

K: Ministries

K) Ministries

CONTENTS

- [Seven Fundamental Qualifications for Ordained Ministry](#)
- [Ministry of Word and Sacraments](#)
- [Special Category Ministries](#)
- [Ministry Overseas Candidating and Assessment for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments](#)
- [Leaving certificates](#)
- [Acceptance/transfer of Ordinands from another Church](#)
- [Transfer between stipendiary and non-stipendiary service](#)
- [Ministerial accompanied self-appraisal](#)
- [Regulations regarding the eligibility of ministers from other churches to enter the URC roll of ministers](#)
- [Transfer of Ministers applying for a certificate of eligibility but not seeking a pastorate](#)
- [Ministers in Retirement](#)
- [Retired ministers](#)

- [Housing Definition of a Church-Related Community Worker](#)
- [Assessment and accreditation of Church- Related Community work](#)
- [Regulations regarding the eligibility of community workers from other churches to enter the United Reformed Church's roll of accredited church related community workers.](#)
- [Lay Preachers](#)
- [National Accreditation](#)

Seven Fundamental Qualifications for Ministry

(1) A total commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and a growing experience of shared life in the Spirit so that the worship and service of God becomes the minister's central and controlling passion. We need radical dissenters from the false worship of our society, whose dissent does not drive them (timidly or defiantly) into a ghetto, but out into the world.

(2) A growing familiarity with and understanding of the Bible and the Christian tradition, especially - but exclusively - in its Reformed development, constantly extended and enriched by wide reading and by a study which neither evades the critical questions nor allows them to silence the central message. We need men and women whose ears are accustomed to listening to the word of God in scripture and who know how to nourish others with that same word.

(3) An informed and passionate involvement in the issues of the contemporary world. Clearly this is not to ask for a pretended omniscience. It is to ask for men and women aware of the world they live in and committed to doing the will of God in its affairs.

(4) Because we live in a society which is mobile and pluriform, the Church must be as varied and as open as the human situations to which it must minister. We need, therefore, not one

style of ministry, but many, exercised by women and men, white and black, conservative and radical, working class and middle class, paid and unpaid. We need to look for and encourage very varied gifts, temperaments and abilities.

(5) It follows that one minister cannot fulfil all roles. Collaboration and team-work will be the marks of a relevant ministry, not omnicompetence. The gifts for animating and enabling groups and teams of colleagues and for evoking the skills of others and the readiness to take a subordinate place - these are the marks of a genuine leader and are more to be desired than the gifts which attract attention to an outstanding individual.

(6) The Church is a community of persons of very different ages and at different stages in their discipleship, seeking to share good news with others. The arts of interpersonal communication are fundamental to its life. We need ministers skilled in these arts, aware of the many different levels at which communication takes place, able to exercise and to help others to exercise the arts of preaching, of teaching adults and children, of listening and counselling, and having enough sensitivity to be able to encourage the use of music, drama, dance and visual symbol in worship and in the communication of the Gospel.

(7) We need ministers who know that they must be learners all through life, who recognise that their initial training can be only a small beginning, who remain to the end eager to reach out for fuller understanding, greater competence, deeper discipleship. (General Assembly 1982)The list of qualifications is descriptive of the Ministry of Word and Sacraments and other ministries within the URC including Church Related Community Workers and Lay Preachers. The assessment and accreditation requirements for these roles are set out in this section.

[Back to the top](#)

The Ministry of Word and Sacraments Ministers serve in a stipendiary or non-stipendiary capacity and may work as one minister of word and sacraments alongside the Elders or in a team with other stipendiary or non-stipendiary colleagues. A team may also involve church related community workers. It may be ecumenical. Local church ministry is exercised in single church, joint or group pastorates.

