

# Paper A7

## Terms of Reference for the Education and Learning Committee

### Business Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Pippa Hodgson, Convenor <b>pippahodgson147@gmail.com</b> Jenny Mills, Secretary for Education and Learning <b>jenny.mills@urc.org.uk</b>
<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Resolution 4</b> <b>General Assembly adopts the revised terms of reference for the Education and Learning Committee as contained in Paper D2 of General Assembly 2024.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Terms of Reference for the Education and Learning Committee.
<b>Main points</b>	Revised Terms of Reference Appendices with background information.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	2005 Principles endorsed by General Assembly 2006 Resolutions from General Assembly 2021 Mission Council Member Role Descriptor.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	The Education and Learning Committee The Discipleship Team.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	N/A
<b>External (eg ecumenical)</b>	None.

## Education and Learning Committee Terms of Reference

<b>Committee</b>	Education and Learning Committee.
<b>Convenor</b>	Appointed by General Assembly.
<b>Secretary</b>	Secretary for Education and Learning.
<b>Ex-officio Members</b>	General Assembly Moderator General Secretary Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship).
<b>General Assembly Nominated Members</b>	Three members with collective experience across the range of Education and Learning.
<b>Length of term</b>	Four years.
<b>Representative members</b>	A Synod Moderator An RCL Principal A representative of the TDO+ Network A representative of the CYDO Network An EM1 Student Representative (one year).
<b>In attendance</b>	RCL Principals (other Colleges) Secretary for Ministries Equalities Committee Representative Ecumenical Representative.
<b>Minute Secretary</b>	PA to Staff Secretary.
<b>Meeting frequency</b>	Four to five meetings per year, one in person over 24 hours (c 20 hours).
<b>Subgroups / sub-committees as of 2024</b>	Continuing Studies Fund (x1 / year) Student Finance Panel (x1 / year).
<b>Quoracy</b>	Six, at least two of whom are the GA appt members.
<b>Accountability and reporting duties</b>	To General Assembly  Responsibility for the implementation of policies and decisions for the Committee rests with those employees appointed by Church House to do so, and ultimately the Secretary for Education and Learning.
<b>Terms of Reference review</b>	Two years, or more frequently if things change.

## **Responsibilities**

The Education and Learning Committee (the Committee) has key responsibilities across a number of interlinked and interdependent areas, and works closely with Ministries and Children and Youth teams and the Synod Training and Development+ Network.

These areas are:

- Education for ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Workers (EM1, EM2, EM3 funding and educational elements)
- Education for Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers
- Education for Ordained Elders
- The Learning Hub and its programmes
- Stepwise
- Lay learning
- Funding streams.

In exercising this authority, the Committee shall:

- foster relationships with Synods through the TDO+ Network
- maintain relationships with the Resource Centres for Learning and receive updates and monitoring reports
- have oversight and effective distribution of the education and learning budget, including funding streams
- review processes and programmes to maintain currency and reflect best practice.

## **Risk management**

The Committee will review the Risk Register as it relates to its key responsibilities at least once per year, but will add additional risks as and when they arise.

## **Conducting business**

The Education and Learning Committee aims to endorse, inspire and encourage lifelong learning for all God's people. Our aspiration is that learning opportunities are accessible, inclusive, integrated, and involve cooperation and collaboration across the whole URC.

Discipleship Development Strategy aims:

- to create opportunities for everyone to encounter the living God, whether they already identify themselves as followers of Christ or not
- to encourage everyone in their prayer life and relationship with God to enable them to live as disciples of Jesus
- to encourage everyone to make the most of educational opportunities that are relevant and appropriate for them in their discipleship journey.

We will also intentionally consider the voices of children and young people, equality and diversity, green issues and safeguarding in all we discuss and decide.

In addition to the planned meetings, others can be scheduled, with reasonable notice, if business requires it.

Decisions can also be taken via email with the same rules of quoracy applying. Such decisions will be recorded by the Convenor / Secretary and noted at the next meeting, with updates on progress as needed.

Expertise from outside its membership can be utilised for projects, and it can instruct task groups from beyond its membership to develop specific pieces of work. The Committee has the power to seek external professional advice if it is deemed necessary, with reference to the Chief Operating Officer for unbudgeted professional fees.

The Committee has discretion to seek input from the wider staff team, as deemed necessary.

## Context

The Committee has delegated authority from the General Assembly in relation to the provision of education and learning. This is operational delegated authority over General Assembly functions V, VI and VII as set out in the *Structure* of the United Reformed Church in *The Manual*. Matters of major strategic and policy directions will remain subject to General Assembly resolution. Should any dispute arise as to whether a matter is operational or strategic policy making, the Business Committee shall determine how the business is to be treated.

The Education and Learning Committee has the power to initiate or dissolve sub-committees and sub-groups from time to time, as necessary.

## Appendices

(Previous relevant information)

### 1. Our 2005 principles

**General Assembly endorses as key training principles for the United Reformed Church: 51**

- Integrated education and training to equip the whole people of God for mission – promoted with coherence and in tune with the policies flowing from the Equipping the Saints and Catch the Vision reports; Ecumenical engagement at every stage
- The presentation of a distinctive Reformed Ethos and History in that ecumenical engagement
- The delivery of this policy in a manner appropriate to the circumstances of the three nations in which the United Reformed Church is situated.

### 2. Resolutions from 2006

- The Synods in England to participate as proactively as possible in the development of the ecumenical Regional Training Partnerships for the training and nurture of the whole people of God in line with the policies agreed by General Assembly and specifically resolution 35 of 2005
- General Assembly, in line with the Training report, welcomes the commitment of the Northern, Scottish and Westminster Colleges to act for the United Reformed Church in a new role as Resource Centres for Learning and to undertake dispersed, integrated training and Christian education for the whole people of God. General Assembly agrees to keep its relationship with these Resource Centres for Learning under ongoing review and asks the Training Committee (*now Education and Learning Committee*) to report on them to the Assembly [of 2012].

## 3. March 2021 Mission Council D2

### Appendix A: Key elements of the Education and Learning Committee member role description

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The booklet *'They've asked me to be a committee member'* provides a full and accurate description of the role and responsibilities of a typical member of our Assembly Committees. The specific additional responsibilities for the Education and Learning Committee are described below.

#### 2 Education and Learning Committee member responsibilities

- 2.1 The Education and Learning Committee has a total of seven Assembly appointed members. Four of these have distinct job or post-related responsibilities:

- RCL Principal representative: only one of the RCL principals is invited to be a voting member; the others are non-voting members
- TDO Network representative, whose role includes ensuring the interests and concerns of the teams involved with training and development in the Synods are considered
- CYDO representative, whose role includes ensuring the interests and concerns of the teams involved with children's and youth work in the Synods are considered
- EM1 student representative, whose role includes ensuring the interests and concerns of all EM1 students studying in our RCLs are considered.

- 2.2 Note that the Nominations Committee will be guided in their recommendations for these positions by the networks the positions represent.

- 2.3 The remaining three Assembly appointed members have been classified 'without portfolio'. In other words, they are appointed not because of a present job or position within the URC, but are appointed to look after the interests of the United Reformed Church as a whole.

These members are expected to:

- use all their gifts to support the aims of the Education and Learning Committee
- to accept collective responsibility for all Education and Learning Committee decisions
- to adopt fully the 'blended' working practices of the committee, such as the use of email and videoconferencing
- to ensure the interests and concerns of the denomination as a whole are considered.

*April 2024*

*Review proposed March 2026*