

COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY

Convener: Rev JNI McNEELY
Secretary: THE DEPUTY CLERK

Executive Summary of the Council's Report

1. The Council for Training in Ministry operates through three committees and six panels, five of which were specified under the Structures Review Report of 2014.

2. The **Ministerial Studies and Development Committee** looks after all aspects of selection, training and ongoing development of full-time Ministers and operates with an Assignments Panel.

3. The **Union Theological College Management Committee** is responsible for all management of UTC and operates with a Curriculum Panel and a Property, Finance and Administration Panel.

4. The **Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee** primarily considers requests from Ministers and Licentiates of other Churches in regard to service within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

5. The **Deaconess Selection and Training Panel** oversees the selection and initial training of Deaconesses including supervising of the probationary period.

6. The **Accredited Preacher and Auxiliary Minister Panel** handles all aspects of the selection, training and on-going development of Auxiliary Ministers and Accredited Preachers.

7. The **Pastoral Care of Manse Families Panel** is responsible for the development of pastoral care for Ministers and their families and the provision of support for manse families.

8. The **Conciliation Panel** provides a service of conciliation and a team of trained people to assist in situations where conciliation is required.

9. The sixth panel is one established by the Council: the **Ministry Formation Panel** which has a remit equivalent to that of the previous Standing Panel on Ministry Formation as explained in paragraph 15 of the report.

10. A **Qualifications Panel** considers the academic merit of degrees awarded by a university or college not normally recognised under the law of the Church and reports directly to the General Assembly.

Convener's Introduction

11. The Council has been primarily continuing the work of the former Board of Christian Training in regard to training of students for the ordained ministry and the training of Church members under the Accredited Preachers Scheme and the new Auxiliary Ministry arrangements.

12. The Council recognises the significance of Supervising Ministers in the training of Assistant Ministers and it is intended that the training of supervisors will be developed and in the future there may be more scope for a greater concentration in 'on the job' training of Student Assistants.

13. Training in ministry is much more than preparing people for ordained ministry and this is recognised by the training of Deaconesses, Accredited Preachers and Auxiliary Ministers. Ministry in the 21st century is changing and the form of ministry in the future may be more diverse. Students trained for the ministry of the PCI may not all end up in traditional charges and specialised training for certain forms of ministry may be necessary. Ministers may require specific training for inner city ministries or for Church planting, for team ministries or for specialised ministries in rural Ireland.

14. The Council recognises the important role that Presbyteries have in the selection of people for training in ministry. Ministers and Presbyteries should be mindful of the types of ministry that are available to members who are inquiring about serving in the Church in a specialised capacity. There are options available and when interviews are being conducted it may be that a potential candidate for training might not always have the gift profile for ordained ministry, but may be suited for one of the other ministries that a person can be trained for under the Council.

15. The Ministry Formation Panel receives reports on the progress of students for the ordained ministry and will when necessary add specific requirements to a candidate's pathway, such as additional courses or an extra year. It may be necessary in exceptional cases to suspend a student's studies or recommend to the General Assembly that a Ministry Candidate's pathway be terminated. It is important to note that students are on pathways of training and that it should not be assumed that acceptance as a student for the ordained ministry is a guarantee that all elements of ministry formation will be achieved.

STUDENTS' BURSARY FUND

The Rev Mark Russell, Students' Bursary Fund Agent, writes:

16. The Students' Bursary Fund exists to make financial provision for students for the ordained ministry and their families, during their time of study.

17. In the academic year Sept 2014 – June 2015 there are 49 students in receipt of grants. The cost to the Fund of grants, fees and all other expenses for this period is £634,787.84. This is being met through offerings at services of licensing, ordination and installation of ministers and elders, personal and congregational donations, and by congregational assessment. Thanks are due to all members of the Church who generously support the Students' Bursary Fund.

18. All those who have responsibility for planning services of licensing, ordination and installation are asked to ensure that full use is made of the SBF literature available from reception in Assembly Buildings, especially the Gift Aid envelope. Past experience has shown that where literature is handed out at an earlier service, those attending the special service are more likely to use a Gift Aid envelope.

