

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 Sub-Committee of the Ministries Committee. Ministers may refer to Ministers of Words and Sacraments or Church Related Community Workers.

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 and accompanying documents as soon as the application process is open.
2. On receipt of the completed form the Secretary for Ministries will;
 - a) confirm that the applicant's own denomination is a member of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, the Council for World Mission or the World Communion of Reformed Churches;
 - b) confirm that previous training was equivalent to that required of Ministers of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Workers in the United Reformed Church;
 - c) confirm that the applicant understands the financial provision given by the URC;
 - d) ensure 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. This currently equivalent to the Council of Europe level B2 or IELTS 6.5.

In the case of c and d 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
 - For CRCW ministry – experience in community work (minimum) 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/settings
 - 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 Assessment Board including a Synod Moderator on behalf of the Accreditations Sub-Committee, as well as the Secretary for Ministries.
5. After shortlisting successful candidates will be invited to an interview conducted on Zoom.
6. Successful candidates will progress to Stage 2. The Secretary for Ministries will take up references and request a letter of Good Standing from the applicant's denomination.
7. The second interview will be conducted in person at a 48 hour conference at a venue in the UK. Clear instructions on how to apply for a visa will be given to you along with a letter of invitation to the conference.
8. The programme for the Conference will include:
 - a) Individual interviews with the Assessors;
 - b) An interview with Synod Moderators;
 - c) A presentation by the candidate;
 - d) Individual and Group work scenarios;
 - e) A financial assessment;
 - f) A short reflection on the ethos and history of the URC.

This list is not exhaustive.

9. The Ministries Office will finance the cost of the conference (accommodation and meals) for candidates but travel will be at the at the minister's expense. If a minister should

have difficulty with the costs of flights, they should speak with the Secretary for Ministries and an arrangement may be made. Other costs whilst within the UK will be at the minister's own expense.

10. The Accreditation Sub-Committee may then issue a Certificate of Eligibility.
11. Certificates of Eligibility are valid for three years during which time the Synod Moderators will introduce the name of the holder of the certificate to vacant pastorates. The normal procedure for filling a vacancy and issuing a call applies [see Practical Steps for Ministers with a Certificate of Eligibility]. Further paperwork will need to be completed at this point.
12. Ministers who are issued with a Certificate of Eligibility and receive and accept a call to a pastorate or post with concurrence given by the Synod, will serve a probationary period of one year from induction. During this probationary period, they 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, they become a Minister of the United Reformed Church by transfer and under its discipline. The minister should resign from the Roll of their previous denomination.
13. If an applicant does not have the Right to Work within the United Kingdom and is called to a pastorate/post 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 by the Ministries Office.
14. If any information offered on the application form, or in any of the stage of the interviews during the process is found to be incorrect or incomplete, or if the DBS/PVG or International Police Check is returned with a blemish, the Accreditations Sub-Committee retains the right to withdraw the certificate.
15. If after three years no call has been issued the certificate will lapse.

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