Ministers may also serve in,

Special Category Ministries

There is a need for a number of specialised ministries, as part of the overall strategy of the URC. These include chaplaincies in industry, hospitals, universities and colleges of further education, ecumenical and other special projects.

or in,

Ministry Overseas

The work of the Church world-wide is one, and we share in it particularly through the Council for World Mission, a partnership of 28 national churches. Following specific training ministers serve abroad, generally on limited term appointments in theological education or pastoral work in six regions: Africa, Europe, Pacific, East Asia, S.E. Asia and the Caribbean.

Details of ministry overseas are obtainable from the International Exchange Sub-Committee of the United Reformed Church.

There are three models of non-stipendiary ministry

Model I - service in a congregation as part of a team. The pattern is taken from the former eldership of the Churches of Christ and is limited in scope and local in nature

Model II - pastoral charge of a small congregation, or service as part of a team of ministers caring for a group of churches.

Model III- ministers in secular employment. Service set apart to be a focus for mission in the place of work or leisure. It is related to a local church or District Council. (General Assembly 1995)

[Back to the top](#)

Candidating and Assessment for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments
Entry qualifications

Candidates for Ministry of Word and Sacraments must be members of the URC of two years standing and need to satisfy pre-assessment criteria approved by the General Assembly. (Criteria for Assessment General Assembly 1996)

The following regulations apply to the age of entry to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments;

1. Training for the stipendiary Ministry of Word and Sacraments may begin from the date of a candidate's 18th birthday, recognising that enquiries may be made several years earlier,
2. The normal minimum age for the commencement of training for the non-stipendiary Ministry of Word and Sacraments shall be 25.
3. Ordination to the stipendiary Ministry of Word and Sacraments should take place by the age of 55, and to this end, given the present Assessment and Training processes, resolves that formal application for training for the stipendiary Ministry of Word and Sacraments must be received by the Province by the date of the applicant's 50th birthday.
4. Formal application for training for the non-stipendiary Ministry of Word and Sacraments must be received by the Province by the date of the applicant's 55th birthday
5. Assembly resolves that applications to transfer from non-stipendiary to stipendiary ministry must be received by the province before the date of the applicant's 53rd birthday (General Assembly 1997)

Testing a call to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments

The candidating process requires:

The commendation of the local Church Meeting and District Council before he or she may attend a National Assessment Conference.

From the Conference a recommendation is sent to the candidate's synod where a final decision is taken as to whether to accept the candidate for training. If accepted the candidate then proceeds as an ordinand to an approved college or course.

For further reading and information:

- Becoming a Minister of Word and Sacraments
- Criteria for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments report to General Assembly 1996
- Could this be you? - Guidelines on Candidating and Assessment.

These documents are available from Synod offices and from the Ministries office, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT. Ordinands preparing for ministry in the United Reformed Church undergo training on courses prescribed by the General Assembly which determines the 'standards and scope of an adequate ministerial training and education' (Basis of Union 9 (5) (v)). Throughout the training process, colleges in the case of stipendiary candidates, and the Board of Studies in the case of non-stipendiary candidates, keep closely in touch with the sending Synods who are also responsible for local support, and if necessary for the discontinuance of a particular candidacy.

[Back to the top](#)

Leaving Certificates

On completion of the agreed course of study and bearing in mind the need to exercise a judgement on the overall fitness of the ordinand to exercise ministry in the URC, the colleges grant to stipendiary candidates a Leaving Certificate, or the Board of Studies to non-stipendiary candidates a Certificate of Completed Study. It is then the responsibility of the Synod, through whatever procedure it decides (e.g. the power could be delegated to an officer or committee of the Synod) to declare that a candidate is eligible for ordination (Basis of Union 9 (4) (vi)). The leaving certificate/certificate of completed study remains valid for three years.

