

Paper S2

Role of the synod moderator
Medium Term Strategy Group

Church 2014
United
Church **Reformed**
Church Church 2014



Paper S2

Medium Term Strategy Group: Role of the synod moderator

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Roberta Rominger roberta.rominger@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	MC agrees that the job description set out in the appendix to Paper S should be recommended to Assembly as a model for future synod moderator appointment groups.
Alternative options to consider, if any	

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	To complete the work undertaken in the 2011-12 review of the role of the synod moderator.
Main points	Following wide consultation, the Medium Term Strategy Group offers a revised job description and person specification for Mission Council comment.
Previous relevant documents	“Review of the role of synod moderator” (Book of Reports, Assembly 2012, pp. 46-56).
Consultation has taken place with...	The convener of the 2012 review group, current synod moderators, three synod clerks, members of a recent synod moderator appointment group, convener of Human Resources Advisory Group.

Summary of Impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

The role of the synod moderator

Purpose

1. The Medium Term Strategy Group (MTSG) inherited as unfinished business the proposals of the task group to review the role of the synod moderator, chaired by Stephen Orchard, that were presented to the 2012 General Assembly. MTSG has moved forward some of the group's proposals. This paper offers a draft model job description for a synod moderator in the light of the Orchard Group's own work and developments since.

Building Blocks

2. The Orchard Group prepared a draft job description consistent with their other proposals. Much of what appears in this paper is based on that document.

3. MTSG also looked at the job description used by the most recent synod moderator appointment group, i.e. that for Mersey. MTSG took account of discussions at Mission Council since the Orchard Group reported, especially the discussions around the concept of a synod manager, and sought to put the job description in the format now preferred by the Human Resources Advisory Group (HRAG).

4. MTSG supports the Orchard Group's preference for a common core to the synod moderators' job descriptions but feels that individual synods need encouragement to reflect deliberately on what specific local demands need to be added. In some synods, for example, the moderator has a role with the synod trust. This constitutes a significant expectation which does not pertain in other synods. The draft job description therefore includes some prompts to encourage that reflection. MTSG suggest that the standard sections should not be altered by a synod appointment group without at least reference to the general secretary.

5. It is also recognised that new patterns are emerging, such as the Cumbria president post within the North Western Synod and the possibility of collaborative working between the five northern synods. This job description is not meant to discourage flexibility but to establish the benchmark against which different patterns can be agreed.

6. Some synods and their moderators have instituted a pattern of regular reviews to assess the needs of the synod and agree the areas where the moderator should focus his/her energies. This is an interesting parallel to the Local Mission and Ministry Review process in local church life where the role of the minister is regularly reviewed and renegotiated in light of the church's mission priorities and pastoral needs. At synod level, such reviews offer the moderators feedback on how their ministry is being received and where changes of emphasis might be appropriate, and they are a healthy response to a job which everyone acknowledges it is unrealistic to expect one individual to fulfil. Each moderator will bring particular strengths to the role. If the synod is aware of the full breadth of its needs, it can release its moderator to work to his/her strengths and support him/her in ongoing personal development, all the while ensuring that there is provision in place for the full scope of work required.

Resolution

Mission Council agrees that the job description set out in the appendix to Paper S should be recommended to Assembly as a model for future synod moderator appointment groups.

APPENDIX: Draft Proposed Model Job Description

JOB TITLE:	Moderator of XX Synod of the United Reformed Church
RESPONSIBLE TO:	General Assembly through the General Secretary
STIPEND:	Stipend authorised by the Plan for Partnership will apply
ROLE OVERVIEW:	<p>To provide spiritual and pastoral oversight, care and leadership within the synod, giving confidence for the Church's mission locally, regionally/nationally, and globally.</p> <p>To provide clear personal leadership to enable and encourage discernment of God's will within the councils of the Church.</p>

This post is for an initial seven year term with a possibility of renewal for a further five years. The main responsibilities will be subject to review during the term, and at the point of any renewal, as new insights are gained and circumstances evolve.

