



# DIOCESE *of* OXFORD

*A Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world*

## ASSESSMENT AT THE END OF CURACY IN THE DIOCESE OF OXFORD

Curates are required to have an assessment at the end of their curacy (AEC) after the third anniversary of ordination as a deacon and before the fourth anniversary. In certain cases, it is possible to request an extension (see separate policy paper *Length of curacy*).

The earliest that the process for the AEC can start is after the third annual review; the curate can request their AEC at the time of the annual submission of the Ministry Development Folders for feedback by a diocesan Assessor on May 10<sup>th</sup><sup>1</sup>. However, the decision that someone has completed their AEC will not be made until after the third anniversary of ordination. The decision is communicated to the curate by their area bishop ('signing off') after July 1st.

### **End of curacy and applications for next post – incumbent focus of ministry curates**

The length of curacy varies from diocese to diocese, however, curacies in the Diocese of Oxford last a minimum of 3 full years. The policy below, extracted from section 14 in the Curates Handbook on IME policy decisions for IME Phase 2 explains the timing that applies to stipendiary incumbent-focus curates looking for their next post, within the diocese, and outside.

### **Policy for considering year 3 curates for vacancies in the Diocese**

All year 3 stipendiary curates (and some SSMS) who wish to remain in the Diocese of Oxford after being signed off, and who would therefore like to be considered for suitable posts will be invited to have a conversation with their Area Bishop from October onwards in year 3, after the curates have attended the *Moving On* course in summer of year 2, and completed the questionnaire on preferences for next posts.

#### **Process:**

1. Curates attend *Moving On* course in June of year 2 (end of year 2) and indicate if they wish to stay in the diocese at the end of curacy or move elsewhere.
2. The IME team meet to write a short report (normally in July/August – after Annual Assessments have been completed) on each 3<sup>rd</sup> year curate, as a trigger for the Area Bishops to do the one-to-one meetings.
3. Area Bishops meet with individual year 3 potential incumbent curates (October onwards) to discuss possibilities of applying for next posts.
4. Please also see February 2018 Policy on Applications for Next Post (below), which gives guidance about when curates can start to apply for their next post.

July 2018

---

<sup>1</sup> Further dates for the submission of MDFs for assessment at the end of curacy are currently 15<sup>th</sup> October and 15<sup>th</sup> February each year.

### **Policy on Applications for Next Post**

The guidance of Bishop's Staff is that incumbent-focus curates are free to begin to look for new stipendiary posts during the third year of their curacy, but strongly advise that curates do not begin looking until after Christmas of their third year.

There are a number of points that curates need to understand with regard to looking for new posts:

- 1) Curates are not free to take up any appointment before 1<sup>st</sup> July, the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of ordination, and licensing cannot take place too soon after signing off on July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 2) Appointments could be delayed further if they have not met all the requirements enabling them to be 'signed off' by their bishop.
- 3) Curates are encouraged to talk with their area bishop about next posts, particularly if / when there is a genuine need for an earlier release or extension of curacy. Anyone wishing to depart from this policy can only do so with the express permission of their area bishop.
- 4) The reason for encouragement from Bishop's Staff to wait until after Christmas to begin searching for new posts is three-fold,
  - i) The third year of curacy is important, primarily it is an opportunity to consolidate and hone ministerial learning and development; this is easily hampered when energy, interest and focus moves beyond the parish. It is also the year in which curates become of greatest value to their training incumbent and parish,
  - ii) Prospective parishes and bishops are going to be less willing to consider a curate who has not been signed off and is not going to be available to begin the new post for more than half year,
  - iii) Oxford loses the opportunity to invite you to consider applying for posts within this Diocese.

February 2018

### **Ministry Development Folder (MDF) Contents**

**MDFs are not 'scrapbooks' containing everything a Curate has done in ministry during the time that s/he has been serving their title. The expectation is that they are a carefully compiled set of documents, demonstrating clearly the Curate's development against the nationally-agreed Formation Criteria (FC).**

#### **Front page**

This needs to give the Curate's name; year ordained deacon; core or core + incumbent focus FC being demonstrated (that was the category of ministry originally selected for at the Bishops Advisory Panel, noting any formal Change of Focus process engaged in since); name of Training Incumbent; name of parish/benefice; archdeaconry; the Curate's qualifications, and name of the theological college or course where IME Part 1 was done, together with a brief introduction to the Curate and his/her present ministerial context (perhaps one paragraph). It is also helpful to the assessors if it includes an indication if the Curate has been diagnosed with dyslexia.

