

CANDIDATING FOR ORDAINED MINISTRY 2022-2023

G.6 STEPS IN CANDIDATING FOR ORDAINED MINISTRY

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this **Steps in Candidating for Ordained Ministry**. It might look daunting but, as you work through it with your Superintendent and Mentor, it will provide you with an overview of the process you will encounter as you candidate. Candidating for ministry in the Methodist Church is a lengthy process and has a number of stages. At each stage, the people you meet will want to encourage you to explore your vocation and to test whether that vocation is to ordained ministry in the Methodist Church. The whole process is undertaken prayerfully, with careful listening and detailed reading of your submissions and the references of others. The selection committees will make their decisions openly and objectively.

Please make sure you are aware of the deadlines to be met.

1. PEOPLE TO TALK TO

- 1.1. Your Superintendent Minister
- 1.2. Your local minister
- 1.3. District Candidates' Secretary
- 1.4. Regional Learning Network officer
- 1.5. Connexional colleagues in the Candidates' Office within the Ministries Team (email candidates@methodistchurch.org.uk)
- 1.6. Methodist Diaconal Order (office@mdo.org.uk) for diaconal candidates
- 1.7. Staff at the Queen's Foundation Open Day (please refer to the Methodist Church website)
- 1.8. Friends and family, as well as presbyters and deacons you know

2. INFORMATION TO GATHER

All relevant documents can be downloaded from the Methodist Church website.

G.1 The Diaconate and the Methodist Diaconal Order Conference 2019 report [and also the 2016 report which can be found here [conf-2016-33-Theology-Underpinnig-the-Diaconate.pdf](#) (methodist.org.uk)]

G.2 Changing Patterns of Ministry Conference Report

G.3 What is a Presbyter Conference Report

G.4 Selection Criteria for Candidates (2016)

G.6 Steps in Candidating for Ordained Ministry (this document)

G.8 Candidate's Support: the 4-way meeting (and see section 6.2 below)

G.9 The Costs of Candidating

G.16 Training information

C.2 Candidating Portfolio Guidance and Instruction Form

3. COMMITMENTS and RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1. 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. Your Superintendent will be aware of the standing orders about candidating for ministry, but you may also find it useful to familiarize yourself with them.

3.2. CPD is made up of two volumes. 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 (Book III). The sections in Book III relating to candidating for ordained ministry are:

- Part 5 The Circuits: Section 52 entitled ‘Circuit Ministry’ sets out expectations and responsibilities of those involved in circuit ministry, such as the Preaching Plan, Meetings, Leading Worship and Pastoral Care.
- Part 7 Presbyters and Deacons (1) – Status and Stationing: Section 71 relates specifically to candidating.
- 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.

3.3 Those candidating for diaconal ministry will find the Rule of Life at Part 5 of Book IV.

3.4 Book VII of CPD sets out the expectations that the Methodist Church has of its members and, in particular, its ordained ministers. This information is in the form of ‘Guidance’ and there are 14 sections altogether, covering a wide variety of matters such as manse requirements, holidays, inter-faith marriages and issues of human sexuality.

Please Note: When you complete the C.1 Candidate’s Application Form 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.

Both volumes of the Constitutional Practice and Discipline (CPD) can be downloaded from the Methodist Church website here [CPD \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://CPD.methodist.org.uk)

4. REQUIREMENTS OF CANDIDATES

For Presbyteral and Diaconal Candidates SO 710 sets out the requirements. In the SO ‘the Church’ or ‘the Methodist Church’ signify ‘the Methodist Church in Britain’.

4.1. Candidates for the diaconate or the presbyterate in the Methodist Church shall have been baptized and shall have been a member of the Methodist Church in Britain in good standing for at least three years by 30 September 2022.

4.2. Candidates for presbyteral ministry shall be a local preacher. They must be fully accredited by 1st February 2023.

4.3. Candidates for diaconal ministry shall have completed an approved worship leaders’ programme by 1st February 2023. This means that the diaconal candidate has to have been welcomed as a Worship Leader by September 2017 or completed (and had assessed) the Worship Leader Portfolio or Portfolio A of the ‘Worship Leading and Preaching’ course which must be submitted not later than September 30th 2022 (because the next submission date would take them beyond the 1st February deadline).

