

**GENERAL SYNOD**

**FORMATION FOR MINISTRY AND A FRAMEWORK  
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION VALIDATION**

**Phase 2 Report of the Working Party,  
as approved by the House of Bishops, December 2011**

**THE STORY SO FAR...**

1. In September, 2010, the government published details of far ranging changes to the funding of Higher Education. The Ministry Council established a Working Party chaired by the Bishop of Sheffield to map the effects these changes would have on training for ministry and the Vote 1 Budget. The Working Party carried out a widespread mapping and consultation exercise and reported back to the Archbishops' Council, the House of Bishops and the General Synod in July 2011.
2. It was apparent that the effects of the HE Funding Changes on training would be significant. £0.9 million of HEFCE funding currently transferred to institutions on validated programmes would be lost to the sector. Tuition and validation fees were set to increase (albeit with many variations across the sector) we predicted by more than £600,000 per annum if nothing was done.
3. The Working Party articulated a series of principles which should guide the Church of England's initial response to these developments. These included an affirmation of the principles in the 2004 report, Formation for Ministry in a Learning Church; the need for a balance between national and local definition of training pathways; the value of HE validation as a whole and HE partnerships; the priority of giving as good a training as possible to as many ordinands as possible; investing most in those who are able to give a good number of years service in ministry; the value of some candidates studying and engaging with the wider academy and the need for a mixed ecology of training.
4. In May the Working Party brought forward its Phase 1 report with six recommendations to the General Synod to address this situation:
  - i. To maintain our commitment wherever possible and affordable to HE validation in order to give time to develop more long-term options.
  - ii. 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.
  - iii. To develop from this base as rapidly as possible, a national Church-approved suite of awards which will also confer a HE award, ideally in partnership with other churches.
  - iv. 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.

- v. 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.
  - vi. 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.
5. The report was debated by the Synod and the motion to approve its recommendations was carried (342 votes in favour; 0 against and 6 abstentions).
  6. The financial provisions in our Phase 1 report are now being carried forward by the Ministry Division Finance Panel, including the detailed negotiations with Colleges and Courses about possible fee increases.
  7. The Phase 1 report explored two possible ways forward in respect of Recommendation 3. The first was to seek a single HE validation arrangement to cover the majority of training needs with one university or group of universities. The second was to set up an intermediate Church sponsored body which would seek degree awarding powers. Discussion of the two possible ways forward following publication of the Phase 1 report and closer scrutiny of the government proposals for new degree awarding powers have steered us towards the first of these options although we have kept the second as a possible long term development.

## **OVERALL VISION**

*We believe that there are compelling reasons for the Church of England, with our partner institutions, to develop a suite of HE Awards with a single validating HE partnership which would provide the main highway of training and formation for IME 1-3, which would also provide dioceses with an option for IME 4-7 and for Reader training; and would also make provision for independent students pursuing a variety of vocations in discipleship and ministry.*

8. The suite of awards would include a Certificate; Diploma or Foundation Degree; Honours Degree and taught Master's programme and a post-graduate Diploma. This suite of awards would not in any sense be a lowest common denominator or lower value set of awards than those currently available in any part of the sector. We are looking for a robust partnership with a strong HE provider such that these awards become the Gold Standard for lay and ordained learning and formation for many years to come.

## THE PHASE 2 REPORT

9. We now present our Phase 2 report which seeks to explore further and take forward Recommendation 3 of our first report: the development of a nationally approved suite of HE awards with a single validating partner university (or group of universities). If our report is approved, it is envisaged that the majority of ordinands and many Readers and curates will in the near future be training within the framework of this nationally approved suite of awards.
10. This report explores in more detail the rationale for such a partnership; its parameters; and the degree of ecumenical involvement. We have explored how a single suite of awards can accommodate the necessary variety in church tradition and mode of delivery. We have made recommendations on how far this suite of awards should become the normal route for training and formation and when and how exceptions would be authorised.
11. We have done our best to set financial parameters and estimate the likely costs to the Church overall, and we have set out the process of tender whereby we would establish the partnership and outlined the timetable and scope of the next phase of the work and the kind of group which will be needed to steer the suite of awards forward.
12. Our Phase 2 report makes a single recommendation:

### **Recommendation:**

*That the Church of England, with our partner churches establish a single suite of HE awards suitable for IME 1-7, Reader training and independent students, with a single HE set of validation arrangements as outlined in this report.*

### **The rationale for a single suite of HE awards and single partnership**

#### *Common Standards of Formation*

13. The Church of England aims to work as one body across different Dioceses and understands itself to share in the mission of God in similar ways in every part of the country. Ordained ministry and recognised lay ministries are interchangeable across every Diocese. For that reason it is important to have common patterns and standards of training and formation.
14. Those preparing for ordained ministry within the Church of England do so within a single national framework of selection and, since 2005 the shape of their preparation for ordination has been guided by common learning outcomes. The Ministry Division oversees this process on behalf of the House of Bishops. The responsibility for the frameworks of selection, sponsorship for training, ordination and IME 4-7 rests individually and collectively with the Bishops.
15. There is a continual dialogue within the Church of England in this as in many areas of church life about the right balance between shared perspective expressed in common patterns and frameworks and diversity expressed in different courses and routes through training in different traditions and parts of the country. As we look back in history, this

balance has been fluid and has been changed, often through the initiatives of Bishops, according to our evolving mission context.

16. The discernment of the House of Bishops, the training institutions and the General Synod at the present time seems to indicate a deep desire to emphasise unity and to bring into clearer focus the common elements of our training. This is in part a natural development after a generation of emphasising local and diverse patterns of training. It is in part a response to the rapidly changing context for mission and the need for the Church of England as a whole to be able to respond to those changes with confidence and creativity. It is in part also simply good stewardship to be able to make the best use of limited resources and to encourage collaboration in teaching and learning.

#### *Simplicity*

17. The consultation exercise which led to our Phase 1 report affirmed the immense value to the Church of England and our partner churches of HE validation of training in general and a strong desire to retain HE validation as part of our training structure.
18. However there was also a widespread awareness of the complexity of the present HE validation arrangements which have grown and developed over the last twenty years according the principles of a market which has now changed permanently. Our 23 different institutions which train around 1,200 ordinands each year (together with curates and Readers) have validation arrangements with 19 separate universities; some Reader and IME 4-7 training is validated in yet more arrangements. Many institutions have validation relationships with more than one university. This is an immensely complex network of relationships for a comparatively small number of students (even when the ecumenical partners are added into the numbers).
19. This complexity is costly in a variety of ways. Fees are cumulatively higher than they could otherwise be (and look set to increase). An immense amount of staff time is expended maintaining and developing these validation relationships or reviewing or changing providers as the market evolves. The offer made by the validating HE partners varies immensely. Some current HE partners have a vibrant theology department; others have none. Some offer library and teaching and learning support; others offer none. In our consultation exercise in January 2011 we noted a thirst for greater simplicity across the sector both in written submissions and in face to face meetings: simplicity which would release energy for the core tasks of formation and training.

#### *Coherence*

20. This pattern of validation ensures coherence in IME 1-3 for those trained within a single institution. Some coherence across IME 1-3 is also maintained through common learning outcomes and the Church Quality Assurance process.
21. However there is very limited coherence between IME 1-3, mainly delivered by the training institutions and IME 4-7, mainly delivered by the Dioceses with some involvement from the Regional Training Partnerships. A cohort of curates in a Diocese will typically have trained in up to eight different training institutions, following differing curricula. The development of a single suite of awards which embraces IME 1-7 as a whole offers the possibility of greater coherence here, which would be a very significant

step forward and complement work begun in “Formation for Ministry in a Learning Church”.

22. With some exceptions, there is even less coherence overall between training for accredited and licensed lay ministries (particularly Reader training) and training and formation for ordained ministry. Again, the development of a single suite of awards would offer the possibility to strengthen this coherence within a national framework such that there would be a common standard and benchmark for Reader training within a single suite of awards and which allowed for previous learning to be taken into account if a candidate at a later stage prepares for ordained ministry.

