

## Ministry Division

### A Review of Models and Funding of Pre-Ordination Training in the light of the Proposed Changes to HE Funding

#### Summary paper circulated to the General Synod

This paper summarises the report of the working party chaired by the Bishop of Sheffield. Synod members are strongly encouraged to read the full report available online. A useful summary of the current funding arrangements for ministerial training is also available which provides the wider background to this item. GS Misc 990 and 990A are available at:

<http://www.churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/ministry/ministerial-education-and-development/initial-ministerial-education/policies.aspx>

1. Over the last 20 years, ordination training within the Church of England has moved to the point where not only is it approved by the Church but also candidates are working for awards (diplomas, Foundation degrees, honours and Masters degrees) accredited by UK universities. Consequently, the government's decision to increase student tuition fees and the likely rises in validation fees on many programmes will set our Church a considerable challenge.
2. The Church of England is committed to enabling those who are being called to serve as its ordained ministers to undertake formation and training at the Church's expense to equip them for their future ministry. A summary of the current funding arrangements is given in the separate document entitled 'Training for ordained ministry: current funding commitments'.
3. The working party has adopted a two stage approach to this challenge: (a) to find a short term approach which will enable an affordable budget to be set in July 2011 for 2012, allowing training to continue in an orderly way and (b) to develop a medium term plan to find a more durable solution enabling the Church of England (hopefully in partnership with other interested churches) to provide publicly recognised training of a good standard over which it has more control and a simplification of the present overly complex system of multiple validation partners.
4. If the Church of England does nothing and continues funding training in the same way, the overall additional cost for ordination training would be of the order of a loss of £924k to our training institutions currently receiving money from HEFCE via universities **and** a rise of £626k on Vote 1 for the combination of rising student fees on high cost pathways and increasing validation fees for the majority of ordinands. In addition there would be similar effects, not quantified here, for Reader training and IME 4-7 which are the responsibility of the dioceses. This is clearly unaffordable and therefore action is needed.
5. While the government's plans for the major changes to HE education threaten to raise the cost of ordination and other forms of training at a time when the Church of England can ill afford such costs, they do challenge the Church to review its provision and to make robust plans for the future.
6. Following consultation with diocesan bishops and with training institutions, the working group is persuaded of the importance of ordination training which has public recognition and which gives the best preparation available to the full range of candidates. This is currently achieved by a combination of HE validated routes for the majority of candidates and undergraduate theology degrees, academically-orientated BThs, MAs and research degrees for a smaller number. Training the great majority of candidates to a high standard is a mission priority for the Church. At the same time it is important to train a number of candidates on the academically more demanding routes to equip these future

ministers for a range of intellectually challenging ministries, to give them confidence and to make the most of these candidates' potential for the ministry of the Church.

7. In terms of the funding challenge there is little appetite in the Church of England for asking all candidates or individual parishes to raise additional funds for training or for an across the board reduction in student or family maintenance. In this situation, the remaining option for the short term is to counterbalance the additional costs to Vote 1 by reductions in cost elsewhere.
8. The working group's proposals are:
  - a. To encourage training institutions strongly to get the best price they can with their current providers
  - b. To limit the amount paid for the HE costs of most approved routes to a stated maximum. This may cause difficulties for a small number of institutions within their current arrangements. The additional costs of this are estimated to be £206k. All the figures in this section refer to Vote 1, the mechanism by which the dioceses share the cost of pre-ordination training.
  - c. To continue to support current BA in Theology and academically oriented BTh programmes to a maximum of 50% of the maximum 2012 cost levels (see appendix 4) and to encourage dioceses and training institutions to make up the difference caused by the rising cost of tuition fees by the provision of bursaries thereby enabling appropriate candidates to study on these pathways. This will cost £201k to Vote 1.
  - d. To raise Vote 1 by £407k to cover the additional costs as outlined above in a)-c).
  - e. To offset these additional costs by limiting access to the maintenance of student families to those who can be ordained by the time they are 50 years of age (and who therefore will potentially offer more than 15 years of service before the age of 65 or 18 to 68). Having taken legal advice, we are informed that this is a proper action for the Church to take. Candidates who do not fall in this category can still enter training in which their tuition will be paid on a regional course or, in college, by paying the additional costs themselves or by securing funds from another source (trust funds, an individual diocese etc). In addition training institutions are developing and are encouraged to develop further ways of training which do not incur the considerable cost of family maintenance which constitutes most of the £4m a year currently paid for the maintenance of single and married students.