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

- 4.5. Unless an exemption is granted in accordance with clause 4.6 below an offer will not be accepted unless the candidate meets such conditions of availability for stationing as are set out by the Conference at the time of acceptance (see 4.8 below).
- 4.6. The Connexional Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee shall make recommendations as to exemptions from the requirements of clause 4.5 above to the Ministerial Candidates Selection Committee, who shall have the power to grant or withhold such exemptions.
- 4.7. A person who was formerly a candidate for the presbyterate or the diaconate may not re-offer for either the presbyterate or the diaconate in the year following that in which his or her previous offer was declined unless advised to do so in writing by the Ministerial Candidates Selection Committee when communicating the Conference's decision.
- 4.8. There is no upper age limit for candidates but the Standing Orders of the Methodist Church (SO 710 (5)) requires all candidates (unless an exemption is granted) to be willing to serve for at least ten years before retirement. We therefore ask all candidates to indicate in writing that they fully intend to offer at least ten years in active ministry in the Methodist Church in Britain. This is done through a question on the application form. If you will be 54 or over on 1 September 2022, you may want to have a conversation with your Superintendent about the implications of making this offer.
- 4.9. Immigration and Residency requirements. Candidates who are accepted for training must demonstrate that they have a legal right to live and work in the United Kingdom. The objective in requesting proof of immigration status is to ensure that you can legally study and/or work here and at the end of training be lawfully deployed as a Methodist minister. If there are any uncertainties about your status, please refer to G.14 Immigration Guidance for Candidates.
- 4.10. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- All candidates are required to complete successfully a DBS check as a "Candidate for Ministry" prior to undertaking any training.
 - The instructions and login details for completing the Disclosure and Barring Online Application as well as the information on forms of verification will be sent to you via email on 1 December 2022.
 - Your completed form will need to be verified by the Candidates' Office. You will either need to send your original documents or signed photocopies by a verifier to candidates@methodistchurch.org.uk for this to be completed.
 - The DBS Application form and the three documents for verification should be completed no later than 12.00 noon on 25 January 2023.
 - The Church's policy on admission to Training Programmes and for the Selection and Appointment of Presbyters and Deacons with a Criminal Record is set out in appendix 1 of the C.1 Candidate's Application Form. If you have ever had any convictions, please inform the candidates office when you complete the application form.

4.11. If at any point in the process you wish to withdraw from your candidature, please do so in writing to candidates@methodistchurch.org.uk. There is no shame in withdrawing. This is a process of discernment so it can become clear that this is not the right step at any point in the process. It is important that you as a candidate take responsibility for this.

5. SELECTION CRITERIA

5.1. Your candidating offer will be assessed against G.4 Selection Criteria for Ordained Ministry (2016) which have been approved by the Methodist Conference. You are strongly advised to study them carefully. There are nine criteria, each with several sub-criteria. The criteria are as follows:

- 1 Vocation (Call and Commitment)
- 2 Vocation (Ministry in the Methodist Church in Britain)
- 3 Relationship with God
- 4 Personality and Character
- 5 Being in Relationship with Others
- 6 The Church's Ministry in God's World
- 7 Leadership and Collaboration
- 8 Learning and Understanding
- 9 Communication

5.2. At every stage of the candidating process, whether material is written or verbal, you will be assessed on these nine criteria. The feedback you will receive at every stage will indicate if you are satisfactorily offering evidence that you are meeting these criteria.

5.3. Generally you will be graded in one of four categories:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <u>1 Exceeds criteria</u> | You have more than met the required criteria grade, at the stage it is awarded |
| <u>2 Meets criteria</u> | You have met the required criteria grade at the stage it is awarded |
| <u>3 Does not yet meet the criteria</u> | You have not met the required criteria grade but you are showing potential that you could meet the criteria |
| <u>4 Does not meet the criteria</u> | This is also used when, in a section, you are graded several '3' grades so that it is not realistic to expect a satisfactory grade to be achieved in the time available. |

It is impossible to over estimate the value of reading through the nine criteria, and sub - criteria in order to present the very best of your offer to the Church.

5.4 2022-2023 is the first year in which you may candidate for specific or local contexts following the decisions made by the Conference in 2021 through the 'Changing Patterns of Ministry' report. You are strongly advised to read the report which can be found as one of the guidance forms for candidates (G.2), and also to read the application information in form C.1.2 and to discuss this with your Superintendent.

6. SUPPORT

6.1. Vocation Days and Exploring Ordained Ministry Days. In order to help you test the call of God, there are regional and Connexional days which focus on Vocation. For more details please see: [Called to Ordained Ministry? \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)

6.2. 4-way Meeting. Once you have spoken to your Superintendent about your intention to candidate, he or she will inform the District Candidates' Secretary who will arrange for a 4-way meeting to be held. In attendance will be: you, your Superintendent, the District Candidates Secretary and an Officer from the regional Learning Network. At this 4-way-meeting the Officer will draft an Individual Support Map for you.

The Agenda of the meeting will include questions around:

- Who will offer personal support to you?
- Who will offer pastoral support within the circuit?
- Who will arrange for prayer support?
- Who might the mentor be?
- Who will approach/appoint the mentor?
- Discussion about the type of placement you need? (further information about the placement is in the introduction to C.2 and also in the guidance document G.11).
- Who will make contact with the minister for the placement?
- Any additional support needed?
- What support your spouse, partner, family and significant others might find helpful and what can be offered?

