

Criteria and Competencies

Competencies for Superintendents

1. Vocation (Call and Commitment)

'First and foremost, Superintendents are presbyters'. So avers the 2005 Conference report *What is a Circuit Superintendent?* It follows that Superintendents must be those who, having been called to presbyteral ministry and having had that call affirmed by the Church, continue visibly to live out their calling and to be open about discerning a call to a position of seniority in the Church alongside a continuing pastoral ministry. Those identifying presbyters for stationing as Superintendents therefore look for:

1. Faithfulness in living out a call to presbyteral ministry.
2. An ability to articulate a call to leadership that is founded on a realistic appraisal of their own gifts and identified and supported by others.
3. A willingness to listen to the voice of others in their call to leadership.
4. The ability to witness joyfully to the experience of public representative ministry.

2. Vocation (Ministry in the MCB)

What is a Circuit Superintendent? glosses its opening statement, describing Superintendents as presbyters 'who in exercising their ministry undertake particular responsibilities on behalf of the Conference'. Those called to Superintendency are called to a particular office that has its place in and affirms the forms of ministry practiced in the MCB, and which involves the exercise of oversight over the life of a circuit and the ministry of colleagues. Those identifying presbyters for stationing as Superintendents therefore look for:

1. A recognition of the needs of the church and a willingness to respond appropriately to them in service.
2. A realistic understanding of the role of a circuit superintendent in the life of the Methodist Church.
3. An understanding of the nature of oversight as it is exercised and experienced in the Methodist Church in Britain and the capacity to exercise such oversight.
4. Have the ability to articulate the missional contribution of a circuit.

3. Relationship with God

If Superintendents are first and foremost presbyters, presbyters are first and foremost people of prayer, who will need a disciplined and robust spirituality to hold before God that for which the Church has made them responsible and to sustain them in the exercise of those responsibilities. Those identifying presbyters for stationing as Superintendents therefore look for:

1. An openness to the spirit through the means of grace.
2. A well-developed life of prayer that enables the individual to hold responsibility before God.
3. A devotional life that integrates the practices of prayer with the practices of ministry.
4. A commitment to seek in all things to bring glory to God.
5. A visible commitment to maintaining a life of prayer and to model that for others.

4. **Personality and Character**

Those who have been Superintendents know that the words of the Ordinal – ‘this ministry will make great demands on you and those close to you’ – acquire greater meaning. The MCB asks its Superintendents to bear significant responsibility for the life of several worshipping communities and for the MCB’s witness in a given area. Superintendents need to be able to deal with stressful situations, sometimes to work long hours, to be public representatives of the circuit, to address complex issues of discipline, to manage conflict, and to continue to exercise the role of a presbyter, in most cases continuing to hold pastoral responsibility for a church or churches. Those identifying presbyters for stationing as Superintendents therefore look for:

1. Realistic understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses.
2. A willingness to seek help in times of need.
3. Appropriate patterns of self-care that model good practice for others.
4. A desire to improve in their practice and discipleship.
5. Appropriate self-reliance and self-motivation and the ability to effectively draw on resources from others and from the Church.
6. The ability to inspire the trust and confidence of others.

5. **Being in Relationship with Others**

The ability to work with others is central to Superintendency; Superintendents need to enjoy good relationships with (among others) their ordained colleagues, the circuit stewards and other lay leaders in the circuit, the members of their churches, and their peers in the district. Stories of the mission of a circuit begin hampered or even disabled by inappropriate inter-personal dynamics have been frighteningly common in the MCB but (as the evidence of the Pauline letters attests) productive relationships can no more be expected to develop automatically in the Church than in other human communities. Whilst the Superintendent cannot bear all the responsibility for forming and maintaining productive relationships in the Church, she or he plays a leading role in enabling colleagues and others to work together and in ensuring that the circuit models estimable Christian fellowship. Those identifying presbyters for stationing as Superintendents therefore look for:

1. Highly developed self-awareness and the ability to be aware of one’s impact on others.
2. A good understanding of difference and the ability to build inclusive communities.
3. The ability to work with conflict to enable transformation and ideally reconciliation.
4. Highly developed pastoral skills.
5. The ability to deploy a range of strategies in difficult interpersonal relationships
6. Proven ability to receive and the potential to offer effective supervision.
7. An informed awareness of their own power and vulnerabilities.
8. The ability to use authority appropriately.
9. The ability to demonstrate and counsel others on the appropriate use of boundaries.