#### *Definition*

23. For the last 25 years the Church of England has largely delegated responsibility for determining the curriculum for theological education and formation to the 23 different training institutions in the framework established by ACCM 22 and, later by the Churches’ Validation Framework, its collaborative successor with Methodist, United Reformed and Baptist partners.
24. The strength of this process is that it invites each institution to develop its curriculum and pattern of formation from first principles. There is much creativity around the edge of the circle but it is often unconnected to other conversations in the Church of England as a whole about training, and in particular conversations in the House of Bishops.
25. In that period there have been many attempts to change and add to the curriculum of pre-ordination training. However there has been very little attempt to define and structure the overall curriculum for the whole Church (which is by far the more challenging endeavour). Much that is good has flowed from the ACCM 22 process and this should not be lost. However, there is now an opportunity to build on this recent past through an ongoing national conversation and definition of the common features of the curriculum for ministerial training and formation.

#### *Partnership*

26. There are some very strong examples of partnerships in theological education at local level and through Regional Training Partnerships. However the ethic of partnership and collaboration across the sector is not as strong as it could or should be to serve the needs of the whole Church of England at the present time. Institutions often find themselves working in competition against one another rather than in creative partnership. This in turn slows the vital exchange of ideas and the development of good practice. In some regions, one group of providers may be working with a long established university with a strong Department of Theology. Another group in the same region may be working to deliver the awards of a less prestigious University at the other end of the country with no theological expertise. In the same region, IME 4-7 and Reader training might be delivered by Dioceses with no HE validation whatsoever.
27. These arrangements make it more difficult than it should be to share teaching and learning, exchange members of staff, maximise library and IT facilities and create the best possible training and formation for the students across the region in their individual courses and in the movement between different kinds of training. A single set of awards

validated by a single university and working to a common curriculum would, we believe, facilitate much greater and deeper partnership at regional level, nationally and ecumenically. It is also a benefit of our proposal that having a single suite of awards negotiated by the churches will in due course release time for those who train ministers, instead of each institution/diocese having to undertake this considerable task. While institutions/dioceses will need to participate actively in the debate about the development of the common suite of awards, they will have more time to focus on core responsibilities of formation, education and training.

### *Responsiveness*

28. The Church of England currently serves in a context which is changing and evolving continually and rapidly. It is not easy for training and formation as a whole to respond in practice to this changing context even when given a strong lead by the House of Bishops or the General Synod.
29. Suppose, for example, that the House of Bishops determined in 2012 that greater attention should be paid in initial training of ordinands and Readers in apologetics because of the critique of the new atheists or that, because of the economic downturn, all curates should receive training in community development. Under the present arrangements this recommendation would come as advice to the Colleges and Courses or Dioceses and as an additional requirement in training (nothing could or would be subtracted). Experience suggests take-up of the recommendations would be slow and patchy at best even if reinforced by the processes of inspection and review.
30. Change is seldom easy but in the arrangements proposed in this Report it is easier to imagine how a recommendation about the curriculum would come through the House of Bishops to the Ministry Council and then to the Steering Group for the Churches Common Awards. In order for change to be properly worked into the curriculum and for it to mesh with the partner university's processes, there would need to be a process for periodic review of the suite of awards, probably on an annual basis. The Steering Group would have to wrestle in a responsible way with how the request might be expressed in relation to the Learning Outcomes and from there in the suite of awards (addressing along the way what might need to be taken out and how staff might be equipped to teach the new priority). This group in turn would pass on guidance to the training institutions.

### *The Learning and Formation of the whole people of God*

31. The Church of England is committed, with our partner churches, to the learning and formation of the whole people of God and equipping all of the baptised for lifelong discipleship. Within that common calling on every Christian to discipleship, there are, of course many different ministries, both informal and recognised.
32. This kind of learning and formation for discipleship operates at a wide range of different levels from marriage preparation classes, Lent courses and catechetical formation in the local church, to Deanery and Diocesan training events to equip thoughtful Christian disciples to live out their discipleship through the whole of their lives. There are many, many ways of learning and theological formation which are not HE accredited.