6.3. You will be provided with details of the Regional Support Group. This is separate from any of the elements of discernment. It is there to provide a safe space for support. Some time will also be spent discussing the financial and time commitments of the candidating process. It is worth looking at G.9 The Costs of Candidating.

7. ADVICE ON FILLING IN YOUR FORMS

7.1. Your application forms will create a first impression of you, so both their appearance and their content matter. Please ensure that all the details are filled in with meticulous care.

7.2. The forms will be photocopied and reproduced for committee use so it is essential to type them as hand written forms are sometimes difficult to read and photocopy. Please use a clear typeface and black font colour.

7.3. All forms must be sent as word document attachments to candidates@methodistchurch.org.uk by the deadline date. Please do not send any forms as hard copies.

7.4. It is strongly recommended that you keep a hard or an electronic copy of all your completed forms, lest they should go missing. More importantly, this means you can review what you have written as you prepare to meet the various committees, since the interview committees will formulate some of their questions on the basis of the contents of your application forms.

- 7.5. In the event that you become a recommended candidate, some of the evidence in the file will be used during the formulation of your initial ministerial formation programme.
- 7.6. The information in the application file will then become the basis of your candidating file held by the Methodist Church in the Candidates' Office.
- 7.7. If you withdraw from the process at any stage, or if it is reported to the Conference that your offer of ministry is not recommended, papers relating to your application will be dealt with according to the Connexional Team Retention Schedules, which incorporate statutory retention periods. These schedules can be seen at [Data protection \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://Data.protection(methodist.org.uk))
- 7.8. Please send all forms as WORD documents, not PDF or JPEGs.

The Candidates' Office will be in touch with you throughout the process, and it is your responsibility to ensure that the contact details provided on your C.1 Candidate's Application Form are correct and kept up to date. Please let us know as soon as possible if there are any changes to your contact details.

8. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

The Methodist Church is mindful of its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to make any reasonable adjustments that you may require during the selection process, on account of any disability or impairment that you may have.

It is your responsibility to inform the Church of any specific support needs for each element of the selection process. Please let us know of any adjustments that you feel you need.

Candidates should also contact their District Candidates' Secretary to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made at circuit and district level.

9. OUTLINE AND TIMETABLE OF THE PROCESS FROM APPLICATION (DETAILS OF THE VARIOUS STAGES ARE GIVEN BELOW)

The Candidating process moves through three stages at circuit, district and connexional level with the recommendation being communicated after the Candidates' Selection Committee (CSC). The final decision is made each year at the Methodist Conference. All deadlines are important so please work to these actual dates. The processes that follow depend on deadlines being met.

Date	Element	Information	Responsibility
As soon as you reach a decision to explore candidating	Inform	Email the candidates office and state that you intend to candidate and copy the message to your superintendent and District Candidates Secretary. This is only an indication at this stage. This email does not oblige you to complete the application process, but it is	Candidate

		important that all parties are informed.	
As soon as possible	Circuit awareness	Ensure the candidate is planned to preach or lead worship (as applicable) around the circuit as much as possible. Alert the circuit meeting that there is a candidate.	Superintendent
As soon as possible	Referees	Discuss with the candidate who is appropriate to be a referee	Superintendent
As soon as possible	Guidance	Read G.7 guidance for superintendents	Superintendent
Before applying	Download forms	Download guidance and application forms from website	Candidate and Superintendent
Before applying	Assent to the doctrinal standards, uphold the discipline of the Methodist Church, and accept the obligations for stationing	In conversation with superintendent	Superintendent
Before applying	4-way meeting : candidate, superintendent, DCS, Learning Network officer	To prepare placement, mentor, and support map	District Candidates Secretary
Before applying	Discussion on context	If the candidate wishes to consider offering for a local or specific context, carefully read form C.1.2, ensure this is fully explored with the district Chair and/or Lay Stationing Representative and take advice where needed (from the Ministerial Coordinator if needed).	Superintendent Candidate DCS
In sufficient time to enable reflection in the portfolio. It is advisable to carry this out before October 2022	Placement – in the relevant order of ministry and not in the candidate’s own circuit	Arranged at the 4-way meeting	Learning Network officer Placement supervisor
Deadline 31 August 2022	Download application form C.1 and C.1.2 (if	From website	Candidate

