The United Reformed Church

Ministries
The United Reformed Church
86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

GUIDELINES
FOR LOCAL INTERVIEWS ON BEHALF OF THE SYNOD

Since General Assembly 2007, the formal assessment process has proceeded as follows: Church Meeting decision, Synod decision, the Assessment Board makes the final decisions about forwarding a candidate for training including the Education and Learning Board's decision on the method of training. These decisions are taken after the Assessment Conference interviews and candidates will be informed of the decisions within two weeks of the Conference. The process can be halted at either the Church Meeting or Synod interview stages.

During the second stage, the Synod decision, the Synod may ask for an interview which is conducted by a local grouping of churches to which the candidate's home church relates. Arrangements for any shadowing of Ministers or visits to Church Related Community Work posts may be devolved by Synod to a local grouping of churches. The result of this interview will not be a decision but a report to the Synod containing a recommendation of the candidate or the reason why the interviewers believe the Synod should not send the candidate to the Assessment Conference.

At this stage we seek to discern a call to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Work and the potential for spiritual, personal and intellectual growth. Areas that require further attention need to be signalled to the Synod interview.

It is important candidates satisfy the pre-assessment criteria (refer to 'Candidating and Assessment for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Work – pre-assessment criteria'). These have been agreed because, in the past, people suffered undue stress during ministerial training, created by their lack of experience of the United Reformed Church and an inability to cope with the demands of the course. Those enquirers who have not been in membership for two years or who do not have the necessary educational qualifications should be encouraged by all the Councils of the Church to see the time spent fulfilling these criteria as of positive value. It should be used as a time for deepening and widening their knowledge of the Church they wish to serve.

Those involved in local interviews should ensure that both the candidate and their family, or those close to the candidate, feel supported during the candidating process, which may take some time if the candidate has to satisfy the pre-assessment criteria. People need to consider the profound changes that occur when someone close to them is called to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Work, and they need to be given the opportunity to be involved and to ask their own questions. They also need to be reassured that there are as many ways of being the minister's family or close support as there are individuals involved.

Checklist ~

1. Before the interview, ensure the interviewers have had appropriate training.

2. The candidating secretary will have already checked that the candidate meets the pre- assessment criteria:

- has been a member of the United Reformed Church for at least two years prior to candidating;
- conforms to the age criteria set by the General Assembly;
- has completed an application form;
- in the case of candidates for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments has preached a sermon and taken a service;
- in the case of CRCW candidates has visited a CRCW post;
- has attended a Church Meeting and a Synod meeting;
- has supplied a reflective account of a Church Meeting and the Synod attended.
- In addition, prospective candidates must show they are able to undertake the academic aspects of ministerial training. The minimum requirements will be those agreed from time to time by General Assembly on the advice of the Ministries Committee. (See 'Candidating and Assessment for the Ministries of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Work – pre-assessment criteria'.). Again, this will have been checked by the candidating secretary.

Some questions may arise for the interviewing group from the information gathered above.

3. Has the family or those close to the candidate been visited and had an opportunity to ask their own questions?

4. Is there a support system in place for the candidate, whether or not they are successful?

5. In the interview check that the candidate

- understands, accepts and is committed to the Schedules for ordination or commissioning and the Basis of Union;
- has read the Competencies and Expected Standards of Conduct and Behaviour for Ministers of Word and Sacraments/Church Related Community Workers;

6. From the areas to be discussed throughout Assessment focus on:

- Ministry
- The Community of the Church
- The Church in the World
  [see 'Candidating and Assessment for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Work: Areas to be discussed throughout Assessment']
- pursue any concerns raised in the Church meeting report,
- pursue any issues raised by the reflective reports.

7. After the interview check that the report gives a full account of the interview for the benefit of the Synod, and highlights any matters which either need particular discussion, but do not warrant a halt to the assessment procedure or could suggest a halt to the candidature.

Person responsible for editing document: The Revd Nicola Furley-Smith

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