

GUIDANCE

GUIDE TO DISCERNING ORDAINED VOCATION PART TWO : OFFERING AS A CANDIDATE

G.1.2

Welcome to the candidating process in the Methodist Church of Great Britain. This is called DOV which stands for 'Discerning Ordained Vocation'.

If you have not read the document G.1.1 about DOV1, please do so before reading this. The support structures listed there follow on into DOV2.

DOV2 is the **offering** phase in which you offer yourself to the church as a candidate for ministry so this is the second part of the guidance document and should be read in conjunction with the first.

It is very important that you take note of guidance document G.9 which contains all the dates and deadlines for each element of the process.

1. REQUIREMENTS TO OFFER AS A CANDIDATE

Every candidate must be prepared to accept the form and length of training prescribed by the Conference.

Training pathways for recommended candidates are allocated based on their preferred learning styles, their circumstances and the formation of effective cohorts of students. Each recommended candidate is asked to complete an allocation form once they are recommended. They then take part in an allocations conversation where these issues are all explored fully with them.

Any exemptions to this are recommended by the Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee (MCPOC) to the DOV Committee who have the power to grant or withhold such exemptions. Allocations conversations are held in mid-May each year, for those candidates who have been recommended for training (usually by video conferencing).

Every candidate must be prepared to have a DBS check carried out once they are recommended for training.

We will be in touch with you with details about how to apply for the necessary DBS check which is an enhanced check with barring for children and adults.

If any concerns are raised, the Connexional Safeguarding Team will advise about any risk assessments or other necessary action needed. Further information about convictions in relation to candidating is provided as an appendix to the candidating application form C1.

The **Methodist Church**

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's
love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission

www.methodist.org.uk

Register charity no 1132208

Every candidate who is recommended for training must have the legal right to work in the UK.

A copy of your passport and any residence permits will need to be provided at the point at which you candidate.

If you are recommended as a candidate your visa may be sponsored by the British Methodist Church. It is important that we know your immigration status at the start of the process.

Please see guidance document G.7.

Every candidate must give written assurance that they fully intend to offer at least ten years in active ministry in the Methodist Church in Britain.

This assurance is given through your agreement to this question on the application form.

If you are 54 or over when you start candidating, you may want to have a conversation with your Superintendent about the implications of making this declaration.

Previous candidates

If you have candidated before for Presbyteral or Diaconal ministry, you are not prevented from candidating again. Your previous candidature is now part of your Christian journey so it would be expected that you would reflect on it and your experiences since that time, in your portfolio.

You are not permitted to offer as a candidate again in the year following that in which your previous offer was declined, unless you have been advised to do so in writing by the DOV2 Committee (or its predecessor).

2. COMMITMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Constitutional Practice and Discipline (CPD) is the Methodist Church's 'rulebook', setting out the standing orders (SOs) under which all the officers of the Church do their work.

CPD is made up of two volumes. It can be downloaded here: [CPD \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://cpd.methodist.org.uk)

Volume 1 has the historic documents of our Church and Volume 2, which is produced annually, contains the decisions or Standing Orders (SO) of the Methodist Conference, which are set out in full. Volume 2 consists of seven 'books'. All the references below relate to Volume 2.

Declaration to be made to the Superintendent

At the point at which you apply to candidate in September arrange to meet your superintendent who will explain and then ask you to:

- assent to the doctrinal standards which are set out in Clause 4 of the Deed of Union.
- affirm your willingness to uphold the discipline of the Methodist Church
- accept the obligations to be at the disposal of the Conference for stationing.

Your superintendent will need to declare on your C1 application form that you have so assented. You can find the Deed of Union in CPD Book II part 1.

| Other sections of CPD relating to candidating | |
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| Book III, Part 5 The Circuits: Section 52 entitled 'Circuit Ministry' | This sets out expectations and responsibilities of those involved in circuit ministry, such as the Preaching Plan, Meetings, Leading Worship and Pastoral Care. |
| Book III, Part 7 Presbyters and Deacons (1) – Status and Stationing | Section 71 relates specifically to candidating. |
| Book III, Part 8 Presbyters and Deacons (2) – Terms of Service | Section 80 looks at the provision for presbyters and deacons and outlines the care the Church takes of those who are ordained. |
| Book IV, Part 5 Rule of life of the Methodist Diaconal Order | It is helpful for all candidates to be aware of this and it is essential for diaconal candidates to be committed to the Rule of Life. |
| Book VII is in the form of guidance | There are 16 sections which set out the expectations that the Methodist Church has of its members and, in particular, its ordained ministers. |

When you complete the candidating application form C.1 and sign it, you will be agreeing to abide by this Guidance and these Standing Orders in your candidating, training and the exercise of your ministry.