	appropriate)		
Deadline 31 August 2022	Download form C.1.1	From website	Superintendent
September 2022 or earlier	Circuit Meeting	Candidate is introduced to the meeting, addresses the meeting and a vote is taken and reported on form C.4.1	Superintendent
Between September and November 2022. Deadline for receipt of reports 1 December 2022	2 assessed acts of worship for presbyteral candidates. 1 assessed act of worship and 1 assessed act of proclamation for diaconal candidates.	Reports prepared on C.3.2, C.3.3a, and C.3.3b (all forms are available on the website). Please read the guidance notes for these services carefully	Superintendent
Before 1 October 2022	Documents	Ensure you have verified the candidate's relevant passport pages and signed the appropriate section of the application form. Ensure the candidate sends the materials on time and that copies are kept.	Superintendent
Deadline 1 October 2022	Return completed forms C.1, C.1.1, C.1.2 (if appropriate), C.1.4 and verified copy of your passport page and visa where applicable.	By email (all forms must be returned electronically, typed and in word format. Hard copies or handwritten copies cannot be accepted. Please scan in original signatures.	Candidate Superintendent
Between 1 October and 2 December 2022	Diaconal conversation	Face to Face conversation between candidate and Warden and Deputy Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order. Report is produced.	Methodist Diaconal Order
By 1 October 2022	District forms	These will be available on the website – including the subject for the candidate's creative presentation	Candidates' office
15 October 2022	Open Day at Queen's Foundation	Opportunity to meet existing students and see the facilities at Queen's. Candidates are advised to	Queen's invite all candidates and their families

		attend. Further detail is available in form G.15.	
Deadline 24 November 2022	Portfolio C.2	By email	Candidate
Deadline 1 December 2022	Circuit Leadership Team report C.4 and Circuit meeting vote report form C.4.1	By email	Superintendent
Deadline for receipt of references 1 December 2022	Two referees are asked for references forms C.5 and C.5.1. If the candidate does not wish their employer to be contacted until after they are recommended for training, please make this clear where asked on the application form.	By email It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure their referees return references by the deadline.	Candidates' office
Deadline 1 December 2022	Warden's report	Report on diaconal candidates is returned to the Candidates' office	MDO
December 2022	DBS online application information sent to candidate	Instructions, login details and information on forms of verification	Candidates office
25 November 2022 to 29 December 2022	Portfolio assessment		Portfolio assessors
3 January 2023	Portfolio assessors moderation meeting		Portfolio assessors
By 6 January 2023	Portfolio reports	Assessments are emailed to candidates and copies to superintendents and DCSs	Candidates office
Deadline 26 January 2023	DBS application		Candidate
Between 7 January 2023 and 31 January 2023	District Candidates Committee		DCC Secretary and Chair of the District
Late January or early February 2023	Connexional Resilience Assessment	Appointment will be arranged, usually on zoom but face to face if required	Connexional Psychologist
Deadline 13 February 2023	District Committee forms D.1, D.2, D.3, D.4 are submitted to the candidates office	Forms sent to the office by email	District Candidates Secretary

Mid February 2023	Invitations to CSC are sent	Calling letter and reply slip	Candidates office
23 February 2023	Reply slip	Email reply slip confirming attendance at CSC, and any special requirements	Candidates
20-24 March 2023	Connexional Candidates Committee		Candidates will be given their particular 24 hours to be present
27 March 2023	Outcome of candidating announced	Letters and emails are sent to each candidate, DCC secretary, Chair, Superintendent and MDO Warden (for diaconal candidates)	Connexional Team
April 2023	Recommended candidates are required to complete Medical questionnaire and Allocations form	Candidates are asked to meet the well-being officer if necessary (usually by zoom).	Candidate
In the period between 24 April 2023 – 6 May 2023	Appeals are heard	Email correspondence with candidates who are appealing	Convenor of Appeals panel
Mid May 2023	Training allocations conversations and allocations committee meets	Each accepted candidate meets one Queen's tutor and one member of the Oversight Committee. This may be face to face at Queen's or on zoom.	Connexional team
Mid May 2023	'Where now?' Retreat for candidates who have not been recommended.		Connexional team
Mid May 2023	Accepted candidates receive information about their training pathway		Connexional team

10. APPLICATION

10.1. Standing Order 711 states: A candidate intending to offer for the diaconate or the presbyterate shall inform the Superintendent of the Circuit and, if different, the presbyter in pastoral charge of the church in which he or she is a member.

10.2. Register your interest

For the initial start of the process and to register your interest in candidating you need to email candidates@methodistchurch.org.uk and copy your Superintendent and District Candidate Secretary into the email to state that you are interested.

10.3. Application form

After registering your interest, download the application form C.1. from the website here [Candidating forms and information \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://methodist.org.uk) before 31 August 2022. Your superintendent will need to complete form C.1.1 part of the form. If you are candidating for a local or specific context please complete C.1.2 in conjunction with your Superintendent. The submission deadline for these three forms is 1 October 2022. If you have not submitted your forms by the deadline date, we will not be able to process your application.

10.4. On receipt of your signed and verified C.1 Candidate's Application Form, your name will be entered onto the Candidates' database and from here on the Candidates' Office will collate all information/evidence gathered throughout the process and store these confidentially on your personal file.

