

GUIDELINES FOR CANDIDATES

You may be reading this because you have been to an Enquirers' Event, or had a chat with your local Minister or Synod Moderator in which case you have already begun to test that sense that God is calling you to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Work.

On the other hand, you may have picked up this leaflet at a synod event because you have already heard the call but have yet to share that with anyone else.

Whatever your situation, now is a good time to think about the series of conversations and interviews - in which you will share if you decide to test your call.

You will talk to the local Minister, Synod Moderator and/or Synod Candidating Secretary where no Synod Moderator is in place. It is at this point you will need to meet the pre-assessment criteria (see the Candidating and Pre-assessment criteria https://urc.org.uk/images/Ministries/Ministries%20Committee/Assessment%20Board/Candidating_and_Assessment_Overview_2020.pdf).

Your candidacy will need to be approved by your local church and synod then you will attend an Assessment Conference where the decision will be final, taken on whether you will be sent for training.

The different Councils of the Church are all represented in the process. The whole Church is involved for, as a Minister or Church Related Community Worker, you will not exist in isolation from other Church members. This is a testing time, in more ways than one. The purpose of the conversations and interviews is to seek God's will and calling in your life, not to interview you for a job.

You will need to complete an application form, submit a reflective account of a Church Meeting, and Synod meeting and provide personal references.

By involving the whole Church, the interviewing process takes quite a long time. Please expect the time from first talking to your Minister to the commencement of training, if that is the outcome, to take up to two years or more. Frustration sets in when there is an unrealistic expectation about the speed of the process. Anxiety is often the result of not having information about the timescale. (Ask those advising you for the deadlines for paperwork and dates of meetings, even those you do not attend.)

The need to gain academic qualifications or have experience of the United Reformed Church may delay your transition to formal candidating. However, do not be deterred if you do not meet all

the requirements from the beginning; it should not prevent your local church and synod from offering guidance and support. Share your sense of call with your Minister and Moderator.

The attached checklist guides you through the process

Checklist

- If you are reading this as a first stage, now is the time to speak to your Minister.
- Now is also the time to talk to those close to you who will be affected by your candidature. If you become a candidate, and subsequently a student, their lives will be changed long before you receive a call to a local church or accredited CRCW project. There is no prescribed pattern of involvement for your partner these days but a willingness to support a person in ministry and share that person with others to a considerable degree is important to establish from the outset. Make sure that those close to you have an opportunity to talk to the Minister and representatives of the synod as well.
- In your initial enquiries, that is during meetings with the Moderator or Synod Candidating Secretary, check that you:
 - ✘ meet the pre-assessment criteria of:
 - membership of the United Reformed Church for at least two years prior to candidating;
 - know, and satisfy, the age criteria set by the General Assembly;
 - ✘ know the minimum educational requirements prior to ministerial training;
 - ✘ understand the timetable for the pre-assessment and 'formal assessment' process. (See Candidating and Assessment for the Ministries of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Work.)
- Before the formal candidating process begins check you have:
 - ✘ filled in an application form;
 - ✘ supplied names of referees to the Synod Candidating Secretary;
 - ✘ understood, accept and are committed to the Schedule for ordination or commissioning and the Basis of Union;
 - ✘ be aware of the Guidelines on Conduct and Behaviour for Ministers of Word and Sacraments/Church Related Community Workers;
 - ✘ attended a Church Meeting, and Synod meeting and supplied reflective accounts of Church and Synod Meetings attended;
 - ✘ completed the form relating to disclosure of criminal convictions and court order.
- If you are candidating for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments you need to have conducted at least one service and preached one sermon, assessed on behalf of the Synod.
- If you are candidating for Church Related Community Work you need to visit at least one CRCW accredited project. (You should contact the CRCW Development Worker at United Reformed Church House for guidance in this.) You also need to prepare a 10 minute

presentation for the Assessment Conference on the ways our faith can produce the actions that make a positive difference to people and their communities.

The Church Meeting interview and recommendation may be concurrent with the writing of reflective accounts, preparing the service or visiting a Church Related Community Work Project

Do you:

- ✘ know if your family or those close to you have been given all the information and support they need,
- ✘ know what support is in place for you during the candidating process and after?

The end of every candidating experience should be positive whether or not it confirms a call to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Work. God may be calling you to use your particular gifts in a different way. Your local church and synod will help you realise what that is to be.

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