

## CANDIDATING FOR ORDAINED MINISTRY 2022-2023

### G.10 GUIDANCE FOR PORTFOLIO MENTORS

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Working with a mentor is a key element to help candidates to develop their reflective skills, as they prepare their portfolio. The mentor acts as a 'critical friend' to accompany the candidate through this process. Thank you for your willingness to share your expertise and your time in this way.

##### 1.1. The role of the mentor is:

- To help the candidate to reflect analytically on their experience;
- To help the candidate construct a learning plan and to monitor development;
- To guide the candidate's reading;
- To help the candidate to select the evidence to put in their portfolio;
- To help the candidate to build their portfolio;
- To comment on both draft material and the completed portfolio.

##### 1.2. Candidates need to work with their mentor by:

- Contacting them and having regular meetings;
- Providing work well before deadlines to give the mentor time to read it and respond.

##### 1.3. Mentors need to:

- Be a critical friend;
- Read and understand all of the portfolio requirements;
- Appreciate the purpose the portfolio is intending to fulfil;
- Listen, summarise and help the candidate clarify what they want to say;
- Encourage the candidate to read widely;
- Set a timetable;
- Help the candidate to prioritise;
- Ask them what they mean.

##### 1.4. Mentors are not:

- Subject specialists in all areas;
- Providers of pastoral care;
- Spiritual directors;
- Supervisors of the candidate's practice-based learning;
- Assessors. Please do not be tempted to inform the candidate of the assessment you would make of their portfolio if you were one of the assessors. That can

lead to difficulty if the actual report differs from the presumed one and it is not part of the role you are being asked to carry out.

*Please read form G.19 which gives guidance on placements in the light of Covid19*

## **2. HELPING A CANDIDATE TO PREPARE THEIR PORTFOLIO**

- 2.1. It is important to begin work on the portfolio as early as possible. It can be started even before the candidate alerts the Connexional Team of his or her intention to candidate.
- 2.2. Insist the candidate follows the portfolio guidance, particularly the word count and the inclusion of the placement report in the portfolio. The guidance is there to help, and accurately following instructions is a discipline that the candidate needs to acquire early on. Candidates who do not abide by the word count will have their portfolios assessed as either 'does not yet meet the criteria' or 'does not meet the criteria' (grades 3 or 4 – both of which are regarded as unsatisfactory). There is no lee-way on this. They need to check the word count carefully and state the actual number of words they have used for each section of the portfolio.
- 2.3. It makes a difference if the portfolio is set out clearly, so please help the candidate to guide the reader through the story, to focus on the questions and to be selective.
- 2.4. Writing the portfolio can feel like a very daunting task, so please help the candidate to break it down into manageable sections.
- 2.5. Encourage the candidate to tell their story openly and honestly; there is no 'right' answer.
- 2.6. The description of the candidate's journey of faith and evidence of a process of discernment is really important. Help them to be clear and concise. If they have candidated before, help them to include reflections on that experience and on how they have developed since.
- 2.7. Grasping the difference between presbyteral, diaconal and lay ministry is essential. It might be helpful if you go through the ordination services in the Methodist Worship Book with the candidate. The candidate should also read G.1 'The 2019 Conference Report on the Diaconate', G.2 'Changing Patterns of Ministry' Report and G.3 'What is a Presbyter?' Help them to think of lay ministry in terms of discipleship in the world and not only lay roles in the church.
- 2.8. Help the candidate to express their understanding in their own words. Stock answers, or quotations from websites or elsewhere can leave a candidate open to challenge. Please resist the temptation to write any sections of the portfolio for the candidate. The portfolio must be their own work. It will indicate to the training institution their understanding and ability to reflect if they become a recommended candidate.

## **3. WHAT MAKES A GOOD PORTFOLIO?**

- 3.1. Candidates should offer their own reflections and arguments, but also that they indicate further reading which they have explored. It is important to identify sources

and make it clear if they are quoting from another source. Using footnotes is fine, but footnotes should not include material that is essential to the portfolio.

