

## Appeals Processes

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1. The Ministries Committee has given consideration to the various ways in which decisions of oversight bodies relating to individual ministers in training and others are reviewed or appealed. Over the last few years there has been some dissatisfaction when decisions have been overturned which, at worst, has diminished the trust between different bodies on which processes depend.
2. A meeting between representatives of the different committees was held in November 2019 and proposals for change brought to the Ministries Committee. The committee recognized the importance to the questions being asked and the frustrations that can occur when a body has to work with an individual who has successfully appealed a recommendation. The committee was pleased to note in June 2021 that improved communication between oversight bodies has eased some of the difficulties.
3. The committee also noted the complexity of some of the processes within the Standing Orders. In the case of those in training for ministry, these relate to a time when there was more than one local oversight committee for students and the committee noted that the role and constitution of the Ministerial Candidates and Probationers' Oversight Committee (MCPOC) has been changing (and may need further to change) in the light of the current training provision.
4. The committee also noted a lack of clarity and the potential for confusion around some of the Standing Orders and the multiple layers of appeal that are sometimes open to candidates, probationers, or ministers.
5. The committee believes that the time has come to look again at processes of appeal and review and the cognate Standing Orders. In particular, the committee believes that the following should be reviewed:
  - Connexional Candidates Selection Committee recommendations
  - Allocation of training pathway for pre-ordination training
  - Recommendations regarding ministerial transfer into full connexion
  - Discontinuance as student minister or probationer minister
  - Appealing decisions of the Connexional Review Committee
6. It would also be pertinent for those reviewing these processes to ask, in consultation with the Faith and Order and Law and Polity Committees, what principles guide our processes of appeal and whether reflection on this question should influence other appeal processes.
7. It is therefore suggested that a small task group be established comprising:
  - An ex President or ex Vice President as Chair
  - A member of the Connexional Team engaged in these matters as Convenor
  - A representative of the Law and Polity Committee
  - A representative of the Faith and Order Committee
  - The Chair or Convenor of the Candidates' Appeals Committees
  - A member of a recent Connexional Review (030) Committee
  - A representative of MCPOC
  - One of the co-chairs of the Ministerial Candidates Selection Committee

8. The terms of reference for the task group are proposed as:

- To explore the relationship between the Church's understanding of discernment and the 'right' to appeal decisions.
- To review the current Standing Orders on appeals/reviews for candidates and ministers in training and to consider if these might be clarified and simplified
- To review the timescales of appeal processes.
- To consider the implications of ministers in training returning to the context in which an original (but overturned) decision for discontinuance was made.
- To ensure that processes include the principles of justice, dignity and solidarity and compliance legislation
- To review the protocols for the hearings of appeals
- To report in the first instance to the Ministries Committee in June 2022.

**\*\*\*RESOLUTIONS**

**85/1. The Council receives the report.**

**85/2. The Council directs that a task group be established as in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the report.**