**Current versus expected university fees 2011 and 2012 and working party proposal**

	HEI actual 2011 £	HEI expected 2012 £	Increase £	Working Party recommended increase £
Validation fees	209,000	521,000	312,000	206,000
Tuition fees	398,000	712,000	314,000	201,000
<b>Total fees</b>	<b>607,000</b>	<b>1,233,000</b>	<b>626,000</b>	<b>407,000</b>

### Breakdown of projected increases in costs of university fees

	£
	£
<b>Total fees payable 2011 (as above)</b>	<b>607,000</b>
Pay increase in full for validation fees rising to no more than £700	117,000
Cap payment of validation fees at £700 for those increasing to more than this figure	89,000
Total proposed increase in validation fees (as above)	206,000
Pay increase in tuition fees in full for non-high cost pathways	57,000
Pay increase in tuition fees in full for moderate increases in high cost pathways	71,000
Pay up to 50% of proposed fee for high increases in high cost pathways	73,000
Total proposed increase in tuition fees (as above)	201,000
<b>Total fees payable 2012</b>	<b>1,014,000</b>

9. For the future, beyond the immediate need to set the Vote 1 budget, the working group is committed to seek to strengthen ordination training and believes that a reduction in the current number of validation relationships with universities would be of overall benefit to the church. This should result in a better use of the time of theological educators (fewer sets of negotiation to be conducted) and reduce the current plethora of similar pathways taken by candidates. This will be a considerable advantage to receiving dioceses and could lead to much greater coherence of provision between IME 1-3 and IME 4-7. In addition there could be better use of, or a saving on, the £1.0m which, if our recommendations are accepted, the Church of England would spend on HE fees with regard to pre-ordination training in a full year once the increases are fully implemented. The two main options under consideration are:
- a. A single suite of vocational awards at appropriate academic levels (foundation degree or diploma; honours degree; MA) which can be delivered in a range of places across England at a uniform cost. This could be developed with our ecumenical partners and could include a pathway for Reader students. One possibility would be to negotiate these awards with the Church universities – ie, one set of awards, taught locally by college and course staff, with the HE award being given by one, two or a consortium of Church universities.
  - b. The Church, encouraged by the intention of the government to bring new providers of higher education into the sector, could seek taught degree awarding powers of its own. While this would not be a simple task and not without set-up and continuing costs, it would give the Church much more control, in contrast to a HE scene which is and no doubt will continue to change rapidly. It could represent a saving or a better return on the £521,000 the Church of England would be paying in the future for the university validation of awards. The new awards to be given would have public recognition giving candidates confidence and enabling ministers to proceed to other UK higher education awards as appropriate during their ministries.
10. We commend these proposals as a way forward, for the short term and the medium term, both to enable training to continue in an orderly manner and for the Church better to be able to shape the training which it offers to candidates.

## 11. Recommendations

1. To maintain our commitment wherever possible and affordable to HE validation in order to give time to develop more long-term options.
2. To develop Church approval for all pathways into ministries for which provision is made by Canon, from 2012, as a viable option for dioceses and training institutions.
3. To develop from this base as rapidly as possible, a national Church-approved suite of awards which will also confer an HE award, ideally in partnership with other churches.
4. To agree a rise in the Vote 1 budget for the academic year beginning 2012 to accommodate those institutions who are facing moderate rises (to up to £700 per full-time equivalent student) in validation fees.
5. To fund only in part those pathways where validation or tuition fees are set to rise steeply and to encourage the creation of student bursary schemes for high-cost pathways where necessary.
6. To limit the pooling of maintenance costs for candidates to those candidates who can be ordained by the time they are 50 years of age having completed their normal training.

+Steven Sheffield

April, 2011

### **Membership of the Working Party and Terms of Reference**

- a) In the context of the Church's future ministry needs, to review the provision of the different educational pathways prior to ordination;
- b) To examine the funding model for pre-ordination training with regard to both high cost and standard pathways
- c) To take evidence from dioceses and for training providers
- d) To make proposals initially for the March 2011 [subsequently amended to June 2011] meeting of the Ministry Council

### **Membership**

Rt Revd Steven Croft, Bishop of Sheffield and former Warden of Cranmer Hall (Chair)  
Rt Revd Martin Warner, Bishop of Whitby  
Prof Michael Wright, Chair, Quality in Formation Panel and former Vice Chancellor of Canterbury Christ Church University  
Canon Dr Dennis Stamps, Ministerial Development Officer, St Albans Diocese and former Dean of the Queen's Foundation, Birmingham  
Prof John Craven, Chair, Ministry Division Finance Panel, Vice-Chancellor, University of Portsmouth  
Mr Andrew Britton, Chair, Archbishops Council Finance Committee

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