

## Frequently Asked Questions arising from Candidating Review

**1. *I'm training as a LP and am exploring a call to ministry. I've just found out that I don't need to be a LP in order to candidate. What should I do?***

The changes to the candidating process mean that it is not necessary to have completed Worship: Leading and Preaching before completing the Candidating process. However, Presbyters still must be preachers, and must demonstrate a call to Word and Sacrament, and Deacons to proclaim the Good News. If you have started WLP our advice would be to continue, it's important that you respond to your calling to preach, and the experience of leading worship regularly will enhance any further training prospects.

**2. *Local Preachers who candidate for ministry currently have the experience of preaching regularly in a variety of different churches during their training with support from tutors and mentors, as well as the discipline of regular preparation and service delivery. How in future will presbyters with this valuable experience before they find themselves with an intense preaching load in circuit?***

One of the changes to the candidating process is that candidates will have 7 months from hearing if they have been recommended to be a student minister, until they start their formation training at Queen's Foundation. In that time each candidate will be asked to use that time to begin to grow their understanding of ministry. For someone who does not have a range of preaching experience then they will be asked to preach and lead worship very regularly. Whilst training for ordained ministry, students are allocated to a *link church* where they will preach and lead worship, and they preach and lead worship regularly in college. We are looking at adjusting probationer appointments for any presbyter probationer who was not an accredited preacher before they started ministerial training, so that they will be enabled to widen their preaching, preparation and worship leading experience. In essence a Candidates call to ministry is tested in the candidating process, they are trained as preachers (and in many other aspects of ministry) at Queen's and then their preaching is further formed and shaped in probation before being accepted into Full Connexion with the Conference. All of this is seen as part of the discernment process.

**3. *If presbyters learn their preaching entirely at Queen's, when will they get their formative experience as preachers that they currently get around their circuit as LPs?***

Formation will occur at Queen's in link churches and principally in Probation. This of course is different to traditional pattern of formation, but has the positive effect of (almost) weekly preparation and delivery of worship to add to a person's formation with the support of a Worship Development Group which is provided to a Probationary Minister.

**4. *How is it intended to provide presbyteral trainees with the range of experiences during their preaching training that they currently have when they train as LPs?***

When someone who is not already a local preacher, or worship leader, indicates to their superintendent that they intend to candidate for ordained ministry, they will in effect be put *On Note*, allocated a mentor and will take as many opportunities as possible to preach or lead worship in a range of contexts. If they are then accepted as a student minister, they will have seven months before starting college, in which time they will attend Worship Foundations training.

**5. *As Local Preachers learning through Worship: Leading & Preaching, we are encouraged to be creative in leading worship. Congregations are very supportive of on-trial preachers doing things differently. If presbyters get their preaching practice as probationers, where will they get this opportunity to experiment and try new things in a supportive environment?***

The same could be said of Probationary Presbyters. None of them will be novice preachers, they will have had (usually) 2 years at college and 1 year as they candidated, during which time they will have been preaching. Like local preachers, and all presbyters, they will have been encouraged to experiment and to be creative in their worship. Probationary presbyters will have pastoral relationships with congregations with whom they will develop worship and this will be a supportive environment. They will also continue to have a worship development group who give feedback to the Probationary Minister on their leading of worship and preaching throughout their probation.

**6. *What if a presbyteral candidate only finds out when they get to probation that they cannot cope with the continuous workload of regular preaching having not experienced it during LP training?***

Response: A huge amount of work is done with student ministers in preparing them for circuit life, including the challenges of preaching every week. For those probationary presbyters who had not been accredited as LPs before they candidated, their probationary period will reflect that.

**7. *As a Superintendent, what can I say to reassure the Local Preachers in my circuit that their role is still valued by the Connexion, even though it's now been detached from ordained ministry?***

Response: Preaching is not detached from presbyteral ministry. It may be that some presbyters will not have also been Local Preachers, but they are and will always all be preachers. The ministry of lay preachers is integral to the expression of Methodism in the UK and around the world. The Methodist Conference has in no way altered its understanding of the value and central nature to Methodist worship of LPs. If anything, this strengthens the value with which Local Preachers are regarded because it is now clear that this is an important office in the life of the church in its own right. The reason for the changes to candidating came about after a significant piece of research which asked what were the barriers preventing people from candidating for ordained ministry. One such barrier was the need to complete preacher training before the end of the candidating process

**8. *In future, increasing numbers of presbyters won't have been Local Preachers first. Will they still be part of the Local Preachers' Meeting, and if so, won't this alter the character and purpose of the Local Preachers' meeting, as we won't all share the experience of having been an LP?***

The character of the LP meeting evolves over time and each Local Preachers' Meeting needs to work hard to fulfil its responsibilities under our Standing Orders. In some circuits, Worship Leaders are part of the meeting. In some circuits, Recognised and Regarded Ministers are present and their initial preaching experiences as lay people were not the same as those trained in UK. No changes have been made to the Standing Orders governing Local Preachers' Meetings, and the priorities of worship, fellowship, training and development remain.