No ordination or appointment can take place until the appropriate Certificate has been issued by the recognised training authority and the Synod has declared that eligibility has been established. It is unwise for any local pastorate or District Council to enter unconditional commitments with a student until that stage has been reached properly: this does not preclude the issue of a call to a student in the final year of a course or its being sustained by a District Council provided that these actions are clearly indicated as being conditional upon the issue of the certificate and the Synod's declaration of eligibility. Such conditional actions are indeed pastorally necessary for those students who are under financial pressure to begin their work and ensure the receipt of a stipend in late June or early July. The appropriate Certificate must have been produced by the time of ordination. (General Assembly 1990)

Further information on this procedure can be obtained from the Ministries office, 86 Tavistock Place London WC1H 9RT

After a call has been issued, in the case of stipendiary ministry, or an appointment has been made, in the case of non-stipendiary ministry, and District Council concurrence has been granted, ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacraments within the United Reformed

Church and induction to the particular pastorate or post follows and the Minister's name is added to the list of Ministers of the United Reformed Church.

The acceptance/transfer of Ordinands from another church
An application to transfer to the URC and continue training for Ministry may be approved by the Ministries Committee, provided that:-1. the applicant is a ministerial student of good standing in their own denomination2. the applicant's own denomination is a member of Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, Council for World Mission or World Alliance of Reformed Churches;3. the applicant's country of origin / present nationality does not preclude training in this country leading to work.The procedure for transfer can be obtained from the Ministries office,86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

[Back to the top](#)

Transfer between stipendiary and non-stipendiary service

The General Assembly in 1990 recognised that there will be some movement either way between stipendiary and non-stipendiary service, and agreed procedures accordingly. It should be noted that in 1990 Assembly agreed that it is 'advisable for ministry according to the initial training to be exercised for a reasonable period first'.

The final decision about a transfer shall be taken by the Synod. Any changes to the training recommended by the National Assessment Board shall be a matter of negotiation between the Synod and the Training Committee.It is the responsibility of the District Council to watch out for transfer situations and not to concur in any call until it has been established that the minister has completed satisfactorily the recommended training.Further information on the procedure for transfer between stipendiary and non-stipendiary forms of service can be obtained from Synod offices or the Ministries office, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

[Back to the top](#)

Ministerial Accompanied Self-Appraisal
In 1997 the Assembly approved a scheme of ministerial accompanied self -appraisal. The aims of the scheme are;

- i) to affirm ministers in their work and encourage them to follow God's calling with a renewed sense of vision.ii) to aid the continuing personal and professional development of ministers in ways which are of benefit to them and to the church they serve as they take stock of their ministry thus far and identify areas on which to build and areas of need which should be addressed, become realistic about strengths and weaknesses, set goals for work and personal development, identify training and personal development needs and ways of addressing them and become aware of sources of support.The style of appraisal.i) each individual will be asked to embark on the exercise of accompanied self - appraisal in the light of the promises made upon ordination (Schedule C)
- ii) The exercise should be seen as supportive and non-threatening, but for it to be effective it is important that it is objective and acknowledges both strengths and weaknesses.
- iii) For this reason the task of appraisal will be shared with a person, an appraisal companion, who has received appropriate training in attentive listening and questioning.

iv) This scheme is not about checking one person's performance against some measurement of ministerial tasks. This would need such a standard to exist and in any case responsibility for carrying out the total ministry in any one situation does not lie with the minister alone but also with the Elders and other members in a local church or colleagues in a team or chaplaincy. We encourage such appraisal but believe it lies within the context of a District Visit. (General Assembly 1997)The scheme of ministerial accompanied self-appraisal will be monitored and reviewed under the auspices of the Ministries Committee together with administrators from each Synod.

[Back to the top](#)

Regulations regarding the eligibility of ministers from other churches to enter the URC roll of ministers

1. Before a local church issues a call, the District Council, in consultation with the Synod Moderator, must satisfy itself that for one of the following reasons the minister concerned is eligible, that:

a) the minister is a minister in good standing of the URC,

b) the minister is on the roll of URC personnel serving overseas, or

c) the minister holds a current certificate of eligibility issued by the Ministries Committee of the URC.