10.5. Due to the many stages to the candidating process, we must adhere to the deadlines in order to be ready for the next stage. **Please note that it is the responsibility of the candidate to make sure all reports and paperwork are submitted on time.** This is particularly important in the case of reports that may have been written some time before. Please do not assume that everything has been submitted, but double check before each deadline.

10.6. How the Church uses References

- It is good practice for any interviewing body to find out as much about a candidate as possible during their candidature. In the secular world most information about a candidate comes from their employment history or training period. Therefore, obtaining an objective reference from your employer or most recent employer, or a training institution, or an organisation where you have undertaken some voluntary work, should be of benefit to the Church and advantageous to you. If you would prefer for your employer not to be contacted for a reference until after your candidating offer has been tested, you have the opportunity to indicate that on the application form. If you are recommended for acceptance, this would then be conditional on receipt of this reference.
- We also seek a reference from a critical friend who can comment on your journey of discernment. This information will be shared with the Candidates' Selection Committee panel

10.7. Medical Assessments. If you are recommended, you will be required to complete a medical questionnaire. The Connexional Medical Committee will review this document and produce a report. You may then be required to attend a medical discussion meeting with the Connexional Wellbeing Adviser in order to assess any reasonable adjustments that may be needed for your training. Please be aware that the medical assessment process is currently under review and the process may change. You will be informed of any changes at the relevant point in the process.

11. DIACONAL CANDIDATES

Diaconal candidates will be invited to meet the Warden and Deputy Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order for a conversation. This will take place after the deadline for applications and before your portfolio is submitted. These conversations focus particularly on the Rule of Life and belonging to a religious order. A report from this conversation will be submitted to the District and Connexional candidates' committees.

12. CIRCUIT

12.1. Candidates for the diaconate or the presbyterate shall satisfy the superintendent that he or she:

- assents to the doctrinal standards set out in clause 4 of the Deed of Union and
- indicate that they are willing, on reception into Full Connexion, to uphold the discipline of the Church and
- to accept in particular the obligations to be at the disposal of the Conference for stationing which apply to the diaconate or to the presbyterate.
- In addition, a candidate for the diaconate shall indicate he or she is willing to accept the commitments entailed in becoming a full member of the Methodist Diaconal Order. (See SO 750).

12.2. The Superintendent shall also make a preliminary assessment on form C.1.1 'Superintendent's Assessment of Ability for Stationing' of what might reasonably be expected of the candidate's future availability for stationing and the terms and conditions of service under which she or he might serve. If you feel called to offer for a local or a specific context, please discuss this with your superintendent and complete form C.1.2 together. Please note that this is a change for 2022-2023 so take time to read form C.1.2 carefully.

12.3. Assessed Acts of Worship/Proclamation. You will be required to conduct two assessed acts of worship/proclamation, usually in different Circuits. Candidates for presbyteral ministry will be assessed on services of worship and preaching. Diaconal candidates will be assessed on a service of worship (if they are local preachers, this can include preaching) and an act of proclamation. The two acts of worship/proclamation must be completely different. They must not be held on the same day and they must not be based on the same lectionary readings or include any other material previously used in the other act of worship. They must not be conducted during your placement.

12.4. Appearing before the Circuit Meeting

- Candidates are often nervous about appearing before the Circuit Meeting but they also find the experience ultimately very affirming. Hopefully, whilst exploring your vocation, you may have had previous experience of observing or attending the Circuit Meeting, so will know what to expect. Though it may be a large gathering, there will be people you know. Your minister and representatives from your church will be there.
- This is the point at which your interest in ordained ministry becomes more publicly known. You will be presented to the Circuit Meeting by two of its members (SO 711(3)). Usually, your Superintendent will address the meeting,

explaining their role in the candidating process. Then they will formally present you to the meeting as a candidate, speaking on your behalf, drawing upon some of the evidence within the C.4 Circuit Leadership Team Report Form, and introducing you so that you can briefly address the meeting. The second person may add a few words, either then and/or after you have spoken.

- Make sure that you have discussed beforehand with your Superintendent what is to happen, so that you can prepare yourself carefully for the meeting. The meeting will want to hear of your sense of call, how you have explored that call and your reason for offering as a candidate for the particular order of ministry (presbyteral or diaconal) at this point in your life.
- The Circuit Meeting members will not have seen your C.1 Candidate's Application Form, so they will base their judgement upon what they know of you and what they hear at the meeting.
- The meeting votes by secret ballot and the vote is reported to the district and connexional stages of the process. You will be informed of the vote and of the meeting's discussion.
- It might be a good idea to ask someone who was present and known to you, whose judgement you trust, to give you some informal feedback that might help you in your later self-presentation.
- The Circuit Meeting is probably the largest single body of people that you will have to address during the candidating process.
- Please note that in the *unusual* circumstance that you are unable to be present, it is possible for the Superintendent to make representations on your behalf and for a vote to be taken in your absence. However, this is a rare occurrence.
- If the Circuit Meeting is not supportive of your candidacy you may nevertheless exercise the right to continue, progressing to the next stage of the process, the District Candidates' Committee.
- Immediately after the Circuit Meeting, your Superintendent will complete and email a signed hard copy of the vote on the form C.4.1 Circuit Meeting Vote Report Form to the Candidates' Office.