3. PROCESS

Application form

Those completing DOV1, who wish to offer as a candidate, download the C.1 application form for DOV2 (candidating) which builds on the information in the DOV1 application form (D.1).

The application form can be downloaded from the website between January/February and September but it cannot be submitted until you have completed DOV1.

Superintendents' review of availability and assent to doctrinal standards

Your superintendent make the declaration on the C.1 form that you have had the conversation and have assented.

Your superintendent also completes a C.3 form about your availability which is signed by you both.

Local or specific context application form

If you wish to apply to serve in a local or specific context, please download form C.2, complete your sections in draft form and arrange to have conversations with your Superintendent and your District Chair as soon as possible. If you are considering applying for a specific context, please also meet with someone experienced in ministry in that context to gain their advice about this aspect of your calling. As the District will be making commitments regarding your future stationing, they need to be involved at a very early stage of your thinking. Please do not submit the form unless all elements have been completed and it has been signed by all parties.

Your application for this context will be assessed by the Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee (MCPOC) in October-November. You will receive a letter which will either:

- accept the application and therefore permit you to continue candidating in that context, or
- require you to continue in an itinerant context or to withdraw.

References

- Circuit Leadership Team C.4. Superintendents are asked to submit this reference.
- Current employer C.5 for those who are in employment or a leader of a voluntary activity for those who are not in employment. The Candidates' Office request this reference from your employer. If you prefer us not to contact your employer at this stage, you can request that on your C.1 form. If you are subsequently recommended, it would be on the condition of receipt of a satisfactory reference.
- Critical Friend C.6. The Candidates' Office request this reference. Please note that this reference cannot be written by your accompanist.

Reports

It is the candidate's responsibility to request and gather these documents and to include them in their portfolio:

- D.3 Agreed record from the DOV1 structured conversation with the accompanist.
- D.4 Letter from the DOV1 Advisory Group.
- Report from the supervisor of any placement or if none has been undertaken, a report from someone who has worked with the candidate in a church setting. There is guidance available in guidance document G.11.

Open Day at the Queen's Foundation

This is an opportunity for all candidates to see the College, meet current students, hear about possible training pathways and meet tutors and other candidates.

Booking arrangements can be found in document G.9

Portfolio C.7

This is your opportunity to tell the story of your Christian journey to those who you will meet as you discern. The guidance in C.7 is to help you to create your portfolio.

The Learning Network will support you to make the most of your portfolio. This session is two hours, online, and you will come away with a clear sense of the 'what is expected in the portfolio', and 'how to create the content'. You can attend either the session in June 2024 or the same session repeated in September 2024. For details and to book your place please visit the following Eventbrite page: [Candidates' Portfolio Support | Eventbrite](#)

The people around you can also provide a helpful resource, such as your minister, your friends at your church or your family. However please remember that we want to meet you through this portfolio so it needs to be your work in your own words.

A report giving you guidance resulting from your portfolio will be sent to you and copied to your Superintendent and District Chair before you attend the DOV2 Connexional Committee.

Presentation

Each candidate will be required to make a presentation when they meet the DOV2 Connexional Committee in February.

The topic and guidance will be sent to candidates soon after they have applied.

Resilience assessment

Each candidate meets with the Connexional psychologist (usually by video conferencing). Thrive Worldwide is the company who provide this service for the Connexion and they will send you information about booking an appointment.

A resilience assessment report is produced after the conversation, which you will be asked to sign before it is submitted.

Warden's interview for diaconal candidates

The Methodist Diaconal Order will arrange an in-person conversation with each diaconal candidate. The focus is on what it means to enter a religious order as well as an order of ministry. These appointments will be made directly by the Order with each diaconal candidate.

