

# Paper H1

Ministries (accreditation sub-committee)  
Special category ministry (SCM)

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

# Paper H1



## Ministries (accreditation sub-committee): Special category ministry (SCM)

### Basic Information

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<b>Action required</b>	To note and for forwarding to synod pastoral committees and equivalents.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Alternative options to consider, if any</b>	None

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	To clarify policy regarding applications for and learning lessons from special category ministry posts.
<b>Main points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are SCM posts available</li> <li>• Ministries welcomes early discussions of any proposal</li> <li>• Synods bear responsibility for proceeding with the application, for day-to-day support and for the integrity of the funding of the project</li> <li>• SCM ministers leaving post should have an exit interview with their synod moderator including an exit statement, which should be forwarded to ministries FAO accreditation sub-committee</li> </ul>
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	<p>Paper M. Mission Council October 2012 Minutes Mission Council October 2012 item 12/42 <a href="http://www.urc.org.uk/images/Ministries/Ministries%20Committee/Accreditation%20Sub-committee/Special_Category_Posts.pdf">http://www.urc.org.uk/images/Ministries/Ministries%20Committee/Accreditation%20Sub-committee/Special_Category_Posts.pdf</a> General Assembly Resolution 25: 2006, changes to ministerial service.</p>
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Results from regular consultation with ministers in SCM posts, management groups and synods.

### Summary of Impact

<b>Financial</b>	None
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	Potential for contribution to local ecumenical initiatives through SCM programme. Many SCM posts rely on good relationships with external bodies, and maintaining these is a synod responsibility.

# Special category ministry (SCM)

## 1. In October 2012, Mission Council resolved:

Mission Council instructs the accreditation sub-committee to limit the number of special category ministry full-time equivalent posts to a maximum of 8% of the total number of stipendiary ministers available to be shared between deployed and special category ministry posts.

The minutes record that the then convenor of ministries said that this would be an interim measure, with a new proposal to be brought to Assembly in 2014.

2. In the meantime, ministries committee decided that there was no appetite for a new proposal on deployment at the present time, and that no resolution would be brought in 2014. Therefore arrangements for synod deployment and SCM have proceeded on the basis of the above resolution. However, the number of applications has seen a sharp reduction, possibly due to the uncertainty implied by this 'interim measure'.

3. Ministries therefore wish to inform Mission Council and all synods that the current arrangements will continue until Assembly is minded to alter them. At present 8% of posts would imply a total of 37 posts. At the date of the last accreditation sub-committee there were 26.5 posts filled, one of those ceasing before the end of 2014. We would therefore welcome applications for consideration at any point in 2015.

4. Guidance notes on the application procedure for special category ministry are available on the website and application forms from the ministries office. We would make the following points to synods who might wish to avail themselves of this opportunity:

- a) The ministries office welcomes early conversation regarding the possibility of a post and the application process – we would rather process successful applications than reject inadequate ones!
- b) A special category ministry can include pastoral charge of one or more churches, provided that the case can be made for the 'specialness' of the ministry concerned, and an exit strategy is in place for returning the pastoral care of the churches to synod deployment after (at most) 10 years.
- c) A local management group, housing and finance must all be in place before an application is approved, and it is the synod's responsibility to ensure and certify that this is so.
- d) Where a SCM post involves shared responsibility and/or funding with ecumenical and/or secular partners, maintaining the local relationships necessary to carry this through is a responsibility of the synod – it cannot be done remotely from the ministries office.
- e) Applications need to address the questions *How will you know if this ministry has been effective? and What will happen to this work when the post-holder leaves?* Outcomes may not be quantifiable, but they need to be demonstrable. Applications which appear designed to employ someone to engage in ministry *instead of* rather than *with* a local church will not be approved.
- f) While the accreditation sub-committee conducts periodic reviews (currently after 6 months, 12 months and then during the penultimate year of the term of a post), the regular oversight of both post and post-holder is the responsibility of the synod, as with all other ministries in its area.

5. To ensure the best use of Assembly's limited resources, the accreditation sub-committee seeks to learn lessons from the experience of each SCM post. To this end:
  - a) Synods are reminded that ministers in special category posts (and other SCM post-holders) leaving post for any reason should, like all URC ministers, prepare an 'exit statement' and the synod moderator should conduct an exit interview. The statement should be forwarded to the ministries office, and in the case of SCM post-holders, the statement will be shown to the accreditation sub-committee.
  - b) The sub-committee is particularly aware at the moment of the need to learn from 'Pioneer' ministries (Fresh Expressions of Church) and to this end ministries is intending to devote some time to this topic at its January residential, and will liaise with the URC's Fresh Expressions co-ordinator.