

## Notes and Guidance | Guidelines with regards to this application, for answering questions on the application form and clarifying eligibility, and the criteria that will be used to judge applications

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You are applying for funding from the Methodist Church to support your proposed higher education (HE) study. This is usually for a taught Masters, or a research degree, in a theological subject area<sup>1</sup>. You are not applying to a funding agency but are applying to be supported by the Methodist Church so that you and your ministry will be enhanced as a benefit to and resource of the Methodist Church. This application should be considered as a further development of your relationship with the Church. You are encouraged to consider study at one the Centres of the Learning Network or another British Methodist related HE institution, although study at other British HE institutions will be supported.

We strongly encourage you to seek a conversation if it would help your discernment in this process in any respect. Please be in touch with:

Jonathan Dean (Director of Learning for Ministry) on [deanj@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:deanj@methodistchurch.org.uk) **OR**

Nicola Price-Tebbutt (Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee) on [price-tebbutn@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:price-tebbutn@methodistchurch.org.uk)

The questions on the application form are each asked for a particular reason. The answers you provide will enable your application to be assessed against fixed criteria for funding. The publication of the criteria is intended to ensure transparency and to assist you when writing your application. Before submitting your application it is advisable to think about whether your application fulfils these criteria. It is important that your answers take into account these criteria in order to give you the best chance of success. Please note that your application form will also be taken as evidence of your ability to reflect, complete tasks and clearly convey relevant information.

### Section 1

Overall eligibility:

All members of The Methodist Church, lay and ordained, are eligible. Where there is a limitation to funding being available priority will be given as follows to:

- a. those applicants from ethnic minorities.
- b. those who will be 55 or younger after the award is completed.
- c. those applicants who have indicated an interest in serving as a theological educator and whose background demonstrates this potential ability.
- d. those who are deemed not to have access to other potential sources of funding related to a specific role.
- e. those who have not received any funding from The Methodist Church for a research project or higher degree before.

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<sup>1</sup> Which can be interpreted widely (e.g. missiology, systematics, ethics, pastoral theology, Church history, biblical scholarship, liturgy and worship etc.): but will need to be evidenced for money to be awarded, at least in the initial grant-making process. It may be possible to support non-theological areas of work which will enhance your ministry, if funds permit, as part of the second round of grant-making.

## Section 2 | ix – xi

The maximum funding that is available is normally a maximum of £2500 pa for two years for Master's degrees (or Level 7 awards), and of £3500 pa for two years for those pursuing doctoral research. You will be asked to demonstrate that you are making acceptable progress, normally through a letter from your course tutor or supervisor, for the second year of funding to be released. After the second year, if your course of study is continuing, and especially in the case of doctoral students, you may reapply for up to a further two years of grant money.

No retrospective funding can be considered.

## Section 2 | xiii

It is important that the work you are intending to do will fit in with your own educational and/or vocational progression. This question provides the opportunity to offer a brief 'narrative' of that progression as it relates to your proposed next step. Please be aware that your vocational and personal experience may provide vital background, as well as your formal education and research.

## Section 3 | i

Note that a requirement of this funding is that you participate in an annual day seminar, at which we aim to foster a community of practice, encourage you in your work, and enable you to form relationships with other students. The costs of attending this conference, including travel, are not normally reimbursed, although lunch will be provided. Those for whom there are exceptional travel costs incurred can apply direct to the Director of Learning for Ministry for consideration for additional support. An annual report of progress is also required, and it is expected that you will have at least one formal conversation during the year with the Co-Directors of Scholarship and Research. Funding in year two is dependent on fulfilling these requirements.

In part (i), we simply ask that you reflect on how what you are proposing to undertake might help, inform, stimulate, resource or energise the current priorities and mission of The Methodist Church. You might consider the following questions:

- What do you intend the broad and practical implications of this work to be?
- What impact will it have?
- In what format(s) do you intend to enable this work to have a wider audience, or to inform a wider group?
- What do you hope will be the lasting material legacy of this work?

