

Review of Theological Education and Funding

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Introduction

Resourcing Ministerial Education (RME) was introduced as a strand of Renewal and Reform in 2017 and, under the terms by which it was established is due for review by July 2020: *‘the Ministry Council will undertake a thorough review of all elements of the financial mechanism based on the system and its review in the preceding three years. This will also take a more strategic perspective and focus on the extent to which the changed financial arrangements have supported the growth and development of the ministerial education sector and met the RME objectives.’*

This RME review is, necessarily, a nuanced interweaving of 3 conversations, in order that it might enable the Church of England to form candidates for mission and ministry.

It must, thus, be:

- a) grounded in reliable theological reflection on the nature of ministry and mission which faithfully ‘proclaims afresh in every generation’ and the task of formation for such ministry
- b) engaged with the ecclesial implications of a national system of training for public ministry
- c) financially robust and sustainable.

Reflecting on the first iteration of the RME process, the Ministry Council has observed that these conversations were separated, and therefore proposes an integrated approach through one review group comprising members who bring expertise in one or more strand of the conversation.

Review Aims

The tasks of the review are 4-fold:

- 1) Delineate a vision for theological education and its provision for the Church of England, founded on the House of Bishops vision for the church’s ministry, to be agreed and adopted by the House of Bishops.
 - a) The vision for theological education will focus on the formation of ordained and licensed lay ministers, and support for their continuing formation and training.
 - b) The shape of the provision will enhance collaboration, innovation and sustainability in the sector.
- 2) Collate and review the experience and impact of the current funding model, assessing:
 - a) the extent to which the RME objectives agreed by Synod in Feb 2016 have been met.
 - Increase the number of ordinands, especially younger ordinands.
 - Provide greater transparency between training decisions and financial outcomes.
 - Operate with simplicity and certainty, whilst ensuring fairness to dioceses, ordinands and TEIs.
 - Maintain mutual support across the dioceses.
 - Avoid transitional turbulence during the early years of implementation.
 - Support the mixed economy of Theological Education Institutions.

- b) the extent to which the methodology for fund distribution (for example, age bands and most numerous pathway) has served the RME objectives.
 - c) the consequence of the RME model for diocesan cashflow outcomes and of any imbalance in surpluses and deficits
 - d) the level and distribution of maintenance payments
- 3) Consider the sources of funding for all forms of training, including the Vote I budget, diocesan and local funding.
- 4) Propose modifications that would better work towards the House of Bishops' vision for ministry and theological education.

Tasks

1. In order to delineate a vision for theological education and its provision the group will review recent regional consultations, the TEI Review meeting and staff meetings with TEI principals, referring also to the Theological Vision for Common Awards, returning to first principles to scope an understanding of theological education and formation that is recognised by the House of Bishops as broadly coherent with their vision for ministry and formation.
2. In order to consider the shape of provision to resource this vision, the following work will be undertaken.
 - a) Mapping the provision of formation across the Church of England
 - b) Mapping the pathways undertaken by ordinands to reveal whether they meet the expectations of a common curriculum
 - c) Mapping the shape of formation in particular with regard to time spent in college and parish, on full time, part time, residential, non-residential and "context based" courses
 - d) Research into current provision of reflective practice, its methodology and quality
 - e) Mapping the provision of opportunities to train in specialist areas, including but not exclusively pioneer ministry and church planting
3. In order to assess the extent to which the RME objectives (including growth, transparency, simplicity and equity) have been met, information will be gathered as usual in the Autumn of 2019 that will enable the Review Group to answer the questions posed. However, there are some other questions for consideration including:
 - a) Formational reasons for continuing to fund pathways which are at a higher cost to the Church than the Common Awards programmes and those that have been granted exception from the Common Awards framework, or not.
 - b) Examination of the Family Maintenance system and its impact on perceptions of cost, especially with regard to context based (mixed mode) training

- c) Consideration of the current surpluses held by dioceses and their use, including an interim proposal for their use (see timetable).
4. In order to consider the sources of funding for all forms of training, including the Vote I budget, diocesan and local funding the review will return to the principle derived at point 1) above, making recommendations for appropriate models of funding for life long vocational discernment, formation and training.
5. To complete the work by proposing modifications that would better work towards the House of Bishops' vision for ministry and theological education, the Review Group will draw on all the research outlined above.
6. Recommendations will be made to ensure the appropriate form of governance for any new model of expenditure.