

The College of Bishops has agreed that the Scottish Episcopal Institute should seek admission to The Common Awards in Theology, Ministry and Mission, a suite of awards validated through a partnership between the Ministry Division of the Church of England and Durham University. The Common Awards suite provides a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes from Certificate to Masters level which encourage integration across disciplines and between classroom learning and practice. Developing an intellectually rigorous, emotionally intelligent and spiritually discerning practice of theological reflection and reflective practice is at the heart of the Awards.

The College of Bishops' decision came at the end of a rigorous six-month process of consultation on the part of Institute Council, SEI staff and students and our ecumenical partner, the URC, culminating in an enthusiastic agreement by the Council that entry into Common Awards would indeed enable the curricular developments urged by the 2013 TISEC Review Working Party Report.

SEI staff will now have a year to work on restructuring and refreshing the curriculum prior to a Validation visit in the spring of 2016 by Durham University staff and Ministry Division representatives. This will evaluate SEI's capacity to deliver the programmes (management, staffing, learning resources), assess the specific course components, delivery, and assessment, and scrutinise matters of legal, financial and academic 'due diligence'. If the programme is approved, then Common Awards will be operative in SEI from October 2016.

SEI staff from across the Province gathered in the Conforti Institute this week and greeted the news of the College of Bishops' decision with delight. Now the hard work begins of revising modules while continuing to teach the current (York St John's validated) curriculum this term and on through the next academic year. Core and ancillary staff, however, expressed their eagerness to rise to this dual challenge as together they endeavour to shape the character and quality of the next generation of our Church's leadership.