It might be helpful to consider the Church's mission needs as expressed in *Our Calling, Priorities for the Methodist Church and God for All*, the Connexional strategy for Evangelism and Growth. Or you might draw from a clear ongoing piece of work articulated in Conference business and reflected on the Church's website or in standing orders. Similarly, your research might be pointing to areas that the Methodist Church needs to consider but about which may not yet be fully aware. If so, talk about that.

If you are a minister, or in lay employment on behalf of the Methodist Church, you should demonstrate how your work will affect your personal and professional development, and describe how you consider your ministry now and in the future will be made more effective by the completion of the proposed study. You could usefully give some thought to how your proposed work will benefit the particular community in which you are a minister, or be offered to the wider Church.

With limited funding available, eligible candidates should be aware that in this competitive process it may be necessary for a successful application to demonstrate very strong benefit to the wider Methodist Church. This is the prime criterion for assessment in this section.

### **Section 3 | ii**

Note that only HE institutions in the UK can be considered for these awards. Doctoral study at The Queen's Foundation, however, which works in partnership with The Free University of Amsterdam in this area, is fine: and indeed encouraged!

Other criteria being equal, where funding is limited, priority will be given to applications to study at either of the two Centres of the Learning Network (Cliff College and The Queen's Foundation) and within a Methodist-related HE institution within the UK (i.e., Wesley House Cambridge; the Wesley Study Centre Durham; the Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History at Oxford Brookes University; Roehampton University; Luther King House and Sarum College).

Please answer this question with reference to any particulars that are unique to your chosen institution. For example, are there any specific resources or facilities that will enhance or facilitate your research such as a library/archive, or existing research project in a related field? Perhaps it is the expertise of the academic staff that will be the most valuable resource. For example, are the expertise/interests of your chosen tutor/supervisor particularly well-suited to your topic?

#### *Criteria for assessment*

Successful applications will demonstrate:

- That the work will be supported by appropriate teaching and resources available to ensure the highest standards of work
- That such considerations have been taken into account when choosing a HE institution

### **Section 3 | iii**

Please describe any specific aspects of your course (eg modules, reading or topics) that you find especially interesting. What drew you to the course? Why are these aspects of personal interest to you?

### **Section 3 | iv**

Please describe how 'research-heavy' your course or programme will be. Will the whole course be research-based, or will it be one component among many? How large will the thesis or dissertation be, and what proportion of the final assessment will it constitute?

### **Section 3 | v**

It is understood that this title will most likely be provisional and that it may change. However, at this stage it will provide a succinct reference point and an idea of the area and angle of your research. If a significant title change takes place during the course of funding, you will be required to make a report of this to us.

### **Section 3 | vi**

Please include and address the following points:

- A brief synopsis of your research
- An outline of questions and problems your work will attempt to answer
- The specific context in which they will be addressed
- The broad aims of your research project, and the particular objectives

Applicants wishing to pursue advanced research should also include any information they have already found on the following, although we recognise that it will be preliminary (other applicants are welcome to do this, although it is not required):

- The current state of knowledge in this research area
- How the proposed research will make an original contribution to this area of study
- The significance and timeliness of this research
- The proposed methodologies
- The risk (eg bias, unavailable resources, sensitive data) and how it will be managed
- Ethical issues

#### *Criteria for assessment*

Successful applicants will demonstrate:

- Clearly defined aims
- Specific and realistic objectives
- Awareness of how they will go about undertaking their work for best results
- Awareness of the risk involved and how to manage it

### **Section 4 | ii and iii**

#### *Criteria for assessment*

Successful applications will demonstrate:

- Awareness of the need to balance time spent on study with other commitments and responsibilities;
- A clear plan for how to manage the strain this can cause;
- Evidence of collaboration and consultation with their ministerial team, where applicable.

### **Section 4 | iv**

This is to be signed by appropriate senior colleague, expected to be Superintendent in the case of a lay person or minister, or Chair in the case of a Superintendent.

### **Section 5**

Many applicants will be interviewed to address any questions that remain. This will normally be via Zoom or a similar technology.

Please return to Jennifer Prentice at [prenticej@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:prenticej@methodistchurch.org.uk) by Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at 5pm.

There will be a second round of applications, resource permitting, in the autumn. The deadline for these will be in October 2022: date to be announced.