guidance

canditating for ordained ministry g.1.1

Guide to discerning ordained vocation part one

Welcome to the candidating process in the British Methodist Church. This is called DOV which stands for ‘Discerning Ordained Vocation’. In DOV1 the church provides resources so that you can discern deeply how God is calling you.

DOV2 is the offering phase in which you offer yourself to the church as a candidate for ministry. Document G.1.2 provides guidance for DOV2.

You may be feeling both excited and daunted as you set out on this journey, but please remember that you are accompanied throughout.

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| Preparing | Suggestions | Resources | Timing |
| Journal | You are strongly advised to start a journal specifically for this journey of discernment. It remains your own private record that you can choose to share as you wish. | Find a notebook that you can easily carry with you and note down your reflections. If someone says something that has made you think about your call to ministry, note it down. If you hear a line of a hymn or a prayer that has particular resonance, note it down. If something you read has significance for you, note it down in your journal.  Your journal will be enormously helpful if you offer as a candidate, because it will form the basis for your portfolio. | It is best to start this as soon as you begin to consider ordination. You can also include in it reflections from your past. Try to write down an account of the way God has called, and is calling you. |
| Ordained friends | It is always advisable to discuss your calling with an ordained person who you know well. | This might be your local minister, fellowship group leader, chaplain or superintendent minister. | You can do this at any point, but particularly from January to April before you start the formal discerning processes. |
| Information days | Exploring Ordained Ministry Days are held two or three times per year on zoom. This is a space to find out more and to ask questions. | Details can be found here [Ordination Exploration Days (methodist.org.uk)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/ministries/called-to-ordained-ministry/ordination-exploration-days/) |  |
| Shadowing and placements | If you have limited experience of what the life of ordained ministry is like, ask a minister if you can shadow them at some of their activities. | The Methodist Diaconal Order will put you in touch with a deacon if you have no other way of making contact with a deacon.  Methodist Diaconal Order contact [mdosupport@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:mdosupport@methodistchurch.org.uk) | It is best to do this as early as possible before May. |
| Family and friends | Share the journey with the people who are closest to you. If you do apply for ordained ministry and go on to be formed as a minister, it will make changes that will impact everyone around you. These are the people who will be supporting you and praying for you. |  | Constantly throughout the process. |
| Order of Ministry | If you are unsure about whether you might be called to presbyteral or to diaconal ministry, read documents G.3, G.4 and G.5, and speak to ministers around you. | G.3 ‘What is a presbyter’ Conference report  G.4 ‘The Methodist Diaconal Order’ Conference report  G.5 ‘Changing patterns of ministry’ Conference report.  These can be found at: [New candidating process starting May 2023 (methodist.org.uk)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/ministries/candidating-for-ministry/new-candidating-process-starting-may-2023/) | You will need to becoming clear about which order of ministry you might be called to during the first part of discernment through discussion with your accompanist. |

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| Context | All candidating for diaconal ministry are offering to be itinerant.  Those candidating for presbyteral ministry usually offer for itinerant ministry, but you can offer instead for a local or specific context. | The contexts are described in G.5, and you can find out more in the ‘local and specific contexts application form’, C.2 which can we found on the website for information all year. |  |

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| Requirements to apply for DOV1 | Evidence | Support | Timing |
| You must be baptised | You will need to submit either your baptism certificate or a book plate from a book you were given at the time or a copy of the church’s baptism records. | Your local minister might be able to help you to contact the church where you were baptised if you do not have these records yourself. |  |
| You must be an active member of the British Methodist for at least the last year | Membership card from the last year or, if you do not have that, a letter from the minister of the church declaring that you are a member of the church and have been for at least one year. | If your church membership is in a Local Ecumenical Partnership, that is fine as long as the Methodist Church is one of the partners. | This must be for the year up to 1 September in the year in which you candidate. |