2. The Ministries Committee is empowered to issue a certificate of eligibility for a call, on behalf of the Assembly, in the case of ministers from member churches of the Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland, or churches overseas which are member churches of the Council for World Mission or the World Alliance of Reformed Churches provided that:a) they will subscribe to the Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church;b) they are in good standing with their own denomination;c) their course of training for the ministry was at least equivalent to that required of students for the ministry of the URC and/or that they have special gifts or qualifications which would make them of service in the ministry of the URC, and they have understood and accepted the URC responsibility towards pension provision and retirement housing.

3. The Ministries Committee shall have the right to require further training for our ministry before issuing a certificate of eligibility. Where such training is required there may be a charge on the Ministerial Training Fund.

4. In the cases of ministers from churches other than those covered in paragraph 2, the Ministries Committee will present any proposal to issue a certificate of eligibility to the General Assembly for approval.

A certificate of eligibility shall remain valid for three years. (General Assembly 1991)

The procedure for granting a certificate of eligibility can be obtained from the Ministries office, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT.

[Back to the top](#)

Transfer of Ministers applying for a certificate of eligibility but not seeking a pastorate

Some ministers of other denominations have been permitted to transfer on to the Roll of Ministers of the United Reformed Church without the intention of seeking a pastorate. These have been ministers of other Churches, usually from overseas or from other nationalities within the British Isles (e.g. a minister from the Church of Scotland working and living in England), who have been appointed to secular work or church "related" spheres of service but for which the denominations have no direct responsibility e.g. teaching posts in universities (sometimes theological), or Christian work e.g. Mission to Seamen. In these cases ministers have sought permission to be included on the Roll sometimes because their own denomination has no facility to retain them once they have moved to an area where their own Church has no jurisdiction, sometimes because it seems more appropriate to relate formally to a 'sister' denomination where their own is not present. Such stipendiary ministers, once their names are included on the Roll, are entitled to seek a pastorate and, if called and inducted, to be paid by the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund.

Up to now there has been no agreed procedure for the Accreditation Sub-Committee to deal with such requests from ministers of other Churches seeking to be included on the Roll of Ministers though not seeking a call to a pastorate. The Sub-Committee has prepared a procedure which has been approved by the Ministries Committee.(General Assembly 1997)

Further information and the procedure for granting a Certificate of Eligibility without seeking a pastorate can be obtained from the Ministries Office, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT.

[Back to the top](#)

Ministers in Retirement

A Definition

Assembly 1987 gave first approval to constitutional amendments which would replace the current minister emeritus with retired minister, and asked for a definition of the latter phrase. The Executive, on the advice of the Thames North Synod which initiated the proposal, offers the following definition:-

For the purposes of associate membership in District Councils, retired ministers are those who:

- (a) at the date of retirement are in stipendiary ministerial service in the URC or are in ministerial service recognised as Category C in the Year Book. or
- (b) At the date of retirement are in the service of the URC as non-stipendiary ministers and have been appointed by Synod to membership of a District Council (General Assembly 1988)

Age of Retirement

The General Assembly meeting 1997 resolved that:-

a) Ministers should normally retire from full time stipendiary service not later than six calendar months from the date on which they attain the age of 65

b) In exceptional circumstances a minister may remain in full time service for a maximum of three years beyond the age of 65. The application shall be supported by the pastorate, and receive concurrence of District Council before the agreement of the Accreditation Sub-Committee is sought. Ministers should make application for such an extension by the date of their 64th birthday(Resolution 33)

Paragraph 3.7. (Reports to Assembly 1997) which describes exceptional circumstances, states as follows:

'As we bring this resolution however we are aware that there are sometimes circumstances in which it may be desirable for a minister to continue, albeit for a limited period. For example a minister might be drawing near to the end of a particular project or piece of work and need to spend a year or two to bring it to conclusion;

or a District Council might be planning a new grouping of churches in a particular area and it might be felt desirable for a minister to remain for a short while to see plans through to fruition; or a minister, coming into ministry later in life, might have just a year to go to qualify for retired ministers' housing; or a minister's spouse might have a short period to go to retirement.

