via the Ministries office along with the report and decision on the candidate for the Assessment Board.

After the Synod interview ensure that the candidates who have not been accepted for training receive appropriate support. This may include an element of mentoring if the candidate has been advised to reapply after completing some further, wider exploration of the United Reformed Church

Assessment Board Conference

At the end of this Conference two decisions will have been made on behalf of the United Reformed Church, recognising that the Assessment Board has a mandate to do its work from General Assembly.

The first decision taken by the Assessment Board will be whether the candidate may or may not go forward for training.

If there is a positive recommendation it will be accompanied by a second decision taken by the Education and Learning Board as to the Resource Centre through which the candidate (now a student) will be trained. The Education and Learning Board will also give an indication of the nature of that training.

The Education and Learning Board interviews the candidate during the weekend of the Assessment Conference, but plays no part in the decisions reached by the Assessment Board.

No candidate will be informed immediately of the decisions of the Assessment and Training Boards. Arrangements need to be made with the Secretary for Ministries for a meeting between representatives of the Synod Ministries Committee and the Assessment Board to discuss any implications of the decision reached regarding the candidate. This will take place within two weeks after the Assessment Conference and the candidate will

be informed of the decision as soon as possible after that meeting, preferably on the same day.

An offer of training is subject to satisfactory completion of the necessary medical and psychological screening agreed by Mission Council in May 2011.

Any appeal against the Assessment Board decision will be made by the candidate and on the basis that the approved procedure has not been followed.

Candidates are free to reapply after two years.

AFTER CANDIDATING

During training

The Synods will be asked to continue to exercise the pastoral care of the candidates as is presently the case. This should not present a conflict since no candidate will have been sent to the Assessment Conference who does not have the prior support of the Synod. It will be for the Synod to decide whether the pastoral care of any particular student should remain with the original sponsoring Synod or be transferred to the Synod within which the student receives training. To a large extent this will depend on whether a student and his/her family relocate to be near the Resource Centre for Learning.

Synods will also continue to attend the annual progress meetings with the training institution. However copies of these reports should be sent to the Assembly Ministries/Education and Learning Committees which have responsibilities on behalf of the whole Church. This will enable the committees to evaluate, and learn from, the decisions that have been taken and raise their awareness of any concerns which may emerge.

The readiness for ordination should also involve all who have been involved in the assessment and training process, i.e. the Synod, the Resource Centre for Learning, the Ministries and Education and Learning Committees.

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