- 3.2. Help the candidate to remember that this is learning related to an application process for ordained ministry in the Methodist Church. If they keep that purpose in mind, then the learning reflections, related to purpose, are more likely to touch on God, theology, community, relationships, justice, sharing, fellowship, self-awareness, and being one of the followers of Jesus.
- 3.3. Portfolios must not have appendices containing any additional material. All that the candidate wishes to submit must be within the body of the portfolio and should follow the structure outlined in document C.2.
- 3.4. The Assessors will be looking for evidence that the candidate meets some of the criteria set out in the document G.4 Selection Criteria for Ordained Ministry, approved by the Conference in 2016. It is available on the website.
- 3.5. Apart from indicating if the portfolio is judged to have met the criteria, the assessors will provide feedback to the candidate and to the district and the connexion, which should be helpful in their ongoing development.
- 3.6. The Portfolio is assessed at Level 4 at H.E., the same level as the local preachers' training course, and which is comparable to A level standard.
- 3.7. Please note that the grades given for the portfolio match those used throughout the rest of the candidating process:
  - 1 – exceeds criteria
  - 2 – meets criteria
  - 3 – does not yet meet criteria
  - 4 – does not meet criteriaIf it is graded 3 or 4, it is deemed to be unsatisfactory.

#### **4. THE PORTFOLIO AND THE CRITERIA**

- 4.1 The Portfolio is intended as a rounded piece of work which helps the Church to share the journey of candidating. It is not used as a check-list against the Conference criteria, but below is an indication of how some of the criteria (roughly) correspond to the parts of the Portfolio.

##### **Vocation (Calling and Commitment) (Criterion 1)**

Good portfolios will give a clear description of a person's journey of faith, and how they have discerned their sense of call. They will evidence an understanding of the distinctions between the different orders of ministry (presbyteral, diaconal and lay), and why they believe themselves to be called to a particular one.

**Vocation (Ministry in the Methodist Church in Britain) (Criterion 2)**

There will be evidence of the capacity to think theologically about ministry in the Church in Britain and an understanding of Methodist doctrinal emphases, Methodist heritage and Methodist polity.

**The Church's Ministry in God's World (Criterion 6)**

There will be evidence that the candidate has been able to reflect with depth on the practical outworkings of ministry from their placement. They will show an awareness of the church's role in its community, how the ministry experienced might relate to other Christian traditions or other faiths, and why this might be important today.

**Learning and Understanding (Criterion 8)**

Here there will be evidence of a candidate's capacity to benefit from initial ministerial learning. This will include the capacity to think theologically and apply such thinking to practice. There will be evidence that the candidate has engaged with a course of study and can demonstrate having learnt some things as a result of undertaking the course.

**Ability to develop administrative skills (Criterion 7.8)**

Administration is a necessary element of ministry in the modern world. The way the candidate structures, writes and presents their portfolio, and the way they respond to the guidance given, will indicate this criterion.

**Communication (Criterion 9)**

The candidate's abilities in communicating through the written word will be evident through the portfolio.

## **5. THE CANDIDATES' NEXT STEPS**

The official support provided by the mentor ends once the candidate submits their portfolio, but mentors often choose to keep in touch with candidates to offer further informal support.

### **5.1. Assessment of the portfolio**

Portfolio mentors will not automatically see the assessors' report on the portfolio but candidates may choose to share it with their mentor. It may be that the report and assessment grade is not the one the mentor might have expected. Please help the candidate to address the issues raised in the report if they ask for that support, even if the issues are not ones that you might have identified if you had been assessing it.

### **5.2. Preparing for the District Committee**

If the candidate asks for continued support from their mentor, it is most helpful to work with them on identifying the questions that might be asked of them at the District Committee based on the portfolio assessment report, and considering how they might respond.