

ASSESSED SERVICES FOR PERSONS ON TRIAL

What are Assessed Services?

The Local Preachers' Meeting provides regular opportunities for those in training to lead worship in the presence of others who can provide constructive feedback to assist their development. For those on trial, Standing Order 564B (5) requires **...one service every quarter to be conducted in the presence of another local preacher, who presents a brief report to the meeting.**

In addition, there are detailed requirements in Standing Order 566 for Trial Services to be conducted in the quarter before their first and second interviews. If a Trial Service takes place, this meets the requirement for an Assessed Service for the quarter.

For those in training as worship leaders, the requirement is not specified, but a quarterly assessed service is a good objective, to be arranged in collaboration with the worship leader's home church.

Assessed services enable the student to receive and reflect on feedback from other preachers and worship leaders so that they can assess their development as practitioners. They also help the Local Preachers' Meeting in their essential task of discerning the call of the preacher or worship leader.

What the Student does

The student uses the **Service Planning and Reflection Form** for each of the quarterly assessed services, and also for their Trial Services. The form guides the student through the process of planning and preparation, and reflection afterwards. Sections that do not apply can be omitted, although Item 2b (exegesis) should be completed in all cases: this is a core skill for all those who lead worship and preach.

The form is described fully in the **Guide to Portfolios**, and both the Guide and the Form can be downloaded at www.methodist.org.uk/wlp3. Note that students studying with WLP 3.0 are not required to include material for assessed services in their portfolios.¹

The student should take the opportunity to talk to their mentor about each assessed service, before and after if possible. The **Service Planning and Reflection Form** should be the basis of these conversations and the student should record insights from the conversations on the form, together with outcomes from conversation with the Assessor.

Before the service, the student should make contact with the assessor, and provide them with a copy of the order of service to assist them with their assessment.

After the service, when the **Service Planning and Reflection Form** is complete, the student sends it to their Tutor. There is no need to provide a copy of this form to the Local Preachers' Meeting.

What the Mentor does

The mentor is critical friend who accompanies the student throughout their training. The mentor should (if possible) to talk to their student before and after each assessed service. The **Service Planning and Reflection Form** should be the basis of this conversation and the student will record insights from the conversations on the form.

If the mentor happens also to be the assessor for a service, see the next section.

What the Assessor does

The assessor appointed by the Local Preachers' Meeting attends the service and participates in worship, whilst also noting any observations on the conduct and content of the service. The assessor

¹ This guidance assumes WLP 3.0 but basic requirements for quarterly assessed services apply to all versions.

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may be the student's mentor, although any local preacher may be the assessor and feedback from a variety of assessors is helpful.

At a convenient point following the service, the assessor discusses the service with the student, using the **Worship & Preaching Feedback Form** as the basis for the conversation. The form can be downloaded from www.methodist.org.uk/wlp3. Note that it may not be appropriate to hold the conversation immediately after the service as the preacher may wish to speak with the congregation or reflect on the service before receiving feedback.

The conversation should be honest and constructive, and the agreed outcomes should be recorded on the above form, with a copy provided to the Local Preachers' Secretary and the person on trial. The assessor will be asked at the next Local Preachers' Meeting to give a brief report on the service.

What the Tutor does

The tutor's role is to accompany the student through the WLP course. The course includes various projects which assess elements of service and sermon preparation and delivery, but there is no requirement in WLP 3.0 to include a range of completed services in the portfolio.

By having sight of the **Service Planning and Reflection Form** for each of the student's quarterly assessed services, the tutor gains a picture of the student's development as a practitioner. Tutors are encouraged to look particularly for evidence that the student is practicing good exegesis, drawing on a range of theological ideas and resources, taking account of the context for worship and displaying empathy with the differing needs of congregations. The student and tutor may wish to reflect on these topics in their conversations.

What the Local Preachers' Secretary does

The Local Preachers' Secretary should seek to ensure that the circuit provides opportunities for assessed services each quarter. Assessed services should include as wide a range of different contexts for worship as the circuit can reasonably provide, including examples² of:

1. **Prayers** – examples of a wide variety of forms of prayer.
2. **Planning and leading** of whole services.
3. Use of **creativity** in worship, e.g. music, drama, art, dance, technology etc.
4. **Collaboration** in leading worship, incorporating the contributions of others.
5. **Preaching**, both in a conventional form and in innovative ways, e.g. through discussion, drama, creative media or storytelling.
6. Worship in a **multi-generational** context. This can be all-age worship or a section of a service where several generations are expected to be present.
7. Services relating to specific **seasons** of the Christian year, such as Advent, Lent and Pentecost.

A **Worship Record Sheet** is available on the LP Secretaries' page of the Methodist website to help to track that these requirements are being satisfied. It is also good practice for the Local Preachers' Secretary to keep a copy of the **Worship & Preaching Feedback Forms** for assessed services in case they need to be referred to at key decision points in the discernment process.

The Local Preachers' Secretary should ensure that when the agenda for each meeting is set, sufficient time is allowed for a conversation (to include the person on trial) following each assessed service.

Bob Bartindale, Officer for Worship & Local Preachers, April 2021.

² See Guide to Portfolios, chapter 4 for more details.