33. However, the offering of HE validated programmes of study for learning and formation in discipleship have the potential to form part of what is offered in the life of the Church of England. Our Colleges, Courses and Schemes already make significant attempts to cater for lay and independent students in what are essentially ministerial degrees. However, in most cases, such people are present in comparatively small numbers in any one institution (and the training is inevitably skewed towards training for recognised ministries).
34. The possibility of a common suite of awards for different forms of training and formation opens up the real possibility of pathways to Diploma, Degree and Masters level with a focus on lay discipleship rather than just a focus on recognised lay or ordained ministry, and of shared teaching and learning in this across a number of institutions. Several of our present institutions have indicated that they believe the degrees we offer will become increasingly attractive to independent students in the coming years because of the funding changes across Higher Education generally.
35. In making this suggestion we are aware of two inherent dangers. The first is that this aspiration that the new awards will make a contribution to formation for discipleship may add to the complexity of an already complex task. The second is that, as in the past, formation and learning for the whole people of God will be seen as some kind of after thought to training for ordained and recognised lay ministries.
36. Nevertheless we believe that in this moment of change in our training structures, we must create the possibility for the development of HE accredited awards and pathways which are shaped by the agenda of formation for discipleship, even if these will take some time in practice to develop.

*Establishing a negotiating position*

37. It is important to recognise that part (but only part) of the motivation for developing the common suite of awards is financial. Our Phase 1 report found ways forward for containing the increased cost to the Church of the changes in HE funding. However, we need to recognise that any sense of stability is an illusion. We are now operating in a changed and changing HE landscape in which validation and tuition costs are likely to continue to rise significantly in the coming decade. All universities have to pay careful attention to the bottom line. The “cost” of an undergraduate degree is now set at around £9,000 per annum per student in the public mind. The next five years are likely to be years of financial uncertainty in the sector as a whole.
38. Given this outlook it is vital that as a Church we maximise our negotiating power with HE institutions to secure favourable and stable HE validation arrangements for all our training and formation. Individually, even our largest single institutions are tiny compared to the size of universities. Together, and with our ecumenical partners, we represent a significant group of students, comparable with other bodies seeking professional validation and public recognition of training.
39. As set out in our Phase 1 report, our aim has been to raise the standard and coherence of training offered to ordinands at the same cost as is currently being paid or at a lower cost to the Church. (The specific financial recommendations of the Phase 1 report are set out in the introduction to this report.) We intend to do this is by the Church entering into one

set of Higher Education arrangements with one or more universities for the pathways for most ordinands, rather than the 23 ministry training institutions doing this individually or in groups.

### **Ecumenical and other partnerships**

#### *Ecumenical partnership*

40. From every perspective, we believe it is important that this suite of awards is established by the Church of England in partnership with our sister churches.
41. We have carried out an initial formal consultation exercise with the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and the Baptist Union (with whom we are already in partnership in different ways in different regions). We are also seeking exploratory conversations with the Roman Catholic Church and with a number of independent and new church networks.
42. The Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and the Baptist Church have all expressed a strong interest in the conversations and have requested Free Church representation on the curriculum working group (Phase 3) in order to ensure that the new suite of awards adequately serves their needs for ministerial training. Partnership in each case is likely to be at regional or local level rather than at national level although such partnership will have national support. If other churches wished to join the partnership, there should be a formal mechanism for enabling this to happen.
43. We believe that the exploratory conversations with the Roman Catholic Church and the independent and new church networks should continue and that the proposals for the new awards should be framed in such a way that students from these churches can share fully in the programmes both for ministerial training and lay education. However it is likely that these partnerships will evolve primarily at local and regional level.
44. Particular mention needs to be made of the Methodist Church because of the Covenant process to which we stand committed and our many close ties in formation for ministry over many years. The Methodist Church has recently published a major consultation document on future patterns of training for ministry: "The Fruitful Field". We are currently seeking opportunities for ongoing dialogue with the Methodist Church as part of their consultation process to explore the ways in which our own review of training and the Methodist Church review can best work together.
45. We are therefore proposing that the conversation moves forward in as ecumenical a way as possible balancing the need to give clarity and direction to formation and training in the Church of England with the need to create and preserve space for growing ecumenical participation in the new awards at both national and local level, as seems most appropriate to our partners. For that reason we are proposing that there is space created on the Phase 3 working group for formal ecumenical representation.