MINISTERIAL STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

19. The Committee seeks to fulfil its broad responsibility which comprises overseeing: the selection process and college years of students for ordained ministry; Licentiate training; in-service training for ordained Ministers (including sabbaticals); pre-retirement courses for Ministers. It met on three occasions since the transition from the Board structure to the new Council structure. The Panels and Task Groups set up under the Committee have been meeting and are making progress in their areas of responsibility.

20. The new Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development (DMSD), the Rev Dr David Allen, took up post on 1st March 2015. The Director of Ministerial Studies (DMS), the Rev Ronnie Hetherington, continued to act as Secretary to the Committee until 31st March 2015 and the Committee wishes to record its appreciation to Mr Hetherington for agreeing to serve during this time of transition and overlap when the new DMSD was settling in. Indeed, the Committee wishes to record its deep appreciation to him for the measure of expertise and experience he brought to the role of DMS through his pastoral sensitivity, wise counsel and administrative ability over the last ten years, and wishes him God's blessing in his retirement. The Committee also assures Dr Allen of its prayers as he now acts as Secretary to the Committee and seeks to advise prospective candidates and fulfil his duties in relation to students in training according to the Regulations of the General Assembly.

21. In the academic year 2014-15 there were 52 students under the care of Presbyteries, as listed in the appended Schedule (see Appendix 1). This is in addition to 2 students training at Union Theological College for Deaconess service.

Accredited Preacher Course Requirement for Ministry Applicants

22. As agreed at the 2013 General Assembly, from 2016 it will be a requirement that all who make application to the Council for Training in Ministry for training for the ordained Ministry will normally have completed the Accredited Preachers Course (General Assembly Reports 2013, p 214).

Revised Application and Assessment Process

23. The Ministerial Training Review Task Group (MTRTG) continues to monitor this process with particular reference to the Applicants Information and Consultation Day and two Interview Days.

Vocational Consultant

24. *Healthlink360* has been engaged by the Council for Training in Ministry as the new vocational consultant, initially for one year but with the hope and expectation that this arrangement will continue into the future.

Interviews

25. The interviews of 9 candidates were held in Union Theological College under the revised Application and Assessment process on Monday 30th

and Tuesday 31st March 2015. The Interviewing Panel comprised: Ministers – the Revs. Amanda Best, Robin Brown, Andrew Faulkner, Nigel McCullough, Ian McNie, Colin Morrison, Ivan Patterson, Alan Thompson; Elders – Mr Joe Campbell, Dr Lena Morrow. Also present were the Rev Noble McNeely (Convener CTM), the Rev Jim Stothers (Secretary CTM), the Rev Dr Bill Parker (Convener MSDC), the Rev Dr David Allen (DMSD) and the Rev Ronnie Hetherington (DMS) and representatives of Healthlink360. Under the revised process 2 Panels interviewed the 9 candidates. The Panels had previously had opportunity to meet and get to know those they had the responsibility to interview at the Applicants Information and Consultation Day in December 2014.

26. Having completed the interviewing process, 6 candidates are being nominated to the General Assembly by the Council for Training in Ministry. As a result of the 2014 Interview Procedure, one applicant was invited to meet his Sub-Panel again in 2015. Having conducted a further interview on Thursday 3rd March, the Panel concluded that he should be nominated to the General Assembly this year.

Restructuring of the Training for Ministry Course

27. As outlined in the closing report of the Board of Christian Training, the Committee has noted the results of the discussion from the Board Conference of October 2014 concerning the Restructuring of the Training for Ministry Course and will progress this matter.

MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT

Post-Ordination Training

28. The 5 year programme for Post-Ordination training, overseen by the DMSD, continues to roll out.

Pre-Retirement Residential

29. This annual residential seeks to equip ordained Ministers and their spouses as they anticipate the transition from full-time ministry to retirement. It is open to ordained Ministers and their spouses from the year in which the Minister reaches the age of 63. A residential was held in November 2014 and the Committee wishes to express its appreciation to the facilitators, the Very Rev Dr John and Mrs Rosemary Dunlop, the Rev Bill and Mrs Margaret Sanderson, and the Very Rev Dr David and Mrs Hazel Clarke. Another residential is planned for 2015. Dr John and Mrs Rosemary Dunlop are stepping down as residential facilitators and the Committee wishes to express its deep appreciation to them for their commitment to this key ministry offered to those anticipating retirement.

WJM PARKER, Convener

UNION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

30. The total student enrolment for the 2014-15 academic year is 212, of whom 48 are ministry students and 2 are Deaconess students.

Curriculum Panel

31. Proposed changes to the academic calendar at QUB in 2016-17 and the implications for courses and methods of assessment at Union continue to be a focus of discussion. There has been a positive response from the Faculty to the proposed changes which include an earlier start to both semesters, the elimination of exams at the end of the first semester, and the inclusion of a period of 'employability enhancement' for all students at QUB. The possibility of second semester teaching being completed by the end of March opens opportunities for the May/June period, such as placements or the offering of ministry courses as intensive weeks of study.

32. Curriculum changes are also a focus of discussion, with some changes having been agreed in the assessment and delivery of a number of modules within the Institute of Theology, while discussions continue with the other constituent college on other proposed changes.

33. The College is undergoing its periodic review by QUB, including the Memorandum of Agreement. It is hoped a number of issues can be discussed and resolved that will lead to better co-operation between the University and the College. Among the issues identified is the question of work visas for international students and negotiations with the UK Border Agency.

34. Following a productive QAA training and review meeting attended by the Principal, a QAA Action Team has been created and is working on the preparation and monitoring of a Quality Action Plan. The Action Plan was presented and a number of the actions discussed. A proposal was approved to survey members of Kirk Sessions in Congregations where student assistants are serving with a view to gaining some feedback on the effectiveness of the training course for ordained ministry.

35. The results of the evaluations of the third *Church in the Public Square Conference* on the theme 'Living and Dying Well' were circulated and these were largely positive. Credit is due to all concerned in the organisation and delivery of the Conference. Such events are not only valuable in their own right but facilitate the College in making a vital contribution to issues of concern in the wider community.

36. During the first semester of the 2014-15 academic year Prof SN Williams was on sabbatical leave.

Finance, Property and Administration

37. Stonework, Phase 1. While the quality of the restoration work has been good, progress has been frustratingly slow. The original completion date of 21st November 2014 stretched to 30th April, although the discovery of dry rot in a portion of the Library roof didn't help. The Quantity Surveyor estimated that the contract may end up some 2.5% over budget. The increase includes expenditure for the unexpected dry rot repairs, plus earlier costs associated with the sourcing

of suitable stone. However, the dry rot work is 45% grant assisted as are the additional stonework items, so the additional grant should cancel out most of the additional cost.

38. Stonework, Phase 2A. A Tender of £336,900 has been accepted. Including VAT and fees the overall estimate is £454,815. Although the tender was submitted to NIEA seeking grant aid, it is unlikely that any grants will be available for phase 2A. The Committee is deeply grateful to the Trustees who have agreed in principle to make a grant from their Discretionary Fund, should no NIEA grant be awarded, to match what the NIEA grant might have been.

39. Work on reinstating the Basement Book Store following water ingress started in mid-February and the books were scheduled to be returned by Easter. The Committee believes that all the costs associated with the entire water seepage incident will be borne by our Insurers.

40. Deficiencies in IT provision continue to cause frustration for both staff and students. The Committee acknowledges that PCI's IT Department works under constant pressure, and the Committee is grateful for all that it does for the College. However, the Committee continues to be seriously concerned that the IT Department is seriously under-resourced, an issue that affects not just UTC but the whole Church. It was agreed to write both to the IT Panel and to the Priorities Committee highlighting the continuing concern of the College re IT service provision and supporting the allocation of additional appropriate resources for the IT Department.

