

CANDIDATING FOR ORDAINED MINISTRY

G.10 GUIDANCE FOR PORTFOLIO MENTORS 2020-2021

1. INTRODUCTION

Working with a mentor is a key element to help candidates to develop their reflective skills, as they prepare their portfolio. Ideally, the mentor will be someone with experience in ministry or training, who can act as a 'critical friend' to accompany the candidate through this process.

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 are not:

- Subject specialists in all areas;
- Providers of pastoral care;
- Spiritual directors;
- Supervisors of the candidate's practice-based learning.

1.4. 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.

Thank you for your willingness to share your expertise and your time in this way.

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 body of 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 marked as 'unsatisfactory' (does not meet the criteria).
- 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. 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.2 What is a Deacon? And G.3 What is a Presbyterian? 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 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. It is best if candidates offer their own reflections and arguments, but also that they indicate further reading. It is important to identify sources. Using footnotes is fine, but they 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. Appendices should be kept to a minimum. Discourage the candidate from filling the appendices with unnecessary and unrelated items.
- 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 be satisfactory, the assessors will provide feedback to the district and the connexion, and to candidates 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 now 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

Assessors will be looking in the portfolio for evidence of particular criteria. Please read these through carefully and note the sub-criteria in each case. Full details of the criteria can be found in G.4. The particular criteria are :

4.1. 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. This is an area that candidates often struggle with so please help them to express their particular calling clearly.

4.2. 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 to show understanding about different orders of ministry and the concept of the Ministry of the People of God.

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

There will be evidence of an understanding of Methodist doctrinal emphases, Methodist heritage and Methodist polity, how this might relate to other Christian traditions or other faiths, and why this might be important today.

4.4. Learning and Understanding (Criterion 8)

Here there will be evidence of the candidate's capacity to benefit from initial ministerial learning. This will include the capacity to become theologically literate and to think theologically and apply such thinking to practice. This study in this section does not necessarily have to be theological, and in fact it is often better if it is not. It could be a course on first-aid or a language or a work based training event on health and safety; the important thing being that the candidate engages with it and can demonstrate having learnt some things as a result of undertaking the course/event. Please draw the candidate's attention to the rubric about what does and does not qualify as a course in this section.

4.5. Ability to develop administrative skills (Criterion 7.8)

4.6. Communication (Criterion 9)