Only in such exceptional circumstances however do we believe that a full time ministry should continue beyond retiring age and we have proposed a mechanism by which permission to do so may be sought and agreed.

'Further information and the procedure for granting an extension of service can be obtained from Synod offices or the Ministries office, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT.

Pre-Retirement Courses for Ministers and spouses

The Ministries Committee in collaboration with the Windermere Centre invites ministers and their spouses to attend a Pre-Retirement Course normally two years before the year in which the minister is due to retire.

[Back to the top](#)

Retired ministers Housing

At the 1979 General Assembly the United Reformed Church accepted a moral obligation to provide housing for retired ministers and ministers' widows who could not otherwise be adequately housed. The relevant clauses of the resolution read as follows:-

'The United Reformed Church delegates to its Finance and Administration Department the responsibility for providing housing for retired ministers and ministers' widows and this it exercises through the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers Housing Society Limited, an independent Company operating within the Finance Department. The Church regards it as a matter of integrity that retired ministers and ministers' widows should be adequately housed and supports the Housing Society in its appeal for funds and its objects. The Assembly

approves the appointment of a 'Retired Ministers Housing Committee' within the Finance and Administration Department to have oversight of matters concerned with the provision of retirement housing for ministers and ministers' widows and to manage the properties held on behalf of the United Reformed Church. By this action Assembly did not institute an entitlement to retirement housing as of right. A minister who has the finance necessary to provide for retirement housing may reasonably be expected to do so. The provision of housing by the Housing Society is for those who would not otherwise be adequately housed. It is provided nevertheless, not as an act of charity but, as the Assembly resolution suggests, in recognition of the Church's obligation to those who have spent many years in its service. Further information and copies of the guidelines on retired ministers housing may be obtained from the Secretary of the URC Retired Ministers Housing Society Ltd., 86 Tavistock Place London WC1H 9RT [Back to the top](#)

Church-Related Community Work
Definition of a Church-Related Community Worker
A Church-Related Community Worker, in the broadest sense, is a community worker who enables the church to work with its local community, rather than someone employed by the church to act on its behalf. In the narrower URC sense, it is also a church member who has gone through the assessment procedure and been accepted as a candidate, satisfactorily completed the prescribed training, and appointed to a post approved by the URC. Churches have sought the help of a CRCW when they are set in urban priority areas, or where their neighbourhood has within it ethnic minorities, or groups with special needs, for example the elderly, single parent families, the unemployed. A Community Worker acquires and develops skills which enable people to grow. These skills include the capacity to listen, often to conflicting voices; to allow groups to run effectively; to enthuse; to stand back and enable people to reflect on what is happening to them; to understand the processes of change and interpret them for those involved; and to be an efficient manager. These skills are learnt through life experience, through involvement in community activity, and through Christian spirituality. They are greatly enhanced by training which broadens the capacity of the worker to understand the working of society, and to apply an understanding of the processes of change in a variety of situations. For this reason, the URC is concerned that accredited CRCWs have a sound understanding of community work practice through a relevant qualification. The contribution which community work skills can make are along 4 lines:-(i) developing self help and mutual aid, mobilising a group's own resources and bringing in new financial and human resources, often under the group's control;(ii) developing community organisation which can press for changes or developments in the policies of statutory bodies or other agencies active in an area;(iii) having a concern to start with peoples' experience as they express it rather than with the concepts of other professional groups. From involvement with people in their hopes and fears, aspirations and struggles and in dialogue with them, alternative views of the effects of social and economic policy on community life can be articulated and presented;(iv) having a focus on learning, so that people develop skills to initiate and manage community and co-operative enterprises (for example, housing co-operatives, community centres or community businesses). This educational thrust also provides an opportunity for dialogue between the group and the worker about motivation, aims and values. (More About Church Related Community Ministry Ministries 1990) Further information on Church -Related Community Work can be obtained from the CRCW office, 86 Tavistock Place London WC1H 9RT [Back to the top](#)