#### *Other Recognised and Authorised Ministries in the Church of England*

46. In a similar way there is need for ongoing conversation and dialogue with those responsible for other forms of training for ministry in the Church of England which

embrace HE Validation, including particularly Church Army Training and training in various forms of Youth Ministry. Again, our principle must be one of openness and encouragement to other bodies to explore the new family of awards in the way which is most helpful to their own distinctive calling.

**Varieties of delivery and flexibility of intention**

- 47. We identified in our Phase 1 report the need for a continued mixed ecology of training, for different modes, styles and patterns of delivery and for the different traditions of the Church of England to be reflected in the mix of training offered.
- 48. We believe that it is possible to create a single set of awards validated by a single HE partnership and preserve this mixed ecology of training. In part this can be done through allowing exceptions to this suite of awards in the process defined below. In part this will be done through encouraging a variety of patterns of delivery, forms of training and choice of routes through the HE awards.
- 49. It will be our clear principle and intention in the first stage of work with institutions to accommodate as far as possible existing patterns of provision within the new suite of awards and the new curriculum. There is already a great deal of common ground in practice which is determined by the common learning outcomes.
- 50. We will conduct an extensive curriculum mapping exercise as a preliminary to our work in Phase 3 to design and structure the curriculum of the new suite of awards to inform this development and we will consult extensively with the training institutions at each stage of the journey. We have in mind a consultation exercise on the curriculum similar to the one we carried out on finance which involved face to face meetings with the institutions in the Spring and further dialogue with College and Course Principals in May and November.
- 51. The awards will also be designed to accommodate a range of different pathways for ministerial students sponsored by other churches; Readers and other lay ministers; independent students and, potentially, students preparing for specialised ministries such as youth work. There will be flexibility in these cases for institutions to seek validation for a range of additional modules to accommodate their present provision.
- 52. The benefit of moving towards a single suite of awards has been widely recognised across the sector and in the General Synod debate. We believe part of the reason for this is the widespread perception that with a common set of awards, greater coherence will develop across the Church of England naturally and organically in the medium term through greater dialogue and a common identity shaping training.

**The Timetable**

- 53. We propose the following timetable for the development of the new suite of awards:

Dec 2011 to Feb 2012	A green light to proceed given by the Ministry Council ; the Archbishops' Council; House of Bishops and General Synod
Jan-Oct 2012	Curriculum framework developed by Phase 3 Working Party

Mar-May 2012	Identify HE partnership through tender process
Oct 2012	Dialogue begins with first wave of institutions Ongoing steering group assumes responsibility for the process
Sep 2013	First teaching of new awards for new students
Sep 2015	All institutions transferred to new awards for new students or recognised as exceptions