41. QAA is changing the scope, content and methodology of how it carries out assessments. In particular it is introducing Higher Education Review (Plus). As part of this new approach QAA now require that a Financial Sustainability, Management and Governance (FSMG) check be carried out. Steps are being taken to ensure that the College will be compliant. However, to return to IT issues, at the time of writing the College falls short in significant areas of IT, and this was noted by the QAA team at their last monitoring visit as an area to be addressed. The College is committed through its Memorandum of Agreement with QUB, and by standards set by the QAA, to providing a satisfactory level of IT support to students.

42. **Personnel:** administrative staff change has continued into 2015. Mr Ken Brown's appointment as Bursar/Registrar in autumn 2014 following the resignation of Mr Tony Holmes in summer 2014, has helped considerably to ease the burden on other staff, and at the time of writing, the process of filling other vacancies continues.

HA DUNLOP, Convener

RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES COMMITTEE

43. The Committee has met once since the restructuring took effect in 2015.

44. One candidate asked to defer their interview to a later time.

45. The Rev Jared Stephens, a Minister of PC(USA) applied in the normal way and was interviewed. The Committee accepted Mr Stephens in the following

terms, “that he successfully completes a 2 year assistantship and relevant studies as agreed by the DMSD and Principal of Union College.” His assignment to an assistantship will be subject to the granting of the appropriate Visa.

46. The Rev Laszlo Orban, Minister of the Hungarian Reformed Church, applied in the normal way and was interviewed. The Committee agreed not to receive him at the current time and that he could apply again in no less than 2 years.

47. The Committee discussed the fee paid to Healthlink360 for the profiles that are compiled for each applicant. It was agreed that normally the candidate will be responsible for this fee in future.

48. The Committee discussed a 2014 General Assembly resolution from the Overseas Board, “That the General Assembly request the Committee on Reception of Ministers and Licentiates to prayerfully review current guidelines with the aim of facilitating and encouraging gifted Ministers and Missionaries with global Church perspectives to serve with PCI on the island of Ireland.” As a result of this a review of application procedures will take place in the coming months.

ANDREW FAULKNER, Convener

DEACONESS SELECTION AND TRAINING PANEL

49. The Panel is mindful of the partnership that exists in the selection, training, assignment and financing of Deaconesses, and is seeking to move forward in co-operation with the Council for Mission in Ireland, the Council for Congregational Life and Witness and PW. Informal meetings have taken place among office-bearers of all four agencies in an attempt to enhance the mutual understanding of responsibilities, and develop further the shared ownership that already exists.

50. There are currently three trainee Deaconesses, two are completing their first year of studies at Union Theological College, while the other has been on maternity leave and is yet to commence training.

TD ALLEN, Convener

ACCREDITED PREACHER AND AUXILIARY MINISTRY PANEL

51. The Panel is building on the work done under the Board of Christian Training’s Committee for Training and Resources in regard to the Accredited Preacher Scheme and the Auxiliary Ministry Scheme. It also oversees the content of the Handling the Word Course.

52. To date twenty one people have successfully completed the most recent Accredited Preacher Course and will be accredited at a service on 14th June 2015. In addition, those who successfully complete the current Auxiliary Ministry Course will be recognised at that service and will be available to apply for Auxiliary Ministry posts as they are created.

53. The next Accredited Preacher Course will commence in Union Theological College in January 2016 with applications needing to be in by 4th September 2015. Plans are also being made to hold Accredited Preacher Courses in the North West and Dublin in 2016. The next Auxiliary Ministry Course is also planned for 2016 with applications needing to be in by August 2015.

54. Some minor changes to the content and structure of the Handling the Word Course have been approved and this remains available for Presbyteries to run in consultation with the Rev Dr David Allen (DMSD).

NIGEL McCULLOUGH, Convener

PASTORAL CARE OF MANSE FAMILIES PANEL

55. At the time of writing it is intended to hold two area meetings in late April and early May to bring the Presbytery Chaplains/Pastors together. One will be held in Banbridge and the other in Randalstown. Each meeting is to have a facilitator who will enable people to share the perceived issues and needs within their Presbytery. It is hoped that these people can be brought together twice a year, to learn from and support each other in this important work for God.