**Annual Review documents:** these should be present in the folder for each of the years in curacy, together with a record of any decisions about future learning needs. These are key documents which the Bishop's Assessors will use in their verification of the Curate's submission that satisfactory progress against the FC has been achieved.

**Learning Agreements:** each of the learning agreements reached through the period of the curacy should be in the MDF. They need to be signed and dated by both the Curate and the Training Incumbent.

**Assessment Feedback Sheets:** each of the annual assessment feedback sheets from the Bishop's Assessor to the Curate needs to be included in the folder (most curates will complete a first year and interim assessment before requesting AEC).

**Hard Skills days:** there should be evidence that the Curate has attended the requisite number of Hard Skills Days (a list of names and dates, with a completed Hard Skills Assessment pro-forma for each). Typically the Assessment Pro-formas will include a short series of bullet points noting the key elements of discussion undertaken in a supervision session with the Training Incumbent or other suitable supervisor and should be signed by both Curate and TI.

**A record of attendance at the MDG** (obtainable from your MDG Animator) must be included each year.

**Learning programme:** there should be evidence of engagement with further theological study and reflection during curacy. This will usually be three theological reflections, each written after a modular course, with feedback comments from the tutor. BA/PgDip students should submit all five portfolios or other Durham assignments, along with the relevant marksheet (where the marksheet has not yet been released, please note this for the Assessor). Self-directed curates should include at least three pieces of writing, with comments from the Head of IME 2.

**Mission and Ministry Project:** a theological reflection/report on the compulsory Mission and Ministry Project should be included (together with a marking sheet if it was undertaken for the final module of one of the taught courses).

**Final Report Documents:** these should be in the folder. They will include the Training Minister's report on the Curate; references from a Church Warden and another lay person; a brief report from the Animator of the Ministry Development Group which comments on the number of attendances and level of engagement only. All the forms to support the final reporting process can be found in the Curates Handbook.

### **Assessment at the End of Curacy Process**

An Assessment at the End of Curacy is triggered by the presentation of the completed MDF from May 10<sup>th</sup> of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. This means that the contents of the MDF are crucial to the decision that someone is sufficiently proficient as a minister to allow them to move into the next phase of ministry. As a result of reading this work, the Assessor will make a recommendation to the Area Bishop (by means of a report which notes the evidence in support of the recommendation). (See DECISION MAKING FLOWCHART (End of Curacy))

The Area Bishop considers the recommendation and may choose to interview the Curate to reach a decision. The Bishop then writes a letter to the Curate, copied to the Training Minister and Head of IME 2, confirming satisfactory completion of the curacy and readiness for a new or renewed post. Customarily, almost all our Curates are assessed as having completed their curacy satisfactorily at the first attempt.

The only document that will go into the Curate's Register of Ministry (ROM) is the final letter from the Bishop. All other materials, including the MDF, need to be kept by the Curate for use as they continue in ministry. The successful completion of the Assessment at the End of Curacy is a cause for celebration, and the event should be marked appropriately. Those in self-supporting ministry will need to re-negotiate their working agreements and receive a new Statement of Particulars (SOP) from the Archdeacon. Those who hope to move to a post of responsibility will be free to do so when they have been assessed as having satisfactorily demonstrated the Core and the Incumbent/ post of responsibility FC.

In the rare event that someone is deemed not to have demonstrated engagement with the FC, the Assessor will inform the Head of IME 2 who will ask a different Assessor to read the papers. Should the advice still be that the Curate isn't ready to move into the next stage in ministry, the Assessors will write to the Bishop stating the reasons for the decision, and making recommendations about the work that is needed before the Curate will be ready for a further assessment. In his/her response, the Bishop will follow the policy of the Regional Training Partnership (RTP). This is likely to include the requirement for up to a further year of curacy, and include a clear indication of the work needed for successful completion of the curacy.

The Head of IME 2 is the Moderator for the work of the Assessors in the diocese, and the quality assurance process for Assessment at the End of Curacy is handled by the South Central Regional Training Partnership (SCRTP) through a further moderation process.

Version 9  
January 2021