54. We propose that all existing institutions offering training for Anglican ordinands are given a timetable of 2 years from September 2013 to transfer HE validation to the new awards or else apply for named pathways to be recognised as an exception to the new system by the process outlined below.
55. Where institutions transfer to the new awards, there will be a need, of course, to make provision for the run out of continuing students, normally under existing validation arrangements or for current students to be brought within the new awards.
56. After September 2015, validation fees for new students will no longer included in the fees paid to the institution for an ordinand but will be paid centrally from Vote 1 to the HE partnership except for approved excepted routes. The Ministry Division Quality in Formation Panel will also need to subject to particular scrutiny any routes which have not come into the new awards and have not been agreed as exceptions.
57. Any new routes through training for Anglican ordinands proposed from Autumn 2012 onwards would need to use the new suite of awards unless they make a separate application to be an exception or unless there is good reason for a transitional phase of validation by another route (for example if they are linked to a local course which will not begin teaching the new programme until 2015).
58. The Ministry Division has no authority to direct validation arrangements for Reader training; Education for Discipleship programmes or IME 4-7. These arrangements fall within the oversight of Diocesan Bishops and are sometimes delegated to Regional Training Partnerships. Nevertheless we would warmly encourage these programmes to opt in and become part of the new arrangements in dialogue with their local providers of training for Anglican ordinands.
59. Similarly we have no authority, of course, to direct those responsible for ministry training in other churches but we would want to give them every encouragement to opt into the new awards, including, as indicated, representation on the Phase 3 Working Group and Steering Group.

#### **Exceptions to the common awards**

60. For the new awards to achieve the aims set and encouraged by the General Synod for a single suite of awards with a single HE validation partnership, we need to set high expectations for participation and therefore have a robust process for the granting of exceptions. Our proposal means that most ordinands will be taking the common awards once they have been introduced.

61. We therefore propose the following protocol:

- Applications to be an exception from the new common awards will be made by letter from the Governing Body to the Ministry Council and will be determined by the Ministry Council
- The process of application to be an exception will begin once the new awards are established (that is from October 2012).
- Exceptions will be agreed on a five year basis and then revisited.

62. The Ministry Council will determine whether or not to grant an exception according to the following criteria:

63. The added value to the Church of England of the alternate provision:

- a distinctive educational environment in which ordinands can engage directly with the study of Theology in the wider academy in centres of excellence for the study of Theology. Studying Christian theology in the wider academy should prepare students for the apologetic task of communicating the faith in a society in which faith is contested.
- a substantial element (normally at least one third) of teaching is provided by those who teach regularly in the Theology and Religious Studies Department of a University (and who therefore offer a different perspective for those training for ministry).
- The costs to the church of the excepted routes. Our Phase 1 report recognised the ongoing value to the church of higher cost pathways yet set a limit to these higher costs per candidate. We would expect the fees for any excepted routes which are higher cost to be normally within the range agreed in the Phase 1 report and the costs to the Church overall of these excepted routes to be manageable within the current Vote 1 budget. We note that the Church may wish in the future to limit the number of places of such higher cost pathways.
- The educational coherence of the programme with the partnership route. There will need to be clear evidence that candidates can enter and exit the programme at different points and engage with the suite of HE awards. They should be able to complete a programme of formation before the normal point of ordination and within the number of years allocated to them for training and be able to proceed to IME 4-7.

### **Costs**

64. There are some initial set up costs for Phase 3 of the work. Funding has been found from within existing Ministry Division budgets to employ someone to service the curriculum design phase of the work for one year. There may also be a limited additional cost for the services of a tendering consultant.

65. Thereafter the costs will be distributed between some likely additional central cost to the Ministry Division of managing the partnership (up to one full time post) and the validation fees paid on behalf of ordinands in training directly from Vote 1 to the HE partnership.

66. We envisage that the total cost to the Church of England will be not more than present costs (that is, the rise in Vote 1 is offset by the reduction in poolable family maintenance) and we hope that savings can be made overall.
67. It is possible that, depending on the degree of ecumenical partnership, there will be a contribution from other churches towards set up and central costs. Partner churches will be responsible for the validation fees for their own students. Validation fees for curates and Readers would be met by Dioceses. Independent students would meet their own validation fees as part of the tuition fee charged by the College or Course.

