MINISTRIES

DDOs are asked to guide the discernment process of candidates for ordained ministry, i.e. Priests and Vocational Deacons. Candidates may be sponsored for either Incumbent Priesthood or Assistant Priesthood. They are not sponsored within these two categories of priesthood for specific roles such as chaplaincy or ordained pioneer ministry.

The ministries for which candidates may be sponsored are described in detail in the paper ‘Ministries in the Scottish Episcopal Church’. This paper delineates the Core Responsibilities, Criteria for Selection and Formation Outcomes for Vocational Deacons and Priests. The comparative tables at the end may be helpful for DDOs and candidates to discern which ministry they may be called to (the tables also include Lay Readership).

It is important that the candidate’s potential ministry is discerned clearly. Ordinands or Lay Readers in training who perceive they are called to a different ministry are required to withdraw and begin their discernment process anew. Lay Readers must serve in that ministry for at least 2 years after licensing before beginning a discernment process for ordained ministry.

THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS

In the Scottish Episcopal Church, final decisions about selection for training and then ordination to the diaconate or priesthood are made by the candidate’s diocesan bishop. However, the bishops involve others in the discernment process from the beginning.
(1) **DISCERNMENT IN THE CONGREGATION OR CHAPLAINCY:**

Before a DDO meets with a candidate, they should receive a confident recommendation from the candidate’s incumbent or chaplain. It may be helpful to send the incumbent or chaplain the [Guidance for Incumbents](#) to aid preliminary discussion with the candidate. It is important that the incumbent takes responsibility for sponsorship at this stage, and does not pass on an unsuitable candidate for the DDO to say ‘no’ to.

(2) **DISCERNMENT WITH THE DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF ORDINANDS (DDO)**

The candidate should expect to meet with the DDO for a minimum of about a year. **Interviewing** will take a different form for each DDO. The first meeting(s) will involve hearing the life story of the candidate and obtaining some basic personal details. Subsequent meetings may move onto a more in-depth discernment of the Criteria, and reflection on any development work undertaken. The bishop will interview the candidate during the discernment process in the diocese.

The DDO and candidate will use the [Criteria for Selection](#) as a discernment tool during their meetings, and the candidate may be required to do reading and written work, undertake practical ministry, and broaden their church experience.

Suggestions for development work based on the Criteria for Selection are found in the [Discernment Curriculum](#). DDOs may find it helpful to use the [Criteria Assessment Sheets](#), so as to gather material for making the final DDO Sponsorship.

**Paperwork:** a record should be made of each interview, detailing what was discussed and proposed, and arrangements for any subsequent meeting. This should be copied to the candidate (and possibly the bishop). This record will prove helpful in ‘logging the journey’ and reflecting on the candidate’s progress in the DDO Sponsoring Form 2.

During discernment with the DDO, the candidate should complete their [Registration Form](#) and a [Written Reflection](#)

There should be some **initial screening for practical issues** which may need dealing with:

**(a) Relationship status:**

Candidates who are **divorced** do not have to apply for special permissions to become a candidate for ordination, although the discernment process will explore whether there has been sufficient reflection on the marital breakdown and whether relationships are as healed and resolved as can be expected.
Candidates in Civil Partnerships also do not have to apply for special permissions to become a candidate for ordination. Here, the question for exploration is how far they have considered how congregations will receive and support their relationship. Candidates who are considering or who have contracted a same-sex marriage, must follow the current guidelines from the College of Bishops:

Clergy and lay readers are authorised public representatives of the SEC. At the time of their ordination and upon any subsequent appointment, clergy promise to render due obedience to the Code of Canons. Lay readers also undertake to adhere to the SEC’s doctrine and act under the direction of their Bishop.

A candidate in the recruitment and selection process for ordination or lay readership who has entered, or is intending to enter, a same-sex marriage would be unable to promise obedience to the Canons. The Bishops likewise expect candidates not to enter into a same-sex marriage in the current situation and that any candidate considering such a step will consult their diocesan Bishop.

(b) Confirmation

Candidates for ordained ministry must have been episcopally-confirmed by the time that they go to a Provincial Panel or BAP.

