

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE SYNOD MINISTRIES OR CANDIDATES COMMITTEES**

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 and the Education and Learning Board decides 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

Any candidate who goes on to the Assessment Conference goes sponsored by the Synod.

The structure of each Synod will doubtless determine how the Synod interviews are to be conducted. However, the Synods will now need to take over the responsibilities which once lay with District Councils even though these may be devolved to a more local area grouping of churches. This means that the Synods will need to oversee:

- arrangements for an assessed service and any appropriate placement work or 'shadowing' for candidates for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments.
- Visits to established CRCW posts and workers will need to be arranged for candidates for Church Related Community Work.

The Synod also will need to collect local knowledge and opinion of the candidate, which is set in a wider context than that of the local church alone, to help in reaching an informed decision. This may be done by arranging for an interview in a local grouping of churches which will then send a report, which may include a recommendation, to the Synod prior to the Synod interview itself.

It will be for each Synod to decide whether the responsibility for the administration of the Synod interviews lies with the Synod Candidating Secretary or is shared between the Secretary and another person appointed by the Synod.

The Synod should ensure that all who interview candidates on behalf of the Synod whether in a local or Synod interview have had appropriate training.

The Synod interview should also identify whether there are determining factors in each candidate's situation, personal or otherwise, which the interviewers would want the Education and Learning Board (which interviews on behalf of the Education and Learning Committee) to take into account in selecting the resource centre and training programme. This information should be sent to the Education and Learning Board via the Ministries office along with the report and decision on the candidate for the Assessment Board

After the Synod interview you will need to ensure that the candidates who have not been accepted for training receive appropriate support. This may include an element of mentoring if

the candidate has been advised to reapply after completing some further, wider exploration of the United Reformed Church

N.B No candidate will be informed immediately of the decisions of the Assessment and Education and Learning Boards. Arrangements need to be made with the Secretary for Ministries for a meeting between representatives of the Synod Ministries Committee and the Assessment Board to discuss any implications of the decision reached regarding the candidate. This will take place within two weeks after the Assessment Conference and the candidate will be informed of the decision as soon as possible after that meeting, preferably on the same day

## Checklist

Please ensure:

- all potential interviewers of candidates have had appropriate training;
- all the relevant paperwork and references have been received prior to the Synod interview;
- there has been an assessed service or visit to a Church Related Community Work post;
- the family of, or those close to, the candidate been visited and given opportunity to discuss the implications of ministerial life;
- all the areas for discussion have been covered, (The areas for discussion throughout the candidating process are set out in 'Candidating and Assessment for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Work – Areas to be discussed'.);
- the synod provides the candidate with the opportunity to discuss the financial implications of a period of ministerial training. Ensure the candidate has the latest version of the booklet 'Financial support for students' published by the Education and Learning Committee;
- the Synod has made arrangements for the ongoing pastoral support of a candidate who goes for training;
- the Synod has made arrangements for monitoring the student alongside the Resource Centres for Learning and in liaison with the Ministries and Education and Learning Committees;
- that if the candidate is not recommended for training the Synod has appropriate mechanisms in place for future support and identification of alternative forms of ministry.

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