### **Identifying the HE Partnership and scoping the process**

68. As indicated, Ministry Division staff have held meetings with ten different universities who have expressed an interest in bidding to be our validating partner. In one case the meeting was with two universities who are considering working in a single partnership.
69. These meetings have established that there would be a number of universities who would make serious bids to become the principal partner with the Church of England and other churches in providing academic validation for ministerial training and lay education within the overall cost parameters set out in our Phase 1 report.
70. Our current understanding is that Church of England ministerial students will be off-quota for the validating university (that is additional to their maximum number of students eligible for student loans and agreed by HEFCE). Our present understanding is that ministerial students of other churches and independently funded students would also be off quota though we are in the process of exploring the implications of independently funded students being separately recognised and on discrete pathways so that they could access loans for tuition fees and maintenance.
71. We recommend that the identification of the HE partnership should proceed by a transparent tender and bidding process which is publicly advertised. Appendix A, available on the Ministry Division webpage at <http://www.churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/ministry/ministerial-education-and-development/initial-ministerial-education/policies.aspx> is our current draft document which will be made available to potential HE partners and against which they will construct their bid. The Ministry Division is investigating the possibility of making use of the services of a tendering consultant to aid this process. A further appendix containing a risk assessment will also be posted there.
72. The shortlisting of bids will be carried out by a small group appointed by the Ministry Council. We propose that shortlisted partners should have the opportunity to present their bids to the Ministry Council and to be questioned by the Council who will then make the final decision. Depending on the outcome of ongoing ecumenical conversations, we hope that ecumenical representatives will be present and contribute to the tender process and decision.
73. A legal contract and Memorandum of Agreement will then be drawn up and signed by both parties. The contract will be between the HE partnership and the Archbishops' Council and, if appropriate, with the equivalent body in other churches.

74. The Ministry Council's decisions about the partnership should we believe be informed by the following criteria:
- The HE partnership selected should have proven expertise in the teaching of Theology and Religious Studies (normally evidenced through an active TRS Department).
  - The HE partnership selected should have proven expertise in the validation of programmes of study for other professions ideally on a national scale
  - The HE partnership should be in sympathy with the aims and objectives of the Church of England and its partner churches and familiar with the context served by the Church of England. Its commitment to the partnership should be evidenced at the highest level within the institutions.
  - The HE partnership offers the best value for money both in terms of initial costs and over the five year term of the contract.
75. The initial partnership agreement will be entered into for five years with the understanding that it is renewable for a further five. Careful attention will be paid in drawing up the legal contract and Memorandum of Association to care of ongoing students should the arrangement have to be discontinued for any reason.
76. We welcome additional submissions from universities who have not so far met with the Ministry Division. We will welcome tenders from groups of universities who are willing to act together in a single partnership.

### **Phase 3 of the Working Party**

77. The next task for the Working Party is to oversee the tender process on behalf of the Ministry Council and to develop the theological underpinning and guidelines for the curriculum and design the awards within the parameters set by this report.
78. We recognise that there will need to be some changes in the membership of the Working Party for Phase 3. The Working Party was originally constituted to explore what was primarily a financial and organisational question. The Phase 3 Working Party will need representation from active theological educators and theologians, ecumenical representatives and will need to work closely with the designated HE partnership once this has been identified.
79. We therefore propose the following membership
- The Bishop of Sheffield (chair)
  - Four representatives of the training institutions and diocesan training departments (appointed by the Ministry Council on the basis of nominations from trainers)
  - Two ecumenical representatives
  - Two other members appointed by the Ministry Council
  - Staff
  - Representatives of the HE partnership from the point at which this is agreed

80. The Phase 3 Working Party will not produce a formal report but will report in the form of curriculum design documents and the shape of the awards to the Ministry Council and the training institutions.
81. As within any of our present pathways, the new suite of awards will need to be undergirded by a theological understanding of mission and ministry, formation and training. The Phase 3 Working Party will use the questions from the Churches Validation Framework in developing this theological preface and this will be an element in what we hope will be a growing coherence and definition in our understanding of training.
82. The Phase 3 Working Party will carry out this work in dialogue with the House of Bishops' work on re-imagining ministry and in dialogue with the training institutions. The draft proposals will be submitted to the Quality in Formation Panel before coming in their final form to the Ministry Council and the House of Bishops.

