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Requirement in Education for Ministry Phase 3

Proposed Joint Education & Learning and Ministries Resolution to General Assembly

All Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers in the United Reformed Church are encouraged to engage in continuing ministerial development, in ways that are relevant to the ministries to which they are called at particular times and in particular contexts. This is known as Education for Ministry Phase 3. In order to enable individuals to devote time and resources to this the General Assembly of 1999 endorsed the inclusion in terms of settlement (or their equivalent) of two weeks of study leave each year. The Training Report to Assembly of 1999 suggested a figure up to £700 towards training costs for each eligible minister, and this figure has remained at this level since then. This is accessed through the Synod Training Officer, and is unaffected by whether service is full-time, part-time, stipendiary or non-stipendiary.

The purpose of the EM3 programme is to ensure that people in public ministry are engaged in continuous development, so that they are refreshed and equipped for the constantly changing demands of 21st century ministry. Some EM3 activities cost very little yet yield valuable rewards – others demand investment of time and resources which stretch the budgets of individuals and the church, and have long term positive impacts. The criteria for what can be included in EM3 is given in broad outline by Assembly and worked out in detail by individual ministers and their Synod officers.

From time to time there have been instances where the United Reformed Church has come close to requiring Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers to undertake particular training because the skills, knowledge and attitudes which it engenders are an essential part of what is expected of people in public ministry. Examples include Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult training, and some legislative aspects of trusteeship.

Given the public expectations that church ministry elicits, and the authority which comes from holding public office, the Education & Learning Committee and the Ministries Committee propose the following resolution to General Assembly:

There will be occasions on which it is right for General Assembly to make certain training mandatory for particular groups of Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers. It will be for Mission Council to agree the nature, duration, and monitoring of such training.