Assessment and accreditation for Church-related community work
Criteria for Assessment
Candidates for Church Related Community Work must be members of the URC

of two years standing and need to satisfy pre-assessment criteria approved by the General Assembly. (Criteria for Assessment General Assembly 1996)

It is not essential that they are already professionally trained community workers but it certainly is important that they have some significant insights into community needs and service. Testing a call to the Ministry of Church Related Community Work

The candidating process requires: The commendation of the local Church Meeting and District Council before he or she may attend a National Assessment Conference. From the Conference a recommendation is sent to the candidate's synod where a final decision is taken as to whether to accept the candidate for training. If accepted the candidate then proceeds to an approved course of training. After training the candidate will be commissioned as a Church Related Community Worker when called to a post. Accreditation The roll of United Reformed Church Accredited Church Related Community Workers shall contain the names of Church Related Community Workers who: -1. have gone through the assessment procedure and been accepted as a candidate; and 2. have satisfactorily completed the prescribed training; and 3. have been appointed to a project approved by the URC. The Accreditation Sub-Committee will keep the Roll under review removing the names of those who have not served in post for more than 5 years, after due consultation with the CRCW Central Management Committee and the individual concerned. A note to this effect will be placed in the Year Book. Names will be restored to the Roll at the commencement of fresh employment in a URC approved post. We shall also keep a list of those who have been on our accredited Roll, or who are eligible for accreditation, and are still available for a post in the future. (General Assembly 1990)

[Back to the top](#)

Regulations regarding the eligibility of community workers from other churches to enter the United Reformed Church's roll of accredited church related community workers.

1. Before a Church Related Community Worker is appointed to a project by the United Reformed Church, the District Council must satisfy itself that for one of the following reasons the CRCW concerned is eligible:

- a) The CRCW is on the accredited list of the URC.
- b) The CRCW has gone through the assessment process and been accepted as a candidate; and has satisfactorily completed the prescribed training.

or

d) the Community Worker has a Certificate of Eligibility issued by the Ministries Committee of the URC

2. The Ministries Committee is empowered to issue a Certificate of Eligibility, on behalf of the Assembly, in the case of Community Workers from member churches of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland or churches overseas which are members of the Council of World Mission or the World Alliance of Reformed Churches provided that:

- a) they will subscribe to the Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church;

- b) they are in good standing with their own denomination;
- c) their course of training was at least equivalent to that for Church Related Community Workers of the URC and or they have special gifts or qualifications which would be of service in the URC;
- d) they have understood the terms of remuneration for URC CRCWs.

3. The Ministries Committee shall have the right to require further training for work with the URC before issuing a Certificate of Eligibility. Where such training is required there may be a charge on the training fund.

4. In the case of Community Workers from churches other than those covered by paragraph 2, the Ministries Committee will present any proposal to issue a Certificate of Eligibility to the Assembly or Mission Council for approval.

Further information can be obtained from the Ministries office, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

[Back to the top](#)

Lay Preachers

Our church needs and values the work of its lay preachers. There are many more churches than ministers. Lay preachers are needed to lead about one third of the services held each Sunday. The minister and the lay preacher bring experience in different fields to their conduct of worship.

Lay preaching is a way of demonstrating that ministry is the work of the whole People of God.

National Accreditation

National Accreditation, introduced in the URC by Assembly Resolution in 1979, amended 1984, provides national recognition of an individual lay preacher's calling and work. A list of nationally accredited preachers is kept by the Lay Preaching Sub-Committee. A lay preacher seeking National Accreditation should:

- (a) be a member of a United Reformed Church.
- (b) have been commended as a lay preacher to District Council by his or her Church Meeting.
- (c) have been accredited as a lay preacher by his or her District Council
- (d) have completed the course of studies leading to the award of the Lay Preacher's Certificate of the United Reformed Church to the satisfaction of the Tutors/ Assessors appointed, or possess other equivalent qualifications.

(General Assembly 1984)