### **The Steering Group for the Awards**

83. From Autumn 2012, the Phase 3 Working Party will hand over its work to a Steering Group for the awards which will have the responsibility of guiding the work forward and reporting regularly to the Ministry Council. This Steering Group will be in place for three years and then be reviewed.
84. We propose the following membership for this Steering Group:
  - A Chair appointed by the Ministry Council (one of the Bishops on the Council)
  - Three members of the Ministry Council
  - Four representatives of the training institutions and diocesan training departments (appointed by the Ministry Council on the basis of nominations from trainers)
  - Ecumenical representatives
  - Representatives of the HE partnership
  - Staff

### **Balancing Risks**

85. We have been asked to provide an assessment of the risks to the Church of England of not proceeding with this new suite of awards and the risks of moving forward.
86. The risks of not proceeding are that our existing validation arrangements become less and less satisfactory as the HE environment continues to change. There is now a much more limited financial incentive to Universities to validate small institutions. In this new environment the smaller institutions and Diocesan training departments which do not have established links to local universities are likely to suffer. The costs of HE validation as a whole will continue to rise.
87. The risks of moving forward are of two different kinds. First, it is possible that in moving forward in this way we will not achieve all that we set out to achieve. Given the significant risks of doing nothing, we judge that substantial progress in this direction will be better than no progress at all.

88. Second it is possible that we may be able to move forward effectively in these ways and realise this vision and that there will be some risks in this. These may include the loss of some current partnerships with universities but there are many different ways of working in partnership which need not include HE validation. They also include a risk that the Church of England over-centralises training (though given the current diversity this does not seem a present danger).

### **Connections with other work**

89. As we noted in our Phase 1 report, this piece of work is proceeding at the same time as the follow up the General Synod and Archbishops' Council priority of "re-imagining ministry". There is and will continue to be close liaison between the taking forward of this priority and the changes proposed in this Report. In particular we note that the House of Bishops are due to debate a paper on re-imagining ministry to be prepared by the Ministry Council Bishops in May 2012. We believe that this paper and the subsequent debate will come at a key time and will inform the work of the Phase 3 Working Party.

### **Where might we be in 2016?**

90. The changes outlined in this document are substantial and demanding, particularly for our training institutions. However they hold out the hope that by 2016:
- The majority of ordinands in the Church of England will be studying for a suite of awards with a single HE set of validation arrangements
  - An increasing number of Dioceses will bring their IME 4-7 within the framework of the common awards giving increased coherence and rigour to this part of training
  - An increasing number of Dioceses will bring their Reader training within the framework of the common awards
  - The awards will serve the needs of ministerial training in other churches in a constellation of different partnerships across the country
  - The new awards will provide a framework for HE accredited training for other recognized ministries
  - There will be a rich and ongoing conversation across the Church of England as a whole and ecumenically on the future development of training and formation
  - Partnerships with Universities will continue not only through the national validation arrangement and the excepted routes but in many ways locally
  - After the initial transition, less time will be consumed with questions of validation within our training institutions
  - Our training and formation for all kinds of ministries will have a stronger theological underpinning; greater simplicity, coherence and responsiveness to God's mission in England and beyond.

## Conclusion

91. As we indicated in our conclusion to our Phase 1 report, we believe that there will be real gains to the Church of England and our partner churches in the development of simpler, more cost effective validation arrangements at national level and through greater definition of requirements for and routes through training. A number of speakers in the General Synod debate in July 2011 noted that while the changes in HE funding and their impact on theological education were not of our making, it would be important in framing the Church of England's response to turn a possible problem into an opportunity and to seize the opportunity to make a number of far reaching and much needed changes in our framework for lay and ordained education and formation.

We commend the proposals in this Phase 2 report to the Church.

On behalf of the Working Party

✠STEVEN SHEFFIELD  
Chair

21 December 2011

## Appendix A

### Pre-tender document to be circulated to potential HE partners inviting bids

This document is available at:

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

## Appendix B Membership of the Working Party

Rt Revd Dr 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, Director of Ministry, 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

Published by the General Synod of the Church of England  
and on sale at the Church House Bookshop

31 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BN

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