(c) Age

Legislation about age discrimination prevents there being any formal age limits in for candidates in the discernment process. There are two grounds on which age might be a legitimate factor in the process:

(i) if the candidate cannot realistically offer sufficient years of service to merit the financial investment by the SEC that training would involve. This might be countered by the candidate financing the training themselves.

(ii) if the candidate’s age prevents them from fulfilling the Criteria for Selection. This might apply, for example, if they were unable to demonstrate the creative missional leadership of a potential incumbent, or a realistic and deliverable vocation.

Some bishops do not require candidates over 60 to go to a BAP.

(d) Visas for non-UK/EU candidates

Neither the General Synod nor SEI are authorised to issue a certificate of sponsorship for a student visa (Tier 4). Consequently, candidates’ ability to be in the UK cannot be dependent on their expectation that we will simply be able to issue a certificate of sponsorship for a student visa. Their right to be and remain in the UK will need to be dependent on some other relevant immigration category.

It is, therefore, essential that DDOs confirm with candidates at an early stage that they would have the right to remain in the UK were they to be selected for training and also, on the assumption that they might need to work to support themselves during training, that they have the right to work in the UK.
(e) *Health, legal and financial status*

The candidate should disclose any health problem or disability which might affect their capacity to train or to minister in the SEC. It will be important to find out (tactfully) whether the candidate has a significant level of debt, or criminal convictions. If there is a concern about the candidate’s psychological stability, they should undergo a psychological assessment. Each candidate must provide a [Confidential Declaration](#) about their potential PVG status before they attend a Provincial Panel.

(3) **DISCERNMENT IN THE PROVINCE**

The DDO refers the candidate to the Provincial Director of Ordinands (PDO), who interviews the candidate. This provides a further element of discernment, and also provides evidence as to whether the candidate is ready to proceed to a Provincial Advisory Panel. The PDO writes a report for the candidate’s diocesan bishop, copied to the DDO.

It is important at this stage that the PDO is informed as to whether the Provincial Panel is being asked to recommend a candidate to go (or not) to a BAP or to proceed directly (or not) to formation with SEI. This should be agreed with the bishop initially, as it will depend on the age of the candidate and the category of ministry for which they are sponsored.

Candidates for Incumbent priesthood should always go to a BAP if recommended. Candidates for Assistant Priesthood normally go to a BAP, but their bishop may not require it if they are over 60 years. Candidates for Vocational Diaconate do not normally go to a BAP, but a bishop may require them to do so.

**Provincial Panels**

These are held between Sept/Oct and March, to ensure that candidates may obtain places on BAPs (before they end in June) if recommended. There are normally 3 candidates per Provincial Panel. The Panel is held from 9.30 a.m. – about 4 p.m. on Saturdays. The diocese funds travel to the Panel for candidates, and the Province funds any overnight accommodation required (see [Finance Tables](#)).

Candidates will have two interviews, each with a pair of Advisers. They will also be asked to offer a Presentation and to lead a Group Discussion.

**Paperwork for the Provincial Panel:** This should be submitted to the PDO no later than 3 weeks before the Panel. Forms (and guidance for completing the DDO Sponsoring Forms) can be found [here](#). The Pastoral Exercise will be sent directly to the candidate by the PDO. See [Pastoral Exercises](#) for examples of this exercise.
DDOs should submit the following:

- Registration Form
- Written Reflection
- DDO Sponsoring Form 1
- DDO Sponsoring Form 2
- Incumbent Reference
- Lay Reference
- Educational Reference
- Occupational Reference
- Photo (jpg by email)

**NB: References:**

*Referees:*
Referees should be balanced in terms of gender and clergy/laity. Referees should not be related to the candidate or to each other. Some of the referees should have known the candidate for more than 2 years in order to provide a good overview and evidence of development and growth. Referees should be from different contexts, e.g. if a candidate works in a church context, not all the references should come from there, or an additional referee should be found, to give some balance. While a candidate has every right to choose their own referees, sometimes their choice may not offer the scope and breadth that would be helpful, so please offer guidance to candidates in choosing their referees for the most appropriate person as opposed to the most obvious person.

