

Pioneer Criteria

The Pioneer Criteria are to be used for the discernment of pioneer ministry, lay and ordained in the Church of England. They are designed to assess whether a candidate has the capacity for pioneering ministry in planting fresh expressions of church.

Some of the Criteria are about assessing a candidate's potential and recognize that that potential will only be fully realized after training and during ministry. The recognition of that potential is sufficient to allow a candidate to be recommended as a pioneer. However, some of the Criteria call for 'demonstrable' ability and as such there has to be clear evidence at the point of selection that a candidate fulfils these Criteria if he or she is to be recommended as a pioneer. These demonstrable abilities are so essential that they need to be clearly and evidently in place at the point of selection.

A. Missional qualities required

Candidate must have a realistic and informed vocation to plant fresh expressions of church within contemporary culture. They will be able to show how they have responded to God's calling to be a pioneer by

1. A demonstrable track record of innovation in their life. Candidates should have a track record of 'firsts' and initiative in having started something new.

Evidence of this will be drawn from a candidate's experience of:

- Having started a contextually-appropriate church or congregation
- Starting a new project or group around perceived opportunities in any area of life
- Identifying and responding effectively to key opportunities for mission
- Working in creative and non-standard ways to develop an innovative approach to problem solving and thinking in any area of life
- Demonstrating practices of missional imagination
- Reflecting on situations, learning from them and make appropriate changes for the future in any area of life.

2. A demonstrable willingness to take risks and show courageous faith

Evidence of this will be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Be a self-starter with a willingness to build from nothing
- Take appropriate risks and be prepared to exercise step by step experimentation.
- Negotiate disappointment well and learn from mistakes to improve further actions

3. A demonstrable ability to communicate the faith effectively to those outside the church

Evidence for this will be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Demonstrate with examples how they have communicated the Christian faith to those outside the Church naturally, sensitively and effectively.
- Demonstrate with examples how they have communicated with and related easily to people outside the church.
- Demonstrate with examples their understanding of the worldviews and mind sets of people outside the church
- Demonstrate with examples an understanding of the interaction between gospel and culture
- Demonstrate with examples how they have helped in forming individuals as missional disciples of Jesus.

B. Collaborative qualities required

4. An ability to work collaboratively in creating and working with a team

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to show how they have:

- Developed vision with others for a new project

- Released and equipped others for pioneering ministry
- Identified and invested in future pioneering leaders
- Helped people to share responsibility for the growth and success of the fresh expression
- Looked beyond their own areas of responsibility with a wider regard for the whole.

5. Well-developed abilities to handle complexity and initiate change

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Live with uncertainty
- Use adaptive practices appropriately in a particular context
- Motivate others to engage with change
- Deal well with conflict
- Shift priorities and emphasis during various stages of development of a project they have been involved with.

6. A clear vision of the place of their envisaged ministry within the wider Church of England's response to God's mission to the world

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Understand and be committed to the Church of England as a 'mixed economy' church
- Be committed to the reshaping of the Church for mission

C. Personal qualities required

7. Have demonstrable maturity and robustness to face the demands of pioneering mission and ministry

Evidence of this will be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Lay aside personal preference for the sake of the community being served
- Cope effectively with pressure, ambiguity, change and disorientation
- Have a consistency of character in varied circumstances of pioneering
- Demonstrate a willingness to live sacrificially and endure hardship
- Persevere for the long-term rather than take shortcuts for quick results
- Work across different cultures
- Show good emotional awareness

8. A mature and well developed devotional life of a pioneer

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- Demonstrate an established robust, discipline of personal prayer, worship and study which can sustain them in pioneering situations
- Adapt their spiritual practices creatively to reflect and engage with their pioneering context
- Develop their ability to relate prayer and worship to their context
- Have the patience to wait for and identify God's timing
- Be able to help new disciples grow in their faith
- Attend to the movement of the Holy Spirit in particular mission situations.

9. The ability to learn and reflect theologically as a pioneer

Evidence of this may be drawn from a candidate's capacity to:

- To make sense theologically of their pioneering work
- To interpret the Bible in the midst of contextual mission
- To understand how missional ministry is shaped by culture and context.
- Understand contemporary cultures and the practice of planting fresh expressions of church within them