**S16 Ecumenical Agreement Form Regarding Probationers’ Appointments**

The completed form should be submitted by the District Chair to [stationingadministration@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:stationingadministration@methodistchurch.org.uk) with the circuit appointment profile to which it relates.

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| **INTRODUCTION** |
| Methodist ministers are required satisfactorily to complete a two-year period of probation before they are received into full connexion and ordained. These two years are regarded as a continuation of their formation as a presbyter or deacon. This means that they are still lay people for these two years.  Therefore, the Methodist church is asking its ecumenical partner denominations to work with a non-ordained minister in ecumenical partnerships and other shared church settings.  Before the proposed appointment can be accepted as being suitable for a probationer, we need to be clear that this will be acceptable to any partner denominations that are closely involved in churches within the appointment.  It is important to the Methodist Church that a written agreement is drawn up before a probationer minister can be stationed to an appointment in which there is a form of ecumenical partnership. The agreement needs to be with the appropriate authority in the partner denomination. The District or Connexional Ecumenical Officer should be consulted about who that will be in each case.  Careful scrutiny is given to these matters in order that a probationer might flourish in her/his appointment. In many places a local ecumenical partnership will prove excellent ground for such flourishing. Ecumenical partners will have appropriate opportunity to contribute to the support and development of the probationer. |

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| **DETAILS TO BE COMPLETED BY THE METHODIST CIRCUIT** |
| Name and Number of circuit |
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| Name of Chair of District |
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| Email address of Chair of District |
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| Name of Superintendent Minister |
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| Email address of Superintendent |
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| Name of Senior Circuit Steward |
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| Email address of Senior Circuit Steward |
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| Name of churches in the proposed appointment for which the probationer will have pastoral responsibility or involvement. |
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| Which church(es) in this appointment have a partnership or significant relationship with another denomination? |
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| Please describe this partnership (eg. Is it formal, how long has it been in existence, what is the balance of ministry expected between the partners). |
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| Which are the partner denomination(s) in this church? |
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| Please list the names of ministers of all denominations who will also exercise ministry in this church. |
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| **DETAILS TO BE COMPLETED BY ECUMENICAL PARTNERS** |
| *The appropriate person in authority in the partner denomination is invited to complete this section of the form for each ecumenical partnership or shared church in the appointment.*  *Where more than one ecumenical partner denomination is involved, please produce separate agreements for each.* |
| Name of Local Ecumenical Partnership or shared church |
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| Denomination of partner church |
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| Name and post of the appropriate authority in the partner denomination |
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| Contact email address and phone number |
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| **PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITY** |
| *Probationer presbyters in the Methodist Church exercise pastoral responsibility under the direction of the Superintendent or his/her nominee. This means that the authority of the probationer presbyter is limited and that the Superintendent or another presbyter will need also to be involved in the life of the Ecumenical Partnership.* |
| Please indicate if you aresatisfied that this arrangement is appropriate in this particular Local Ecumenical Partnership or shared church. |
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| What difficulties, if any, may need to be addressed in advance of the appointment with regard to pastoral responsibility? |
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| **ACCEPTANCE OF MINISTRY** |
| Please indicate whether a Methodist probationer will be accepted as an equal partner in ministry by ecumenical colleagues who exercise ministry in this church. |
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| How might the probationer’s ordination and reception into Full Connexion with the Methodist Conference be acknowledged and celebrated as a significant moment for the Ecumenical Partnership or shared church? |
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| **PRESIDING AT THE LORD’S SUPPER** |
| *The Methodist Church holds that it is normative for the presiding minister at the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper to be an ordained presbyter. It also maintains that it is not in the interests of the Church and the mission of God for God’s people to be deprived of the sacrament because of a shortage of presbyters.*  *Where Methodists are deprived of reasonably frequent and regular celebration of the sacrament, the Conference will authorise suitably qualified and nominated lay people to preside. These authorisations are granted annually and apply only as directed by the Superintendent within the named circuit.*  *Probationer presbyters are often considered by the circuit to be the most suitably qualified people to be granted an authorisation, though some will in conscience decline to be nominated.* |
| Please indicate if you consider it would cause any difficulties within the Ecumenical Partnership or shared church if a Methodist probationer presbyter presided at the sacrament of Holy Communion before they were ordained. |
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| **SIGNATURES** | |
| We confirm that a conversation has taken place among the relevant parties concerning the requirements for the stationing of a Methodist probationer presbyter to this particular ecumenical appointment.  We accept the requirements for the stationing of a Methodist probationer presbyter in this particular ecumenical appointment, as specified above. | |
| Signature of Superintendent Minister |  |
| Date |  |
| Signature of relevant authority in the partner denomination |  |
| Date |  |
| Signature of District Chair |  |
| Date |  |