A report of this conversation is provided and becomes part of the material received by the DOV2 Committee.

DOV2 Connexional Committee

All candidates attend the DOV2 Committee for a 48-hour residential process which is underpinned with worship as candidates and the church discern together. You will be sent details of the venue and specific dates and, at that point, you will also be given further details about the process. Accommodation costs are covered by the Connexion.

During the 48 hours you will be invited to make your presentation to a panel of six people, you will have conversations with smaller groups and an individual panel member, you will do some activities in a group with other candidates and you will have interviews with the full panel.

A team of chaplains will provide support for you throughout.

Outcome

Candidates will receive letters in the week following the DOV2 Connexional Committee.

The outcomes will be either:

- Category 1 – recommended
- Category 2 – conditionally recommended (the condition must be measureable and achievable within 3 years)
- Category 3 – not recommended

The letter is copied to your Superintendent. It is good idea to arrange for a friend to be available for you during that day.

Allocations form

Recommended candidates will be sent an allocations form for your preferred training pathway. These forms need to be returned within two weeks of receiving the outcome.

Occupational Health assessment

Recommended candidates will have an Occupational Health (OH) assessment

These begin with the completion of a questionnaire by each recommended candidate and details about the application process will be included in the outcome letter to each candidate.

The OH reports are assessed by the Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee (MCPOC) with reference to the Candidates' Health Policy.

The application of the Candidates' Health Policy could lead to a recommendation that a candidate is not recommended on occupational health grounds. If this is the case, it will be clearly reported to the candidate. This assessment will be arranged within two weeks of receiving the outcome.

Please see guidance document G.12 for the Candidates Health Policy.

DBS checks with barring

The Candidates' office will send you login details for you to complete this online. This needs to be completed as soon as possible after receiving the recommendation.

'Where Now' retreat

Soon after the outcome letter is sent, candidates whose outcome is Category 3 will be contacted by the 'Where Now' retreat team. They will invite these candidates to a retreat to help them to reflect and discern their next steps. The team will send the candidates details about the dates, venue and programme.

Appeals

Candidates whose outcome is Category 3 have the right to appeal the decision on certain grounds. This must be done within two weeks of receiving the outcome letter.

It is advisable to discuss this with your Superintendent Minister, and to consult standing order 716 in CPD.

The process will be explained in the outcome letter.

Preparing for training

Three areas of preparation are recommended (not all are applicable for all recommended candidates):

1. Guided reading. A booklist from Queen's will be available on the website.
2. Learning needs assessment (where appropriate and possible).

3. Mentoring in worship leading and preaching arranged by your superintendent (if you are not a local preacher or worship leader). This is to give you as much experience as possible of preparing and leading a range of different sorts of worship.

Allocations

Each candidate meets on zoom with a tutor from the Queen's Foundation and a member of MCPOC to discuss their training preferences. Candidates are invited for a particular time slot.

The Allocations Committee meets to allocate training pathways in the days following the conversations, and a letter is sent to each candidate following that meeting, informing them of their training pathway.

Sincere attention is paid to the particular circumstances of each candidate when making the allocations, as well as taking notice of other factors. Candidates are asked to accept their allocated pathway. However it is possible to ask for this to be reviewed if the candidate has strong reasons.

Conference

All recommendations regarding Presbyteral candidates made by DOV2 committee and the Appeals Committee are presented to the Methodist Conference for approval.

All recommendations regarding Diaconal candidates made by DOV2 committee and the Appeals Committee are presented to the Diaconal Conference Committee at Methodist Diaconal Order Convocation for approval.

Training and Formation for Ministry

From September, recommended students start on either the full time (2 years) or part time (3 years) pathway, at the Queen's Foundation, though occasionally some adaptations to this are made. Full time students can be daily or weekly commuters or can live on site or in other accommodation nearby. This will be worked out with you through the allocations process and in subsequent conversations.

Candidates might also be allocated provisionally to the Circuit Based Learning Pathway (CBLP) which starts in the second year.

Details about the training pathways can be found in guidance document G.8.