13. PORTFOLIO

- 13.1. A central element of the candidating process is the submission of a portfolio of experience demonstrating your sustained and systematic engagement in a process of vocational exploration and discernment. At your support meeting, consideration will be given to finding a Mentor to assist you with writing your portfolio. Make sure that they have a copy of G.10 Guidance for Portfolio Mentors. It is important to begin work on your portfolio. This can be started even before you alert the Connexional Team of your interest.
- 13.2. There are Portfolio Support Days which can help you prepare your portfolio. Details can be found on the Methodist Church website here: [Support for Candidates \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/support-for-candidates)
- 13.3. Preparing the portfolio is the part of the process that will demand the most time and planning. The C.2 Candidating Portfolio Guidance document will give you all the information you need. The deadline for submission of the portfolio is 24 November 2022. Please ensure that you read the guidance carefully and do not exceed the word count in any section because this could result in your portfolio being graded as 'Unsatisfactory'.
- 13.4. The candidating portfolio is assessed and the assessment sheet will be sent by email to you, your Superintendent and District Candidate Secretary. This information is also shared with the district and connexional committees. The portfolio and the assessment sheet become part of the discussion with you about your learning, your understanding and your call. This is a part of your discernment. The report from the assessor may indicate areas of your reflection that need further exploration. Please take these seriously and give thought to them before you meet the District Committee.
- 13.5. If you are accepted, your portfolio will be shared with the training institution, so that it can assess your level of work.
- 13.6. Portfolios are graded from 1-4:
- 1 : exceeds the criteria
 - 2 : meets the criteria
 - 3 : does not yet meet the criteria but shows potential
 - 4 : does not meet the criteria
- 13.7. Standing order 710(2) states that all candidates must submit a portfolio of experience and either:
- satisfy a connexional assessment panel, that the portfolio is of the required standard, as set by the responsible member of the Connexional Team, of the candidate's sustained and systematic engagement in a process of vocational exploration and discernment;
 - or
 - if your portfolio is graded 3 or 4, it is deemed to be unsatisfactory. In that case you will be required to discuss with the District Candidates' Committee whether you should still be allowed to proceed with your candidature. You should ask your Mentor and Superintendent to help you prepare for this discussion. The

District Candidates' Committee will make a declaration regarding your portfolio as part of their assessment.

13.8. Resource List

As part of the discussion about engagement with learning and contemporary culture in the District Committee and the Connexional Committee, we ask you to provide some information about books and cultural events that you have read, seen, or been part of in this last year. This is included within your portfolio. The resource list should comprise of:

- a theological book
- a non-theological book (i.e. a novel or other nonfiction book)
- a film or theatre performance
- an exhibition, display or cultural event that you have seen recently.

Please list **one** resource **per section**

You will be expected to be able to share your thoughts about your chosen items.

14. DISTRICT CANDIDATES COMMITTEE (DCC)

14.1. Committee members are carefully selected by their District Synods to represent the membership of the churches in the District and they will include members experienced in interviewing.

14.2. Creative Presentation

- There is a given topic for all candidates on which you are asked to make a creative presentation to the DCC. The D.5 DCC Candidate's Creative Presentation Guidance will be uploaded on the Methodist Church website on 01 October 2022.
- The range of what you might offer as a creative presentation is vast. You could (for example) prepare a banner or painting, compose a hymn (with new or existing music), write (and maybe perform) poem or short drama, dance or mime, or make and play a board game.
- Please be aware that DCCs may need to be held in virtual form, which will have an impact on the medium you choose to use.
- Please contact your District Candidates Secretary (DCS) to indicate to them what medium you would like to use at the DCC meeting, particularly if you need any additional resources. The DCS will give you plenty of notice if the DCC has to be held virtually.
- At the DCC meeting, present your visual or verbal material using electronic media if you wish (but have hard copy as back up). You will have a maximum of 10 minutes to present your material, so ensure it addresses the topic given to you (which will be known to the Committee). The Committee will then explore this with you.

14.3. The meeting will be chaired by a District Chair, but not necessarily by your Chair. It is possible that the DCC could be composed of members from two or more District Synods. If the Chair of another District is chairing the proceedings, your District Chair will be a member of the committee. Apart from the person who chairs the meeting, the DCC includes the DCS, who would have liaised with you previously and will act as secretary, and between 10 and 13 others of whom at least five will be lay people, three presbyters and one a deacon.