Responsibilities and Duties

Synod

1. To play a key role in developing and realising the synod's vision and strategy by offering theological insight, having a clear awareness of priorities, and facilitating open discussion within the synod to produce realistic and agreed objectives.
2. To encourage ecumenical commitment and endeavour across the synod.
3. To encourage the Church's engagement with public issues.
4. To nurture a sense of community and coherence across the synod by clear communication and leadership to ministers, churches, officers, committees, synod staff and the synod trust company.
5. To work collaboratively with synod officers/committees to facilitate clarity about priorities and to encourage creativity and new ideas about being church.
6. To chair synod meetings.
7. [Synod specific addition, if any]

Churches

8. To work collaboratively to encourage local churches and partnerships to engage in strategies leading to health, growth, learning and renewal.
9. To ensure the development and implementation of an appropriate strategy for the deployment of stipendiary ministers/CRCWs within the synod's agreed allocation.
10. To visit and provide strategic encouragement to pastorates in vacancy, to suggest names of ministers and CRCWs to vacant pastorates in conjunction with interim moderators of local churches and to preside (except where a deputy is appointed) at all ordinations/commissionings and/or inductions of ministers within the synod.
11. To work with others to ensure that individual gifts in the churches and committees will be recognised and fostered for the benefit of the whole synod.
12. To visit and lead worship at churches within the synod.
13. [Synod specific addition, if any]

People

14. To ensure active encouragement and support for the spiritual growth, renewal and Christian service of church members of all ages.
15. To meet with ministerial candidates and provide them with procedural guidance.
16. To provide supportive oversight and pastoral care to serving ministers, CRCWs and their families both personally and through the establishment of collegial teams.
17. To act as an adviser in the URC's provision of support services to ministers and CRCWs (e.g. long term sickness arrangements, welfare, retirement processes).
18. To encourage ministers and CRCWs in spiritual growth and development at all stages in their ministry, in partnership with those responsible for their self-appraisal and ongoing development.
19. To fulfil the responsibilities ascribed to the synod moderator under the Ministerial Disciplinary process and the Incapacity procedure.
20. [Synod specific addition, if any]

Wider Engagement

21. To participate as a member of Mission Council and the General Assembly.
22. To represent the synod to the wider church and the wider church to the synod.
23. To take a full part in the moderators' meeting.
24. To be proactive in encouraging fruitful ecumenical activities at a regional/national level, to ensure the United Reformed Church is represented in church leaders' meetings and, where relevant, represent the synod at ecumenical events.



Person Specification

JOB TITLE: Moderator of XX Synod

REQUIREMENTS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	MEASUREMENT
Education and qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educated to at least diploma level or equivalent in theology Ordained minister of Word and Sacraments of the United Reformed Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of keeping abreast with current theological literature 	Applicant's details/ interview
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working as a minister in a local pastorate Experience of leadership and working in close collaboration with other colleagues Experience of working with church or voluntary organisations on strategic plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent experience of working as a minister in a local pastorate Experience of different church contexts Experience of working ecumenically Experience of change management at synod level 	Applicant's details/ interview
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deep understanding of the role of the Church in its mission to the world Deep understanding of the distinctive traditions, ethos and witness of the United Reformed Church Awareness of the individuality of local churches and their needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of the ethos and polity of other denominations and major faith groups Applicant's details/ interview	Applicant's details/ interview
Skills and Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to exercise appropriate personal leadership within a conciliar ecclesiology Ability to exercise appropriate personal leadership within a conciliar ecclesiology Ability to discern and deliver the kind of approach which will best promote open and constructive relationships at all levels Delegation and team building skills Facilitation skills Conflict resolution skills Skills in project and change management. Skills in time management. Ability to assess priorities and plan workload accordingly IT skills in e-mail and document handling 		Applicant's details/ interview