

## Accreditation Sub-Committee Certificates for Limited Service

General Assembly authorises the Ministries Committee, through the Accreditation Sub-Committee, to grant Certificates for Limited Service to ministers of other churches in order that they might serve local pastorates and posts in the United Reformed Church and receive a stipend from the Maintenance of the Ministry fund.

Before granting a Certificate for Limited Service the Accreditation Committee must be satisfied that the minister:

- is from a member Church of the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, or a church overseas which is a member church of the Council for World Mission, the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council or the World Communion of Reformed Churches;
- will subscribe to the Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church;
- is in good standing with their own denomination;
- has the appropriate training and experience or gifts to enable them to serve the United Reformed Church.

Such Certificates shall relate to a particular appointment and normally be valid for a limited period not exceeding 3 years.

A Certificate for Limited Service will be endorsed with the name of the pastorate or post to which an appointment has been made as soon as it is known. It is valid for no other local church. It also bears the date when the Certificate ceases to be valid.

From 2021, and for a period of three years, in order to assist with deployment, Ministries Committee agreed that posts scoped at 50% and under would not be counted against a Synod's target number of full-time stipendiary equivalents. In granting such certificates, those Synods who can afford the cost of the ministry have been encouraged, for the 3 years, to pay into the MOM Fund.

In 2022 Ministries Committee agreed to extend this to full-time Certificates for Limited Service provided that the Synod pays the equivalent of the cost of ministry (£40,690) to the MOM fund. It shall be for the Synod to decide whether it is Synod itself or the local pastorate who pays the cost of ministry. However, the pastorate shall need to also pay their MOM contribution. It is possible to apply for a full-time Certificate of Limited Service without this provision being met, but such a post then counts against deployment. (These provisions also relate to any Certificates of Limited Service that exceed 50% but are not full-time.

1. There are ministers of other churches who serve the United Reformed Church in addition to those who transfer onto the roll of ministers by way of Certificates of Eligibility.
2. Some serve in local ecumenical partnerships and remain with and are funded by their own church that takes full responsibility for their oversight. No action is required by the United Reformed Church in relation to such ministers' status or support.
3. Others are willing to serve the United Reformed Church but for various reasons do not wish to transfer to our Roll of Ministers. These are some of the circumstances when this might arise;
  - a) **Where a minister of another denomination is near retirement age and is willing to serve in a short-term appointment of not more than 12 months.**
    - i) If the minister is granted a Certificate for Limited Service they may receive a call, and after induction receive a stipend from the Maintenance of Ministry Fund. They will on the appointment of the Synod be a member of the Synod and their name will be added to the List of Ministers of other Churches serving the United Reformed Church. Upon completion of the period of service, or earlier resignation from it, their name will be removed from the list.
  - b) **Where there is a need for interim ministry in a local United Reformed Church and the local church with Synod concurrence wish to call a minister from another denomination for a period of not more than 3 years.** In such circumstances a request for a Certificate for Limited Service will be made by the minister and supported by the Synod at the request of the local church. This follows the procedure already in place.
  - c) **Where a minister of another denomination is in pastoral charge within their own denomination, or is in an ecumenical appointment, or is seconded by their denomination to a United Reformed Church sponsored appointment, and is willing to extend their ministry to give pastoral oversight to a local United Reformed Church.**
    - i) The Accreditations Sub-Committee will need to establish that the applicant's denomination is willing to allow them to extend their ministry beyond that work in which they are already engaged, and is prepared to hold them under its own disciplinary procedures for that part of their work which is carried out in the United Reformed Church.
    - ii) Thereafter, provided that the minister receives a valid call, they may be inducted, and their name added to the List of Ministers of other Churches serving the United Reformed Church. Upon completion of the period of service or earlier retirement from it, his/her name will be removed from the List.

- iii) If the original appointment with the parent denomination, or other body, comes to an end, the minister's service in the local United Reformed Church also terminates. If it is desired that this service should continue, an application for a Certificate of Eligibility should be made, as appropriate to the new situation.
  - d) **Where a minister of another denomination is employed outside the structures of their own denomination, and is willing to give oversight to a local United Reformed Church on a non-stipendiary basis.** In this case, a minister should apply for a Certificate of Eligibility in the usual way. If it were necessary (and not merely desired on the applicant's part) for the original denominational link to be maintained, then the minister should apply as for 3c above.
4. In seeking a Certificate of Limited Service a Synod needs to provide evidence that the local church/pastorate wishes this to happen and the relevant Synod Committee has agreed. A minute of the appropriate meeting should be sent to the Secretary for Ministries along with a letter of request. The Secretary for Ministries will take the request to the request to the Accreditation Sub-Committee.
  5. In relation to the circumstances detailed above, it is necessary for the Accreditation sub-Committee to have granted a Certificate of Limited Service before any formal agreement concerning ministry is entered into by the local church.
  6. The affirmations set out in Schedule C of the Basis of Union will be made by those to be inducted.
  7. Ministers on Certificates for Limited Service fall under the discipline of the denomination in which they were ordained. However, where there are concerns about a minister's behaviour in the course of serving the URC and the sending denomination does not have appropriate safeguarding or disciplinary processes in place to deal with the issues, the URC reserves the right to use their own processes to investigate a concern. This may include the suspension of the Certificate for Limited Service by the Accreditation Sub-Committee whilst any investigation is being undertaken. Stipend will continue to be paid during the suspension. In some cases the decision may be to withdraw the Certificate.
  8. In no case shall the inclusion of a person's name in the List of Ministers of other Churches serving in the United Reformed Church confer a right to receive a call from any local United Reformed Church save that for which the Certificate of Limited Service was granted.
  9. If the minister wishes to extend their service in the United Reformed Church they will need to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility (if available) and transfer onto the roll of Ministers of the United Reformed Church.