6. **The Church’s Ministry in God’s World**

‘The Circuit is the primary unit in which Local Churches express and experience their interconnexion in the Body of Christ, for the purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help’(SO 500). Beyond the call to engage in mission which is for all Christian people, the particular vocation of a Superintendent is to enable the effective participation of a Methodist circuit in the *mission Dei*. Those identifying presbyters for stationing as Superintendents therefore look for:

1. The capacity to offer prophetic leadership in mission.
2. The ability to hear and to articulate the call of God to mission.
3. An ability to interpret the culture of their locality and to identify the requirements of the work of God in response to it.
4. The ability to see how the Church's personnel and resources in an area might be effectively deployed.
5. A secure Methodist identity and the ability to inspire others in that.
6. A well-developed knowledge and understanding of the governance structures of the local Methodist circuit.
7. Clear understanding of Methodist polity and how it is effectively administered.
8. The awareness of the role as a representative leader in Methodism and in ecumenical context.
9. Clear understanding of the duties of Methodist Trustees.
10. The ability to advocate safeguarding procedures.

7. Leadership and Collaboration

Superintendency is a leadership role in the life of the Church. Just as all oversight in the Methodist Church in Britain, however much it seems to be invested in an individual, has a shared nature, so leadership in the MCB always involves ways of working collaboratively and collegially. Those identifying presbyters for stationing as Superintendents therefore look for:

1. The understanding of the circuit as a unit for mission and the ability to make that effective.
2. Developed administrative skills.
3. Developed skill in the chairing of public meetings.
4. Clear understanding of the power inherent in Superintendency in a circuit.
5. Developed skills of change management.
6. An understanding of a range of leadership styles and the ability to deploy them.
7. The ability to stimulate theological reflection.
8. The ability to recognise and encourage the gifts in others and to learn from their failures and successes.
9. A capacity for visionary leadership.
10. A developed understanding of risk and the ability to act independently and take responsibility for own actions.
11. The ability to encourage the voices of all involved in the life of the circuit.
12. The ability and willingness to challenge inappropriate behaviour.
13. The ability to use supervision effectively as a tool for oversight.
14. The ability where necessary to manage employees.
15. The ability to delegate and to trust in the competence of others.
16. The ability to build, lead and work with teams.
17. The ability to delegate appropriately.

8. Learning and Understanding

All presbyters continue to be students of theology throughout their ministry; the role of the Superintendent in modelling this aspect of ministry and in fostering learning communities within the life of a circuit is crucial in enabling theologically informed worship, fellowship and mission. Those identifying presbyters for stationing as Superintendents therefore look for:

1. Demonstrable skills of and the ability to lead others in theological reflection.
2. The ability to model and encourage practices of study.
3. The ability to recognise the learning needs of a community of Christians and to draw effectively on the resources of the church and wider community.
4. The proven capacity to address her/his own learning needs by, for example, attending appropriate conferences and training.
5. The ability and willingness to create space for learning and theological reflection.

9. Communication

The communication of the Good News of Christ is central to the ministry of all presbyters and all circuits. Superintendents will find themselves exercising this ministry as spokespeople for a circuit and with the responsibility of ensuring that within and on behalf of the circuit good communication systems are in place to enable the taking forward of God's mission. Those identifying presbyters for stationing as Superintendents therefore look for:

1. Advanced communication skills including the ability to deal with broadcast media.
2. The ability to speak with informed authority on behalf of a circuit.
3. The ability to exercise effective oversight over a circuit's own communications systems and publications.
4. The ability to enable good communication within a circuit and between its various bodies.
5. The ability to enable good communication on behalf of a circuit.
6. The ability to articulate clearly and understandably theological truths and the priorities of the church.
7. The capacity to communicate effectively with and to enable effective communication between different offices and officers in the Church.