*References:*
References should be dated and signed (electronically will do). References should be no more than six months old by the time of the BAP. If they are older, then referees need to be invited to update the reference.

After the Provincial Panel, the candidate may be recommended to go to a Bishops’ Advisory Panel in England, to do further discernment work, or not recommended.

The PDO writes a full report of the Panel, based on the Advisers written reports, for the candidate’s diocesan bishop and copies in the DDO. The DDO de-briefs the candidate after the Provincial Panel, which may involve helping the candidate to come to terms with a non-recommendation. The PDO will ensure that any preparatory or development work is done for a BAP (eg. revising the Presentation).
If recommended by the Provincial Panel, the candidate will proceed to a Bishops’ Advisory Panel in England, which the PDO will book for them. The diocese bears the cost of travel and attendance at the BAP (see Finance Tables). No further paperwork is required from the candidate or DDO for BAPs. The PDO will meet with the candidate to prepare them thoroughly for the BAP.

Candidates really appreciate a card from the DDO awaiting them at the place of their BAP. This will be either:

- Shallowford House, Norton Bridge, Stone, Staffs ST15 0NZ
- Bishop Woodford House, Barton Rd. Ely CB7 4DX

Candidates may be recommended for training, not recommended, or conditionally recommended. The BAP Report is sent to the bishop, with the DDO and PDO copied in. Once the DDO is sure that the bishop has communicated the recommendation to the candidate, they should be in touch to arrange to meet for a debriefing.

The candidate’s diocesan bishop decides what the candidate will do next on the basis of the various recommendations. In practice, they almost always follow the recommendations of the Panels. At this stage, the candidate may begin training, but the decision has not yet been made as to whether they will be ordained at the end of training. Again, in practice, it would be very unusual for them not to be, but it has happened.

The care of non-recommended candidates:

This is a difficult and delicate area, which calls for cooperation between the bishop, DDO, PDO, Incumbent and others (e.g. a Spiritual Director). The Incumbent may be as disappointed and critical of the process as the candidate, or may now reveal that he or she had serious misgivings all along. If candidates has been well-prepared about the process and the possible outcomes, they will find it easier to come to terms with a non-recommendation. It is also helpful if Incumbents have been warned to take their pastoral responsibility to the candidate at this time seriously.

Helpful resources:

CPAS Resource Sheet 7 at
http://www.cpas.org.uk/download/1202/web_upload%252F7%2BNotRecommended%2BRS09-single-1268750798.pdf

and When the Church Says ‘No’, Helen Thorp, (Grove Booklets, P98) see:
http://grovebooks.co.uk/products/p-98-when-the-church-says-no
TRAINING AND FORMATION

Ordinands are trained and formed by the Scottish Episcopal Institute (SEI), alongside Lay Reader candidates.

They are required to register with SEI by the end of June in the year that they will begin training, so all recommendations by Provincial Panels or BAPs have to be made by that date.

Ordinands’ training pathways depend on their previous education and future ministry:

- **Incumbents** must attain degree level in theology by the end of IME 6 (end of curacy).
- **Assistant priests** and **Vocational deacons** must attain diploma level before ordination.

Ordinands who already have a degree in theology awarded within the last 10 years may be offered a 2-year course, which will involve residential learning, modules in areas not yet covered and field education.

Some ordinands may be offered a bursary by the SEC to complete a three-year theology degree at a Scottish university; funds for this are limited and would apply only to Incumbent ordinands.

Other ordinands would take the Common Awards (CA, Durham University) diploma in theology and ministry. This is a three-year course, for which entry is offered every other year (in even-numbered years). Incumbent candidates study during their curacy for further CA credits which lead to a degree being awarded.

If a candidate is recommended for training in a year in which the CA course is not offered, they may study elements of the **SEI Foundation Year course** in study skills, Biblical studies, Hermeneutics, Field Education and Worship.

Further details about SEI, training and formation may be found at [http://www.scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/vocation-and-ministry/sei/](http://www.scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/vocation-and-ministry/sei/)

CONTACTS

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