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| Criteria | Information | Resources |  |
| All ministers and many lay office holders are accountable to a list of nine criteria (also called competencies). Sub criteria outline what is required at each stage of ministry. | These criteria provide a helpful framework as you discern your own gifts, character and experience.  They will be used in the discernment processes of candidating. | The details of these for candidates for ordained ministry can be found in document G.6 which you can find here [New candidating process starting May 2023 (methodist.org.uk)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/ministries/candidating-for-ministry/new-candidating-process-starting-may-2023/) |  |
| Support | Information | Resources | Timing |
| Accompanist | If you undertook ‘Explore’ you will already have been matched with an accompanist who will have talked many things through with you already. If you did not go to ‘Explore’, then as soon as you apply, you will be matched with an accompanist. This person is there to walk alongside you as you discern God’s calling. They do not assess you or make decisions for you. | Information about the covenant agreement between explorers and pre-candidates and accompanists can be found in form D.5 here: [New candidating process starting May 2023 (methodist.org.uk)](mailto:methodist.org.uk)   You are asked some questions on your application form concerning the sort of qualities in an accompanist you would find most helpful. Matches are made by the Connexional Team. If the relationship does not work well, support will be provided. | As soon as you apply, you can be matched with an accompanist and you can start meeting with them. |
| Local church and circuit | Throughout the processes your local church community will be an important source of prayer and pastoral support for you. |  | Ongoing |
| Regional support groups | The Learning Network will set up support groups for candidates in the same region. This is to help you to support each other and to help particularly when it comes to compiling the portfolio. | More information can be found here: [Learning and Development (methodist.org.uk)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/learning-and-development/) | Particularly for DOV2 but meetings may start during DOV1. |
| Financial support | Your accompanist will discuss with you the gifts you are given in candidating, training and future ministry as well as the costs involved. | Most of the costs are for travel though some meetings will be held by video conferencing.  The Methodist Church in Britain wishes to encourage all who feel called to do so to offer as candidates and therefore will endeavour to ensure that no-one is discouraged by a lack of funds. Candidates who are struggling to meet the costs of candidating should be asked to contact the candidates’ office: [candidates@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:candidates@methodistchurch.org.uk) to discuss what help might be available. | Discussion during May |
| You will also need to consider the costs involved with training and formation. | The details of this are different depending on the pathway. Details are explained in document G.8 which can be found on the website. | This document is updated during each year so please make sure you check for the latest version. |
| Connexional Candidates’ Office | The office is part of the Conference Office in the Connexional Tem and runs all of the aspects of the candidating processes. We are available to provide answers to any questions that you have not been able to answer locally. | candidates@methodistchurch.org.uk | Ongoing |

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| Reasonable adjustments | Information | Resources | Timing |
| The Methodist Church is determined that all people who are discerning a call to ordained ministry are able to access the processes of discernment. | This may mean making reasonable adjustments that you require during the processes due to any disability or need that you may have. | We ask you to inform the candidates office of any specific support needs you have particularly during the retreat, DOV1 Advisory interviews and the DOV2 Connexional committee. This is your responsibility. | As soon as you apply for DOV1 please inform the candidates’ office of any adjustments you need. |
| Process | Information | People and responsibilities | Timing |
| Application form D.1 | Available on the website here: [New candidating process starting May 2023 (methodist.org.uk)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/ministries/candidating-for-ministry/new-candidating-process-starting-may-2023/) | You are advised to submit your application form as early as possible so that you can start conversations with your accompanist  When you submit the form, you need to attach a letter from a church leader to support your application and confirm you are a member of the Methodist church | This can be downloaded at any point between 1 January and 30 April. The deadline for the form to be submitted is 30 April. |
| Equality, Diversity  and Inclusion  Monitoring form  D.2 | The data gained from this form will be used to assist the Methodist Church to identify and address any trends or patterns which may have the potential to lead to disadvantage or discrimination. This data will also be used to establish and share best practise and to celebrate the rich diversity of Methodist people. | How we process and use your data is outlined in our [Privacy notice (methodist.org.uk)](mailto:https://www.methodist.org.uk/privacy-notice/) | All of the questions in the form are optional. Please return the form with your application form. You will not be asked for this information again if you candidate. |
| Accompanist | Accompanists are trained to walk alongside you in your discernment journey. In the application form, you will be asked to identify the qualities in an accompanist that would be of most help to you. | The Connexional team will make a match between you and an accompanist. | As soon as you apply |
| Review | At least three meetings in person or on zoom. Travel costs are your responsibility. Meeting 1 – introductions and completing the covenant form D3. Discussion about your discernment so far. Meetings 2 and 3 – a structured conversation about the impact of candidating, training and ministry and to discern the order and context they are called to. | You and your accompanist  Together you will produce the agreed record D4 which becomes an element in your portfolio if you decide to offer as a candidate.  You need also to send the agreed record to the candidates’ office | The first half of May |
| Retreat | Everyone who starts DOV1 is given the gift of this retreat and will automatically be booked into it. The retreat costs will be borne by the Connexion.  You are asked to make your own arrangements to travel to the retreat. | You and the retreat leaders. Your accompanist does not attend. | The date and venue can be found on document G.9 Dates and Deadlines.  You will be sent details of the programme and travel directions when you apply. |
| Reflect | Meet to discuss your spiritual discernment and where you feel that has taken you.  Prepare for your conversation with members of the DOV1 Advisory group. | You and your accompanist | Immediately after the retreat |
| Conversation with DOV1 Advisory group. | You and your accompanist, will meet three members of the DOV1 Advisory group for an online conversation of up to one hour regarding your discernment so far. | See G.9 for the dates |
| The DOV1 Advisory group will write a guidance letter (D5). It will contain one of these suggestions:  Continue into candidating.  Undertake a shadowing experience or do some other defined form of preparation between June and September and then continue into candidating.  Explore further before returning to candidate (either through attending ‘Explore’ or through another route).  Explore a different form of vocation  The letter will also indicate the main elements of the conversation, highlight any gaps identified, questions to consider or concerns to address. The letter becomes part of your portfolio if you candidate. | It is important to remember the DOV1 Advisory Group are providing advice and suggestions but the decision about your next step remains entirely your decision. | After DOV1 advisory group conversation |
|  |  | At the end of this stage, the accompanist will help you to consider the advice given and to take any subsequent actions.  If you decide to offer as a candidate for ordained ministry, please see the guidance document G.1.2. |  |