- 14.4. The DCS will already have been hard at work, behind the scenes, ensuring that the Committee has all the available evidence to hand. They will also be responsible for making sure that the evidence gathered in the meeting, and the decisions and outcomes it reaches, are properly recorded and sent to the Candidates' office.
- 14.5. You may feel that you will be exposed to the scrutiny of strangers. However, do not be afraid, they will want to hear of your journey of faith and commitment. Furthermore, you will not be alone or unsupported. Every candidate will have the support of their own Superintendent/minister and may also be accompanied by someone who has guided them in the process of vocational discernment.
- 14.6. You will not be interviewed at district level by a relative or a close friend since this would be unfair to you and to others who are to be interviewed. So the DCS will discuss the appropriate boundaries with you and determine whether there is any member of the Committee who should declare a relationship with you that could make them ineligible to interview you.
- 14.7. During the day each candidate will meet with committee members in small groups where focused conversations will explore specific areas and then at the end of the day with the whole district committee. In some districts you will make your creative presentation first, then have the small group conversations and then the conversation with the whole committee. In others the creative presentation happens as part of the whole committee conversation. Your DCS will inform you of the way the process will operate for you.
- 14.8. You should anticipate spending at least half a day at the DCC, about an hour and a half with the small-groups and full committee and some time waiting as they deliberate. As you wait between different parts of the day's process you will probably have ample opportunity for conversation with those who have accompanied you. If, however, you are someone who would prefer to have the time and space for quiet contemplation, do let your supporters know.
- 14.9. The district part of the process culminates in the interview with the full panel of the DCC. All candidates will have the opportunity to discuss their sense of vocation with the full committee.
- 14.10. Some Districts choose to report the outcome of the interview to you before you go home. The rules for the conduct of the DCC require it to report the outcome to you more formally no later than 72 hours after the committee has met.
- 14.11. You will be asked to sign the District Report form to say that you have seen it and the supporting documentation that is to go forward to the Connexional Selection Committee. The forms will be sent as attachments by email to the Candidates' Office by 13 February 2022.
- 14.12. Those who have accompanied you to the meeting will be able to offer both feedback (including advice about how to improve your interview technique) and pastoral support, as you decide whether to go forward to the Connexional Committee.

14.13. Even if the DCC, after reflection upon their feedback to you and upon the way you presented yourself to them, is not supportive of your candidacy, you may nevertheless exercise the right to continue, progressing to the next stage of the process. However, if your portfolio was marked 'unsatisfactory' the DCC will need to submit a declaration about the standard of your portfolio to enable you to proceed.

15. RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT

15.1. The Candidates' Office will send your contact details to the Connexional Psychologist who will make an appointment with you in order to carry out a resilience assessment in late January or early February 2023. This is an opportunity to talk about yourself with a professional assessor who is not a member of the selection committees. The appointment will last for about one and half hours. The appointment will take place by video conferencing. If you feel strongly that you would prefer a face to face meeting instead, please request this when the psychologist sets up the appointment.

15.2. Many people find this a valuable process though you can expect the psychologist to want to know about painful or difficult areas of life, both past and present, as well as the more polished areas we tend to present to strangers. In other words, they will be looking to get as full a picture of you as possible. The psychologist will then write a report of your meeting and will share the report with you for your consent and any comments, before sending it to the candidates' office. It will be seen by those who interview you at the Candidates' Selection Committee and could also be seen by the appeals panel if you appeal the recommendation of CSC.

15.3. The Connexional psychologist is in contact with the Connexional Selection Committee and is able to act in a consultative capacity to the selection panels.

16. CONNEXIONAL CANDIDATES COMMITTEE (CSC)

16.1. Those who candidate for ministry in the Methodist Church, either as a presbyter or as a deacon, offer to serve and to represent the whole Church. It is important, therefore, that the body that decides whether or not an offer is accepted is the Conference and that the Connexional committee makes the final recommendation to the Conference.

16.2. The Candidates' Selection Committee is the body that recommends to the Conference the names of candidates to be accepted for pre-ordination training for:

- diaconal ministry and membership of the Methodist Diaconal Order or
- presbyteral ministry in the Methodist Church.

16.3. The Committee is appointed by the Conference and reports directly to it. It has, altogether, over 70 members nominated by the Conference to represent the life of the Church. They are a carefully balanced mixture of ordained presbyters, ordained deacons and lay people, many having experience and skills in interviewing, counselling or education. Some have been engaged in training student ministers. Some have particular interests in mission in this country and the World Church. The Committee will be divided, for most of its work, into small panels of six to eight people. You will be interviewed by two of these panel members in three 'triangle' conversations, as well as

by the whole panel. You will also be asked to take part in a group exercise. Some candidates are invited to meet a separate Panel of Reference. This does not mean that there are any difficulties with your candidating, just that the panel wanted some particular issues to be explored further with you.

