

Paper R3

Section O: New Appendix C Assembly Mandated Matters

Ministries Committee and Complaints and Disciplinary Advisory Group

Basic information

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Action required	Adoption of new Appendix C in Section O of the URC Manual.
Draft resolution(s)	Assembly Executive adopts the new Appendix C in the Ministerial Discipline Process as outlined below. (currently there is no Appendix C).

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To provide a streamlined process in dealing with ministers who refuse to engage in Assembly Mandated Matters.
Main points	<p>From time-to-time Assembly requires ministers, as office holders, to undertake mandated activities to ensure fitness to hold office. Whilst most ministers engage well and fruitfully with these mandated activities, the church's discipline processes are used to ensure a clear, open, and fair way to deal with those who decline to satisfactorily follow the mandates of Assembly.</p> <p>The process outlined below in a suggested new Appendix C sets out the steps to be taken if a minister refuses to comply with mandatory training.</p> <p>The term minister applies to ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers.</p>
Previous relevant documents	
Consultation has taken place with...	Synod Moderators Ministries Committee CDAG.

Summary of impact

Financial	This process will save money, as it will be faster.
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External (eg ecumenical)	
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New Appendix C Assembly Mandated Matters

1. First stages

- 1.1 Synods will, usually through their Moderators, make ministers aware of what is required. Ministers who are in any sort of difficulty meeting these requirements (eg illness of self or spouse, sabbatical, or extended leave) will inform their Moderator of these circumstances and discuss suitable ways to meet the Assembly requirements.
- 1.2 Ministers who undertake Assembly roles are still under the discipline of their Synods and it is for Synods to ensure that these ministers have fulfilled any Assembly mandated activities.
- 1.3 Where ministers have not engaged, or not engaged fruitfully, in Assembly mandated activities despite information and reminders given by their Synods, the Secretary for Ministries (or their duly appointed deputy) will write to the ministers concerned reminding them of their obligations.

2. Moderator's Recorded Warning

- 2.1 Where a minister has not met these requirements in a timely manner a Moderator's Recorded Warning (Appendix D), issued in line with guidelines from the Ministries Committee, will be the first stage in the process. This recorded warning will include a reasonable deadline for the Assembly mandated activity to be completed.

3. Referral to the Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline

- 3.1 Where a minister has not fulfilled the Assembly mandated activity by the deadline specified in the Moderator's Recorded Warning the Secretary for Ministries will refer the matter to the Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline (ASPD). The referral will outline the various attempts made to encourage the minister to undertake the Assembly mandated activity and this referral will be copied to the minister with a deadline for the minister to respond to the Secretary of Ministries and the ASPD with any comments or mitigation.
- 3.2 A special ASPD will be set up, convened by the Assembly Representative for Discipline or their duly appointed deputy, to deal with all such cases.
- 3.3 The ASPD will consider the information from the Secretary of Ministries, any response from the minister, and safeguarding advice, and decide whether to issue an Agreed Caution (giving further time for the Assembly mandated activity to be completed) or refer the matter to the Assembly Commission for Discipline. If the ASPD refer the matter to the Assembly Commission for Discipline, it shall also consider whether to suspend the minister referring to Appendix J.

4. Referral to the Assembly Commission for Discipline

4.1 If the matter is referred to the Assembly Commission for Discipline (ACD), the Commission Panel will be set up and proceed in the normal way, save that if several ministers are referred at the same time to the ACD it is preferable that the same Commission hear all the cases.

4.2 Prehearing submissions in writing will include:

4.2.1 The Secretary of Ministries' case against the Minister

4.2.2 The Minister's response which might contain rebuttal or mitigation

4.2.3 Advice from a Safeguarding officer.

4.3 At the hearing the case against the Minister shall be presented by the Secretary for Ministries. The Minister may be assisted by a colleague, legal counsel or a Trade Union Representative.

4.4 The Assembly Commission for Discipline will have the usual sanctions outlined in Appendix S at its disposal if matters are proved.

5. Appeals

Appeals proceed in the normal way, save that the Secretary of Ministries, rather than the Investigation team, will either be the appellant or respondent as the case may be.