

In accordance with government guidance, the National Ministry has had to adjust our way of working and many events and activities have been moved online. For many, this has been a very new experience and a new way of working. We do hope that you will have patience with us as we navigate these uncharted waters.

Below you will find some Frequently Asked Questions addressing the discernment process, training, and vocations in light of COVID-19. We remain committed to supporting you in your front line roles. Please do not hesitate to contact us with your questions, ideas and concerns.

## **Vocations**

### **Is the Ministry Experience Scheme still operating?**

Broadly, yes.

The end of the year will look rather different for the 2019/20 cohort. Different dioceses have dealt with this in different ways but all following Government advice and restrictions on movement. There are some great stories of participants stepping up within local volunteering groups and foodbanks. We are enthusiastically recruiting for the 2020/21 cohort using all means available. Of course we hope that the cohort will start off as normal but if the beginning of the year 20/21 has to make use of online resources to get started, we will do what we can to facilitate that.

### **Are we still encouraging new vocations (lay and ordained)?**

Absolutely! The Church still needs new and emerging explorers to consider whether God is calling them to ordained or formal lay ministries. Whilst some people are swept off their feet at this time, others find themselves with more time on their hands to reflect and to pray. We encourage and applaud creative ways within dioceses to facilitate this reflection and to begin discussions with new explorers. Our prayer is that in both September 2020 and September 2021, there will still be plenty of wonderfully faithful people entering training for ordained and lay ministries.

## **Formation: FAQs for TEI Staff**

### **Can an ordinand be ordained if they have not completed the formational programme?**

Yes, your recommendation to the Bishop contained in the final year report remains one based upon evidence that they meet the Formation Criteria. In most cases, you will have come to this judgement already and although the formational work will be disrupted, we hope that you will feel confident to stick with your recommendation. If you have particular concerns over an individual ordinand's capacity to meet the criteria, you should, as always be in touch with their DDO and Bishop to discuss this. You may of course wish to suggest to the ordaining Bishop that IME 2 might possess certain development goals to compensate for this.

### **Will we have as a TEI to make up for any lost teaching/class contact?**

For those studying under Common Awards programmes, flexibility is being offered so that students can complete courses, often learning using online resources. The same applies to assessments. You should be in touch with the Common Awards team to inform them of the changes that you are making but this can be after the event. The primary issue here is to give students equal access to whatever learning you are able to provide and that this will be on a par with that which you would have offered.

### **What about the loss of formational time by not completing a placement this year?**

We hope that for continuing students, it may be possible for you to re-arrange placements as and when this might be possible. But for those to be ordained this summer, this will not be possible and we will need to trust IME 2 providers and contexts to attend to the ongoing formational development.

### **Who do I speak to if our TEI is experiencing financial concerns?**

Sarah Evans ([sarah.evans@churchofengland.org](mailto:sarah.evans@churchofengland.org)) or David Wells ([david.wells@churchofengland.org](mailto:david.wells@churchofengland.org)) are the people to be in touch with.