16.4. The Committee works particularly with your Circuits and District to bring together information to help the Church to make its decision. Some people will have known you well for some time; others will have come to know you through the process of vocational exploration. The Circuit and the District have been asked to express their judgement that you, as a person they know, are someone in whom they affirm continuing signs of a calling to a particular order of ministry. Referees have provided evidence for the committees about your recent development. All these people have accompanied you in education, discernment and formation, and their reports help CSC to make a recommendation to the Conference as to whether you should enter training for ordained ministry as a presbyter or deacon in the Methodist Church.

16.5. The dates of CSC are Monday 20 March 2023 to Friday 24 March 2023. You will be required to attend for a 24 hour period in that week (2pm one day to 2pm the next day). We will let you know which 24 hours in your invitation letter in mid-February 2023. This letter you will receive inviting you to the CSC will set out full details of:

- The arrangements at the conference centre, and travel instructions
- The timetable
- The interview process
- How you will meet the committee members
- The role of the chaplains
- How the outcome is communicated
- Your right of appeal

16.6. When you prepare to attend CSC you will be aware of its importance in the whole process. In choosing what to wear, we encourage candidates and Committee members to feel comfortable but also to dress formally in recognition of the importance of the discernment we are undertaking together. Please note however, that the wearing of clerical dress is reserved for the chaplaincy team.

16.7. Please also note that your supporters are not present at CSC and should not enter the venue, even if they have come to collect you at the conclusion of the process. You will be cared for through CSC by a dedicated team of chaplains.

16.8. Panels of Reference comprise 3 members of CSC who are separate from the panels and therefore they are people who have not previously interviewed you. They will have been asked by the panel who have interviewed you to focus their conversation on one or two issues. Being asked to see a Panel of Reference does not mean that anything has gone wrong. This is simply an opportunity for further conversation to be held on specific issues. You will be accompanied to the Panel of Reference by a member of the panel who have interviewed you. Please be aware that the conversation in a Panel of Reference will be recorded for reference purposes.

17. THE COMMITTEE'S DECISION

- 17.1. When the CSC has reached its decision it will recommend one of three categories
- Category 1 - Recommended for acceptance and to proceed to pre-ordination training.
 - Category 2 - Conditionally recommended - the condition must be something that is measureable and possible for you to fulfil within three years. Once you have fulfilled it you may proceed to pre-ordination training.
 - Category 3 - Not recommended - the offer for ordained ministry is to be declined.

Please be aware that if a panel vote is exactly divided, that is not a vote in favour and therefore the decision is category 3.

- 17.2. The outcome letter you are sent contains some information regarding the criteria you have met or not met. Further verbal feedback by telephone can be given if requested. Please be aware that the outcome letter is the only form of written feedback that is offered.

- 17.3. If you are not recommended there is an appeals procedure, details of which will be given to you when you receive your outcome letter. You will also be invited to attend the 'Where Now?' retreat which is a gift from the Connexion to help you discern God's call and your continued journey of faith.

- 17.4. In the past candidates have been asked not to share the outcome of their candidating on any social media platform. This is in order to be sensitive to those who have not been recommended, and also to recognise that the outcome is not confirmed until the Conference. However it is now recognised that even if the candidate does not share the news on social media, others might. Also increasingly churches are using streaming and online platforms in communicating their notices. Therefore candidates and others are now permitted to share the news on social media but they are asked to do this carefully and sensitively. The outcome can also be shared sensitively in church notices including worship that is live streamed or recorded.

- 17.5. All the recommendations (including the decisions on appeals) are given to the Conference Diaconal Committee (for diaconal candidates) or the Presbyteral Session of the Conference (for presbyteral candidates). The Conference also notes with regret that some offers have to be declined.

- 17.6. In its Representative Session, the Conference moves to accept the report of the Selection Committees, by Standing Vote. Prayer is offered for all those who have shared in this process.

- 17.7. After the Committee, for those to be recommended, decisions will be made about pre-ordination training and they will be invited to discuss their future training needs. The letter informing you of your recommendation will explain when and how the decisions in respect of your pre-ordination training will be made.

18. THE WORK OF GOD GOES ON

Our prayer is that together we may discern the manner in which you may respond to God's calling in your life and within the life of the Church.

For all who have engaged with the process there will be the opportunity to reflect upon what has transpired and to offer ourselves anew to God.

*God of power and grace,
may the boldness of your Spirit transform us,
the gentleness of your Spirit lead us,
the gifts of your Spirit equip us,
to serve you in the church and the world
now and always.
Amen*

The Candidates' Office, The Ministries Team, The Methodist Church
candidates@methodistchurch.org.uk

All the information you need for candidating will be on the Methodist Website: [Candidating for ministry \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/candidating)