56. It is planned to increase the profile of the Panel for the wider Church including:

- an article for the Herald promoting its work and the service it offers;
- a more prominent place on the Church website making it easier to access;
- building relationships with students and Licentiates.

GAJ FARQUHAR, Convener

CONCILIATION PANEL

57. In the autumn of 2014 the Panel recruited and trained 12 new conciliators. The total number of active conciliators is 22 from 12 Presbyteries who receive ongoing training and supervision.

58. The Panel has a steady stream of cases mainly referred by Presbyteries.

JOE CAMPBELL, Convener

APPENDIX 1

SCHEDULE OF STUDENTS

ARDS	Stephen Lowry	Union
	Craig Lynn	Union
	Alan Marsh	Union
	Richard Tregaskis	Union
ARMAGH	Edwin Frazer	Union
	Craig Jackson	Union
BALLYMENA	Jonathan Boyd	Union
	Matthew Boyd	Union
	Ross Kernohan	Union
	Norman Kennedy	Union
NORTH BELFAST	Hanneke Marshall	Union
	Jonathan Newell	Union
SOUTH BELFAST	Andre Alves-Areias	Union
	John Martin	Union
	Brent van der Linde	Union
	Seth Wright	Union

EAST BELFAST	Alan Dickey	Union
	Andrew Downey	Union
	David Gray	Union
	David Kelly	Union
	Steve Kennedy	Union
	Alistair McCracken	Union
	Alan McQuade	Union
CARRICKFERGUS	Ian Cahoon	Union
	Stuart Hawthorne	Union
	Robert Orr	Union
COLERAINE & LIMAVADY	Alan Burke	Union
	Robert McClure	Union
DERRY & DONEGAL	John Torrens	Union
	Jonny McKane	Union
DOWN	Michael McCormick	Union
DROMORE	Robin Aicken	Union
	James Maguire	Union
	Philip Poots	Union
DUBLIN & MUNSTER	John Brogan	Union
	Richard Cronin	Union
	David Curran	Union
	Marty Gray	Union
	John O'Donnell	Union
	Joanne Smith	Union
	Graham Mullan	Union
IVEAGH	Keith Parke	Union
	Michael Rutledge	WTS
	Jonathan Porter	Union
MONAGHAN	Stephen Kennedy	Union
NEWRY	David Clarke	Union
TYRONE	Philip Leonard	Union

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the following candidates, their nominations having been sustained by the Council for Training in Ministry, be accepted as students for the Ordained Ministry, and placed under the care of their Presbyteries:

Name	Congregation	Presbytery
Sam Bostock	Kirkpatrick Memorial	East Belfast
Philip Houston	Rathcoole	North Belfast
Richard Morrison	Toberdoney	Route
Campbell Mulvenny	Mourne	Newry
James Porter	Connor	Ballymena
Christopher Wilson	1st Ballymena	Ballymena
Robert McFaul	Ebrington	Derry & Donegal

2. That those reported by Presbyteries as Licentiates and Ministers without charge be retained as such on the Church's current records.

3. That the candidature for the Ordained Ministry of Mr Norman Kennedy be terminated with immediate effect.

4. That following the changes to the Management Structures for Union Theological College as part of the Structures Review agreed in 2014 (Minutes 2014, pp 55f, res 8 and9), the General Assembly note the following as agreed in 2009 (Minutes 2009, p 85, res 12): 'That the General Assembly instruct the Clerk of the General Assembly to draft Overtures to give permanent effect to the agreed changes in the Management Structures for Union Theological College and to take steps to have any necessary amendments enacted to the 1978 Act of Parliament.'

5. That the Rev Dr David Allen, Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development, be appointed to the Faculty of Union Theological College.

6. That the assessment for the Ministerial Development Programme be set to raise £50,000.

7. That the assessment for the Students' Bursary Fund be set to raise £375,000.

8. That the Report of the Council for Training in Ministry be received.