

Ministry Council: Periodic External Review Follow-up Report

Bristol Diocesan Licensed Lay Ministry Training and Formation Course

May 2017

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Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ

Switchboard: +44(0)20 7898 1000 Email: ministry@churchofengland.org Website: www.churchofengland.org

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Senior Reviewer's Follow-up Report to the January-February 2016 Periodic External Review

May 2017

Following the report there has been a reorganisation in the ministry department. The former Adviser for Lay Ministry Development has moved into parish ministry, but has also become the Warden of Readers, and Reader training is now overseen by a newly appointed Adviser for Initial Ministerial Development. An action plan was produced in December 2016.

I met with the Revd Wiz Slater, the new Adviser for Initial Ministerial Development, in April 2017; before that meeting she had provided a copy of their PER Recommendations Action Plan, complete with actions, people responsible, timescales and progress.

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the LLM Council look to appoint someone from the higher or further education sector to provide advice and assistance when reviewing the course.

A member of the tutorial staff at Trinity College, Bristol, has been drawn in as a 'critical friend' for the once a year self-evaluation and to assist with quality review. She attends the LLM Council when relevant. The LLM Council has discussed its role within the formation year, had a training session on self-evaluation and the Periodic External Review process and has at least attempted to recruit someone from the higher or further education sector. This has helped to ensure that the LLM Council is more aware of its oversight of the course and is more active in exercising this responsibility (with external help).

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the course consider strengthening the inter-faith content of the curriculum.

An inter-faith session has been introduced in the formation year and will be a regular part of the programme.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the LLM Council considers how to press for clarity of purpose in the partnership and its procedures for curriculum review.

Lying behind this recommendation is the clearly felt need to revise elements of the 'Exploring Christianity' course whilst its copyright effectively lies elsewhere. What is required is either a reviving of the training partnership or permission to effect local changes. The Bishop of Swindon has written to the Bishop of Bath

& Wells asking for clarity in this and for a way forward. Though this correspondence has been recent and much delayed it now opens the way to sorting out this problem.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that the scheduling of training in preaching and leading worship be reviewed and serious consideration given to introducing it earlier in the year.

Terms two and three have been swapped so that preaching and leading worship are now tackled earlier in the year.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 5

Students should be given information in advance of the induction weekend that will indicate in sufficient detail how the content is designed to build community to prepare them for the formation year experience.

The written instructions for the weekend have been revised and clear verbal guidance is also given to those preparing for the induction weekend.

Implementation being taken forward; no further action.

Recommendation 6

There should be a review and a clear policy of how the course prepares students for the full range of liturgies of the Church of England.

This was discussed by the Bishop of Swindon and the Ministry Development Strategy meeting. The outcome of this was that training incumbents would be made responsible for ensuring that this aspect of training has been met and that the training handbook would be updated accordingly.

The danger of this is that there is no quality control and that the Adviser for Initial Ministerial Development has little opportunity for ensuring that students are fully prepared in this regard and can exercise liturgical ministries beyond their local context. I discussed this issue with the Rev'd Wiz Slater who is keen to find a way to ensure that the training course can retain oversight of students' development of knowledge and skills through local training contexts, and to work with partners in the diocese in doing so.

Recommendation only partially addressed but there is a desire on the part of the new Adviser for Initial Ministerial Development to address this.

Recommendation 7

Actions proposed on the 2015 Annual Self Evaluation relating to preparation and feedback on conducting worship should be reviewed in the 2016 Annual Self Evaluation.

Worship has been moved from the end of the session to the beginning to allow time for feedback (during coffee time). One tutor participates in worship whilst the other observes. Worship feedback sheets are being placed in students' files.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that the staff handbook be updated to reflect the current policy of the Church of England relating to safeguarding. This can be found at <http://churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/child-protection-safeguarding.aspx>

This has been done.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that a written complaints policy be drafted and implemented to include a flow chart clearly showing how each stage of the complaint will be handled. Such a policy should also address the process in case of any appeal against marks allocated.

This has been done. The complaints procedure is now in the course handbook.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 10

We recommend the appointment of a second student (from the second year of the course) to the LLM Council. This will provide continuity of representation.

This has been done.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that the cost of training an LLM be calculated and comparisons made with other dioceses.

The Adviser for Initial Ministerial Development has this in hand.

Implemented being taken forward; no further action.

Recommendation 12

We recommend that the LLM Council conduct a risk assessment for the course with particular regard to future staffing and funding.

This has been done. Part of the concern in this item was due to the dependence of the course on the one key member of staff. The new appointment of an Adviser for Initial Ministerial Development and a reorganisation of roles within the ministry department seems to have gone well and thought has been given to ensuring that good leadership of the course continues.

Implemented being taken forward; no further action.

The overall judgement of the review was that we had **Confidence with Qualifications** in the course. Our qualifications were few and the recommendations mostly of a minor nature. The bigger picture (mostly outside the scope of the review) was how Licensed Lay Ministry fitted within the overall strategy of the diocese. Recent numbers of those training for LLM have been low – this may be due to either the lack of much explicit mention of LLM in the diocesan strategy or the inevitable hiatus caused by the change in leadership of the course. The latter is a short-term issue; the former can only be addressed at a level ‘higher’ than the LLM Council (though they will no doubt continue to have a key role in shaping the diocese’s strategy and vision).

The Revd Canon Nick Moir, Senior Reviewer
May 2017